ARABIC LITERATURE – Postclassical Period
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Classical Poetry : Qasidah (Ode)

The *"Hanging Odes",* the Dichotomy of Chaste and Not-So-Chaste Love, Wine-Poetry, Mystical Poetry, and other uses of the classical ode (*qasidah*)

The pre-Islamic Ode. The pre-Islamic poet `Antarah ibn Shaddad wrote, "Have the poets left a song unsung?" Already in the pre-Islamic period, Arabic poetry had a long and venerable tradition. The most prestigious art form of the Arabs, it served many roles in society. The earliest recorded sources reveal that the most valued form of Arabic poetry was the *qasidah* or ode, a form that is still in use today, having enjoyed a life of over fifteen centuries. The *qasidah* varied in length from about 30 to 100 lines, adopted monorhyme, and consisted of individual verses (*bayt*) made up of two hemistichs (*misra`*), with a caesura in the middle.  By convention, the first hemistich in the first verse of the poem also rhymed with the second hemistich—the same monorhyme—in an effect termed *tasri`*. Critics identified sixteen distinct meters, all quantitative, involving set patterns of long and short syllables like the meters of Greek, Latin, and Sanskrit poetry. The *qasidah* was typically tripartite, beginning with an amatory prelude (*nasib*), which portrayed the poet traveling in the desert and coming across the abandoned campsite of a former love; the intensity of the emotion evoked by the traces or ruins (*atlal*) of his loved cause him to compose a poem. The middle section of the poem, the journey (*rahil*), described the hardships the poet went through in order to reach the patron or the audience. The third part presented the main message (*gharad*) of the *qasidah*, often a panegyric addressed to a patron. Also common, but less touted than the *qasidah* form, were short poems termed *qit`ah* "pieces"that adopted the same formal features but had fewer verses. Yet another form of poetry, lower down on the hierarchy of cultural value, was *rajaz*, which adopted simpler meters and was composed of rhyming hemistichs with the rhyme scheme *aa bb cc dd …* . The *qasidah* form was divided into traditional sub-types termed *gharad*, *aghrad* "purpose, theme" sanctioned by past usage and the social function that the poetry served: *madh* (praise, encomium), *hija'* (satire, lampoon), *fakhr* (boasting, praise of oneself or of one's tribe), *ritha'* (elegy). Other categories included hunting poetry, wine poetry, and *wasf* (description, of horses, camels, rain, nature, and so on). The poet played an important social role in the Arab tribe of the pre-Islamic period, preserving its cultural heritage, touting its past and present glories, and defending its reputation. Ibn Rashiq al-Qayrawani reports that the pre-Islamic Arabs did not celebrate birthdays, but would congratulate a tribe when they acquired a new poet. A good poet was a boon for the tribe because he could win a battle merely by embarrassing their opponents with expert invective.

Key Examples of the Classical Ode. Raymond Farrin's work *Abundance from the Desert* does an admirable job of introducing the main types and uses of the *qasidah* in pre-modern Arabic literature, giving an accessible description of some of the most famous poems in Arabic without watering down the material. His book contains thirteen chapters, each focusing on a different poet from the sixth century until the thirteenth century and providing a detailed analysis of one long poem. The exceptional chapter in terms of the poetic form discussed is that which is devoted to Ibn Quzman, who wrote poetry of a new form, the *zajal*, a strophic poem couched in the vernacular language. The figures Farrin includes are Imru' al-Qays (d. ca. 545), Labid (d. 661), Ta'abbata Sharran (d. ca. 540), al-Khansa' (d. ca. 646), Jamil (d. 701), Jarir (d. 728) and Farazdaq (d. 730), Abu Nuwas (d. 814), Abu

Tammam (d. 845), al-Mutanabbi (d. 965), Ibn Zaydun (d. 1070), Ibn Quzman (d. 1160), Ibn al-Farid (d. 1235), and Baha' al-Din Zuhayr (d. 1258).

The Suspended Odes: The *Mu`allaqat* or "Suspended Odes" are to Arabic literature what Shakespeare's plays are to English literature. Seven poems of considerable length, by the poets are Imru' al-Qays, Tarafah, Zuhayr, Labid, `Antara ibn Shaddad, `Amr ibn Kulthum, and Harith ibn Hilliza, they date from the century before the advent of Islam in 622 and all won the poetry contest at the Market of `Ukaz, an annual fair held in central Arabia in the pre-Islamic period. Hammad the Rhapsodist is said to have compiled them in the 8ᵗʰ century, and each is referred to as "the *mu`allaqah* of So-and So". We will read two of these famous poems, the *Mu`allaqah*s of Imru's al-Qays and Labid. Imru' al-Qays, whose poem, the earliest of the seven, dates to the mid-sixth century, was a member of the royal house of the tribe of Kindah which lost power when his ancestor Harith ibn `Amr died in 529. He led the life of a refugee, seeking an opportunity for revenge after his father Hujr was killed by the Banu Asad tribe, and accounts report that he died after seeking military support at the Byzantine court. Labid is the latest of the *Mu`allaqah* poets; he died in 661 after converting to Islam.

Other uses of the *qasidah*. The *su`luk* "bandit" was the punk rocker of pre-Islamic Arabia, and the poetry of the *sa`alik* resembles the songs of modern gangster rappers, celebrating their rejection of societal norms, violence, and the embracement of opposing the ideals of their society. The most famous *su`luk*, known by the epithet Ta'abbata Sharran "He who carries evil under his arm," is featured in chapter two of Farrin's work. Al-Khansa' is the most famous female poet in Arabic. The exacting literary critic Bashshar ibn Burd (d. 784) is held to have commented that in order to be a great poet in Arabic, one must be a "stallion" (*fahl*)—that is, the pinnacle of manliness. When someone remonstrated, "Then what about al-Khansa'?" he replied, "She had *four* testicles!"—meaning that her verse was manlier than that of the greatest male poets. This chapter presents her elegies for her brother Sakhr. Women had a social obligation to mourn for male relatives who died or were killed in battle, and the elegy was a form in which women excelled. Jarir and Farazdaq, the archetypal practitioners of *hija'* "satire, lampoon", carried on a poetic duel for decades in the early eighth century that has been preserved in *al-Naqa'id*. Jamil developed the *ghazal*, a love poem, and is the chief representative of the `Udhri poets, who, after the manner of the Banu `Udhrah tribe, describe their love in chaste, romantic terms rather than stressing physical, sensual, and sexual aspects of love. Jamil and his beloved Buthaynah become one in a series of famous pairs of lovers immortalized in verse, along with Majnun and Layla, and others, corresponding to Romeo and Juliet in Western traditions. Abu Nuwas adopted a parodic approach to the tradition, and in a revolt against the `udhri poetry focused on "licentiousness" (*mujun*), including sex (with both men and women), wine, and drunken revelry. After dealing with some of the most prominent poets of the medieval period, Abu Tammam (9ᵗʰ c., Iraq), al-Mutanabbi (10ᵗʰ c., Iraq and Syria), and Ibn Zaydun (al-Andalus, 11ᵗʰ c.), Farrin turns to Ibn Quzman, the acknowledged expert of the *zajal* form, ending with the well-known mystical poetry of Ibn al-Farid, and Baha' al-Din Zuhayr's descriptive poetry about contemporary Egypt in the thirteenth century.

Questions

How does the form of the *qasidah* constrain the poet?

Is there a particular rhetorical function associated with the tripartite structure of the ode? What is the logic behind it, and what ideas does it convey?

Compare and contrast any two poets addressed in Farrin's book.

What images appear odd or bizarre to you, and how should you go about interpreting them?

What effect did the transition from a primarily oral tradition to a primarily written one probably have on Arabic poetry?

How did Arabic poetry change over time? Which elements were stable, and which were not?

Compare and contrast the *zajal* and the *qasidah*.

<u>Reading</u>

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The Praise Poems and Satires of al-Mutanabbi

Al-Mutanabbi. Al-Mutanabbi (915-965) is acclaimed by many as the leading Arab poet of all time. He is famed for his deceptively simple style called *al-sahl al-mumtani* "easy but unattainable", his economy of expression, his skilful manipulation of the traditional conventions of pre-Islamic poetry, his elegant hyperbole, and his ability to produce eminently quotable individual verses, which even in his own day became proverbial expressions. Equally renowned for his tremendous ego and pride in the Arab tribal ideals of bravery and generosity, he not only praised his patrons for having these qualities but also cultivated a heroic image of himself as a great warrior poet. In fact, this image is said to have caused al-Mutanabbi's death when, reminded by his son or servant of his martial poetic claims about his own prowess in battle, he turned to face Bedouin attackers rather than fled to safety.

A youthful prophet. Al-Mutanabbi, whose name was Abu al-Tayyib Ahmad b. al-Ḥusayn al-Ju`fī, was born into a quite humble Shiite family in Kufa in southern Iraq in 915; his father was apparently a water-carrier. He was a child prodigy with a phenomenal memory and ability to produce poetry. One day when he was at a bookseller's shop, a man came in to sell a copy of a treatise by al-Asma`i, the famous philologist. While the shop owner was busy negotiating a suitable price, al-Mutanabbi memorized the 30-page treatise. The bookseller was so impressed that he bought the book and gave it to the youth as a present. Part of al-Mutanabbi's poetic skill is said to derive from his experiences living for several years with the Banu Kalb tribe in the Syrian Desert after disturbances in Kufa caused his family to flee the city. Beyond this, little is known of his youth and education, other than that he studied under a certain Abu al-Fadl in Kufa. His mother died when he was young, and his father and his grandmother raised him. By the age of fourteen, already a skilled poet, he went to Baghdad with his father and presented an encomium to a Shiite notable. He subsequently left Iraq for Syria, where the large number of governors and local rulers presented opportunities for ambitious poets. His career took a bizarre twist when, in 934, he claimed to be a prophet and produced a sacred text of revelations that followed Qur'anic style and contained 114 chapters termed `*ibrah* "lesson, warning", parallel to the Qur'an's 114 *surah*s. He gathered the support of Arab tribes in the vicinity of Latakia in northern Syria and led a series of revolts. He was eventually captured and imprisoned in 934-36 but later released on condition that he recant his heretical claims. It is this episode that earned him the *nom-de-plume* al-Mutanabbi, literally "the would-be prophet".

The search for a patron. Al-Mutanabbi engaged in what the medieval critics termed *al-takassub bi'sh-shi`r* "earning a living through poetry." By this point in Islamic history, the tenth century, the Abbasid Caliphs, centered in Baghdad, had lost direct control of most of the Empire; in case after case, the governors of outlying provinces had established themselves as hereditary monarchs of their territories. Smaller centers of power proliferated, in a situation resembling that of the city-states of renaissance Italy, or the petty kingdoms of al-Andalus following the fall of the Umayyad dynasty. Al-Mutanabbi sought his fortune by travelling throughout Iraq and Syria in search of a patron who would reward him abundantly for highly crafted encomia. He was no ordinary poet, however, and was not satisfied with purses of gold coins. He also expected to be treated with tremendous respect and to be rewarded in accordance with his conception of himself as a great and dignified hero; it appears that his ultimate goal was to be made governor of a territory. For a time, he found his ideal patron in Sayf al-Dawlah (945-967), an Arab of the Hamdan tribe who ruled northern Syria from his capital at Aleppo and engaged in constant warfare with the increasingly belligerent Byzantines to the north. This satisfied al-Mutanabbi's conception of a worthy patron, for he was a racial elitist, considering Arabs superior to others, finding it a disgrace for Arabs to be ruled by non-Arabs, and exalting military

prowess. He stayed at the court of Sayf al-Dawlah from 948 until 957 and wrote many of his best poems there. Times were not always idyllic, though, because, perhaps as a consequence of his colossal ego, al-Mutanabbi was continually getting into quarrels with the other poets and scholars at court, including Abu Firas al-Hamdani (d. 968), an excellent poet who was also Sayf al-Dawlah's cousin.

Later years. After a falling out with Sayf al-Dawlah, al-Mutanabbi left Syria for Egypt, attaching himself to the court of the Ikhshidids (935-969) in Fustat (Old Cairo). The young Ikhshidid ruler was dominated by the regent Kafur (d. 969), a black eunuch who had been influential in the court of the Muhammad ibn Tughj, the Turkish governor who had founded the dynasty and died in 946. Al-Mutanabbi wrote a number of panegyrics of Kafur, but soon had a falling out with him, accusing the regent of making empty promises and being a stingy ingrate. Upon leaving Egypt in 960, he penned several poems of invective against Kafur that are the most memorable lampoons in the history of Arabic literature. Al-Mutanabbi eventually returned to Iraq. In 965, he accepted an invitation by the Buwayhid vizier Ibn al-`Amid (d. 970) to Arrajan and stayed there for three months, after which he traveled to the court of the Buwayhid Sultan `Adud al-Dawlah in Shiraz, where he was received with great honor. After returning to Iraq, he was killed while on the way from Wasit in southern Iraq to Baghdad after being ambushed by Bedouin raiders under Fatik ibn Abi al-Jahl, the uncle of Dabba ibn Yazid, whom he had satirized a year earlier.

Commentary on his work. Al-Mutanabbi's large *diwan* has not been translated. It was the subject of a number of learned medieval commentaries, the best of which is that of al-Wahidi (d. 1076), as well as more specialized treatises, including critiques by detractors who pointed out al-Mutanabbi's flouting of convention and his unacknowledged borrowings from other poets. Arberry's translation includes many of his most famous poems.

Read Arberry's translation, think about the following questions, and write answers to two.

Compare and contrast any of al-Mutanabbi's poems with the pre-Islamic and early Islamic poems discussed in Week 2.

Analyze one of al-Mutanabbi's panegyrics in detail.

Analyze one of al-Mutanabbi's lampoons or satires in detail.

What do panegyrics and satires reveal about Arab cultural values? Is there any distance between general cultural values and the values idealized in particular literary genres? How are they related?

What does the poet say or imply about himself when he is praising, insulting, or lamenting the loss of others? What persona does the poet create for himself?

How does al-Mutanabbi play with the conventions of the ode? How does he follow, extend, reshape, or violate them?

What features of his poems contribute to their rhetorical power?

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Maqamat

The parodic mode in Arabic literature. Abdel-Fattah Kilito has called for a more concentrated study of *hazl* "folly" as opposed to *jidd* "earnest" in the history of Arabic literature. This plea is based on recognition of the conservative nature of Arabic literary criticism and its focus on normative pious and ethical values. While the tendency in Arabic literature to uphold and promulgate standard Arab and Islamic values is certainly strong, mockery of central cultural and religious icons or their portrayal in less-than-serious light also abound. As L.E. Goodman has remarked, "Just as it is false to say that there can be no Christian tragedy …, so it is false to suppose that there is no Islamic farce, or parody, or satire." For example, through the comical figure of the *nahwi* or grammar expert appears in anecdotes such as those of `Alqamah, a historical figure who is portrayed as addressing illiterate passers-by, common laborers, or donkey-drivers with obscure, archaic, and fully inflected expressions, the sanctity, beauty, clarity, and above all utility of the classical Arabic language is thoroughly mocked if not fundamentally undermined. Just as the sexual exploits of medieval monks have featured prominently in European literature, so too are outwardly pious Muslim *shaykh*s associated with pederasty and other vices in Arabic literary texts. The tendency to parody various established forms of Islamic religious and high literary discourse may also be seen in the genre of the *Maqamat*, invented by Badi` al-Zaman al-Hamadhani (d. 398/1008) in the late tenth century.

The *Maqamat*, a new genre. *Maqamat* are collections of episodic texts couched in *saj`* or rhyming and rhythmical prose. In their classical form, they feature two main characters: a rogue or trickster—Abu al-Fath al-Iskandari in al-Hamadhani's work—who uses his eloquence and ability to disguise himself to beg for money in various artful ways, and a naïve dilettante narrator—`Isa ibn Hisham in Hamadhani's work—who is easily impressed by evidence of learning and is consistently duped by the trickster. The episode follows a fairly consistent plot: the narrator arrives in a town and witnesses the trickster, who is disguised and whom he does not recognize, engaging in a performance in front of an audience. The members of the audience and the narrator give him money, either as charity or as a reward or token of appreciation for his performance. Then the narrator realizes that the performer is in fact the same trickster who has duped him before in other cities in the course of his travels. He accosts the trickster and rebukes him, and the trickster justifies his actions, not very convincingly, by claiming that tough times require extraordinary measures or by making other similar excuses.

Influence of the *Maqamat*. The genre has been one of the most distinctive and successful of Arabic literature, spanning a millennium and including hundreds of individual collections. The *Maqamat* also inspired imitations in Persian, Syriac, and Hebrew. It was in Hebrew literature that the *maqamat* genre exerted its greatest influence, producing a flourishing Hebrew genre in its own right. Yahudah al-Harizi (d. 1225) produced a fascinating translation of al-Hariri's collection into Hebrew, and then wrote his own collection of *mahberot*, the Hebrew equivalent of *maqamat*. The result, his famous *Sefer Tahkemoni* (1218-20), counts as one of medieval Hebrew literature's chief masterpieces. Immanuel of Rome (1261-1335) also composed a collection of *Mahberot* that won a place of high esteem in medieval Hebrew literature, and the genre boasts dozens of other important examples.

Not just verbal artistry. While the comic nature of the *Maqamat* has been recognized, standard interpretations have emphasized their verbal artistry and ignored their imitative and satirical references to Islamic religious discourse. The *Maqamat* of al-Hariri (d. 1122), al-Hamadhani's (d. 1008) most famous imitator, have been more assiduously studied in the Arabic literary tradition, as the great number of commentaries devoted to that collection, including the famous commentary of al-Sharishi (d. 1222), indicates. Al-Hariri's *Maqamat*

have acquired an important place in the study of rhetoric, serving primarily as an example of high belle-lettristic style, and this has colored perception of the *maqamah* genre as a whole. Later scholars' heightened concern with grammar, rhetorical figures, and obscure vocabulary has drawn attention away from the parodic intent of both al-Hamadhani's and al-Hariri's *Maqamat*, which, though occasionally recognized, has not been sufficiently examined or methodically set forth. *Maqamat* came to be seen as textbooks for aspiring rhetoricians and court secretaries, so that Ibn al-Tiqtaqa (fl. 13th c.) opined that *maqamat* are good only as an introduction to the various types of prose and poetic writing and as part of training in epistolary composition, and the modern Egyptian scholar Shawqi Dayf claimed that one of the main purposes behind the *maqamat* was to teach recondite vocabulary to the youth. We will read Prendergast's translation of al-Hamadhani's Maqamat, focusing on the ideological content of the episodes and the parodic elements of the text, while still appreciating his verbal artistry.

Questions

Who are the two main characters? What information do their names reveal? What are their salient characteristics?

What is the typical pattern of a *maqamah*'s plot? What are the distinct steps followed? How do the characters interact?

Can you think of any other examples in literature in which set characters repeatedly interact in a similar fashion?

Is the author on the side of the narrator or the rogue? What is the evidence of this?

What messages do the *maqamat* convey about language and how it can be used?

Is the setting of each *maqamah* relevant or important, or is the point merely to change each time? How do the *maqamat* refer to Christians? How do they refer to Shiites?

Analyze one *maqamah* in detail. Compare and contrast it with other episodes in the collection. What is distinctive about the place, themes, or issues treated in this episode?

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Adab Literature : Al-Jahiz

Virtues, Vices, Ideals, and Manners in Medieval Arab Society

Generosity and stinginess in Arab culture. If generosity and hospitality are the greatest virtues in Arab culture, then avarice and stinginess are the most despicable vices. Many modern Arab nations have genres of jokes devoted to the stingy habits of some particular region: in Egypt, the town of Damietta on the Mediterranean coast, in Morocco, the southern region of Souss, in Iraq, the northern city of Mosul, and so on. They all poke fun at the lack of hospitality show by these minority groups, thereby stressing the idea that "normal" or "ideal" Egyptians, Moroccans, or Iraqis are by nature generous and hospitable. Arabic literature abounds with legendary acts of generosity and also with descriptions of the behavior of champion misers, cheapskates, and freeloaders. A generous man is still referred to as "a Hatim" and his deeds *karam Hatimi* "Hatim-like generosity" after Hatim al-Ta'i, a legendary member of the tribe of Tayy who was famed for his magnanimity. The story is told that king of Persia, having heard that Hatim owned a fabulous stallion, sent an envoy to request the steed, knowing that Hatim's generous nature would make it impossible for him to refuse the request. The envoy made the long journey to Hatim's territory, arriving unexpectedly at night, when Hatim's liberality had depleted his livestock and stores, making it difficult for him to show the envoy the proper hospitality. Nevertheless, he prepared a feast for his guest and his entourage. After finishing the meal and engaging in polite conversation for some time, the envoy broached the purpose of his mission, revealing that the king had asked for Hatim's prize stallion.   Hatim replied that he would not ordinarily refuse the king's request, but that the king's envoy had just eaten the stallion. Hatim is not alone, however; other anecdotes depict great acts of generosity by `Ali ibn Abi Talib, the Prophet's son-in-law and cousin, al-Hasan, the Prophet's grandson, and others.

Comic literature on stinginess. On the other end of the spectrum, Arabic literature includes numerous anecdotes and entire works that highlight great feats of stinginess. Al-Khatib al-Baghdadi (d. 1071), a conservative preacher, jurist, and hadith expert, wrote a fascinating work on the exploits of freeloaders and party-crashers. By far the most famous work of this type, however, is *The Book of Misers* by al-Jahiz. In this book, the material for which must have derived from popular lore as much as from earlier literature, the main group targeted for criticism on account of their stinginess are Persians, so that one must see it as part of the broader anti-Persian, pro-Arab polemic that became prevalent in the ninth century as part of the *shu`ubiyyah* debate, which set Persian cultural chauvinists against their Arab counterparts. Among the highly stingy Persians, the recognized champions of stinginess are the inhabitants of Marv, northeast of Mashhad in what is now Turkmenistan.

Rules of etiquette. Al-Jahiz's work, however, reveals much more that the prejudices of Arabs against Persians, or ingenious methods for saving every last drop of lamp oil, getting free food, or preventing one's guests from eating too much. It also reveals the complex system of understood rights and obligations involved in the Arab system of hospitality, as well as the many rules of etiquette and proper behavior to be observed at dinner parties and other occasions. Al-Jahiz's keen observation and satirical talent make this comic work extremely enjoyable.

Al-Jahiz. Al-Jahiz, meaning "bug-eyed," was the nickname of Abu `Uthman `Amr ibn Bahr, a descendant of East African slaves. Born in Basra in 781, he studied with leading philologists and theologians in his native town, eventually becoming a scholar of some repute. His fame soared in 816 when he relocated to Baghdad, where he remained a prominent writer until his death in 868. Al-Jahiz is arguably the greatest prose writer of

classical Arabic literature. Though a major theologian as well, he was a literary man at heart who took full advantage of the explosion in publishing that followed the importation of pulp-paper technology from China in the late eighth century. By the beginning of the ninth century, Baghdad was a thriving center of paper production, the booksellers' quarter boasted over one hundred bookshops, and scholars regularly wrote massive works of ten, twenty, thirty or more volumes. As the reading public expanded rapidly, so did the market for works of general interest. Al-Jahiz wrote works for specific patrons, and even boasts of accumulating a fortune in this manner, but he also authored anthologies and short treatises that would bring him income by appealing to a wide audience, and *The Book of Misers* was one of these, like his *Book on Slave-girls*. Jahiz' writing is notable for its elegant, balanced phrases that exhibit artful parallelism and contrast but nevertheless avoid rhyme; his consummate skill at dialectic, which allows him to argue for and against many points so convincingly that one cannot determine his actual view; and his numerous and extensive digressions, which take on a life of their own and often become more interesting than the main train of thought to from which they branch.

A variety of works. Jahiz wrote a number of works on theology, many drawing on those of his teacher al-Nazzam (d. ca. 835), a leading theologian of the Mu`tazili school, whose members applied concepts derived from Greek logic and philosophy to Islamic theology and were later denounced for failing to give scripture the appropriate weight and relying to heavily on human reason. Many of al-Jahiz's theological texts have been lost as a result of the ideological shift away from Mu`tazilism, though some fragments are preserved in later works. Extant works and fragments include a work on the merits of dogmatic theology, a refutation of Christianity, a work on epistemology, a manual of legal interpretation, a treatise on the authentication of hadith reports, another on the createdness of the Qur'an, a refutation of the Shiite view that `Ali deserved to be the first Caliph after the Prophet, and works on prophecy. Perhaps his greatest work—also influenced by Mu`tazili theology—is his *Zoology* (*Kitab al-hayawan*), which was clearly drew on Greek models and Aristotle's *Zoology* in particular but which includes digressions on a bewildering variety of topics. Many of his books debate questions: the superiority of blacks to whites, the relative merits of having sex with men or women, the merits and defects of state functionaries, and so on. Many shorter treatises focused on the most various topics, including wine, poetry, and theological doctrines. He also wrote works in support of the Abbasids and argued for the superiority of Arab culture over others. *Elegance of Expression and Clarity of Exposition* (*Kitab al-Bayan wa'l-Tabyin*) is a large rhetorical work in which he argues, by compiling hundreds of example texts and anecdotes, that Arabs are exceptionally gifted in rhetoric and poetry.

Questions

Why, and for whom, did al-Jahiz write *The Book of Misers*?

Where do you think Sahl b. Harun's epistle ends?

In light of al-Jahiz's politics (and the politics of Abbasid Iraq in general), why might he have been inclined to ridicule Khurasanis?

What does al-Jahiz mean when he asserts that certain grammatical inflections are out of place in these stories (p. 32)?

List and describe all the types of beggars, rogues, and misers that al-Jahiz mentions.

Why do you think al-Jahiz included the section devoted to a typology of eaters?

What do you learn about 9th century table etiquette from 'The Tale of Muhammad ibn Abi 'l-Mu'ammal?'

Why would the three brothers (p. 98) say that Abu Bakr, Umar, and 'A'isha deviated from the *Sunnah*?

At this point, what would you say was the diet of the average Basran?

If wine is forbidden in Islam, why are so many people getting drunk in these stories?

What is the major argument of Abu al-'As al-Thaqafi's epistle? What are his sources (on what does he base his arguments)?

What is the major argument of Ibn al-Taw'am's epistle? What are his sources (on what does he base his arguments)?

From context, can you tell why and from whom one would have received a stipend in Abbasid Iraq?

List all the kinds of meals al-Jahiz talks about (with definitions).

Why do you think al-Jahiz included the section about hunger and the Bedouin?

How does the section of poetry at the end of the book seem to be organized?

Thinking back over the entire book, how are women portrayed?

Reading

Al-Jahiz, *The Book of Misers*.

Further Reading

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Al-Jahiz. *Sobriety and Mirth: A Selection of the Shorter Writings of al-Jahiz.* Trans.   Jim Colville. New York: Kegan Paul, 2002.

Malti-Douglas, Fedwa. *The Structures of Avarice: The Bukhala' in Medieval Arabic Literature*. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1985.

The Theory of Love in Arabic Love Poetry

Ibn Hazm. Ibn Hazm was the name of a prominent family of Cordoba; the famous Ibn Hazm was Abu Muhammad Ali ibn Ahmad ibn Sa`id ibn Hazm, who was born in 994 and died in 1064. Both his father and grandfather held positions under the Umayyad Caliph Hisham II (976-1008), and Ibn Hazm grew up among wealthy and powerful circles attached to the Umayyad court in Cordoba, their capital. He himself served under several of the Umayyad Caliphs, including the last one, Hisham III (1026-31). After a prolonged civil war in 1008-1031, he witnessed the collapse of the Umayyad state and its fragmentation into the petty kingdoms of the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Having suffered imprisonment several times for his support of the Umayyads, he subsequently retreated to his family estate and devoted himself to writing.

Works. Ibn Hazm wrote on a variety of topics, including law, theology, logic, grammar, and literature. Although he was educated according to the Maliki school of Islamic law, later in life he adopted the methods of the Zahiri legal school, which he rescued from near-oblivion. Zahirism had been founded by Dawud ibn Khalaf al-Isfahani (d. 884) in Baghdad in the mid-ninth century. The school was propagated after Dawud's death by his son Abu Bakr Muhammad (d. 910) and other disciples, who spread the school beyond the confines of Iraq, to Syria and Egypt. By the latter half of the eleventh century, Abu Ishaq al-Shirazi (d. 1083) reports that the school was defunct in Baghdad and survived only in Shiraz. Ibn Hazm's work revived the school in the Islamic West, where it apparently survived for several generations after his death. Ibn Hazm's largest extant work is *al-Muhalla*, a massive compendium of law based on Zahiri principles. He also wrote *al-Ihkam fi usul al-ahkam*, a substantial work on legal theory and interpretation, as well as a number of shorter treatises on matters of legal interpretation, such as the points of law subject to consensus (*ijma`*) and the invalidity of analogy (*qiyas*) as a method of legal interpretation. In theology, he wrote a major doxography or heresiography, *al-Fisal fi al-milal wa'l-nihal*, in which he reveals himself to be a well-informed bigot, highly critical of Jews, Christians, Shiites, and other Islamic sectarians. Other works include an essay on ethics, a taxonomy of the learned disciplines, and a work on logic.

Ibn Hazm's work on lover theory. Ibn Hazm's literary side is most apparent in his work on love theory, *The Neck-ring of the Dove*, which shows him to be sensitive, refined, insightful, frank, and understanding of the foibles of his fellow man. This book, which he wrote after his second or third imprisonment, in 1022 or 1027, belongs to a genre of works devoted to the theory of love and discussing its causes, varieties, the situations to which it gives rise, and the emotional states experienced by the lover. They include Ibn Dawud's (d. 910), *Kitab al-Zahrah* (The Book of the Flower), al-Sarraj al-Qari' al-Baghdadi's (d. 1106) *Masari` al-`ushshaq* (Calamities of Lovers), al-Shayzari's (fl. 12th c.) *Rawdat al-qulub wa-nuzhat al-muhibb wa'l-mahbub* (The Garden of Hearts and the Promenade of Lover and Beloved), Ibn al-Jawzi's (d. 1200) *Dhamm al-hawa* (Censure of Passion), Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah's (d. 1350) *Rawdat al-muhibbin wa-nuzhat al-mushtaqin* (The Garden of Lovers and the Promenade of Those Who Yearn), Ibn Abi Hajalah's (d. 1375) *Diwan al-sababah* (Collected Poems on Infatuation), Mughulta'i's (d. 1361) *al-Wadih al-mubin fiman ustushhida min al-muhibbin* (Plain and Clear Guide to Lovers Who Have Died as Martyrs), and Dawud ibn Umar al-Antaki's (d. 1599) *Tazyin al-Aswaq bi-tafsil al-ashwaq* (Embellishment of 'The Markets' by Explaining Passions in Detail).

Works on sex. Works on love theory are concerned with the emotional and psychological aspects of being in love and are not to be confused with sex or marriage manuals, which formed a distinct genre focusing on physical and practical matters and in some cases including erotic or pornographic tales, even though these latter works also discuss love.

They include Muhammad ibn Ahmad al-Tijani's (d. ca. 1311) *Tuhfat al-ʿarus wa-mutʿat al-nufus* (Gift of the Bride and Delight of the Soul); al-Suyuti's (d. 1505) *al-Idah fi ʿilm al-nikah* (The Clarification, on the Science of Sex); Ahmad ibn Sulayman Ibn Kamal Pasha's (d. 1534) *Rujuʿ al-shaykh ila sibah fi al-quwwah ʿala al-bah* (The Old Man's Rejuvenation, on Gathering One's Strength for Sex); and others. The most accessible is Muhammad ibn Muhammad ibn ʿUmar al-Nafzawi's (fl. 15th c.) *al-Rawd al-ʿatir fi nuzhat al-khatir*, which was translated—with many additions and embellishments—by Richard F. Burton as *The Perfumed Garden* in 1886 and—without the additions—by Jim Colville in 1999.

The model of Ibn Dawud's *The Book of the Flower*. Ibn Hazm's work draws on Ibn Dawud's *The Book of the Flower*, which has not been translated, and it must be, to some degree at least, because of his obsession with the Zahiri legal school that he decided to write *The Neck-Ring of the Dove*. A striking feature that the two works share is their structure, which follows the life cycle of the love affair. Beginning with falling in love, both works proceed to sending messages to the beloved, revealing one's love, overcoming obstacles, union, breaking off the relationship, and both end, finally, with death. Ibn Hazm's work is an excellent example of *prosimetrum*, the type of composition that characterized most medieval belles-lettres, an artful combination of prose discussions and poems. In this work, unlike the *The Book of the Flower*, Ibn Hazm makes it a point to include examples of his own poetry rather than that of other poets, whether ancient or contemporary. The work is an excellent introduction to the world of medieval Arabic love poetry in genre, because it explains many of this poetry's central concepts and assumptions, such as separation, union, love's pact, secrecy, and so on, as well as love poetry's stock characters, such as the poet-lover, the beloved, the rival or guard, the friend, helping brother or go-between, and the slanderer. A comparison with medieval European works on courtly love such as Andreas Capellanus' *The Art of Courtly Love*, or with the poetry of the troubadours, suggesting that the two literatures are closely related.

Questions

What causes love? Is it a disease, an imbalance, or something else?

How can one tell when someone else is in love?

Why must love be kept secret? What are the practical results of this?

Practice 'hinting with the eyes'. Be prepared to demonstrate.

Who are the characters involved in a love affair (pp. 73-74, 96-117)? Do the same characters exist now?

What is the relationship between love and poetry? What role does poetry play in the *Ring of the Dove*?

What are the technical terms involved in love theory of Ibn Hazm? What are their modern equivalents?

Is this work romantic, idealistic, pragmatic, objective? How would you describe it overall?

What does the work reveal about Ibn Hazm's society in the Andalus? How does social class enter into questions of love? What about age? What about gender?

How is the book organized, and what message or ideas does the arrangement convey?

Is it acceptable to display emotion in Ibn Hazm's society?   What are the rules concerning this?

What is the relationship between the last two chapters and the rest of the work? Would the work make sense without them? Why did he write these two chapters?

If you wrote several chapters in a modern equivalent of Ibn Hazm's book, what would they be about? Can you think of popular songs that would illustrate particular points or capture important situations?

Reading

Ibn Hazm, *The Neck-Ring of the Dove.*

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Tales : The 1001 Nights

Stories move west. Or so it seems. While this rule cannot take the categorical form of a physical law, many collections of tales, particularly those that are bound together by a frame-tale, seem to have traveled west from India, through Persia, to the Middle East, and then to Europe. One indication of this movement is the fact that the standard opening of Arabic folktales, *kan ya ma kan* "There was, or there wasn't", clearly derives from the Persian antecedent *yeki bud, yeki nabud* "There was one, there wasn't one." In addition, there are many examples of east-to-west transmission of particular collections, some well documented and others a matter of speculation. *Aesop's Fables*, famous in Greek already in the 6th c. B.C.E., were likely of Near Eastern origin. The *Pancatantra* of Bidpai, written in Sanskrit ca. 300 C.E., included a series of tales attributed to Karataka and Damanaka, two jackal retainers of the lion king Pingalaka. This work was translated into Middle Persian (Pahlavi) by Burzowayh ca. 570 C.E. under the title *Kalilag va-Dimnag*. In the early Abbasid period (ca. 720-50 C.E.), Ibn al-Muqaffa` (d. 756) translated the work into Arabic with the title *Kalila wa-Dimna*. Ibn al-Muqaffa`'s Arabic version was translated into Spanish in 1261 at the court of Alfonso X 'the Wise' (1252-1284) as *Calila e Dimna*. It was also translated from Arabic into Greek in 1080, into Hebrew by Jacob Ben Eleazar (fl. 12th c.), from Hebrew into Latin by Johannes of Capua (fl. 1262-69) under the title *Directorium Vitae Humanae*, and from these last works into many other languages in subsequent centuries. Another such work is the *Disciplina Clericalis*, by Petrus Alphonsi, a Spanish Jew who converted to Christianity in 1106, which includes 33 didactic tales in Latin, derived entirely or mainly from Arabic originals. A collection of tales about the wiles of women called *The Book of Sendebar* or *El libro de los engaños* (Sindbad, but not Sindbad the sailor) was translated from Arabic in 1253 at initiative of Don Fadrique, brother of Alfonso X. In 1335, Don Juan Manuel wrote *El conde Lucanor*, a collection of 51 didactic tales in Spanish, including a number of tales that derived from Arabic. Other tales of Arabic or Middle Eastern origin found their way into the *Decameron* of Boccaccio (1313-1375) and *The Parlement of Fowls* and the *The Canterbury Tales* of Chaucer (1343-1400). Although the Arabian Nights found its way into European literature at a much later date, it too seems to have traveled a path similar to that of the *Pancatantra*, perhaps starting in India, then moving through Persia to Iraq, then Syria and Egypt, then to France and England, becoming a major work of world literature in the nineteenth century.

Discovery of the *Arabian Nights*. The history of the discovery and translation of *The 1001 Nights*, as it is known in Arabic, is complex. The pioneering figure in the introduction of *the 1001 Nights* to Europe was the Frenchman Antoine Galland (1646-1715). After studying Latin and Greek in Paris, Galland worked as an interpreter for the French embassy to the Ottoman Sultan in Istanbul between 1670 and 1675, becoming well versed in Turkish, Greek, Arabic, and Persian. He then served as a research assistant for the Orientalist Barthélemy d'Herbelot, who was writing an encyclopedic work on the history and culture of the Near East. In 1701, he published a translation of the tales of Sindbad, and between 1704 and 1717, he published 12 volumes of the *Arabian Nights Entertainments*. His translation was based in part on an old manuscript in the Bibliothèque Nationale, but when the first few volumes were so successful, the publisher clamored for more material, and Galland added stories from other manuscripts from outside the *Arabian Nights*' tradition, and even from oral sources, including a Maronite priest from Aleppo who was living in Paris at the time. Because he did not reveal these sources, and because some of the manuscripts that he used may have been lost or have not been identified, the origins of many of these stories remain obscure, and it is not entirely possible to say which stories belong to the original tradition. Many of the most famous stories, such as those of Sindbad, Aladdin, and Ali Baba, were not in early versions of the *Nights*. Later editors and translators who worked in the nineteenth century adopted similar methods, further complicating the

matter. The nineteenth century witnessed a number of Arabic editions of the *Nights*, including stories that only appeared in Galland's collection and not in the Arabic manuscripts, meaning that some of them must have been translated into Arabic from Galland's French version.

English translations. The nineteenth-century saw the popularity of the *Nights* expand outside France, particularly to England and Germany, and a number of translators translated all or part of the text, claiming to be working from the original, but often using Galland's French or one of the other existing translations as a basis. The most important translations from the nineteenth century from the point of view of the reception of the work are those of Edward W. Lane (1801-1876) and Richard F. Burton (1805-88). Lane is lived in Egypt for two extended periods and is well known for *Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians* and his *Arabic-English Lexicon*. Though he was an excellent Arabist, he was a prudish moralist and thought that *The Arabian Nights* should be presented in a form suitable for children. To that end, he omitted any stories that he thought obscene or vulgar, and bowdlerized the stories he did not omit if they included risqué references. He also omitted all of the poetry, which formed a significant part of the tales.

Burton's idiosyncrasies. We will read an abridged version of Burton's multi-volume translation. Though it is not exactly a faithful rendition of the Arabic, it is a fascinating part of the history of the literary work's history and deserves attention in its own right. Burton's translation often makes the text more complex and exciting than the Arabic original. He was a quite decent Arabist, though he makes some mistakes (Lane does too), but the fact that he consistently exaggerates his linguistic and cultural expertise is at times annoying. He uses exceedingly recherché and odd vocabulary to render what are often ordinary Arabic words. His prose is on the whole archaic, featuring words like "whilom" and "anent", but he often interrupts this with low slang from his own time. He also exaggerates anything having to do with sex, erotica, or the exotic. His copious footnotes reveal an obsession with sex and racial characteristics, and they include odd bits of irrelevant and obscure information along with personal anecdotes and occasionally useful and insightful discussions of Middle Eastern customs and material culture. His complete translation has the virtues of including all the tales that Lane omitted because they were not suitable for children and of including all the poetry, which he renders into English verse. He also attempts in various ways to convey the 'Oriental' flavor of the text by translating in an overly literal fashion Arabic turns of phrase and grammatical constructions and rendering sections of Arabic rhymed prose into English rhymed prose, often with exoticizing or bizarre results. The abridged version that we are using cannot do justice to the entire collection but nevertheless includes many of the best-known and most influential tales.

Mahdi's critical edition. Since the late nineteenth century there have been many other editions of the work in English, most in the vein of Lane's translation, presenting the work as a collection of fairy-tales for children. The most important development, aside from a great deal of scholarship on the *Nights* and artistic and literary works inspired by the Nights, has been the edition of the earliest known manuscript, the one in the Bibliothèque Nationale that Galland had used, by Muhsin Mahdi in 1984. Mahdi took this version, which includes only 271 "nights", as his exclusive basis; he did not include any of the other accretions to the *Nights* that Galland, Burton, and others had added, giving a quite different view of the text. Haddawy produced a reliable translation of Muhsin Mahdi's edition in 1994.

Historical layers in the text. It is clear from the surviving text of the frame tale that it derives from Persian. The names Shahrazad and Shahriyar are clearly Persian, and the setting is Transoxania, for Shahzaman is said to be the king of Samarqand. Kingship is also a favorite topic of Persian stories, as one sees from the great Iranian national epic, the

Shahnameh. It is possible that this Persian layer was based on a yet earlier, Indian layer, for Indian tales of advice for kings abound, but the evidence for this in the text is extremely slim. The work had already been translated into an Arabic version in the early Abbasid period: a ninth-century papyrus fragment of the work that includes clear references to Shahrazad and the frame tale has been preserved. The next mentions of the text, by the historian al-Mas`udi (d. 965) and the bookseller Ibn al-Nadim (d. 980), both refer to the frame tale and both recognize that the collection derives from an earlier Persian collection called *Hezar Afsan* (One Thousand Tales). The earliest substantial extant manuscript, from the 14th century, includes 271 nights. The Persian layer includes the frame-tale and a number of the early tales, which presumably derives from the *Hezar Afsan*. A later, Baghdadi layer includes a number of stories set in Baghdad, often in the time of the famous Abbasid Caliph Harun al-Rashid (786-809), but probably recorded a century or more later. A third layer includes stories from Egypt and Syria, perhaps from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries; and, as explained above, a fourth layer consists of the orphan stories added by Galland and others from written sources of various periods and oral sources Galland collected in the early eighteenth century.

Themes. While the themes of the stories vary widely, several dominate. The frame-tale turns on the question of adultery, the comportment of wives, the psychological disturbance of Shahriyar, and correct methods of royal rule, so it is not surprising that these themes feature in many of the stories. Similarly, since the plot of the frame-tale involves the working of a psychological cure through storytelling, the power of storytelling and the skill of storytellers is also prominent in many tales. At times, this feature is exaggerated, as stories are told within stories within stories and so on. Good and bad wives abound, as well as wise and unwise rulers. Beyond this, an extremely prominent theme is sibling rivalry, with many examples of envy among brothers, and among sisters as well. Other common features of the store are magic, treasure troves, genies, travel, and adventure.

Reading

Selections from *The 1001 Nights*, trans. Richard F. Burton.

Further Reading

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Pinault, David. *Story-Telling Techniques in the Arabian Nights.* Leiden: Brill, 1992.

Reynolds, Dwight F. "The Thousand and One Nights: A History of the Text and its Reception." *The Cambridge History of Arabic Literature: Arabic Literature in the Post-Classical Period*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006.

On-line Resources

Arabian Nights website: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/One_Thousand_and_One_Nights
Journal of the 1001 Nights: http://journalofthenights.blogspot.com/2009/06/beginners-bibliography.html

This is an extensive website, including a beginner's bibliography, master's bibliography, Dissertations dealing with the Nights, fiction influenced by the Nights, Film/Television and the 1001 Nights, online versions of the nights, and operas based on the Nights.

Questions

What are some other famous collections of tales that have frame tales?

In framed collections of tales, how is the frame tale related to the rest of the stories in the collection?

Who are the main characters in the frame tale of *The 1001 Nights*? Are there any features in the frame tale that suggest where it originated?

How and why is Shahriyar's brother cured? Did he need Shahrazad to cure him?

Compare and contrast Shahrazad and the figure of Esther from the *Book of Esther* in the Hebrew Bible.

What is the relationship between the story of Shahriyar and Shahzaman on the one hand, and that of Shahriyar and Shahrazad on the other?

Explain how any of the subsequent tales is related to the frame tale.

On "Sindbad":

Why is it necessary for Sindbad the wealthy merchant to tell his story to the porter? What immediate purpose does the story serve?

What do we learn about merchants and trade in Baghdad and the Middle East, or how merchants were viewed, from the description of Sindbad's *Voyages*?

Are the *Voyages of Sindbad* related to Homer's *Odyssey*? How so?

Some elements repeat in this cycle of seven voyages. What is the outline of the typical voyage?

Why are the voyages arranged in this order? Is there some principle behind the arrangement?

What makes Sindbad undertake another voyage? What is the moral of the story?

On "Aladdin's Lamp":

What are the differences and similarities between this story and the Aladdin story in the popular Disney movie or in the classic film "The Thief of Baghdad"?

What effect do the differences have on the audience?

How does the audience perceive Aladdin in these versions?

On "Judar and His Brothers":

Compare and contrast this story with "Aladdin's Lamp".

Does this story share a theme with the story of Joseph in the Bible? Explain.

How should Judar treat his brothers? Was his behavior proper or wise? What is the message of the work in this regard?

On "Ali Baba":

What causes bad things to happen in this story? Who makes errors, what are they, and how is the reader supposed to judge the characters in the story?

How are women and family relationships portrayed?

What does the character of Morgana reveal? What aspects of her character are surprising or unexpected?

On "Marouf the Cobbler":

Compare and contrast this story with "Aladdin's Lamp".

Where was this story was written? What is the evidence?

What does the reader learn about merchants and trade from this story?

What does the audience learn from the two characters of Marouf's wife in Cairo and the daughter of the Sultan whom he marries later?

What does the audience learn from Marouf's character? Is the reader supposed to like him, or not? How is the reader supposed to react to his questionable actions, such as lying?

Arabic Literature's Influence on European Literature

Islam in Europe. The Islamic Empire expanded rapidly after the passing away of the Prophet Muhammad in 632. By the late 630s, Muslim armies had defeated the Byzantines and the Persians in major battles in Jordan and Mesopotamia, conquering most of what is now Syria, Jordan, Israel, Palestine, and Iraq. In 640, they invaded and conquered Egypt. They advanced rapidly across the North African coast, and reached the Atlantic before 700. They did not stop there: in 712 Tariq ibn al-Walid, after whom Gibraltar is named (from Jabal Tariq "Tariq's Mountain"), famously crossed into Spain and burned his men's boats, allowing them no choice but to advance. They eventually conquered nearly the entire peninsula, crossed into France, and only turned back when defeated at the Battle of Poitiers by Charles Martel in 732. While the invading armies held territory in the south of France for several decades, they eventually retreated behind a stable border in Spain which accorded to them about three-fourths of the Iberian Peninsula. Muslim rule in parts of the Iberia lasted a very long time, from 712 until 1492, when the Nasrids (1232-1492), the last surviving Muslim dynasty, capitulated to the Catholic Monarchs, Ferdinand (1479-1516) and Isabella (1474-1504). This period, nearly eight centuries long, witness intense contact among Jews, Christians, and Muslims and between Arabic and Romance speakers. Arabic letters and Islamic culture, along with Hebrew letters and Jewish culture, exerted a very strong influence on Christian-European culture. In some areas this influence is both obvious and clearly documented. At Toledo in the 12th and 13th centuries, important works in mathematics, medicine, and philosophy were translated into Latin and Spanish and went on to become standard texts in the curricula of European centers of learning. Averroes (d. 1198), for example, gained renown in Latin, Christian circles as the most important commentator on Aristotle. Avicenna's (d. 1037) major work on medicine, *The Canon*, became the standard textbook in Europe's medical schools until the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In other fields, however, influence is either less well established or has been neglected.

The extent of influence. In *The Influence of Islam on Medieval Europe,* a deeply disappointing book, W. Montgomery Watt does not deliver what the title promises, giving some information on influence in mathematics, medicine, philosophy, a few other sciences such as pharmacology, and trade. He ignores huge swaths of scientific, literary, and artistic endeavor in which the influence of Arabic, Islamic, and Middle Eastern material was clearly of great importance. The Arabic influence on European languages is striking, particularly in Spanish, the language most strongly affected. Typically, when languages in contact, nouns are most easily borrowed, but Arabic gave to Spanish adjectives as well, such as *baladí* "of inferior quality" (< *baladi* "rustic, rural, local") and conjunctions such as *hasta* "until" (< Ar. *hatta*) and *ojalá* (*que*) "would that" (< Ar. *in sha' allah*). Spanish borrowed Arabic in cases where the other Romance languages did not: while "olive" derives from Latin in French, Italian, and the other European languages, Spanish has *acetiuna* (< Ar. *az-zaytuna*). The Spanish word for "what's his name" is *fulano*, from *fulan*, which serves the same purpose in Arabic. While many Romance specialists deny the influence of Arabic poetry on the songs of the troubadours, it is difficult to deny that the troubadours' instrument of choice, the lute (< Ar. *al-`ud*), derives from Arab musical traditions. Influence of Arabic and Islamic traditions has been claimed for Spanish music, poetry, epic, folktales, and other genres, but many such claims have not met with general acceptance, in part because of insufficient direct evidence. Nevertheless, a great deal of circumstantial evidence exists; the fact that the pivotal Spanish national epic is titled *El Cantar de Mio Cid*, adopting the Arabic honorific *Cid* (< Ar. *Sayyid* "Master") instead of the Spanish *Don* is suggestive of the extent of Arabic influence.   In some cases, more direct indications of influence exist. *El Conde Lucanor* (1335), a collection of fifty-one *exemplos* or didactic tales by Don Juan Manuel (1282-1348), includes three stories that are explicitly designated as deriving from Arabic tales, and

each of these gives an Arabic proverb—transliterated in the Roman alphabet—as the moral of the story. Similarly, the famous collection of didactic tales *Calila e Dimna* was translated from Arabic into Castilian at the court of Alfonso X (1252-84). These few works must be considered the tip of an iceberg.

An overview of literary influence. In the study we will read this week, María Rosa Menocal discusses some of the main types of European literature on which Arabic literary tradition may have exerted substantial influence. Her work is synthetic, and while it does not produce new evidence of influence or discover new paths that influence might have taken, it brings together a great deal of disparate material to make a bold case concerning the importance of Arabic literary background for medieval European literary history, focusing on three areas: courtly love lyrics of the troubadors, the Arabic-Romance hybrid poetry of *muwashshahat*, and the poetry of the *scuola siciliana* and of Dante. Her work has the virtue of alerting scholars willing to learn Arabic in addition to one or more of the Romance languages to many exciting avenues of research. At the same time, she addresses the academic firewalls and prejudiced views that have hindered such work and slowed its acceptance by experts in French, Spanish, Italian, and other literatures.

Questions

What is the basic argument of Menocal's book? Why is this important for an understanding of medieval European literature? What are the opposing views? What are the obstacles to further research in this area?

2. Identify and explain the significance of four of the following:
    A. Troubadors.
    B. William IX of Aquitaine.
    C. Eleanor of Aquitaine.
    D. Courtly love.
    E. Andreas Capellanus.
    F. Peter the Venerable.
    G. *muwashshaha*.
    H. *kharja*.
    I. The *scuola siciliana*.
    J. The king of Sicily—and Holy Roman Emperor—Frederick II (1215-1250).
    K. The *Mi`raj*.
    L. Dante
    M. Miguel Asín Palacios.
    N. Petrus Alfonsi's *Disciplina clericalis*.
    O. Boccaccio's *Decameron*.

Reading

Menocal, *The Arabic Role in Medieval Literary History: A Forgotten Heritage*.

Further Reading

Daniel, Norman. *Islam and the West: The Making of an Image*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1960.

Daniel, Norman. *The Arabs and Medieval Europe.* London: Longman, 1975.

Daniel, Norman. *The Cultural Barrier: Problems in the Exchange of Ideas.* Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1975.

Kelly, Ann. *Eleanor of Aquitaine and the Four Kings.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1950.

Kritzeck, James. *Peter the Venerable and Islam.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964.

Nykl. A.R. *Hispano-Arabic Poetry and Its Relations with the Old Provençal Troubadors*. Baltimore: J. H. Furst, 1946.