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ii. Adab in Arabic Literature

In modern Arabic usage the term *adab* (plur. *ādāb*) denotes "literature," but in classical Islam it was applied only to a limited range of literary works. Nearly all arabists have accepted that it derives from the plural *ādāb* of *daʾb*, which means manner, habit, condition, state, or behavior, but originally conveyed the sense of way, path, or track, exactly as Sunna originally meant road, path, etc. Sunna came to be used for religious purposes, while *daʾb* retained its figurative sense of manner or condition and *adab* was reserved for something similar to Sunna, but in a secular context. *Adab* indicated a set of rules inherited from the ancestors which comprised practical ethics, separated from all Koranic and traditional teachings, and also the sum of educational elements needed by a man who wanted to behave appropriately in all circumstances of life. A simple definition is given by Jāḥeẓ in a little-known *resāla* on schoolmasters (see *al-Mawrad* 7/4, Baghdad, 1978, p. 152); he says, "the name of the schoolmaster (*moʿallem*) comes from *ʿelm* (religious science), and the name of the educator (*moʾaddeb*) comes from *adab*; we know that *ʿelm* is the basis, while *adab* is the branch; *adab* is either moral [education] (*ḵoloq*) or transmission of traditions (*rewāya*)."

As soon as the Arabs and Arabic-speaking Muslims left the stage of oral transmission for that of written communication, their precepts, roles of behavior, traditional information, and teachings constituting the so-called *adab* gave rise to three main kinds of books. The first category, parenetic *adab*, consisted of ethical writings. The second, cultural *adab*, included works compiled for the benefit of the upper classes or cultured people and containing prose or poetry fragments, witticisms, and anecdotes, all suitable to be used in well-bred society; this category can be linked with *adab* in the sense of good breeding, a feature of refined people. The third category, training or occupational *adab*, consisted of handbooks or guides intended for members of the ruling, intellectual, and professional classes. Therefore the concept of *adab* must be considered on three distinct but not clearly bounded levels—moral, social, and intellectual. *Adab* literature, in the beginning, essentially comprised roles of behavior going back to virtuous and able ancestors, whether Arabs, Persians, Indians, or even Greeks, and its actual purpose was the training of Muslims in the field of ethics, culture, and crafts. Essentially a prose genre, it was originally characterized by some common features: (1) use of Arabic simple prose without excessive ornaments, but generally supple and well articulated in an artistic and literary fashion; (2) derivation of substance mainly from Persia, either ethical or formative in intent yet restricted to general rules of behavior or principles of activity; (3) lack of emphasis on Islamic elements; the Arab patrimony was confined to the Arabic language.

The scribes (*kottāb*) employed in the administration of the caliphate, especially non-Arab secretaries, became the true founders of Arabic prose, since they had at their disposal a time-honored Middle Persian (Pahlavi) tradition. In general, historians of literature put first Rūzbeh b. Dādūya, better known as Ebn al-Moqaffaʿ, but alongside him and perhaps before him is found a Persian *mawlā* of a Qoraišī clan, ʿAbd-al-Ḥamīd b. Yaḥyā al-Kāteb (q.v., d. 132/750), who is considered as the pioneer of Arabic epistolography. Among his epistles there is a *resāla* to the Ommayad heir apparent which is a remarkable literary and socio-cultural document. The introduction to it attempts to blend Islamic teachings with Iranian traditions on court etiquette, which is a notable feature of early *adab* literature. As a rule, the substance of ʿAbd-al-Ḥamīd's writings comes from Iranian sources, and it is aimed in general at molding the soul and mind of prominent people such as rulers, and powerful civil servants like *kottāb*. So *adab* literature, from its very beginning, displayed the distinctive features of ethical object and occupational aspect, but at first it was restricted in content.

The same features of substance and form, but on a larger scale, appear in the works of Ebn al-Moqaffaʿ, whose fame rests mainly on his translation, titled *Ketāb Kalīla wa Demna*, of a Pahlavi rendering of the Indian *Pañcatantra*. It is noteworthy that the translator did not islamize the Pahlavi text, although he modified some problematic expressions or images and added a few passages of his own. In my opinion *Kalīla wa Demna* and Ebn al-Moqaffaʿ's other translations or original works did not meet at once with very large success in Arab (or anti- Šoʿūbī) circles, as is shown by a sentence of Jāḥeẓ in a *resāla* entitled *Ḏamm aḵlāq al-kottāb*: "As soon as a secretary has learned Bozorgmehr's maxims, Ardašīr's testament, ʿAbd-al-Ḥamīd's epistles, and Ebn al-Moqaffaʿ's *adab*, as soon as he has made of the *Book of Mazdak* the source of his knowledge and of *Kalīla wa Demna* the secret treasure of his wisdom, he fancies he is the great Fārūq [the Caliph ʿOmar] on administrative affairs" (see C. Pellat in *Hesperis* 1956/1-2, p. 35). It appears from this statement that reading *Kalīla wa Demna* was still, in the middle of the 3rd/9th century, typical primarily of Persian scribes. Given the accepted opinion that the whole of Ebn al-Moqaffaʿ's output provided later *adab* with many materials, it is remarkable that the works containing animal stories in Arabic literature were nearly all written by Persians, from the verse rendering of *Kalīla wa Demna* by Abān Lāḥeqī (2nd century) to the *Fākehat al-ḵolafāʾ* by Ebn ʿArabšāh (d. 854/1450). Other translations made by Ebn al-Moqaffaʿ have not survived; they include *Ketāb Mazdak* referred to by Jāḥeẓ, *Āʾīn-nāma*, *Ketāb al-tāǰ*, and *Ḵodāy-nāma* or *Ketāb sīar molūk al-ʿaǰam*. The latter served as a basis for Arabic historiography, insofar as Persian history was concerned, but in addition many long quotations of it survive in such works as Ebn Qotayba's *ʿOyūn al-aḵbār* and *Ketāb al-maʿāref*, which belong to *adab* literature. A few quotations from *Āʾīn-nāma* (āʾīn = *adab*/*ādāb*), *Ketāb al-tāǰ*, and other texts appear also in later works—good evidence of the impact of such books on Arab Islamic culture.

Ebn al-Moqaffaʿ's works provide us with a convenient starting point, for they contain essentially roles of conduct for an ordinary or outstanding man. In addition, some of his translations bring in Iranian historical traditions. Ebn al-Moqaffaʿ reveals three aspects of *adab*: (1) ethics turned either inward or outward; (2) vocational training limited to rulers and high officials; and (3) culture and education insofar as historical data, etiquette, good manners are concerned.

ʿAbd-al-Ḥamīd and Ebn al-Moqaffaʿ represent something of a peak early in the

evolution of *adab* literature, and we do not find other prominent representatives of it during the second half of the 2nd/8th century. It is likely that their fame overshadowed that of other writers, e.g., the Persian Abān Lāḥeqī, who tried to put into verse the monuments already translated into Arabic, and Sahl b. Hārūn, head of the famous Bayt al-Ḥekma, who was a fanatic adept of Shuʿubism. Sahl's *resāla* on avarice, inserted by Jāḥeẓ in his *Ketāb al-boḵālāʾ* ("Book of misers"), represents the earliest attempt at introducing into the framework of *adab* an analysis as well as a defense of a single trait of character, prefiguring further development in Jāḥeẓ's hands.

Apart from the decisive Iranian influence, at the same time or shortly afterward another mass of foreign books was translated and put at the disposal of a Muslim elite, namely Greek works which introduced the achievements of Hellenic thought, notably logic and methods of reasoning, but no literary texts. However, while Ebn al-Moqaffaʿ, being a Persian, was as well versed in Persian as in Arabic, Ḥonayn b. Esḥāq, for instance, was compelled to translate Greek books into Syriac before rendering them in Arabic; thus Persian literature was, as a whole, better served by its translators. The fact that *Kalīla wa Demna*, despite some early resistance to it, became a classic of Arabic literature shows that the Arabs themselves, and not only arabicized Persians, were at ease with it. And while Greece was remote from the center of the Arab state, the Persians were inside the empire. In the view of a few modern supporters of Arab predominance, translations of the works of Aristotle and others led to a kind of renaissance, so that the antidote against Persian influence was administered by Hellenism. Actually the legacy of Hellenism was of little consequence for the average Muslim, the shaping of whose mind was the function of *adab* literature.

Persia capta ferum victorem cepit, but such a capture did not result in the ruin of Islam, partly owing to the Muʿtazilites, who attempted to build up a new Arab Islamic culture on the basis of disparate elements whether borrowed from various countries and civilizations or of Arab origin. Indeed many scholars had begun to collect what may be called Arab humanities and to classify the materials brought to light by the *rowāt*, so that the common denominator of the *adab* literature of that time became summarized in the motto: *al-aḵḏ men koll šayʾ be ṭaraf* "to take from everything a piece" in order to educate without tiring and to instruct while entertaining.

If we apply to *adab* the statement of Francis Bacon that the human mind is memory, imagination, and reason, we can see that, after completion of the

first stage in Arabic culture (i.e., memory or erudition), it was time to take advantage of all the practical materials and historical traditions collected by the *rowāt*, all the Indo-Persian lore, and all Greek data known to the Muslims, in order to pass to the next stage, to promote a genuine Arabic literature of *adab*, which would include belles lettres and appeal to the imagination. The *maqāmāt* (q.v.) and some psychological analyses were among the products of this stage. But the simplest approach to the main goal of *adab* was to select among all available materials and retain only the most interesting information.

The body of cultural information had grown too voluminous and diverse to be learned by a single man; thus it was reasonable to select and harmonize the principle data. The writer could mingle humor with seriousness and occasionally cut short the most serious passage with amusing anecdotes or good poetry. Inevitably some *odabāʾ* forgot the basis of *adab* and educated without distracting, while others entertained without educating, each making his choice of materials and confining himself to quotations. For the advocates of Arab supremacy it seemed only natural to attempt to minimize Iranian influences by praising their own patrimony in order to show that it was able to foster new forms of *adab*.

In the world of 3rd/9th century Islam, many people began to think the science of erudition was extinct. As a result of this attitude, new ideas appearing in intellectual gatherings were eagerly collected by observers and introduced into their own works; they may be called butterfly hunters. One of them was Jāḥeẓ (d. 255/868), who exemplifies Bacon's definition. His works are characterized by *rewāya* (i.e., memory in action) and to a lesser extent by imagination and by reason; a prominent Muʿtazilite, he turned his imagination toward observation and research. One can distinguish three main branches of his works: politico-religious writings dealing with the *kalām* doctrine of the Muʿtazilite school or supporting the ʿAbbasids against their opponents (these writings remain in general outside the framework of *adab*); traditional *adab* developing into the portrayals of manners, character, and social qualities and classes; and more individualistic *adab* works bearing a literary or para-scientific stamp.

Being of non-Arab origin, Jāḥeẓ saw the dangers threatening Islam, and this is the chief reason why he did not place the Iranian legacy in the foreground of the form of culture he advocated. He sought material which would raise the prestige of the Arabs, whose main merit lies in their skill in poetry and

oratory. He gave occupational *adab* a new shape, and treated traditional *adab* differently than his Persian predecessors had done. Instead of arbitrarily quoting maxims, testaments, instructions, injunctions, and the like, he makes use of irony and tries to analyze such virtues and vices as generosity, justice, envy, anger, and snobbishness, so that he raises *adab* from a mere catechism or simple apologues to the level of rudimentary psychology and philosophical reasoning. Moreover, the study of a trait of character, as in the case of misers, leads him to portray social classes, whose typical qualities or shortcomings are depicted in a marvelous and amusing fashion. He thus influenced the development of the *maqāma* and the *qaṣīdasāsānīya*.

Jāḥeẓ's additions to *adab* literature chiefly consist of a cultural program and method. According to him, it was convenient to let the Muslims specialize in one or two branches of learning, but he deemed it desirable to also furnish them with that kind of *adab* which we may call general culture or educational background. Such culture is not limited; a person must not take traditions for granted, but must think them over in order to reach some measure of conviction. Moreover, every element of this culture is to be presented in a pleasant form. So, we witness the establishment of an original culture including Arab and foreign elements, and the foundation of an Arabic literature based on erudition, reason and, to a lesser extent, imagination.

From the very moment when Arabic humanities competed with cultural elements coming from outside, there had been a dilemma to solve: Was it convenient to establish a purely and exclusively Arabic and Islamic culture, or to accept some diversity and let foreign influences freely play their part at the risk of jeopardizing an uneasily achieved balance? Jāḥeẓ felt that the Muslims are the heirs of previous civilizations, but all means are good for the defense of Islam and the Arabs. Hence the significance of his manifold *adab* as a cultural program.

Jāḥeẓ was called *moʿallem al-ʿaql wa'l- adab* ("the teacher of reason and *adab*"), but his classroom was soon drained by another outstanding *adīb* of Persian origin, Ebn Qotayba (d. 276/889). The latter regarded the Arabs as the only holders of wisdom and conclusive evidence, since they had been given the Qurʾān; true culture had to revolve around the holy book, the Arabic language, and poetry. In contrast with the Jahezian restlessness and anxious state of mind, Ebn Qotayba offered a perfectly orderly syllabus to provide a good Muslim with all the cultural information he actually needed. His religious, political, moral, and cultural program does not include research and

investigation; unlike Jāḥeẓ, he tends to create a good standard Muslim by limiting inquisitiveness and issuing general, restrictive rules. What Bacon termed memory was to remain in general the fundamental basis of Muslim education; imagination was to be used only for improving poetry or prose; and reason ought to be reserved for a small elite of thinkers and philosophers, who were no longer regarded as orthodox Muslims. Violently reacting against *kalām* and Greek thought, Ebn Qotayba believed that free thinking was dangerous to the integrity of Islam; he put religious learning in the first place, and gave in the introduction to his *Adab al-kāteb* a program of education consisting of grammar, lexicography, rhetoric, arithmetic, geometry, techniques of public works, rudiments of *feqh*, and some anecdotal history and ethics. This is pure occupational *adab* in a traditional manner. The *Ketāb al-maʿāref* ("Book of secular knowledge") contains all the historical information needed by cultivated men.

The *ʿOyūn al-aḵbār* is the best representative work of Ebn Qotayba's *adab*. The main concern of mankind is to work out their salvation, but no man must neglect his interests on earth; for that purpose he has to be given some knowledge of everything. The *ʿOyūn* aimed at providing everyone with *adab*, i.e., what he needs to be happy. But Ebn Qotayba does not leave room for personal thinking or original research, since he is able to answer every question. So this book is both restrictive and definitive; everybody must learn its contents, for they are *ʿOyūn*, something of the quintessence of secular traditions enabling one to secure a happy life without jeopardizing salvation in the next world. Ebn Qotayba's different works display a preview of what was bound to happen in the history of Arabic *adab*; the *kottāb*, being the true holders of culture, were to develop his *Adab al-kāteb* into extensive handbooks and encyclopedias, and the *odabāʾ* were also to compile popular and more specialized collections of traditions and verses on a given subject.

Ebn Qotayba exerted a powerful influence on Arabic literature in general and represents, in the development of the *adab* genre, a turning point—or rather terminus, since he tried more or less consciously to prevent further cultural growth, which Jāḥeẓ had encouraged, as though Arab Islam had reached its fullness. After Ebn Qotayba, traditional ethics as treated by Ebn al-Moqaffaʿ seem to grow more and more islamicized and arabicized in the hands of thinkers and religious men whose main aim is to educate at any cost; their writings are interesting but somewhat tedious, for they are stripped of the pleasant features of *adab* proper. Vocational *adab* grows more specialized,

although a few outstanding *kottāb* compiled comprehensive works; in an attempt at preserving the legacy of earlier generations in the field of high Arab Islamic culture, many writers follow the old tradition of putting at the disposal of the practitioners of different arts and intellectual crafts a kind of vade mecum containing all that they need in order to comply with the requirements of their trade. Cultural *adab* as represented first by Jāḥeẓ gives birth to several genres, including more or less specialized anthologies and collections of anecdotes that bear more often than not an obscene stamp, aiming at amusing without educating. Following the way laid out by Ebn Qotayba, a few writers described as *odabāʾ* compile popular encyclopedias covering the whole field of classical *adab*; they bring together elements of ethics, prose, poetry, general knowledge, savoir vivre, and so on, not failing to insert chapters consisting of anecdotes and witticisms; such books resemble the popular almanacs of our times.

Ebn Qotayba's example was constraining but convenient and consistent with standard Muslim trends. Soon after him, at the other end of the Muslim world, Ebn ʿAbd Rabbeh (246-328/860-940) compiled in Spain an encyclopedia similar to the *ʿOyūn* with the significant title of *al-ʿEqd* ("The necklace"). Ebn ʿAbd Rabbeh remarks that every generation brings its share to the Arab patrimony, so that the bulk of traditions needs to be periodically brought up to date. Thus it was to be expected that later compilers would follow his approach and make successive selections from a growing body of material. Nevertheless this kind of encyclopedic *adab* seems to be little represented in Arabic literature after the *ʿEqd*. Some similar works may be lost; some others survive in manuscript, but the best known book of this type is the popular *Mostaṭraf fī koll fann mostaẓraf* by Ebšīhī (d. after 850/1446), an Egyptian writer, who acknowledges that he is indebted to Ebn ʿAbd Rabbeh for some material. The role of ethics in that book shows that in those dark days, the best resort for anxious minds was to those records of the classical period regarded as representing a perfect ideal. Geography, history, and applied sciences are totally wanting; such works were meant for the common people, who can be content with a bulk of ancient traditions supplemented by a few accretions of later centuries.

In the classical period after the failure of the Muʿtazilite doctrines, it was the Shiʿite creed that took over the Muʿtazilite inclination toward the acceptance of cultural pluralism. The true successor of Yaʿqūbī (285/897), whose *Tārīḵ* is fairly open to outside material, was another Shiʿite writer, Masʿūdī (d. 345/956). Part one of his *Morūǰ* gives an account of ancient nations and foreign countries

with a great deal of historical, geographical, and sociological information; part two relates various traditions selected from historical, literary, and religious lore concerning the caliphs. Masʿūdī endeavored to interest and entertain his readers with anecdotes, poems, and amusing stories scattered among more serious information, thus applying one of the most important requirements of *adab*. The *Morūǰ* is a kind of encyclopedia, but it appears quite different from those compiled after the fall of Baghdad (656/1258), at a time when a characteristic movement was discernable in various parts of the Islamic world.

In the late 7th/13th century, Ebn Manẓūr (630-711/1232-1311) wrote in the introduction to his famous *Lesān al-ʿarab*: "I have in sight only the preservation of the grounds of this prophetical language . . . , and I have built my dictionary exactly in the same condition as Noah when he built his Ark." It is obvious that the fear of disaster inspired many an encyclopedia pertaining to *adab* literature, of which we shall mention *Nehāyat al-arab* by Nowayrī (677-732/1279-1332) and *Ṣobḥ al-aʿšā* by Qalqašandī (d. 821/1418). The latter supplies the *kottāb* of the time with all that they must know to perform their duties, i.e., geography, political history, zoology, cosmography, time measurement, epistolography, and so on. Qalqašandī uses the term *adab* for belles lettres and linguistic sciences, but the whole work belongs to *adab* literature.

As a whole, the works we have just mentioned fall within the framework of occupational *adab*, since they might be described as *adab al-kottāb* or *al-wozarāʾ*. There also exists a series of handbooks in Ebn al-Moqaffaʿ's tradition, the titles of which begin with *adab*: *Adab al-moʿallemīn*, *Adab al-qożāt*, *Adab al-baḥṯ* for scholars, *Adab al-monādama* for boon companions, and so forth. All these books are quite serious and lack the entertaining features traditionally required in *adab* literature.

Still another group of writers also failed to follow Jāḥeẓ's example of harmoniously mingling seriousness and levity; forgetting the main object of *adab*—to educate without tears—they confined themselves to entertainment. They compiled collections of anecdotes meant to raise laughter without moralizing or instructing and comprising more often than not lewd passages in which sex and scatology occur as comic elements.

A number of treatises on erotology can be classified with this kind of *adab* literature. Jāḥeẓ himself had dealt with this subject in his *Mofāḵarat al-ǰawārī*

wa'l-ḡelmān and, to a lesser extent in the *Ketāb al-qīān*; in the latter he describes a class of *ẓorafāʾ*, i.e., refined people who already in the 2nd/8th century had reached a high degree of sophistication in polished manners and distinguished bearing.

One of the more lasting meanings of *adab* is politeness, good manners, savoir vivre; it was to be expected that such treatises as those already found in Ebn Moqaffaʿ's corpus should develop into more and more sophisticated handbooks, as manners and customs became more refined, particularly at the court and among high officials and rich tradesmen. Here the influence of Persia is obvious, and one can notice an evolution beginning with the schools of music first established in Ḥeǰāz. The fame of Waššāʾ (d. 325/936), for instance, rests on his *Mowaššā*, a treatise on *ẓarf* (refinement of manners); this book contains almost exclusively quotations on the subject of each chapter, for instance frankness, discretion, clothes, eating, drinking, fruits, letters, formulae, inscriptions on rings, apples, shoes, and so on.

Anthologies of prose and poetry were intended for cultured people who may be *ẓorafāʾ* but are more often described as *odabāʾ*. For the study of *adab* as literary education, it is useful to consider the writings known as, e.g., *fahrasa*, *barnāmaǰ*, or *ṯabt*, in which the books read by the author are listed. For instance a 5th/11th century Andalusian *adīb* had to read *al-Kāmel* of Mobarrad (210-85/826-98), *Ketāb al-adab* of Ebn Moʿtazz (249-96/861-908), and *Zahr al-ādāb* of Ḥoṣrī (d. 413/1022). Faithful to the fundamental principles of *adab*, to instruct without boring, Ḥoṣrī mentions only varied and relatively short tracts to be learned by heart and used as models or in conversation; his *adab* is on the whole identical with a branch of Jāḥeẓ's but more strictly defined in its practical and didactic purpose. The *Fehrest* lists about two hundred books which appear to be novels. Nearly thirty of them are translations from Pahlavi, Greek, and Indian languages; romances of Koṯayyer and ʿAzza, Jamīl and Boṯayna, and several other pairs of lovers are partly preserved in later works, but it is difficult to tell historical facts from legendary additions, so that one is inclined to doubt the actual existence of such characters. In any case, these novels are collective products, being no more than mere collections of traditions and verse.

It is strange that such a mass of literary works soon disappeared almost completely from libraries and bookshops; most of them either were absorbed into great collections such as the Arabian Nights or relapsed into oral tradition, where they have become part of the folklore of various Islamic

countries. In the first half of the 4th/10th century, Ḥamza Eṣfahānī stated that about seventy books of entertainment were very much read in his time; a few decades later, Ebn al-Nadīm gave an even longer list, asserting that *asmār* and *ḵorāfāt* (i.e., a variety of tales and stories) were very popular in the ʿAbbasid period. Yet this infatuation for narrative literature was short-lived; the above collections, instead of inspiring good writers to original novels, were only mined by later compilers.

By contrast Ebn Ḥazm's *Ṭawq al-ḥamāma* (383-456/993-1064) is quite personal. He tells us only about his own life, feelings, and experiences, and quotes almost exclusively his own verse; the people he mentions are not Jamīl and Boṭayna, but men and women he knew personally. Besides this treatise on love, Ebn Ḥazm wrote a number of moral epistles related to parenetic *adab* in which he analyzes his own inward experience; such introspection leads him to an ethical conception of happiness reached by improvement in men's nature.

Just as Ebn Ḥazm listed in his *Ṭawq al-ḥamāma* the obstacles against love, so Abū Ḥayyān Tawḥīdī (d. 414/1023) had studied, in his *Resāla fi'l-ṣadāqa wa'l-ṣadīq*, the obstacles to friendship and had gone farther, advocating social improvement. His *Moqābasāt* collects 106 conversations on philosophical subjects. Other works of his belong more or less to *adab*, especially his *Maṭāleb al-wazīrayn*, a satirical portrait of the two viziers Ṣāḥeb b. ʿAbbād and Ebn al-ʿAmīd. Tawḥīdī was so fond of Jāḥeẓ that he devoted to him a separate book, unfortunately lost; and he followed his example in the *Maṭāleb* where satire is also introduced into *adab*.

Jāḥeẓ himself, who wrote several pieces of prose about thieves, beggars, and rogues, speaks in the *Bayān* of mimics (*ḥākīa*) able, he says, not only to copy the mannerism, gestures, voice, and habits of speech of different ethnic groups, but also to reproduce the demeanor and bearing of various types of people, the blind for instance. This very passage of the *Bayān* is quoted by Abu'l-Moṭahhar Azdī in the introduction to his *Ḥekāya* in order to justify the creation of a new literary genre in which a single character typifying the mentality of the people of Baghdad would be put on the stage. The hero of that *Ḥekāya* (imitation, representation) is a vagrant who entertains the bourgeoisie of the capital and reels off jokes and sarcastic remarks in doubtful taste. The reference to Jāḥeẓ makes it easy to understand the meaning that Abu'l-Moṭahhar wanted to give to his *Ḥekāya*, namely a realistic presentation of the manners of Baghdad, a fiction taken form real life. In attempting to produce a type, Abu'l-Moṭahhar advances beyond Jāḥeẓ, but the *Ḥekāya* does not seem to

have been imitated. Since the dates of its author remain unknown, this text's links with the *maqāma* are not clear. But it is not unlikely that he was a contemporary of Hamadānī (d. 398/ 1008), whose *Maqāmāt* form a masterpiece of Arabic literature entering within the scope of *adab*. These texts enjoyed great success in the world of Islam, and were imitated in several languages. Unfortunately, their original framework was used by many writers for different purposes ranging from literary criticism (for instance Ebn Šaraf) to lexicography (Ḥarīrī) and exercises of style in rhymed prose. Rhymed prose is one of the main features of the *maqāma* which spread everywhere during the 4th/10th century, penetrated many fields of literature, and became particularly honored in official correspondence. Thus the *kottāb*, the actual holders of culture and the practices of literature, played a more and more important part in addition to their natural role in compiling technical treatises and huge encyclopedias. For example in Spain one of the best representatives of the traditional training of future *kottāb* is probably Ebn Šohayd (d. 426/1035), whose *Resālat al-tawābeʿ wa'l-zawābeʿ* belongs to *adab* literature, since it is a kind of literary criticism at a level similar to that of Maʿarrī's *Resālat al-ḡofrān* (a work of literature proper).

Why is the term *adab* used at present for literature in general, while it was reserved in the Middle Ages for only a part of it? From the beginning, *adab* has been employed for politeness, good manners, good breeding, social graces, decency, and humanity; the word *adīb* as an adjective means refined, well-bred, civil, urbane; and as a noun, man of culture and refined tastes; also man of letters, writer, author; and so another sense of *adab* is belles lettres, humanities, literature. The term implied three main notions: (1) politeness, refinement; (2) rules of conduct in general; (3) culture either passive, or active—i.e., authorship. As regards literature, the term *adab* was opposed to *šeʿr* "poetry," and *adīb* was distinguished from *šāʿer* "poet." In spite of the modern use of *adab* for literature, we are not confident that a poet would be described today as an *adīb*, and in such an expression as *al-šeʿr wa'l-adab* it is obvious that *adab* means only literary prose. However, medieval *adab* literature always contained some poetry, so that the extension of the word's meaning is understandable, the more so since independent poetry, although still very much cultivated, no longer plays the same role in Arabic literature as it did in early Islam.

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No comprehensive monograph has so far been devoted to *adab* literature.

In addition to scattered remarks in histories of Arabic literature, see especially: "Adab," *EI*[2] I, pp. 175-76.

C. A. Nallino, *La letteratura araba degli inizi all'epoca delle dinastie umayyade*, Rome, 1948; French tr. by Ch. Pellat, Paris, 1950, pp. 7-26.

Ch. Pellat, "Adab," in F. Bostānī, *Dāʾerat al-maʿāref* VIII, Beirut, 1969, pp. 62-68; tr. "Variations sur le thème de l'adab," *Correspondance d'Orient* 5-6, Brussels, 1964.