CFP: ISLAMICATE FICTIONALITIES

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ISLAMICATE FICTIONALITIES
(abstracts due: August 20, 2021)

Guest editors N. İpek Hüner Cora, Sam Lasman, and Rachel Schine invite abstract submissions for a special issue of postmedieval entitled Islamicate Fictionalities. We ask interested contributors to submit an abstract (approximately 500 words) to postmed.islamicatefictions@gmail.com by August 20, 2021, highlighting the topic and the theoretical questions the article will raise.

How do we identify and characterize fiction, and how did writers in the past? What power did fiction hold among various audiences, and what was its material life? These questions of medieval fictionality have recently received increased attention among scholars of premodern texts. The special issue of postmedieval, Islamicate Fictionalities, invites papers by scholars focused on engaging the possibilities of medieval fiction outside of the West, in Islamicate contexts that span from Morocco to Indonesia, and in comparison with the literatures of their borderlands in Central Europe, East Africa, South/east Asia, and the Western Mediterranean. We seek projects that explore fictionality in ways particular to the Islamicate sphere, that offer new comparative perspectives between and beyond Islamic societies, or that center underappreciated texts and contexts in Islamic worlds.

Defining the scope as Islamicate, we aim to address the literatures of a diffuse geography in which Muslims were the socially or politically dominant group, while highlighting the constitutive role this presence plays in genres and bodies of text across religious and other boundaries. The issue hopes to be inclusive of different genres, themes, and languages employed by both Muslims and non-Muslims living in Islamicate spaces. We invite authors to think across a multitude of forms, including but not limited to prosopographies and anthologies (tazkirat), picaresque stories (maqamat), histories (akhbar), storytelling traditions (hikayat), epic and romance (sirah, masnavi), and works of literary and rhetorical theory in Arabic, Persian, Ottoman Turkish, Chagatay, Armenian, Urdu, and various other regional languages. The authors are also encouraged to focus on works and themes that transgress the well-defined genres of high literature and discuss literary works at the margins of available canons. The contributions should cover the time period which can be vaguely defined as medieval and postmedieval—but the issue will not expand to the modern period in which the definition of literary genres and fictionality is discussed within the scope of modernization.

Topics that this issue will address include (but are not limited to):
1. The relationship between fictionality and identity formations, in the form of experiences of gender and sexuality, the sacred/profane, the self and subjectivity, human and animal, race and ethnicity, and so on.

2. Situating fictionality within the Islamicate, broadly construed, and therefore take up intersections with and manifestations of Jewish, Christian, Hindu, and other authorships.

3. The relationship between fictionality, form, and material, including consideration of folk and book arts, performance studies, and popular culture.

4. The presence of metafiction and an ethics of fiction in the medieval period across cultures.

This issue will particularly seek the work of early career scholars and provide a space for them to sketch the horizons of the field. It will consider epistemologies of fiction both within text and between text and experience.

The special issue *Islamicate Fictionalities* also hopes to include a few fictional pieces based on Islamicate literary traditions. We encourage the submission of short fictional pieces that will inspire readers to meditate further on fictionality and that will give occasion for writers to express themselves in ways that go beyond academic convention while complementing the issue’s scholarly engagements.

Completed articles should not exceed 6000 words including footnotes and bibliography, and they should follow the style guidelines of *postmedieval*. This brevity is meant to emphasize the conversational communication of ideas to an interdisciplinary readership, rather than a specialist proof or extended philological demonstration. The final date for articles’ submission to peer-review is February 1, 2022.

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