

Abbasid Belles Lettres The Cambridge History Of Arabic Literature

The study of the family is one of the major lacunas in Byzantine Studies. Angeliki Laiou remarked in 1989 that 'the study of the Byzantine family is still in its infancy', and this assertion remains true today. The present volume addresses this lacuna. It comprises 19 chapters written by international experts in the field which take a variety of approaches to the study of the Byzantine family, and embrace a chronological span from the later Roman to the late Byzantine empire. The context is established by chapters focusing on the Roman roots of the Byzantine family, the Christianisation of the family, and the nature of the family in contemporaneous cultures (the late antique west and the Islamic east). Key methodological approaches to the Byzantine family are highlighted and discussed, in particular prosopographical and life course approaches. The contribution of hagiography to the understanding of the Byzantine family is analysed by several authors; other chapters on the family and children in art and on the archaeology of the Middle Byzantine house explore the material evidence that can shed light on the Byzantine family. Overall, the diversity of families that existed in Byzantium (blood, fictive, metaphorical) is emphasised, and chapters

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consider the specific cases of ascetic, monastic, aristocratic and peasant families, as well as the imperial family, which is illuminated by the comparative case of a Caliphal family. The volume is topped and tailed by a Preface and an Afterword by the editors, which address the state of the field and consider the way ahead. Thus the volume is vital in putting the subject of the Byzantine Family in sharp focus and setting the research agenda for the future.

At the heart of this book is a spectral theory of world literature that draws on Edward Said, Aamir Mufti, Jacques Derrida and world-systems theory to assess how the field produces local literature as an "e;other"e; that haunts its universalising, assimilative imperative with the force of the uncanny. It takes the Middle Eastern novel as both metonym and metaphor of a spectral world literature. It explores the worlding of novels from the Middle East in recent years, and, focusing on the pivotal sites of Middle Eastern modernity (Egypt, Turkey, Iran), argues that lost to their global production, circulation and reception is their constitution in the logic of spectrality. With the intention of redressing this imbalance, it critically restores their engagements with the others of Middle Eastern modernity and shows, through a new reading of the Middle Eastern novel, that world literature is always-already haunted by its others, the ghosts of modernity.

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The Encyclopedia of Historians and Historical Writing contains over 800 entries ranging from Lord Acton and Anna Comnena to Howard Zinn and from Herodotus to Simon Schama. Over 300 contributors from around the world have composed critical assessments of historians from the beginning of historical writing to the present day, including individuals from related disciplines like Jürgen Habermas and Clifford Geertz, whose theoretical contributions have informed historical debate. Additionally, the Encyclopedia includes some 200 essays treating the development of national, regional and topical historiographies, from the Ancient Near East to the history of sexuality. In addition to the Western tradition, it includes substantial assessments of African, Asian, and Latin American historians and debates on gender and subaltern studies.

This is the first English translation of the *Tarikh al-Mustabsir*, written in the early quarter of the thirteenth century by Ibn al-Mujawir. The text is a fascinating account of the western and southern areas of the Arabian Peninsula by a man from the east of the Islamic world, probably from Khurasan in Iran. Ibn al-Mujawir was a man who in all probability followed the age-old Islamic practice of making the pilgrimage to Mecca and thereafter travelling in the area to further his business interests. His route began in Mecca and essentially ran south through

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the Red Sea coastal plain, Tihamah, down into the Yemen and along the southern coast of the peninsula. He paused long in Aden, where he observed closely the activities of the port to report at some length on its administration, its taxes, its markets, its currency, its weights and measures, and the like. His route then continued along the southern coast of Arabia into the Gulf, and he presumably returned home to the east via Iraq. The author is a wonderful observer of people: their buildings, their dress, their customs, their agriculture, their food and their history. This book is a unique source for the social and economic history of thirteenth-century south Arabia, written with a humour and wit otherwise unknown in the writings of medieval Islam. The text is of major linguistic importance too, written as it is in a far from classical Arabic. This translation is fully annotated with an introduction, appendices, glossary and full index, and contains maps and illustrations.

During the eleventh and twelfth centuries, Andalusian Jewish poets introduced philosophical theories into their devotional verse. This study explores the impact of their rich intellectual and cultural life on their Hebrew poems devoted to the soul.

Arabs and Iranians in the Islamic Conquest Narrative analyzes how early Muslim historians merged the pre-Islamic histories of the Arab and Iranian peoples into a

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didactic narrative culminating with the Arab conquest of Iran. This book provides an in-depth examination of Islamic historical accounts of the encounters between representatives of these two peoples that took place in the centuries prior to the coming of Islam. By doing this, it uncovers anachronistic projections of dynamic identity and political discourses within the contemporaneous Islamic world. It shows how the formulaic placement of such embellishment within the context of the narrative served to justify the Arabs' rise to power, whilst also explaining the fall of the Iranian Sasanian empire. The objective of this book is not simply to mine Islamic historical chronicles for the factual data they contain about the pre-Islamic period, but rather to understand how the authors of these works thought about this era. By investigating the intersection between early Islamic memory, identity construction, and power discourses, this book will benefit researchers and students of Islamic history and literature and Middle Eastern Studies.

Offering a new reading of Islamic ethical and political thought in the Buyid period (334-440/946-1048), this book focuses particularly on the philosopher Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawhīdī who lived in Baghdad and what is now western Iran. *Ethics in Islam* provides the first major treatment of al-Tawhīdī's ethics, political thought, and social idealism, investigating the complex influences that shaped this thought and especially his concept of friendship, which is analysed in the

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unique context of Byzid society. Al-Tawhid revives the value of friendship in politics. He introduces it as the best way to reform social and political order and as a means to the good life, to restrain passion and self-interest, to bring about cooperation and promote reason, and for action in opposition to religious zeal. Instead of seeing him as alienated from society, supposedly rejecting traditional Muslim beliefs, this book places him in his historical and intellectual contexts, and shows that while he was original in many ways, his outlook was firmly rooted in the Islamic culture in which he was educated. Contributing to modern discussions of Islam and political ethics, this book is of interest to scholars and researchers of political philosophy, comparative ethical thought and Islamic studies.

This book explores the long history of the evolution of Arab political identity, which predates the time of the Prophet Muhammad and is characterized by tolerance, compassion, generosity, hospitality, self-control, correct behaviour, equality and consensus. The author argues that present-day struggles in many Arab countries to redefine politics and polity are related to the fact that the underlying political culture of the Arabs has been overridden for centuries by successive political regimes which have deviated from the original political culture that the Prophet adhered to. The book outlines the political culture that existed before Islam, examines how the Conquests and the rule of the early dynasties

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(Umayyad and Abbasid) of the Islamic world found it necessary to override it, and analyses the effect of rule by non-Arabs – successively Mamluks, Ottoman Turks and Western colonial powers. It discusses the impact of these distortions on present day politics in the Arab world, and concludes by appealing for a reawakening of, and respect for, the cultural elements underlying the origins of Arab political identity.

The first volume in a three-volume set, this is a study of the rise of Persian Sufi spirituality and literature in Islam during the first six Muslim centuries. This collection of 24 essays covers the key achievements of the Muslim intellectual and cultural tradition in history, mysticism, philosophy and poetry. It demonstrates the positive role played by Sufi thinkers during this period. The subjects covered include: Sufi masters and schools; literature and poetry; spiritual chivalry; divine love; Persian Sufi literature - Rumi and 'Attar.

This book offers a comprehensive reinterpretation of Shāfi's "Risāla" and shows how Shāfi sought to formulate an all-embracing hermeneutic that portrays the law as a tightly interlocking structure organized around defined interactions of the Qur'an and the Sunna.

The Encyclopedia of Islamic Civilization and Religion provides scholarly coverage of the religion, culture and history of the Islamic world, at a time when that world

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is undergoing considerable change and is a focus of international study and debate. The non-Muslim world's perceptions of Islam have often tended to be dominated by unrepresentative radical extremist movements and media interpretations of events involving such movements, to the extent that many people are unaware of the depth and variety of Islamic thought. At the same time, many who have had a formal training in Islamic studies have tended to concentrate on the traditional, to the exclusion of the contemporary. The Encyclopedia of Islamic Civilization and Religion covers the full range of Islamic thought, in historical depth, but it also provides substantial coverage of contemporary trends across the Muslim world. With well over a thousand entries on Islamic theology, history, arts, science, law and institutions, and coverage of Islam in individual countries and cities around the world, the Encyclopedia of Islamic Civilization and Religion provides an extremely rich resource for students and researchers in religious studies and Middle Eastern studies. Entries are cross-referenced and bibliographies are provided. There is a full index. Routledge published *The Qur'an: An Encyclopedia* in 2005, an excellent companion to the Encyclopedia of Islamic Civilization and Religion. When the Abbasids overthrew the Umayyads in 750 CE and ushered in Islam's Golden Age, ideas about gender and sexuality were central to the process by

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which the caliphate achieved self-definition and articulated its systems of power and thought. Nadia Maria El Cheikh's study reveals the importance of women to the writing of early Islamic history.

Abundance from the Desert provides a comprehensive introduction to classical Arabic poetry, one of the richest of poetic traditions. Covering the period roughly of 500â€"1250 c.e., it features original translations and illuminating discussions of a number of major classical Arabic poems from a variety of genres. The poems are presented chronologically, each situated within a specific historical and literary context. Together, the selected poems suggest the range and depth of classical Arabic poetic expression; read in sequence, they suggest the gradual evolution of a tradition. Moving beyond a mere chronicle, Farrin outlines a new approach to appreciating classical Arabic poetry based on an awareness of concentric symmetry, in which the poem's unity is viewed not as a linear progression but as an elaborate symmetrical plot. In doing so, the author presents these works in a broader, comparative light, revealing connections with other literatures. The reader is invited to examine these classical Arabic works not as isolated phenomena—notwithstanding their uniqueness and their association with a discrete tradition—but rather as part of a great multicultural heritage. This pioneering book marks an important step forward in the study of

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Arabic poetry. At the same time, it opens the door to this rich tradition for the general reader.

A major achievement in the field of translation, this anthology presents a rich assortment of classical Arabic poems and literary prose, from pre-Islamic times until the 18th century, with short introductions to guide non-specialist students and informative endnotes and bibliography for advanced scholars. Like many pre-modern Arabic anthologies it aims at being both entertaining and informative. It ranges from the early Bedouin poems with their evocation of desert life to refined urban lyrical verse, from tender love poetry to sonorous eulogy or vicious lampoons, and from the heights of mystical rapture to the frivolity of comic verse. The prose contains anecdotes, entertaining or edifying tales and parables, a fairy-tale, a bawdy story, samples of literary criticism, and much more. With this anthology, distinguished Arabist Geert Jan van Gelder brings together well-known texts as well as less familiar pieces that will be new even to scholars in the field. Many recent studies and anthologies of Middle Eastern literatures are primarily interested in Islam and religious matters--an emphasis that leads to the common misconception that almost everything in the region was and is dominated by religion. Classical Arabic Literature instead brings to life the rich variety of pre-modern Arabic social and cultural life, where secular texts happily

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coexisted with religious ones. This masterful anthology, in English only, will introduce this vibrant literary heritage to a wide spectrum of new readers. *Studies in Islamic Civilization* draws upon the works of Western scholars to make the case that without the tremendous contribution of the Muslim world there would have been no Renaissance in Europe. For almost a thousand years Islam was arguably one of the leading civilizations of the world spanning a geographic area greater than any other. It eliminated social distinctions between classes and races, made clear that people should enjoy the bounties of the earth provided they did not ignore morals and ethics, and rescued knowledge that would have been lost, if not forever, then at least for centuries. The genius of its scholars triggered the intellectual tradition of Europe and for over seven hundred years its language, Arabic, was the international language of science. Strange then that its legacy lies largely ignored and buried in time. In the words of Aldous Huxley, "Great is truth, but still greater, from a practical point of view, is silence about truth. By simply not mentioning certain subjects... propagandists have influenced opinion much more effectively than they could have by the most eloquent denunciations." *Studies in Islamic Civilization* is a compelling attempt to redress this wrong and restore the historical truths of a "golden age" that ushered in the Islamic renaissance, and as a by-product that of the West. In doing so it gives a

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bird's eye view of the achievements of a culture that at its height was considered the model of human progress and development. (2010).

A compelling look at the Fatimid caliphate's robust culture of documentation The lost archive of the Fatimid caliphate (909–1171) survived in an unexpected place: the storage room, or geniza, of a synagogue in Cairo, recycled as scrap paper and deposited there by medieval Jews. Marina Rustow tells the story of this extraordinary find, inviting us to reconsider the longstanding but mistaken consensus that before 1500 the dynasties of the Islamic Middle East produced few documents, and preserved even fewer. Beginning with government documents before the Fatimids and paper's westward spread across Asia, Rustow reveals a millennial tradition of state record keeping whose very continuities suggest the strength of Middle Eastern institutions, not their weakness. Tracing the complex routes by which Arabic documents made their way from Fatimid palace officials to Jewish scribes, the book provides a rare window onto a robust culture of documentation and archiving not only comparable to that of medieval Europe, but, in many cases, surpassing it. Above all, Rustow argues that the problem of archives in the medieval Middle East lies not with the region's administrative culture, but with our failure to understand preindustrial documentary ecology. Illustrated with stunning examples from the

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Cairo Geniza, this compelling book advances our understanding of documents as physical artifacts, showing how the records of the Fatimid caliphate, once recovered, deciphered, and studied, can help change our thinking about the medieval Islamic world and about premodern polities more broadly.

This volume covers artistic prose and poetry produced in the 'Abbasid empire from the mid-eighth to the thirteenth centuries AD.

To Christians the Iberian Peninsula was Hispania, to Muslims al-Andalus, and to Jews Sefarad. As much as these were all names given to the same real place, the names also constituted ideas, and like all ideas, they have histories of their own. To some, al-Andalus and Sefarad were the subjects of conventional expressions of attachment to and pride in homeland of the universal sort displayed in other Islamic lands and Jewish communities; but other Muslim and Jewish political, literary, and religious actors variously developed the notion that al-Andalus or Sefarad, its inhabitants, and their culture were exceptional and destined to play a central role in the history of their peoples. In *Iberian Moorings* Ross Brann traces how al-Andalus and Sefarad were invested with special political, cultural, and historical significance across the Middle Ages. This is the first work to analyze the tropes of Andalusian and Sefardi exceptionalism in comparative perspective. Brann focuses on the social power of these tropes in

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Andalusi Islamic and Sefardi Jewish cultures from the tenth through the twelfth century and reflects on their enduring influence and its expressions in scholarship, literature, and film down to the present day.

An electrifying account of the extraordinary untold history behind Darwin's theory of evolution

This book – the third and concluding volume of the series on “Submerged Literature” in ancient Greek culture – expands the approach presented in the previous volumes to a comparative perspective. The case studies range from Qumran texts to Arabic-Islamic literature, from ancient Rome to gnostic texts, with a particular emphasis on anthropological themes and methods, aiming to offer new insights for both classical and comparative studies.

In *Licit Magic: The Life and Letters of al-ʿIb b. ʿAbbād* (d. 385/995) Maurice A. Pomerantz explores the biography and literary output of a major tenth-century Muslim statesman, literary patron, and intellectual.

An introduction to Modern Arabic Literature, from the beginning of the nineteenth century to the present

Drawing on recent developments in the comparative study of religion, this book explores the trends of the past sixty years from a global perspective. Each of the ten chapters covers the study of religion in a different region of the world, from

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Europe and the Americas to Asia and the Far East. Topics covered include: local background to the study of religions formation of religious studies in the region important thinkers and writings institutions interregional diversity and interregional connections emerging issues. This book is a major contribution to the field of religious studies and a valuable reference for scholars, researchers and graduate students.

"The Arabian Nights" has become a synonym for the fabulous and the exotic. Every child is familiar with the stories of Aladdin, Sinbad the Sailor and Ali Baba. Yet very few people, even specialists in oriental literature, have a clear idea of when the book was written or what exactly it is. Far from being a batch of stories for children, "The Arabian Nights" contains hundreds of narratives of all kinds - fables, epics, erotica, debates, fairy tales, political allegories, mystical anecdotes and comedies. It is a labyrinth of stories within stories. Widely held in contempt in the Middle East for its frivolity and occasional obscenity, the work has nevertheless had a major influence on European and American culture, to the extent that the story collection must be considered as a key work in Western literature. A full understanding of the writings of Voltaire, Dickens, Melville, Proust and Borges, or indeed of the origins of science fiction, is impossible without some familiarity with the stories of the "Nights". This companion aims to guide the

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reader into this labyrinth of storytelling. It traces the development of the stories from prehistoric India and Pharaonic Egypt to modern times, and explores the history of translation and imitation. Above all, it uses the stories as a guide to the social history and counter-culture of the medieval Near East and the world of the storyteller, the snake charmer, the burglar, the sorcerer, the drug-addict, the treasure hunter and the adulterer.

Translation-related activities from and into Arabic have significantly increased in the last few years, in both scope and scale. The launch of a number of national translation projects, policies and awards in a number of Arab countries, together with the increasing translation from Arabic in a wide range of subject areas outside the Arab World – especially in the aftermath of the Arab Spring – have complicated and diversified the dynamics of the translation industry involving Arabic. The Routledge Handbook of Arabic Translation seeks to explicate Arabic translation practice, pedagogy and scholarship, with the aim of producing a state-of-the-art reference book that maps out these areas and meets the pedagogical and research needs of advanced undergraduate and postgraduate students, as well as active researchers.

How Do You Say “Epigram” in Arabic? is the first study of one of the most popular and enduring genres in the history of Arabic poetry, the maq??ah, and a contribution toward a decolonized comparative literature.

There are few ideals of character as distinctive and divisive as the ancient virtue of 'greatness of soul'. A larger-than-life virtue embodying nothing less than a vision of human greatness, it has often been seen as a relic of the Homeric world and its honour-loving heroes. In

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philosophy, it found its most celebrated expression in Aristotle's ethics, and it has lived on in the minds of philosophers and theologians in different forms ever since. Yet among the many lives this virtue has led in intellectual history, one remains conspicuously unwritten. This is the life it led in the Arabic tradition. A virtue of Greek warriors and their democratic epigones — what happened when this splendid virtue made landfall in the Islamic world? This world, too, had its native heroes, who bequeathed their conception of extraordinary virtue to posterity. Heroic virtue is above all expressed in a boundless aspiration to what is greatest. Could we admire such virtue enough to want it as our own? What can we learn from the Arabic tradition of the virtues? In answering these questions, Sophia Vasalou elucidates a larger family of virtues that are united by their preoccupation with all things great: the 'virtues of greatness'. An important constituent of the character ideals expounded within the Islamic world, this type of virtue tells us as much about the content of these ideals as about their kaleidoscopic genealogies.

Walter Cohen argues that the history of European literature and each of its standard periods can be illuminated by comparative consideration of the different literary languages within Europe and by the ties of European literature to world literature. World literature is marked by recurrent, systematic features, outcomes of the way that language and literature are at once the products of major change and its agents. Cohen tracks these features from ancient times to the present, distinguishing five main overlapping stages. Within that framework, he shows that European literatures ongoing internal and external relationships are most visible at the level of form rather than of thematic statement or mimetic representation. European literature emerges from world literature before the birth of Europe — during antiquity, whose Classical

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languages are the heirs to the complex heritage of Afro-Eurasia. This legacy is later transmitted by Latin to the various vernaculars. The uniqueness of the process lies in the gradual displacement of the learned language by the vernacular, long dominated by Romance literatures. That development subsequently informs the second crucial differentiating dimension of European literature: the multicontinental expansion of its languages and characteristic genres, especially the novel, beginning in the Renaissance. This expansion ultimately results in the reintegration of European literature into world literature and thus in the creation of today's global literary system. The distinctiveness of European literature is to be found in these interrelated trajectories.

The Culture of Letter-Writing in Pre-Modern Islamic Society received an honourable mention from the British-Kuwait Friendship Society at BRISMES 2009. Writing letters was an important component of intellectual life in the Middle Islamic period, telling us much about the cultural history of pre-modern Islamic society. This book offers a unique analysis of letter-writing, focusing on the notion of the power of the pen. The author looks at the wider context of epistolography, relating it to the power structures of Islamic society in that period. He also attempts to identify some of the similarities and differences between Muslim modes of letter-writing and those of western cultures. One of the strengths of this book is that it is based on a wide range of primary Arabic sources, thus reflecting the broader epistemological importance of letter-writing in Islamic society.

Writings in learned subjects from the period eighth to thirteenth centuries, AD.

This volume of The Cambridge History of Arabic Literature covers artistic prose and poetry produced in the heartland and provinces of the 'Abbasid empire during the second great period

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of Arabic literature, from the mid-eighth to the thirteenth centuries AD. 'Abbasid literature was characterised by the emergence of many new genres and of a scholarly and sophisticated critical consciousness. This volume deals chronologically with the main genres and provides extended studies of major poets, prose-writers and literary theorists. It concludes with a comprehensive survey of the relatively unknown literature of the Yemen to appear in a European language since the manuscript discoveries of recent years. To make the material accessible to non-specialist readers, 'Abbasid authors are quoted in English translation wherever possible, and clear explanations of their literary techniques and conventions are provided. With chapters by leading specialists from the Middle East, Europe and America, the volume represents a wide cross-section of current academic opinion.

A vital analysis of world literature through history. What constitutes a nation's literature? How do literatures of different countries interact with one another? In this groundbreaking study, Alexander Beecroft develops a new way of thinking about world literature. Drawing on a series of examples and case studies, the book ranges from ancient epic to the contemporary fiction of Roberto Bolaño and Amitav Ghosh. Moving across literary ecologies of varying sizes, from small societies to the planet as a whole, the environments in which literary texts are produced and circulated, *An Ecology of World Literature* places in dialogue scholarly perspectives on ancient and modern, western and non-western texts, navigating literary study into new and uncharted territory.

This companion offers a wide-ranging introduction to the rapidly expanding field of translation studies, bringing together some of the best recent scholarship to present its most important current themes. Features new work from well-known scholars. Includes a broad range of geo-

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linguistic and theoretical perspectives Offers an up-to-date overview of an expanding field A thorough introduction to translation studies for both undergraduates and graduates Multi-disciplinary relevance for students with diverse career goals

Islamic civilization was once the envy of the world. From a succession of glittering, cosmopolitan capitals, Islamic empires lorded it over the Middle East, North Africa, Central Asia and swathes of the Indian subcontinent, while Europe cowered feebly at the margins. For centuries the caliphate was both ascendant on the battlefield and triumphant in the battle of ideas, its cities unrivaled powerhouses of artistic grandeur, commercial power, spiritual sanctity, and forward-looking thinking, in which nothing was off limits. *Islamic Empires* is a history of this rich and diverse civilization told through its greatest cities over the fifteen centuries of Islam, from its earliest beginnings in Mecca in the seventh century to the astonishing rise of Doha in the twenty-first. Marozzi brilliantly connects the defining moments in Islamic history: from the Prophet Mohammed receiving his divine revelations in Mecca and the First Crusade of 1099 to the conquest of Constantinople in 1453 and the phenomenal creation of the merchant republic of Beirut in the nineteenth century, and how this world is continuing to change today.

Other titles by Leon J. Weinberger: *Anthology of Hebrew Poetry in Greece, Anatolia, and the Balkans* *Early Synagogue Poets in the Balkans* *Jewish Poets in Crete* *Jewish Prince in Moslem Spain: Selected Poems of Samuel ibn Nagrela* *Rabbanite and Karaite Liturgical Poetry in Southeastern Europe* *Romaniote Penitential Poetry*

Mirrors for princes form a substantial and important genre in many pre-modern literatures.

Their ostensible purpose is to advise the king; at the same time they assert that the king, if he

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is truly virtuous, will appreciate being reminded of the contingency of his power. The unknown author of the Counsel for Kings studied in this book wrote in a distinctive early tenth-century Iranian environment. He deploys an abundant set of cultural materials representing 'perennial wisdom' of mixed provenances, which he reinvigorates by applying them to the circumstances of his own time and place. AGBP The first volume situates Counsel for Kings in its historical context. The second volume gives direct access to a substantial portion of the text through translation and commentary.

This reference work covers the classical, transitional and modern periods. Editors and contributors cover an international scope of Arabic literature in many countries.

This volume deals with the medieval shu'ʿbiyyah movement (in which non-Arab Muslims sought equality of power and status with Arabs) in al-Andalus, Muslim Spain. By analysing a letter composed by Ibn Garcia during the 11th century, the tensions between Arab and non-Arab Muslims are discussed in detail. Symbols, stories and legends used in the shu'ʿbiyyah corpus of writings are analysed in the light of the political and theological development in al-Andalus and the Muslim world. Authority, legitimacy and power are central both to the discussion of Ibn Garcia's letter and the history of the shu'ʿbiyyah movement. The first part gives the historical background to the history of al-Andalus. Ethnic conflicts and tensions related to authority and power are of special interest. The second part, gives a detailed analysis of Ibn Garcia's shu'ʿbiyyah letter in relation to the historical and contemporary situation in al-Andalus.

Insights into power, spectacle, and performance in the courts of Middle Eastern rulers In recent decades, scholars have produced much new research on courtly life in medieval Europe, but

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studies on imperial and royal courts across the Middle East have received much less attention, particularly for courts before 1500AD. In the Presence of Power, however, sheds new light on courtly life across the region. This insightful, exploratory collection of essays uncovers surprising commonalities across a broad swath of cultures. The pre-modern period in this volume includes roughly seven centuries, opening with the first dynasty of Islam, the Umayyads, whose reign marked an important watershed for Late Antique culture, and closing with the rule of the so-called “gunpowder” empires of the Ottomans and Safavids over much of the Near East in the sixteenth century. In between, this volume locates similarities across the Western Medieval, Byzantine and Islamicate courtly cultures, spanning a vast history and geography to demonstrate the important cross-pollinations that occurred between their literary and cultural legacies. This study does not presume the presence of one shared courtly institution across time and space, but rather seeks to understand the different ways in which contemporaries experienced and spoke about these places of power and performance. Adopting a very broad view of performances, In the Presence of Power includes exuberant expressions of love in Arabic stories, shadow plays in Mamluk Cairo, Byzantine storytelling, religious food traditions in Christian Cyprus, advice, and political and ethnographic performances of power.

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