

It is unfortunate that Jackson has retired from Keele University. His expertise is unlikely to be superseded in the near future. While I have no doubt that he will continue his research, I suspect it is unlikely that we will see a volume on *The Mongols and China* to accompany his *The Mongols and the West* (2005) and *The Mongols and the Islamic World*. Nonetheless, the latter should be a mandatory requirement for anyone studying the Mongol empire or Islamic history and will long remain a standard work in these areas.

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Relief after Hardship: The Ottoman Turkish Model for The Thousand and One Days. By ULRICH MARZOLPH. Series in Fairy-Tale Studies. Detroit: WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2017. Pp. viii + 151. \$39.99.

As presented in the volume under review, Ulrich Marzolph's erudite synthesis of the fifteenth-century *Ferec ba'd eṣ-ṣidde*, the origins of the Ottoman Turkish tale collection are as intriguing as its posterity. Marzolph's project takes its cue from the work of Andreas Tietze (d. 2003), who produced an edition and a translation of the text, and whose favored transliteration of its Ottoman Turkish title is adopted by Marzolph as a tribute. Drawing on Tietze's unpublished German translation and on his own extensive knowledge of narrative traditions across languages and periods, Marzolph incorporates *Ferec ba'd eṣ-ṣidde* into the broader scholarship on Middle Eastern narrative tradition, its European reception in and before the eighteenth century, and comparative folk narrative research.

The book is organized like an edition, with the first half of the volume serving as an introduction to the original text and its history, and summaries of the tales taking up the second half. The introductory part focuses on three main corpora: Pétis de la Croix's *Les mille et un jours*, published in the early eighteenth century amid an appetite for oriental tales in the aftermath of Galland's *Arabian Nights* translation; the above-mentioned anonymous Ottoman tale compilation *Ferec ba'd eṣ-ṣidde*; and the Persian literary genre known as *Jāmi' al-ḥikāyāt*, represented by diverse manuscripts. Marzolph reviews the strong evidence that the main source for *Les mille et un jours* was the Ottoman *Ferec*, and that a substantial part of the latter originated in an unidentified representative of the *Jāmi' al-ḥikāyāt* genre. These relationships are neither straightforward nor exclusive: Pétis pretended that his model was a Persian text (he subtitled his collection *Contes persans*), and the *Ferec* tales found in his collection are clearly reworked and adapted rather than translated. Moreover, no known manuscript of the *Jāmi' al-ḥikāyāt* genre contains all forty-two tales of the *Ferec*, or shares the sequence of tales found in the Ottoman compilation, and the oldest known *Jāmi'* specimen (sixteenth century at best) is younger than the oldest known *Ferec* manuscript. The importance, then, of the "postscript" that Marzolph appends to his first part should not be overlooked. When his book was already in proof, Marzolph unearthed a little-quoted essay detailing the contents of *Mu'nis-nāma*, a neglected thirteenth-century Persian manuscript in the British Library, which contains a larger number of tales corresponding to *Ferec* stories than any of the surveyed *Jāmi' al-ḥikāyāt* manuscripts, and largely shares the sequence of tales found in the *Ferec* as well. However, most of what Marzolph advances in his survey still holds, and there is much to look forward to as further work is conducted on *Mu'nis-nāma* and its comparison with the *Ferec*.

While the *Jāmi' al-ḥikāyāt* genre (including *Mu'nis-nāma*) is likely the main source of *Ferec ba'd eṣ-ṣidde*, particularly its first half, numerous parallels with other Persian and Arabic works are also listed, including Sadīd al-Dīn 'Awfī's *Javāmi' al-ḥikāyāt*, *Ṭūṭī-nāma* (Book of the parrot), and *Sindbād-nāma*. In a chapter dealing with the genre of individual *Ferec* tales, Marzolph notes the overlap between the "relief after hardship" (*faraj ba'd al-shidda*) category and that of the "marvelous and the strange" (*ʿajīb and gharīb*), and records tales with historical characters or events and tales of "seriousness and jocularity" (*jidd and hazl*). Finally, in discussing "Middle Literature" and the origins of the European fairy tale, Marzolph suggests that the tales of the *Jāmi' al-ḥikāyāt* genre could be late instances of the type of tales once included in *Hizār afsān*, which early Arabic sources tell us was the

Persian original for the *Arabian Nights* frame story. Marzolph thus makes the case for Ottoman Turkish narrative literature as a contender for the transmission of tales like those of the *Arabian Nights* to the West well before Galland's translation.

Because each chapter in the first part of this book devotes only a handful of pages to broad topics, arguments are occasionally so condensed as to be difficult to follow: on p. 8, for instance, I could not understand whether the author was arguing that A.-R. Lesage had a great impact on Pétis de la Croix's *Les mille et un jours* or did not. Nevertheless, this book, with its precious and detailed summaries of the *Ferec's* twisty tales, its indices helping readers to locate motifs and parallels in the summaries, and several lists and tables comparing the contents of the most relevant tale collections, will serve as an essential and generous reference for further scholarship on this and many related narrative traditions.

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Ibn Qutaybah. *The Excellence of the Arabs*. Edited by JAMES E. MONTGOMERY and PETER WEBB, translated by SARAH BOWEN SAVANT and PETER WEBB. Library of Arabic Literature. New York: NEW YORK UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2017. Pp. xxxiii + 297. \$40.

Abū Muḥammad ʿAbd Allāh b. Muslim Ibn Qutayba (d. 276/889) was a prolific writer on a variety of topics—poetics, law, gambling, astronomy, literature, and religion. In Western scholarship he is mainly known for his early *adab* works, such as *Adab al-kātib* (The secretary's handbook) and *ʿUyūn al-akhbār* (Choice anecdotes), and less for his earlier, theological works on revealed texts, e.g., *Gharīb al-ḥadīth* (Rare expressions in hadīth) or *Taʿwīl mushkil al-Qurʾān* (Explanation of problematic passages in the Quran). There is, however, a common theme to all his works: “a concern to anchor Islamic civilization firmly in the Arabic language, and especially in the cultural heritage of the Arabs and of Arabia” (J. Lowry, “Ibn Qutaybah,” in *Arabic Literary Culture, 500–925*, ed. M. Cooperson and S. Toorawa [Detroit: Thomson Gale, 2005], 173). The text in hand, *Faḍl al-ʿArab wa-l-tanbīh ʿalā ʿulūmihā* (The excellence of the Arabs and their sciences), is a prime example of Ibn Qutayba's efforts in this direction since it is “one of the most explicit, sustained, and detailed descriptions of Arab identity written before modern times” (p. xii). It comprises two extended essays: “Book One: Arab Preeminence” and “Book Two: The Excellence of Arabic Learning,” in which Ibn Qutayba “addresses one of the central questions confronting his writerly community and its elite patrons” (p. x): What did it mean to be Arab?

In their introduction, the translators situate Ibn Qutayba's writing in a time of political uproar that started with the fraternal civil war between al-Amīn and al-Ma'mūn, went through the replacement of the Arab military by non-Arab mercenaries and the move of the Abbasid capital from Baghdad to a newly established Samarra—where a fresh elite network of eastern Iranians was formed—and ended with the gradual fragmentation and practical bankruptcy of the Abbasid centralized caliphate. The translators emphasize that, as a state-appointed judge, Ibn Qutayba must have been fully aware of this political turmoil and its consequences for the elite position of the Arabs within Islamic society, since he lived during what is traditionally known as the “period of anarchy” that formally started with the murder of the Abbasid caliph al-Mutawakkil (d. 247/861).

Ibn Qutayba wrote *Faḍl al-ʿArab*, the translators add, “probably toward the end of his career, that is, during al-Muʿtamid's caliphate” (r. 256–279/870–892) (p. xii), which coincidentally went against the grain of the times because it constituted a temporary Abbasid revival. He furthermore penned his work when “many of his contemporaries began to drop the sense of Arabness from their identity. They spoke and wrote in Arabic, but they were . . . choosing to identify by . . . Persian and other ethnic affiliations” (p. xiii). *Faḍl al-ʿArab* is an engaging defense of the Arab cultural heritage against those who propagated equality (*ahl al-taswiya*, e.g., pp. 91–92) or, worse, belittled the Arabs. Ibn Qutayba's opponents are never individually named, but collectively referred to as *shuʿūbī*, translated as “Bigot.”