

Literary Visions of the Middle East

An anthology of canonical masterpieces of Arabic, Persian, Turkish and Hebrew fiction (mid-19th to early 21st centuries). Compiled, edited and commented by Stephan Guth

This anthology by Stephan Guth assembles, in English translation, more than forty prose texts of modern Arabic, Turkish, Persian, and Hebrew fiction, from the 19th century reform period until the early 2000s. Each of them can be regarded as having attained canonical status – not only because they display “typical” stylistic features of the periods to which their respective national literary historiographies usually ascribe them (“Reformism,” “Romanticism,” “Socially critical Realism,” etc.), but also because they mirror, in an exemplary manner, the political and social situations in their countries at the times they were written. As unfiltered comments by Middle Easterners who lived through decisive phases of their societies’ development and experienced the ups and downs of their peoples’ histories, the voices that speak from this collection have the quality of representative sources that grant us immediate insight into Middle Eastern lifeworlds. They make us relive the conflicts, dreams, traumata, desires and emotions of Arab, Turkish, Iranian and Israeli society at certain points in history and give us access to the worldviews and creative imagination with which authors meet and process the changes and challenges they register. The introductory paragraphs preceding each text provide background knowledge and the “red thread,” their ensemble combining to a literary history of the Middle East in a nutshell.



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