

**EXPANDED EDITION**

# **Masterpieces of the Orient**



**Edited by G. L. Anderson**



# Masterpieces of the Orient

*ENLARGED EDITION*



Edited by G. L. Anderson

UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII

General Editor  
Maynard Mack  
YALE UNIVERSITY



---

W · W · NORTON & COMPANY · INC · New York

## FOR JULIET

for the mole on whose cheek  
I'd barter Bukhara and Samarkand

Copyright © 1977, 1961 by W. W. Norton & Company, Inc.

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data  
Anderson, George Lincoln, 1920- ed.

Masterpieces of the Orient.

Bibliography: p.

Includes index.

1. Oriental literature—Translations into English.
2. English literature—Translations from Oriental languages. I. Title.

PJ409.A5 1977 808.8 76-25159

ISBN 0-393-09196-1 pbk.

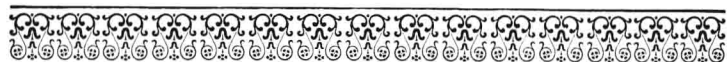
*Book design by John Woodlock*

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0



# Preface



This volume contains extracts from the literatures of Arabia, Persia, India, China, and Japan. Their standards are not our own, and the pleasure they give to us is often different from what we get from Western literature. The word "Orient" itself is a vague term, of use only for convenience. "East" would not be better: there is an Arab literature in Morocco, which is fifteen hundred miles west of Athens, and there is Western literature in Vladivostok, almost a thousand miles east of Peking. "Asiatic"—a word frowned upon by Asians as reflecting Western nineteenth-century attitudes towards the Orient—and "Asian" will not do; the literature of the Arabs has largely been produced in Africa, but for many centuries in Europe the Near East is the "Orient." So we fall back on the word "Oriental" as useful only in labeling major civilizations not in the Western tradition. It is a very old-fashioned word. The affinities of Arabic and Persian literature are with the West and not with their Eastern relatives, especially in the Middle Ages. Arabic and Persian literature, distinct from one another in significant ways, have little to do with Indian. The great bond of Buddhism connects India with the Far East, but Indian literature exhibits little similarity to Chinese or Japanese. Japanese literature and Japanese culture generally have systematically imitated Chinese, but the Japanese genius has everywhere put its own stamp on its borrowings, and it is doubtful that Japanese literature is any closer to Chinese than French is to classical Latin. These Oriental literatures have in general less in common with one another than do the European literatures, which have a common cultural ancestry. Limitations of space preclude any notice of two dozen or more other major literatures of the Orient—national literatures taught in universities and read by millions of people, such as the Korean, Mongolian, Thai, Burmese, Indonesian, Vietnamese, and others. Here scholarship is still sparse and translations few; there is a generation of work still to be done. For the literatures included here, there has been a great increase in available translations since the first edition of

1961, translations marked by both accuracy and felicity of language, and the general reader now has a small library, rather than a shelf, to supplement this volume of selections.

Readers will find in these selections, it is hoped, new insights into the human mind and spirit, and new aesthetic experiences. They will discover the delight in intricate language of the Arab and the stately splendor of Persian. In Indian literature they will find a pervasive religious element whether the work be gay or pathetic, heroic or realistic, tragic or comic. In Chinese literature they will experience the world's best amalgam of the didactic and the poetic. And in Japanese literature they will find a restless desire for novelty and change controlled by a powerful and instinctive sense of beauty. To gain an understanding of these literatures is to gain new worlds. To ignore them is to limit and make provincial our understanding of our own.

The translations are the best available. The transliteration systems used in the introductions and in my notes are intended to be consistent and represent systems commonly used by American Orientalists. However, I have thought it wise not to attempt to make changes in the alternate systems used by some of the translators. To do so would be the height of presumption for an amateur. The variety of systems presents no obstacle to the reader. The one exception to this principle is that I have replaced the accent (˘) sometimes used to indicate a long vowel in Persian and Sanskrit and replaced it with the more common and more modern macron (—).

What critical acumen is displayed in this volume I owe to an acquaintance, now going back many years, with a number of American Orientalists who have talked to me not only about the literature itself but about the difficulties of presenting it to the general reader. These scholars have everywhere received me with hospitality, spent time on my problems, and endured my most ignorant questions with fortitude. To mention all of them by name would shed a luster on the collection that it may not merit, but without them I would indeed have walked in darkness. I would like to mention two, whose labors are done. The late W. Norman Brown seemed to me to be a sage when I was an undergraduate at the University of Pennsylvania and his career in Indic scholarship spanned decades after that. His advice was invaluable. The career of the late John Lyman Bishop of Harvard University was cut short, but not before he had made substantial contributions to the study of Chinese literature, especially fiction. I remember him as a pleasant companion, a precise scholar, and a subtle critic. I also express my appreciation to the others, whose work goes on, some of whom are represented by their translations below.

G. L. ANDERSON

Masterpieces  
of the Orient



# Contents



## PREFACE

## The Near East

INTRODUCTION	1	WRITINGS AND CRITICISM	4
THE GOLDEN ODES ( <i>Mu'allaqat</i> )			6
The Wandering King ( <i>Mu'allaqa of Imru'-al-Qays</i> )			9
Whom the Gods Loved? ( <i>Mu'allaqa of Tarafa</i> )			14
The Centenarian ( <i>Mu'allaqa of Labid</i> )			19
The Black Knight ( <i>Mu'allaqa of 'Antara</i> )			24
FIRDAUSĪ (ca. 940-1020 or 1025)			29
The Book of Kings ( <i>Shāhnāma</i> )			31
The Poet's Introduction			31
The Reign of Keyumars			34
The Adventures of Sekander			34
Yazdegerd the Sinner			39
RŪMĪ (1207-1273)			56
The <i>Mathnawī</i>			58
SA'DĪ (1213/19-1292)			66
The Rose Garden ( <i>Gulistān</i> )			67
HĀFIZ (ca. 1320-1389/90)			90
Poems ( <i>Ghazals</i> )			91
TĀHĀ HUSSEIN (born 1889)			102
The Stream of Days			103

# India

INTRODUCTION	130	WRITINGS AND CRITICISM	132
THE RIGVEDA			134
THE SONG OF GOD ( <i>Bhagavad Gītā</i> )			153
VĀLMĪKI (ca. 1st Century B.C.)			168
The Rāmāyana			170
KĀLĪDASA (ca. 5th Century A.D.)			232
Shakuntalā			234
VIDYĀKARA (ca. 1100), compiler			316
The Treasury of Well-Turned Verse			
( <i>Subhāsitaratnakosa</i> )			
RABINDRANATH TAGORE (1861-1941)			328
The Post Office			329
R. K. NARAYAN (born 1906)			346
The Financial Expert			348

# China

INTRODUCTION	367	WRITINGS AND CRITICISM	369
THE BOOK OF SONGS ( <i>Shih Ching</i> ) (ca. 600 B.C.)			371
CONFUCIUS (K'UNG FU-TZU) (ca. 551-ca. 479 B.C.)			389
The Analects			391
CHUANG-TZU (ca. 369 B.C.-ca. 286 B.C.)			407
Selections			408
LU KI (291-303)			422
Rhymeprose on Literature ( <i>Wen Fu</i> )			424
THREE POETS			432
T'AO CH'EN (365-427)			434
LI PO (701-762)			455
PO CHÜ-I (722-846)			463
WU CH'ENG-EN (ca. 16th Century)			477
Monkey ( <i>Hsi Yu Chi</i> )			478
LIU T'IEH-YÜN (1857-1909)			496
The Travels of Lao Ts'an ( <i>Lao-ts'an Yu-chi</i> )			498



LU HSÜN (CHOU SHU-JEN) (1881-1936)	531
Three Stories	
A Madman's Diary	533
Medicine	541
Soap	548
THE RED LANTERN (1965 version)	556

## Japan

INTRODUCTION	593	WRITINGS AND CRITICISM	595
THE COLLECTION OF TEN THOUSAND LEAVES ( <i>Manyōshū</i> ) (ca. Late 8th Century)			598
SEI SHŌNAGON (965?-1025?)			625
The Pillow Book ( <i>Makura no Sōshi</i> )			626
TALES OF THE MIDDLE COUNSELOR OF THE EMBANKMENT ( <i>Tsutsumi Chunagon Monogatari</i> ) (ca. 794-1160)			659
The Lady Who Loved Worms ( <i>Mushi Mezururu Himegimi</i> )			660
TALES OF THE HEIKE ( <i>Heike Monogatari</i> )			668
KAMO-NO CHŌMEI (1153?-1216)			690
Life in a Ten-Foot-Square Hut ( <i>Hōjōki</i> )			691
SIX NŌ PLAYS			702
ZEAMI MOTOKIYO (1363-1443)			702
Atsumori			706
The Deserted Crone ( <i>Obasute</i> )			712
The Dwarf Trees ( <i>Hachi no Ki</i> )			720
Komachi at Sekidera ( <i>Sekidera Komachi</i> ) (attributed to Zeami)			728
ZENCHIKU UJINOBU (1414-1499?)			
Princess Hollyhock ( <i>Aoi no Uye</i> )			737
KOMPARU ZEMBO MOTOYASU (1453-1532)			
Early Snow ( <i>Hatsuyuki</i> )			742
BASHŌ AND OTHERS			745
Twenty-five <i>Haiku</i>			747
CHIKAMATSU MONZAEMON (1653-1725)			753
The Courier for Hell ( <i>Meido no Hikyaku</i> )			757

FOUR MODERN MASTERS OF FICTION	786
RYŪNOSUKE AKUTAGAWA (1892-1927)	
Rashōmon	790
In a Grove ( <i>Yabu no Naka</i> )	795
JUNICHIRO TANIZAKI (1886-1965)	
The Tattooer	802
YASUNARI KAWABATA (1899-1972)	
The Moon on the Water	807
YUKIO MISHIMA (1925-1970)	
The Priest and His Love	815
GUIDE TO PRONUNCIATION	828
NOTE ON PROPER NAMES	831
BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE	832
INDEX	833

# The Near East

The literatures of the Arabs and the Persians, though welded into a common tradition by the lightning flash of Islam, have differing early traditions that are separately cherished and periodically revived. The Arab world before Islam is almost a *tabula rasa*; a single great work, the *Golden Odes* (*Mu'allaqāt*), survives. This collection and the highly poetic sacred book of the prophet Muhammad, the Koran, stand at the dawn of Arabic literature and enforce a reverence for the poet and the seer which the writer of prose never achieves. Persian literature, on the other hand, looks back on a history rivaling that of the Greek in antiquity. The Persian sees a heroic age, which he celebrates in epic, in the days when great kings and a widespread empire challenged European rule in the eastern Mediterranean. Just as the Greek knows that there were poets before Homer, so the Persian can postulate a literary past stretching far back into pre-Islamic times.

The Arabs leap into history. In less than two hundred years they grow from an obscure tribe in the wastes of South Arabia into an empire stretching from the frontiers of India to the Pyrenees. But this violent historical process does not provide the

Arab with a literary past. Behind the glories of the Baghdad court of Hārūn-al-Rashīd lies, in the Arab imagination, the Bedouin or desert nomad, a hero closer to an American cowboy or a Gaucho than to a Homeric or a Persian warrior. The Persian can see the signs of a long and indefinite past carved on the rocks of his land. It is a land of barren plains and nomadic life, as is Arabia, but the Persian is aware of his ancestors and celebrates in literature bygone empires and the culture of cities.

After the advent of Islam, the Persian clung to his non-Moslem traditions, and the Arab, in the case of the *Golden Odes*, cherished his pre-Moslem ways. A flood of borrowings from Arabic into the Persian language and the mandate to read the Prophet in his own language succeeded to a certain extent in "Arabicizing" both the Persian language and Persian thought. The unifying influence of Islam is found most notably in poetry—both court poetry and an extensive tradition of mystical poetry—and in philosophical writing. Here the Persian and the Arab spirit meet, but Persian independence often vies with Arab orthodoxy in the interpretation of religious doctrine (the Sunnite, or orthodox sect, flour-

ishes principally in the Arab lands; the Shi'ite, the largest rival sect, is centered in Iraq and Iran).

### PERSIAN LITERATURE

The Persians speak a language that is basically Indo-European or Indo-Aryan. Old Persian, the most ancient form of the language, probably goes back to at least the sixth century B.C. The great king Darius about 500 B.C. describes himself as a Persian and an Aryan.<sup>1</sup> The earliest literary works are the sacred scriptures of the Zoroastrian religion (sixth century B.C.) in a form of Persian (or, more properly, Iranian) known as *Avestan*. Little is known of Zoroaster except through his religious doctrine, the most important aspect of which is a dualistic concept of deity—there is a god of good and a god of evil, of equal powers. The *Avesta* (still the sacred scripture of the Parsis, an Iranian group in India) is a most difficult book, and in it are imbedded some seventeen poems—the actual words of Zoroaster—known as *Gáthás*, which certainly rank among the world's most untranslatable poems. The narrative material in the *Avesta* is epical. There is evidence of much other writing in the epic form, though little has survived, either in the old language or in Pahlavi or Middle Persian (first to tenth centuries A.D.), but a lengthy epic tradition existed when Firdausi (see below) sat down to incorporate the entire legendary past of Iran into one monumental poem. Doubtless the onslaught of a

new religion encouraged the Persians to neglect their Zoroastrian past. The modern Persian language dates from the Arab conquest in the seventh century A.D. Its towering monument is the *Book of Kings* (*Shāh-nāma*) of Firdausi, written in the early eleventh century. Fragments of early epics in verse and prose and later imitations are insignificant beside this work.

Lyric poetry is a major type in Persian literature. The mystical lyric is best exemplified in the work of the thirteenth-century poet Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī. His *Mathnavī* (see below) is an exciting and difficult example of a strain of religious writing common to the Arab and Persian world. It is worth noting that almost all Near Eastern lyric poetry (including 'Umār Khayyām's, which we will come to, can be interpreted allegorically or symbolically for religious purposes, as can the *Song of Songs* in the Old Testament. Two better known Persian poets are sa'di (thirteenth century) and Hafiz (fourteenth century) (see below). 'Umar Khāyyām is not, we should note in passing, considered one of Persia's great poets; his fame in Persia is that of an astronomer. But his *Rubā'iyāt*, re-created by Edward FitzGerald in Victorian England, has given him fame in English-speaking lands. FitzGerald's quatrains are easy to remember, and 'Umar's "eat, drink and be merry" philosophy is appealing.

Prose is considered by the Persians a lower kind of litera-

1. "Aryan" here or "Indo-Aryan" is a designation for a language family and has no validity as an ethnic term.

ture. Collections of stories abound, and some of the stories in the *Arabian Nights* are clearly Persian in origin (*Shahr-āzād*—Scheherazade—is a Persian name). A special kind of anecdotal and didactic prose is employed in various manuals of guidance for young princes. How *Princes Conduct Their Lives* (*Siyar al-mulūk*) is one of these works; it provides, as it were, a complete course in personal and public behavior for the young nobleman. Another such work is the *Mirror for Princes* (*Qābūs-nāma*), compiled by an aging warrior prince to instruct his son in every aspect of a nobleman's life, not excluding the ritual of the bath, sexual etiquette, and hunting and gambling techniques.

Persian literature underwent many centuries of decline from its great days. The classical mode in poetry became fossilized, and lasted, without vitality, at least to the end of the nineteenth century. Today there are stirrings of a revival among young Persian intellectuals who read Western literature, but activity so far has been limited.

## ARABIC LITERATURE

The *Golden Odes* (*Mu'allāqāt*) of pre-Islamic Arabic (see below) has already been mentioned. The odes are the epic lays of the Bedouin tribes that existed in loosely organized confederations in the Arabian peninsula before Muhammad gave these tribes a common and dynamic religion and a missionary purpose. Though these odes have always been cherished by the Arabs and have had great appeal for the Westerner, in an

orthodox sense Arabic literature starts with the *Koran* (*Qur'ān*), the book of the Prophet, the text of which was standardized in 646 A.D. by the third caliph, 'Uthman. Perhaps uniquely among the sacred books of the world's great religions, the text of the *Koran* was established with a finality that modern philologists have not been able to disturb (all variant versions were destroyed), and, more importantly, the *Koran* represents the actual words of the Prophet, not his thought as set down by others. These factors have tended to put great stress on the actual language of the *Koran*: on the one hand, grammatical and lexicographical studies abound in Arab scholarship; on the other hand, the acceptance and preservation of classical Arabic as a national language was greatly encouraged by the desire to use and to preserve the actual idiom of the Prophet. To this day it is of religious value to the traditionally educated Arab to be able to recite verses from the *Koran* in classical Arabic even if he is uncertain of their meaning. Next to the *Koran*, the traditions (*hadith*) concerning the life of Muhammad and the application of the religion and philosophy of Islam to practical affairs are what the orthodox would consider to be Arabic "literature." Belles-lettres, in the narrowest Western sense of the term, are not and cannot be on a par with these other kinds of written composition.

Of the main literary types only poetry has been able to hold its head high in the Arab world. The lengthy ode (*qasida*), simple in syntax but rich in language, persists in the literature, from

the *Golden Odes* almost to the present. Variations of it, occasionally deliberately archaic in language, are used by later poets (ca. 800–1300 A.D.). The difficulty of translation into English is acute. To translate adequately the bitterly philosophical al-Ma'arri (973–1057) G. M. Wickens says, "... would need the joint services of Swift and Pope, with the carefully controlled intervention of Ezra Pound."<sup>2</sup> Abū Nuwās (756?–7810), immortalized in the *Arabian Nights*, is perhaps easier to translate than either al-Ma'arri or al-Mutanabbi (915–965), who is considered by many to be the greatest of the Arab lyric poets.

Drama was unknown in the Arab world until recent times, though there is now both theater and a flourishing cinema; and fiction, always the entertainment of the masses, was not considered respectable for the educated until Western admiration for such collections as the *Arabian Nights* won them a hearing. History and travel writing, on the other hand, were raised to a literary level. There is a brilliant historian and historiographer in Ibn Khaldun (1332–1406). Of more belletristic

interest is the essay or epistle (*risāla*). Originating as a letter, the form became fixed, and a premium was put, as in poetic composition, on literary virtuosity. The poet al-Ma'arri will serve as a representative author in this genre.

In the twentieth century the Arabic world has been beset both by local problems which affect literature and also by all the ills of the modern world. One of these is the problem of language—what kind of Arabic to use. The classical language is much revered, but it is argued by some that it is not suited for the modern world. If a modern dialect is to be used, Cairene, Moroccan, Syriac, and Iraqi all compete for the reader's mind. The literature has been assaulted by Western models from Ibsen and Maupassant to Sartre. The Arab-Israeli conflict and the ideological conflict between Western European ideas and Soviet Marxism has made much modern Arab writing either polemical or romantic and totally disengaged, and little has been translated into English. Tāhā Hussein's writings (see below) have received as much respect and admiration as those of any other Arab author.

2. *Literatures of the East*, edited by E. B. Ceadel, 1959, p. 37.

#### WRITINGS AND CRITICISM

*The date of the latest edition or reprint is given. The place is New York unless otherwise indicated.*

The cultural background of Arabic and Persian literature may be found in T. W. Arnold and A. Guillaume's *The Legacy of Islam* (Oxford, 1931), G. E. von Grunebaum's *Medieval Islam: A Study in Cultural Orientation* (Chicago, 2nd ed., 1953), and Carl Brockelmann's *History of the Islamic Peoples* (1947). A great deal of material is made available in Eric Schroeder's anthology *Muhammad's People* (Freeport, Maine, 1954), and with introductions and notes in Marshall G. S. Hodgson's *Islamic Civilization* (3

vols., Chicago, 1958–1959). The history of the Arabs is well surveyed by Philip K. Hitti in *The Arabs: A Short History* (1948) and in his more detailed *History of the Arabs* (5th ed. rev. 1951). Percy M. Sykes's *History of Persia* (2 vols., London, 1915) is recommended, as is also *The Legacy of Persia*, edited by A. J. Arberry (Oxford, 1953). Much valuable material on specific writers, literary forms, and religious and historical matters is contained in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam* (4 vols. and supplements, London, 1913–

1938), of which a new edition has begun to appear. R. A. Nicholson's *Translations of Eastern Poetry and Prose* (Cambridge, 1922) contains both Persian and Arabic writings.

#### ARABIC LITERATURE

A good, brief introduction is G. M. Wickens' "Arabic Literature," pp. 22-49 in *Literatures of the East*, ed. E. B. Ceadel (1959). H. A. R. Gibb has a short history, *Arabic Literature* (rev. ed., 1963). An extensive treatment is R. A. Nicholson's *Literary History of the Arabs* (1907). The general nature of Arabic literature is discussed in G. E. von Grunebaum's "The Aesthetic Foundations of Arabic Literature," *Comparative Literature*, IV (1952), 323-340. For anthologies see James Kritzeck's *Anthology of Islamic Literature* (1964), which contains both Arabic and Persian material, R. A. Nicholson's *Translations of Eastern Poetry and Prose* (1922), and Herbert Howarth and Ibrahim Shukrallah's *Images from the Arab World* (1944).

For a first reading of the *Koran* (*Qur'ān*), A. J. Arberry's *The Holy Koran, an Introduction with Selections* (1953), or the older translation of J. M. Rodwell (Everyman's Library) is satisfactory. Rodwell rearranges the *suras*, however, in their probable chronological order. An excellent translation is that of Richard Bell (2 vols., 1937-39). Other useful translations include N. J. Dawood (1956) and Marmaduke Pickthall's *The Meaning of the Glorious Koran*, a free interpretation by a Moslem (1953). For comment see Arthur Jeffrey's "The *Qur'ān*," pp. 49-61 in *Approaches to the Oriental Classics*, ed. W. T. deBary (1959) and *The Koran Interpreted* by A. J. Arberry (1964), perhaps the best scholarly translation. George Sale's literal translation (1734, often reprinted) is still valuable as a very orthodox interpretation.

The nature of Arabic poetry is well analyzed in G. E. von Grunebaum's "Arabic Poetics," pp. 27-46 in *Papers of the Indiana Conference on Oriental-Western Literary Relations*, ed. Horst Frenz and G. L. Anderson (1955), and in R. B. Serjeant, "Arabic Poetry," pp. 42-47 in *Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics* (1965). For the *Golden Odes*, see below. A general anthology of poetry is Charles J. Lyall, *Translations of Ancient Arabian Poetry* (1930). A considerable part of a mystical poetic work (the *Poem of the Way of Ibn-al-Fārid*) has been translated by A. J. Arberry (1952). See also "The Response to Nature in Arabic Poetry" by G. E. von Grunebaum, *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, IV (1945), 137-151.

For Arabic prose, Ibn Battūta's *Travels in Asia and Africa*, translated by H. A. R. Gibb (1929), and Ibn Khaldūn's *The Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History* (3 vols., 1958; Bol-

lingen Series, XLIII) translated by Franz Rosenthal, especially the "Prolegomena," are important works of interest to Westerners. Al-Ma'arri's *Letters* have been translated by D. S. Margoliouth (1898). A delightful treatise on Platonic love is Ibn Hazm's *The Ring of the Dove*, translated by A. J. Arberry (1953). Versions of the *Arabian Nights* are numerous. The old one of Edward Lane is still serviceable. Sir Richard Burton's, especially in the editions which contain his notes, is an encyclopedia of Arab lore. Selections have been done by A. J. Arberry, N. J. Dawood, and Joseph Campbell. A succinct account of the background of the *Nights* may be found in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*; a more detailed study is M. I. Gerhardt's *The Art of Story Telling: A Literary Study of the Thousand and One Nights* (1963).

Modern Arabic literature is discussed in A. Abdel-Meguid, *The Modern Arabic Short Story* (n.d. [1955?]); P. J. E. Caccia, "Modern Arabic Literature," in *The Islamic Near East*, ed. D. Grant (1960); A. J. K. Germanus, "Trends of Contemporary Arabic Literature," *Islamic Quarterly*, III (1956) and IV (1957); and, for the early twentieth century, H. A. R. Gibb in his *Studies on the Civilization of Islam* (London, 1962). The *Atlantic Monthly* supplement on the Arabs (October, 1956) is useful. Twentieth-century Arabic poetry is translated by A. J. Arberry in *Modern Arabic Poetry: An Anthology with English Verse Translations* (1950). Taufiq al-Hakim's *Maze of Justice*, translated by A. S. Eban (1947), is an important modern work, as are various volumes by J. K. Jibrān (Kahlil Gibran): *Nymphs of the Valley* (1948), *Spirits Rebellious* (1949), and *A Tear and a Smile* (1950), all translated by H. M. Nahmad. See also Jacob M. Landau, *Studies in the Arab Theatre and Cinema* (1958). For Tāhā Hussein, see below.

For general bibliographical aids see the Bibliographic Note at the end of this book.

#### PERSIAN LITERATURE

The pre-Islamic period is well but briefly surveyed in I. Gershevitch's "Iranian Literature," pp. 50-73, and the Moslem period in Reuben Levy's "Persian Literature," pp. 74-96 in *Literatures of the East*, edited by E. B. Ceadel (1959). A short history is Levy's *Persian Literature: An Introduction* (1923) and his somewhat longer critical account in *An Introduction to Persian Literature* (1969). A lengthy recent history which includes the other Iranian literatures as well as Persian is Jan Rypka's *History of Iranian Literature* (1968). This has an excellent bibliography. A. J. Arberry's *Classical Persian Literature* (1958) covers the great period (down to 1492) and is rich in critical comment. An extensive history

is E. G. Browne's *Literary History of Persia* (4 vols., rev. ed., 1928). See also M. Farzad, *The Main Currents in Persian Literature* (1965), and C. A. Storey, *Persian Literature* (5 parts, 1927-1953). For the poets Rūmī, Sa'dī, and Ḥāfiẓ, see below. FitzGerald's famous version of the *Rubā'iyāt* of 'Umār Khayyam is widely available: the edition of E. Heron-Allen (1899) gives literal translations from the Persian along with FitzGerald's renderings. Arberry has translated the quatrains in *Omar Khayyām: A New Version Based on Recent Discoveries* (1952). Persian tales are translated by Reuben Levy in *The Three Dervishes and Other Persian Tales and Legends* (1928). Levy has done the *Qābūs-nāma* as *A Mirror for Princes* (1951). For a description of Persian poetics see A. J. Arberry, "Persian Poetry," pp. 609-612 in *Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics* (1965).

Modern Persian literature has been little translated into English. Studies include A. J. Arberry, "Modern Persian Poetry," *Life and Letters* (December 1949); P. W. Avery, "Developments in Modern Prose," *Muslim World*, XLV (1955), 313-323; M. Ishaque, *Modern Persian Poetry* (Calcutta, 1943); H. Kamshad, *Modern Persian Prose Literature* (1966); D. G. Law, "Modern Persian Prose," *Life and Letters* (December, 1949); R. Mostafavi, "Fiction in Contemporary Persian Literature," *Middle East Affairs*, II (1951), 273-279; S. R. Shafaq, "Patriotic Poetry in Modern Iran," *Middle East Journal*, VI (1952), 417-428; and Mansour Shaki, "An Introduction to Modern Persian Literature," pp. 300-315 in *Charisteria Orientalia*, edited by Felix Tauer and others (1956). Rypka (cited above) covers the modern period.

For general bibliographical aids see the Bibliographic Note at the end of this book.

**THE GOLDEN ODES.** There is an elaborate critical commentary in Arberry's translation (cited below). See also Francesco Gabrieli, "Ancient Arabic Poetry," *Diogenes*, No. 40 (Winter 1962), 82-95. Anne and Wilfred S. Blount's *The Seven Golden Odes of Pagan Arabia* is still attractive as a literary rendering.

**FIRDAUSĪ.** Theodor Noldeke's *The Iranian National Epic, or the Shahnamah*, translated by L. Bogdanov (1930), although somewhat outdated, is still very useful. See also G. E. von Grunebaum's "Firdausi's Concept of History," pp. 168-184 in *Islamic Essays in the Nature and Growth of a Cultural Tradition* (1955). A good verse translation of the epic is by A. G. Warner and E. Warner (1926).

**RŪMĪ.** For criticism see the introduction to Nicholson's translation (cited below), A. J. Arberry, *Tales from the Mathnavi* (1961), and the complete translation with commentary by R. A. Nicholson, *The Mathnavi* (1925-1940).

**SA'DĪ.** For criticism see G. M. Wilkins' introduction to Rehatsek's translation (cited below). Other translations include *Būstān*, translated by C. S. Davie (1882); *Stories from the Bustan*, translated by Reuben Levy (1928); and *Kings and Beggars* (*Gulistan*, Chapters I and II), translated by A. J. Arberry (1945).

**ḤAFĪZ.** See the Introduction to Arberry's translation (cited below) and to P. Avery and J. Heath-Stubbs' *Ḥafiz of Shiraz* (1952; *Wisdom of the East Series*). Gertrude Bell's *Poems from the Divan of Ḥafiz* is a sensitive poetic rendering, first published in 1897.

**TĀHĀ HUSSEIN** (or **HUSAYN**). His *An Egyptian Childhood* has been translated by E. H. Paxton (1932). See the general studies listed above and P. Cachia, *Tāhā Huseyn* (1956).

## The Golden Odes (Mu'allaqāt)

"A poet was a defence of their honour, a protection for their good repute; he immortalized their deeds of glory, and published their eternal fame. On three things they congratulated one another—the birth of a boy, the emergence of a poet in their midst, or the foaling of a mare." So writes Ibn Rashīq of Kai-rouan, an eleventh-century Arab writer, of the position of the poet in the nomadic society of the early Arab world.<sup>1</sup> The

*Golden Odes* are the only important survivals of what must have been a considerable oral literature among the Bedouin tribes of the Arabian Desert during the sixth century A.D. They are the literary expression of a world of marches across arid wastes (more like the drier areas of the American West than the Sahara) from one water hole to another. They celebrate war and women, endurance and a life of austerity. They left a sen-

1. A. J. Arberry, *The Seven Odes* (New York, 1957), p. 14.



timental legacy in the Arab world similar to the idealization, among Jews and Christians, of the days of Abraham. The harsh, primitive world of the nomad stood in sharp contrast to the opulence of the courts of David and Solomon or of Harun-al-Rashid of the *Arabian Nights*, and to the complexities of urban life—the life of the ghetto Jews and of the Arab *falahin*, or city dwellers.

The word *mu'allaqāt* had by the tenth century come to mean “suspended poems.” The legend was that the prize-winning poems of competing poets were inscribed in letters of gold and suspended in the Kaaba, the most sacred of the Moslem shrines in Mecca. This is probably fanciful; likelier translations include “transcribed (i.e., written down) odes,” “precious odes,” “separated (from anthologies) odes,” or something similar, but no agreement has been reached by modern scholars on the translation of the term. What is clear is that immediately after the advent of Muhammad and the fixing of the *Koran* in its final form after his death, efforts were made to collect the poetry of pre-Islamic Arabia. Working somewhat in the manner of present-day folk collectors, early Arab scholars attempted to get from the poets themselves or from professional reciters the works (*diwan* or *díván*) of the various Bedouin poets. An interest in genealogy—the desire to find illustrious ancestors—certainly stimulated the search.

The form of the ancient ode (*qasida*) was conventionalized both in meter and in content. The poem was supposed to be

of substantial length (as against many later short lyrics by Arab poets), with perhaps sixty couplets following an identical rhyme. A choice of meter was available, but, having committed himself, the poet was expected to stick to one meter. The subject matter was prescribed, and nearly all of the proper subjects were likely to appear in one ode: the nomadic life contrasted with that of the town; the passions of physical love; the extremes of physical experience in the desert—cold, heat, rain, dryness, thirst, feast and famine, and danger from enemies—and the hope of receiving recognition from a patron for the poem.

The locale of the poems is southern Arabia. The place names are vague and can be conceived of as mere water holes—a few trees clustered around a well. At the time of the composing of the odes, the Byzantine Empire and Persia contested the area between present-day Baghdad and Damascus. A line drawn at the midpoint of a line between these cities brings us down to more and more remote and difficult country (the “Empty Quarter”) until the desert is somewhat relieved by Yeman and Aden on the Gulf of Aden. Sometimes the Bedouin served as a vassal of Constantinople, of Ctesiphon, or of other powers infiltrating northern Arabia. Sometimes he formed alliances with other tribes. But his horizon was limited to his tribe, and into his *Mu'allaqāt* went the joys and sorrows of the tribe, and also its history.

“The Wandering King” (the English titles are the trans-