



The Book of the Superiority of Dogs Over Many of Those Who Wear Clothes (Various Pagings) (Arabic Edition)

By M. A. S. Abdel Haleem, Ibn al-Marzuban

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This collection of stories and poetry was inspired by a conversation in 10th century Baghdad between the collector and a friend. Between them they contemplate the declining moral standards of the human race and sigh with nostalgia for 'the good old days', when one could depend upon the loyalty and friendship of one's fellow beings. Having promised such a collection to his friend, Ibn al-Marzuban launches with enthusiasm into his task. Quotations of the famous are followed by anecdotes and stories which in turn give way to an apposite poem all either de-crying man for his evil ways or illustrating the fine qualities displayed by his best friend, the dog, viz, his loyalty, guarding instinct, consistency, intelligence and his capabilities as a hunter. The editors have made use of two previously printed texts of the work, both based on a single manuscript, and to these they have added three newly discovered manuscripts. From the whole a completely new critical edition in Arabic has been produced. As well as an English translation, there is an introduction in English with an Arabic summary which, among other things, attempts to view the collection within the general framework of Arabic adab literature and to provide a survey of Muslim attitudes to the dog throughout the ages. The edition and translation is greatly enhanced by some fine sketches and there are seven plates showing illustrations of dogs from both Arabic and Persian medieval manuscripts.

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Language Notes

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