This is the study of a previously neglected genre in pre-modern Arabic literature: the (poetic) epigram anthology. The epigram anthology was pioneered by a handful of poets in 14th-century Syria, but the genre was soon taken up by anthologists across the pre-modern Middle East and soon became one of the most popular types of Arabic poetry up until the modern period. This study is divided into two parts. Part One deals with critical issues in literary history and comparative literature, whi...
Length: Most epigrams are short in length, but there is no precise word limit. Here is a longish epigram by an American war hero and president: If by a Liberal they mean someone who looks ahead and not behind, someone who welcomes new ideas without rigid reactions, someone who cares about the welfare of the people—their health, their housing, their schools, their jobs, their civil rights and their civil liberties—someone who believes we can break through the stalemate and suspicions that grip us in our policies abroad. The epigram is the simple, elegant black dress of literature; it leaves nearly everything bared and yet still temptingly open to the imagination. The best epigrammatists produce belle lettres (“beautiful letters” or “fine writing”) en brief (“in brief”).