

Departure from Orientalist Norms in Arminius Vambery's *Travels in Central Asia*

Ahmad Gholi* , Masoud Ahmadi Mosaabad 

Department of Foreign Languages, Gonbad Kavous University, Gonbad Kavous, Iran

Received: 2/1/2023
Revised: 24/3/2023
Accepted: 29/5/2023
Published: 30/3/2024

* Corresponding author:
ahmadgholi0098@gmail.com

Citation: Gholi, A. ., & Mosaabad , M. A. . (2024). Departure from Orientalist Norms in Arminius Vambery's *Travels in Central Asia*. *Dirasat: Human and Social Sciences*, 51(2), 333–346.
<https://doi.org/10.35516/hum.v51i2.3199>

Abstract

Objectives: This article critiques Edward Said's Orientalism through a detailed examination of Arminius Vambery's "Travels in Central Asia" as a departure from traditional Western travel writing. By analyzing Vambery's work, the aim is to highlight instances where he deviates from the established principles of Orientalism.

Methods: Drawing on Behdad's insights, this study explores the dynamic and flexible nature of Orientalist discourse. It investigates how travel writers like Vambery can deviate from the norms and conventions of Orientalism in their encounters with Eastern cultures and people.

Results: The findings of this study demonstrate three notable instances where Vambery showcases his departure from Orientalism. Firstly, he recounts an encounter with two Afghans who discover his disguise during their shared journey. Secondly, Vambery refrains from depicting the harem of local Emirs in Turkistan as a place of hedonism, in contrast to prevailing Victorian travel writers. Lastly, he appreciates and celebrates the local cuisine, in contrast to the dismissive attitudes prevalent among his contemporaries.

Conclusions: It is a mistaken assumption that Victorian travel writers exclusively followed Orientalist tropes when exploring the Islamic Orient. The study emphasizes the importance of recognizing these counter-Orientalist moments in travel literature to present a more nuanced and comprehensive understanding of the works.

Keywords: Travel writing, orientalism, deviation, disguise, harem, cuisine.

الانزياح عن المعايير الاستشرافية في رحلات إلى آسيا المركزية لأرمينيوس فمبيري

احمد قلى، مسعود احمدى موسى آباد
قسم اللغات الأجنبية، جامعة كنبند كاووس، كنبند كاووس، إيران

ملخص

الأهداف: يعد أدب الرحلات حقلاً للدراسات النقدية في مختلف المجالات وذلك بفضل كتاب الاستشراق الذي ألفه إدوارد سعيد ودرس فيه آثار الرحالين الفرنسيين والبريطانيين المكتوبة في سياق الإمبريالية الغربية في القرن التاسع عشر. يعتقد سعيد في كتابه بأن هؤلاء الرحالين في تلاقهم بالبلدان الشرقية وفي مشاهداتهم وتعليقاتهم لم يكونوا محايدين، بل كانوا شركاء لمشروع إمبريالية غربية. رغم أن آراء سعيد هذه مقنعة، إلا أنه لا يشير في الاستشراق إلى أن الرحالين الغربيين في تلاقهم بالثقافة الشرقية والسكان المحليين يمكنهم تحدي تقاليد الاستشراق. إذن، تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى قراءة الرحلات إلى آسيا المركزية لأرمينيوس فمبيري لتسليط الضوء على انزياحات الرحال عن معايير الاستشراق الراسخة. المنهجية: هذه الدراسة إنبتت على آراء بهداد حيال الاستشراق؛ يؤكد بهداد بأن الاستشراق له خطابٌ حركيٌ ويتحلى بالانفتاح والمرونة، فلهذا يتمكن الرحالون من الانزياح عن معايير الاستشراق.

النتائج: يستنتج الباحث بأن انزياحات فمبيري تتمثل في ثلاثة أشكال: الأول يكون في حين يكتب الرحال عن رفيقيه الطريق الأفغانيين اللذين كشفوا هويته خلال الرحلة. والثاني يحدث حينما يتمتع فمبيري عن تصوير حرم الحاكم المحلي في تركستان كمكانٍ للذة والمتعة. والثالث يقع حينما يقدّر الرحال المطبخ المحلي بدلاً من تجاهله كما كان شأن الرحالين في عصر فيكتوريا.

الخلاصة: من الخطأ الاعتقاد بأن الرحالين في العصر الفيكتوري في رحلاتهم نحو الشرق الإسلامي إتبعوا المعايير الاستشرافية على نحو عشوائي بحث. بل -كما كشفت هذه الدراسة- في بعض الأحيان قد يتزاح الرحال عن هذه المعايير. لهذا يجب أن ينتبه الدارس في مجال أدب الرحلات إلى هذه المواضيع المضادة للاستشراق حتى يتمكن من عرض قراءة دقيقة عن كتب الرحلات. الكلمات الدالة: أدب الرحلات، الاستشراق، الانزياح، التسرّ، الحرم، المطبخ.



© 2024 DSR Publishers/ The University of Jordan.

This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY-NC) license
<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>

1. Introduction

Travel writing refers to those texts in which travelers document in prose their observations of and impressions about their encountered destinations and residents from the first-person perspective. Optimistically, travel writers with their sympathetic, nuanced, and respectful understanding of their travelees and visited cultural zones enlarge and enrich their readers' minds about them. Pessimistically, they perpetuate prejudicial views on indigenous people and their customs, thereby giving rise to cultural misunderstanding. In doing so, they reinforce their readers' racial and cultural hauteur. Critical fascination with travel writing in the twentieth century begins with Edward Said's *Orientalism*. Before Said, historians and anthropologists exploited travel narratives as secondary sources in their studies of alien cultures. In his *Orientalism*, Said (1979) examines nineteenth-century French and British travel writers. For Said, they are not the objective arbiters of their encountered Eastern territories but the accomplices in Western colonialism since they participate in collecting colonial knowledge and promulgating the essentialist and reductive perceptions of their Eastern travelees. Hence, these travel writers portray Eastern people in a negative light as sensual, submissive, feminine, silent, illogical, and tradition bound. Like colonial officers, the travel writers in the context of colonialism emphasize and justify the necessity of Western colonial presence to dramatically transform the East with the supposed blessings of Western civilization and commerce. This explains why they gloss over the evils, horrors, and injustices of colonialism and why they textually suppress the civilizational achievements of the Eastern civilizations. Even though Said's critical perspective in his *Orientalism* is cogent and persuasive, it does not provide a holistic picture. He tars travel writers with the same brush. From Said's perspective, Westerners in their views and words about the Orient are racist, imperialist, and ethnocentric (1979, p.204). Indeed, Said fails to acknowledge the fact that some Western travel writers in the nineteenth century can revisit some orientalist tropes despite their participation in the colonial project. Unlike Said, Ali Behdad holds that Western travel writers in their travelogues can depart from the rules of Orientalism when they confound myopic, orientalist vision which is based on artificially fashioned binaries between the East and the West. Accordingly, by adopting Behdad's critical insight, the current article attempts to read Arminius Vambery's *Travels to Central Asia* to highlight Vambery's departure from the Orientalist worldview. Arminius Vambery (1832-1913) was an anglophile, Hungarian orientalist in the service of the British Empire. His travelogue relates his journey from Hungary to Istanbul, where he acquires Islamic education, and from Turkey to Persia and then to Turkistan (Central Asia) and Afghanistan during the Great Game which refers to the imperial competition between Russia and England in the second half of the nineteenth century. In the context of the Great Game, the British politicians in India believe that Russians are secretly seeking to wrest India from them by encroaching on Turkistan. Thus, they dispatch travelers like Vambery to gather intelligence about the Russians, their imperial designs, and the local people's attitude to the Russians. During his journey, Vambery comes to this realization that the menace of Russians' ambitious colonial project is serious. If it is unchecked, the Russians will take the control of Turkistan. Worse still Russian merchandise will dominate the thriving bazaars of Turkistan depriving England of a huge profit even though English goods especially its textiles are of superior quality and popular among the local womenfolk compared with Russian ones (Alder & Dalby, 1979). For him, it is a political oversight to think that Russia will civilize Muslim residents of Turkistan because Russians are inferior to Turkistani people in terms of civilization and refined manners. In the eyes of Vambery, the Russians are cherishing the idea of occupying India and reaching the Mediterranean Sea. Hence, He insists on curbing Russians' colonial advancement in Turkistan before it is getting late. He believes the English style of government is congruent with the temperament of the Muslim Turkistani people because England has successfully dealt with a large Muslim community in India (ibid.). He also questions the indifference of some English policymakers who assume Tsarist Russia will not sabotage British interests and civilize the so-called semicivilized inhabitants of Turkistan. Still, Vambery is remembered for his staunch anti-Russian perspective among scholars. For instance, David Mandler (2016) in *Arminius Vambéry and the British Empire: Between East and West* explores in detail his anti-Russian sentiments.

Instead of delving into Vambery's role in the Great Game and highlighting his cooperation in the British imperial project, this article chooses a new critical path. It argues that despite his participation in the British imperial project, Vambery demonstrates his departure from the Orientalist perspective in three ways. Firstly, by demonstrating the agency

of two Afghan subjects who penetrate his disguise and expose his imperialistic motives. In doing so, they prevent him from advancing his imperial project. Secondly, by abstaining from reiterating the trope of the Oriental harem, as the alleged space of boundless pleasure. Lastly, through presenting a nuanced and non-orientalist vision of local food through his appreciation and enthusiasm.

2. Review of Literature

As an orientalist, Turcologist, explorer of Central Asia, and British agent, Vambery has not attracted enough scholarly attention. Available literature scrutinizing his travel writing is few. Only Mandler's articles deal with his travel book; however, they neither pay sufficient attention to the content of his travel book nor present a close reading of his travelogue.

Mandler believes (2011) that Vambery in his travel book does not subscribe to the prevalent crude binary logic of the Orient and the Occident. Instead, he ruptures the cultural schism by establishing a racial link between them. According to Mandler, Vambery believes that the ancestors of the Magyar ethnic in Hungary hail from Central Asia/Turkistan. For Vambery, Mandler notes, there is the persistence of Central Asians' virtues such as compassion for the weaker, hospitality, and religious tolerance in simple peasant Magyars. By finding such a link, Mandler states, Vambery elevates Central Asians to a superior position. Also, Mandler contends that due to his bitter experience of religious discrimination in his formative years at the hands of Catholic Christians in Hungary, Vambery cultivates a sympathetic and empathetic outlook toward the inhabitants of Turkistan who are the targets of Russian colonialism.

David Mandler (2007) in his other article deals with how an Oriental Muslim critiques the Western world when he concentrates on Vambery's imaginary travel book in which a local Muslim from Turkistan travels to Europe. For this Muslim traveler, the West sounds like an exotic world defined by strange mores and customs. Mandler remarks that Vambery through adopting the narrative persona of a Muslim voyager unsettles the orientalist dichotomy of the superior West and the inferior East. For the Tartar traveler, it is odd that the Westerners attach significant importance to heredity than meritocracy which leads to the underserved promotion of the aristocratic class and the marginalization of ordinary people. But in the East, the Tartar observes, blood cuts no ice, and this explains why obscure qualified subjects can rise to the status of viziers. Besides the absence of meritocracy, it is horrible for the Turkistani traveler to witness that Jews are not tolerated in the West while they freely express their religion in Central Asia. Finally, this Eastern traveler admits the West is superior in terms of modern science, but this does not mean that Muslims are not intellectual; they possess great mental prowess.

Mandler in his articles does not present an in-depth analysis of Vambery's deviation from orientalist tropes in his travel narrative. He sporadically refers to his travel book without contextualization and close reading of them. Thus, the current study seeks to fill this research lacuna.

3. Theoretical Approach

This study adopts Behdad's insights about Orientalism. The privilege of his perspective in comparison with Said's model is its close attention to nuances and contradictions, dissenting elements, and dialogic aspects of travel narratives which is absent in Said's discussion of Orientalism. In other words, his critical model offers a subtle understanding of travel books.

Behdad in his book: *Belated Travelers* states Orientalism is "diffused and fluid [and displays] political resilience and capacity [which] utilizes [...] its voices of dissent and discontent [as well as it incorporates] the plurality of subject and ideological positions" (p. 1999, p.17). This adaptability of Orientalism "enables it to recuperate and use points of opposition in its transformations." (p.132). To elucidate his thesis, Behdad focuses on belated travelers such as Nerval, Flaubert, Isabella Eberhardt, and the Blunts. He demonstrates how they contest Orientalism.

Another significant edge of Behdad's perspective over Said's model is distinguishing the Orientalist desire from the desire for the Orient. For Behdad (1990), the former is characterized by the urge to master the Orient and Oriental others by employing the institutional discourse with which the Western travel writer is equipped; the orientalist desire, Behdad maintains, implies the distance between the observing and representing travel writer and his observed travelees in the course

of his journey in the Orient (p. 39). In the eyes of Behdad, the latter is defined by “involvement and [...] giving oneself over to the experience of Oriental journey” (ibid.). He associates the desire for the Orient with “the repressed fascination with [Oriental] Other” (ibid.). According to Behdad, the desire for the Orient suggests appreciation, favorable response, and ethical interaction. For Behdad, the desire for the Orient is contingent on figuration by which he means that the travel writer includes himself “in the profile of the very picture it provides”; in doing so, he eradicates the border between the self and other (p.41).

4. Discussion

4.1. Being Unmasked by His Travelees

As a performative and underhand stratagem (Withers, 2021, p. 62), disguise has been integral to the expansion of the British Empire in the nineteenth century (Foster & Mills, 2002, p. 257). British travelers and agents have made journeys in disguise to map, survey, and produce knowledge about unexplored or less explored non-European terrains, namely Islamic regions like Turkistan which has been closely observed by travelers affiliated with British India in the context of the Great Game. Disguise is not a spontaneous act, but it is a pre-designed plan which is encouraged and financed by political institutions and scientific societies like the Royal Geographical Society in England (Withers, 2021, p.53). Accordingly, prior to making his journey in disguise, the traveler must master the local language(s) to enhance his interpersonal communication with natives and ease the sensitive process of intelligence gathering (p.54). Besides linguistic dexterity, he has to choose a local name, wear the costume of the indigenous people, follow local people’s tenants, and mimic their body language (p.59). Moreover, the colonial traveler needs exercise vigilance and avoid attracting attention to his concealed materials such as paper, pens, watches, compasses, and other measuring devices which are vital for recording observations and collecting data (ibid). Furthermore, to divert the suspicion of the indigenous people, the traveler must get a tan; otherwise, his usual fair complexion betrays his foreign identity (ibid.). Finally, during his journey with caravans in the context of the Islamic world, he should win his fellow travelers’ confidence and trust through his savoir-faire (p.54). The role of the wandering dervish in the context of the Islamic world ideally suits this colonial-cum-orientalist goal. Richard Burton clearly expresses this colonial stratagem in his *Personal Narrative of Pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina*: “No character in the Moslem world is so proper for disguise as that of the Dervish” (1874, Vol. I, p. 14). With his ragged garb, absolute poverty, and world-detesting ideology, the dervish is not the object of political suspicion and is not taken seriously, yet he enjoys respect among Muslims due to offering up prayers for those desiring benedictions and blessings.

Given the significance of disguise, the traveler before embarking on his trip knows well that if he completes his exploratory mission, he will be lionized and his resultant travelogue - with his portrait in disguise on its frontispiece- will be a bestseller. He will be admitted to learned societies, newspapers will seek his fresh views on the traveled zone, and finally, he will use his travel and travel accounts as political and cultural capital.

The traveler’s disguise and his supposed heroic penetration into the allegedly savage terrains presuppose that the visited indigenous people are passive, feminine, and racially and intellectually inferior (Foster & Mills, 2002, p. 257). As a result, disguise is morally dubious. Indeed, the traveler implies that he is more native [or Oriental] than his travelees whom he can outwit with his impeccable role-playing by being a “fake Muslim and a genuine Westerner” (Said, 1979, p.161). Among English travel writers in the nineteenth century, Richard Burton is the best example who adopts a masquerade and visits Mecca and Medina, forbidden to non-Muslims. Then he writes about his travelees' alleged exoticism.

It seems that Vambery has been under a spell of Richard Burton’s disguise and journeys in the Islamic territories before his departure for Turkistan. No doubt, his travel in disguise is the expression of his admiration for Burton. Interestingly, he meets him in London and impresses him with the recitation of the opening verses of the Koran (Alder & Dalby, 1979, p. 229). Vambery has been aware of the unique status that Burton enjoys among the English people (p.232). Like Burton, he learns Arabic and Persian and adopts the character of a Turkish wandering dervish with the Koran suspended from his neck. Nonetheless, two Afghans: Emir Mehemmed and Yakoub Khan penetrate into his disguise and expose his hidden agenda. In doing so, they hamper his subsequent imperialistic observations. Indeed, Emir Mehemmed and Yakub Khan invalidate

the idea of the Oriental travelees as feminine and passive. These Afghan men draw attention to the openness and flexibility of Orientalism in which agency is not limited only to the travel writers.

Given Emir Mehemmed, he is Vambéry's fellow traveler in the caravan heading to Turkistan. As a resident of Kandahar, he has seen many British officers and soldiers there. Consequently, it is not a difficult endeavor for him to distinguish a European from a non-European. As a former victim of British hostility and colonization in Afghanistan, he is deeply suspicious of any Western foreigner in Turkistan. To put it differently, he can read their sinister intentions:

Emir Mehemmed, born in Kandahar, has after the occupation of his native city by the English, been compelled to fly [...]. He has had frequent opportunities of seeing Europeans and has recognized me as a European by my features. Consequently, from the first moment, he had regarded me as a secret emissary [...] under my mendicant disguise. He has always at his service a formidable menace (1864, p. 87).

Undoubtedly, Emir Mehemmed has witnessed the British forces have created the scene of terrible carnage in Kabul and Kandahar, his hometown, during the British retribution invasion after the first Anglo-Afghan war (1839-1842). He certainly knows well that the supposed friendship of the British government is a pretext for exploitation, occupation, and colonization. Also, he is not blind to the fact that they are perfidious, and their promises are empty, and their alleged alliance with Afghanistan has torn their nation. Moreover, it is clear that this Afghan travelee is aware of the sensitivity of the Emirs of Turkistan regarding map-making and gathering intelligence carried out covertly by European agents. Therefore, he informs the local police about Vambéry's covert mission. Unlike his travel companions who have unshakable faith in Haji Reshid effendi's (Vambéry's adopted name) piety and religious and spiritual credentials, Emir Mehemmed practices the hermeneutic of suspicion. Thus, he announces to the caravan members that Reshid Effendi is a Western foreigner in disguise: "Our Reshid Effendi is a Frenghi in disguise" (ibid.). Emir Mehemmed's whistleblowing immediately and strongly influences the head of the caravan: "The Karavanbashi [the head of the caravan] is making many objections to my joining him on the journey to Khiva [and] my appearance seems suspicious to him" (p.91). Just like Emir Mehemmed, the Karavanbashi is aware that Western foreigners are deceitful and unreliable because:

He has conducted a Fernghi [foreigner] envoy to Khiva [in Turkistan] who in that single journey, takes off a faithful copy of the whole route with his diabolical device. He has not forgotten to delineate any well or any hill on paper and this has incensed the Khan of Khiva (p. 92).

As Muslims with affectionate hearts, Vambéry's travel companions do not ill-treat and harass him. Instead, they permit him to accompany only with two conditions. Firstly, they should search him whether he has drawing [instruments] and wooden pens [lead pens]; secondly, he has to promise to make no "secret notes respecting hills and routes" (ibid.), otherwise, they will abandon him in the desert, and he will perish out of thirst. The Emir Mehemmed's unmasking delimits Vambéry's freedom and turns him into the object of his gaze, surveillance, and suspicion. By doing so, he not only subverts power relations between the traveler and his travelees but also dismantles the idea of the all-observing Western traveler. No longer is the traveler 'the monarch of what he surveys,' to borrow Pratt's words (2008, p.197). As a result, Vambéry is forced to harness his curiosity and mapmaking activity and accept his new inferior status. Indeed, this Afghan traveler exerts power on him and tames his imperial ambition which has an enormous appetite not only for collecting topographical information but also for inscribing the terra incognita or filling the blank spot. To put it differently, by hampering the travel writer's gaze and surveillance, this Afghan subject successfully prohibits Vambéry from "colonizing the landscape, mastering and portionizing, fixing zones and poles, arranging and deepening the scene as the object of desire" (Spurr, 1993, p. 27). In this incident, the travel writer understands that his travelee is not a passive simpleton whom he can deceive with his role-playing, but an inquisitive person that can lay bare his concealed identity and spoil his goal. Here, it dawns on him that there is a discrepancy between his orientalist expectation and his immediate challenging experience. As the following passage vividly captures the agency and counter-orientalist act of Emir Mehemmed:

I still see to my great regret that injurious suspicion has increased with every step and I should have the greatest difficulty in taking even the shortest notes of my journey. I am very much annoyed at not daring to put any questions as to the names of the different stations [...]. The nomads inhabiting the various oases have affixed a specific name to every place, every hill, and every valley [...]. What bitter disappointment, what annoyance, must not the traveler feel who after having through long struggles and great perils reached [...] the fountain, he longs for, cannot even then slake his thirst! (Vambery, 1864, p. 93).

In the above passage, the travel writer metaphorically envisions his traversed region as the fountain of vital and invaluable information from which he seeks to quench his insatiable, imperial thirst. Like Edward William Lane, Vambery seeks to render [Turkistan and its residents] "totally visible, to keep nothing hidden from his reader" (Said, 1979, p.162). But Emir Mehemed forbids him from imbibing it from this fountainhead. He only adds fuel to the fire. In doing so, he demonstrates that the local travelee is not "non-active, non-autonomous, non-sovereign with regard to himself" (p.97). Furthermore, this Afghan man transforms the disguised traveler into a notorious object that attracts his travel companions' gazes. Given the importance of the travelee's gaze, Indira Ghose states that the gaze of native people "exerts a pressure on traveler's [travel] texts" (1998, p.147). One can sense the dramatic impact of Emir Mehemed's disclosure and surveillance in London where an English man affiliated with British imperialism feels strongly disappointed because Vambery has not taken any significant notes in his journey: "[Sir Roderick] shows disappointment on hearing from me that I neither brought cartographical sketches [...] [nor] drawings" (qtd. in Adler & Dalby, 1979, p. 218). To justify his shortcoming, Vambery confesses that "He has carried only a small pencil [...] concealed under the wadding of his dervish dress and if natives [of Turkistan] have noticed [it] he has lost his life" (ibid.). Even his famous publisher, John Murray admits that Vambery has not been able to make their desired observations (Adler & Dalby, 1979, p. 224).

When the caravan reaches Khiva, a city in Turkistan, Emir Mehemed informs the local police about a disguised traveler who involves in espionage on behalf of England: "We have brought three interesting quadrupeds [referring to the buffaloes demanded by the Emir Khiva for medical purposes] and a no less biped [referring to Vambery who is] [...] Djansiz [spy] and Frenghi [foreigner]" (Vambery, 1864, p.123). Indeed, this Afghan's words have been effective in casting suspicion against Vambery among some important local police and politicians. For instance, Vambery admits that "Mehter [vizir] begins to insinuate to Khan [the Emir] that I was only a sham Dervish, has been probably sent upon some secret mission by Sultan to Bokhara" (p.136). In this context, Emir Mehemed paves the path for the cross-examination of the travel writer by Khiva authority and places him under an extra watch and gaze during his sojourn in Khiva. It is worth noting that both in Khiva and Bukhara, the Emirs enjoy employing many watchful eyes that control even minute movements of foreigners; hence Emir Mehemed's disclosure has made the local intelligence service more alert about the new dervish, more than before. Nevertheless, due to his low social standing and foreign nationality in Khiva, Emir Mehemed fails to draw extra attention to his disguise.

Given Yakub Khan's ability to unmask Vambery's masquerade, when the caravan reaches Herat, Vambery wishes to meet the ruler of Herat. Thus, he goes to the Charbag, the palace in which the sixteenth year-old governor resides. When he reaches the destination, he finds that soldiers are practicing their daily drills in the courtyard of the palace while Yakoub Khan is sitting on his chair near the window, observing their drilling. Vambery under the guise of a dervish decides to meet the Khan in person to bestow the blessing on him. As he enters the crowded palace, he pushes through the crowds and confidently seats between the ruler and his vizier and raises his hands and begins to pray. As soon as he ends his prayer, the Khan rises and fixes his gaze on him. Then while laughing, he points his finger at Vambery and tells him "Vallahi, Billahi Schuma, Inghiliz hestid (By God, you are an Englishman ... Hadji Kurbunet, tell me you are an Englishman in Tebdil [an Arabic word which means disguise], are you not?" (p.278). This incident is significant from a postcolonial perspective because Yakoub Khan does not permit the Western traveler to transform his palace into a playground for his masquerade and adventure. Instead, the Khan jeers at him and turns him into a clown-like character before his courtiers. In

doing so, the perceptive Emir precludes the travel writer from outwitting him. Here, Vambery places the Emir in the position of power and authority, while he becomes the object of his gaze and correct conjecture. Indeed, Khan's unmasking undermines the notion that travelees are passive objects for surveying, commenting, and exercising power. Instead, they are people with willpower and agency whose piercing gazes are capable of challenging and curtailing the freedom of the traveler in the disguise. After Khan's discovery, native people follow the example of their ruler and emphasize how the traveler has aroused their suspicion; the act that deeply distresses the traveler:

[His discovery] has some consequences not very agreeable, as far as my continued stay in Herat is concerned. Following the Prince's example, everyone wants to detect in me the Englishman. Persians, Afghans, and Herati [people] came to me with the express purpose of convincing themselves and verifying their suspicions [...] They see in me [...] Eldred Pottinger, who has made his first entry into Herat disguised as a horse dealer (p.279).

Even though Vambery is not from England; however, Vambery is affiliated with the British Empire. His consequent travel to London where he publishes his travelogue in English and where he delivers his lecture before British politicians amply substantiate the point. Accordingly, that local people view him as a British subject is not irrelevant and misguided. For Afghans, he is a reminder of the British force in the first Anglo-war and their duplicity; and as a result, his Afghan travelees are unhappy with his presence. As a consequence, they do not treat him kindly: "During my stay at Herat which has lasted for several weeks [...] they strike me, the supposed Ferengi [the Western foreigner]. I shudder when I [remember] how the angry looks they have cast on me" (*The Story of My Struggles* 209-210). Given the natives' ill feelings, Vambery cannot explore Herat and take notes at his leisure despite staying there for weeks.

Thus, it is illogical to think that travelees are ignorant people without any agency. Conversely, they can go through the travel writer's masquerade and disclose the travel writer's true identity and his hidden agenda; as Emir Mehmed and Serdar Yakoub Khan have done in the case of Vambery. In doing so, not only do they reverse the binarism of Self and Others, but they also hamper and spoil the disguised travel writer's dream of textual power and contest his claim of intellectual superiority.

3.2. Contesting the Orientalist Vision of Harem

By definition, a harem points to a protected sanctuary. Beckford in his *Vathek*, written in an orientalist fashion in the eighteenth century, introduces it as the "retreat of joy or dangerous [space]" (2013, p.16). Since the eighteenth century, Western travel writers both male and female in their journey to the Islamic Orient have enlarged upon it. According to Foster and Mills: "The cult of the harem is central to the fantasies which structure orientalist discourse" (2002, p.15). From the viewpoint of these travel writers, harems are the by-product of the Islamic Orient, the alleged abode of sensuality. Therefore, they introduce the earthly harems as the distorted version of paradise in Islam (Melman, 1989, p.301). For these travel writers, the harems are a graphic reminder of supposed Oriental despotism (Foster, 2004, p.10). Hence, they have textually fashioned the harem as a microcosm for the Orient. This is why Foster and Mills contend that the cultural arena of the harem is a "trope for the Orient itself" (2002, p.15). Not having access to this space and relying on sensational hearsay, these male travel writers have converted the world of harem into an imaginative canvass on which they inscribed their orientalist fantasies and suppressed desires to cater to their male audience hankering for exoticism and eroticism. In their eyes, these harems with their opulence, excess, and ease indicated by floral fragrance, lush carpets, velvet pillows, soft cushions, silk and gauze draperies, divans, and hookahs are not unrelated to the magnificent world of *The Arabian Nights* (Melman, 1989, p.306). For instance, MacGahan in his travelogue accounts his encounter with the harem in Khiva after the city falls into the Russians' hands with reference to *The Arabian Nights*: "It is now near midnight and silent [...]. It is no longer a real city [Khiva] but a leaf torn from the enchanted pages of *The Arabian Nights* [and now] I peer down into the harem" (emphasis added, 1874, p. 255). To Western travel writers, the harems are the site of boundless pleasures and promiscuity.

Like Richard Burton and William Lane, two eminent orientalist travel writers, Vambery in his journey to Turkistan dwells on the harems of the Emirs of Bokhara and Khiva. In contrast to them, he does not reiterate the Orientalist perspective about the institution of the harem. Instead, he purges it from clichés attached to it. Given, the harem of Bokhara, Vambery's anti-orientalist voice deserves to be quoted fully:

Mozaffar-ed-din Khan has- for it is the custom of his religion- four legitimate wives and about twenty slaves [...]. I am told seriously, only employed to tend to the children. The harem is presided over by the sovereign's mother. It bears high character for chastity and orderly training. The cost of the harem, as far as dress, board, and other necessities are concerned, is very small. The ladies make not only their own clothes but often even the garments of the Emir, who is known to be the strictest economist and to exercise severe control over everything. The daily kitchen expenses of the palace are said to be from sixteen to twenty Tenge (rather more from nine to ten shillings), which is very likely, as his table rarely offers any confectionary and consists merely of pillow [pilaf] boiled with mutton fat. The expression 'princely table' is inapplicable to Bokhara, where one and the same dish satisfies the prince, official merchant, mechanic, and peasant (1864, pp.189-190).

This passage makes clear that the travel writer has obtained his information about the Emir's harem from his native travelers signaled by two passive sentences: "I am told seriously" and "The expenses [...] are said to be" (ibid.). The voices of these unidentified travelers not only bestow the faint echo of dialogism and authenticity on his travelogue but also prevent him from sinking into misinterpretation and misrepresentation. Initially, one thinks that the travel writer is operating within the field of us/they paradigm when he writes that the harem is based on "the custom of his [Emir's] religion [that is Islam]" (ibid.). However, on closer inspection, the rest of the passage substantiates his broad-mindedness. Even though the travel writer notes that Emir has four legitimate wives and twenty slaves in his harem, he immediately reminds his readership that these concubines are mainly employed to nurse and look after his children instead of catering to his carnal desires. By doing so, the travel writer frustrates his readers' harem fantasies, exorcises eroticism from the harem, and represents the Emir as a family-oriented father who cares about his children and wives. For Vambery in this passage, the harem is not the unfettered domain of Id and sensuality since Emir's mother and grandmother act like the superego inside the harem and establish modesty, discipline, and chastity.

In the above passage, the travel writer also attests that Emir's harem is not the site of opulence, pomp, luxury, and ostentation. From Vambery's perspective, his harem is the place defined by the Islamic ideals of thriftiness and simplicity. Islam discourages Muslims from being wasteful and extravagant in their life, and the Emir's frugality is a good example. According to *The Glorious Quran*, "Squanderers are brothers of the ungrateful Devil" (Sura 17:27 201). Elsewhere in his travelogue Vambery articulates how the Emir enforces Islamic, unenvied, and unostentatious life in Bokhara: "The Emir throws obstacles in the way of his subjects whenever they seek to depart from simplicity and modesty [...]. The introduction of articles of luxury or expensive merchandise is forbidden, as also the employment of sumptuousness in house or dress" (Vambery, 1864, p.183). If the harem in the eyes of Western travelers with orientalist inclination is the locus of idleness, mindlessness, and indolence (Foster, 2004, p. 9), Vambery in this passage erodes the credibility of this orientalist assumption by depicting it as the scene of industry and diligence since the harem inmates efficiently fill their time with dressmaking and embroidery. In doing so, Vambery constructs them as the angels of the mundane harem and bridges the cultural gap between Muslim and Christian British housewives.

In Orientalist literature, the supposedly despotic Emir and his wives in his harem lead a gluttonous and sensual life and they submitted themselves to their senses. Unlike his counterparts, Vambery refrains from reinforcing the image of the harem as a space of gluttony and sensuality. Instead, he highlights the meager expenses of the harem kitchen. He also leaves no doubt that the Emir's tablecloth is not far cry from his common subjects since he partakes in the same staple food that his people afford. Finally, Western travel writers associate The East with unhealthy sweet foods. To give an example, V.S. Naipaul in his *An Area of Darkness* states that "There is the East in the food, the emphasis on sweets, some of which I know from my childhood" (1987, p.786). In contrast to V.S. Naipaul, Vambery undermines gastronomical Orientalism when he

accentuates that seldom does the Emir's tablecloth offer any dainties.

In the same vein, Vambery in his *Sketches of Central Asia* which is based on his journey in Turkistan unsettles the orientalist notion of harem when he touches on the harem of the Emir of Khiva:

The harem here [in Khiva] is different. The number of women is limited. The fairy-like luxuriousness of life in a harem is entirely wanting, strict chastity and modesty pervade it [...]. The present Khan has only two wives although Koran allows four [...]. The Khan treats her wives without severity, and on the whole with tenderness [...]. The rules of modesty require that his wives should pass the greater part of the day in the harem, where comparatively little leisure is lavished upon the embellishment of the toilet. The ladies of harem have very little leisure for idleness since under the custom of the country the greater part of the clothes, carpets, and other stuff for the use of the prince should be prepared by the hand of his wives (1868, pp.95-96).

Once more, the travel writer evacuates the harem from its supposed sensuality, indolence, and dreamlikeness. For Vambery, the Emir's harem does not conjure up the world of imagined geography of *The Arabian Nights* because it is a space characterized by industry, chastity, and domestic bliss rather than violence.

In brazenly orientalist texts like Beckford's *Vathek* Muslim rulers' harems are portrayed as elaborate, sumptuous, and labyrinthine structures. For instance, Vathek's harem in Beckford's novel is interlinked with the four apartments of his palace, and each of them is devoted to a specific sensual delight. The first apartment is called "The Eternal or Unsatiating Banquet" in which the most delicious dishes and beverages are served. The name of the second apartment is "The Temple of Melody or the Nectar of the Soul" wherein the caliph immerses himself in the joys of beautiful music and lyrical poetry. The third part is called "The Delight of the Eyes or the Support of Memory" where the rarities of the world are exhibited for the caliph, and finally, the fourth wing is designated as 'The Palace of Perfume' where the most exquisite perfumes of the earth are available (Beckford, 2013, pp. 15-17). Unlike Beckford, Vambery in his *Sketches of Central Asia* offers an alternative picture of the Khan's harem in Khiva:

The residence of His Majesty of Khiva [...] resembles a poor mud hut like all the other houses in the town, and [...] without any particular luxury to be met with inside, except several large and valuable carpets, a few sofas and round cushions [...]. The number of apartments is very small, and [...] [his residence] is divided into the Harem, (the rooms set apart for the women,) and the Selamdjay, (the reception hall). Nowhere are any signs of splendor perceptible (1868, p.88).

In the above paragraph, by employing situational irony, Vambery effectively demonstrates the discrepancy between mundane reality and the escapist fantasies of the harem woven by Western travelers, poets, and novelists. Instead of animating his audience's orientalist perception, he shatters it when he states that Khan's residence is a lackluster space without any orientalist excitement and adventures: Khan's harem is not the retreat of joys with many cells to accommodate seductive hurries but a simple, mud space attached to his reception hall where he not only receives local politicians but also adjudicates legal disputes. By highlighting the proximity of the harem to the reception halls, not only does Vambery drain the sensational and erotic connotations from the harem but also constructs Khan as a man of state and law, not a promiscuous prince who is ill-fitted to the sphere of statesmanship.

Given Vambery's iconoclastic attitude toward the harem trope, a question may emerge: How will his anti-orientalist stance contribute to the anti-Russian policies in England? Some politicians in England in the nineteenth century have been pro-Russians and advocated their supposed civilizing mission in Central Asia; they do not interpret Russian colonial advance towards Turkistan as a threat to English colonial interests in India and Afghanistan. Instead, they regard Russian imperialism as a benign force that will liberate women by toppling local Emirs and eliminating their harems (Vambery, 1874, p.26). Indeed, Vambery via his positive account of the local Emirs' harems warns the British policymakers that Russians' claims about the inhumanity of local khans and their ill-treatment of women both inside and outside harems are

incorrect. In other words, he encourages the British policymakers to distrust Russians and take their British supporters' words with a pinch of salt. This explains why Vamberry is very unpopular in Tsarist Russia and why his travel book is viewed as an inaccurate picture of their country (Trotter, 1882, p.121).

3.3. Appreciating the Food Culture of Visited Terrain

Vamberry's journey in Turkistan takes place in the Victorian era when British travelers viewed local foods as unhygienic and repulsive (Forman, 2007, p. 64). As a disguised traveler and dervish who is indifferent to the pleasures and delights of the world, Vamberry must be content with the simplest of dishes and ingest local dishes without any complaint, otherwise, he will betray his true identity since he is under suspicion. Despite his initial negative impression, Vamberry's attitude towards native food and drink is not critical but appreciative and accurate. Before departing for Turkistan, Vamberry meets his prospective travel companions in their caravanserai cell in Tehran where they offer him green tea which he accepts. Nevertheless, he describes his experience in an orientalist manner: they have "offered me green tea and I have to go through the torture of drinking without sugar and large Bokhariot bowl of greenish water" (1864, p.18). Here, Vamberry evaluates green tea based on the British gustatory norms: in Britain taking black tea with sugar is the norm. Thus, sipping green tea without sugar for Vamberry is an alien practice and gustatory aberration. The travel writer, accordingly, assumes that his companions are drinking only simple greenish water without any benefits or special effects. In other words, they are drinking a worthless beverage. This is why he ironically states that his travel companions give him "the heartiest reception" (ibid.). His orientalist outlook toward green tea commensurates with his negative depiction of the caravanserai as the den "filled with filth and misery" (p.17). However, he does not sustain his critical position. Traveling with the natives in a caravan provides an opportunity for him to see and experience the world from their worldview, resulting in the revision of his myopic and dogmatic perspective as the following passage illustrates the point:

It [green tea] is nothing more than greenish water, innocent of sugar [...]. Still, human art has discovered no food, has invented no nectar, which is so grateful, so refreshing in the desert, as this unpretending drink. I have still a vivid recollection of its wonder-making effects. As I sipped, the first drops of soft fire filled my veins; a fire which enlivened without intoxicating. The later draughts affect both heart and head; [my] eyes become peculiarly bright and begin to gleam. In such moments I have felt an indescribable rapture and sense of comfort (1868, p. 5).

Thanks to living the life of his travel companions and undergoing their hardship in the caravan going through the arid desert of Turkistan, the exhausted travel writer becomes psychologically receptive to new experiences. Thus, he suddenly gains an illuminating insight into the value and power of green tea to which he has been oblivious so far. According to Nyman: "The long road to the other place changes the subject [that is, the identity of the traveler]" (2009, p. 223); however, it is a matter of degree. Drunk with his new enlightenment and its immense pleasure, the travel writer waxes lyrical about the positive effects of green tea through words that conjure up intense romantic love signaled by 'fire,' 'bright eyes,' 'intoxicating,' and 'gleam'. In other words, he is rapturous because he senses green tea without the rust of misunderstanding. No longer is green tea an insignificant and trivial beverage, no longer is it a torturous drink, but a healthy drink that is restorative and rejuvenating. Here it is not illogical to claim that the travel writer experiences the gustatory epiphany, albeit by extension of meaning. His poetic response brings to mind the words of Emerson who holds that "There is a great deal of poetry and fine sentiment in a chest of tea" (quoted in Amjad, 2007, p. 57). The travel writer supports his favorable response toward green tea by reflecting on the medicinal benefit of green tea from the perspective of his travelees: the residents of Turkistan in the summer "drink green tea which thins the blood and promotes digestion" (1868, p.120). Interestingly, his observation is consistent with the views of Muslim physicians in the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries since they unanimously hold that green tea enhances "digestive working [...] and purifies the blood" (Matthee, 2005, p. 239). It is worth noting that green tea has been popular among nomads and residents of Turkistan (Frembgen, 2017, p. 8); they especially consume it in the summer since it is characterized as 'cold' according to folk medicine (p.14).

In the realm of travel literature, one can compare Vamberry's positive outlook toward tea to that of Kinglake in his journey to Egypt in his *Eothon* in which the travel writer suddenly attests to the power of tea in curing his fever:

I drink deep draughts from a fragrant cup [of tea]. The effect is almost instant. A plenteous sweat burst through my skin [...]. The hot tormenting weight which has been loading my brain is slowly heaved away. The fever is extinguished. I have felt a new buoyancy spirit and unusual activity of the mind. In the morning, I asked myself how I am. I answered "Perfectly well" (1982, p.345).

Vambery's favorable attitude is not solely confined to green tea, the reader of his travelogue will encounter his affirmative reaction towards local foods when he dwells on pilaf (or plov) with interest since he "has lived on it for a long time" (1868, p.118). His enthusiastic description of it displays his sincere desire for his encountered culture since food stands for the visited culture (Forsdick, 2019, p. 245). No doubt, the travel writer is impressed by the taste of the pilaf in Turkistan. This is why Adler and Dalby (1979), Vambery's biographers, maintain that Vambery in London yearns for the pilaf that he has preprepared for himself in Turkistan (p.230). Hence, he decides to share its recipe with his European readership: "I willingly impart to Europeans my knowledge of how it is prepared" (1868, p.118). He reveals his delight when he admires it: "This dish is excellent and indispensable alike in the royal table and the hut of the poorest" (119), and his warm response and emotional involvement in terms of food bring into question Adler's and Dalby's view that Vambery is a detached observer (1979, p. 88). In depicting the pilaf, he does not reveal shallow understanding, but he presents its nuanced picture. Accordingly, Vambery distinguishes it from the ones in Turkey and Iran: "The favorite national dish [in Turkistan] is Palau, also called *Ash* which though related to the pilau of the Persians and the pilaf of the Turks, by far surpasses both these in savor" (1868, p.118). He believes that the origin of Afghan pilaf known as Kabuli is in Turkistan (p.119). Here, by sharing the recipe of pilaf, Vambery approves the food and foodways of his visited destination and acts as a needle that seeks to connect the West and East and encourage his readers to appreciate his encountered food in Turkistan and revise their gustatory prejudice fortified by Victorian travelers who associated Oriental food with dirt and diseases.

Besides tea and pilaf, Vambery favorably comments on the best-known fruit of Turkistan: "No European can form an idea of the sweet taste and aromatic flavor of this delicious fruit. It melts in the mouth and [if it] eaten with bread the most wholesome and refreshing food that nature affords" (p.242). In the above sentence, the traveler's object of desire is the melon for which Turkistan is globally well-known. Local people take it with bread either as a snack or a complete meal in the summer and autumn. Alexander Burnes points to their popularity in this region: "The melon is the choicest fruit of Bokhara. The emperor Baber [who is from Turkistan, in his book] tells that he [has] shed tears over the melon of Toorkistan [Turkistan] which he cuts in India after its conquest [in the sixteenth century] (Vol.1, p.172). Needless to say, the traveler's sojourn in Turkistan and enjoying the hospitality of local people in the course of his journey provide an opportunity for him to savor the melon with bread like the indigenous people. Though silent about the views of local people about the melons, the travel writer is most likely reflecting their viewpoint when he asserts that melons are the healthiest and most refreshing food. Under the influence of prophetic traditions and Islamic medicine, his Muslim travelers undoubtedly have faith in the therapeutic properties of melons. According to Al Ghazali, the Prophet of Islam was the lover of melons and used to take them with bread and dates (Saad & Said, 2011, p.619). It is no wonder that he recommends them for women: "If a woman eats a sweet melon, she will give birth to a handsome and pretty child (Caner, p.163). In the same vein, Avicenna, a well-known Muslim physician, recommends melon pulp since it works as an anti-inflammatory, an antitussive, and an anthelmintic for a variety of diseases (Mavlyanova et al., 2021, p.148). Vambery reveals his sincere 'desire for the Orient' by extolling its pleasant perfume and sweet flavor. It is worth noting that here melons function as a synecdoche for the food culture of his encountered zone. Given Vambery's food representation and encounter, the travel writer represents the positive side of travel writing. According to Huggan, travel writing at its best "attests to the desire to open up the world to engagement between different ideas, cultures, and people" (2014, p.80).

In the end, this question arises: How does Vambery's positive response toward the local people's food culture relate to his anti-Russian sentiment? Through his affirmative food representation and engagement, Vambery suggests that the people of Turkistan are already civilized and possess an intricate culture crystalized in their food and foodways. Thus, the idea of

civilizing the supposed barbarian people of Turkistan by Tsarist Russia in the context of the Great Game is preposterous: "Russians are at a very low degree of civilization and in the refinement of habits are behind those [Muslim] Asiatic races" (Vambery, 1974, p.54). Vambery implies that the British policymakers should support the local people of Turkistan against their foremost Russian enemies so that they can halt their colonial advance and it is an ideal time for England to replace Russia as a colonial power in Turkistan.

5. Conclusion

Departure from orientalist tropes in Arminius Vambery's travelogues about Turkistan finds expression in three ways. Firstly, when Vambery strives to penetrate the jealously guarded Turkistan in the context of the Great Game by masquerading himself as a dervish from Istanbul to collect intelligence about Russian colonial activities in Turkistan, assess the local people's attitude towards the Russians' imminent invasion, and identify markets for British manufactures in thriving markets of Bokhara. Nevertheless, a fellow Afghan traveler and an Afghan ruler pierce into the travel writer's masquerade and inform the caravan leaders and local people about his ulterior motives. Their whistle-blowing results in the drastic curtailment of his imperial gaze and intelligence gathering as well as bringing him under considerable suspicion in Turkistan and Afghanistan.

Another social arena in which Vambery manifests his counter-orientalism is related to the harem. For Said, the harem is the cliché that pervades Orientalist texts (*Orientalism*, 1979, p. 190). Unlike other Western travel writers, Vambery does not resuscitate the trope to eroticize and feed their Oriental fantasies by rendering it as the paradise of voyeurs. He depicts the harems in Turkistan as a mundane space in which the Emirs' wives lead an unpretentious lifestyle, dedicating themselves to their domestic affairs. In doing so, he portrays them as the 'Angels of House' rather than promiscuous and caged slaves. In other words, he evacuates hedonism and lurid fantasies from the harem. The travel writer indebts his iconoclastic perspective to his travelees in Turkistan since they supply him with accurate information in which drama and exaggeration do not run amok. He does not mention his interlocutors' names; nonetheless, he declares that he has heard the description of the harem from residents of Turkistan whose perception of the harem is diametrically different from his Western readership soaked with romantic and erotic fantasies of *The Arabian Nights*.

Thirdly, Vambery brings to the fore her deviation from the rules of Orientalism through his food experience in Turkistan. Unlike travelers in the Victorian era who capitalize on non-European foods to draw a rigid gustatory boundary between themselves and their travelees by associating them with dirt and disease, Vambery responds to them affirmatively. Initially, he is dismissive of the green tea that his traveling companions drink, regarding it as worthless, greenish water. However, in the midst of the Turkistan desert, thanks to the positive effects of physical traveling on the traveler's identity, he suddenly realizes the unique power of green tea. His new realization makes him rapturous and excited. His unanticipated enlightenment is not dissimilar to the gustatory epiphany. As a result of this positive response, he refers to the benefits of green tea from the perspective of his travelees or local people. Moreover, if food stands for the visited culture, then Vambery's favorable and nuanced reaction to Pilaf is equal to the acknowledgment of the food culture of Turkistan. This explains why he introduces their recipes to his Western readership, illustrating his bona fide desire to connect two different cultures. Besides his positive response toward green tea and pilaf, Vambery praises the melons of Turkistan as well bespeaking his intense desire for the Orient, to borrow Behdad's words. His attraction towards and enjoyment of food and fruit in Turkistan points to the fact that the encountered culture is not an inert space, but a complex world that can influence the identity of the travel writer provided that the traveling subject demonstrates 'the desire for the Orient' to borrow Behdad.

REFERENCES

- Alder, L. & Dalby, R. (1979). *The Dervish of Windsor Castle*. London: Bachman & Turner Ltd.
- Amjad, H. (2007). *Elixir of Life: Meditations Over a Cup of Tea*. New York: Lulu.
- Beckford, W. (2013). *Vathek*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Behdad, A. (1999). *Belated Travelers: Orientalism in the Age of Colonial Dissolution*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- . (1990). Orientalist Desire, Desire for the Orient. *French Forum*, 15.1,37-51. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/i40024012>.
- Burton, R. F. (1874). *Personal Narrative of Pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina*. (Vol. I). Leipzig: Bernahard Tauchnlts, n.d.
- Caner, J. (2003). *The Crescent and the Cradle: The Mother and Child in Islam*. In *The World of Islam through the Eyes of Women: Voices behind Veil*, (pp. 157-171). The U.S.: Kregel Publications.
- Foster, S. (2004). Colonialism and Gender in the East: Representations of Harem in the Writings of Women Travelers. *The Year Book of English Studies*, 34,6-17, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09518968908569575>.
- Forman, R. G. (2007). *Eating out East: Representing Chinese Food in Victorian Travel Literature and Journalism*. In *A Century of Travels in China: Critical Essays on Travel Writing from the 1840s to the 1940s*, (pp. 63-73). Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press.
- Forsdick, C. (2019). *Taste*. In *Keywords for Travel for Travel Studies*, (pp.244-246). London & New York: Anthem Press.
- Foster, S., & Mills, S. (2002). *Introduction*. In *An Anthology of Women's Travel Writing*, (pp.1-12). Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Frembgen, J.W. (2017). *A Thousand Cups of Tea*. Karachi: Oxford University Press.
- Huggan, G. (2014). A Beginning, Two Ends, and a Thickened Middle Journeys in Afghanistan from Byron to Hosseini. *Journeys*, 15.1, 72-89. <https://doi.org/10.3167/jys.2014.150104>.
- Kinglake, A. W. (1982). *Eothen or Traces of Travel Brought Home from the East*. London: Century Publishing Company.
- Ghose, I. (1998). *Women Travelers in Colonial India: The Power of the Female Gaze*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- The Glorious Quran*. (2003). (Tran. Pickthall, M. M.). New York: Tahrike Trsile Quran.
- MacGahan, J.A. (1874). *Campaigning on the Oxus, and the Fall of Khiva*. New York: Harper & Bros.
- Mandler, D. (2016). *Arminius Vambéry and the British Empire: Between East and West*. Lanham, Boulder, New York, London: Lexington Book
- . (2007). Introduction to Arminius Vambéry. *Shofar: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Jewish Studies*, 25.3,1-15. <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/214150/pdf>.
- . (2011). *Vambéry, Victorian Culture, and Stoker's Dracula*. In *Comparative Hungarian Cultural Studies*, (pp. 47-58). West Lafayette: Purdue University Press.
- Mathee, Rudi. (2005). *The Pursuit of Pleasure: Drugs and Stimulants in Iranian History 1500-1900*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Mavlyanova, R.F., Eisenman, S.W., & Zaurov, D.E. (2021). *Melons of Central Asia*. In *Natural Products of Silk Road Plants*, (pp.133-151). Borca Rotan: CRC Press.
- Melman, B. (1989). Desexualizing the Orient: The Harem in English Writing by Women, 1763-1914. *Mediterranean Historical Review*, 4.2,301-339. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09518968908569575>.
- Naipaul, V.S. (1982). *Among the Believers: An Islamic Journey*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Nyman, J. (2009). *Home, Identity, and Mobility in Contemporary Diasporic Fiction*. Amsterdam: Rodopi.
- Pratt, M. (2008). *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*. London & New York: Routledge.
- Saad, B. & Said, O. (2011). *Greco-Arab and Islamic Herbal Medicine: Traditional System, Ethics, Safety, Efficacy, and Regulatory Issues*. New Jersey: Wiley.
- Spurr, D. (1993). *The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing, and Imperial Administration*. Durham: Duke University Press.

- Said, E. (1979). *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Trotter, J.M. (1882). *Western Turkestan: An Account of the Statistics, Topography, and Tribes of the Russian Territory and the Independent Native States in Western Turkestan*. Calcutta: Office of the Superintendent of Government of India.
- Vambery, A. (1874). *Central Asia and the Anglo-Russian Frontier Question: A Series of Political Papers*. London: Smith, Elder & Co.
- . (1868). *Sketches of Central Asia*. Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott & Co.
- . (1864). *Travels in Central Asia*. London: John Murray, Albemarle Street.
- . (1904). *The Story of my Struggles: The Memoir of Arminius Vambery*. New York: E.P. Dutton Company.
- Withers, C. W.J. (2021). Disguise-Trust and Truth in Travel Writing. *Terrae Incognitae*, 53.1, 48-64. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00822884.2021.1891369>.