

## A Bird after Love: Ibn' Hazm's The Ring of the Dove (Tawq al- Hamamah ) and the Roots of Courtly Love

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### Abstract

The concept of love covers a considerable place in the world literature both in the West and the East. Commonly, the works on love in the Western literature such as Ovid's *Ars Amatoria* and Andreas Capellanus' *The Art of Courtly Love* are well known compared to the studies on love in the Eastern literature. However, there is a great deal and variety of love literature in the East, ranging from the explorations of divine love within the context of Sufi writings to profane love. Indeed, the Arabic literature on love in the Middle Ages is widely acknowledged to contribute much to the European literature. Dealing with love in more secular aspects, among others, Ibn' Hazm's *The Ring of the Dove (Tawq al- Hamamah)* becomes the representative of profane and courtly love in the Eastern literature. Gaining universal appeal through numerous translations due to its significance in particular for the studies about the troubadours and the roots of courtly love, *The Ring of the Dove* forms a bridge between the studies on love in the medieval Eastern and Western literature. Although he had been harshly criticized by his Spanish- Arab countrymen due to his approach to love in *The Ring of the Dove*; Ibn' Hazm have received the greatest attention by the modern scholars who are interested in profane love in the Arabic literature. Accordingly, this paper aims to portray the traces of profane and courtly love in the Arabic literature as reflected in Ibn' Hazm's *The Ring of the Dove*.

**Keywords:** Arabic literature; courtly love; Middle Ages; the Ring of the Dove; profane love.

*Love is the only reason for the world's existence and it is away from sensual feelings; it is dangerous, but it is still the warmth in heart based on mutual intimacy and respect between lovers. Lover is the one who unconditionally accepts his/her lover and whose character changes when s/he is in love.*<sup>1</sup>

### 1. Introduction: Love in the Arabic Literature and its Reflections in the Western World

Love is one of the most treated themes in literature; yet, the literary products of the West on love such as Ovid's *Ars Amatoria* and Andreas Capellanus' *The Art of Courtly Love* are well-recognised compared to those of the East. Indeed, with a close look at the East, it is possible to encounter a great deal of love literature especially in the Arabic literature in the medieval age which is accepted to contribute much to the European literature. Allen (1998) states that the theme of love in the Arabic literature has varieties, and it can be ranged from the explorations of divine love- within the context of Sufi writings- to the studies on the delights and dangers of profane love. In his work *Epistle on Passion (Risālahfi al- ishğ)*, Ibn Sina searches for the divine love and takes intellect and passion as the two qualities which consist the real nature of the "necessary existence" (p. 249), thus keeping the balance between intellect and passion becomes a significant part of moral judgment and of the connection of humanity to the divine being. Thereby, the pains and delights of love and martyrdom are important themes in early love poetry as emphasized in the contexts of Sufi writings; furthermore, on the way of love, there is a constant struggle in which the believers are in a quest for transcendent experience (Allen 1998, p. 249).

The Arabic literature in regard to love in more secular aspects embodies multifarious works whose concerns are related to the texts from Qur'an like Ibn al-Jawzi's work *Condemnation of Desire* which warns believers against the dangers of the passionate love.

Among such works, Ibn Taymiyyah's work *Meadow of Lovers and Diversion of the Infatuated* has a significant place. This masterpiece is about the essence of desire and passion and gives advices to a young man who is in a

<sup>1</sup>The definition of love was written in line with the love definitions of 10 Phd students of English literature in the Department of English Language and Literature at Hacettepe University, Ankara, Turkey.

dilemma between the delight of love and the danger of sin. In the work, Taymiyyah also highlights many issues in the corpus of love literature and criticizes the Sufi's notion of martyrdom in love. In his work, Taymiyyah also attacks Ibn' Hazm and states that the approach of Ibn' Hazm in *Tawq al- Hamāmah (The Ring of the Dove)* is shocking. Taymiyyah vilifies Ibn' Hazm's work as he supports that the work accepts the morally wrong behaviour by portraying the meeting of lovers with secret glances (Allen, 1998, p. 250). Another important figure in the Arabic literature is Ibn' al- Qayyim who also attacks Ibn' Hazm as Ibn' Hazm supports that "one could freely enjoy at looking at a person not "lawful" to one, though touching him or her was forbidden" (as cited in Giffen, 1971, p. 129). Another startling element in Ibn' Hazm's work is its open and honest approach through which Ibn' Hazm explores the exiting adventures of Andalusians who are his contemporaries, which increases the value of the work at the same time (Allen, 1998, p. 251).

In fact, profane love occupies a great room in the Arabic literature. In *The Theory of Profane Love among the Arabs*, Giffen (1971) explores the development of the genre of profane love which underlines "human, earthly love, its nature, causes and vicissitudes" (p. v). Giffen supports that Arabic works on profane love in the Middle Ages do not only discuss the literary tradition, but also "psychology, philosophy, cosmology, theology, ethics, practical piety and Islamic law. . ." (p. v). Giffen (1971) continues that theme of love and its problems have a great place in the literatures of the world; however, its causes, types and nature are less frequently emphasized. In the Arabic literature, although the diwans of poetry or tales about love are greatest in number, there is also a great number of works on profane love. Due to the religious and mystical factors in the Islamic world, the works on mystical love is greater in number than profane love, yet it is possible to see that the ethical, religious and mystical issues are hand in hand even in the works on profane love (p. xi).

The interest of the modern scholars on the profane love in the Arabic literature turns back to 1914 in which K.K Petrof published the first edition of Ibn' Hazm's *Tawq al- Hamāmah (The Ring of the Dove)*. The work encouraged examining other similar works, but it attracted the greatest attention depending on its significance in general for the history of Spanish literature and in particular for the studies about the troubadours (Giffen, 1971, p. xi). There are several articles about *The Ring of the Dove* written by Emilio Garcia Gomez and the work was translated into English in 1931 by A.R Nykl which made the book accessible to non-orientalists and especially to the specialists in the European Middle Ages and Renaissance who were interested in the cultural relations with the Islamic world. In his book, Nykl also included an essay on the relationships between Spanish Arabic and troubadour poetry (as cited in Giffen, 1971, p. xii).

The translation of Nykl followed various studies and other translations of *The Ring of the Dove* such as a Russian translation by A. Salie in 1933, a German one by Max Weisweiler and a new Arabic version with French translation by Leon Kercher in 1941, an Italian translation by Francesco Gabrieli in 1949, a Spanish translation by Emilio Garcia Gomez in 1952, and an English translation by Arthur Arberry in 1953. Apart from Ibn' Hazm's work, there are other works from the Arabic literature on profane love which gained great interest in the Western world such as Ibn Quayim al- Jauziya's *Raudat al- Muhibbin (The Garden of Lovers)* published in 1930 and Muhammad b. Da' ud's *Kitāb as- Zahra (The Book of the Flower)* which was published in 1932 (Giffen, 1971, p. xii).

## 2. The origins of courtly love and the attitudes of the West towards the contribution of the East to the European literature

Analyzing Ibn' Hazm's *The Ring of the Dove* as a work of courtly and profane love, the interactions between the Arabic literature and the Western literature are of great significance. The Arabic literature is regarded to have a considerable impact on the Western literature; however, according to Menocal (1987), it took a very long time for the western people to accept this contribution. This is also the case about the origins of courtly love which, as Barrack (2013) suggests, is one of the recurrent issues discussed in medieval studies since "of the several theories advanced to explain this cultural phenomenon, the Hispano-Arabic hypothesis (proposed by Burdach (1925) remains one of the most promising and contested" (p.173). Listing the five main sources of courtly love as ballad, liturgical, Classical Latin, and Arabic; Denomy (1953) suggests that the debate will continue until the real origin of courtly love is discovered (p.45). About the debate, Menocal asserts that the opposition of medievalists and Hispanists to the origins of the poems of troubadours [or courtly love] "stems less from scholarly objections than from the fact 'that European scholarship has an a priori view of, and set of assumptions about, its medieval past that is far from conducive to viewing its Semitic components as formative and central" (1987, p. xiii). Furthermore, Menocal emphasizes the use of double standard related to justification and documentation of the works in the comparative studies. She supports that although the European literature welcomes the contribution of Celtic and Germanic studies with little justification, the contribution of Hispano- Arabic to troubadour poetry is largely questioned and requires rigid evidence. Menocal claims that the traditional literary historiography cannot come up with the sound revision of the medieval history since it depends on the model of the westernness of European literature

and the otherness of non-European and evaluates history in line with the “winners” (1987, as cited in Meisami, 1991, p. 346). Meisami (1991) asserts that this double standard comes from the fact that we deny the cultural influence of the alien culture on our cultures foundation, but we should not avoid “the mixed ancestry for western Europe” (p. 346) which contributes much to our history. With the same token, Von Grune Baum points out that “the interactions between East and West in Middle Ages will never be correctly diagnosed or correctly assessed and appraised unless their fundamental cultural unity is realized and taken into consideration” (as cited in Meisami, 1991, p. 348).

To support her argument, Meisami (1991) also touches upon the interactions between the East and the West and lists the Arabic speaking singers and musicians in Europe, the movement of scholars, merchants, translators and poets between Europe, Spain, Sicily and the East and the connection through pilgrimages, military engagements, marriage and trade. Moreover, Meisami associates the double-standardisation with the political, colonial and religious issues like crusades and she also argues that the Arabic was the prestigious language of a high culture and the people who learnt it were not concerned with the doctrinal issues but the cultivation of that culture (p. 347). Finally, Meisami (1991) points out that among the numerous assumptions about the roots of courtly love, in spite of wider range of sources, the probability of non-European, non- Christian sources is mostly refused. She underlines that “the rise of this area of study came during the period when Europe was shaping its views of the Arabs as colonial subjects” (p. 348) and the Arabist theory of origin was not taken into consideration and even became a taboo; so that only the theories which were in line with the “fundamental principle of Europeanness” (p. 348) were later discussed in the related studies.

### 3. Ibn’ Hazm and The Ring of the Dove

*The Ring of the Dove (Tawq al- Hamāmah)* was written by Abu Muhammad Ali Ibn’ Hazm who was born at Cordova in 994-1064. He was the greatest scholar of the Muslim Spain. Of Ibn’ Hazm, Watt states that he was “far and away the most outstanding scholar of *al-Andalus*...” (as cited in Hummel, 2008, p. 34). His works “include compositions on Islamic law, theology, heresiography, history, and ethics, as well as the phenomenology of love” (Rosen, 2004, p. 211). Ibn’ Hazm was a very prolific writer and his son, Abu Rafi, stated that “Ibn’ Hazm’s written works numbered four hundred volumes, consisting of 80, 000 pages in his own handwriting. No other scholar in Muslim history . . . produced such a volume of writings” (Haider, 1987, p. 55). Ibn’ Hazm belonged to a Regenade family, but in spite of his Christian ancestors; he followed his descent to a Persian freedman of Yazib Abi Sufyan. His father occupied the position of Vizier under Mansir Ibn Amir and Ibn’ Hazm also was interested in politics and before the age of thirty, he became the prime minister of Abdu l’Rahman. However, upon the fall of the Umayyad Government, he dedicated his life entirely to literature. He was accepted as a learned writer, poet, biographer and historian (Nicholsan, 1969, p. 426). He received a good education in both the religious and secular sciences and he was for the sciences of ancients which included logic, mathematics, astronomy, medicine and other sciences (Chejne, 1984, p. 57). Nykl (1923) states that Ibn’ Hazm was treated unjustly by his Spanish- Arab countrymen and although he was one of the most prolific writers in Islam, very few of his works have come to light today, since they were burnt by his opponents (p. 30). About his works’ putting into flames, Ibn’ Hazm remarks that:

*The Paper ye may burn, but what the paper holds  
Ye cannot burn: ’tis safe within my breast: where I  
Remove, it goes with me, alights when I alight,  
And in my tomb will lie. (cited in Nicholsan, 1969, p. 427)*

With regard to his aim in learning and writing, Ibn’ Hazm expresses that “my only desire is seeking knowledge to attain a high scientific rank in this world and the next” (cited in Nicholsan, 1969, p. 427). Due to his contemporaries’ hostility towards him since he attacked the most religious authorities of Islam, Ibn’ Hazm was expelled from different provinces of Spain and withdrew to a village and stayed there until his death. In *The Ring of the Dove* (2004), Ibn’ Hazm touches upon the hostility towards himself by his contemporaries:

*. . . my antagonists, being choked in intellectual debate with me, cast foul reproaches in my face, and accused me of espousing the cause of untruth; this they did because they were unable to refute my arguments in defence of truth and its champions, and were jealous of my debating prowess. (Of Fidelity, para. 23)<sup>2</sup>*

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2 Throughout the paper, A.J. Arberry’s translation of *The Ring of the Dove* (2004) was used.

Among his valuable works apart from *The Ring of the Dove, Kitabu'l- Milal wa-'Nihal (Book of Religions and Sects)* is very significant in which he argues about Islam and its dogmas as well as the non-Muhammadan religious systems such as Judaism and Christianity (Nicholsan, 1969, p. 427). Ibn' Hazm wrote *The Ring of the Dove* (1027) after he finished his last term in prison. Ibn' Hazm stayed away from the political life and wrote a great deal in the fields of profane love and theology. As aforementioned, he was in conflict with his contemporaries and there was a famous saying of the time "the pen of Ibn' Hazm was like the sword of al- Hajjaj (the notorious Umayyad governor of Iraq) in sharpness" (Giffen, 1971, p. 23). *The Ring of the Dove* seems to have come down in a single manuscript at Leiden which is not a complete work but a perfect example of the original work; therefore, it is not possible to know how much of the original work was kept. Moreover, today's version was also known to be changed by numerous scholars who corrected some of its mistakes and explained most of its obscure parts (Giffen, 1971, p. 24).

The title of the work is also very significant as dove's necklace stands for the feathers around the neck of the doves and in the classical Arabic literature; it symbolizes the chain of love which is worn around the neck till one's death. Moreover, in the old African tribes, the dove's necklace symbolizes grandeur ("Güvercin Gerdanlığı," 2008, para. 1).<sup>3</sup>

With regard to the title, Doruk underlines that in modern times, it was found out that the doves have a specific ring around their necks called "manyelit" (magnetite) which works like a compass and helps the doves to find their ways. Doruk adds that the dove's neck refers to the compass of love in the Arabic literature which proves that this recently discovered magnetite had known by the ancients long before today ("Güvercin Gerdanlığı'nı Anarak Endülüs'ü Dolaşmak, 2005, para. 12). Additionally, Chejne indicates that Ibn' Hazm's *The Ring of the Dove* is one of the most pleasing works of Arabic literature. In the work, Ibn' Hazm deals with love "its nature, its symptoms, its causes, faultfinding, slandering, union, loyalty, betrayal, separation, oblivion, illicit practices, etc" (1984, p. 57). Allen, Kilpatrick, & de Moor (1995) state that Ibn' Hazm's *The Ring of the Dove* is "perhaps the only work of classical Arabic belles-letters to have been widely translated into European languages . . . (p. 10). Similarly, Gibb mentions that the main figure of the prose literature of the century is Ibn' Hazm and his work *The Ring of the Dove* is one of the few works of Arabic literature which gained universal appeal (1966, p. 114). Ortega y Gasset defines the work as "the most illustrious [book] on the theme of love in Moslem civilization" (1952, as cited in Barrack, 2013, p.174)

Praising *The Ring of the Dove* in her article *Güvercin Gerdanlığı ve Aşk (The Ring of the Dove and Love)*, Turkish academic Çınar remarks that *The Ring of the Dove* comprises a large field from psychology to ethics, from law to anthropology and culture to linguistics which reflects that Ibn' Hazm was even at that time aware of the significance of interdisciplinary studies (2008, para. 15). Allen (1998) also defines *The Ring of the Dove* as charming and praises Ibn' Hazm's use of intimate and confidential tone as reflected in the following extract from the work:

The lover hurries to the spot where the beloved is at the moment, endeavors to sit as near him as possible sidles up close to him, lays aside all occupations that might oblige him to leave his company, makes light of any matter however weighty that would demand his parting from him, is very slow to move when he takes his leave of him. I have put this somewhere into verse (Ibn' Hazm, 2004, *The Signs of Love*, para.4):

*No captive for the gallows bound  
With more reluctance quits his cell  
Than I thy presence, in profound  
Regret to say farewell. (Ibn' Hazm, 2004, The Signs of Love, para. 5)*

Allen (1998) asserts that it was these aforementioned qualities which made *The Ring of the Dove* an appealing work in Europe; thereby, it was translated into a number of languages. In the English speaking world, the work became popular by the translation of Sir Richard Burton from the French version to English in 1850. Allen (1998) also argues that an earlier translation of the work might not been possible more probably due to the Victorian sensibility which is in clash with the homosexual practices in the work (pp. 251-252).

#### **4. *The Ring of the Dove* as a work of courtly and profane love**

Moller states that when courtly love was introduced into the High Middle Ages, it was entirely based on oral tradition and reciting accompanied by music. Gaining a significance place in nobility, it could survive as it was transmitted through writings of significant members of the nobility in Old Provencal and in Middle High German such as William IX of

3 All translations from Turkish are my own.

Aquitaine and Henry VI of Hohenstaufen. Eventually, "the chance of personal and local interest determined the composition of anthologies in the later thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. . ." (1960, p. 39). The main characteristic of these early works was "the poet's preoccupation with the amorous cult of a lady who is venerated as the sovereign of all his thoughts, feelings, and actions" (1960, p.40). Of the courtly love in medieval Spain, Green (1949) remarks that the concept of courtly love in Spain is closely related to "medieval ideas on medicine and psychology, on the soul and its passions, and, in general, to mediaeval moral philosophy and theology; but its ultimate source is to be found in the love poetry of the troubadours which spread to all the courts of Europe" (p. 247). As the most significant exemplar of the works on courtly love in Mediaeval Spain, even the structure of Ibn' Hazm's *The Ring of the Dove* is noteworthy in terms of its reflection of courtly love tradition. The work consists of thirty parts which deal with love in different subtitles such as of the nature of love, the signs of love, on falling in love at first sight, on falling in love through a description, of concealing the secret, of the messenger, of fidelity, of betrayal and of separation all of which highlight the characteristics of courtly love. Similarly, Giffen (1971) mentions that *The Ring of the Dove* is a mainly prose work about the theory of profane love, how love begins and develops, how a love affair managed and ended through causal selections of poetry in line with the present subject (p. 11). In the first chapter, the author deals with the essence, nature and causes of love then he comes to the main subject, the situation of lovers in the order of related happenings (Giffen, 1971, p.69). In fact, in *The Ring of the Dove* Ibn' Hazm defines love as ". . . a conjunction between scattered parts of souls that have become divided in this physical universe, a union effected within the substance of their original sublime element" (2004, Of the Nature of Love, para. 5) which might remind one of today's popular concept of soul mate. Furthermore, Ibn' Hazm supports that love is not a sin, but a natural phenomena:

*. . . it is sufficient for a good Moslem to abstain from those things which Allah has forbidden, and which, if he choose to do, he will find charged to his account on the Day of Resurrection. But to admire beauty, and to be mastered by love that is a natural thing, and comes not within the range of Divine commandment and prohibition . . . (2004, Of Concealing the Secret, para. 2).*

About the reason for falling in love, Ibn' Hazm claims that neither the physical beauty nor the harmony in nature is the cause for love since no reason is necessary for falling in love:

*If the cause of Love were physical beauty, the consequence would be that no body defective in any shape or form would attract admiration; yet we know of many a man actually preferring the inferior article, though well aware that another is superior, and quite unable to turn his heart away from it. Again, if Love were due to a harmony of characters, no man would love a person who was not of like purpose and in concord with him. We therefore conclude that Love is something within the soul itself. (2004, Of the Nature of Love, para.6)*

Ibn' Hazm also lists different types of love and differentiates true love from the others as he supports that no certain reason is necessary for falling in *true love* (emphasis added) whose source is the fusion of souls:

*The noblest sort, of Love is that which exists between persons who love each other in God . . . Next to this is the love, which springs from kinship; then the love of familiarity and the sharing of identical aims; the love of comradeship and acquaintance. . . the love that is based upon a shared secret which both must conceal. . . In none of the other sorts of love does anything like this happen: that mental preoccupation, that derangement of the reason, that melancholia, that transformation of settled temperaments, and alteration of natural dispositions, that moodiness, that sighing, and all the other, symptoms of profound agitation which accompany [real] love. All this proves that true Love is a spiritual approbation, a fusion of souls. (2004, Of the Nature of Love, para.12-13)*

As suggested in its subtitles, *The Ring of the Dove* displays many characteristics of courtly love. For example, Ibn' Hazm lists the symptoms of love such as continuously looking at or talking about one's lover and sleeplessness: "Sleeplessness too is a common affliction of lovers; the poets have described this condition frequently, relating how they watch the stars, and giving an account of the night's interminable length" (2004, The Signs of Love, para.19). Ibn' Hazm also emphasizes the change for better in one's character when s/he is in love which is highlighted in courtly love as well:

*A man in love will give prodigally to the limit of his capacity, in a way that formerly he would have refused; as if he were the one receiving the donation, he the one whose happiness is the object in view; all this in order that he may show off his good points, and make himself desirable. How often has the miser opened his purse strings, the scowler relaxed his frown, the coward leapt heroically into the fray, the clod suddenly become sharp-witted, the boor turned into the perfect gentleman, the stinker transformed himself into the elegant dandy, the sloucher smartened up, the decrepit recaptured his lost youth, the godly gone wild, the self-respecting kicked over the traces-and all because of love! (2004, The Signs of Love, para.11)*

As Barrack (2013) suggests, the lovers' change in the same way is portrayed in "the ethic of courtly love in Hohenstaufen Germany" (the House of Hohenstaufen was a dynasty of German monarchs ruling from 1138 to 1254 when German literature was famous for its lyrical love poetry basing upon courtly culture) and in the love lyric of al-Andalus just like in the lines of al-Baha Zuhair: "my nature has become noble through love, and anyone who wants to inquire about me and investigate this can do so . . ." (as cited in Barrack, p. 177). Ecker (1934, p. 150) also emphasises that "in Provençal, the same theme later appears in the lyrics of Guillaume IX as well as in the lyrics of Bernard de Ventadour, who avers that through the beloved, he has achieved value, meaning, and a more joyful heart, and, therefore, a kinder heart" (as cited in Barrack, 2013, p. 177). Another element of courtly love, secrecy, is depicted in the Provençal poetry and in Hohenstaufen Germany since "revealing the true name of the beloved was viewed as the greatest act of uncouthness by both the German and Provençal poets of Courtly Love" (Barrack, 2013, p. 183). The same point is underlined in Ibn' Hazm's *The Ring of the Dove* as such: "One of the attributes of Love is holding the tongue; the lover will deny everything if interrogated, affect a great show of fortitude, and make it appear that he is extremely continent and a confirmed bachelor" (2004, Of Concealing the Secret, par.1). Subservience and loyalty were also depicted as the significant characteristic of courtly love in al-Andalus, Provence, and Hohenstaufen Germany. Similarly, in his *The Ring of the Dove*, Ibn' Hazm remarks that "among the laudable instincts, noble characteristics and virtuous habits by which men may be adorned, whether they are engaged in lovemaking or any other activity, Fidelity ranks high" (2004, Of Fidelity, para.1). As for subservience of the lovers, Ibn' Hazm states that

One of the wonderful things that occur in Love is the way the lover submits to the beloved, and adjusts his own character by main force to that of his loved one. Often and often you will see a man stubborn by disposition, intractable, jibbing at all control, determined, arrogant, always ready to take umbrage; yet no sooner let him sniff the soft air of love, plunge into its waves, and swim in its sea, than his stubbornness will have suddenly changed to docility, his intractability' to gentleness, his determination to easy-going, his arrogance to submission. (2004, Of Compliance, para.1).

As mentioned before apart from heterosexual love, Ibn' Hazm's work contains a great number of homosexual practices which is one of the reasons for his contemporaries' hostility to him. In the following extract, Ibn' Hazm tells about a homosexual relationship of a respected man in his surrounding:

*[Ahmad b. Feth] had cast off all restraint on falling in love with a certain goldsmith's son called Ibrahim Ibn Ahmad. I knew this young man, well enough to be aware that his qualities did not merit his being loved by a person of a good family, in a prominent position, and possessed of broad estates and an ample patrimony. . . He had become the talk of the town; all tongues wagged of his adventure; his name was banded through' the countryside, and the scandalmongers ran everywhere with tales of his amazing escapade. (2004, Of Divulging the Secret, para.11)*

Furthermore, *The Ring of the Dove* is regarded as a masterpiece and a milestone of the culture of Muslim Spain through which one can have valuable insights into the intimate life of Cordova of the eleventh century (Giffen, 1971, p. 25). Indeed, being an acute and wise observer of the society and portraying love relationships in his surroundings, Ibn' Hazm provides the reader with a lively picture of Muslim Spain:

*Now I remember a party that was held in our residence, on one of those occasions that are commonly made the excuse for such festivities in the houses of persons, of rank. The ladies of our household and of my brother's also (God have mercy on his soul!) were assembled together, as well as the womenfolk of our retainers and faithful servants, all thoroughly nice and jolly folk. The ladies remained in the house for the earlier part of the day, and then betook themselves to a belvedere that was attached to our mansion, overlooking the garden and giving a magnificent view of the whole of Cordova; the bays were constructed with large open windows. (2004, Of Forgetting, para.36)*

*The Ring of the Dove* also contains the poems and stories of the author himself. Giffen (1971) points out that the poems in the work aim to make clarify and summarize the author's words. The poems are thought to add a great quality and originality to the work. The work, indeed, is concerned with the psychological phenomena of love in its prose parts; accordingly, Garcia Gomez takes the work as a psychological treatise (as cited in Giffen, 1971, p. 70). Moreover, although Ibn' Hazm's work *The Ring of the Dove* is not original in its general structure and theme, the author's use of his poetry and stories of himself and of his contemporaries along with his peculiar direct and lively style brought something original to the works on profane love in the Arabic literature. Garcia Gomez supports that Ibn' Hazm's work is one of the representations of a school of literature in Andalusia "which was aristocratic, Arabophile, nationalist, personal and independent in character" (as cited in Giffen, 1971, p.79). Additionally, with regard to its originality, Giffen adds that:

*It sought to give full expression to the temperament and personality of the author. It scorned to indulge in the oriental vice of endless citations and quotations from earlier works or the conscious display of the author's polish in grammar and rhetoric. The resulting freshness and individuality of the style make the *Tauq al-Hamama* unique among its kind. (cited in Giffen, 1971, p.79)*

Following the Arabic tradition on love, Ibn' Hazm portrays the tragedies of love with his own tragic stories as well. He mentions generally about the Andalusians whom he knew personally and tells about their stories. His peculiar and lively style is not common in the Arabic literature. The work might be also considered un-Islamic in that it reflects the unacceptable conduct by much of the Islamic world which made the work the subject of the Western literature (Giffen, 1971, p. 25). Both in content and form, the influence of Ibn' Hazm's work on the similar works is great in the following centuries (Giffen, 1971, p. 79). Finally, Giffen (1971) claims that among the writers who wrote about profane love in the Arabic literature, Ibn' Hazm is one of the most originals by his "rejecting the oriental tradition in so far as it demanded both the imitation of the traditional model and the quoting of predecessors or the repetition of old familiar stories of the lovers of the distant past" (p. 136).

## 5. Conclusion

Along with the great emphasis on mystical love and religion, profane love occupies a great room in the Arabic literature in the Middle Ages. In spite of the controversies over the Arabic origins of courtly love stemming from the love lyrics of al-Andalus, there are striking similarities between the accepted origins of courtly love (the Provençal poetry and the love lyrics in Hohenstaufen Germany) and the poetry on profane love in Medieval Spain. Accordingly, Ibn' Hazm's work *The Ring of the Dove* becomes the representative of profane and courtly love in the Eastern literature; thereby, it contributes much to the studies on the relationships between the medieval Eastern and Western literature. With his modern point of view, Ibn' Hazm dares question the dogmas of his religion and sincerely depicts earthly love with its all dimensions through his keen observations in his conservative society. Moreover, away from the tradition of borrowing from the early works, Ibn' Hazm achieves originality by including original stories and poems in his work. Finally, it can be supported that Ibn' Hazm - a man whose works were put into flames like himself was put into prison for his secular ideas -was very ahead of his time and reflected courtly love in harmony with religion as it is highlighted in the preface of *The Ring of the Dove* : "No better beginning can there be for my book than that I should praise Almighty God as He is worthy, and pray for His blessings upon Mohammed His servant and messenger in particular, and upon all His prophets in general" (Ibn' Hazm, 2004, par. 2). This harmony is also in line with Green's argument in which he defines one of the main characteristics of courtly love, courtesy, as "the treatment of love as a religion" (1949, p.254).

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