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الجمهورية الجزائرية الديمقراطية الشعبية

وزارة التعليم العالي والبحث العلمي

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جامعة تلمسان
كلية الآداب واللغات
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The Middle East and North Africa in English Literature

Master 1 (Literature and Civilization)

Dr Souad Baghli Berbar

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The Middle East and North Africa in English Literature

Course Contents

The Middle East and North Africa in English Literature

Introduction to the Course

The MENA in English literature is a Master1 fundamental literature seminar running over 2 semesters for students of Literature and Civilization specialty. It is continued for another semester at Master2 level.

The Middle East and North Africa in English Literature deals with the description, by authors writing in English, of the MENA region referred to as "the Orient" or the East and follows the evolution of this perception in the course of time. The course is based on the study of primary sources in the form of excerpts from literary works by Anglo-Saxon authors that mention Oriental people and places. The purpose is to critically analyze the image of the MENA or the Orient in these texts and to examine the changes in perception from the 16th to the 19th centuries. The 20th century is to be covered in Master 2.

The Orient, which constitutes the corpus of study by Orientalists or specialists of the east, is not merely a geographic region but a concept that is to be defined in the course of these seminars. The places meant by the Orient are not only situated in the geographical east but also include North Africa in addiction to Turkey. The Orient is meant as the polar opposite of the Western European world which claims to have hegemony over it for imperialistic purposes. This binary opposition is best described in the imaginary line drawn by Charles Foster in his review of *Contending Visions of the Middle East: The History and Politics of Orientalism* by Zachary Lockman:

> There is an invisible but tragically significant line which traces the eastern border of Greece, sweeps west through the Mediterranean and finally squeezes through the Straits of Gibraltar into the Atlantic. It has been there for thousands of years, and its route has barely changed. Even when the Prophet's army burst into Spain the line hardly wavered. The Arab colony in Spain was a camp--a magnificent marbled and jewelled camp--but still a camp. Cordoba was glorious in Arab fable because it was strange: it was the Arabs on another planet. The line is the border separating the Western world from the East. The two worlds have peered wonderingly at one another for millennia. Orientalism is the story of Western wonderings about the East (Foster).

Edward Said's seminal 1978 book *Orientalism* provides the definition of Orientalists, Western European authors and artists specializing in the Orient and pretending to have authority over it. In his epigram to this landmark work, Said mentions two significant and highly influential thinkers of the 19th century:

> They cannot represent themselves; they must be represented.
> **—Karl Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte***
> The East is a career.
> **—Benjamin Disraeli, *Tancred***

Marx insists on the subaltern and inferior aspect of Orientals who must be depicted by Westerners pretending to know them better than themselves while Disraeli underscores the importance of the Orient politically and economically for Europe and the need to have hegemony over it. For Edward Said, Orientalism is

> a way of coming to terms with the Orient that is based on the Orient's special place in European Western experience. The Orient is not only adjacent to Europe; it is also the place of Europe's greatest and richest and oldest colonies, the source of its civilizations and languages, its cultural contestant, and one of its deepest and most recurring images of the Other. In addition, the Orient has helped to define Europe (or the West) as its contrasting image, idea, personality, experience. Yet none of this Orient is merely imaginative (1-2).
>
> Taking the late eighteenth century as a very roughly defined starting point Orientalism can be discussed and analyzed as the corporate institution for dealing with the Orient—dealing with it by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, by teaching it, settling it, ruling over it: in short, Orientalism as a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient (Said 3).

In the eyes of the Orientalists, the "Orient" has a number of "inherent characteristics": It is "(1) monolithic, (2) static and stagnant, or changeless, (3) inferior, simple and irrational, and (4) primitive, exotic and mysterious" (Taib 2). The aim of these seminars is to investigate these characteristics as they appear in the works of Anglo-Saxon Orientalists and explore the varying degrees to which they are used by examining literary texts in a chronological order in order to evaluate their evolution.

The earliest reference to a MENA place in English literature occurs in the General Prologue to Geoffrey Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* (1400) where he mentions Tlemcen (spelt Tramessine) ─ the capital of the Zianides since 1235 (Baghli Berbar 14).

Geoffrey Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* (c 1400)
from **General Prologue**

When April's gentle rains have pierced the drought
Of March right to the root, and bathed each sprout
… On pilgrimage then folks desire to start.

….There with us was a KNIGHT, a worthy man
Who, from the very first time he began
To ride about, loved honor, chivalry,
The spirit of giving, truth and courtesy.
He was a valiant warrior for his lord;
No man had ridden farther with the sword
Through Christendom and lands of heathen creeds,
And always he was praised for worthy deeds.
He helped win Alexandria in the East,
And often sat at table's head to feast
With knights of all the nations when in Prussia.

In Lithuania as well as Russia
No other noble Christian fought so well.
When Algaciras in Granada fell,
When Ayas and Attalia were won,
This Knight was there. Hard riding he had done
At Benmarin. Along the Great Sea coast
He'd made his strikes with many a noble host.
His mortal battles numbered then fifteen,
And for our faith he'd fought at **Tramissene** 62
Three tournaments and always killed his foe.

The first contact between Britain and North Africa and the Middle East dates from the times of the Ottoman Empire. However, before the mid 16th century information about the oriental lands has reached Britain from many sources:

The Classics: through the works of ancient authors, Greek and Latin, such as Herodotus (6th century BC) and Pliny (1st century AD).

The Bible: gave prominence to the East called the Levant (oriental side of the Mediterranean) as the scene of Jesus Christ's life in Palestine: Nazareth, Bethlehem, Jerusalem. Egypt was also familiar to Christians as the place where Moses lived and from which he led the Hebrews out in their Exodus. Syria was the object of St Paul's travels (his "road to Damascus" became a famous saying). All these places were part of the Judeo-Christian world.

The Crusades: religious wars with a Christian bias, presenting Islam as a religion threatening Christianity. Crusaders' accounts were used back in Europe as support for this perception. Christianity and Islam faced each other and through this conflict, Europe came to hear of the Moors of Spain and the Saracens of the Near East.

English travellers: very few at first, narrating about alien, remote Arab lands. They were merchants or adventurers and were soon followed by diplomats and scholars. From the 16th century onwards, there were more and more trade relations as well as official British missions posted in the Mediterranean Sea and more particularly in North Africa: the 3 Barbary States (the regencies of Algiers, Tunis and Tripoli) as well as Morocco not under Ottoman rule. Piracy and corsair activities came to be associated with the Barbary States.

Elizabethan Perception of North Africa and the Orient

John Tipton was the first English consul posted to Algiers in 1580. He was appointed at the request of London tradesmen who were interested in the North African market. He worked for the Barbary Coast Company, which was established under the reign of Elizabeth I. When James I succeeded Elizabeth I to the English throne in 1603, and made overtures to Spain, England benefited from this privileged position but its ships came under attack from the Barbary privateers (Bencherif 12).

Thanks to Constantinople, a peace treaty was signed in Algiers in 1623. The truce, however, did not last very long. Tensions between the two fleets resurfaced and hundreds of captives were taken to London and Algiers. This state of affairs lasted until the beginning of 1682, when in April of that year, a peace and trade treaty was signed by both countries (Bencherif 15).

Christopher Marlowe's plays reflected Elizabethans' anxious concerns with corsair activities.

Christopher Marlowe *Tamburlaine the Great* (1592)
Act III, Scene IV

TAMBURLAINE: Well said, Theridamas! speak in that mood;
For WILL and SHALL best fitteth Tamburlaine,
Whose smiling stars give him assured hope
Of martial triumph ere he meet his foes.
I that am term'd the scourge and wrath of God,
The only fear and terror of the world,
Will first subdue the Turk, and then enlarge
Those Christian captives which you keep as slaves,
Burdening their bodies with your heavy chains,
And feeding them with thin and slender fare;
That naked row about the Terrene sea,
And, when they chance to rest or breathe a space,
Are punish'd with bastones so grievously
That they lie panting on the galleys' side,
And strive for life at every stroke they give.
*These are the **cruel pirates of Argier**,*
That damned train, the scum of Africa,
Inhabited with straggling runagates,
That make quick havoc of the Christian blood:
But, as I live, that town shall curse the time
That Tamburlaine set foot in Africa.

Christopher Marlowe *The Jew of Malta* (1633)

Act I

… *Enter FERNEZE governor of Malta, KNIGHTS, and OFFICERS; met by CALYMATH, and BASSOES of the TURK.*

FERNEZE. Now, bassoes, what demand you at our hands?
…*CALYMATH.* The ten years' tribute that remains unpaid.
FERNEZE. Alas, my lord, the sum is over-great!
I hope your highness will consider us.
CALYMATH. I wish, grave governor, 'twere in my power
To favour you; but 'tis my father's cause,
Wherein I may not, nay, I dare not dally.
FERNEZE. Then give us leave, great Selim Calymath.
CALYMATH. Stand all aside, and let the knights determine;
And send to keep our galleys under sail,
For happily we shall not tarry here.—
Now, governor, how are you resolv'd?
FERNEZE. Thus; since your hard conditions are such
That you will needs have ten years' tribute past,
We may have time to make collection
Amongst the inhabitants of Malta for't.

Elizabethan literature contributed to the image of the **hateful corsair, Moslem pirate and cruel Turk.**

Richard Knolles published *A General History of the Turks* which was reprinted several times, showing its large success as *The generall historie of the Turkes from the first beginning of that nation to the rising of the Othoman familie: with all the notable expeditions of the Christian princes against them. Together with the liues and conquests of the Othoman kings and emperours faithfullie collected out of the- best histories, both auntient and moderne, and digested into one continuat historie vntill this present yeare 1603.* It may have been a rich source of inspiration for Elizabethan playwrights.

Thomas Goffe's plays *The Raging Turk or Bajazet II* (1613) and *The Courageous Turk or Amurath I* (1620) reflect the attitude of the English towards the Turks. Turks were such "abhorrent creatures" that the word "**Turk**" was used to describe any cruel, tyrannical man or any one behaving like a barbarian or savage (*A Critical Old-spelling Edition of T. Goffe's The Courageous Turk* 44).

Barbary was also used as a setting for popular plays in Elizabethan times. George Peele set his play *The Battle of Alcazar* (1598) in Morocco, giving prominence to Islamic Spain and reflecting growing interest and taste for the exotic Orient. Tunis is the setting of Philip Massenger's play *The Renegado* (1624) about the problematic of "turning Turk", ie conversion to Islam. It pictures the imaginative Orient to Elizabethan audiences with references to harems, seraglios, eunuchs, bazaars, etc…

Moors started to figure prominently in Elizabethan theatre.
The first characterization of a Moor appeared in the *Battle of Alcazar* in the portrayal of Mulay Hamet, a crafty, treacherous plotter, inaugurating a long line of **villainous** moors often described as **black** in colour (swarthy). Hence, the persistent prejudice and biases against the Moor, the Turks and the Moslems. Elizabethan stories of the unhappy lot of Christian captives carried as slaves perpetuated the idea of captivity and forced conversion (untrue). The themes of the search for the captives and escape from slavery are related to Barbary themes showing the Christian as a virtuous hero and the **Moor as a black villain**.

It is no accident that Shakespeare should use **Argier** as the birth place of Sycorax, the mother of the monstrous Caliban in ***The Tempest***.

PROSPERO: Thou hast. Where was she born? speak; tell me.
ARIEL: Sir, in Argier.
PROSPERO: O, was she so? … This damn'd witch Sycorax,
For mischiefs manifold and sorceries terrible
To enter human hearing, from Argier,
Thou know'st, was banish'd: for one thing she did
They would not take her life. Is not this true? (Act I, scene II).

Moors were accused of greed, intemperance, cruelty and viewed as the incarnation of **evil**. The Moorish Jews were perceived as Antichrist. Shakespeare's ***Titus Andronicus*** (1588) features Aaron, a Moorish Jew, the lover of Tamara, queen of Goths, as a combination of **cruelty** and **lust**: two characteristics of Moors in Elizabethan imagination.
William Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus* (1588)
Act II, scene III *Enter AARON, with a bag of gold*
AARON: He that had wit would think that I had none,
To bury so much gold under a tree,
And never after to inherit it.
Let him that thinks of me so abjectly
Know that this gold must coin a stratagem,
Which, cunningly effected, will beget
A very excellent piece of villany:
And so repose, sweet gold, for their unrest
… **TAMORA:** Ah, my sweet Moor, sweeter to me than life!
…BASSIANUS: Believe me, queen, your swarth Cimmerian
Doth make your honour of his body's hue,
Spotted, detested, and abominable.
Why are you sequester'd from all your train,
Dismounted from your snow-white goodly steed.
And wander'd hither to an obscure plot,
Accompanied but with a barbarous Moor,
If foul desire had not conducted you?
(Cimmerian: very dark and gloomy. One of a mythical people described by Homer as inhabiting a land of perpetual darkness).

Act V, scene III
LUCIUS
Good uncle, take you in this barbarous Moor,
This ravenous tiger, this accursed devil;
Let him receive no sustenance, fetter him
Till he be brought unto the empress' face,
For testimony of her foul proceedings:

AARON
Some devil whisper curses in mine ear,
And prompt me, that my tongue may utter forth
The venomous malice of my swelling heart!

MARCUS ANDRONICUS: Now is my turn to speak. Behold this child:
Of this was Tamora delivered;
The issue of an irreligious Moor,
Chief architect and plotter of these woes:
The villain is alive in Titus' house,
And as he is, to witness this is true.
Now judge what cause had Titus to revenge
These wrongs, unspeakable, past patience,
Or more than any living man could bear.

Growing interest in Moors influenced Shakespeare's conception of his tragic hero Othello a Moorish general at the service of Venice, represented in the **noblest** traits but also capable of **passionate violence**.

Although the largest part of information about Moors came from captives' accounts and travellers' descriptions, Shakespeare like other Londoners had the opportunity to see Moors in their streets when a delegation was sent by Sultan Ahmad Almansur King of Morocco to Queen Elizabeth I. Their presence in London was widely advertised and a portrait was made of a Moorish nobleman presently found at the Shakespeare Institute of Birmingham. He is painted as an Arab, bearded, hawk-nosed, swarthy, with a turban, flowing robes and an ornamented scimitar.

It is also suggested that the character of Othello owes a great deal to Leo Africanus' *Geographical History of Africa* which Shakespeare consulted in John Pory's translation (1600). Shakespeare's source for the story was an Italian novella (1566), a sordid tale of jealousy giving warning to young ladies against disobeying their parents and marrying moors. It was changed beyond recognition by Shakespeare's treatment (Mabillard).

The Christianized Moorish general echoes Leo Africanus himself, Al Hasan Ibn Mohamed El Wazzan El Fasi (Maalouf 4) who took refuge in Fes, fleeing from Andalusia after the Spanish Reconquista. Sold in slavery in 1520, he was given as a gift to Pope Leo X who converted him to Christianity. And five years after his arrival in Rome, he completed his book first in Arabic, then translated it into Latin.

Of the Moors of Barbary, Leo Africanus wrote “no nation in the world is so subject to jealousy for they would rather lose their lives than put up any disgrace on the behalf of their women” (Mabillard). However, Othello’s justification at the end of the play is satisfying his honour: “An honourable murderer, if you will;/ For nought I did in hate, but all in honour”.

Shakespeare’s *Othello, The Moor of Venice*

Act I, scene I

IAGO: For, sir,
It is as sure as you are Roderigo,
Were I the **Moor**, I would not be Iago:
In following him, I follow but myself;
Heaven is my judge, not I for love and duty,
But seeming so, for my peculiar end:
For when my outward action doth demonstrate
The native act and figure of my heart
In compliment extern, 'tis not long after
But I will wear my heart upon my sleeve
For daws to peck at: I am not what I am.
RODERIGO
What a full fortune does the **thicklips** owe
If he can carry't thus!
…to BRABANTIO DESDEMONA’s father: Your heart is burst, you have lost half your soul;
Even now, now, very now, an old **black ram**
Is topping your white ewe. Arise, arise;
Awake the snorting citizens with the bell,
Or else the **devil** will make a grandsire of you:
Arise, I say.
…you'll
have your daughter covered with a **Barbary horse**;
you'll have your nephews neigh to you; you'll have
coursers for cousins and gennets for germans.
RODERIGO:
To the gross clasps of a **lascivious Moor**–

Act I, scene III

DUKE OF VENICE
Valiant Othello, we must straight employ you
Against the **general enemy Ottoman**.
DESDEMONA
My noble father,
I do perceive here a divided duty:
To you I am bound for life and education;
My life and education both do learn me
How to respect you; you are the lord of duty;
I am hitherto your daughter: but here's my husband,
And so much duty as my mother show'd

To you, preferring you before her father,
So much I challenge that I may profess
Due to **the Moor my lord**.

DUKE OF VENICE
To BRABANTIO
And, noble signior,
If virtue no delighted beauty lack,
Your son-in-law is **far more fair than black**.

The voyage to the Orient also figured prominently in Shakespeare's plays. The East is often presented as a dangerous destination with a devastating effect on Europeans as is clear in ***Antony and Cleopatra*** (1606). Mark Antony starts as a firm Roman soldier, but when captivated by the East, he turns soft, transformed by his contact with the Orient. He is unnerved, the shadow of his former self, fallen victim to the indulgent, erotic Orient, to the life of the senses.

The play has built the image of the East as the world of sensual indulgence, which destroys the will-power of the victims to the spell of the Orient. Mark Antony is thus destroyed in the process.

Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* (1606)
Act I Scene i

Alexandria. A room in CLEOPATRA's palace *Enter DEMETRIUS and PHILO*
PHILO:
Nay, but this dotage of our general's
O'erflows the measure: those his goodly eyes,
That o'er the files and musters of the war
Have glow'd like plated Mars, now bend, now turn,
The office and devotion of their view
Upon a tawny front: his captain's heart,
Which in the scuffles of great fights hath burst
The buckles on his breast, reneges all temper,
And is become the bellows and the fan
To cool a **gipsy's lust**.
Flourish. Enter ANTONY, CLEOPATRA, her Ladies, the Train, with Eunuchs fanning her
Look, where they come:
Take but good note, and you shall see in him.
The triple pillar of the world transform'd
Into a **strumpet**'s fool: behold and see.

The play enacts the opposition between Rome, the world of duty, firmness of purpose, respectability and morality, represented by Octavia whom Mark Antony marries out of duty and to strengthen his alliance with Octavius Ceasar, another triumvir; and the Egypt of Cleopatra, the world of indulgence of the senses, of oblivion, overwhelming power of sexual desires that makes people forget responsibility and world affairs, the

world of moral perdition and disintegration. Mark Antony wishes to extricate himself from this debilitating passion:

Act I Scene ii

MARK ANTONY :
… These strong **Egyptian fetters** I must break,
Or lose myself in dotage.
…I must from this **enchanting queen** break off:
Ten thousand harms, more than the ills I know,
My idleness doth hatch.

Act I Scene v

The demi-Atlas of this earth, the arm
And burgonet of men. He's speaking now,
Or murmuring 'Where's **my serpent** of old Nile?'
For so he calls me
ACT III SCENE XI
MARK ANTONY
O, whither hast thou led me, Egypt? See,
How I convey my shame out of thine eyes
By looking back what I have left behind
'Stroy'd in **dishonour**.
CLEOPATRA
O my lord, my lord,
Forgive my fearful sails! I little thought
You would have follow'd.
MARK ANTONY
Egypt, thou knew'st too well
My heart was to thy rudder tied by the strings,
And thou shouldst tow me after: o'er my spirit
Thy full supremacy thou knew'st, and that
Thy beck might from the bidding of the gods
Command me.

The West represents a world of public duty and order while the East stands for a world of pleasure, idleness, sexual gratification, unrestricted self-indulgence. These two warring desires in Antony bring about his downfall and death. Cleopatra is the seductress, sorceress, associated with the Eastern woman (a serpent).

Cleopatra foreshadows the myth of the seductive woman, exotic femme fatale of the 1940's colonial novel, (the Dancing girl). But in the 18th century, another prototype of the Eastern woman emerged in Scheherazade who took Europe by storm.

Seventeenth-Century References

Besides the travellers' descriptions of the MENA region, famous literary works belonging to the English canon in the 17th century mention Oriental places and people.

John Milton *Paradise Lost* (1667)
Book XI

And SOFALA thought OPHIR, to the Realme
Of CONGO, and ANGOLA fardest South;
Or thence from NIGER Flood to ATLAS Mount
The Kingdoms of ALMANSOR, FEZ, and SUS,
MAROCCO and ALGIERS, and TREMISEN;
On EUROPE thence, and where ROME was to sway
The World: in Spirit perhaps he also saw
Rich MEXICO the seat of MOTEZUME,
And CUSCO in PERU, the richer seat
Of ATABALIPA, and yet unspoil'd
GUIANA, whose great Citie GERYONS Sons
Call EL DORADO: but to nobler sights
MICHAEL from ADAM'S eyes the Filme remov'd
Which that false Fruit that promis'd clearer sight
Had bred;

John Bunyan *The Pilgrim's Progress* (1678)
from This World to That Which Is to Come

> CHRISTIAN : Thus say the common people that know him, A saint abroad, and a devil at home. His poor family finds it so; he is such a churl, such a railer at and so unreasonable with his servants, that they neither know how to do for or speak to him. Men that have any dealings with him say it is better to deal with a **Turk** than with him; for fairer dealing they shall have at their hands. This Talkative (if it be possible) will go beyond them, defraud, beguile, and overreach them.

The perception of the evil Turk is reinforced as an exemplary of tyranny and fraud.

17th century Travellers' Accounts

The figure dominating travellers' accounts in the early 17th century is **William Lithgow**, a famous Scottish traveller who went to North Africa in 1614 after visiting the Near East. He could thus compare conditions in both parts of the Moslem world. His narrative of travel is titled ***Rare Adventures and Painful Peregrinations*** (1632) where he makes allusions to the "wild and savage Arabs" an image not far from that of Elizabethans' "cruel and savage Turk". He continued to reflect the prejudices of his age, distrusting the Arabs as infidels hating Christians. In the absence of other forms of entertainment, these narratives were popular and eagerly read.

From **Lithgow's *Rare Adventures***

found Domesticke, some fifteene circumcised English Runagates, whose lives and Countenances were both alike, even as desperate as disdainfull. Yet old Waird their maister was placable, and joyned me safely with a passing Land conduct to Algiers; yea, and diverse times in my ten dayes staying there, I dyned and supped with him, but lay aboord in the French shippe.

At last having obtayned my pasport from the Bassaw there, and surety taken from my life and moneyes, I imbraced the Land way with this conduct, consisting of forty Moores, and a hundred Camels loaden with Silkes, Dimmeteis, and other Commodities, traversing the Regions of Constantine and Bougie. In all which way (Lying nightly in a Tent) I found a pleasant and fruitfull Country, abounding in Wines, Rye, Barly, Wheate, and all kinde of fruites, with innumerable villages, and so infinitely peopled, that it made me wish there had beene none at all; otherwise that they had beene Christians, and so more civill. The greatest enemy this journey designed mee, was the Sunne, whose exceeding heate was intollerable to indure, being in September Anno 1615. But for provision of Water, Wine, and Victuals wee had abundance. Upon the seaventh day of our course, wee entred in the Countrey of Tlemsen.

This copious Kingdome in all things, hath beene oft and ever molested with the Numidian Sarazens, or bastard Arabs, who falling downe from the Mountaines, do runne their carriere at random upon the ground-toyled Moores, to satisfie their needy and greedy desires. Tlemsen had of old foure Provinces, but now oncly two: Whose capitall Towne being too cognominated Tlemsen, contayned once eighteene thousand fire houses (208).

Lithgow's description initiates a recurring two-fold image about the Orient; that of an edenic place of abundance but inhabited by evil and loathsome savage people who do not deserve it. However, the most visited Oriental region by Europeans is the Middle East and more precisely the Holy Lands.

"As the Holy Land of Christianity, Palestine has been a site for pilgrimage since at least the third century. Throughout the Middle Ages, Christian pilgrims from all over Europe visited and venerated this land and even fought to gain control over it during the Crusades. Over the centuries, scores of books were written by pilgrims about their journey to Jerusalem" (Nassar 62).

One of the most famous travellers' accounts is **Henry Maundrell's *A Journey from Aleppo to Jerusalem*** in 1697. It is an example of the new genre of travel writings on Palestine that was emerging at the time. The book is a sort of **diary** kept by the author in which he reflects on what he saw and did. Even though he was the chaplain of the British Levant Company in Aleppo, and he was visiting a land holy to his faith, Maundrell had also economic preoccupations. His description provides detailed geographical information about roads and distances. "At the same time, whenever the place he mentions has some Biblical significance, Maundrell includes verses from the Bible that relate to the site. Thus, despite the fact that it is a **travelogue**, Maundrell's book has the aura of a scientific scholarly work on biblical history as well" (Nassar 63).

The Eighteenth Century Perception

During the 18th century, the image of the Maghreb and the Orient was determined by two main sources of information: **oriental tales** like the *Arabian Nights* and **autobiographies** in the form of travellers' letters and observations of Barbary and the Levant as well as captivity narratives of American and European slaves held in the Barbary States.

Travellers' Accounts

became popular in England in the beginning of the 18th century as a result of the growing number of merchants and travellers going to MENA concerned with trade in the Mediterranean Sea. These travellers would provide information about the area and its people.

Important additions were made to seventeenth-century descriptions, contributing to a better knowledge of the Maghreb and the East with more accurate observations of travellers who spent years in direct contact with the people and the institutions of these areas. Such a record is that of Dr **Thomas Shaw** in his ***Travels or Observations relating to Several Parts of Barbary and the Levant*** (1738) where he gave almost encyclopaedic comprehensive information not only of the people but also of the fauna and flora. He spent about 12 years at the Regency of Algiers as the King's chaplain attached to the consulate from 1720 to 1732 and travelled intensively. The result of these travels is this book where he deals with governments, forces, revenues, taxes, local practices, religion (Malekites, Hanafites), number of mosques, cadis, providing Arabic lexis and transcriptions, providing a remarkable piece of typography illustrated with maps (used later by the French in their landing in Algeria).

In his description of the Arabs, he indulges in the same stereotypes of the Arab Bedouins as thievish and treacherous, merely raiders but they are opposed to the more urbane Moors and Turks.

From Thomas Shaw's ***Travels or Observations*** **(Volume I)**

Dedication: To the King

Most Gracious Sovereign,

I BEG leave to approach Your Royal Person, with an humble present in my hand, after the fashion of those countries where I have long resided

It is a volume of Travels and Observations, wherein are described the situation, polity, and customs of various nations; nations unacquainted with liberty, and whose government is the very reverse of Your Majesty's wise and gracious administration.

I HAD an opportunity of making these observations, whilst I had the honour of being Your Majesty's Chaplain at Algiers. It was in this situation that I first collected materials for the following sheets; and so extensive is Your ' Majesty's influence, that it procured me safety and protection, even in countries remote and barbarous.

A WORK which owes its rise, its progress, and completion, to these assistances, seems in some degree entitled to Your Royal Favour, and IS therefore, with all humility, presented to Your

Sacred Majesty.

must be what the Europeans call wild Arabs; for there is no such name peculiar to any one particular clan or body of them, they being all the same, with the like inclinations (whenever a proper opportunity or temptation offers itself) of robbing, stripping, and murdering, not strangers only, but also one another.

PART I. CHAPTER I.
Of the Kingdom of Algiers in general Page 29

There is not the like disagreement among these geographers, in relation to the breadth of this kingdom, though none of them make it less than CL M. where it is the narrowest; nor more than CCXL where it is the broadest. The breadth indeed, though much short of these accounts, is not every where the same: for near Tlemsan it is not above xl M. from the Sahara to the sea coast; near the sources of the rivers Sigg, and Shellifi it is about LX; which, in the western part of this kingdom, may be taken at a medium for the extent of what the Arabs call Tell, ie. land proper for tillage. But, to the eastward of Algiers, the breadth is more considerable ; particularly in the meridians of Boujejali, Jijel, and Bona, where it is never less than CM.

CHAPTER IV.
Of the most remarkable inland Places and Inhabitants of the Western Province, or the Province of Tlemsan.

If we return then to the westward, five leagues to the southward of the mouth of the river Tafna, is the city Tremesen, as the modem geographers write it, or Telemsan or Tlemsan, according to the Moorish pronunciation. It is situated upon a rising ground, below a range of rocky precipices... We have a large strip of level ground, that throws out from every part of it a number of fountains.
These, after uniting gradually into little rills, fall in a variety of cascades, as they draw near to Tlemsan. In the west part of the city, there is a large square bason of Moorish workmanship, two hundred yards long, and about half as broad. The inhabitants entertain a tradition, that formerly the kings of Tlemsan took here the diversion of the water, whilst their subjects were taught the art of rowing and navigation. But the water of the Sachratain, as Leo well observes, being easily turned off from its ordinary course, this bason might have been rather designed for a reservoir in case of a siege ; not to mention the constant use of it at all other times, in preserving a quantity of water sufficient to refresh the beautiful gardens and plantations that lie below it.

The Beni Mezzab notwithstanding they pay no tribute to the Algerines, and, being of the sect of the Melaki, are not permitted to enter their mosques; yet they have been from time immemorial the only persons who are employed in their slaughter houses, and who have furnished their shambles with provisions. It may be farther observed of these sons of Mezzab, that they are generally of a more swarthy complexion than the Gardaians to the northward; and as they lie separated from them by a wide inhospitable desert, without the least traces of dwellings, or even the footsteps of any living creatures, they may be in all probability, as it will be elsewhere observed, the

most western branch of the Melanogaatuli, so much sought after, and so little known in the modern systems of geography.

Boujeiah is one of the garrisoned towns of this kingdom, where three Suffrahs constantly reside;yet they are of so little consequence, that the Goryah, the Toujah, and other neighbouring Kabyles, lay it under a perpetual blockade. Every market day especially, strange disorders are occasioned by these factious clans. All the morning, indeed, while the market continues, every thing is transacted with the utmost peace and tranquillity; but immediately afterwards, the whole place is in an uproar and confusion, and the day rarely ends without some flagrant instance of rapine and barbarity.
The Boujeians carry on a considerable trade in plowshares, mattocks, and such like utensils as they forge out of the iron, dug out of the adajacent mountains. Great quantities likewise of oil and wax, brought down every market day by the Kabyles, are shipped off for the Levant, and sometimes for Europe.

No nation in the world is so much given to superstition as the Arabs, or even as the Mahometans in general. They hang* about their childrens necks, the figure of an open hand, usually the right, which the Turks and Moors paint likewise upon their ships and houses, as a countercharın to an evil eye; for five is with them an unlucky number, and five (meaning their fingers) in your eyes, is their proverb of cursing and defiance.

who have the Dey's ear; by flattering one, placing confidence in another, and especially by making a proper use of those invincible arguments, money, kaf-tans, and gold watches. For according to an old and infallible observation, “Give a Turk money with one hand, and he will permit his eyes to be plucked out by the other.”

Of the state of Learning in Barbary, with the Method of teaching their Children.

The liberal arts and sciences among the Mahometans continue to be, as they have been for many ages, in a low state and condition. Philosophy, mathematics, and the knowledge of physic and medicine, which, a few centuries ago they had almost entirely to themselves, are at present very little known or studied. The roving and unsettled life of the Arabs, and the perpetual grievances which the Moors meet with from the Turks, will not permit either of them to enjoy that liberty, quiet and security, which have at all times given birth and encouragement to learning.

Thomas Shaw indulges in the same stereotypes of evil and violent Orientals, ignorant and savage as well as superstitious, whereas their land is a sort of paradise on earth.

Lady Montagu's *Turkish Letters*

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu was the first Western woman to live in the Orient. She accompanied her husband who had been appointed Ambassador Extraordinary to the Court of Turkey. He was also a representative of the London-based Levant Company, which traded in this region for items such as tulips, coffee, and silk. The task of Edward Montagu's diplomatic appointment was, in part, to keep trade functioning smoothly. Unfortunately, he was unsuccessful in effecting a truce between the warring nations of Austria and Turkey.

Lady Montagu learnt Turkish and wrote descriptions of the country in her celebrated ***Turkish Embassy Letters*** in 1717 but they were published after her death in 1763 (within the vogue of the epistolary form like Montesquieu *Lettres Persanes* (1721).

As a woman, she had the chance to penetrate women society hidden to male observers and saw how they lived. She rejects the image of the cruel Turk:

Letter XLI.
TO THE COUNTESS OF B——.

> I know You'l expect that I should say something particular of the Slaves, and you will Imagine me half a Turk when I don't speak of it with the same horror that other Christians have done before me, but I cannot forbear applauding the Humanity of the Turks to those Creatures. They are never ill us'd and their Slavery is in my Opinion no worse than Servitude all over the world. 'Tis true, they have no wages; but they give them yearly clothes to a higher value than our salaries to our ordinary servants.

She found Turkish women freer than any ladies in the universe, it being their husbands' business to make money and theirs to spend it. She also found the veil as very convenient, allowing women to go and come without being recognized and no man accosts them in the streets, they are treated with respect. The harems, so fascinating to Europeans, are not the places of debauchery described in the *Arabian Nights*. Instead, she discovered places of respectability and decorum, like English coffee-houses.

She also brought back to England the practice of engrafting or smallpox inoculation.

From Lady Montagu's *Turkish Letters*

PREFACE

I CONFESS, I am malicious enough to desire, that the world should see to how much better purpose the LADIES travel than their LORDS; and that, whilst it is surfeited with Male travels, all in the same tone, and stuffed with the same trifles; a lady has the skill to strike out a new path, and to embellish a worn-out subject with variety of fresh and elegant entertainment.

Letter xxix.

Adrianople. — Lady M. describes her Turkish dress — the persons and manners of the Turklsh ladies — their dress when they go abroad —the plurality of wives allowed by the Koran seldom indulged.

To the Countess of ——.
Adrianople, April. 1. O. S. 1717.
Pray let me into more particulars, and I will try to awaken your gratitude, by giving you a full and true relation of the novelties of this place, none of which would surprise you more than a sight of my person, as I am now in my Turkish habit, though I believe you would be of my opinion, that 'tis admirably becoming. — I intend to send you my picture; in the mean time accept of it here.
THE first part of my dress is a pair of drawers, very full that reach to my shoes, and conceal the legs more modestly than your petticoats. They are of a thin rose-coloured damask, brocaded with silver flowers. My shoes are of white kid leather, embroidered with gold. Over this hangs my smock, of a fine white silk gauze, edged with embroidery. The *antery* is a waistcoat, made close to the shape, of white and gold damask, with very long sleeves falling back, and fringed with deep gold fringe, and should have diamond or pearl buttons. My *caftan*, of the same stuff with my drawers, is a robe exactly fitted to my shape, and reaching to my feet, with very long strait falling sleeves. Over this is my girdle, of about four fingers broad, which, all that can afford it, have entirely of diamonds or other precious stones; those who will not be at that expence, have it of exquisite embroidery on sattin; but it must be fastened before with a clasp of diamonds. The head dress is composed of a cap, called *talpock*, which is, in winter, of fine velvet embroidered with pearls or diamonds, and in summer, of a light shining silver stuff. This is fixed on one side of the head, hanging a little way down with a gold tassel, and bound on, either with a circle of diamonds (as I have seen several) or a rich embroidered handkerchief. On the other side of the head, the hair is laid flat; and here the ladies are at liberty to shew their fancies; some putting flowers, others a plume of heron's feathers, and, in short, what they please; but the most general fashion is a large *bouquet* of jewels, made like natural flowers; that is, the buds, of pearl; the roses, of different coloured rubies: the jessamines, of diamonds; the jonquils, of topazes, &c. so well set and enamelled, 'tis hard to imagine any thing of that kind so beautiful. The hair hangs at its full length behind, divided into tresses braided with pearl or ribbon, which is always in great quantity. I never saw in my life so many fine heads of hair. 'Tis surprising to see a young woman that is not very handsome. They have naturally the most beautiful complexion in the world, and generally large black eyes. I can assure you with great truth, that the court of England (though I believe it the fairest in Christendom) does not contain so many beauties as are under our protection here. They generally shape their eye-brows, and both Greeks and Turks have the custom of putting round their eyes a black tincture, that, at a distance, or by candle-light, adds very much to the blackness of them. I fancy many of our ladies would be overjoyed to know this secret, but 'tis too visible by day.
AS to their morality or good conduct, I can say, like Harlequin, that 'tis just as 'tis with you; and the Turkish ladies don't commit one sin the less for not being Christians. Now, that I am a little acquainted with their ways, I cannot forbear admiring, either the exemplary discretion, or extreme stupidity of all the writers that have given accounts

of them. ’Tis very easy to see, they have in reality more liberty than we have. No woman, of what rank soever, is permitted to go into the streets without two *murlins*, one that covers her face all but her eyes, and another, that hides the whole dress of her head, and hangs half way down her back. Their shapes are also wholely concealed, by a thing they call a *serigee*, which no woman of any sort appears without; this has strait sleeves, that reach to their fingers-ends, and it laps all round them, not unlike a riding-hood. In winter, ’tis of cloth; and in summer, of plain stuff or silk. You may guess then, how effectually this disguises them, so that there is no distinguishing the great lady from her slave. ’Tis impossible for the most jealous husband to know his wife, when he meets her; and no man dare touch or follow a woman in the street.

Letter XXVI.
TO THE LADY ——.
Adrianople, April 1. O. S. 1717.

IN one of these covered waggons, I went to the bagnio about ten o'clock. It was already full of women. It is built of stone, in the shape of a dome, with no windows but in the roof, which gives light enough. There were five of these domes joined together, the outmost being less than the rest, and serving only as a hall, where the portress stood at the door. Ladies of quality generally give this woman a crown or ten shillings; and I did not forget that ceremony. The next room is a very large one paved with marble, and all round it are two raised sofas of marble, one above another. There were four fountains of cold water in this room, falling first into marble basons, and then running on the floor in little channels made for that purpose, which carried the streams into the next room, something less than this, with the same sort of marble sofas, but so hot with steams of sulphur proceeding from the baths joining to it, 'twas impossible to stay there with one's cloaths (sic) on. The two other domes were the hot baths, one of which had cocks of cold water turning into it, to temper it to what degree of warmth the bathers pleased to have.

I WAS in my travelling habit, which is a riding dress, and certainly appeared very extraordinary to them. Yet there was not one of them that shewed the least surprise or impertinent curiosity, but received me with all the obliging civility possible. I know no European court, where the ladies would have behaved themselves in so polite a manner to such a stranger. I believe, upon the whole, there were two hundred women, and yet none of those disdainful smiles, and satirical whispers, that never fail in our assemblies, when any body appears that is not dressed exactly in the fashion. They repeated over and over to me; "UZELLE, PEK UZELLE," which is nothing but, Charming, very Charming.—The first sofas were covered with cushions and rich carpets, on which sat the ladies; and on the second, their slaves behind them, but without any distinction of rank by their dress, all being in the state of nature, that is, in plain English, stark naked, without any beauty or defect concealed. Yet there was not the least wanton smile or immodest gesture amongst them. They walked and moved with the same majestic grace, which Milton describes our general mother with… in different postures, some in conversation, some working, others drinking coffee or sherbet, and many negligently lying on their cushions, while their slaves (generally pretty girls of seventeen or eighteen) were employed in braiding their hair in several pretty fancies. In short, 'tis the women's coffee-house, where all the news of the town

is told, scandal invented, &c.—They generally take this diversion once a-week, and stay there at least four or five hours, without getting cold by immediate coming out of the hot bath into the cold room, which was very surprising to me…I was charmed with their civility and beauty, and should have been very glad to pass more time with them; but Mr W—— resolving to pursue his journey next morning early.. ADIEU, madam, I am sure I have now entertained you with an account of such a sight as you never saw in your life, and what no book of travels could inform you of, as 'tis no less than death for a man to be found in one of these places.

LETTER. XLII.
TO THE COUNTESS OF ——.
'Tis also very pleasant to observe how tenderly he and all his brethren voyage-writers lament the miserable confinement of the Turkish ladies, who are perhaps more free than any ladies in the universe, and are the only women in the world that lead a life of uninterrupted pleasure, exempt from cares; their whole time being spent in visiting, bathing, or the agreeable amusement of spending money, and inventing new fashions. A husband would be thought mad, that exacted any degree of economy from his wife, whose expences are no way limited but by her own fancy. 'Tis his business to get money, and hers to spend it: and this noble prerogative extends itself to the very meanest of the sex. Here is a fellow that carries embroidered handkerchiefs upon his back to sell. And as miserable a figure as you may suppose such a mean dealer, yet, I'll assure you, his wife scorns to wear any thing less than cloth of gold; has her ermine furs, and a very handsome set of jewels for her head.
Letter. XXVIII
My only diversion is the conversation of our host, Achmet Beg, a title something like that of count in Germany. His father was a great bassa, and he has been educated in the most polite eastern learning, being perfectly skilled in the Arabic and Persian languages, and an extraordinary scribe, which they call effendi… I was going to tell you, that an intimate daily conversation with the effendi Achmet-beg, gave me an opportunity of knowing their religion and morals in a more particular manner than perhaps any Christian ever did. I explained to him the difference between the religion of England and Rome; and he was pleased to hear there were Christians that did not worship images, or adore the Virgin Mary. The ridicule of transubstantiation appeared very strong to him… He assured me, that if I understood Arabic, I should be very well pleased with reading the alcoran, which is so far from the nonsense we charge it with, that it is the purest morality, delivered in the very best language. I have since heard impartial Christians speak of it in the same manner; and I don't doubt but that all our translations are from copies got from the Greek priests, who would not fail to falsify it with the extremity of malice…

Captivity Narratives

The other source of information about the MENA available to English readers in the eighteenth century was what is known as "Barbary captivity narratives" or "white slave narratives", including non-fiction, fiction and plays.

Pirate ships and crews from the North African states of Tripoli, Tunis, Morocco, and Algiers (the Barbary Coast) were the scourge of the Mediterranean. Capturing merchant ships and holding their crews for ransom provided the rulers of these nations with wealth and naval power (Gawalt).

Cotton Mather called Barbary servitude "the most horrible captivity in the world" and described the "Hellish Moors" who held Americans in bondage as "worse than Egyptian taskmasters" (quoted in Baepler 2).

Such captivity narratives, written by British and American men and women, had started in the 17th century with **Francis Knight** who wrote in 1640 *A Relation of Seven Years Slavery*, praising God's hand in his deliverance and lamenting the tribulations of a galleys slave: "there is no calamity can befall a man in this life which hath the least parallel to this of captivity, neither are the endurances of the captives equal, although the least without the divine assistance were insupportable, yet are they all easy in comparison to that of the galleys, which is most inhuman and diabolical" (quoted in Baepler 6).

Joseph Pitts, an Exeter boy, was captured by Algerine pirates at the age of 15 and sold as a slave in Algiers. He spent more than fifteen years in captivity and served three successive *Patroons*, or owners, with whom he travelled to Cairo and Alexandria, as well as to sacred Islamic sites at Mecca and Medina. Unlike many English captives, Pitts was never ransomed by a British consul and had to escape to recover his freedom after being made prisoner for refusing to join the British army. His *Faithful Account of the Religion and Manners of the Mahometans* (1704) is a mixture of captivity narrative and traveller's account.

From Chapter 7, "Containing an Account of the *Mohammetans* Pilgrimage to *Mecca*"

[W]e came to a place call'd *Rabbock,* about *four* days sail on this side *Mecca,* where all the *Hagges* (excepting those of the Female Sex) do enter into *Hirawem,* or *Ihram, i.e.* They take off all their Cloaths, covering themselves with two *Hirrawems*, or large white *Cotton Wrappers*; one they put about their *middle*, which reaches down to their ankles, the other they cover the *upper part* of the Body with, except the *Head*, and they wear no other thing on their Bodies but these Wrappers, only a pair of *gimgameea, i.e.* Thin-sol'd Shoes, like *Sandals* …During this time they are very Watchful over their *Tempers*, and keep a Jealous Eye upon their *Passions*, and observe a strict Government of their *Tongues,* making continual use of a *form* of devout expressions. And they will also be careful to be *Reconcil'd,* and at Peace, with all such as they had any Difference with; accounting it a very sinful and shameful thing to bear the least Malice against any. They do not shave themselves during this time.

From Chapter 9, "An Account of the Author's turning *Mohammetan*, through the barbarous Cruelties and Tortures which he suffered. Of the Concern and Remorse

he had thereupon": The Reader, I suppose, will expect an Account, how I became qualified to write such an *History* as this (though it may be guessed at by what has gone before) an and how I was let into the Secrets of the *Mohammetan Religion,* so as to be able to give such an exact Description, as is herein publish'd, of their Religion, particularly of that at *Mecca*... I spake something before of the Cruelties exercised upon me by the *Turks*, but now shall give a more particular Account of them; which were so many and so great, that I being then but young too, could no longer endure them, and therefore turn'd *Turk* to avoid them.

GOD BE MERCIFUL TO ME A SINNER!

…Then he took me by the Right-hand, and endeavoured to make me hold up the Fore-finger, as thy usually do when they speak those Words, [viz. *La illabi illallah Mohammet Resul-allah*] which initiates them *Turks* (as I have related before) but I did with all my might bend it down; so that he saw nothing was to be done with me without Violence; upon which he presently call'd two of his Servants, and commanded them to tye up my Feet with a Rope to the Post of the Tent; and when they had so done, he with a great Cudgel fell a beating of me upon my bare Feet. .. but at last, seeing his Cruelty towards me insatiable, unless I did turn *Mohammetan*, through Terrour I did it, and spake the Words as usual, holding up the Fore-finger of my Right-hand; and presently I was had away to a Fire, and care was taken to heal my Feet (for they were so beaten, that I was not able to go upon them for several Days) and so I was put to Bed."

The Captives: Eleven Years a Prisoner in Algiers by **James Cathcart**

is about an American youth of 17, first taken prisoner by the British and then captured by the Algerines on July 25, 1785. "An indomitable spirit of patriotism enabled him to rise from abject slavery to become Christian clerk to the Dey of Algiers" (Preface iii).

"Had I known the different vicissitudes I was to experience, and the length of my captivity, I should have sunk beneath the weight of such accumulated woe. But hope, that sweet soother of all earthly cares, represented that our situation was really not so bad as we had expected, and that we had not been used worse than many of our fellow citizens had been during the Revolutionary war in the different British prisons; and, being confident that our country would immediately redeem us, I resolved to bear my captivity with as good a grace as possible and not give the Mahometans the satisfaction of seeing me dejected.. As I have promised to give a detail of the treatment that Christian slaves receive in Barbary, and as I have experienced a great variety of scenes myself, I will give the particulars as they occur..

CHAPTER II.

Economy of the Dey's palace will describe the situation of slaves in all the Grandees and rich peoples' houses in the Regency of Algiers, making allowance for the caprices of Masters, some being better and some worse, as in other countries. The Dey's palace is governed by two Hasnadars or Chamberlains' and two chief cooks.. The two chief cooks on my arrival at Algiers had thirty-three Christians of different denominations, under their command, besides a number of Moors for doing the out door work, the

Christians only being permitted to go out twice a year, on the second day of their two chief festivals. Those Christians are employed in the different offices of the kitchen and magazines of provisions in the palace. The chief cooks only superintend the whole".

Captivity narratives were also written in the form of fictional works such as novels and plays. The most famous novel is by American author
Royall Tyler: ***The Algerine Captive, Or The Life and Adventures of Doctor Updike Underhill: Six Years a Prisoner Among the Algerines*** (1797).

From *The Algerine Captive*

Chapter 39: "The Author Confereth with a Mollah - Defendeth the verity of the Christian creed and resigns his Body to Slavery to preserve the Freedom of his Mind".

Upon the margin of a refreshing fountain, shadowed by the fragrant branches of the orange, date and pomegranate, for five successive days I maintained the sacred truth of our holy religion against the insidious attack of the Mussulman priest...
Author: our religion was disseminated in peace, yours is promulgated by the sword.
Mollah:my friend, you surely have not read the writings of your own historians. The history of the Christian church is a detail of bloody massacres; from the institution of the Christian thundering legion under Constantine the Great, to the expulsion of the Moors of Spain by the ferocious inquisition, or the dragooning of the Hugonnots from France under Louis the Great. The Massulmans never yet forced a man to adopt their faith... we leave it to Christians of your Southern plantations to baptise the unfortunate African into your faith, and then use your btother Christians as brutes of the desert.

Here I was so abashed for my country, I could not answer him.
Mollah: ...You need not renounce your prophet, him we respect as a great apostle of God; but Mahomet is the seal of the prophets. Turn then, my friend, from slavery to the delights of life... Lift your finger to the immensity of space and confess that there is one God, and that Mahomet is his apostle.
...after five days conversation, disgusted with his fables, and almost confounded by his sophistry, I resumed my slave's attire and sought safety in my former servitude."

Susanna Rowson's play *Slaves in Algiers: or a Struggle for Freedom* (1794) is a comedy melodrama about a group of Americans held captive in Algiers. Rebecca is one of the main characters. ln search of her captured husband, she "civilizes" Oriental women by teaching them about liberty. Fetnah is one of these women who also wants to escape. Finally, impressed by the Americans' willingness to die for freedom, the Dey has a change of heart, frees all the slaves and even abolishes slavery in Algiers. Rawson had never visited Algiers or any Oriental place, her vision of the Orient is rather negative, it is used to shed a positive light on American values.

The titles of these narratives, often fictitious, provide information about their contents, and are used to attract the audience:

The Captivity and Sufferings of Mrs. Mary Velnet, Who was Seven Years a Slave in Tripoli, three of which she was confined in a dungeon, loaded with irons, and

four times put to the most cruel tortures ever invented by man. To which is added, The Lunatic Governor, and Adelaide, or the Triumph of Constancy, a Tale, Mary Velnet (1828).

History of the Captivity and Sufferings of Mrs. Maria Martin, who was six years a Slave in Algiers: two of which she was confined in a dark and dismal dungeon, loaded with irons (1807).

Recent studies have exposed the fallacy of these pretended autobiographical narratives of captivity. Maria Martin has never existed (Marr 47) and her lengthy and detailed tale of enslavement and torture at the hands of the Algerines is a long imaginary fabric of fabulation as vented by Timothy Marr in *The Cultural Roots of American Islamicism*.

The image of Orientals as evil tyrants torturing their victims is purposefully exaggerated to elicit sympathy from Western readers and levy money to redeem the captives. The fear of forced conversion to Islam is played upon by Puritan Americans to collect the necessary taxes used for paying tribute to the Algerine fleet in order to guarantee the safety of the ships of the nascent United States.

The Oriental Tale

The second source of information about the MENA which proved highly influential by the end of the 18th century on the whole of Europe is what is called the Oriental tale or Arabian tale, beginning with the *Arabian Nights*.

The Arabian Nights

The first recorded mention of the Nights comes in a Baghdad book catalogue dating from around AD 900, and the earliest surviving full-length manuscript from a few hundred years after that. What seems clear, though, is that there was no single author or source: the work was a cultural patchwork stretching from Egypt to India, a jigsaw puzzle with no agreed design, which grew over the years as old stories were altered and new stories were added.

The earliest translations appeared in French between 1704 and 1717, and in English from 1708 (Warner 15). As the first European translator of the *Nights*, Antoine Galland (1645–1715) learned Arabic, Persian, Turkish, and Greek to cope with what was really a kind of linguistic palimpsest. Galland was employed by the French East India Company, and travelled the Mediterranean, living in Constantinople for a time. Though his work was largely based on the fourteenth-century Syrian manuscript, his 1712 version strayed from translation into paraphrase and even invention as he rendered a spare original into a polished, lyrical, and refined narrative that appealed to a French aristocratic readership. Galland is said to have added the stories of **Aladdin**, **Ali Baba**, and others as well.

Among the most notable later editions are those published by **Edward Lane** (in 1839–41) who expurgated the tales from details counter to Victorian strict morality, John Payne (in 1882–4), and **Richard Burton** (in 1885–6), who also translated the *Kama Sutra*, *The Perfumed Garden*, and other 'classics' of the Orientalist canon.

The *Nights* offered a particularly powerful vision of an Oriental culture seemingly saturated with references to sensuality, extravagance indulgence, violence, supernaturalism, and eroticism: the very things that the rising European powers were—for all their own obsessive interest in them—keen to disavow as elements in their own cultures as they sought to find ways to justify their conquest and rule over other peoples, particularly in Asia. The *Nights* also added a supernatural dimension to the Enlightenment; the tales offered an avenue into modernity through its magical opposite, an alternative to European identity, and an antidote to neoclassicism. In the introduction to his nineteenth-century adaptation, Richard Burton made the connections explicit:

> England is ever forgetting that she is at present the greatest Mohammedan empire in the world. He who would deal with them successfully must be, firstly, honest and truthful and, secondly, familiar with and favourably inclined to their manners and customs if not to their law and religion. We may, perhaps, find it hard to restore to England those pristine virtues, that tone and temper, which made her what she is; but at any rate we (myself and a host of others) can offer her the means of dispelling her ignorance

concerning the Eastern races with whom she is continually in contact (Preface).

The Romantic poets found the *Arabian Nights* to be a particularly fertile counterpoint to what they felt to be the more stolid legacy of the Enlightenment. Not only did Romanticism develop out of the eighteenth-century interest in Orientalism, of which the *Nights* long provided the centrepiece, but Romanticism as we know it would not have developed without Orientalism (a point first articulated by Raymond Schwab in *The Oriental Renaissance*).

Wordsworth, Southey, Coleridge, Shelley, and Byron—to name only the most obvious examples—were all weaned on the *Nights*, and they all developed their poetry in the context of Britain's burgeoning interest in Orientalism.

Several nineteenth-century authors used the fame of the *Arabian Nights* to publicize their works, even if these did not include Oriental characters or settings. Robert Louis Stevenson published *The New Arabian Nights* in 1882, endowing it with fantastic plots but the stories are usually set in Britain. It was followed by *More New Arabian Nights: the Dynamiter*, in 1885 and the *Island Nights' Entertainments*, in 1893.

Oscar Wilde's *The Happy Prince and Other Tales*, published in 1888 and its sequel, *The House of Pomegranates* (1891), borrow from the universe of the *Arabian Nights* stories of talking birds and living statues though they do not contain oriental settings or characters.

The *Arabian Nights* ushered in a change of perception of the Middle East. The Ottoman empire was no longer a threat to the powerful European colonial powers which were extending their territories.

The Orient then became a metaphor to express moral attitudes and beliefs. It allowed escapism from a rigid society, losing mystery and spirituality and was considered as a place of exoticism and eroticism; a world of fantasy and magic, supernatural beings (djinns) genii out of bottles, supernatural birds (roc), flying carpets as well as harems and slaves.

It is interesting to compare Edward Lane's and Richard Burton's versions of the *Arabian Nights* especially in their opening parts to shed light on the difference in perception of the Oriental world.

Edward Lane's *The Arabian Nights*

The Sultan and His Vow

It is written in the chronicles of the Sassanian monarchs that there once lived an illustrious prince, beloved by his own subjects for his wisdom and his prudence, and feared by his enemies for his courage and for the hardy and well-disciplined army of which he was the leader. This prince had two sons, the elder called Schah-riar, and the younger Schah-zenan, both equally good and deserving of praise.

When the old king died at the end of a long and glorious reign, Schah-riar, his eldest son, ascended the throne and reigned in his stead. Schah-zenan, however, was not in the least envious, and a friendly contest soon arose between the two brothers as to which could best promote the happiness of the other. Schah-zenan did all he could to show his loyalty and affection, while the new sultan loaded his brother with all possible honors, and in order that he might in some degree share the sultan's power and wealth, bestowed on him the kingdom of Great Tartary. Schah-zenan immediately went to take possession of the empire allotted him, and fixed his residence at Samarcand, the chief city.

After a separation of ten years Schah-riar so ardently desired to see his brother, that he sent his first vizier, with a splendid embassy, to invite him to revisit his court. As soon as Schah-zenan was informed of the approach of the vizier, he went out to meet him, with all his ministers, in most magnificent dress, and inquired after the health of the sultan, his brother. Having replied to these affectionate inquiries, the vizier told the purpose of his coming. Schah-zenan, who was much affected at the kindness and recollection of his brother, then addressed the vizier in these words: "Sage vizier, the sultan, my brother, does me too much honor. It is impossible that his wish to see me can exceed my desire of again beholding him. You have come at a happy moment. My kingdom is tranquil, and in ten days' time I will be ready to depart with you. Meanwhile pitch your tents on this spot, and I will order every refreshment and accommodation for you and your whole train."

At the end of ten days everything was ready, and Schah-zenan took a tender leave of the queen, his consort. Accompanied by such officers as he had appointed to attend him, he left Samarcand in the evening and camped near the tents of his brother's ambassador, that they might proceed on their journey early the following morning. Wishing, however, once more to see his queen, whom he tenderly loved, he returned privately to the palace, and went directly to her apartment. There, to his extreme grief, he found her in the company of a slave whom she plainly loved better than himself. Yielding to the first outburst of his indignation, the unfortunate monarch drew his scimitar, and with one rapid stroke slew them both.

He then went from the city as privately as he had entered it, and returned to his pavilion. Not a word did he say to any one of what had happened. At dawn he ordered the tents to be struck, and the party set forth on their journey to the sound of drums and other musical instruments. The whole train was filled with joy, except the king, who could think of nothing but his queen, and he was a prey to the deepest grief and melancholy during the whole journey.

The Book of The THOUSAND NIGHTS AND A NIGHT (ALF LAYLAH WA LAYLAH)

By Sir Richard F. Burton (1885)

In the Name of Allah, the Compassionating, the Compassionate!

PRAISE BE TO ALLAH * THE BENEFICENT KING * THE CREATOR OF THE UNIVERSE * LORD OF THE THREE WORLDS * WHO SET UP THE FIRMAMENT WITHOUT PILLARS IN ITS STEAD * AND WHO STRETCHED OUT THE EARTH EVEN AS A BED * AND GRACE, AND PRAYER-BLESSING BE UPON OUR LORD MOHAMMED * LORD OF APOSTOLIC MEN * AND UPON HIS FAMILY AND COMPANION TRAIN * PRAYER AND BLESSINGS ENDURING AND GRACE WHICH UNTO THE DAY OF DOOM SHALL REMAIN * AMEN! * O THOU OF THE THREE WORLDS SOVEREIGN!

And afterwards. Verily the works and words of those gone before us have become instances and examples to men of our modern day, that folk may view what admonishing chances befel other folk and may therefrom take warning; and that they may peruse the annals of antique peoples and all that hath betided them, and be thereby ruled and restrained:--Praise, therefore, be to Him who hath made the histories of the Past an admonition unto the Present! Now of such instances are the tales called "A Thousand Nights and a Night," together with their far famed legends and wonders.

Therein it is related (but Allah is All knowing of His hidden things and All ruling and All honoured and All giving and All gracious and All merciful that, in tide of yore and in time long gone before, there was a King of the Kings of the Banu Sasan in the Islands of India and China, a Lord of armies and guards and servants and dependents. He left only two sons, one in the prime of manhood and the other yet a youth, while both were Knights and Braves, albeit the elder was a doughtier horseman than the younger. So he succeeded to the empire his name was King Shahryar, and he made his younger brother, Shah Zaman hight, King of Samarcand in Barbarian land… When the Wazir entered the city he proceeded straightway to the palace, where he presented himself in the royal presence; and, after kissing ground and praying for the King's health and happiness and for victory over all his enemies, he informed him that his brother was yearning to see him, and prayed for the pleasure of a visit.

… "I hear and I obey the commands of the beloved brother!" adding to the Wazir, "But we will not march till after the third day's hospitality."

… On the fourth day he made ready for wayfare and got together sumptuous presents befitting his elder brother's majesty, and stablished his chief Wazir viceroy of the land during his absence. Then he caused his tents and camels and mules to be brought forth and encamped, with their bales and loads, attend ants and guards, within sight of the city, in readiness to set out next morning for his brother's capital. But when the night was half spent he bethought him that he had forgotten in his palace somewhat which he should have brought with him, so he re turned privily and entered his apartments, where he found the Queen, his wife, asleep on his own carpet bed, embracing with both arms a black cook of loathsome aspect and foul with kitchen grease and grime. When he saw this the world waxed black before his sight and he said, "If such case happen while I am yet within sight of the city what will be the doings of this damned whore during my long absence at my brother's court?" So he drew his scymitar and, cutting the two in four pieces with a single blow, left them on the carpet and returned presently to his camp without letting anyone know of what had happened.

Then he gave orders for immediate departure and set out at once and began his travel; but he could not help thinking over his wife's treason and he kept ever saying to himself, "How could she do this deed by me? How could she work her own death?," till excessive grief seized him, his colour changed to yellow, his body waxed weak and he was threatened with a d dangerous malady, such an one as bringeth men to die.

Besides translations or improved versions of the Arabian Nights, the genre of the Oriental tale includes narratives set in the Orient with Oriental characters and featuring the particular universe of the Nights. The most famous of these Oriental tales is **William Beckford's *The History of the Caliph Vathek*** (1786).

William Beckford was born in an aristocratic family in 1759, the son of the Mayor of London. He was taught music by Mozart. He amused himself by writing, at the age of about twenty-two, *Vathek* in French, at a single sitting; but he gave his mind to it and the sitting lasted three days and two nights.

It portrays a sinister dark orient, with a hero reminiscent of the Satan of Milton's *Paradise Lost*; Caliph Vathek a cruel and sensual sultan, two characteristics often associated in the image of oriental characters.

The grandson of Haroun Errachid, his mother was a Greek sorceress, he was corrupted by absolute power, stressing the element of despotism and tyranny in eastern ruler, and a thirst for knowledge. He was convinced by his mother to become a servant of Eblis (devil, chief of devils) who denied worship to Adam, in order to gain access to forbidden knowledge and the treasures of the pre-Adamite kings, a Faustian figure who sold his soul to the devil.

He sacrificed 50 children eaten by the giaour and on his journey to the mountain of Eblis, fell in love with Nouronihar, daughter of the Emir. After many incidents and adventures, he gains admittance to Eblis court and the subterranean world and discovers, sickening, the worthlessness of the riches piled there, and as punishment for his sin, his heart burst into flames for eternity.

The tale features a **dark** and **cruel** orient, a doomed hero, mystery and imagination and can be said to have influenced the Gothic, Romantic literature of the 19th century.

From **William Beckford's *The History of the Caliph Vathek***

Vathek, ninth Caliph of the race of the Abassides, was the son of Motassem, and the grandson of Haroun Al Raschid. From an early accession to the throne, and the talents he possessed to adorn it, his subjects were induced to expect that his reign would be long and happy. His figure was pleasing and majestic; but when he was angry one of his eyes became so terrible that no person could bear to behold it, and the wretch upon whom it was fixed instantly fell backward, and sometimes expired. For fear, however, of depopulating his dominions and making his palace desolate he but rarely gave way to his anger.

Being much addicted to women and the pleasures of the table, he sought by his affability to procure agreeable companions; and he succeeded the better as his generosity was unbounded, and his indulgences unrestrained, for he was by no means scrupulous, nor did he think with the Caliph Omar Ben Abdalaziz that it was necessary to make a hell of this world to enjoy Paradise in the next.

He surpassed in magnificence all his predecessors. The palace of Alkoremmi, which his father Motassem had erected on the hill of Pied Horses, and which commanded the whole city of Samarah, was in his idea far too scanty; he added therefore five wings, or

rather other palaces, which he destined for the particular gratification of each of his senses.

In the first of these were tables continually covered with the most exquisite dainties, which were supplied both by night and by day, according to their constant consumption, whilst the most delicious wines and the choicest cordials flowed forth from a hundred fountains that were never exhausted. This palace was called "The Eternal or Unsatiating Banquet."

The second was styled "The Temple of Melody, or the Nectar of the Soul." It was inhabited by the most skilful musicians and admired poets of the time, who not only displayed their talents within, but, dispersing in bands without, caused every surrounding scene to reverberate their songs, which were continually varied in the most delightful succession.

The palace named "The Delight of the Eyes, or the Support of Memory," was one entire enchantment. Rarities collected from every corner of the earth were there found in such profusion as to dazzle and confound, but for the order in which they were arranged. One gallery exhibited the pictures of the celebrated Mani, and statues that seemed to be alive. Here a well-managed perspective attracted the sight; there the magic of optics agreeably deceived it; whilst the naturalist on his part exhibited, in their several classes, the various gifts that Heaven had bestowed on our globe. In a word, Vathek omitted nothing in this palace that might gratify the curiosity of those who resorted to it, although he was not able to satisfy his own, for he was of all men the most curious.

"The Palace of Perfumes," which was termed likewise "The Incentive to Pleasure," consisted of various halls, where the different perfumes which the earth produces were kept perpetually burning in censers of gold. Flambeaux and aromatic lamps were here lighted in open day. But the too powerful effects of this agreeable delirium might be avoided by descending into an immense garden, where an assemblage of every fragrant flower diffused through the air the purest odours.

The fifth palace, denominated "The Retreat of Joy, or the Dangerous," was frequented by troops of young females beautiful as the houris, and not less seducing, who never failed to receive with caresses all whom the Caliph allowed to approach them; for he was by no means disposed to be jealous, as his own women were secluded within the palace he inhabited himself.

…One night, however, while he was walking as usual on the plain, the moon and the stars at once were eclipsed, and a total darkness ensued; the earth trembled beneath him, and a voice came forth, the voice of the Giaour, who, in accents more sonorous than thunder, thus addressed him: "Wouldest thou devote thyself to me? Adore then the terrestrial influences, and abjure Mahomet. On these conditions I will bring thee to the palace of subterranean fire; there shalt thou behold in immense depositories the treasures which the stars have promised thee, and which will be conferred by those Intelligences whom thou shalt thus render propitious. It was from thence I brought my sabres, and it is there that Soliman Ben Daoud reposes, surrounded by the talismans that control the world and the treasures of the Pre-Adamite Sultans."

Nineteenth-Century Perception of the Orient
Romanticism

The vogue of the oriental tale exotically set in the Middle East ushered in the 18th century was continued, reaching its heyday with Romanticism and exploiting the theme of the Crusades which symbolize East and West relations, though based not so much on confrontation as on complementarity.

James Morier's ***The Adventures of Hajji Baba of Isfahan*** was first published in 1823 and at once became a bestseller. In it, the eponymous protagonist, a Persian adventurer half Candide and half rogue, tells the story of his life from humble beginnings to final success, through dramatic vicissitudes and brushes with death.

The book was a satire on Persia and its people, in particular the despotic Shah Fath Ali Shah and his corrupt, intriguing courtiers. The device of using a fictitious narrator to satirise a society was not unusual among 18th-century authors - Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* and Charles de Secondat Montesquieu's *Lettres Persanes* spring to mind. But while the heroes of these books are strangers commenting on an alien world, Morier's Hajji was a native of the country and provoked comparison with Alain Le Sage's masterpiece *Gil Blas of Santillane*. In Persia itself, it was believed to be the work of a Persian writing under an English pseudonym: how could a foreigner have such a deep understanding of the country, of the subtleties of its language, of the nuances of its customs? It soon became a classic and has remained one of the most popular picaresque novels.

Sir Walter Scott's ***Talisman*** (1825) is another instance of the Oriental tale dealing with the Crusades. It is perhaps the first novel in English to portray Muslims in a positive light. This novel focuses on the Third Crusade which had been triggered by the conquest in 1187 of almost the whole of Palestine, including Jerusalem, by Salah-ed-Din Yusef ibn Ayub or **Saladin**. The plot revolves around the Crusaders' camp in the Holy Land which is being torn apart by tensions between rival leaders. The most influential, Richard the Lionheart, is ill, which accentuates the divisions among the Christian forces. On a mission far from the camp, the poor Scottish crusader **Sir Kenneth, or the Knight of the Leopard**, comes across a Saracen emir with whom, after inconclusive combat, he strikes up a friendship. The emir is none other than Saladin himself. He manages to gain access to the Christian camp by disguising himself as a physician sent to Richard the Lionheart, whom he quickly cures with the aid of the talisman of the novel's title. Sir Kenneth is entrusted to guard the banner of England during the night but he is lured from his post by Queen Berengaria, Richard's wife, who has an urgent message for him from Edith Plantagenet with whom Sir Kenneth is enamoured. During his absence the English flag is torn down and his faithful hound wounded. Sir Kenneth is dishonoured and only escapes execution thanks to the emir who agrees to take him as his slave. Saladin treats Kenneth kindly before the knight returns to the camp disguised as a mute attendant to King Richard, whom he saves from assassination. Richard sees through Sir Kenneth's disguise but awards him the chance to find the man who wounded his hound and tore down the banner. As the forces march past the re-erected standard the hound leaps upon

Richard's rival, Conrade of Montserrat, and brings him down from his horse. A trial by combat is arranged between Conrade and Sir Kenneth which the Scottish knight wins. Afterwards Sir Kenneth is revealed to be Prince David of Scotland. His royal status thus entitles him to pursue his union with Edith Plantagenet.

From **Sir Walter Scott**'s ***The Talisman***

The seventh shaft apparently found a less perfect part of the armour, and the Christian dropped heavily from his horse. But what was the surprise of the Saracen, when, dismounting to examine the condition of his prostrate enemy, he found himself suddenly within the grasp of the European, who had had recourse to this artifice to bring his enemy within his reach! Even in this deadly grapple the Saracen was saved by his agility and presence of mind. He unloosed the sword-belt, in which the Knight of the Leopard had fixed his hold, and, thus eluding his fatal grasp, mounted his horse, which seemed to watch his motions with the intelligence of a human being, and again rode off. But in the last encounter the Saracen had lost his sword and his quiver of arrows, both of which were attached to the girdle which he was obliged to abandon. He had also lost his turban in the struggle.

These disadvantages seemed to incline the Moslem to a truce. He approached the Christian with his right hand extended, but no longer in a menacing attitude.

"There is truce betwixt our nations," he said, in the lingua franca commonly used for the purpose of communication with the Crusaders; "wherefore should there be war betwixt thee and me? Let there be peace betwixt us."

"I am well contented," answered he of the Couchant Leopard; "but what security dost thou offer that thou wilt observe the truce?"

"The word of a follower of the Prophet was never broken," answered the Emir. "It is thou, brave Nazarene, from whom I should demand security, did I not know that treason seldom dwells with courage."

The Crusader felt that the confidence of the Moslem made him ashamed of his own doubts.

"By the cross of my sword," he said, laying his hand on the weapon as he spoke, "I will be true companion to thee, Saracen, while our fortune wills that we remain in company together."

"By Mohammed, Prophet of God, and by Allah, God of the Prophet," replied his late foeman, "there is not treachery in my heart towards thee. And now wend we to yonder fountain, for the hour of rest is at hand, and the stream had hardly touched my lip when I was called to battle by thy approach."

The Knight of the Couchant Leopard yielded a ready and courteous assent; and the late foes, without an angry look or gesture of doubt, rode side by side to the little cluster of palm-trees.

Christian and Saracen next sat down together on the turf, …The champions formed a striking contrast to each other in person and features, and might have formed no inaccurate representatives of their different nations. The Frank seemed a powerful man, built after the ancient Gothic cast of form, with light brown hair, which, on the

removal of his helmet, was seen to curl thick and profusely over his head. His features had acquired, from the hot climate, a hue much darker than those parts of his neck which were less frequently exposed to view, or than was warranted by his full and well-opened blue eye, the colour of his hair, and of the moustaches which thickly shaded his upper lip, while his chin was carefully divested of beard, after the Norman fashion. His nose was Grecian and well formed; his mouth rather large in proportion, but filled with well-set, strong, and beautifully white teeth; his head small, and set upon the neck with much grace. His age could not exceed thirty, but if the effects of toil and climate were allowed for, might be three or four years under that period. His form was tall, powerful, and athletic, like that of a man whose strength might, in later life, become unwieldy, but which was hitherto united with lightness and activity. His hands, when he withdrew the mailed gloves, were long, fair, and well-proportioned; the wrist-bones peculiarly large and strong; and the arms remarkably well-shaped and brawny. A military hardihood and careless frankness of expression characterized his language and his motions; and his voice had the tone of one more accustomed to command than to obey, and who was in the habit of expressing his sentiments aloud and boldly, whenever he was called upon to announce them.

The Saracen Emir formed a marked and striking contrast with the Western Crusader. His stature was indeed above the middle size, but he was at least three inches shorter than the European, whose size approached the gigantic. His slender limbs and long, spare hands and arms, though well proportioned to his person, and suited to the style of his countenance, did not at first aspect promise the display of vigour and elasticity which the Emir had lately exhibited. But on looking more closely, his limbs, where exposed to view, seemed divested of all that was fleshy or cumbersome; so that nothing being left but bone, brawn, and sinew, it was a frame fitted for exertion and fatigue, far beyond that of a bulky champion, whose strength and size are counterbalanced by weight, and who is exhausted by his own exertions. The countenance of the Saracen naturally bore a general national resemblance to the Eastern tribe from whom he descended, and was as unlike as possible to the exaggerated terms in which the minstrels of the day were wont to represent the infidel champions, and the fabulous description which a sister art still presents as the Saracen's Head upon signposts. His features were small, well-formed, and delicate, though deeply embrowned by the Eastern sun, and terminated by a flowing and curled black beard, which seemed trimmed with peculiar care. The nose was straight and regular, the eyes keen, deep-set, black, and glowing, and his teeth equalled in beauty the ivory of his deserts. The person and proportions of the Saracen, in short, stretched on the turf near to his powerful antagonist, might have been compared to his sheeny and crescent-formed sabre, with its narrow and light but bright and keen Damascus blade, contrasted with the long and ponderous Gothic war-sword which was flung unbuckled on the same sod. The Emir was in the very flower of his age, and might perhaps have been termed eminently beautiful, but for the narrowness of his forehead and something of too much thinness and sharpness of feature, or at least what might have seemed such in a European estimate of beauty.

… Richard took a scroll, in which were inscribed these words: The blessing of Allah and his Prophet Mohammed ["Out upon the hound!" said Richard, spitting in contempt, by way of interjection], Saladin, king of kings, Saldan of Egypt and of

Syria, the light and refuge of the earth, to the great Melech Ric, Richard of England, greeting. Whereas, we have been informed that the hand of sickness hath been heavy upon thee, our royal brother, and that thou hast with thee only such Nazarene and Jewish mediciners as work without the blessing of Allah and our holy Prophet ["Confusion on his head!" again muttered the English monarch], we have therefore sent to tend and wait upon thee at this time the physician to our own person, Adonbec el Hakim, before whose face the angel Azrael [The Angel of Death.] spreads his wings and departs from the sick chamber; who knows the virtues of herbs and stones, the path of the sun, moon, and stars, and can save man from all that is not written on his forehead. And this we do, praying you heartily to honour and make use of his skill; not only that we may do service to thy worth and valour, which is the glory of all the nations of Frangistan, but that we may bring the controversy which is at present between us to an end, either by honourable agreement, or by open trial thereof with our weapons, in a fair field—seeing that it neither becomes thy place and courage to die the death of a slave who hath been overwrought by his taskmaster, nor befits it our fame that a brave adversary be snatched from our weapon by such a disease. And, therefore, may the holy—"

"Hold, hold," said Richard, …Yes, I will see his physician. I will put myself into the charge of this Hakim—I will repay the noble Soldan his generosity—I will meet Saladin in the field, as he so worthily proposes, and he shall have no cause to term Richard of England ungrateful. I will strike him to the earth with my battle-axe—I will convert him to Holy Church with such blows as he has rarely endured. He shall recant his errors before my good cross-handled sword, and I will have him baptized on the battle-field, from my own helmet, though the cleansing waters were mixed with the blood of us both.—Haste, De Vaux, why dost thou delay a conclusion so pleasing? Fetch the Hakim hither."

"My lord," said the baron, who perhaps saw some accession of fever in this overflow of confidence, "bethink you, the Soldan is a pagan, and that you are his most formidable enemy—"

"For which reason he is the more bound to do me service in this matter, lest a paltry fever end the quarrel betwixt two such kings. I tell thee he loves me as I love him—as noble adversaries ever love each other. By my honour, it were sin to doubt his good faith!"

… "Know, then, that the medicine to which thou, Sir King, and many one besides, owe their recovery, is a talisman, composed under certain aspects of the heavens, when the Divine Intelligences are most propitious. I am but the poor administrator of its virtues. I dip it in a cup of water, observe the fitting hour to administer it to the patient, and the potency of the draught works the cure."

"A most rare medicine," said the King, "and a commodious! and, as it may be carried in the leech's purse, would save the whole caravan of camels which they require to convey drugs and physic stuff; I marvel there is any other in use."

Prime minister and novelist Benjamin Disraeli also wrote romantic fiction set in the Orient. In 1833, he wrote ***The Wondrous Tale of Alroy or the Rise of Iskander*** which tells the story of a 12th Century Jewish false messiah who in reality conquered some minor provinces before he was destroyed. In the novel, however, he founds a global empire based in Baghdad.

Benjamin Disraeli: *The Wondrous Tale of Alroy* (1833)

Preface

With regard to the Hebrew people, it should be known that after the destruction of Jerusalem, the Eastern Jews, while they acknowledged the supremacy of their conquerors, gathered themselves together for all purposes of jurisdiction, under the control of a native ruler, an asserted descendant of David, whom they dignified with the title of "The Prince of the Captivity." Their chief residence was Bagdad, where they remained until the eleventh century.. In this state of affairs arose Alroy, .. a memorable being, and the dry record of whose marvellous career I have long considered as enveloping the richest materials of poetic fiction.

With regard to the supernatural machinery of this romance, it is Cabalistical and correct. From the Spirits of the Tombs to the sceptre of Solomon, authority may be found in the traditions of the Hebrews for all these spiritual introductions. I believe that the character of Oriental life is not unfaithfully portrayed in these pages. It has undergone less changes than the genius of the Occident. I have had the advantage of studying the Asiatics in their most celebrated countries and capitals. An existence of blended splendour and repose, varied only by fitful starts of extravagant and overwhelming action, and marvellous vicissitudes of fortune, a strong influence of individual character, a blind submission to destiny, imagination, passion, credulity: these are some of the principal features of society in the most favoured regions of the globe.

Disreali, who is famous for his 'condition-of-England' novel *Sybil or the Two Nations* (the rich and the poor) in response to Carlyle's call to write about the prevailing situation in Britain, chose to conclude his Young England Trilogy with an Oriental tale: ***Tancred or the New Crusade*** (1847) – "a novel that bore greater resemblance to an Arabian Nights fantasy than to any mid-Victorian reform fiction - perplexing his readers with what he considered as his favourite composition" (Conary 75).

Benjamin Disraeli's Tancred or the New Crusade

Tancred tells the pilgrimage of the hero, Lord Montacute, who renounces his seat in Parliament to look for spirituality in the east, in the Holy Land, like his medieval ancestors:

> "Our castle has before this sent forth a De Montacute to Palestine. For three days and three nights he knelt at the tomb of his Redeemer. Six centuries and more have elapsed since that great enterprise. It is time to restore and renovate our communications with the Most High. I, too, would kneel at that tomb; I, too, surrounded by the holy hills and sacred groves of Jerusalem, would relieve my spirit from the bale that bows it down; would lift up my voice to heaven, and ask, What is duty, and what is faith? What ought I to do, and what ought I to believe?'"

Before embarking on his journey, he seeks the help of an Easterner, Jewish banker Sidonia who gives him letters of introduction:

A Letter of Introduction.

To Alonzo Lara, Spanish Prior, at the Convent of Terra Santa at Jerusalem.

'Most holy Father: The youth who will deliver to you this is a pilgrim who aspires to penetrate the great Asian mystery. Be to him what you were to me; and may the God of Sinai, in whom we all believe, guard over you, and prosper his enterprise!

'Sidonia. 'London, May, 1845.'

'You can read Spanish,' said Sidonia, giving him the letter. 'The other I shall write in Hebrew, which you will soon read.'

A Letter of Credit.

To Adam Besso at Jerusalem.

'London, May, 1845. 'My good Adam: If the youth who bears this require advances, let him have as much gold as would make the right-hand lion on the first step of the throne of Solomon the king; and if he want more, let him have as much as would form the lion that is on the left; and so on, through every stair of the royal seat. For all which will be responsible to you the child of Israel, who among the Gentiles is called 'Sidonia.'

On the way, Tancred is captured to be ransomed against 2 million piastres.

'Salaam, Sheikh of Sheikhs, it is done; the brother of the Queen of the English is your slave.'

'Good!' said Sheikh Amalek, very gravely, and taking his pipe from his mouth. 'May your mother eat the hump of a young camel! When will they be here?'

'They will be the first shadows of the moon.' 'Good! is the brother of the Queen with Sheikh Salem?'

'There is only one God: Sheikh Salem will never drink leban again, unless he drink it in Paradise.'

'Certainly, there is only one God. What! has he fallen asleep into the well of Nummula?'

'No; but we have seen many evil eyes. Four hares crossed our path this morning. Our salaam to the English prince was not a salaam of peace. The brother of the Queen of the English is no less than an Antar. He will fight, yea or nay; and he has shot Sheikh Salem through the head.'

'There is but one God, and His will be done. I have lost the apple of mine eye. The Prince of the English is alive?'

'He is alive.'

'Good! camels shall be given to the widow of Sheikh Salem, and she shall be married to a new husband. Are there other deeds of Gin?'

'One grape will not make a bunch, even though it be a great one.'

'Let truth always be spoken. Let your words flow as the rock of Moses.'

'There is only one God: if you call to Ibrahim-ben-Hassan, to Molgrabi Teuba, and Teuba-ben-Amin, they will not be roused from their sleep: there are also wounds.'

'Tell all the people there is only one God: it is the Sheikh of the Jeilaheens that has done these deeds of Gin?'

'Let truth always be spoken; my words shall flow as the rock of Moses. The Sheikh of the Jeilaheens counselled the young man not to fight, but the young man is a very Zatanai. Certainly there are many devils, but there is no devil like a Frank in a round hat.'

At the foot of the Mount Sinai, he had a vision, an angel spoke to him:

'Child of Christendom,' said the mighty form, as he seemed slowly to wave a sceptre fashioned like a palm tree, 'I am the angel of Arabia, the guardian spirit of that land which governs the world; for power is neither the sword nor the shield, for these pass away, but ideas, which are divine. The thoughts of all lands come from a higher source than man, but the intellect of Arabia comes from the Most High. Therefore it is that from this spot issue the principles which regulate the human destiny.

'That Christendom which thou hast quitted, and over whose expiring attributes thou art a mourner, was a savage forest while the cedars of Lebanon, for countless ages, had built the palaces of mighty kings. Yet in that forest brooded infinite races that were to spread over the globe, and give a new impulse to its ancient life. It was decreed that, when they burst from their wild woods, the Arabian principles should meet them on the threshold of the old world to guide and to civilise them. All had been prepared. The Cæsars had conquered the world to place the Laws of Sinai on the throne of the Capitol, and a Galilean Arab advanced and traced on the front of the rude conquerors of the Caesars the subduing symbol of the last development of Arabian principles.

'Yet again, and Europe is in the throes of a great birth. The multitudes again are brooding; but they are not now in the forest; they are in the cities and in the fertile plains. Since the first sun of this century rose, the intellectual colony of Arabia, once called Christendom, has been in a state of partial and blind revolt. Discontented, they attributed their suffering to the principles to which they owed all their happiness, and in receding from which they had become proportionately miserable. They have hankered after other gods than the God of Sinai and of Calvary, and they have achieved only desolation. Now they despair. But the eternal principles that controlled barbarian vigour can alone cope with morbid civilisation. The equality of man can only be accomplished by the sovereignty of God. The longing for fraternity can never be satisfied but under the sway of a common father. The relations between Jehovah and his creatures can be neither too numerous nor too near. In the increased distance between God and man have grown up all those developments that have made life mournful. Cease, then, to seek in a vain philosophy the solution of the social problem that perplexes you. Announce the sublime and solacing doctrine of theocratic equality. Fear not, faint not, falter not. Obey the impulse of thine own spirit, and find a ready instrument in every human being.'

A sound, as of thunder, roused Tancred from his trance. He looked around and above. There rose the mountains sharp and black in the clear purple air; there shone, with undimmed lustre, the Arabian stars; but the voice of the angel still lingered in his ear. He descended the mountain: at its base, near the convent, were his slumbering guards, some steeds, and crouching camels.

Disraeli urges the West to find salvation in the East, “the great Asian mystery”. He symbolized the union of the West and the East by the love and presumed later marriage of Tancred and Eva, the English aristocrat and the Jewess, “The Angel of Arabia and of my life and spirit!” He had employed the same symbolic formula in the preceding novels of the trilogy (aristocracy and trade with Coningsby and Edith Millbank, the rich and the poor with Egremont and Sybil).

The Emir Fakredeen, a Christian Syrian who seeks the help of the English or of the French to defeat the Ottomans and recover his lost kingdom (he is the descendant of the standard-bearer of the Prophet), is portrayed as a compound of Romantic dreamer and calculating money-lover who saves the life of Tancred and of Eva.

'I am sorry for that,' said the lady, 'for really, Fakredeen, of all your innumerable combinations, that did seem to me to be the most practical. I think it might have been worked. The Maronites are powerful; the French nation is interested in them; they are the link between France and Syria; and you, being a Christian prince as well as an emir of the most illustrious house, with your intelligence and such aid as we might give you, I think your prospects were, to say the least, fair.'

'Why, as to being a Christian prince, Eva, you must remember I aspire to a dominion where I have to govern the Maronites who are Christians, the Metoualis who are Mahometans, the Ansareys who are Pagans, and the Druses who are nothing. As for myself, my house, as you well know, is more ancient even than that of Othman. We are literally descended from the standard-bearer of the Prophet, and my own estates, as well as those of the Emir Bes-cheer, have been in our registered possession for nearly eight hundred years. Our ancestors became Christians to conciliate the Maronites. Now tell me: in Europe, an English or French prince who wants a throne never hesitates to change his religion, why should I be more nice? I am of that religion which gives me a sceptre; and if a Frank prince adopts a new creed when he quits London or Paris, I cannot understand why mine may not change according to the part of the mountain through which I am passing.

The two Romantic novels display an image of the Orient that is not unfavourable, often contrasting East and West through their corresponding characters and insisting on the exotic and supernatural aspect of the Orient that is to be further expanded in nineteenth-century poetry.

Romantic Poetry

19th century Romantic poetry about the Orient is teeming with exoticism and eroticism, fantasy and the supernatural, extravagance and the Gothic. The influence of the Arabian Nights can be felt in the quality of an Oriental tale that these poems possess, with Eastern places and characters.

Robert Southey's **"Thalaba the Destroyer"** (1801)
is a long poem in five books which is pre-eminently an Arabian tale.
"Thalaba" opens with "the wandering footsteps of a woman, who is flying with her son over the deserts of Arabia, and the boy is soon left crying in the wilderness, over the lifeless remains of his mother. This child is Thalaba, who by a miracle has escaped from a murderer who has sacrificed his father, an old Arab, named Hodeirah, and all his race. The murderer is the agent of a party of magicians, who dwell in the caverns of Domdaniel, at the bottom of the ocean, and who have been informed that their destroyer is to spring up from the race of Hodeira. The conflicts between Thalaba and these magicians form the subject of the poem, and at length the young hero penetrates into the retreat of his enemies, and, like another Samson, perishes along with them beneath the ruins of their cavern. Such a story, of course, requires to be supported by all sorts of poetic accessories, and it is but rendering justice to Mr. Southey to say, that be has ably availed himself of the rich colouring of oriental imagery, scenery, and costume" (*Living Poets of England* 7).

***From the** PREFACE*

> In the continuation of the Arabian Tales, the Domdaniel is mentioned; a Seminary for evil Magicians under the Roots of the Sea. From this seed the present Romance has grown. Let me not be supposed to prefer the metre in which it is written, abstractedly considered, to the regular blank verse; the noblest measure, in my judgement, of which our admirable language is capable. For the following Poem I have preferred it, because it suits the varied subject; it is the *Arabesque* ornament of an Arabian tale.

The most influential British Romantic poet who is also an avowed Orientalist is Lord Byron who has not only visited the East but also financed war against the Ottomans on the side of the Greeks which eventually caused his death by fever. Byron's Oriental poems embody the impossible love between a Western man and an Oriental woman, resulting in the inevitable death of the Byronic heroes.

Lord Byron's "The Giaour: A Fragment of a Turkish Tale" (1813)

Byron's Giaour (whose title means "infidel" as Byron explains in a note) has traditionally been read as an allegory where Leila (from Circassia, then lying of the border between East and West) stands for Greece caught between two forms of imperialism, Ottoman (Hassan is Turkish) and European (the Giaour is a Venetian in exile). The fragments of Byron's "Turkish tale" yield a story that combines doomed love with the clash of civilizations. A "Giaour" in the eyes of his antagonist, the Christian hero of this poem goes to battle with the Muslim Hassan. His aim is to avenge the memory of Leila, the slave girl whom Hassan has had drowned after learning that she had been unfaithful to him with his enemy.

The excerpt that follows, which relates the dying Hassan's curse of the Giaour, also represents a decisive moment in the early literary history of the vampire: a traditional figure in the oral folk culture of Europe's eastern margins, whom Byron here helps to introduce into the print culture of the modern West.

Hassan's curse of the hero

But thou, false Infidel! shalt writhe
Beneath avenging **Monkir**'s scythe;
And from its torment 'scape alone
To wander round lost **Eblis**' throne;
And fire unquench'd, unquenchable—
Around—within—thy heart shall dwell,
Nor ear can hear, nor tongue can tell
The tortures of that inward hell!—
But first, on earth, as Vampire sent,
Thy corse shall from its tomb be rent;
Then ghastly haunt thy native place,
And suck the blood of all thy race,
There from thy daughter, sister, wife,
At midnight drain the stream of life;
Yet loathe the banquet which perforce
Must feed thy livid living corse;
Thy victims ere they yet expire
Shall know their daemon for their sire,
As cursing thee, thou cursing them,
Thy flowers are wither'd on the stem.
But one that for thy crime must fall—
The youngest—most belov'd of all,
Shall bless thee with a father's name—
That word shall wrap thy heart in flame!
Yet must thou end thy task, and mark
Her cheek's last tinge, her eye's last spark,
And the last glassy glance must view
Which freezes o'er its lifeless blue;
Then with unhallowed hand shalt tear
The tresses of her yellow hair,
Of which in life a lock when shorn,
Affection's fondest pledge was worn;
But now is borne away by thee,
Memorial of thine agony!
Wet with thine own best blood shall drip,
Thy gnashing tooth and haggard lip;
Then stalking to thy sullen grave—
Go—and with **Gouls** and **Afrits** rave;
Till these in horror shrink away
From spectre more accursed than they!

The poem enacts the love of a Muslim woman for a Christian, a theme that is also found in "the Corsair".

Lord Byron "The Corsair" (1814)

Composed of three cantos, the poem enacts the confrontation of Christian and Muslim pirates. Conrad, the corsair of the Aegean sea, abandons Medora on his island to attack Pasha Seyd. He is captured but during the fight he saved the life of Gulnare, the Pasha's favourite who falls in love with him and kills the Pasha to save him and run away with him. But they discover that Medora had committed suicide when hearing that Conrad was made prisoner.

> He thought on her afar, his lonely bride;
> He turn'd and saw Gulnare, the **homicide**! (III.463)
> …She for him had given
> Her all on earth, and more than all in heaven!" (III.529-30)

Lord Byron "The Bride of Abydos"

Divided into two cantos, and further into more than a dozen stanzas each, "The Bride of Abydos" begins with a description of the Turkish setting. The ruler Giaffir rebukes his supposed son, Salim who professes his love for his half-sister, Zuleika, Giaffir's daughter. Angered, the Pasha refuses Salim to have a key to the royal harem and upbraids him with insults. Later, it is revealed that Salim is the son of Giaffir's brother whom he had killed. This poetic Oriental tale emphasizes the evil despotic nature of the Oriental and suggests incestuous relations which are associated with the Orient and its indulgence in the senses.

Old Giaffir sate in his Divan:
Deep thought was in his agéd eye;
And though the face of Mussulman
Not oft betrays to standers by
The mind within, well skilled to hide
All but unconquerable pride,
His pensive cheek and pondering brow
Did more than he was wont avow.
With Giaffir is none but his only son,
And the Nubian awaiting the sire's award.
"Haroun—when all the crowd that wait
Are passed beyond the outer gate,
(Woe to the head whose eye beheld
My child Zuleika's face unveiled!)
Hence, lead my daughter from her tower"

The myth of Zuleika and fatal beauty will find their way in the 20th century through Max Beerbohm's novel *Zuleika Dobson* which takes place at Oxford and where she decimates the student population.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge's "Kubla Khan"

"Kublah Khan or a Vision in a Dream, A Fragment" was published in 1816, but must have been written over a decade earlier as he states: "This fragment with a good deal more, not recoverable, composed, in a sort of Reverie brought on by two grains of Opium, taken to check a dysentery, at a Farm House between Porlock & Linton, a quarter of a mile from Culbone Church, in the fall of the year 1797". The fantastic universe of the poem is largely derived from the *Arabian Nights* with images from Muslim paradise.

In Xanadu did KubIa Khan
A stately pleasure dome decree:
Where Alph, the sacred river, ran
Through caverns measureless to man
Down to a sunless sea.
So twice five miles of fertile ground
With walls and towers were girdled round:
And there were gardens bright with sinuous rills,
Where blossomed many an incense-bearing tree;
And here were forests ancient as the hills,
Enfolding sunny spots of greenery.
But oh! that deep romantic chasm which slanted
Down the green hill athwart a cedarn cover!
A savage place! as holy and enchanted
As e'er beneath a waning moon was haunted
By woman wailing for her **demon lover**!
And from this chasm, with ceaseless turmoil seething,
As if this earth in fast thick pants were breathing,
A mighty fountain momently was forced:
Amid whose swift half-intermitted burst
Huge fragments vaulted like rebounding hail,
Or chafly grain beneath the thresher's flail:
And `mid these dancing rocks at once and ever
It flung up momently the sacred river.
Five miles meandering with a mazy motion
Through wood and dale the sacred river ran,
Then reached the caverns measureless to man,
And sank in tumult to a lifeless ocean:
And `mid this tumult KubIa heard from far
Ancestral voices prophesying war!
The shadow of the dome of pleasure
Floated midway on the waves;
Where was heard the mingled measure
From the fountain and the caves.
It was a miracle of rare device,
A sunny pleasure dome with caves of ice!
A damsel with a dulcimer
In a vision once I saw:
It was an Abyssinian maid,
And on her dulcimer she played,
Singing of Mount Abora.
Could I revive within me
Her symphony and song,
To such a deep delight `twould win me,
That with music loud and long,
I would build that dome in air,
That sunny dome! those caves of ice!
And all who heard should see them there,
And all should cry, Beware! Beware!
His flashing eyes, his floating hair!
Weave a circle round him thrice,
And close your eyes with holy dread,
For he on **honeydew** hath fed,
And drunk the **milk of Paradise**.

Coleridge was a practising playwright as well as a practising poet, critic, lecturer and would be philosopher (Sealey-Morris 298). He wrote a second version of his Oriental play *Osorio* as *Remorse* set in sixteenth-century Granada featuring Moors such as Alhadra. The play combines Gothic elements like castles, dungeons and ghosts with Orientalist aspects as sorcery and conspiring Moors who attack Christians for revenge.

Thomas Moore "Lalla Rookh" An Oriental Romance (1817)

Thomas Moore, author of the celebrated "Irish Melodies", ventured into Oriental Romanticism at the instigation of his friend Byron. "Lalla Rookh" consists of four highly imaginative tales told by a young Cashmerian poet named Feramorz, employed to entertain the Indian princess Lalla Rookh on her travels from Delhi to Cashmere to be married to the king of Bucharia (Bukhara, in what is now Uzbekistan). Lalla Rookh falls in love with the poet Feramorz, who at the end turns out to be the very king of Bucharia to whom she is betrothed.

This "eastern Romance" as Moore describes it in the dedication contains four stories which are:

The Story of the Veiled Prophet of Khorassan

[*PART ONE* -- Lalla Rookh hears about Zelica and Azim]
[*PART TWO* -- A reunion under appalling circumstances]
[*PART THREE* -- The lovers meet their final fates]

The Story of Paradise and the Peri

[*PART FOUR* -- Lalla Rookh hears about the Peri's quest]

The Story of the Fire-Worshippers

[*PART FIVE* -- Lalla Rookh hears about Hinda and Hafed]
[*PART SIX* -- Hafed is betrayed]
[*PART SEVEN* -- Hinda is abducted]
[*PART EIGHT* -- The end of the ordeal]

The Story of the Light of the Haram

[*PART NINE* -- Nourmahal and her wiles]

"The Fire-Worshippers" establishes the principal characters of a kind of Romeo-and-Juliet plot of young (and ultimately tragic) love in a context of warring families and cultures. Hafed, the leader of the Persian Ghebers, falls in love with Hinda, daughter of his enemy, the Moslem emir al Hassan. Moore suffuses his poetic tale with Oriental images and references.

Percy Bysshe Shelley "The Revolt of Islam" (1818)

"The Revolt of Islam", first published as "Laon and Cythna", is a symbolic parable on liberation and revolutionary idealism of almost 5,000 lines, written in 1817. Shelley states that his aim is to kindle in his readers "a virtuous enthusiasm for those doctrines of liberty and justice...which neither violence nor representation nor prejudice can ever totally extinguish among mankind". He has recourse to Islam in the title to attract readers fascinated with the Orient whereas he deals with the French Revolution.

American Romantics

Washington Irving

"Father of American literature", "Literary Ambassador of the New World to the Old", "Inventor of the Modern Short Story", such are the titles given to this great American Romantic figure, the first to gain international fame.

He is also a major biographer who wrote not only the *Life of Christopher Columbus* and of *George Washington* after whom he is named but also the less known *Mahomet and his Successors* (1808). But as a Romantic, he tended to fuse history and romance, and many of the inadequacies that any Muslim can find may be due to his tendency to romanticize even biographies.

In *Recollections of the Alhambra* Irving evokes his living "in the midst of an Arabian tale", pointing to the *Arabian Nights* which constitute an "important influence on Western attitudes towards Islam" according to Timothy Marr (13).

From *Mahomet and His Successors*

Brought up, as Mahomet was, in the house of the guardian of the Caaba, the ceremonies and devotions connected with the sacred edifice may have given an early bias to his mind, and inclined it to those speculations in matters of religion by which it eventually became engrossed. Though his Moslem biographers would fain persuade us his high destiny was clearly foretold in his childhood by signs and prodigies, yet his education appears to have been as much neglected as that of ordinary Arab children; for we find that he was not taught either to read or write. He was a thoughtful child, however; quick to observe, prone to meditate on all that he observed, and possessed of an imagination fertile, daring, and expansive. The yearly influx of pilgrims from distant parts made Mecca a receptacle for all kinds of floating knowledge.

… therefore, granted his prayer, and took him with him on the journey to Syria.
The route lay through regions fertile in fables and traditions, which it is the delight of the Arabs to recount in the evening halts of the caravan. The vast solitudes of the desert, in which that wandering people pass so much of their lives, are prone to engender superstitious fancies; they have accordingly peopled them with good and evil genii, and clothed them with tales of enchantment, mingled up with wonderful events which happened in days of old. In these evening halts of the caravan, the youthful mind of Mahomet doubtless imbibed many of those superstitions of the desert which ever after ward dwelt in his memory, and had a powerful influence over his imagination. We may especially note two traditions which he must have heard at this time, and which we find recorded by him in after years in the Koran. One related to the mountainous district of Hedjar. Here, as the caravan wound its way through silent and deserted valleys, caves were pointed out in the sides of the mountains once inhabited by the Beni Thamud, or children of Thamud, one of the lost tribes" of Arabia; and this was the tradition concerning them (33).

Of all the stock imagery employed for Islamic Orient, the turban and the crescent appear to be the most conspicuously appealing to nineteenth-century readership. They were readily used by Washington Irving in association with death and fighting and symbolic of Christians' foes. In *the Chronicle of the Conquest of Granada* (1829),

Irving relates how "Christian knight and turbaned infidel disputed, inch by inch, the fair land of Andalusia, until the Crescent, that symbol of heathenish abomination, was cast down, and the blessed Cross, the tree of [their] redemption, erected in its stead" (Irving 2). The sight of a "hostile turban" or descrying a "turbaned host" of Moors filled his narrative with awe as the two opponents "continued their struggle in the waves, and helm and turban rolled together down the stream" (158).

Herman Melville

While Irving seems to share his contemporary Americans' hostile vision of Islamic Orient, Herman Melville's attitude is more ambiguous. His stereotyped representation of Islam either as romantic overindulgence in the senses or the traditional enemy of Christianity and an epitome of despotic rule "would change drastically by the time of Clarel where the religion is held in much higher esteem" (Bakhsh 154) as a result of Melville's (1856-57) visit to the Holy land.

Melville's novels as expected by his readers are fraught with characters and tales from the *Arabian Nights*, the most famous ones being Aladdin who is referred to in *Redburn* in the escapade to London with Harry to "Aladdin's palace" and in *Moby Dick* where "the whaleman equally makes his berth an Aladdin's lamp" (507). Israel Potter's son "listened, night after night, as to the stories of Sinbad the Sailor" (166) while the whale's "island bulk" (18) in *Moby Dick* suggests one of these very tales in which Sindbad and his sailors mistaking a whale for an island were picnicking on its back until it plunged and drowned most of them. Even in his long poem *Clarel*, Melville begins the Timoneer's Story with "those Sinbads had begun/Their Orient Decameron" (Clarel 306).

In the beginning of *Mardi*, stealing a boat was "Harder than for any dashing young Janizary to run off with a sultana from the Grand Turk's seraglio" (20) while *Moby Dick* has a whole chapter on the so-called schools or whale harems, the patriarch being "a luxurious Ottoman, swimming about over the watery world, surroundingly accompanied by all the solaces and endearments of the harem" (391), a "Bashaw defending his ladies from an intruding Lothario" (392).

Barbary is associated with piracy activities, especially the Regency of Algiers which gives its name to a species of whale: "Algerine Porpoise - A pirate. Very savage… Provoke him, and he will buckle to a shark" (*Moby Dick* 144) or in an Ichthyology survey including "the Algerines; so called, probably, from their corsair propensities" (*Mardi* 42).

Melville also has recourse to the symbols of **turban** and **crescent** albeit in different terms from Irving. In his second sea novel set in Polynesia, *Omoo*, is found a "Bashaw with Two Tails" alluding to the turban made of a shirt with the two sleeves hanging behind. In *Clarel*, where Moslem characters are most likely to be found, "First went the turban--guide and guard" (133) denoting Djalea's double trusted role towards the community of pilgrims. The friendly relationship between the two faiths is serenely depicted as early as Canto 8 of Part One, in "Among brave Turbans freely roamed the Hat" (29), the Hat being Nehemiah (Gale 459). And in *Moby Dick* when Melville "celebrates a tail", he has recourse to Islamic image of a crescent to delineate the beautiful curve of the whale's tail when he claims that "In no living thing are the

lines of beauty more exquisitely defined than in the crescentic borders of these flukes" (375).

Moreover, the prophet of Islam is only mentioned 5 times in all Melville's production, in: "a Prophet who prophesy'd of Mahomet" (MD 458) and in "the arches of Mahomet's heavens" (*Mardi* 230) following widespread contemporary English transliteration that is also used by Irving in his famous romanticized biography *Mahomet and his Successors*. However, Melville resorts to a closer Arabic spelling in *White Jacket*: "like that old exquisite, Mohammed, who so much loved to snuff perfumes and essences, and used to lounge out of the conservatories of Khadija, his wife, to give battle to the robust sons of Koriesh" and in Pierre: "and it was one of his own little femininenesses—of the sort sometimes curiously observable in very robust-bodied and big-souled men, as Mohammed, for example—to be very partial to all pleasant essences" (94). These passages underscore complementary qualities of robustness and masculinity with the love of perfumes and delicacy which are truly the attributes of the Prophet of Islam as asserted by himself in a saying related by Al-Tirmidhi (Hadith 1388): "I was made to love three things from your world: women, and perfume, while the comfort of my eye is in salat" i.e. prayer. The Ramadan chapter in Moby Dick involves a sort of Lent performed by Queequeg albeit not in accordance with Islamic practice. After his journey to the Levant and his better acquaintance with the Islamic world, Melville is able to be more accurate in *Clarel* as to the practice of fasting in Derwent's rebuke to Belex (314-16) while as early as *Omoo* a whole chapter called "Hegira or the flight" shows the narrator using a calendar in a similar fashion to Islamic calendar that starts with the Prophet's flight from Mecca to escape persecution and build a state at Medina.

It is in his monumental work *Clarel* which is at once *A Poem and a Pilgrimage* in the Holy Land that Melville's benevolent image of the Orient is displayed. It even tips the balance in favour of Islam in comparison with Christian behaviour in the story of a European merchant cheated by his own co-religionists and honestly paid back by Moslems:

A merchant Frank on Syria's coast,
That in a fire which traveled post,
His books and records being burned,
His Christian debtors held their peace;
The Islam ones disclaimed release,
And came with purses and accounts.
(Part IV Canto 12).

The same canto relates Caliph Omar's noble refusal to pray on the church yard to save it from being annexed by Moslems which has failed to be met with a corresponding magnanimity by "Christian knights, how ill conformed/The butchery then to Omar's prayer/And heart magnanimous".

The "Easter Fire" Canto best epitomises Melville's way of unifying Christian and Islamic faiths: To Christ the Turk as much as Frank
Concedes a supernatural rank;
Our Holy Places too he mates
All but with Mecca's own
(Part III Canto 16),

while in Canto 37 “Rolfe”, the reader is invited to "Look, by Christ's belfry set,/ Appears the Moslem minaret!" and behold how “The Saracen shaft and Norman tower/In truce stand guard beside that Dome”, to symbolize their peaceful proximity.

Irving who was more acquainted than Melville with Islamic sources displays less tolerance and understanding of this religion and its prophet, his “presentation frequently challenges Muslim orthodoxy” (Einboden 44). Melville has only used “Mussulmans” or “Islamites” to refer to Muslims whereas Irving repeatedly mentioned “Mahometans” which connotes worship of Muhammad and is offensive to Muslims who worship no other God but Allah.

Melville’s greatest achievement in his contribution to inter-religious dialogue is his subtle counterpoising of a conventionally Orientalist image of Islam with a more favourable, open and even admirative view (Baghli Berbar 71-78).

Nineteenth-Century Realism

The nineteenth- century perception of the MENA region in English literature is composed of Romantic poems and novels as well as autobiographical travel books and even epistolary poems with the aim of faithfully describing the people and places visited by their authors.

Victorian Travellers to MENA

The French colonization of Algeria in 1830 and the presence of the French army encouraged travellers together with the development of steamships which brought North Africa within easy access of Europe. North Africa soon became a sanatorium for wealthy consumptive Victorians.

Poet **Thomas Campbell** (a Scot born in Glasgow) was the first to visit Algeria in 1834 in the aftermath of the French occupation and his visit was under the escort of the French soldiers. He wrote his impressions in the form of letters sent to his friends back in Britain and collected later as ***Letters from the South*** (1837). He also composed poems such as "Epistle from Algiers". His vision was influenced by his French hosts.

Thomas Campbell *Letters from the South* (1837)

Epistle, from Algiers, to Horace Smith
Dear Horace! be melted to tears,
For I'm melting with heat as I rhyme;
Though the name of this place is All-jeers,
'Tis no joke to fall in with its clime.

With a shaver from France who came o'er,
To an African inn I ascend;
I am cast on a barbarous shore,
Where a barber alone is my friend.

Do you ask me the sights and the news
Of this wonderful city to sing?
Alas! my hotel has its mews,
But no muse of the Helicon's spring.
My windows afford me the sight
Of a people all diverse in hue;
They are black, yellow, olive and white,
Whilst I in my sorrow look blue.

Here are groups for the painter to take,
Whose figures jocosely combine, -
The Arab disguised in his haik,
And the Frenchman disguised in his wine.

In his breeches of petticoat size
You may say as the Mussulman goes,
That his garb is a fair compromise
'Twixt a kilt and a pair of small clothes.

The Mooresses, shrouded in white,
Save two holes for their eyes to give room,
Seem like corpses in sport or in spite
That have slyly whipped out of their tomb.

Unlike Campbell who sided with the French, Colonel Scott who had fought in Spain and refused to continue serving "the cause of despotism.. and cold-blooded murderers", decided to join the Emir Abdelkader against the French and gives an account of his first-hand acquaintance and life with the leader of Algerian resistance to the colonizer.

Colonel Scott: ***A Journal of the Residence in the Esmailla of Abdelkader and of Travels in Morroco and Algiers*** **(1842).**

> I therefore retired from the service, with the full intention of proceeding to Tegedempt to join the Emir Abd-el-Kader, whose glorious resistance against the united power of the French nation, inspired me with admiration, at that time only considering him in the light of an Arab chief (Introduction p.vi).
>
> On my arrival at the court of the Emir, I soon became so great an admirer of His Royal Highness's liberal policy, that I considered I should render him a far more important service by remaining at the Esmailla, and giving the world at large a correct account of the state of his country, than by being engaged at his side in active service (vii).

Like Colonel Scott, travellers **Wilfrid Scawen Blunt** and **Lady Anne Blunt** (the grand daughter of Lord Byron) who were journeying to the Middle East and Arabia looking for studs for their horse breeding, and who came to Algeria again in the early 1870's, were more critical of the French, having developed anti-imperialistic ideas and sympathizing with the Arabs. They shared the lives of the Bedouins and lived under their tents and readily commended the Arab virtues of hospitality and honour as reported in his *Diaries* (1919) and in *The Secret History of the English Occupation of Egypt* (1907).

He translated the Mu'allaqat as *Seven Golden Odes of Pagan Arabia* (1903) and with his wife edited her *Bedouin Tribes of the Euphrates* and *A Pilgrimage to Nejd* based on her journals. Scawen Blunt's work *The Desert Hawk: Abd el Kader and The French Conquest of Algeria* begins by W.M. Thackeray's poem: "Abd-El-Kader at Toulon or, The Caged Hawk".

W.M. Thackeray "Abd-El-Kader at Toulon or, The Caged Hawk"

… Weep, maidens of Zerifah, above the laden loom!
Scar, chieftains of Al Elmah, your cheeks in grief and gloom!
Sons of the Beni Snazam, throw down the useless lance,
And stoop your necks and bare your backs to yoke and scourge of France!

Twas not in fight they bore him down; he never cried amàn;
He never sank his sword before the PRINCE OF FRANGHISTAN;

But with traitors all around him, his star upon the wane,
He heard the voice of ALLAH, and he would not strive in vain.

They gave him what he asked them; from king to king he spake,
As one that plighted word and seal not knoweth how to break;
"Let me pass from out my deserts, be't mine own choice where to go,
I brook no fettered life to live, a captive and a show." tolerate

And they promised, and he trusted them, and proud and calm he came,
Upon his black mare riding, girt with his sword of fame. belt
Good steed, good sword, he rendered both unto the Frankish throngcrowd,
He knew them false and fickle—but a Prince's word is strong.

How have they kept their promise? Turned they the vessel's prow
Unto Acre, Alexandria, as they have sworn e'en now?
Not so: from Oran northwards the white sails gleam and glance,
And the wild hawk of the desert is borne away to France!

Where Toulon's white-walled lazaret looks southward o'er the wave,
Sits he that trusted in the word a son of Louis gave.
O noble faith of noble heart! And was the warning vain,
The text writ by the BOURBON in the blurred black book of Spain?

They have need of thee to gaze on, they have need of thee to grace
The triumph of the Prince, to gild the pinchbeck of their race.
Words are but wind, conditions must be construed by GUIZOT;
Dash out thy heart, thou desert hawk, ere thou art made a show!

Thackeray shows familiarity with the events and geography of Algeria and ability to present an atmosphere of sympathy with the subject fraught with Oriental imagery from Arabian tales. His aim is to vindicate the Emir and clear his name from the propaganda of French colonialism.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt also wrote *The Secret History of the English Occupation of Egypt* (1907) where he clearly sides with the revolt of Urabi and in which we can find a description of Algeria.

The following winter, that is to say the early months of 1874, we spent in Algeria. Here we assisted at another spectacle which gave food for reflection: that of an Eastern people in violent subjection to a Western (4) … This was worst in the settled districts, the colony proper, where the civil administration was taking advantage of the rebellion to confiscate native property and in every way to favour the European colonists at the native expense. With all my love for the French …I found my sympathies in Algeria going out wholly to the Arabs…The great tribes of the Sahara were still at that time materially well off, and retained not a little of their ancient pride of independence which the military commandants could not but respect. We caught glimpses of these nomads in the Jebel Amour and of their vigorous way of life, and what we saw

delighted us. We listened to their chanting in praise of their lost hero Abd-el-Kader, and though we misunderstood them on many points owing to our ignorance of their language, we admired and pitied them. The contrast between their noble pastoral life on the one hand, with their camel herds and horses, a life of high tradition filled with the memory of heroic deeds, and on the other hand the ignoble squalor of the French settlers, with their wineshops and their swine, was one which could not escape us, or fail to rouse in us an angry sense of the incongruity which has made of these last the lords of the land and of those their servants (5).

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt ***My Diaries: Being a Personal Narrative of Events, 1888-1914*** (1919),

describes "A Visit to Tunis"

After an excellent breakfast, Terence took me to the bazaars, which are more beautiful and more purely Oriental than any I have seen, and then to the Bey's town palace, built, but on a large scale, in the same style as his own little house, which I have just described. In contrast to all this we then passed through the French quarter, mean, noisy, and with stinks beyond description, whereas the Arab town is sedate and clean and quiet. I have never anywhere seen a contrast so entirely in favour of Islam (154).

"28th October (Sunday) – Back to Tunis, Terence tells me the agricultural colonists here are of a superior class to those of Algeria, there being some young Frenchmen of good family among them. These are opposed to annexation, and take the part of the natives as against the encroachment of the officials, but the town colonists are for making Tunis a French Province. The worst of all are some from Algeria, where they are all rabid against '*les Arabes*' (156).

Another early Victorian traveller to MENA was **Alexander William Kinglake**, a Scotsman. In 1834 he decided to visit Turkey and the Levant despite the plague that was raging in Turkey and Egypt (there were drastic quarantine measures taken).

At Semlin, he crossed the river Save to Belgrade, entering upon Ottoman territory. From Cyprus, he sailed to Beirut and then went to Nazareth, Jerusalem, then to Cairo and finally to Damascus. When he returned home at 26, he started composing ***Eothen*** which was an immediate and major success. He later made several travels, notably to Algeria in 1844, but never wrote another travel book. He wrote "The Invasion of the Crimea" after fighting there himself. "The Charge of the Light Brigade" by Tennison is also about this war, but as a needless sacrifice.

Eothen means "of the east". Kinglake does not just describe what the desert looks like, but what journeying in the desert feels like. This is the East itself, as he claims. Yet, he is an Englishman in the East, there is a background of English scenery even in the desert, which contains hegemonic attitudes especially when he mentions civilization in the desert.

Alexander William Kinglake ***Eothen***

I hired my horses and mules (for I had some of both) for the whole of the journey from Beyrout to Jerusalem. The owner of the beasts (who had a couple of fellows under him) was the most dignified member of my party; he was, indeed, a magnificent old

man, and was called Shereef, or "holy"-a title of honour which, with the privilege of wearing the green turban, he well deserved, not only from the blood of the Prophet that flowed in his veins, but from the well-known sanctity of his life and the length of his blessed beard (41).

CHAPTER XVII-THE DESERT

Gaza is upon the verge of the Desert, to which it stands in the same relation as a seaport to the sea. It is there that you charter your camels ("the ships of the Desert"), and lay in your stores for the voyage.

…From morn till eve you sit aloft upon your voyaging camel; the risen sun, still lenient on your left, mounts vertical and dominant; you shroud head and face in silk, your skin glows, shoulders ache, Arabs moan, and still moves on the sighing camel with his disjointed awkward dual swing, till the sun once more descending touches you on the right, your veil is thrown aside, your tent is pitched, books, maps, cloaks, toilet luxuries, litter your spread-out rugs, you feast on scorching toast and "fragrant" tea, sleep sound and long; then again the tent is drawn, the comforts packed, civilization retires from the spot she had for a single night annexed, and the Genius of the Desert stalks in.

For several hours I urged forward my beast at a rapid though steady pace, but now the pangs of thirst began to torment me. I did not relax my pace, however, and I had not suffered long when a moving object appeared in the distance before me. The intervening space was soon traversed, and I found myself approaching a Bedouin Arab mounted on a camel, attended by another Bedouin on foot. They stopped. I saw that, as usual, there hung from the pack-saddle of the camel a large skin water-flask, which seemed to be well filled. I steered my dromedary close up alongside of the mounted Bedouin, caused my beast to kneel down, then alighted, and keeping the end of the halter in my hand, went up to the mounted Bedouin without speaking, took hold of his water-flask, opened it, and drank long and deep from its leathern lips. Both of the Bedouins stood fast in amazement and mute horror; and really, if they had never happened to see an European before, the apparition was enough to startle them. To see for the first time a coat and a waistcoat, with the semblance of a white human head at the top, and for this ghastly figure to come swiftly out of the horizon upon a fleet dromedary, approach them silently and with a demoniacal smile, and drink a deep draught from their water-flask-this was enough to make the Bedouins stare a little; they, in fact, stared a great deal-not as Europeans stare, with a restless and puzzled expression of countenance, but with features all fixed and rigid, and with still, glassy eyes. Before they had time to get decomposed from their state of petrifaction I had remounted my dromedary, and was darting away towards the east.

Kinglake introduced a major Oriental image full of mystery and fascination, that of the desert, which will continue to figure prominently in English literature about North Africa and the Middle East.

Travellers to the Orient include translator of the *Arabian Nights* such as Edward Lane, who wrote *Manners and Customs of the modern Egyptians* and Sir Richard Burton who went disguised as a Moslem to perform pilgrimage. He wrote *Pilgrimage to Mecca and Al Madinah* where he describes his feat of penetrating the Holy Land of Islam, suffusing the depiction with *Arabian Nights* imagery of fantasy and imagination.

From Burton's *Pilgrimage to Mecca and Al Madinah*

> I may truly say that, of all the worshippers who clung weeping to the curtain, or who pressed their beating hearts to the stone, none felt for the moment a deeper emotion than did the Haji from the far-north. It was as if the poetical legends of the Arab spoke truth, and the waving wings of angels, not the sweet breeze of morning, were agitating and swelling the black covering of the shrine. But, to confess humbling truth, theirs was the high feeling of religious enthusiasm, mine was the ecstasy of gratified pride.

He ushered in spy figures of the 20th century such as T. E. Lawrence the British agent of the Arab revolt against the Turks during WWI who was known as Lawrence of Arabia.

American Realists

William Mayo is an American author who visited North Africa and more precisely Morocco and penned an Oriental tale in 1850: *The Berber or The Mountaineer of the Atlas: A Tale of Morocco.* He is also the author of *Kaloolah: or, Journeyings to the Djébel Kumri: an autobiography of Jonathan Romer* (1848).

He claims that *Mountaineer of the Atlas* is accurate and authentic about Moorish customs and not an Oriental tale in the Romantic sense as he clearly states in its preface:

William Mayo *The Berber or The Mountaineer of the Atlas: A Tale of Morocco*

Preface

The principal object of the author, in the following pages, has been to tell an agreeable story in an agreeable way. In doing so, however, an eye has been had to the illustration of Moorish manners, customs, history and geography-to the exemplification of Moorish life as it actually is in Barbary in the present day, and not as it usually appears amid the vague and poetic glamour of the common Moorish romance. It has also been an object to the common Moorish romance. It has also been an object to introduce to the acquaintance of the reader a people who have played a most important part in the world's history, but of whom very few educated people know anything more than the name.

A few orthographical liberties may, perhaps, be noticed in the spelling of proper names and titles; but the orthography of Arabic words is so perfectly arbitrary, and the authorities so widely discrepant, that perhaps no apology is necessary for any oddities of the kind.

In relation to the historical incidents introduced or alluded to, however strange and incredible they may seem to readers living in a religious, political, and social state, so widely different, the author has only to say that they are well authenticated, and that there can be no question of their truth (7-8).

Mayo provides his American readers with slices of life in Moroccan mountains, which portray North Africans in a better light than the familiar captivity narratives of the preceding century.

American Realist Mark Twain, best known for *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* also visited North Africa and the Middle East as a journalist reporting on the daily lives of the American pilgrims on their European and Oriental tour. The result is a travel book, ***Innocents Abroad; or, the New Pilgrim's Progress* (1869).** It is an autobiographical account of the places and people of the East interspersed with criticism of American character.

Mark Twain *Innocents Abroad; or, the New Pilgrim's Progress*

CHAPTER VIII.

This is royal! …Tangier is the spot we have been longing for all the time.

Elsewhere we have found foreign-looking things and foreign-looking people, but always with things and people intermixed that we were familiar with before, and so the novelty of the situation lost a deal of its force… Here is not the slightest thing that ever we have seen save in pictures—and we always mistrusted the pictures before. We cannot anymore. The pictures used to seem exaggerations—they seemed too weird and fanciful for reality. But behold, they were **not wild enough**—they were **not fanciful enough**—they have not told half the story. Tangier is a foreign land if ever there was one, and the true spirit of it can never be found in any book save ***The Arabian Nights***. Here are no white men visible, yet swarms of humanity are all about us. Here is a packed and jammed city enclosed in a massive stone wall which is more than a thousand years old. All the houses nearly are one-and two-story, made of thick walls of stone, plastered outside, square as a dry-goods box, flat as a floor on top, no cornices, whitewashed all over—a crowded city of snowy tombs! And the doors are arched with the peculiar arch we see in Moorish pictures; the floors are laid in varicolored diamond flags; in tesselated, many-colored porcelain squares wrought in the furnaces of Fez; in red tiles and broad bricks that time cannot wear; there is no furniture in the rooms (of Jewish dwellings) save divans—what there is in Moorish ones no man may know; within their sacred walls no **Christian dog** can enter. Isn't it an **oriental picture**?

There are stalwart Bedouins of the desert here, and stately Moors proud of a history that goes back to the night of time; and Jews whose fathers fled hither centuries upon centuries ago; and swarthy Riffians from the mountains—born cut-throats—and original, genuine Negroes as black as Moses; and howling dervishes and a hundred breeds of Arabs—all sorts and descriptions of people that are foreign and curious to look upon. And their dresses are strange beyond all description. Here is a bronzed Moor in a prodigious white turban, curiously embroidered jacket, gold and crimson sash, of many folds, wrapped round and round his waist, trousers that only come a little below his knee and yet have twenty yards of stuff in them, ornamented scimitar, bare shins, stockingless feet, yellow slippers, and gun of preposterous length—a mere soldier!—I thought he was the Emperor at least. And here are aged Moors with flowing white beards and long white robes with vast cowls; and Bedouins with long, cowled, striped cloaks; and Negroes and Riffians with heads clean-shaven except a kinky scalp lock back of the ear or, rather, upon the after corner of the skull; and all sorts of barbarians in all sorts of weird costumes, and all more or less ragged. And here are Moorish women who are enveloped from head to foot in coarse white robes, and whose sex can only be determined by the fact that they only leave one eye visible and never look at men of their own race, or are looked at by them in public. Here are five thousand Jews in blue gabardines, sashes about their waists, slippers upon their feet, little skullcaps upon the backs of their heads, hair combed down on the forehead, and cut straight across the middle of it from side to side—the selfsame fashion their Tangier ancestors have worn for I don't know how many bewildering centuries. Their feet and ankles are bare. Their noses are all hooked, and hooked alike. They all resemble each other so much that one could almost believe they were of one family. Their women are plump and pretty, and do smile upon a Christian in a way which is in the last degree comforting.

Mark Twain pretends to write an authentic travel book about what he himself witnessed, but the numerous references to *The Arabian Nights* and the repetition of stereotypes about wildness, fantasy and extravagance are characteristic of the persistence of Orientalist influences on American realistic literature about the Middle East and North Africa.

Conclusion

After examining a large array of literary texts from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century written by British and American authors about the Middle East and North Africa, the perception that can be inferred from their study appears to be in evolution. There is no stagnant or monolithic aspect about the orient, each period and every author displays a particular view of the Orient with specific purposes.

The image varies from a very negative one to a highly laudatory vision, sometimes even showing the superiority of the Orient over the West, as in Lady Montagu's *Turkish Letters*. The *Arabian Nights* wielded a definite influence on the nineteenth century whether for Romantic literature or even Realism, giving birth to stereotypes about the Orient that persist to the present time. The desert is also a powerful image associated with the MENA that is so enduring that, even nowadays, Western travellers expect to find sand dunes and camels right as they step out of ports of airports.

The perception of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries remains to be examined with the introduction of new notions such as fanaticism and terrorism.

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