CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press
0521017394 - The Arabian Epic: Heroic and Oral Story-telling, Volume 2 - Analysis
M. C. Lyons
Excerpt
More information

Introduction to volume two

Dimensions and outlines such as have been given in the preceding volume are of obvious relevance to a study of the general patterns of the Arabic hero cycles, but it can reasonably be argued that the pictures conveyed by these cycles are pointillist. Beyond the determinants and delineators that have been discussed, the ultimate basis of literary structure can be taken as the individual words of which it is composed, but as these have their quota of untransferable connotations for all who use them, their analysis must lead to a form of critical solipsism. In a wider context, however, what the Arabic cycles share with other literatures are ingredients, both simple and compound, which formulaic theory would have no difficulty in claiming for its own.

In his magisterial *Proben der Volksliteratur* Radlov wrote of the poetry of the Kara-Kirgis: 'Jeder nur irgend wie geschickte Sänger improvisiert stets seine Gesänge nach der Eingebung des Augenblicks, so dass er gar nicht im Stande ist, einen Gesang zweimal in vollkommen gleicher Weise zu rezitieren ... Die Kunst des Sängers besteht nur darin, alle diese fertigen Bildtheilchen so aneinander zu reihen, wie dies der Lauf der Begebenheiten fordert und sie durch neu gedichtete Verse zu verbinden. Der Sänger vermag nun alle die oben angeführten Bildtheile in sehr verschiedener Weise zu besingen. Er versteht ein und dasselbe Bild in wenigen kurzen Strichen zu zeichnen, er kann ausführlicher schildern, oder in epischer Breite in eine sehr detaillirte Schilderung eingehen.' [Vol. 5 xvi]

The accuracy with which formulaic theory, as developed by Lord and Parry, reflects its own background is beyond dispute, but the limitations of its scope are equally obvious. While some of the problems associated with it are accidental, the limitations apply to the essence of any attempt to distinguish between formulaic and non-formulaic literature. Of these difficulties, the accidental are caused by an over-simplification of the link between formulaic and oral poetry, with the implication that all oral poetry must be subject to arbitrary change. Here, while it is obviously true that the use of formulae can allow a reciter the 'witty introductions of his own invention', that Lane attributes to the Arab 'Mohaddit', bardic tradition may bind him to a verbatim repetition of all or most of a sacred or of a secularly important text. Nor does there seem any reason to distinguish between an inspirational poet whose work is written down but not revised and an oral poet of the same type whose lines are memorised but not changed.

Of more importance, however, is the point that to set apart 'formulaic' literature obscures the fact that all literature can be argued to work on what can be seen as a

© Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press
0521017394 - The Arabian Epic: Heroic and Oral Story-telling, Volume 2 - Analysis
M. C. Lyons
Excerpt
More information

'formulaic' pattern, of limited ingredients. In itself, the indication of uniformity that this gives carries no more significance than does an attempt to equate the artistry of Yugoslavian folk-poetry with that of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, but it is related to wider issues, amongst which is most obviously the question of literary values. Here, on the one hand, are those who develop the Sophists' demonstration that white is black by arguing that in literature white and black are the same, while ranged against them are those for whom 'high' literature, characterised by a serious moral purpose, is alone worthy of critical attention, as opposed to popular or commercial writing, together with romantics for whom what can be seen as untutored spontaneity is the only mark of genius.

Like Newtonian physics, traditional literary criticism has dealt with comprehensible generalisations, covering both laws and concepts. Formulaic theory, however, has introduced an uncertainty principle into its own limited sphere, in that the location of a given ingredient may be altered in one and the same narrative to suit the convenience of the narrator. To suggest that this could be developed in a wider context to produce the equivalent to the physicists' dream of a Theory of Everything, based on super-symmetry, would be naïve, but at least there is the possibility of developing a literary quantum theory, in which the particle supplants the formula and the wave replaces the notion of literary genre.

In the present work the approach to this has been empirical and is based on the fact that the Arabic texts studied share a number of identifiable narrative ingredients. These may be simple, compound, static or dynamic; as with physical particles, they can be classified under a number of different headings, and all that they necessarily share in common is the fact that they are located within the cycles.

Examples of simple particles can be seen in the King with Four Hands, the One-Eyed King, the Magnetic Mountain, or the Inscribed Necklace. A compound particle may contain two elements bound together by an action, as with the Champion Who Kills His Own Mount and the Daughter Who Betrays Her Father, or it may comprise a standard series of ingredients, as in the Aladdin-type story of the magician who needs help to win a treasure. A static ingredient, which adds detail to but does not advance the narrative, can be seen in the checking of their horses' girths by the cycles' heroes, while an example of dynamism is provided by the princess who in her isolated tower is bound to set the heroic machinery in motion by attracting a hero to visit her.

As physical particles are grouped in waves, so the cycles can without difficulty be thought of as narrative waves, but the effect of the wave on the particle or of the particle on the wave is not always straightforward. Where the ingredients are simple, no essential change in them is possible. A spyglass remains the same whether it is found in the *Sīrat Baibars* or in the Hilālī cycle, and the same is true of the whip used by Shīḥa or found by Saif b. Dhī Yazan. Similarly, compound ingredients may, at times, be transferred word for word without any detectable alteration in the narrative purpose that they serve, as where the entire episode of Ṣaḥsāḥ's meeting with Alūf is found, as has been noted, in a different context in *The Arabian Nights*. Elsewhere, however, while the ingredient remains the same, the emotional charge that it carries is altered, either by the colouring of the words through which it is expressed, more generally by a difference in narrative level, or, more often, by a mixture of the two. For example, within the

© Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press
0521017394 - The Arabian Epic: Heroic and Oral Story-telling, Volume 2 - Analysis
M. C. Lyons
Excerpt
More information

Arabic tradition Saif b. Dhī Yazan's quest for the dress of Bilqīs belongs to the sphere of heroic/wonder literature, while when 'Alī al-Zaibaq recovers his stolen robe from Zainab as she pretends to sleep, the narrative context is one of trickery with erotic overtones. In a wider context the point is even more obvious. Ariosto makes a joke of Astolfo's magic weapons, which have to be taken seriously when they are wielded by Ḥamza or by Baibars. The poisoned glass that shatters when handed to al-Ṣāliḥ is found in *The Mysteries of Udolfo*, few would claim any ressemblance between the narrative tone found in Mrs Radcliffe and that of the Cairene reciters, while similarly the underground passage that unites the lovers in the *Roman de Flamença* has only a superficial connection with the one through which Shīḥa retakes Alexandria.

While it is evident that the particles may acquire different emotional charges from their contexts, what is less clear is whether they are affected in any way by their own species, that is, specifically, by the frequency of their occurrence or by the importance attached to a given context or group of contexts in which they are found. As has been shown, Fāṭima, the mother of 'Alī al-Zaibaq, shares characteristics with Fāṭima Dhāt al-Himma. It may be wondered, however, to what extent this would add an extra dimension to the Cairene audiences' appreciation of her relationship with her son or to its development by the narrators, that is to say, whether the particle itself carries with it an emotional charge derived from its associations, or whether colouring or emotion is a feature restricted to the narrative wave.

As can be seen in the Comparative Index, the importance of this point is underlined by the universals of folklore. The bird-girl story found in the cycle of Saif b. Dhī Yazan has an astonishing worldwide popularity, which can only with difficulty be accounted for by orthodox processes of diffusion. Further, it is found in contexts so varied that if it has acquired an extra emotional charge, or colouring, this may be argued to be a function of the motif itself rather than of its context.

Within this field it is, of course, possible to limit the scope of investigation by restricting it through discriminatory rules to questions of borrowing and diffusion or by ensuring that like is only to be compared or contrasted with like. In general, this leads back to the proliferation of definitions quoted in Volume One, and in particular in the field of comparison it narrows the range of examples to be studied. A difficulty with the first of these positions is that the divisions are not so much multiple but endless. Radlov, for instance, notes the difference between the poetry of the 'Karakirgisen' and the 'Kasak-Kirgisen'; the *Odyssey* is not the same kind of poem as the *Iliad*; there is an obvious difference between the *Chanson de Roland* and *Roland à Saragosse*; the *Mahābhārata* differs from the *Rāmāyaṇa*, while within the narrowest of geographical limits Trevelyan pointed to the contrast in feeling and expression between English and Scots border ballads. In wider fields of comparison, on the other hand, restrictions tend to reinforce preconceptions and to limit discovery.

There is, of course, no shortage of demonstrable narrative diffusion in relation to Arabic cycles, where, for example, the westward journey of the *Sinbād Nāma*, with its numerous changes of language, is paralleled in reverse by the story of Alexander. The existence of the *Dukus Horant* fragment in Hebrew script in the Cairo Geniza is a graphic example of the 'heidnische schriften' from which Wolfram von Eschenbach's Kyot is said to have taken the tale of Parzifal. As has been noted, details from the cycle

© Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press
0521017394 - The Arabian Epic: Heroic and Oral Story-telling, Volume 2 - Analysis
M. C. Lyons
Excerpt
More information

of Ḥamza are found in Java, while elements of *Jataka* stories exist in Arabic. It is the importance attached to such chains of derivation that is gently satirised by Pulci, where he writes of the imaginary Alfamenonne: 'che fece gli Statuti delle donne,/ E fu trovato in lingua persiana,/ tradutto poi in arabica e'n caldea/poi fu recato in lingua soriana/e dipoi in lingua greca, e poi in ebrea/poi nell' antica famosa romana/finalmente vulgar si riducea.' [19.153/4]

In the development of such points scholars must heed Temple's well-justified words of caution: 'Suppose research to show a tale or idea to be of general occurrence in India, Europe, Africa, and even in America and the Pacific Islands: recent works show so much and so ancient communications all the world over as to make one very careful as to asserting origin.' In fact, Macculloch must be correct where he writes that 'the product of his [man's] imagination, of his soul and spirit – religion, poetry, folk-tale – once they have struck root in the soul of humanity, are practically immortal', and he goes on to explain, more precisely and prosaically, that: 'If any given incident in a story cycle struck the imagination, it would have a larger chance of being introduced into other cycles already complete in themselves.'

The intricacies of the processes involved clearly limit the value of their generalised investigation. To set against this, however, is the equally obvious point that the assimilative patterns of oral narrative represent a shared cultural phenomenon, which cannot be appreciated in the isolation of any one tradition, or, as can be argued, within the restrictions of a uniform literary level. More immediately, the Arabic cycles cannot fully be appreciated and should not be studied in isolation.

Even where narrative formulae are at their most banal, a study of their contexts can underline differences, literary, sociological or psychological, that distinguish one culture from another. Internally, there is as wide a variance between the two versions quoted here of the *Sīrat al-Zīr* as is noted by Proinsias Mac Cana between the 'frankly tedious repetition of the Irish text' of *Togail Bruidne Da Derga*, and 'the ordered economy' of what is thought to be its derivative, the story of Branwen in the *Mabinogion*. Where the Arabic can be compared directly to an external tradition, as in the *Sīrat Dhāt al-Himma* and the Turkish romance of al-Baṭṭāl, a difference of treatment is to be seen that must be a reflection of the tastes of the audiences and so, in part, of the shaping influences of their civilisation. This approach can be developed more generally throughout the field of popular literature. We are told, for instance, that Chinese folk-tales are 'the least romantic of all', and that 'never, surely, has the art of story-telling, in subsequent centuries, reached the perfection attained by the Icelanders before the invention of printing'. If generalisations of this kind are to move the world of scholarship, criticism must have a place on which to stand, and it is this that is most obviously provided by a study of shared narrative particles.

In a large number of cases the occurrence of these particles in different literatures is obviously coincidental. Identical narrative problems are likely to share the same solution, and no copyright can restrict the universal attraction of love at first sight or of the nick-of-time rescue. Customs and beliefs may be duplicated spontaneously and the basic circumstances of human life provide universals of their own. This, however, is of less importance than the fact that such coincidences or universals are transmuted as narrative particles and, at a primitive level, it is in terms of these particles that all

© Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press
0521017394 - The Arabian Epic: Heroic and Oral Story-telling, Volume 2 - Analysis
M. C. Lyons
Excerpt
More information

narrative can be analysed. Throughout the fields of literature – detective stories, adventures, children's tales, serious novels and so on – there are to be found familiar elements. The reuse by Tolkien of heroic/wonder/travel formulae set in motion a commercial wave that has not yet broken, while, on a different level, the elements of Kafka, Proust and Robbe-Grillet can all be investigated in the same way.

As has been noted, it can, of course, be argued here that even were a comparative study to be extended beyond the boundaries of diffusion, it should at least be confined to the same literary level, in that a Homeric motif found in Spenser differs in purpose, treatment and effect from those of its original context. An invocation of the uncertainty principle, which can be applied with convenience to formulaic narrative, is of no apparent service here, in that the principle must be either abandoned or reinterpreted in relation to written works fixed in the moulds provided by their authors. In the same way, however, that oral narrative commonly represents accretive tradition, so written works are rarely found in total isolation. Normally they form part of a wider grouping representing interests and attitudes shared not only amongst their authors but amongst the audiences for whom they are designed, and related to the background from which they have been produced. It is these groupings which can be taken as the equivalent of narrative waves.

However widespread the range of any individual particle may be, some are clearly better adapted for use in a particular wave or series of waves, whose identification they, and in particular their frequency of occurrence, can help to refine. For instance, the water of life, mentioned in the *Sīrat Ḥamza*, can reasonably be found in *Gilgamesh* but would be out of place in the *Sīrat Dhāt al-Himma*, while the *chakravartin*, or universal king, is reflected, albeit pallidly, by Saif b. Dhī Yazan but not by Charlemagne. In part, such waves can be classified merely on the basis of the number of particles that they contain. It can be seen, for example, that the text of the *Sīrat ʻAntar* analysed here differs in particular from the introductory section of the *Sīrat Baibars* not merely because the former is a desert cycle and the latter urban, but because the second is a far denser narrative, as can be seen from the number of its ingredients.

Both in the Arabic cycles and in the wider field of literature part of the impetus of narrative waves, or at times perhaps merely their surface colouring, is supplied by emotion. Thus in the Arabic the revenge motif may often be no more than a narrative convenience, but at times in the *Sīrat ʻAntar* and the *Qiṣṣat al-Zīr* there is a feeling of genuine savagery. Humour provides a context and a stimulus for the narrative of Baibars's early adventures in Cairo. There is pathos, if not tragedy, in the *Taghrībat Banī Hilāl*, and even the brief adventures of Saif al-Tījān are coloured by a diffuse feeling for beauty and splendour.

At best, however, in the cycles the dynamism of such emotion is limited and it remains to be asked to what extent it is supplemented by artistic creativity. Here a mechanical application of formulaic theory would obviously limit the possibilities. It might be suggested that in the field of oral literature the reciter is merely allowed to reshuffle his pack of ingredients, whereas in higher forms of literature the artist forms patterns of his own, the difference being not so much that between particles found in a natural wave and those of a wave produced in a laboratory experiment, but between the former and particles that have actually been created by their manipulator. It is

© Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press
0521017394 - The Arabian Epic: Heroic and Oral Story-telling, Volume 2 - Analysis
M. C. Lyons
Excerpt
More information

obviously true that the oral reciter works within restraints; heroes may not be killed; there must be repeated climaxes; the main lines of familiar stories cannot be altered. Similarly, however, no exponent of *littérature engagée* can be said to have a free creative hand, and although writers in general may flout the conventions of their own societies, few stray beyond the preconceptions of their own group. Ultimately, it can be questioned whether any writer can 'create' a particle *ex nihilo*. In so far as creativity can be seen as a surmounting of limits, it may appear to better advantage in the tragic Achilles of the *Iliad* and the shadowy Osiris-Dionysus-Zīr of the Egyptian version than in such characters as 'pius Aeneas', who smell of the lamp.

Here, within the context of Arabic narrative, a fundamental, if unanswerable, query passes beyond creativity within the treatment of particles to question the reason for the creation of the cycles themselves. As far as Arab audiences are concerned, this cannot be merely a matter of 'the praises of men', to prevent 'the great and wonderful actions of the Greeks and the Barbarians from losing their due meed of glory'. Such an explanation could certainly account for the original pattern of 'Antar, al-Zīr and the Hilālīs, but it leaves unexplained Saif al-Tījān and, to a lesser extent, the unhistorical Fīrūz Shāh, nor in itself does it suggest a reason for the fact that Baibars has a cycle while Saladin does not. It can be argued that Baibars's early murderous reputation provided the nucleus for a story of his rise to power, but in itself that cannot be sufficient to produce a narrative wave that extends through the length of his preserved cycle. Here, as elsewhere, the creativity of the story-tellers must have had some powerful stimulus to encourage them to dip into their store of narrative ingredients so as to expand the nucleus of their chosen theme.

It does not need a Dr Johnson to point out that: 'No man except a blockhead ever wrote except for money.' Reciters require material for recitation and one cycle must compete with another for the attention of the audience. But here, as with literature in general, the part played by the audiences themselves is not to be undervalued. They may be attracted by the immediate dynamism of a new cycle or of a new style, but unlike the reciter or the author they have nothing at stake and the wave must either carry them along with it or else lose its force. Here it may again be questioned how important a part recognition has to play.

If the particles that make up narrative are by definition commonplaces, many, if not all, must be recognised as such by the audience. In the same way that the body has an immune system which distinguishes self from non-self, it may be questioned whether the mind has a similar mechanism of its own which can be called into play in these circumstances. On a superficial level, a familiar phrase of rejection by a reader is: 'this is not my kind of book'. A sophisticated audience may enjoy 'intertextuality' and recognise quotations, borrowings and adaptations, which are assimilated into its own cultural identity. More generally, at all levels a reader or listener will be attuned to the restatement of his own preoccupations. There must be an intuitive recognition, or precognition, of what experience shows to be the repeated patterns of human experience, and, by extension, perhaps even of their symbolical representations and explanations. This is not merely a matter of taking universals found in the cycles, such as the cave and the well, as Freudian symbols, but of adding in different levels of recognition, in which are found the mysteries of real caves and the dangers of known

© Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press
0521017394 - The Arabian Epic: Heroic and Oral Story-telling, Volume 2 - Analysis
M. C. Lyons
Excerpt
More information

wells. On another plane are the compounds, amongst which are the familiar *ben trovato* stories, such as those of the message tattooed on a shaven head or the Tale of the Two Thieves. Here in the case of identical problems recognition is involved in the acceptance of the appropriateness of an ingenious solution, whether this is propounded at first or at second hand. How this can convincingly be expanded to cover the complications of complex motifs, such as that of the bird-girls, is not yet clear, but if it is to be found in the self-recognition mechanism of the audience, then the translation of recognition to narrative and of narrative to recognition shows a very remarkable pattern of uniformity in the creative processes of story-telling as expressed not merely through particles but in the waves themselves. A proper investigation of these points must obviously take as its starting point the accumulation of evidence.

Here a quantum theory of literary criticism can do no more than to isolate elements that may have their own emotional charge, reinforced or modified by the influence of the waves in which they are found. The waves themselves derive an external impulse from their points of origin, and they can be defined both by this, by their emotional currents, by the interplay of their narrative particles, and more generally by the dynamism which keeps them in motion. In the case of oral literature the value of an orthodox analysis of the structure of a particular presentation of the text is limited in that the text itself has no immutable form. Even if all its extant versions can be studied, much of its oral background must be irrecoverable. Instead of a linear, sequential approach, there can then be substituted a series of concentric rings, grouped around the narrative nucleus – which in the case of the hero cycles will be the hero himself. The frequency of occurrence of these particles, together with the measure of their own dynamism, or lack of it, determines their place in these rings, with the commonest being nearest to the centre. In such an analysis 'uncertainty' is something of a misnomer, in that it applies only to the exact but not to the relative position of the particle. Similarly in 'high' literature, although the exact position of each particle is known, it is their relative positions in the rings surrounding the nucleus that is of greater significance and it is this that is a key element in any attempt to analyse the whole rather than the part.

What is produced by the creative processes involved here is what at all levels the audience takes as patterns acceptable to their self-recognition mechanism, of which a large number can be shown to exist. As with physics, this multiplicity prompts the question of whether underlying it is a form of literary super-symmetry. Such an investigation may prove chimerical, but it must be undertaken, and it is to provide material for such an investigation that the analyses and comparisons in this volume are presented.

In order to follow the lines of investigation that have been outlined, the epitomes of the cycles given in this volume are accompanied by an identification of their ingredients, which are then listed by letter and number in the Narrative Index. This, in turn, is linked to the Comparative Index which covers a number of literatures where borrowings or loans are either demonstrable or likely, but extends horizontally beyond this, particularly in the fields of folk-tales and of mythology. Vertically, examples are taken not merely from simple oral literature, but from the sophisticated reworking of its themes at different levels. The Comparative Index has no claim to be comprehensive even

© Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press
0521017394 - The Arabian Epic: Heroic and Oral Story-telling, Volume 2 - Analysis
M. C. Lyons
Excerpt
More information

within its own range of texts, where it displays only a limited number of illustrations of common themes. For the most part it relies on primary sources, with the addition of only a small number of secondary works, such as those of Stith Thompson and Aarne. It could reasonably have been argued that sources which supply either few or banal references should have been omitted. In fact, many of these are present merely to indicate the range of the Index, covering as it does both fruitful and unfruitful ground. For any single investigation many of the references given will be irrelevant, but the range of topics to be investigated in this context is not only wide but also undefined and perhaps undefinable. Here, as throughout, the object of this work has been to facilitate, and, it is hoped, to stimulate, further research.

References in the Comparative Index follow the conventions of the individual texts quoted, covering books, cantos, pages or lines. It is only where there appears to be a danger of confusion that additional specifications have been provided. Where orthographical problems occur, as, for instance, with accentuation in the Chansons de Geste, the forms used by the editors of the individual texts are given.

Volume, section and page references to the epitomes are given in the extended versions found in Volume Three. In a limited number of cases, for reasons of style, the two do not coincide exactly, but as the differences appear unimportant references have not been added.

© Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org

ʻAlī al-Zaibaq

(1)
The caliph Hārūn al-Rashīd, roaming the streets of Baghdad in disguise one night, finds a wounded youth, who turns out to be Ardashīr, the son of his friend Bābak, the king of Isfahan. Jaʻfar, the vizier, is ordered to have him cured within forty days, on pain of execution.
pp. 1–3
K 4.7; T 12; D 17.1
14.7

(2)
It turns out that Ardashīr had been distracted from affairs of state by a passion for hunting. His father had been advised to 'fetter him, that is marry him', and he had then fallen in love with a girl whom he had seen in a dream and who turned out to be Sāra, the daughter of a Jewish banker.
pp. 3–6
M 13.5; L 14.3
M 30

(3)
After having been smuggled into Sāra's room in a chest, Ardashīr had converted her. The pair had then fled to Baghdad, where Ardashīr had been attacked and wounded. Sāra herself had disappeared.

Jaʻfar is now given three days in which to solve the mystery. He succeeds through the help of Dalīla, whose father, a former police chief of Baghdad, had died of anger after having been replaced by Aḥmad al-Danaf. It turns out that Sāra is being held by an agent employed by her father.
pp. 7–10
T 27; C 30.2; T 12
[A 25; D 14.63; D 14.55; D 14.42]
H 7.56; O 3.8; C 30.5

(4)
The narrative introduces the princess Kaukab al-Nār, the daughter of Chosroe, now seen by Hārūn, who is again wandering through Baghdad in disguise. After being brought to him, she tells him that she had been kidnapped and then saved from rape by

© Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press
0521017394 - The Arabian Epic: Heroic and Oral Story-telling, Volume 2 - Analysis
M. C. Lyons
Excerpt
More information

a peasant. Her rescuer is himself killed by Hārūn's servant, Masrūr, and Hārūn decides that he wants to marry her.

She passes to ʿAlī al-Jauhari, who gave her a drink when she was thirsty, a treasure given her by Hārūn, the story of whose discovery is added in the text. Hārūn at first wants to have ʿAlī executed, but a substitute is killed by Jaʿfar and ʿAlī is later allowed to marry Kaukab. Hārūn marries her sister, who turns out to be the girl whom he had first seen.

After the wedding Kaukab vanishes and ʿAlī is apparently discovered as a headless corpse. This turns out to have been a plot on the part of Chosroe. Dalīla again unravels it and recovers both Kaukab and ʿAlī. The corpse turns out to have been that of a slave.

pp. 10–13
K 4.7; P 28.33; P 28.40; H 5; P 28.49; S 42.3; B 21.3; B 22.3; M 38.8
[T 22.19]
P 28.27

(5)
Dalīla uses forged letters to arrange for the exile of her rival, Aḥmad al-Danaf. Aḥmad flees to Cairo, where he finds himself involved in a feud between the police chief, Ṣalāḥ, and the wily Ḥasan al-Shūmān.

After a number of adventures he returns to Baghdad, leaving as the chief opponent of Ṣalāḥ his own protégé, Muḥammad b. al-Bannān.

pp. 13–18
F 21
[D 25.8; D 15; T 8.1; A 20; M 11; C 18.7; I 8; T 8.2]
C 30.5; O 3.8

(6)
Muḥammad is introduced as the hero of a number of adventures involving a Damascene police official, Ḥasan b. al-Sukkarī, whom he has overheard as boasting that he proposes to play a trick on him. During the course of these adventures he rescues Ḥasan's wife, who had been seen at her window by a visiting prince and carried off to Genoa. Disguised as a groom, he then returns to Damascus with Ḥasan and reveals himself after Ḥasan has boasted of his own superior prowess.

pp. 18–23
O 10; P 28.69; P 28.33; D 14.14; F 3.2
[D 14.19; I 6]
S 44.6; U 6; T 26.2; P 33.4

(7)
Muḥammad is now killed by Fāṭima, the formidable daughter of the qāḍī of the Fayyūm, who had left home after a quarrel with her brothers. She had disguised herself as a bedouin, robbed them, and then moved to Cairo.

Al-Sayyida Zainab tells her in a dream that she is destined to marry Ḥasan Ra's al-Ghūl and to produce a famous son. She insists that Ḥasan must first take the place of Ṣalāḥ, the police chief, which he does, after rescuing al-ʿAzīz, the ruler of Egypt, from a band of Persians.

© Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org