

ISLAMIC LITERATURES: WRITING IN THE
SHADE OF THE QUR'AN

Shawkat M. Toorawa

The adjective “Islamic” has come both to denote practices related to the religion of Islam—such as Islamic law, Islamic dress, and the Islamic calendar—and to connote broader cultural phenomena arising from the civilization of Islam—such as Islamic architecture, Islamic medicine, and Islamic Spain. In the rubric “Islamic literatures,” although the latter broader usage seems to be implied, the former narrower one is usually meant. Indeed, the term “Islamic literatures” in the wider sense is little used, although it is to be found in the title of James Kritzeck’s *Anthology of Islamic Literature*¹ and in an article in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* by Anne-Marie Schimmel, a noted scholar of Iranian and Indian Islam, who observes that the term “Islamic literatures” “virtually defies any comprehensive definition.”² In 1986, the Pakistani English-language poet and critic Alamgir Hashmi circumvented the vexed question of the use of the adjective “Islamic” by calling his anthology of “modern and contemporary literature of the Islamic lands” *The Worlds of Muslim Imagination*.³ His stated concern was with “the Muslim imagination, its literary engagements and manifestations, but not with Islamic pieties.”⁴

“Islamic literature,” then, is best understood as the *total* literary output of Muslims and those influenced by Islamic civilization. Accordingly, it comprises works in Arabic, Chinese, Hausa, Indonesian, Persian, Swahili, Turkish, Urdu, and dozens of other languages, including English. This output encompasses everything from the Qur’an,⁵ an Arabic scripture that emerged with Islam in the Arabian Peninsula in the seventh century CE, to the Hebrew poetry of the Iberian Judah Halevi (d. 1145 CE),⁶ to the fifteenth century Sundiata (Son-Jara) Epic of Mali,⁷ to *Noor*, an English-language novel by the U.S.-based Pakistani writer Sorayya Khan.⁸ Limitations of space do not permit such a comprehensive survey here. Instead, using the Qur’an as something of an axis, this chapter highlights a sampling of genres, writers,

and works, with less of an emphasis on poetry as this has typically received greater attention in surveys, scholarship, and translation.⁹

In 978 CE, the Baghdad bookseller Ibn al-Nadim published *al-Fihrist* (The Catalogue), a comprehensive and annotated list of every book that he was aware of that had *ever* been written in Arabic or translated into Arabic.¹⁰ This work has provided posterity with invaluable information about works that no longer survive (estimated at a staggering and depressing 98 percent of all works written in Islamic languages) and about the ways in which Muslims of the tenth century CE—during the so-called Golden Age of Arabo-Islamic culture—viewed their literatures. Ibn al-Nadim divides the literatures of his time into 10 categories, as follows:

1. Languages and scripts; scriptures of Muslims and other “Peoples of the Book”
2. Grammar and lexicography
3. History, belles-lettres, biography, genealogy
4. Poetry
5. Scholastic theology
6. Law and Hadith
7. Philosophy and the “ancient sciences”
8. Stories, legends, romances; magic, conjuring
9. Doctrines of the non-monotheistic creeds
10. Alchemy

Not surprisingly, script, scripture, and grammar have pride of place, appearing at the beginning of the work and altogether accounting for one-fifth of the whole catalogue. Though the *Fihrist* includes books from other languages, it only mentions these if they were translated into Arabic from their original sources. Knowledge of Arabic then, as now, was a premium for Muslims. Today, in the early twenty-first century CE, only 20 percent of the Muslim world speaks Arabic natively and an even smaller percentage is fully literate in the language. However, Arabic is just as necessary today as it was in Ibn al-Nadim’s day for anyone interested in the study of Islamic civilization.¹¹ Knowledge of Arabic gives one access to the Qur’an in its original language, as well as to a vast output of religious and nonreligious scholarship. The *Fihrist* was itself the product of nonreligious scholarship, written by a man who was a courtier (or the son of a courtier) and a bookman. Such scholarship was possible because of the explosion of translation and writing since the ninth century CE. This birth of multiple literary forms was to a large extent due to the availability of paper,¹² a Chinese import, which in turn resulted in the various kinds of “Islamic literatures” that Ibn al-Nadim recorded.

By definition, the first example of Islamic literature is the Qur’an, a series of revelations in Arabic believed by Muslims to have emanated from God,

and orally transmitted by the Archangel Gabriel to the Prophet Muhammad from the year 610 CE until Muhammad's death in 632 CE. These revelations, which were in Arabic, Muhammad's native language, were memorized and written down piecemeal by his followers, and were subsequently collected and collated into a written codex (*mushaf*). This canonizing of the "text" into what was effectively the very first Islamic book is traditionally believed to have taken place in the 650s.¹³

The Qur'an is organized into *Suras* ("chapters"), more or less from the longest to the shortest—with the notable exception of the opening chapter, which is only seven *ayat* ("verses") long. *Suras* are read or recited from memory in whole or in part; many pious Muslims memorize the whole Qur'an. Through its admonitory narratives of past revelations and its exemplary stories, the Qur'an also functions as a blueprint for a good and righteous life.¹⁴ In addition to its liturgical and didactic functions, the Qur'an is also a source of law: roughly 600 of its approximately 6,200 verses are legislative. One major work on the probative nature of these legal verses was the *Risala* (Treatise) of Muhammad ibn Idris al-Shafi'i (d. 820 CE).¹⁵

The influence of the Qur'an on the scholarship, artistic output, and philosophy of the Islamic world, both Arab and non-Arab, is immeasurable. Its appearance accounts for the development of the Arabic script, a writing system that came to be used by almost all Muslim people. For example, Modern Persian (Farsi)—an Indo-European language—is written in Arabic script, as are the Central Asian languages Uighur and Pushtu, the South Asian language Urdu, and the African language Hausa. In the past, Arabic script was used to write Ottoman Turkish and Malay, whose Arabic script was called *Jawi* (Ar. "Javanese"). Arabic script also formed the basis for one of Islamic art and architecture's most recognizable features, Arabic calligraphy. Some modern artists today use Arabic calligraphy and other media to interpret Islamic literatures. The Algerian artist Rachid Kereïchi, for instance, has installations devoted to the Arabic works of the Andalusian Sufi Ibn 'Arabi (d. 1240 CE) and the Persian works of the Sufi Mevlana Jalaluddin Rumi (d. 1273 CE). Ibn 'Arabi's works of metaphysical Sufism are widely read, such as his *Fusus al-Hikam* (Bezels of Wisdom).¹⁶ Rumi is the author of the influential *Divan-e Shams-e Tabriz* (The Complete Works of "Shams of Tabriz"), a 40,000-verse collection comprising quatrains (*rubai'iyat*) and love poems (*ghazals*), and the *Masnawi Ma'navi* (Spiritual Couplets), a poetic work of more than 25,000 couplets that is often called the most important work of Islamic literature after the Qur'an. Some mystics have even called Rumi's *Masnawi* the "Persian Qur'an," for its simplicity and profundity.¹⁷

Most Muslim scholars argue that by virtue of being God's word, the Qur'an is the pinnacle of literary perfection. Some concede that it is poetic in form, but they have almost unanimously rejected the idea that it is poetry. Indeed, the Qur'an itself points out that the Prophet Muhammad was not a poet (Qur'an 36:29). This is a polemical statement, however, made in the

context of attacks on Muhammad by detractors for being a soothsayer inspired by supernatural forces, or a poet inspired by a supernatural muse. To Muhammad are attributed negative statements about Imru'l-Qays (d. ca. 540 CE), the great sixth-century Arab poet (who is still considered, incidentally, the greatest of all Arab poets), and whose poem "Stop, you two, and let us weep" is one of the seven Pre-Islamic classics, the *Mu'allaqat*, or so-called Suspended Odes.¹⁸ Imru'l-Qays was a *bon vivant* whose lifestyle was certainly not in keeping with the Prophet Muhammad's moderate views. However, Muhammad himself had panegyrists of whom he approved, such as Hassan ibn Thabit (d. ca. 660 CE) and Ka'b ibn Zuhayr (fl. seventh century CE), whose "Su'ad has left" poem Muhammad so cherished that he gave Ka'b his mantle. For this reason, the poem came to be known as *Qasidat al-Burda*, "The Mantle Ode." In the thirteenth century, the Egyptian poet Busiri (d. ca. 1294 CE) wrote an expanded commentary in verse on Ka'b's poem. Though arguably of less literary value than the original, the circumstances of its writing—the paralyzed Busiri composed it after dreaming that the Prophet cured him when he placed his mantle upon him—have made it one of the most popular pieces of literature across the Islamic world. There are commentaries, super-commentaries, and imitations of this work in dozens of languages, and it is even used as a protective amulet.¹⁹

Debates about the nature of the Qur'an occasioned numerous works of theology and philosophy, some in the context of the infamous ninth-century "inquisition" by the Caliph al-Ma'mun (d. 833 CE), a leader remembered not only for his partiality for rationalist Greek philosophy but also for the translation of non-Arabic writings into Arabic, an activity he enthusiastically patronized.²⁰ Much Greek material, from Galen's medical treatises to Aristotle's philosophical ones, was rendered into Arabic by Christian translators, such as the Nestorian physician Hunayn ibn Ishaq (d. ca. 873 CE).²¹ Middle Persian advice literature and wisdom literature were translated by Muslim Persian writers; many of them were state secretaries in the Caliph administration.²² Ibn al-Muqaffa' (d. 759 CE), for example, translated the Pahlavi work *Khwaday-Namag* (Book of Kings).²³ A verse rendering of this history, the *Shahnameh* (Epic of Kings), was made at the end of the tenth century CE by the poet Ferdowsi (d. 1020 CE) and is one of the masterpieces of Persian literature (eclipsing his other works, including his poem, "Yusuf and Zulaykha").²⁴ Ibn al-Muqaffa' also made famous the stories of *Kalila wa Dimna*, a collection of moral fables originally by the Indian writer Bidpai. Through such translations, Arabic literature, and later the literatures of Africa, Asia, and Europe, acquired many stories, some of which, like *Kalila wa Dimna*, emanated from the Sanskrit literary tradition.²⁵ Ibn al-Muqaffa' is also credited, perhaps apocryphally, with trying to imitate the Qur'an. Previously, one contemporary of the Prophet Muhammad had mocked the Prophet by saying that the stories he himself knew from the glorious Persian

past were superior to the ones Muhammad was bringing in the Qur'an. This taunt is said to have occasioned the revelation of *Surat Yusuf* (Qur'an 12, "Joseph"), the only Qur'anic chapter that is a discrete and continuous narrative, and the inspiration for numerous works describing the romance between Yusuf (Joseph) and Zulaykha, Potiphar's wife.²⁶ The only major rival to this romance in Islamic literature is the story of the star-crossed Arab lovers Layla and Majnun, which was popularized in works such as the Persian poet Nizami's (d. 1209 CE) *Leyli va Majnun*. This story was even the inspiration for Eric Clapton's rock song, "Layla."²⁷ Popular South Asian romances that fall under the "Islamic" rubric include the Urdu *Dastan-e Amir Hamza* (Romance of Prince Hamza), inspired by the exploits of Hamza ibn 'Abd al-Muttalib, the Prophet Muhammad's uncle and an early martyr of Islam, and the Panjabi *Heer Ranjha* by Waris Shah (d. 1766 CE).²⁸ In Panjabi too is the mystical love poetry of Sultan Bahu, which is still sung today in such devotional musical forms as *qawwali* and *kaafi*.²⁹

The need to understand the language of the Qur'an, accompanied by the need to understand the intent of the Prophet Muhammad's statements and actions, occasioned wider and deeper study in fields that later came to be known as "the Islamic sciences." These consisted of lexicography (*lugha*); grammar (*nahw*) and morphology (*tasrif*); metrics ('*arud*), rhyme (*qawafi*), and prosody (*sun'at al-shi'r*); rhetoric (*bayan, balagha*); literary criticism (*naqd*); legal theory and methodology (*usul al-fiqh*) and jurisprudence (*fiqh*); and philological commentary (*sharh, ma'ani, gharib*). This last genre, in a more expanded form, became the "science" of Qur'anic exegesis (*tafsir al-Qur'an*).³⁰ Scholars regard the monumental Arabic Qur'an commentary *Jami' al-bayan 'an ta'wil ay al-Qur'an* (The Sum of Clarity Concerning the Interpretation of the Verses of the Qur'an) by the Persian scholar Tabari (d. 923 CE) as pivotal because it combined all earlier exegetical traditions and became a major source for later commentaries.³¹ Also widely consulted today are the Arabic commentaries of Zamakhshari (d. 1144 CE), Ibn Kathir (d. 1373 CE), and the handy *Tafsir al-Jalalayn* (Commentary of the two Jalals) by Jalal al-Din al-Mahalli (d. 1459 CE) and Jalal al-Din al-Suyuti (d. 1505 CE).³² The latter work acquired considerable importance in Southeast Asia where it was translated and expanded upon by the Achenese scholar 'Abd al-Ra'uf Singkili (d. 1693 CE) in his Malay-language *Tarjuman al-mustafid* (The Influential Interpreter).³³ Also significant is the *Mafatih al-ghayb* (Keys to the Unseen) of Fakhr al-Din al-Razi (d. 1210 CE), an important theologian often viewed as equal in importance to Ibn Sina (Avicenna, d. 1037 CE) and al-Ghazali (d. 1111 CE). Ibn Sina's *Qanun fi al-tibb* (Canon of Medicine) was in wide use in the Islamic and Christian worlds for centuries, and in his *al-Shifa'* (The Cure), he systematically describes his philosophical views. Ghazali wrote a vigorous refutation of Islamic philosophy titled *Tahafut al-falasifa* (The Incoherence of the Philosophers), directed at Ibn Sina. This was itself refuted in the

Tabafut al-tabafut (The Incoherence of “The Incoherence”) by another major philosopher, Ibn Rushd (Averroës) (d. 1198 CE).³⁴

Ghazali held the chair in Islamic law at the premier law school of the day, the Madrasa Nizamiyya, founded by Nizam al-Mulk (d. 1092 CE), the vizier to the Seljuq Turkish rulers. Nizam al-Mulk was an author in his own right, notably of a Persian treatise on kingship, the *Siyasat Nameh* (Book of Government).³⁵ Like his patron, Ghazali wrote a work in the “mirror for princes” genre, the *Nasibat al-muluk* (Advice to Kings). Nizam al-Mulk, Ghazali, and the Ismaili missionary Hassan-i Sabbah (d. 1124 CE) are protagonists, together with the Persian mathematician-poet Omar Khayyam (d. 1131 CE)—whose quatrains have eclipsed his cubic equations—in the French novel *Samarcande* by Amin Maalouf, one of the few writers anywhere writing historical novels about authors of Islamic literature.³⁶ Ghazali’s slim autobiographical treatise *al-Munqidh min al-dalal* (Deliverance from Error) is widely read, and his magisterial *Ihya’ ‘ulum al-din* (Revival of the Religious Sciences) has been instrumental in bridging the (apparent) rift between Islamic orthodoxy and Sufism.³⁷ Eight centuries later, Muhammad Iqbal (d. 1938 CE), an Indian poet and philosopher, published *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, based on a series of university lectures. He is also the author of the Hindustani national song, *Saare jahan se accha* (The Finest in the World).

Important recent commentaries on the Qur’an include the Ottoman Ismail Hakki Bursevi’s (d. 1725 CE) *Ruh al-bayan* (The Soul of Eloquence), the Moroccan Sufi Ibn ‘Ajiba’s (d. 1809 CE) *al-Bahr al-Madid* (The Expansive Sea), Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan’s (d. 1898 CE) Urdu *Kanz-ul-iman* (The Treasure of Faith)—he is also the first Muslim to write a commentary (partial) on the Bible, Fadhlalla Haeri’s English series *Keys to the Qur’an*,³⁸ and Amin Ahsan Islahi’s (d. 1997) Urdu *Tadabbur-i Qur’an* (The Organization of the Qur’an), which advances a theory of the Qur’an’s structure and morphology in its canonical form based on the work of Farahi (d. 1930).³⁹ Although no full-length commentary on the Qur’an by a woman has yet appeared, three U.S.-based female scholars have recently given the Qur’an systematic attention: the African American convert Amina Wadud, the Pakistani-American Asma Barlas, and the Syrian Nimat Barazangi.⁴⁰ The Egyptian scholar ‘Aisha ‘Abd al-Rahman (d. 1974 CE) published the first partial commentary on the Qur’an by a woman, under her pen name Bint al-Shati’ (“Daughter of the Seashore”). Bint al-Shati’ also edited the *Risalat al-ghufran* (Epistle on Pardon) by the marvelous medieval Arab poet Ma’arri (d. 1057 CE).⁴¹ The *Risalat al-ghufran* recounts the encounter of its protagonist (the work’s addressee) with people in Paradise and Hell, into which Ma’arri casts the allegedly heretical poet Bashshar ibn Burd (d. 784 CE), among others. This is ironic, as Ma’arri was also accused of heresy and was, like Bashshar, blind. Ma’arri’s *al-Fusul wa al-ghayat* (Paragraphs and Periods), because it is in rhymed prose, has been seen by some as a

blasphemous imitation of the Qur'an, but the charge is no doubt an attempt to disparage this gifted author.

Commentaries on the Qur'an inspired commentaries and super-commentaries in other fields too, such as poetry and grammar. The first major Arabic book after the Qur'an was *al-Kitab* (The Book) of Sibawayhi (d. ca. 795 CE), a systematic study of Arabic grammar.⁴² Countless grammar books followed, culminating in such works as the versified Arabic grammar *al-Alfiyya* (The Thousand-liner) by the Andalusian Ibn Malik (d. 1274 CE); *al-Ajrumiyya*, the Moroccan Berber Ibn Ajrum's (d. 1323 CE) eponymous condensation of all the rules of Arabic grammar; and *Bahth al-matalib* (Discussion of Grammatical Questions) by the Archbishop of Aleppo, Jermanus Farhat (d. 1732 CE). By virtue of the fact that Arabic was the language of scholarship for much of the Muslim world well into the sixteenth century CE, non-Arabic works before that time were, relatively speaking, less common—but this is not to say that they were less important. Indeed, the interplay of Arabic and Persian in particular is of great significance. Persian may have adopted rhyme patterns, for instance, from Arabic, but it gave to Arabic such forms as lyric poetry and the quatrain. Persian was also used in Muslim India, where it remained the language of culture and administration until 1835. The poet-scholar Azad Bilgrami's (d. 1786 CE) poetry—his panegyric earned him the title *Hassan-i Hind* (The Hassan [ibn Thabit] of India), likening him to the Prophet Muhammad's panegyrist—and his magnum opus *Subhat al-Marjan* (The Coral Rosary), a major historical-biographical-literary critical work, were in Arabic, but he wrote many more works in Persian.⁴³

The Qur'an, as God's word, is held by Muslims as the standard of eloquence. It comes as no surprise therefore that it has been frequently drawn upon, thematically, textually, and structurally.⁴⁴ Textual recourse to the Qur'an involves quoting, creatively misquoting, or reworking Qur'anic passages. As might be expected, it is widely quoted by characters in novels and stories. One of the most unusual quotations is in the autobiography of 'Umar ibn Sa'id (d. 1864 CE), a West African slave and former minor Islamic scholar from North Carolina who was urged by abolitionists to write an account of his life. He begins this work, which he wrote in Arabic, with the entire text of *Surat al-Mulk* (Qur'an 67, The Dominion).⁴⁵ The modern Syro-Lebanese poet Adonis, who was born in a Shiite Muslim family, also uses Qur'anic passages, often recasting the Qur'an's words and thereby earning the disapproval of pious critics. His most recent work, like the Qur'an resonantly called *al-Kitab* (The Book), has also irked critics.⁴⁶

Thematic recourse to the Qur'an has taken many forms. The most well known are modern uses of Qur'anic themes, such as the Algerian novelist Tahir Wattar's use of the theme of apocalyptic convulsions on Judgment Day in *al-Zilzal* (The Earthquake).⁴⁷ This novel is especially interesting for the fact that the protagonist mentions Nobel Prize-winning author Naguib

Mahfouz's *Awlad haratina* (Children of the Alley), one of the few fiction works structurally to draw upon the Qur'an.⁴⁸ *Children of the Alley* is divided into five parts, each corresponding to a character evidently based on Qur'anic and Biblical figures, but is also subdivided into 114 chapters, as is the Qur'an. The novel has been misread (and accordingly banned) as an allegorical comment on religion and the death of God. It is, rather, the converse: a reading of modern Egyptian society through the scriptural archetypes. Egyptian playwright Tawfiq al-Hakim's (d. 1987 CE) *Ahl al-kahf* (People of the Cave) is about the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus mentioned in *Surat al-Kahf* (18, The Cave) of the Qur'an.⁴⁹ Indonesian-born 'Ali Ahmad Ba-Kathir's (d. 1969) *Harut wa Marut* is about two faultfinding angels; Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses*, like his subsequent *Haroun and the Sea of Stories*, is a thinly veiled critique of contemporary authoritarian Islam (in Britain in the former, in Iran in the latter) through a parody of the Prophet Muhammad and the Angel Gabriel.⁵⁰ Whether Rushdie qualifies as a writer of "Islamic Literature" will depend on the pietistic commitments of the person making the decision. Certainly, he merited inclusion in Amin Malik's recent analytical survey, *Muslim Narratives and the Discourse of English*.⁵¹ Other authors in this work illustrate the wide sweep implicit in the notion of postcolonial Islamic literature(s). A partial list includes the Pakistani Ahmed Ali (d. 1994), who was also the translator of a widely available, if only passably good, translation of the Qur'an into English; the Somali Nuruddin Farah; the Tanzanian from Zanzibar Abdulrazak Gurnah; the Tanzanian-Canadian Ismaili writer M. G. Vassanji;⁵² and the female authors, the Nigerian Zaynab Alkali and the Malaysian Che Husna Azhari.⁵³

The colonial-era encounter of Islamic literatures with the West in the nineteenth century and after, principally (but by no means exclusively) through English, French, and Russian, resulted in the "importation" of the novel and the short story into the Islamic world. The novel in particular started out as a vehicle for nationalist, and sometimes secularist expression, but grew to become a major genre in Islamic literatures. Many novelists chose to write in the colonial language, as the Hashmi anthology and the Malak volume mentioned above record for English. However, prose output thrived in "Islamic" languages too. Suffice to mention here—a survey of this material is certainly a desideratum—some key figures. In Arabic, Mahfouz has been one of the most prolific and admired writers; the 1989 Nobel Prize in Literature merely confirmed his status as the dean of Arabic letters.⁵⁴ However, he has not eclipsed other great writers in Arabic, such as the Sudanese Tayeb Salih, whose 1969 *Mawsim al-hijra ila al-shamal* (Season of Migration to the North) is widely viewed as The Great Arabic Novel and is to be found on every list of postcolonial writing. A riposte to the simultaneously seductive and insidious nature of the colonial venture, it is *inter alia* a sophisticated rereading of Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* and a supple inversion of Shakespeare's *Othello*.⁵⁵ It was anticipated in 1961 by the Senegalese writer

Cheikh Hamidou Kane's French novel *L'aventure ambiguë* (The Ambiguous Adventure), which was also about the travel of a protagonist to Europe and the clash of African and Islamic cultures with European culture.⁵⁶

The Saudi-Iraqi Abdel Rahman Munif (d. 2004) wrote poignantly in *Mudun al-milb* (Cities of Salt) about the changes wrought by modernity in an unnamed oil nation and about the excesses of politicians and businessmen.⁵⁷ The Turkish novelist Orhan Pamuk has also spoken out against the status quo. His 2002 *Kar* (Snow), named one of the 10 best books of 2004 by the *New York Times*, is about the relationship between Westernism and Islamism, both typically espoused with fervor in Turkey. Pamuk came to fame with *Benim Adım Kırmızı* (My Name is Red), which is a murder mystery of sorts set in sixteenth-century Ottoman Istanbul.⁵⁸ Iran's most famous prose writer is Sadegh Hedayat (d. 1951). His 1937 morbid and unsettling novella *Buf-e kur* (The Blind Owl) is his masterpiece. Like *L'Etranger* (The Stranger) by Albert Camus—who was, incidentally, a *pid noir*, that is, a Frenchman born in Muslim North Africa, where most of his novels are set—the appearance of *Buf-e kur* forever changed the Iranian and international literary landscapes.⁵⁹ Modern Urdu letters boast of a number of important prose writers. Predictably, the partition of India and Pakistan features prominently, allegorically, or explicitly in their writings. Suffice to mention here the female novelist Qurratulain Hyder, whose magnum opus, *Ang Ka Darya* (River of Fire), is a historical sweep that begins before the Common Era. Like Hyder, Ismet Chughtai (d. 1991) was born in Aligarh, India, and was another major female figure in Urdu letters, but writing in India not Pakistan.⁶⁰

As we have seen, many Muslim writers have turned to the Qur'an for inspiration. The Yemeni novelist Zayd Muti' Dammaj (d. 2001) was inspired by the Qur'anic account of Yusuf and Zulaykha (Potiphar's wife) in his novel *al-Rabina* (The Hostage). This novel is about a young man who becomes the object of affection of the sister of the governor in whose palace he is being kept prisoner.⁶¹ The Moroccan novelist Driss Chraïbi takes on the Prophet Muhammad himself and his deeply amorous relationship with his wife Khadija in the daring but reverential *L'homme du livre* (The Man of the Book), a French novel(la) that is principally a first-person account of the thoughts of a fictionalized Muhammad on the eve of the first revelation.⁶² Chraïbi includes the mysterious Qur'anic figure of al-Khidr in the novel, combining him with the Syrian monk Bahira, who was said to have seen the mark of prophecy on the young Muhammad. In the title story of his collection *The Mapmakers of Spitalfields*, the U.K.-based Bangladeshi writer Syed Manzurul Islam melds this same al-Khidr into his main character, the itinerant Brother-O Man.⁶³

One antecedent for accounts about an errant or wandering character, often a rogue, who dupes those around him is the *maqamat* ("Assemblies," or "Standings"), a unique literary form in a very ornate, stylized manner, which

alternates rhyming prose with poetry. Originated in Arabic by Badi' al-Zaman al-Hamadhani (d. 1008 CE), and expertly taken up by Hariri (d. 1122 CE),⁶⁴ it subsequently inspired the Hebrew *Maqamat* of al-Harizi (d. thirteenth century CE) in Andalusia and also the anonymous Spanish picaresque novel, *Lazarillo de Tormes* (1531).⁶⁵ *Maqamat* is usually named for a character, a locale, or the item around which the trickery revolves. Mixing prose and poetry (*prosimetrum*) in this genre is not uncommon. It is to be found in scholarly, belletristic, and even popular works such as the medieval *Alf layla wa layla* (The Thousand and One Nights). This is one of the most enduring and recognizable story collections in world literature although it has been criticized in Arabic literature because of its fabulous and salacious content.⁶⁶ Other important story cycles in Islamic literature include the fifteenth-century Malay *Hikayat Hang Tuah* (Tale of Hang Tuah), about the exploits of the eponymous hero and four friends in fifteenth-century Malacca; the sixteenth-century Turkish *Book of Dede Korkut*; a 12-story collection of epic and heroic tales of the Turkic Oghuz people; and the medieval "Darangen Epic" of the Maranao of the southern Philippines, which is a historical record of events from before the period of Islamization.⁶⁷

The Algerian novelist Assia Djebar turns to historical chronicles in *Loin de Médine* (Far from Medina), an attempt to flesh out the lives of the women around the Prophet Muhammad and the early Muslims. She rereads the historical accounts preserved in such works as Tabari's monumental *Tarikh al-rusul wa al-muluk* (History of Messengers and Kings), a world history from creation to the mid-tenth century CE.⁶⁸ One of the many sources used by Tabari was *Kitab Baghdad* (Book of Baghdad) by Ibn Abi Tahir Tayfur (d. 893 CE). Only one volume of this work survives, but Jorge Luis Borges (d. 1986), one of the many world authors drawing inspiration from Islamic literatures, mentions it in his short story, "El Tintorero Enmascarado Hakim de Merv" (The Masked Dyer Hakim of Merv).⁶⁹

Djebar's and others' attempts to make sense fictionally of the Prophet Muhammad's words and deeds mirror early Muslims' attempts to do so. The corpus of writing that they had available was the Hadith, and they immediately set themselves the task of verifying whether the words they had recorded were authentically transmitted. Thus, the groundwork of the early Hadith collectors, such as Bukhari (d. 870 CE) and Darimi (d. 869 CE), and the Hadith transmitters, such as Nawawi (d. 1277 CE)—who produced a very short précis of the most salient Hadith narratives in *al-Arba'in al-Nawawiya* (The Nawawi Forty [Hadith])—was accompanied by a vigorous scrutiny of the transmitters themselves.⁷⁰ This investigation into the personalities and characters of the men and women involved in the transmission of Prophetic tradition became the basis for a wider activity, namely the writing and compiling of large biographical works, such as Ibn Sa'd's (d. 845 CE) early compendium, *al-Tabaqat al-kubra* (The Great Generations). These biographical works were repositories of information about birth, birthplace,

education, output, reliability, and death. Some biographical works came to be devoted to a specific region; for example, Indian scholars were the subjects of 'Abd al-Hayy's (d. 1923) *Nuzhat al-khawair* (The Promenade of Ideas). Others were devoted to a specific century, such as the Egyptian Sakhawi's (d. 1497) *al-Daw' al-lami'* (The Gleaming Lamp), which was devoted to the ninth Islamic century (fifteenth century CE). Still others were devoted to a specific profession, such as the manumitted slave Yaqut's (d. 1229 CE) *Mu'jam al-udaba'* (Encyclopaedia of Writers). Sometimes, the subjects of these books were both people and their works, as in the compilation of the top songs of Baghdad by the courtier Abu al-Faraj (d. 967 CE) in his massive *Kitab al-Aghani* (Book of Songs). Yaqut produced the alphabetically arranged *Mu'jam al-buldan* (Encyclopedia of Place-Names), which was devoted to places and locales, building on earlier geographies such as the anonymous Persian *Hudud al-'Alam* (Limits of the World).⁷¹ Such compilations remain the principal source of information about much of medieval Islamic culture and society.⁷²

Biographical compilations were complemented by book-length biographies. Ibn Hisham's (d. 833 CE) abridged edition of Ibn Ishaq's (d. 767 CE) *Sirat Rasul Allah* (The Life of the Messenger of God) is an early and widely quoted biography of the Prophet Muhammad.⁷³ It would become a model for later biographies, a genre out of which arose some autobiographies. Indeed, scholars frequently felt the need to write about their careers and accomplishments: to set the record straight, to serve as a model for their children and students, or, as many explicitly state, to follow the Qur'anic injunction (Qur'an 93:11) to broadcast the virtues bestowed upon them by God. The autobiography is a significant genre of Islamic literature.⁷⁴ Several authors already mentioned wrote autobiographies, such as Hunayn ibn Ishaq, al-Ghazali, Ibn Sina, Suyuti, and Azad Bilgrami. One famous autobiographer was the so-called father of sociology, 'Abd al-Rahman Ibn Khaldun (d. 1406 CE), whose six-volume world history is eclipsed by its sophisticated one-volume introduction, *al-Muqaddima* (The Prolegomenon).⁷⁵ From the fragments of the autobiography of the scholar-physician 'Abd al-Latif al-Baghdadi (d. 1231 CE), we learn a great deal about the political climate of the time and also get a glimpse of the fundamental role played by patronage in supporting literary output.⁷⁶ It is patronage that Sayyide Salme, an Omani princess who fled her home in Zanzibar, sought when she wrote under her adopted name Emilie Ructe, *Memoiren einer arabischen Prinzessin* (Memoirs of an Arabian Princess). The memoir is also a literary form with a distinguished pedigree.⁷⁷ One of the most famous of such works in all of Islamic literature is the Chaghatai *Babur-Nameh* (Book of Babur). This work contains the memoirs of Babur (d. 1530 CE), the Central Asian founder of the Mughal dynasty in India.⁷⁸ The diary is a less attested form, although the deeply personal *Kashf al-asrar* (The Unveiling of Secrets) by the Persian Sufi Ruzbihan Baqli of Shiraz (d. 1210 CE) certainly reads that way.⁷⁹

Sufism (*tasawwuf*) accounts for a considerable literary output and, as the current interest in the poetry of Rumi suggests, is very popular. Indeed, Sufism's "popular" appeal often put it at odds with the orthodoxy espoused by the formal religious scholars (*ulama*). This explains the significance of Ghazali's espousal of Sufism, and of its incorporation into the *Han Kitab* (Chinese Writings), an early modern corpus of texts by Muslim Chinese scholars.⁸⁰ Sufi scholars wrote expositions of Sufism, such as the Persian *Kashf al-mahjub* (Unveiling the Veiled) of Hujviri (d. 1071 CE), or the *Risala* (Epistle) of Qushayri (d. 1074 CE), and biographical works (hagiographies), such as the *Tadhkirat al-awliya'* (Memorial of the Saints) by Farid al-Din 'Attar (d. 1220 CE).⁸¹ They also wrote guides for their disciples and followers, such as the Malayo-Arabic [*al-*] *Sirat al-Mustaqim* (The Straight path) by the Gujarati al-Raniri (d. 1658 CE), the *Risalat al-Mu'awana* (The Book of Assistance) of the South Arabian 'Abdallah ibn 'Alawi (d. ca. 1719 CE), and Sheikh Muzaffer Ozak's (d. 1985 CE) *Ziyet-ül-kulub* (Adornment of Hearts).⁸² Sufis have also written a great deal of poetry, such as the simple but searing verse attributed to the early woman mystic Rabi'a al-'Adawiyya (d. 801 CE).⁸³

Poetry, the preeminent literary form of Arabic literature, may be regarded, as the literary form *par excellence* of Islamic literatures too—for the premodern period at any rate. The *qasida*, or ode, arose in the same language and region as did the Prophet Muhammad and the Qur'an (the Arabian Peninsula), but it did so before Islam. It went on, in one guise or another, to find a place in every Islamic literature. Classical Arabic scholar Stefan Sperl recognized this when he read a poem his wife was then studying, by the Pakistani poet Faiz.⁸⁴ That realization led to an anthology titled *Qasida Poetry in Islamic Asia and Africa: Eulogy's Bounty, Meaning's Abundance*. Most of the 50 poems and poets represented in this work are worth listing here, as they provide an apposite, if cursory, overview of what we might tentatively term the poetry of Islamic civilization.⁸⁵

Arabic: Abu Tammam (d. 845 CE), in praise of an Abbasid caliph

Arabic: Mutanabbi (d. 965 CE), invective against Kafur

Hebrew: Solomon Ibn Gabirol (d. ca. 1058 CE), in praise of an unnamed person

Persian: Nasir-i Khusrau (d. ca. 1077 CE), in praise of knowledge and justice

Hebrew: Judah Halevi (d. 1141 CE), in praise of Isaac ibn al-Yatom

Persian: Khaqani (d. 1199 CE), Elegy on Mada'in

Arabic: Ibn al-Farid (d. 1235 CE), On Sufi love

Arabic: Rundi (d. 1285 CE), Elegy on the lost cities of al-Andalus

Arabic: Busiri (d. ca. 1296 CE), the *Burda* in praise of the Prophet Muhammad

Turkish: Necati (d. 1509 CE), "Rose Kaside" in praise of Sultan Bayezid II

Persian: Hayali (d. 1557 CE), "Rose Kaside" in praise of Sultan Suleyman

Persian: 'Urfi (d. 1591 CE), in praise of Abu al-Fath

Malay: Hamza Fansuri (c. 1600 CE), on Sufi teachings

Kurdish: Malaye Jaziri (d. 1640 CE), on Sufi teachings

Pashto: 'Abd al-Rahman Baba (d. c. 1710 CE), a pious *carpe diem*

Swahili: Anonymous (before 1800), in praise of a virtuous wife

Hausa: Usman dan Fodio (d. 1817 CE), in praise of the Prophet Muhammad

Urdu: Zauq (d. 1854 CE), in praise of Bahadur Shah II

Sindhi: Ghulam Haidar (d. 1861 CE), *Munajat* in praise of the Prophet Muhammad

Fulfulde: Asma'u Fodio (d. 1865 CE), in praise of Muhammad Bello

Malay: Anonymous (c. 1900), in praise of the Sufi text *Hidayatus salikin* (Guidance of the Seekers)

Urdu: Muhsin Kakoravi (d. 1905), in praise of the Prophet Muhammad

Punjabi: 'Abd al-Sattar (d. 1913), in praise of the Prophet Muhammad

Urdu: Altaf Husain Hali (d. 1914), on the Golden Jubilee of Queen Victoria

Persian: Iraj Mirza (d. 1926), criticizing the veil

Persian: Abu al-Qasim Lahuti (d. 1957), to the daughters of Iran

Arabic: Badr Shakir al-Sayyab (d. 1964), rain song

Arabic: Badawi al-Jabal (d. 1981), love and God

Arabic: Wazir Junaid al-Bukhari, elegy for Abu Bakr Bube

Turkey: Attila İlhan, "Hell Kaside"

Persian: Khu'i, "The Imam of the Plague"

Indonesian: [sung by Arfitta Ria]: The propagation of Islam in Indonesia by the *Wali Songo* (Nine Saints)⁸⁶

Naturally, many other important poets deserve mention in a survey of Islamic literatures. Suffice here to evoke the names of the Sufi poet 'Abd al-Rahman Jami (d. 1492 CE) and the feminist Forough Farrokhzad (d. 1967) in Persian.⁸⁷ Among the *ghazal* poets, one may cite Mir Taqi Mir (d. 1810 CE) and Ghalib (d. 1869 CE) in Urdu.⁸⁸ In Turkish poetry, mention should be made of the Ottoman Baki (d. 1600 CE), the modern Hikmet (d. 1963), and the Islamist Kisakürek (d. 1983).⁸⁹ In Swahili, one should not overlook the religious poet Seyyid Abdallah bin Nasir (d. 1820 CE) and the "secular" poet Abdillatif Abdalla.⁹⁰ Finally, writing in English were the iconoclastic Kahlil Gibran (d. 1931) and the diasporic Agha Shahid Ali (d. 2001).⁹¹

"Islamic literatures," whether understood broadly (the literary output of Muslims and non-Muslims influenced by Islamic civilization) or narrowly (the literary output of Muslims inspired directly by Islam), comprise a fourteen-century legacy of scripture, epic, prose, poetry, romance, and drama of a richness that is still largely untold. Together, they continue to affect and inspire the lives of well over a billion people throughout the world.

NOTES

1. See James Kritzeck, ed., *Anthology of Islamic literature: From the Rise of Islam to Modern Times* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1964) and Kritzeck, ed., *Modern Islamic Literature from 1800 to the Present* (New York: New American Library, 1970).

2. Annemarie Schimmel "Arts, Islamic," *Encyclopædia Britannica* from Encyclopædia Britannica Premium Service. <<http://www.britannica.com/eb/article-13869>> (Accessed March 1, 2006).

3. Alamgir Hashmi, ed., *The Worlds of Muslim Imagination* (Islamabad: Gulmohar, 1986), 3.

4. Ibid., 4. It should be noted that one literary movement does bear the name *al-adab al-Islami* (literally, "Islamic literature," in the singular), namely, literature produced in the context of the conservative Islamic religious revival in the Arab world. However, this "Islamic" literature, albeit prolific, has merited neither an entry in the comprehensive *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, nor in the *Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World*, although several paragraphs are devoted to it in the OEMIW entry, "Arabic Literature." Among *al-adab al-Islami's* most famous authors are the Egyptian Najib al-Kilani (d. 1995), who defined the movement in his treatise "Islamism and Literary Movements," and Sayyid Qutb (d. 1966), whose 30-volume exegetical *Fi Zilal al-Qur'an (In the Shade of the Qur'an)* remains one of the most popular and widely available works in the Islamic world. See *In the Shade of the Qur'an, Vol. 30*, trans. M. A. Salahi and A. A. Shamis (London, U.K.: MWH, 1979).

5. There are approximately 60 published translations of the Qur'an into English. For a bibliography up to 1996, see A. R. Kidwai, *A Guide to English Translations of the Quran* (Port Louis: Hassam Toorawa Trust, 1997). Translations that have appeared since 1996 include: *The Quran: A New Interpretation; Textual Exegesis by Muhammad Baqir Bebbudi*, translated by Colin Turner (Richmond, U.K.: Curzon Press, 1997); *The Qur'an: A Modern English Version*, translated by Majid Fakhry (Reading, U.K.: Garnet Publishing, 1997); *An Interpretation of the Qur'an: English Translation of the Meanings: A Bilingual Edition* (New York University Press, 2002); *The Quran, the First Poetic Translation*, by Fazlollah Nikayin (Skokie, Ill.: Ultimate Book, 2000); *The Qur'an, A New Translation from the Original*, by Mirza Abul Fazl [sic] (Hyderabad: Wakf Baitul Madina, 2002); *The Qur'an, A New Translation*, by Thomas Cleary (Chicago, Illinois: Starlatch Press, 2004); *The Qur'an, A New Translation*, by M.A.S. Abdel Haleem (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2004).

6. See Ross Brann, "Judah ha-Levi," in *The Literature of Al-Andalus*, ed. Maria Rosa Menocal, Raymond P. Scheindlin, and Michael Sells (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 265–281.

7. Djibril Tamsir Niane, *Sundiata, an Epic of Old Mali*, trans. G.D. Pickett (Harlow: Longman African Writers, 1994).

8. Sorayya Khan, *Noor* (Islamabad: Alhamra, 2003).

9. For a panoramic survey, see Schimmel, *Encyclopædia Britannica*. <<http://www.britannica.com/eb/article-13869>>; and for a short guide to further reading, see below.

10. See *The Fihrist of al-Nadim*, 2 vols., trans. Bayard Dodge (New York: Columbia University Press, 1970).

11. Kees Versteegh, *The Arabic Language* (Edinburgh, U.K.: Edinburgh University Press, 1997).

12. See Jonathan Bloom, *Paper Before Print: The History and Impact of Paper in the Islamic World* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 2001); see also, Shawkat M. Toorawa, *Ibn Abi Tahir Tayfur and Arabic Writerly Culture: A Ninth-Century Bookman in Baghdad* (London and New York: Routledge-Curzon, 2005).

13. On the Qur'an as a book, see Daniel A. Madigan, *The Qur'an's Self-Image: Writing and Authority in Islam's Scripture* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2001).

14. Scholarship on the Qur'an is vast. For a brief overview, see Andrew Rippin, "Koran," in *Encyclopaedia of Arabic Literature*, ed. Julie Scott Meisami and Paul Starkey (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), 2, 453–456; for in-depth information, see the *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'an*, 5 vols., ed. Jane Dammen McAuliffe (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2001–2006).

15. See, for example, *Islamic Jurisprudence: al-Shafi'i's Risala*, trans. Majid Khadduri (Baltimore, Maryland: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1961).

16. Ibn [al-]Arabi, *Bezels of Wisdom*, trans. R.W.J. Austin (New York: Paulist Press, 1980).

17. See *The Mathnawi of Jalalu'ddin Rumi*, ed. and trans. Reynold A. Nicholson, 8 vols. (London, U.K.: Luzac, 1925–1940). On Rumi, see Franklin Lewis, *Rumi Past and Present, East and West* (Oxford, U.K.: One World Publications, 2000). According to the 20 September 2002 issue of *Publisher's Weekly*, Rumi was the bestselling poet in the United States in 2002.

18. See *The Seven Odes*, trans. A.J. Arberry (London, U.K.: George Allen & Unwin, 1957).

19. For Ka'b's poem, see Michael Sells, *Desert Tracings: Six Classic Arabian Odes* (Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 1989); for Busiri's, see *The Burda of Imam Busiri*, trans. Hamza Yusuf, 3-CD set and Casebound Book (Hayward, California: Alhambra Productions, 2004).

20. See Michael Cooperson, *Al-Ma'mun* (Oxford, U.K.: One World Publications, 2005).

21. See Dimitri Gutas, *Greek Thought, Arabic Culture* (London and New York: Routledge, 1998).

22. See Mary Boyce, "Middle Persian Literature," *Handbuch der Orientalistik, Volume 4*, ed. Ilya Gershevitch et al. (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1968), 31–66.

23. See *History of Iranian Literature*, ed. Jan Rypka et al. (Dordrecht: D. Reidel Publishing Company), 1968.

24. Abu al-Qasim Ferdowsi, *Shahnameh: the Persian Book of Kings*, [selections] trans. Dick Davis (New York: Viking Press, 2006).

25. *Kalila and Dimna: Tales for Kings and Commoners: Selected Fables of Bidpai*, retold by Ramsay Wood (Rochester, Vermont: Inner Traditions International, 1986).

26. See, for example, the play *Yusuf'ya-Zulaykha* (Teheran: Sukhan, 2002) by the noted Iranian director and writer Pari Saberi (b. 1932).

27. *Layla and Majnun* by Nizami, a Prose Adaptation by Colin Turner (London, U.K.: Curzon Press, 1997). See also Maria Rosa Menocal, *Shards of Love: Exile and the Origins of the Lyric* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1994).

28. *The Romance Tradition in Urdu: Adventures from the Dastan of Amir Hamza*, trans. Frances W. Pritchett (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991).

29. *Death before Dying: The Sufi Poems of Sultan Bahū*, trans. Jamal Elias (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1998).

30. On fields of study and curricula of the Islamic sciences, see George Makdisi, *The Rise of Colleges: Institutions of Learning in Islam and the West* (Edinburgh, U.K.: Edinburgh University Press, 1981).

31. See *The Commentary on the Qur'an by Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn Jarir al-Tabari*, partially translated by J. Cooper (Oxford, U.K.: Oxford University Press, 1987).

32. For Ibn Kathir (and Tabari), see *Interpretation of the Meanings of the Noble Qur'an*, trans. Muhammad Taqi-al-Din al-Hilali and Muhammad Muhsin Khan, 9 vols. (Riyadh: Darussalam, 2000). The *Tafsir al-Jalalayn* (and numerous other major Qur'an commentaries) will be available in translation at <www.altafsir.com> in coming years.

33. See Peter Riddell, *Transferring a Tradition: 'Abd Al-Ra'uf Al-Singkili's Rendering into Malay of the Jalalayn Commentary* (Berkeley, California: Centers for South and Southeast Asia Studies, University of California at Berkeley, 1990).

34. See *The Cambridge Companion to Islamic Philosophy*, ed. Peter Adamson and Richard C. Taylor (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2005). Incidentally, Avicenna and Averroës are included by Dante in the *(Divine) Comedy*. Unlike the Prophet Muhammad, who resides in Hell, they are in Limbo, and are spared Hell.

35. Nizam al-Mulk, *The Book of Government or Rules for Kings*, trans. Hubert Darke (Richmond, U. K.: Curzon Press, 2002).

36. Amin Maalouf, *Samarkand*, trans. Russell Harris (London: Quartet, 1992). Maalouf is a Paris-based, non-Muslim Lebanese writer.

37. Ghazali, *Deliverance from Error*, trans. Richard Joseph McCarthy (Louisville, Kentucky: Fons Vitae, 1999); *The Revival of the Religious Sciences*, partial translation by Banky Behari (Farnham: Sufi Publishing, 1972); *Ghazali's Book of Counsel for Kings*, trans. R. R. C. Bagley (London, U.K.: Oxford University Press, 1964).

38. Fadhilallah Haeri, *Keys to the Qur'an*, 5 vols., new edition (Reading, U. K.: Garnet Publishing, 1993).

39. See Rotraud Wielandt, "Exegesis of the Qur'an: Early Modern and Contemporary," in *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'an*, 2, 124–142. On Islahi, see Mustansir Mir, *Coherence in the Qur'an* (Indianapolis, Indiana: American Trust Publications, 1986).

40. Amina Wadud, *Qur'an and Woman: Rereading the Sacred Text from a Woman's Perspective* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999); Asma Barlas, "Believing Women" in Islam: *Unreading Patriarchal Interpretations of the Qur'an* (Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, 2002); Nimat Hafez Barazangi, *Woman's Identity and the Quran: A New Reading* (Gainesville, Florida: University Press of Florida, 2004).

41. *The Risalatul-'Ghufran*, summarized and partially translated by Reynold A. Nicholson (London, U.K.: Royal Asiatic Society Journal, 1900).

42. For a systematic discussion of *al-Kitab*, see Michael Carter, *Sibawayhi* (London, U.K.: I.B. Tauris, 2004).
43. See Azad Bilgrami, "India as a Sacred Islamic Land," in *Religions of India in Practice*, trans. Carl Ernst, and ed. Donald S. Lopez, Jr. (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1995), 556–564.
44. See A.M. Zubaidi, "The impact of the Qur'an and Hadith on medieval Arabic literature," in *Arabic Literature to the End of the Umayyad Period*, ed. A.F.L. Beeston et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 322–343; Stefan Wild, "The Koran as subtext in modern Arabic poetry," in *Representations of the Divine in Arabic Poetry*, ed. Gert Borg and Ed de Moor (Amsterdam and Atlanta: Rodopi, 2001), 139–160; Shawkat M. Toorawa, "Modern Arabic Literature and the Qur'an: Creativity, Inimitability... Incompatibilities?" in *Religious Perspectives in Modern Muslim and Jewish Literatures*, ed. Glenda Abramson and Hilary Kilpatrick (London, U.K.: Routledge-Curzon, 2005), 239–257.
45. "The Life of Omar Ibn Said", trans. Ala A. Alryyes, in *The Multilingual Anthology of American Literature*, trans. Ala A. Alryyes and ed. Marc Shell and Werner Sollors (New York: New York University Press, 2000), 58–94.
46. Adonis' *al-Kitab* is not available in translation. For one of his works in English, see Adonis, *A Time between Ashes and Roses: Poems*, trans. Shawkat M. Toorawa (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2004).
47. Tahir Wattar, *The Earthquake*, trans. William Granara (London, U.K.: Saqi Books, 2000).
48. Naguib Mahfouz, *Children of the Alley* (New York: Doubleday, 1996).
49. Tawfiq al-Hakim, *The People of the Cave [Ahl al-Kahf]*, trans. Mahmoud El Lozy (Cairo: Elias Modern Publishing House & Co., 1989).
50. Salman Rushdie, *The Satanic Verses* (London, U.K.: Viking Press, 1988); *Haram and the Sea of Stories* (London, U.K.: Granta Books in association with Penguin Books, 1991).
51. Amin Malak, *Muslim Narratives and the Discourse of English* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2005).
52. Ahmed Ali, *Twilight in Delhi* (Bombay: Oxford University Press, 1966). The following are the mentioned authors' most recent novels: Nuruddin Farah, *Links* (New York: Riverhead Books, 2004); Abdulrazak Gurnah, *Desertion* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2005); M.G. Vassanji, *When She Was Queen* (Toronto: Doubleday Canada, 2005).
53. Zaynab Alkali, *The Cobwebs and Other Stories* (Ikeja, Lagos State, Nigeria: Malthouse, 1997); Che Husna Azhari, *An Anthology of Kelantan Tales* (Selangor Darul Ehsan Malaysia: Furada Publishing House, 1992).
54. *Naguib Mahfouz: From Regional Fame to Global Recognition*, ed. Michael Beard and Adnan Haydar (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 1993).
55. Tayeb Salih, *Season of Migration to the North*, trans. Denys Johnson-Davies (London, U.K.: Heinemann, 1969). See also Jamal Mahjoub, *Wings of Dust* (Oxford, U.K.: Heinemann, 1994), which is itself a response, as it were, to Saleh's book.
56. Hamidou Kane, *Ambiguous Adventure*, trans. Katherine Woods (New York: Walker, 1963).

57. Abdel Rahman Munif, *Cities of Salt*, trans. Peter Theroux (New York: Random House, 1987).
58. Orhan Pamuk, *Snow*, trans. Maureen Freely (London, U.K.: Faber and Faber, 2004); Pamuk, *My Name is Red*, trans. Erdag Göknaar (New York: Alfred Knopf, 2001).
59. Sadegh Hedayat, *The Blind Owl*, trans. D.P. Costello (Repr., Edinburgh, U.K.: Rebel Inc., 1997); Albert Camus, *The Stranger*, trans. Matthew Ward (New York: Vintage Books, 1989).
60. Qurratulain Hyder, *River of Fire*, “transcreated” into English by the author (New Delhi: Kali for Women, 1998). See also *Domains of Fear and Desire: Urdu Stories*, ed. Muhammad Umar Memon (Toronto: TSAR, 1992).
61. Zayd Muti’ Dammaj, *The Hostage, A Novel*, trans. May Jayyusi and Christopher Tingley (New York: Interlink, 1994).
62. Driss Chraïbi, *Muhammad, A Novel*, trans. Nadia Benabid (Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1998).
63. Syed Manzurul Islam, *The Mapmakers of Spitalfields* (Leeds, U.K.: Peepal Tree, 1997).
64. *The Assemblies of Al Hariri*, trans. Thomas Chenery (Repr., Farnborough: Gregg, 1969); *The Maqamat of Badi al-Zaman al-Hamadhani*, trans. W. J. Prendergast (Repr., London, U.K.: Curzon Press, 1973).
65. Judah al-Harizi, *The Book of Tahkemoni*, trans. David Simha Segal (Portland, Oregon: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2001); *The Life of Lazarillo de Tormes: His Fortunes and Adversities*, trans. W.S. Merwin (New York: New York Review of Books, 2005).
66. *The Arabian Nights*, trans. Husain Haddawy (New York: W.W. Norton, 1990).
67. On Malay literature in general, see Sir Richard Winstedt, *A History of Classical Malay Literature* (Oxford, U.K.: Oxford University Press, 1961); *The Book of Dede Korkut*, trans. Geoffrey Lewis (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 1974); *Darangen: in Original Maranao Verse with English Translation*, trans. Maria Delia Coronel, 8 vols. (Marawi City, Philippines: Folklore Division, University Research Center, Mindanao State University, 1986–1995).
68. Assia Djebar, *Far from Madina* (London, U.K.: Quartet Books, 1994); *The History of al-Tabari*, 38 vols., general editor Ehsan Yar-Shater, various translators (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 1985–1999).
69. Jorge Luis Borges, “Al-Hakim, the Masked Dyer of Mery,” in *Borges, A Reader*, ed. Emir Rodriguez Monegal and Alistair Reid (New York: Dutton, 1981).
70. *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, trans. Muhammad Muhsin Khan, 6th ed., 9 vols. (Lahore, Pakistan: Kazi Publications, 1983); *An-Nawawi’s Forty hadith*, trans. Ezzeddin Ibrahim and Denys Johnson-Davies (Beirut: Holy Koran Publishing House, 1976).
71. *The Introductory Chapters of Yaqui’s Mu’jam al-Buldan*, trans. Wadie Jwaideh (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1959); *Hudud al-‘Alam, The Regions of the World*, trans. Vladimir Minorsky (London, U.K.: Luzac, 1970).

72. On Islamic biography generally, see Michael Cooperson, *Classical Arabic Biography: the Heirs of the Prophets in the Age of al-Ma'mun* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2000). On Abu al-Faraj's work, see Hilary Kilpatrick, *Making the Great Book of Songs* (London, U.K.: Routledge-Curzon, 2003).

73. *The Life of Muhammad*, trans. Alfred Guillaume (London and New York: Oxford University Press, 1955).

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