MAMLŪK STUDIES REVIEW

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Nathan C. Hofer, Emory University, "Sufism, State, and Society in Ayyubid and Early Mamluk Egypt, 1173–1309,"

Matthew B. Ingalls, Yale University, "Subtle Innovation Within Networks of Convention: The Life, Thought, and Intellectual Legacy of Zakariyya al-Ansari (d. 926/1520)."

2012: Elias Ibrahim Muhanna, Harvard University, "Encyclopaedism of the Mamluk Period: The composition of Shihāb al-Dīn al-Nuwayrī's (d. 1333) *Nihāyat al-arab fī funūn al-adab*."

2014: Noah Gardiner, University of Michigan, "Esotericism in a Manuscript Culture: Aḥmad al-Būnī and His Readers through the Mamlūk Period."

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Representations of Women in the Mamluk Period

In the pre-modern Arab-Islamic world the act of writing significantly contributed to establishing and perpetuating a culture of gender, especially perspicuous in images and representations of women and men found in texts where stereotyped physical and moral features are portrayed. Gender relationships find their place particularly in what we could define as normative literature on sex and marriage *(adab al-nikāḥ),* but also in works of a wider scope (e.g., *adab* anthologies) that directly or indirectly describe interpersonal relationships. From idealization of the perfect wife to demonization of the cunning and ugly woman, passing through images of women being at the service of men's pleasure, women's representations in the literary production generally seem to be the result of a dominant, masculine voice and the expression of men's interests, mainly focused on the feminine body and personality as serviceable commodities. The panel "Representations of Women in the Mamluk period," presented at the Second Conference of the School of Mamlūk Studies (Liège, June 25–27, 2015), was conceived as a way of investigating representations of women in the textual production of the Mamluk period, aiming at better understanding gender relations in Mamluk society.

The four papers of the panel are now published in this themed issue of *MSR;* the addition of a fifth article, stretching to the early Ottoman period, nicely complements the original group and shows transitional processes and the persistence of Mamluk elements in that time.

The contributions published here, some considerably enlarged in comparison with the original papers, are based on different textual genres (literary, normative, religious, and so-called scientific texts) and take different approaches. In spite of this, they meaningfully converge in presenting a compact and coherent array of themes and approaches connected with the feminine and representations of women in the Mamluk period. To begin with, all of them agree on the fact that women's images are constantly constructed through men's eyes. Texts were penned by men for men, thus transmitting only men's patterns of thought and stereotypes; even when feminine voices are perceptible in the texts and express (or, better, are *supposed* to express) women's statements, reactions, acts, and reflections, they do it through manly discourse. Feminine voices are thus transmitted through men's words and validated by men's authority; what is more, women's speech—when detectable—is often addressed to women to instruct them to obey and satisfy men. In short: women are spoken of by men in the interest of men. Perhaps as a consequence of this, the scope of textual images of women is limited to the boundaries of their sexual life and their physicality as a commodity for men, be they masters or husbands (the analogy of slavery and marriage is often

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referred to in the sources). It is not by chance that the concentration of passages related to images of women is impressive in works (or chapters) of an erotological nature, often with a normative intent.

A real obsession with women's bodies also emerges from almost all the sources explored: secluding the body and making it invisible is the first concern, interestingly paralleled by a marked tendency to an almost lecherous display of the most intimate parts of women's bodies. On one hand, the female body—it is repeatedly explained and emphasized—is considered shameful *(ʿawrah)* and must be hidden. On the other hand, there are minute descriptions with such a verbose emphasis on details that they verge on pornography, which seem to be using words to compensate for the absence of opportunities to see what must be hidden. As a result, women's individuality is denied through partial and skewed representations of the feminine body often attaining reification, sexual objectification, or even dehumanization. The female body can thus become a complex of body parts producing a fixed canon of beauty and ugliness, or a sexual commodity.

Not unrelated to reification and the anxiety to cover women's bodies, misogyny is also a pervasive trend in the texts under consideration. The evil nature of women, their cunning, perfidy, and anarchical and subversive potential (mostly residing in their sexuality and aspects of their biology) are depicted in telling terms (e.g., women are accused of being *fitnah*), an element that is emphasized with the utmost clarity in these articles. The feminine body, and even women's voices, are also repeatedly associated with the notion of shame *(ʿawrah)*.

An interesting feature, emphasized to different degrees in the five essays, is the re-use made by (male) authors of authoritative, reliable references in order to reinforce their narratives and the construction of their discourse on the subordinate role of women and their limited function in society. This effectively contributes to shape a gender identity that frames women in the private sphere as a function of men's interests, thus adhering to the mission dictated by Islamic axiology. The recourse to authoritative sources also underlines a remarkable continuity with earlier periods of Islamic intellectual history, pointing out its consistency as well as its repetitiveness.

If the five articles of this themed volume converge in depicting a consistent representation of women in the Mamluk period, or—better yet—in exemplifying male patterns of thought about women, each contribution offers deep insights into specific issues and has recourse to different textual approaches.

Mirella Cassarino's article focuses on the seventy-third chapter, entirely dedicated to women and *adab al-nikāḥ,* of *Al-Mustaṭraf fī kull fann mustaẓraf* of al-Ibshīhī, an *adab* anthology. The paper aims at investigating, through the authoritative speech found in al-Ibshīhī's text, the dichotomic model of roles (man/woman) and stereotypes regarding women. Literary, imaginary, and social real-

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ity are thus put in conversation to single out themes related to the representation of women in their archetypal positivity or negativity, the division of spheres of influence (public/private), the negation of the individual nature of women, and the reification of their bodies through a process of disassembly. These themes, all ascribable to male imaginary and with misogyny remaining a constant, aptly demonstrate how men used words to describe, condemn, or even demonize women. The thorough reading of the text also shows the purely instrumental conception of the feminine body, seen as functional for procreation and/or satisfaction of men's needs.

In the same vein, but from a different perspective, Antonella Ghersetti's paper revolves around the fragmentary and skewed description of female slaves *(jawārin)* contained in the *Kitāb al-Siyāsah fi ʿilm al-firāsah* of Shams al-Dīn al-Dimashqī. The translation of the passage on *jawārin* is accompanied by a map of its intertextual connections and read in conversation with materials of a legal nature on female slaves, like normative texts and purchase deeds. The article demonstrates that this description is a skillful construct in which the *jāriyah* is described, through men's eyes, as an instrument of pleasure and the female body is represented as a function of male desire. The skewed deconstruction of the *jāriyah*'s body in *Kitāb al-Siyāsah* thus functions as a vehicle of sexual objectification well in tune with the legal discourse and general assumptions revealed by historical sources of the Mamluk period. The study also suggests that texts of a "scientific" nature can be an interesting complement for apprehension of the representation of slave girls in the Mamluk period.

The articles of Pernilla Myrne and Daniela Rodica Firanescu both deal, though from different perspectives, with Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī's treatises on *adab al-nikāḥ*. Myrne's contribution is about sexual ethics as presented in three works by al-Suyūṭī on marital sex. It begins by carrying out a careful comparison of the sources used by al-Suyūṭī, including erotological works like *Jawāmiʿ al-ladhdhah* by ʿAlī ibn Naṣr al-Kātib, a well-known treatise of the tenth century, and other important texts of the subsequent tradition, which are surveyed and scrutinized. These works, transmitting different and sometimes conflicting ideals on women's sexuality, are then compared with the contents of al-Suyūṭī's production and put in relation with his authorial intents, showing that al-Suyūṭī attempted to combine different erotological traditions and to harmonize them in the light of Islamic tradition. The survey of key concepts found in his treatises, like ideal femininity and masculinity or the ideal male behavior towards women and women's obedience and total submission, substantiate the thesis that in the eyes of al-Suyūṭī and his audience, the role of women is restricted to satisfying their husbands' needs and obeying them, to the exclusion of their own wishes and desires. This highly gendered message thus assigns to women the primary role of enhancing men's

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sexual experience, while—meaningfully enough—men have no similar obligation towards women.

Firanescu's piece is focused on the presence and the function of women's voice in male-authored texts. After a preliminary section expounding on the scope and context of *adab/ādāb al-nikāḥ* it singles out meaningful examples of feminine speech (i.e., verbal reactions presented as direct speech or ascribed to women) in al-Suyūṭī's *Shaqāʾiq al-utrunj* and other writings included in G. Kadar's *Fann al-nikāḥ fī turāth shaykh al-islām Ǧalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī*. A telling, preliminary question (is woman's voice shameful, *ʿawrah*?) is dealt with first, with interesting extensions to contemporary discussions on this point. Examples of feminine voices taken from normative texts (the Prophet's tradition, the Quran, and *tafsīr*), accurately categorized and analyzed, effectively demonstrate that feminine voices are used by men to shape a construct of the role of women conforming to religious and legal discourses. The paramount role (indeed, practically the only one) is the role of women in sex and marriage relations, best described as serving men's interests and, at the same time, acquiring and/or transmitting to other women proper education in this realm. Women's speeches, reported and validated by men, are thus utilized by al-Suyūṭī to perpetuate and reinforce the "culture of gender" during the Mamluk period.

The last article, by Paulina Lewicka, delves into male patterns of thinking and fantasizing about women through the attentive reading of the chapter on women contained in al-Munāwī's *Tadhkirat ūlī al-albāb bi-maʿrifat al-ādāb,* a "compendium of practical-spiritual knowledge" concerning diverse matters of everyday life. ʿAbd al-Raʾūf al-Munāwī was a high-ranking Egyptian scholar and Sufi who lived during the Mamluk-Ottoman transition. The key thoughts present in al-Munāwī's text, clearly revolving around the notion of misogyny, are easily summarized in some basic points: women are defective, deceitful, lustful, and therefore dangerous, and for this reason must be controlled by men. These concepts are read against the social background, taking into account situations and processes proper to the Arabic-Islamic aspects of that period. Interesting parallels with Christian theology and the Jewish tradition are also traced, widening the scope of the investigation. This cross-cultural approach turns out to be very productive in interrogating the complex relation of the universal mechanism of misogyny to socio-cultural reality, also investigated in normative and historical sources. The extra-cultural dimension of the text is also taken into consideration to show that misogyny interacts with culture. Al-Munāwī's text, with its marked misogynic slant spread in the Sufi milieu, is thus taken as a meaningful token of the gender-based discrimination and lack of symmetry between sexes that also marks other cultures.

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I would like to conclude on a personal note and express my gratitude to the colleagues who responded to the call and generously contributed to the panel and to this themed issue; working with them, in a truly collaborative and fruitful manner, has been a privilege and a pleasure, which—I hope—was not only mine. I would also like to express my thanks to the Editor of *MSR*, Marlis Saleh, who accepted our articles for publication in the journal.

Antonella Ghersetti
Università Ca' Foscari Venezia

Editor's note

This issue of *MSR* also contains an article which is unrelated to the volume's main theme: "Between Venice and Alexandria: Trade and the Movement of Precious Metals in the Early Mamluk Period," by David Jacoby.

Marlis Saleh
Editor, *Mamlūk Studies Review*

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Mirella Cassarino
University of Catania

Between Function and Fiction: The Representation of Women in al-Ibshīhī's *Mustaṭraf*

Premise: Methodological Considerations

In the section carrying the title "Performative Power" in the book *Bodies that Matter,* Judith Butler dwells on performative acts, defining them as forms of authoritative speech. They are, indeed, statements that, once made, confer a binding power on the action performed. This is equivalent to saying that performativity is an area in which power acts as discourse.[1] The concept of performative, thus articulated by Butler, moves in truth from the notion, already expressed by Derrida, of "iterability:" every act, even a word act, is configured as a repetition, a sedimentation, even a re-quotation.[2]

In my opinion, the concepts of performativity and iterability, considered in relation to the social construct of gender identity, can prove useful in approaching the representations of women that al-Ibshīhī (d. ca. 1446)—also known as al-Abshīhī or al-Ibshayhī from the name of the village of Fayyūm in which he was born[3]—transmitted in the seventy-third chapter of his encyclopedic work *Al-Mustaṭraf fī kull fann mustaẓraf*[4] ("The Exquisite elements from every art con-

[1]Judith Butler, *Bodies that Matter* (New York, 1993), 225. (Italian trans., *Corpi che contano: I limiti discorsivi del sesso* [Milan, 1996].)

[2]See Jacques Derrida, *La scrittura e la differenza: Firma, evento, contesto*, trans. N. Perullo (Turin, 1971), 27.

[3]See J.-C. Vadet, "al-Ibshīhī," *Encyclopaedia of Islam,* 2nd ed., consulted online on 15 December 2017; Timo Paajanen, *Scribal Treatment of the Literary and Vernacular Proverbs of al-Mustaṭraf in 15th–17th Century Manuscripts with Special Reference to Diglossic Variation* (Helsinki, 1995), 16–18; K. Tuttle, "al-Ibshīhī (1388–ca. 1446)," in *Essays in Arabic Literary Biography, 1350–1850,* ed. J. E. Lowry and D. J. Stewart (Wiesbaden, 2009), 236–42.

[4]The work has a rich and complex manuscript tradition and I direct readers in this regard to the cited work of Paanjanen, *Scribal Treatment.* Among the various editions I limit myself here to citing the classic one published in Būlāq, 1851, and the three most recent, respectively edited by ʿAbd Allāh Anīs al-Ṭabbāʿ (Beirut, 1981), by Darwīsh Juwaydī (Beirut, 1999), and by Muṣṭafá Muḥammad al-Dhahabī (Cairo, 2000). The edition I cite here is the one edited by Muḥammad Khayr Ṭaʿamih al-Ḥalabī (Beirut, fifth edition 2008). The work has been totally edited and translated into French by Gustave Rat as *Al-Mostaṭraf: Recueil de morceaux choisis çà et là dans toutes les branches de connaissances réputées et attrayantes par Sihâb ad-Dîn Ahmad al-Abshîhî: Ouvrage philologique, anecdotique, littéraire et philosophique* (Paris, 1899–1902). For a more recent study on the work and on its position in the Arabic literary canon, see Ulrich Marzolph, "Medieval Knowledge in Modern Reading: A Fifteenth Century Arabic Encyclopaedia of *Omni re scibili*," in

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sidered elegant"). The chapter in question, which sits in the context of *adab al-nikāḥ,* carries the title "On women and the qualities that distinguish them; on marriage and repudiation; on what is praised and blamed in relationships." It is not superfluous as a caption to my work here to mention the author's traditional background: he studied theology, law, and grammar. He lived most of his life in a provincial environment, at Maḥallah al-Kubrá or in the neighboring small town of Nahrarīr. In Cairo he was a pupil of Jalāl al-Dīn al-Bulqīnī (d. 1421) and attended some Sufi groups. Despite belonging to the Shafiʿi school, he was sympathetic to the Maliki school and was particularly close to the master al-Ṭarīnī.[5] In the *Mustaṭraf,* consistent with predecessors, including Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih (d. 940) and al-Zamakhsharī (d. 1143), explicitly indicated as his primary sources,[6] he presents himself as an anthologist desirous of making known the literary features, edifying discourses, and maxims of wisdom regarding the most diverse sectors of that knowledge necessary in the education and formation of the cultural background of a good Muslim.[7] Given the environment he came from, it is a general opinion among scholars that his work reflects more or less a provincial culture that may perhaps be defined as "middle," according to the associations attributed to this term by Aboubakr Chraïbi.[8] The chosen expressive mode is, therefore, that of *adab* that is translated, in concrete terms, into respect for the hierarchical order of edifying discourse: quotation of Quranic verses and prophetic traditions, references to the *sunnah* and to maxims of knowledge and philosophy, and the use of many forms of short narration, full of verses, dialogues, and elements both edifying and amusing, in which it is difficult to discern reality from fiction.

This narrative mode, as Ulrich Marzolph has written regarding the modern reception of the work, had authoritative precedents:

Pre-Modern Encyclopaedic Texts: Proceedings of the Second Comers Congress, ed. P. Binkley (Leiden, 1997), 407–20.

[5] See Tuttle, "al-Ibshīhī, "237.

[6] *Mustaṭraf,* 7.

[7] The work has been defined by Hilary Kilpatrick as "a short work for a wider public," in reference to its popularity over the centuries, probably due to the simplicity of its organization and the particular choices made by the author that made the subject easily accessible to a wider public. See H. Kilpatrick, "Encyclopedias, medieval," in *Encyclopedia of Arabic Literature,* ed. J. Scott Meisami and P. Starkey (London, 1998), 208.

[8] See Aboubakr Chraïbi, *Les* Mille et une nuits: *Histoire du texte et classification de contes* (Paris, 2008), and Thomas Herzog, "Social Milieus and Worldviews in Mamluk *adab*-Encyclopedias: The example of Poverty and Wealth," in *History and Society during the Mamluk Era (1250–1517),* ed. S. Conermann, Studies of the Annemarie Schimmel Institute for Advanced Study 2 (Bonn, 2016), 1–18.

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> As for the *literary dimension,* the *Mustaṭraf* belongs to the genre of *adab*-literature, a genre which aims at combining instruction and entertainment conveying knowledge in a diverting manner and employing entertaining topics in order to present and discuss serious moral and ethical matters. Moreover, the *Mustaṭraf* belongs to the category of the encyclopaedia, or more specifically, the *adab*-encyclopaedia, a category which had already been established by a number of basic works in the ninth and tenth centuries, and to which the *Mustaṭraf* represents the last major contribution. So the *Mustaṭraf*'s genesis is to be seen against the specific background of a literary product summing up previous knowledge in a period of cultural decline.[9]

In this context, the words and the discourses repeated by subjects granted recognized authority within an environment regulated by shared norms have ended up determining representations of male and female.[10] Indeed, performativity was expressed, as Butler affirms, in the words proffered in daily life by men and women, in the repetition, in the temporal continuum of the social and cultural representation of their behavior. In this theoretical framework, the theme of the body—as word and deed, described and put into action in various moments and places of experience—and of its representations has become an integral part in the process of social construction of gender. In the *Mustaṭraf,* the chapter relating to women is organized in five sections. The first is dedicated to the conjugal union and its advantages, and to the desires that lead to union in matrimony *(Fī nikāḥ wa-faḍlihi wa-al-targhīb fīhi).*[11] The second is centered on the praiseworthy qualities of women *(Fī ṣifāt al-nisāʾ al-maḥmūdah).*[12] The third, in oppositional terms with respect to the previous section, regards the description of bad woman *(Fī ṣifāt al-nisāʾ al-sūʾi bi-Allāh taʿālá minhā),*[13] while the fourth deals with women's cunning,

[9] See Marzolph, "Medieval Knowledge," 408. On encyclopaedism among the Arabs, see: Ch. Pellat, "Les encyclopédies dans le Monde Arabe," *Cahiers d'histoire mondiale* 9 (1966): 631–58; R. Blachère, "Quelques reflections sur les forms de l'encyclopédisme en Egypte et en Syrie du VIIIe/XIVe siècle à la fin du IXe/XVe siècle," *Bulletin d'études orientales* 23 (1970): 7–19; M. al-Shakʿah, *Manāhij al-taʾlīf ʿinda al-ʿulamāʾ al-ʿarab* (Beirut, 1979), 729–60; H. Kilpatrick, "A genre in classical Arabic literature: The adab encyclopedia," *in Proceedings [of the] 10th Congress of the UEAI, Edinburgh, 9–16 September 1980,* 34–42.

[10] The concept of performativity has been described by J. L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words* (Oxford, 1962); idem and K. Barad, "Posthumanist Performativity: Toward an Understanding of How Matter Comes to Matter," *Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 28, no. 3 (2003): 801–31.

[11] *Mustaṭraf,* 663–71.

[12] Ibid., 671–72.

[13] Ibid., 672–73.

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their perfidy, the feeling of disapproval that they inspire, and their rebellious nature *(Fī makr al-nisāʾ wa-ʿadhrihinna wa-dhammihinna wa-mukhālafatihinna).*[14] The last section is dedicated to divorce and what is cited in this regard *(Fī ṭalāq wa-mā jāʾa fīhi).*[15]

In the pages that follow, the themes dealt with by the author will not be examined in the order in which they are expounded, but will emerge through a transversal reading that takes into account the dichotomic male/female model that they underpin, the processes of reification of the female body brought into being by the author's referential literary tradition, and the social, religious, and juridical norms that, in the repetition of words and gestures, have led to representations of stereotyped women, historically and culturally determined, often considered to be an instrument of social destabilization. The man-woman power relations that emerge from examination of the relation between law and literary fiction in *adab* also end up, as we shall see in the last part of this article, corroborating and consolidating such representations.[16]

The Dichotomic Model of the Roles: Male/Female

In the *Mustae hot* the most obvious role to which the author seems to conform is the basic dichotomic one of the woman in her archetypical and absolute positivity or negativity. The picture presented, in many respects disturbing, is that of a series of female figures traceable to primary stereotypical images built from Islamic morals[17] and from previous and coeval literature[18] on nature, on expec-

[14]Ibid., 673–75.

[15]Ibid., 675–77.

[16]On the dynamics of power and on the debate sparked by this theme, I limit myself here to citing Nancy Hartsock, "Foucault on Power: A Theory for Women?," in *Feminism/Postmodernism*, ed. L. Nicholson (New York and London, 1991), 157–75.

[17]See Barbara Freyer Stowasser, *Women in the Qurʾan, Traditions and Interpretations* (New York and Oxford, 1994).

[18]Despite the discovery of new sources and the diversity of approaches in terms of form, the overall picture of women that emerges from *adab* works is rather static. Indeed, Everett Rowson has written: "In the case of anecdotal literature, such traditionalism must be understood quite literally: an anecdote which first appears in a ninth-century collection will reappear, unchanged, in subsequent collections for a millennium." See "The Categorization of Gender and Sexual Irregularity in Medieval Arabic Vice Lists," in *Body Guards: The Cultural Politics of Gender Ambiguity*, ed. J. Epstein and K. Straub (New York, 1991), 50–79. Naturally, as has come about in all literatures, a more accurate, diversified, and nuanced vision of man–woman relations and further, of the relative representations and questions of gender, can emerge from non-canonical texts, or texts ascribable to other typologies of writing, such as treatises of erotology. I make reference, in this regard, to the above-cited contribution from Rowson and to Pernilla Myrne's research. Among the works of the latter, I limit myself here to referencing the article published in this same issue

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tations, and on the roles assigned to women in a society that was essentially patriarchal and made for men.[19] Configured as a product of fiction, the literature was therefore a resonance chamber for a question that is above all social, a place for propositions and comparisons of ways of reading and conforming woman in relation to the needs of society.[20] The theory of the fixed "separate spheres," as we see in the work of al-Ibshīhī, presupposes a drastic distinction between male and female fields of action. Already from the first part of the chapter, dedicated to the conjugal union and its advantages and clearly addressed to men, through the Quranic verses, traditions, and stories cited, we see the exclusion of woman from the public sphere and her location in the strictly domestic and family context. It seems opportune to recall furthermore how, in the educational praxis that the *adab* anthologies such as the *Mustaolog* convey, the control of sexuality, understood as a result of political, social, economic, and cultural processes, has considerable weight also with regard to men. Only for women, however, does it acquire the form of a metaphoric privation, of a true and proper negation of the self and of the sexual impulse.[21] This translates in concrete terms into the definition of a ghettoized and ghettoizing space in which woman reigns on condition of a full and total adhesion to the mission that society and the Islamic axiology attribute to her. This mission is identified, in substance, with a negation of female subjectivity and with the appearance of roles lived in relation to the men of the family. It is advisable for whoever has to take a wife to choose a pious and good willed one (life seems short if shared with a good, virtuous woman, while it seems full of torment if spent alongside a nasty woman whose company is revolting to the heart and the sight of whom is never a joy to the eyes);[22] obviously she should be a virgin (her mouth the sweetest, her breasts the most fecund),[23] fertile

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of *MSR* and to highlighting the essays "Pleasing the Beloved: Sex and True Love in a Medieval Arabic Erotic Compendium," in *The Beloved in Middle Eastern Literatures: The Culture of Love and Languishing*, ed. A. Korangy, H. Al-Samman, and M. Beard (London, New York, 2017), 215–36, and "Of Ladies and Lesbians and Books on Women from the Third/Ninth and Fourth/Tenth Centuries," *Journal of Abbasid Studies* 2, no. 4 (2017): 187–210. See also *Concubines and Courtesans: Women and Slavery in Islamic History*, ed. M. S. Gordon and K. A. Hain (Oxford, 2017).

[19] See P. Myrne, *Narrative, Gender, and Authority in Abbasid Literature on Women* (Göteborg, 2010).

[20] See H. Kilpatrick, "Some late ʿAbbāsid and Mamlūk Books about Women: A Literary Historical Approach," *Arabica* 42, no. 1 (1995): 56–78, and Y. Rapoport, "Women and Gender in Mamluk Society: An Overview," *Mamlūk Studies Review* 11, no. 2 (2007): 1–47.

[21] For men, it would perhaps be more appropriate to talk of repression.

[22] *Mustaṭraf,* 665.

[23] Ibid., 663–64. In this case, for example, the reference is to a saying of the Prophet and an adage that goes thus: "The most attractive ride is the one that has never been mounted, just as the most precious pearl is the one that has not been punctured." (663).

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(so that she can procreate easily), young (a forty-year-old woman is a calamity),[24] of noble origin, and well-educated with regard to child-rearing (pay attention to the person to whom you entrust your children and pay attention to appearances, to the woman who is beautiful, but whose origins are bad).[25] Furthermore, social sanctions connected to the risk of bad ancestry lead the author to advise a man to look for a wife in a family other than his own.[26] Again, the work contains a reference to the social condition of the woman: "An essay has stated: I invite you to take as wives those women who have been raised in opulence and who have then had experience of the horrors of poverty; they will have been affected by the past opulence and poverty will have been for them a salutary lesson."[27]

Contrary to male power, which is manifested openly and in public, female influence, therefore, is manifested and acts in private. It gives life to every aspect of existence of the individual and of all society only if it continues to remain in shadow and invisibility. Even when advice on marriage is provided for women by other women, that is to say when male authority attributes the advice to female voices, the perspective does not change. The commandments offered by a mother to a daughter who is about to leave her home because she has been given in marriage is a clear example:

> Be unto him like a servant so that he will be unto you like a servant. In your relations with him follow painstakingly ten essential points that will be for you a treasure: the first two consist of showing yourself to be happy regarding your fate, to be obedient and submissive; the next two consist of seeking to make yourself pleasing to his sight and smell; the fifth and sixth reside in carefully respecting the times of your husband's meals and rest since excessive hunger would render him cross and lack of sleep anxious; the seventh and eighth regard the care of property and management of the servants and people of the household; the ninth and tenth consist of not disobeying him and not revealing his secrets.[28]

In essence, while the moral qualities that the woman must possess are exalted through exemplary narrations, there emerges gradually in the course of the work the need to educate individual women on the basis of a totalizing formative project that is able to channel female instincts and feelings in the right direction, or at least in the direction held to be such by a society that is seeking further affir-

[24]Ibid., 664.

[25]Ibid.

[26]Ibid., 665.

[27]Ibid., 671.

[28]Ibid., 665.

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mation; which, in a few words, makes reference to the negation of the individual nature of woman and of the specific mission assigned to her by society. As can be noted, beyond the necessary moral and character qualities, above all obedience and submission to male desires and will, what characterizes the representations offered by al-Ibshīhī for the Mamluk epoch, which are not so far from those of previous epochs, are industriousness and a whole gamut of female behaviors that are functional for the correct running of household life and which render the home that comfortable refuge to which man aspires. Keeping the house clean, knowing how to manage the servants and looking after the children, knowing how to deal with the kitchen, these are all qualities that accompany what can be considered as the essential prerogative of the model: the female capacity for abnegation and total sacrifice of the self.

The Beautiful Woman and the Ugly Woman: Reifying the Female Body

Describing woman, as is known, is an operation ascribable to the male imaginary.[29] It is men who form, judge, discuss and establish the parameters of female beauty. In the second section of the *Mustaṭraf,* dedicated to female qualities worthy of praise, physical beauty is considered to be a fundamental requisite of the good wife:

> Al-Ḥajjāj wrote to al-Ḥakam ibn Ayyūb as follows: "Seek for ʿAbd al-Malik ibn Marwān a woman for him to marry who is pretty from a distance, beautiful from nearby, who enjoys the respect of her tribe, is of humble sentiment, and obedient to her husband." Al-Ḥakam replied: "I have found the woman you describe, but she has abundant breasts." Al-Ḥajjāj rejoined: "The beauty of woman is not perfect. She has abundant breasts so that she might warm him who shares her bed and might feed her child in abundance."[30]

And here is the portrait of ideal beauty:

> One day, ʿAbd al-Malik ibn Marwān asked a member of the Ghaṭafān tribe to portray the most beautiful woman. The man replied: Choose one, O prince of believers, who has velvet skin on her

[29]For a reconstruction of philosophical reflection on the female body, see Julia Kristeva, *Pouvoirs de l'horreur: Essai sur l'abjection* (Paris, 1980); M. Frazer and M. Greco, *The Body. A Reader* (London, 2005); Michela Marzano, *La philosophie du corps* (Paris, 2007). More specific is the study by Fedwa Malti-Douglas, *Woman's Body, Woman's Word: Gender and Discourse in Arabo-Islamic Writing* (Princeton, 1992).

[30] *Mustaṭraf,* 671.

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> feet, strong heels, smooth legs, round knees, well-turned thighs, rounded arms, delicate hands, abundant breasts, rosy cheeks, large black eyes, long, narrow eyebrows, intensely red lips, a wide and luminous forehead, a straight and proud nose, a fresh, perfumed mouth, hair black as coal, a long, slender neck, a sinuous belly.[31]

It is not by chance that such a woman is found primarily, as is affirmed immediately afterwards, among pure-blooded Arabs, or "among those Arabs who have not mixed with other peoples" and, secondarily, "among the Persians who are not of mixed race."[32] Thus it does not appear to me to be by chance that al-Ibshīhī, through a series of quotations attributable to authoritative characters, makes reference to an "anonymous," but "collective" model of female beauty that unites physical and moral qualities that traditionally belong to Arab women, albeit from different tribes: "She has the breasts of a Qurayshite, the belly of a Kindite, the feet and hands of a Kuza'ite, the mouth of a Tayite, the wisdom of Luqmān, the figure of Joseph, the harmonious voice of David, and the chastity of Mariam."[33]

The final result of this verbal portrait is a body of parts that produce a canon of ideal beauty. The rhetorical technique the author makes use of is rather conventional.[34] The depiction that comes out of it is not that of an individual beauty, but a beauty deriving from a process of assembly, or rather "disassembly" of the most beautiful parts of women, behind which is concealed a process that causes fragmentation and reification of the body. Nancy Vickers has expressed, for descriptive texts composed in other epochs and contexts, some interesting considerations on the rhetoric that characterizes the male descriptive approach to the female body:

> Description… is a gesture of display, a separating off and a signaling of particulars destined to make visible that which is described. Its object or matter is thus submitted to a double power-relation inherent in the gesture itself: on the one hand the describer controls, possesses, and uses that matter to his own end; and on the other hand, his reader or listener is extended the privilege or pleasure of "seeing."[35]

[31] Ibid.

[32] Ibid.

[33] Ibid., 672.

[34] E. Zetzel Lambert, *The Face of Love: Feminism and the Beauty Question* (Boston, 1995), 23–53.

[35] N. Vickers, *The Blazon of Sweet Beauty's "Best": Shakespeare's Lucrece and the Question of Theory* (New York, 1985), 95–115.

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It seems significant to me, indeed, that the portrait, in this case, contrary to what happens in medical and physiognomy texts,[36] begins from the bottom and proceeds gradually towards the top according to an ascending order that disturbs the rigor of the description and underlines the fragmentary sense of the whole. Probably, the procedure of "disassembly" put into action in this type of description reveals, as has already been emphasized by feminist critics in relation to descriptions of Renaissance women, the male desire to appropriate the female body with the aim of exercising power over it. The description of the so-called "body of parts" is therefore not only the result of a process sanctioned by literary tradition, but is an index of the desire for control and the anxiety of male domination. The body becomes, symbolically, the place in which man can exercise his action as authority. A reading of this type is backed by the need, evidently felt by the author, to also provide a long and detailed portrait of the ugly woman, who could simply have been implied, alluding to all that is the opposite of the features of the beautiful woman, and which here is entrusted to the words of an "Arab from the countryside with great experience with women":

> The worst woman is the one with a thin body, all skin and bone, who has white discharges, is sickly, pale, sinister in her figure, quarrelsome, repelling, authoritarian, strident, moody, always ready to attack, with a tongue as sharp as the blade of a lance, who laughs and cries with no reason, who attracts enmity towards her husband, stupid and with her head in the clouds, with steel calves and her jugular swollen with anger, whose words sound like threats, with a grating voice, who hides the good and manifests the bad, who lines up against her husband in bad times rather than allying with him, who takes no pleasure in him and has no fear of him, who, when he enters, exits, and vice versa, who if he laughs, cries, and vice versa, who storms him with questions, who eats greedily and grumbles continuously, who is mean and indecent in her dress, who keeps her children in a state of want and leaves the home dirty ….[37]

So ugliness, subject of the third section of the chapter, is a typical characteristic of a bad wife. The description continues with a listing of other defects for which God is invoked so that "He might cover [a woman thus made] with opprobrium and infamy and make her undergo the hardest trials."[38] In this case too, the

[36] See Antonella Ghersetti, "Il Kitāb Arisṭāṭalis al-faylasūf fī l-firāsa nella traduzione di Ḥunayn ibn Isḥāq," *Quaderni di Studi Arabi* 4 (1999).

[37] *Mustaṭraf,* 672–673.

[38] *Mustaṭraf,* 673.

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portrait thus constructed defines a sort of "exemplary ugliness" that is aimed at the same time at stating a "terrible spiritual and moral condition."

Gender Norms and Stereotypes Regarding Women

Even the stereotypes, generated by gender norms and continuously conveyed in the literary imaginary of *adab,* emphasize the clear division of roles, the social stratification, with a particular regard given to the "alterity," the importance of the domestic function, and, above all, the reproductive function attributed to the woman, made into an "object" to every effect. With reference to this, the following quotations suffice:

> Female first cousins from the father's side are those whose company is the most pleasant; foreigners are those who bear children destined to become the most eminent men; and no one strikes an adversary more vigorously and energetically than the children borne by a black woman.
>
> ʿAbd Allāh, son of Marwān, has stated: "He who wants a concubine for her sensuality should choose a Berber; he who wishes a good mother should direct his choice to a Persian woman; he who wants a woman who serves him should choose a Greek."[39]
>
> A poet once said: "Do not reprove a man for having as mother a Greek, a Sudanese or a Persian. Other mothers are simply containers suitable for receiving the deposit of seminal fluid. It is always from the father that it is drawn [everything]."[40]

Obviously, the most shocking lines, clearly misogynistic, are those in the concluding part of the quotation, in which woman's body is rendered a pure "object," a "recipient" with the function of receiving the seminal fluid and generating offspring that will inherit no character trait from her. The part related to the advice given to men on the basis of their preferences is linked to an equally interesting aspect, i.e., the perception of alterity, always felt to be a central problem in the political, social, and cultural systems, which here is inevitably interwoven with a gender question. The passage quoted reflects a composite society on the ethnic level, within which the Arabs continue to affirm their own superiority in general and to consider "other" women such as Berbers, Persians, Greeks, and blacks dif-

[39] See Ibn Buṭlān, *Risālah jāmiʿah li-funūn nāfiʿah fī shirá al-raqīq wa-taqlīb al-ʿabīd*, It. trans. A. Ghersetti, *Trattato generale sull'acquisto e l'esame degli schiavi* (Catanzaro, 2001), in particular chapter IV, 74–84. For the images of the slave girls in a physiognomic text, see also the article by Antonella Ghersetti in the current issue.

[40] *Mustaṭraf,* 670.

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ferently from Arab women. So it is that Berber concubines are more "sensual," Persians are more capable of being good mothers, the Greeks are more servile, and the blacks are those who generate stronger men.

Woman as Instrument of the Devil: The Topoi of Misogyny

As if this were not enough, al-Ibshīhī dedicates the entire fourth section to women's cunning, their perfidy, and their rebellious nature. Taken together, these moral judgments—some even attributed to the authoritative voices of the prophets David and Jesus—and the examples provided tend to criminalize women generically by virtue of their characteristics as fomenters of sin and subverters of social order, especially in relation to the fact that their good graces depend on carnal passion:

> In dealing with women, do not trust even your brother. When a woman is at stake, there is no man on whom you can really count…
>
> A wise man said: "Women are all evil and the worst thing about them is that it is difficult to do without them." The wise men said: "Do not ever trust women and do not allow yourself to be beguiled by riches, no matter how considerable they may be." We say indeed: "Women are the devil's traps."[41]

The phenomenon of woman's body being considered *instrumentum* of the devil, an uncontrollable vehicle, and therefore dangerous, through which the malign can manifest itself, is found in various cultures. One tends to see in these representations a visual translation of female sexual power, intended not only in the erotic sense, but also in the reproductive and procreational sense, the power of regeneration and transformation. The texts of Michel Foucault are now a sort of commonplace to which much previous feminist and gender criticism direct recognition, which consider sexuality as fundamentally a cultural construct. What I am interested in underlining here is how discourse on female sexuality is an integral part of the overall strategy of control and power applied in this field by a sexist and patriarchal society against groups that are potentially subversive. The strategy is applied and flourishes not only in stereotyped images,[42] but also in the representations that make reference to that dimension defined by Bakhtin as low, corporeal material, very present in Arabic literature from the eighth century, to be linked with the comic-grotesque mode that characterizes it. This dimension implicates denuding bodies, verbal banter, rude language, and obscene exhibi-

[41] *Mustaṭraf,* 673.

[42] See Antonella Ghersetti, "Fisiognomica e stereotipi femminili nella cultura araba," *Quaderni di Studi Arabi* 14 (1996): 195–206.

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tion, involving laughter as stimulation.[43] A brief, but interesting example in this sense is an anecdote in which a woman reproves her husband for his rare visits and he responds with lines of poetry in *wāfir* meter:

> I am an elderly man and I have a woman who is old and who invites me to a thing that is not allowed;
>
> "Since we have grown old," she shouted, "your goods have withered!"
>
> I retorted: "Of course not! It's your hole that has widened."[44]

We are in the presence of an overturning of sense: here the female threat, as expressed through the woman's active sexuality (in the scene the desire for sexual satisfaction is attributed to the woman), is deflated and becomes ridiculous. The grotesque icon of a consumed female body, the exhibition of that which normally is hidden, and the reference to an evidently widened vulva constitute a grotesque lowering of the symbols of sexuality and fecundity. The spectacle, at the service of a policy of aversion and disgust, is obscene precisely because the laughter has desacralized it, by the circumstances in which it takes place, and by the distribution of the roles among the actants (dominating/dominated). The aged female body has lost its fearful erotic power and thus is ridiculed.

The list relating to the unreliability, perfidy, and cunning of women, as happens in other literatures, is very long and can be summarized in the following phrase: their advice leads to ruin and their decision to impotence. Here is a story produced by al-Ibshīhī as an example:

> Abū Bakr (may God hold him in glory) said: "How sad is that man who trusts a woman in his business." It is told that a fisherman brought a fish to Abraviz. The prince, enchanted by the beauty and the quality of this fish, ordered that four thousand dirhams be given to the fisherman. When his wife Sirin pointed out to him that he had just committed an error, Abraviz asked: "What should I do?" And his bride replied: "When he comes to visit you, ask him: is your fish a male or a female? If he replies that it is male, tell him that in truth you wanted a female; if, instead, he replies that it is a female, then tell him you wanted a male." And so, when the fisherman came to visit, Abraviz asked him the question and came the reply: "It is a female." "Well," said the king, "bring me a male." And the fisherman said: "May God grant long life to the king! The

[43] See Rowson, "The Categorization of Gender and Sexual Irregularity in Medieval Arabic Vice Lists," in particular 52–53.

[44] *Mustaṭraf,* 675.

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> fish is virgin, it has never coupled." "Bravo!" exclaimed the king, who then gave orders to give the fisherman eight thousand dirhams. Then he concluded: "Write down, among the wise maxims: the cunning of women and the adoption of their advice are evils that lead to grave consequences."[45]

The misogynistic attitude therefore influences according to a scheme of clear consequentiality according to which every woman is false and evil, lustful and avid, so that it is absolutely necessary to always distrust her because she is capable of leading man to ruin. It therefore makes sense to reserve the correct dose of contempt for her because, given her incurable nature, she will betray him sooner or later. Yet again, the representation of the ugly woman, of her falsity and perfidy, is significant. She is the incarnation of evil and epitome of the threat and subversive potential that society identifies in female sexuality in particular.[46] These two contrasting images are emblematic of the peculiarities and limits of a vision of woman in which the fracture between the two poles of femaleness could not be any clearer or more unresolvable, but are also the expression of a "discourse" regarding woman that is ideologically determined and oriented. Now, at the origin of this attitude it is possible to identify motivations relating to social order that radicalize the exaltation of the good and beautiful woman on the one hand and demonize the ugly and bad woman on the other. In a word, it is fear of what woman represents as a symbol of dangerous forces that could cause anarchy and social disintegration that pre-constructs and pre-determines her image.

Marriage and Divorce: Women, Law, and Literature

The first section of the *Mustaṭraf,* regarding the advantages of conjugal union and the desires that lead to union in matrimony, and the fifth and last section, dedicated to what is usually cited concerning *ṭalāq,* confirm and consolidate, with some slight variation, the traditional vision of the woman conveyed in previous Arabic belletristic production. The woman is conceived of mostly in terms of her reproductive capacity and as an object of desire, need, and even of the whims of men.[47] What I am interested in dwelling on in particular here is that most problematic and dialectic aspect that has been established in the Islamic environment over the course of the centuries: the dialectic between social reality (with the relative manifestations and deviations from the norm), the sources of law,

[45] Ibid., 674.

[46] Abdelwahab Bouhdiba, *La sexualité en Islam* (Paris, 1975).

[47] Yossef Rapoport, *Marriage, Money and Divorce in Medieval Islamic Society* (Cambridge, 2005).

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and the expressive modes of *adab.*[48] Relations between law and literature, both based on abstract formulations and on associative models of thought, constitute an extremely fertile ground for research based on interdisciplinarity.[49] Law and literature, in the context of Arabic-Islamic culture, have always appeared to be tightly interconnected, as is demonstrated by the very biographies of many authors, including our own al-Ibshīhī, who usually have a juridical background. Both law and literature, furthermore, share an intent to structure reality through language. Add to this the fact that *adab* is a narrative mode aimed at transmitting knowledge that is also ethical and moral, thanks to its specific capacity for reformulating what has already been experienced and referred previously. Elsewhere, in a context that has nothing to do with female representations in literature, I have already dealt with the question that is now posed for the *Mustaṭraf,* i.e., that relation between ideas and language, between thought and style, that characterizes the transmission of knowledge. In a contribution on the *Sulwān al-muṭāʿ* by Ibn Ẓafar al-Ṣiqillī (d. 1172), with regard to the thematic chapters that make up the work and the narrative modes therein, I expressed myself in terms of the "hierarchical order of discourse," precisely because of the fact that on the individual themes faced by the author, the first quotations came respectively from the sacred text of Islam and from the sayings and the deeds of the prophet Muḥammad, and only later were there quotations from the moral sayings of wise men and philoso-

[48] The bibliography on the narrative modes of *adab* is quite extensive. I limit myself to indicating: S. A. Bonebakker, "Adab and the Concept of Belles-Lettres," in *The Cambridge History of Arabic Literature,* ed. J. Ashtiyany et al. (Cambridge, 1990), 16–30; Rosita Drory, "Three Attempts to Legitimize Fiction in Classical Arabic Literature," *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 18 (1994): 146–64; Antonella Ghersetti, "La *narratio brevis* nella letteratura araba classica: Tecniche discorsive e convenzioni narrative," in *Raccontare nel Mediterraneo,* ed. Maria Grazia Profeti (Florence, 2003), 9–29; Ead., "Parola parlata: convenzioni e tecniche di resa nella narrativa araba classica, Annali Ca' Foscari XXXXV (2006), 71–92; ead., "Arabic Anecdotes and Medieval *Narratio Brevis*: a Literary Analysis," in *The Classical Arabic Story: Critical views*, ed. S. Kh. Jayyusi (Leiden, forthcoming); Philip F. Kennedy, *On Fiction and* Adab *in Medieval Arabic Literature* (Wiesbaden, 2005); Mirella Cassarino, *Le* Notti *di Tawḥīdī: variazioni sull'*adab (Soveria Mannelli, 2017), 17–51.

[49] The approach adopted here is inspired by that of the Law and Literature movement, founded on the idea that literary works are able to testify to the fundamental values of American juridical culture of the early twentieth century and to also diffuse the idea according to which literature can contribute to forming the ethical conscience of judges and lawyers. I limit myself to citing, on this movement: Benjamin Cardozo, *Law and Literature* (New York, 1931): Julie Stone Peters, "Law, Literature and the Vanishing Real: On the Future of an Interdisciplinary Illusion," *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America* 120, no. 2 (2005): 442–53; and Martha C. Nussbaum, *Hiding from Humanity: Disgust, Shame, and the Law* (Princeton, 2004). On the validity of this interdisciplinary approach I refer to Remo Ceserani, *Convergenze: Gli strumenti letterari e le altre discipline* (Milan, 2010).

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phers and from literature.[50] The same scheme is repeated in the chapter of the *Mustaṭraf* dedicated to women.[51] The first section opens, indeed, with the quotation of the most well-known verse from the Quran regarding marriage, or more precisely, regarding polygamy: "If you fear that you will not act justly towards the orphans, marry such women as seem good to you, two, three, four; but if you fear you will not be equitable, then only one, or what your right hands own; so it is likelier you will not be partial."[52]

The author also quotes the following verse, contained in the Surah of Light, on matrimony as a compulsory condition in the life of every Muslim physically and economically able to contract marriage: "Marry the spouseless among you, and your slaves and handmaidens that are righteous; if they are poor, God will enrich them of His bounty; God is All-embracing, All-knowing."[53]

Another Quranic verse quoted in the *Mustaṭraf* regards the possibility of contracting marriage with widows: "There is no fault in you touching the proposal to women you offer, or hide in your hearts; God knows that you will be mindful of them; but do not make troth with them secretly without you speak honorable words. And do not resolve on the knot of marriage until the book has reached its term; and know that God knows what is in your hearts, so be fearful of Him; and know that God is All-forgiving, All-clement."[54]

The verses quoted are directed exclusively to men. It is they who take women as brides, the slaves or the widows, according to rules and customs dictated by social norms and regulated by the texts. As is known, the Quran and prophetic traditions are at the basis of Islamic law. Therefore in al-Ibshīhī's writing there had to be reference to the words of the Prophet on the joys that marriage holds and, above all, on the importance of uniting with fertile women to ensure the growth of the community. In limiting ourselves to one single, significant example, it is enough to quote the following words attributed to Muḥammad: "A fertile black woman is better than a sterile white one."[55]

This is a quotation which introduces into the gender binarism continually repeated in the Quran and Sunnah—a binarism in the rigid form of inequality between men and women—also a racist element. The black woman is preferable to

[50] See Mirella Cassarino, "Come rivolgersi all'autorità: I Conforti politici di Ibn Ẓafar il Siciliano," in *Il potere della parola, la parola del potere, tra Europa e Mondo Arabo-Ottomano, tra Medioevo ed Età Moderna,* ed. A. Ghersetti (Venice, 2010), 26–45.

[51] *Mustaṭraf,* 663.

[52] Quran 4:3. The English translation here and in notes 53 and 54 is from Arberry, 1955. See https://www.islamawakened.com/quran/4/st10.htm

[53] Quran 24:32.

[54] Quran 2:235.

[55] *Mustaṭraf,* 663.

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the white woman, if the latter is not able to bring children into the world. At the center of attention, once again, is the woman as object or, more precisely, woman's capacity for procreation: if and when this fails, then one can make do even with a black woman. We are here facing a further demonstration of how gender norms are reinforced not only by the ideals and the canons of binarism, but also by the racial codes of purity and taboos on crossbreeding between races.[56] These are norms that also contribute to the determination of the ontological area in which legitimate expression can be given to bodies.

The words of the Prophet are then followed by those of other authoritative personages, together with lines of verse on the themes dealt with and already considered in the previous sections. The fifth and last section, in contrast, is for the most part made up of stories that have as their purpose warning men of the dangers to which they expose themselves when they divorce in a superficial manner. The weave of the narrative is thus developed and recounted with its point of departure being a law on repudiation that in some cases is not respected: here too, despite the fact that woman may be victim of male abuse, it is the man who is the true addressee of the discourse. *Adab,* due to its intrinsic stylistic and rhetorical force, is thus functional to the knowledge, the transmission and the direct application of some juridical norms founded on an ideal dimorphism and the heterosexual complementarity of bodies. In al-Ibshīhī's pages, the ethical dimension legitimately occupies its own specific space and represents the foundation of the normative and deontological aspect. There is no trace at all of any critical reflection on the author's part that might highlight the limited and partial nature of the binarism that governs relational practices.

The anecdotes and the stories recounted, dedicated prevalently to the risks arising from a superficial use of the formula to be pronounced for the *ṭalāq,* should make reference to questions of responsibility and to the defence of women in an inevitably oppressive juridical system. I limit myself to quoting the following anecdote, attributed to the authoritative testimony of several personages and permeated by the dialectic between *jidd* and *hazl* that characterizes *adab:*

> It is told, on the basis of what was transmitted by ʿAbd al-Raḥmān, son of Muḥammad, son of the brother of al-Aṣmaʿī, as follows: "One day," he said, "my uncle, who was in the company of al-Rashīd, said to him: 'Prince of believers, I have heard it said that an Arab repudiated five women in one single day.' Al-Rashīd replied, 'How is this possible, since one man may only marry four?' 'Prince of believers,' he rejoined, 'this man had married four women. One day, he went to them and found them arguing. He was a very bad man and

[56] See Butler, *Bodies that Matter,* xiv.

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> shouted, "So you're not going to stop fighting among yourselves? I am certain," he said turning to one of them, "that it is all your fault: go away! You are repudiated!" "You have been a little too impulsive, in repudiating her," observed another of the women, "perhaps it would have been more appropriate to reprove her in another way." "Well, you too are repudiated!" said the man. "May God curse you (confound you)," exclaimed the third woman, "how can you behave in this way when—by God!—we have always been respectful towards you?!" "Good: you too, who bring in good behavior, you too, just like them, are repudiated!" And the fourth woman, belonging to the Banū Hilāl tribe, exclaimed on her part, "You really must have a heavy heart that drives you to punish all your women in this way, repudiating them!" "Well," replied the man, "I repudiate you too!" A woman neighbor, who had listened to everything the man had said, put her head out of the window and said loudly, "By God! Among all the Arabs only you and your tribe are so weak of spirit because of the travesties you have undergone and because of how you have acted in consequence: you have found no other solution than to repudiate, in just one hour, all of your wives!" "You who interfere in what does not regard you," shouted the man, "you too are repudiated, if your husband ratifies my sentence!" "I ratify it!" exclaimed the woman's husband.' That anecdote was of great interest to al-Rashīd."

As we can see, the first reference regards the Islamic juridical norm concerning the number of women—four—that it is possible to marry. With this element as point of departure, which manifests and transmits a true fact, it is possible to highlight the anomaly in the anecdote (which probably derives from the imaginary): the repudiation of the five women. An interesting aspect of the story relates to the wives speaking up: if on the one hand this reflects the women's capacity for judgement, their courage in expressing their own opinions, and their sense of solidarity, on the other it functions to emphasize both the consequences that can arise from such an act, and the abuses of men in exercising power.[57] As a consequence of the women speaking up,[58] the man will repudiate all four and will go beyond that, carrying out the same act with regard to his neighbor's wife, and with the consent of his neighbor. In my opinion, the story may be classi-

[57]On the value of women speaking up in literary texts, see the article by Daniela Rodica Firanescu in this same issue.

[58]For a panoramic view, in chronological order, of instructions on divorce see: Quran 4:20; 2:228–32; 65:1–7; 33:49; 2:236–37; 4:35; 33:28; 66:5.

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fied among that long series of humorous anecdotes, present in various Muslim literatures, that aim to reveal (and distort) a complex reality in which women are subaltern subjects, often victims of male abuse also connected with the restitution of the dowry.

It is not by chance, for example, that al-Ibshīhī should include, in the concluding part of the chapter, some anecdotes that regard the suffering that the absence of the repudiated woman can generate in their souls, especially when she has remarried. This probably had the purpose of continuing to "educate" by example to effect a regulation of practices connected to the *ṭalāq*. Men, indeed, end up regretting the often hastily taken action. Bear in mind that in the Quran (2:229–30) there is a significant instruction that aims to impede a man from taking his wife back before the four-month term envisaged by the law only to repudiate her once again immediately afterwards.

In some cases it is possible that what Alessandro Bausani suggests in his comment on these verses might happen, i.e., the wife, tired, "Grants him the dowry so as to be repudiated truly and thus be able to remarry. In retroactive use the jurists also held valid (though it was considered a sin) the 'triple divorce,' i.e., pronounced by the man three times in succession, perhaps even in a moment of anger. In order to be taken again the wife then had to marry first with a third person."[59]

And here, to conclude, is one of the examples put forward by the author regarding a matter in which the prince-poet al-Walīd ibn Yazīd[60] was protagonist; he was known, not surprisingly, for his libertine spirit and his religious indifference:

> Al-Walīd ibn Yazīd repudiated his wife Saʿdá and when she remarried he was profoundly saddened and regretted his action. Ashʿab came to visit and al-Walīd said to him: "In exchange for a recompense of ten thousand dirhams, will you deliver a message to Saʿdá from me? He replied: "I will." So al-Walīd gave the order for the money to be counted and to give it to him. When the man was in possession of the recompense he said: Give me the message now. Al-Walīd replied: Go to her and recite for her the following verses:
>
> Saʿdá, there is still for us a possibility
> O we can but await the day of resurrection
> Certainly it is possible that destiny may lead
> your husband to death or to separation

[59] See Alessandro Bausani, *Corano* (Italian translation, Florence, 1978), comment, 514.

[60] The bibliography on this personage is quite extensive. I limit myself to citing Regis Blachère, "Le prince umayyade al-Walîd ibn Yazîd [II] et son rôle littéraire," in idem, *Analecta* (Damascus, 1975), 379–99.

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> Ashʿab went to visit Saʿdá and asked permission to see her. She accepted. When the man was in her company, she asked him: "What good wind carries you to me, Ashʿab?"
>
> "My lady, it is al-Walīd who sends me with the following message." And he recited the verses. She said to her slaves: "Hold this man." "My lady," he replied, "al-Walīd paid me ten thousand dirhams to carry out this mission. You may have them in exchange for my freedom, I swear by God!" She replied: "I will set you free only if you will go to give him my words." "Agreed," replied Ashʿab, "but give me a recompense." "The carpet on which I sit is yours!" she said. And he said: "Well, get up." When she got up, the man took the carpet and loaded it onto his shoulders, then he said: "Give me the message." The woman recited the following verses:
>
> You cry for Saʿdá when it was you who left her
> She is now lost no matter what you do
>
> On receiving the message, al-Walīd felt his heart grow smaller and he became enormously sad. He then said to Ashʿab: "Choose how you will die by my hand: I can kill you, or have you fall from the top of this palace or, otherwise, throw you in that den of lions who will tear you apart." The man, terrified, bowed his head for a long time and then said: "My lord, I am certain that you will not have the courage to torture the eyes of one whose gaze has fallen on Saʿdá." At those words, al-Walīd smiled and let him go on his way.[61]

In this anecdote too there is an interesting aspect, as in the previous one, in the fact that the woman's voice, in conventional terms, is reported. She, repudiated, manifests her own resentment for the treatment she has received and feels it important to underline her own refusal to return to her husband. It seems, furthermore, that the anecdote recounted by al-Ibshīhī contains only references to one part of the events connected with al-Walīd ibn Yazīd's repudiation of his wife. Indeed, we know that some months after the death of his father he fell hopelessly in love with a woman called Salmá, sister of his wife Saʿdá, and that this was the real reason why he repudiated his wife.[62] He then tried in vain to win back Saʿdá,

[61] *Mustaṭraf,* 676.

[62] The events have been reconstructed by Blachère, who writes: "Durant vingt années, al-Walîd paraît avoir gardé le regret douloureux de cet amour inassouvi. Pour la poésie arabe, ce fut un bonheur. Le prince, en effet, comme c'est naturel, ne cessera de célébrer celle qui pourrait être sa joie et qui fait seulement sa peine, de chanter son chagrin, ses efforts pour s'y arracher, son désespoir de n'y point parvenir" ("Le prince umayyade," 381).

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who had already remarried. As a consequence, he dedicated himself to wine and women.

Conclusions

The aim of my article was to investigate, through al-Ibshīhī's testimony, the performative power of discourse on the conception of the female body in the Mamluk period, its presence in the literary imaginary as a reflection of reality, and its function in society. What comes out of this brief and partial analysis of chapter LXXIII of the *Mustaṭraf* is a picture characterized by an evident misogynist attitude. In the Mamluk period, in keeping with what previous authors have written, *adab al-nikāḥ* reproposes, as had come about in other cultural traditions, a drastic separation of male and female fields of action, a conception of the female body as functional to procreation and the satisfaction of male needs, and conventional portraits of beautiful and ugly women in which the procedures of disassembly conceal processes of reification of their bodies and contribute to the reproposal of the social role reserved for the two sexes: the male dominant and oriented towards the external, and the female dominated and concentrated on herself and the home. Women are represented as physically weak and morally fragile people in need of protection, both from themselves and from others. By "protection" is intended complete submission to man. These images are determined in equal measure by social norms and by religious and juridical discourse. Belletristic production, mostly written by men, continued, even in the Mamluk epoch, to transmit these less than edifying images of women. The only female figures that escape the stereotype and enjoy at least a partially positive image are virgins, widows, and married women. Through chastity they manage to get the better of their sexual instincts: the virgins completely relinquish them through a conscious choice; the widows relinquish them through the death of their consort; the married women limit their own sexuality exclusively to procreation. In the last analysis, the discourses in question, due to the strategies applied and the performative nature of *adab,* have contributed in a determinant way to conditioning knowledge and rooting within the very structure of communication itself the fundamental processes of the formation of personal and social identity.

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The Representation of Slave Girls in a Physiognomic Text of the Fourteenth Century

> "Nothing is more harmful to an old man than a good cook and a beautiful slave girl"
> (Thābit ibn Qurrah, d. 288/901)

The image of women in literature is subject to literary conventions and complicated by the presence of topoi. Literary representations of women, often stereotyped, are not real portraits but more reflections of prevalent social attitudes. For instance, in *adab* collections women are often categorized as a social character type, like misers or uninvited guests; it is perhaps worth noticing that, as Fedwa Malti Douglas remarks, these works contain specific chapters on *nisā'*, but no chapters on *rijāl* as such, since men are *not* defined through their gender but more through moral or intellectual features.[1] A frequent feature of literary representations is the lack of individuality of the "anecdotal woman" and the stress put on her physicality, which is represented "in its most rudimentary form."[2] Nevertheless, this is often balanced in literary texts by representations where women act and behave as individuals. The same cannot be said of other kinds of texts, which can be much more biased. Therefore, as Yehoshua Frenkel stressed in a recent essay, we need "an integrated reading of various literary genres and materials" in order to have a glimpse of the representations of women in the Mamluk period.[3] Scientific, or—in modern eyes—para-scientific texts (under-researched compared with the religious, normative, or literary texts towards which most analysis has been oriented) could in fact give useful insights into the ways women were represented. In this article we will focus on the description of female slaves *(jawārin)*[4]

[1] Fedwa Malti-Douglas, *Woman's Body, Woman's Word: Gender and Discourse in Arabo-Islamic Writing* (Princeton, 1992), 31.

[2] Ibid., 34, 30.

[3] "Slave Girls and Learned Teachers Women in Mamluk Sources," in *Developing Perspectives in Mamluk History: Essays in Honor of Amalia Levanoni,* ed. Yuval Ben-Bassat (Leiden-Boston, 2017), 176.

[4] *Jāriyah* (pl. *jawārin*) is by far the most common term used to refer to female slaves. Relevant entries in classical dictionaries like *Lisān al-ʿarab* and *Al-Qāmūs al-muḥīṭ* have no reference to slavery: *jāriyah* is defined as "a clearly young girl" *(bayyinat al-jarā'/al-jarāyah).* Other words, like *amah, waṣīfah,* or *walīdah,* are found in technical literature (manuals for notaries, legal texts, or normative texts) and purchase deeds, but they are very rare and do not feature in any of the documents studied by Yūsuf Rāġib, *Actes de vente d'esclaves et d'animaux d'Égypte medieval*

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contained in a treatise on physiognomy *(firāsah)* of the first half of the fourteenth century with a view to add a small piece to the complex picture of the images of women in the Mamluk period. Ours will thus be a textually oriented approach directed towards the discourse of physiognomy, which was considered a secondary natural science inextricably tied to medicine. In this article we shall translate the section on female slaves of the *Kitāb al-siyāsah fī ʿilm al-firāsah* of Shams al-Dīn al-Dimashqī; then map its intertextual connections by outlining its relation to its antecedents, its parallels, and its sources (or what the author claims to be such). The text will then be read in conversation with materials on female slaves of a legal nature (normative texts and purchase deeds), in order to compare their different narratives of the feminine and to show their nature as a construct. The documents we intend to question could also be relevant for a gender studies approach with a historical perspective. Nevertheless, considering the kind of approach we have chosen, we limit ourselves to drawing the attention of the experts in this field to such materials.

The Author and the Treatise

Shams al-Dīn al-Anṣārī al-Ṣūfī al-Dimashqī (d. 727/1327), known as *shaykh al-Rabwah* and *shaykh Ḥiṭṭīn,*[5] served as shaykh of the *khānqāh* of Ḥiṭṭīn (a village between Tiberias and Acre) and then as shaykh and imam at al-Rabwah ("the Hill"), a village near Damascus. He owes his renown to *Nukhbat al-dahr fī ʿajāʾib al-barr wa-al-baḥr,*[6] a cosmography dealing with geography, mineralogy, rivers, islands, genealogy, and other topics. He also authored a work of an encyclopedic nature on physics, mathematics, and theology, *Al-Maqāmāt al-falsafīyah wa-al-tarjamāt al-ṣūfīyah,* and *Kitāb al-siyāsah fī ʿilm al-firāsah,* a comprehensive treatise on physiognomy. A portrait of his personality and an account of his interests are given by al-Ṣafadī, who was one of his associates and met him many times

(Cairo, 2002); by D. P. Little, "Six Fourteenth Century Purchase Deeds for Slaves from Al-Ḥaram Aš-Šarīf," *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 131 (1981): 297–37; and by Frédéric Bauden, "L'achat d'esclaves et la rédemption des captifs à Alexandrie d'après deux documents arabes d'époque mamelouke conservés aux Archives de l'État à Venise (*ASVe*)," *Mélanges de l'Université Saint-Joseph* 58 (2005): 269–325. *Waṣīfah* seems to be reserved for slaves meant to serve as domestic help, along with *khādim: waṣīfah,* probably referring to an inferior category, seems to be typical of Egypt and the Orient (Rāġib, *Actes,* 2:23–24).

[5]D. M. Dunlop, "al-Dimashḳī," *The Encyclopaedia of Islam,* 2nd ed., 2:291; Carl Brockelmann, *Geschichte der arabischen Litteratur,* 2nd ed. (Leiden, 1943), 2:130, S2:261; Khayr al-Dīn al-Ziriklī, *Al-Aʿlām* (repr. Beirut, 2002), 6:170; al-Ṣafadī, *Al-Wāfī bi-al-wafāyāt,* ed. Aḥmad al-Arnāʾūṭ and Tazkī Muṣṭafá (Beirut, 2000), 3:136–37; Aḥmad ibn ʿAlī Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *Al-Durar al-kāminah fī aʿyān al-miʾah al-thāminah,* ed. Sālim al-Karnūkī (Hyderabad, 1929–31), 3:458–59.

[6]Ed. A. Mehren (Copenhagen, 1892; repr. Leipzig, 1923).

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in Ṣafad, where al-Dimashqī died. Al-Dimashqī was an eclectic and encyclopedic author, with no definite juridical and philosophical affiliation. His interests ranged from agriculture to law; he was also versed in diverse sciences including divinatory sciences like geomancy and *ʿilm al-awfāq* (the sciences of the magical squares). Al-Ṣafadī extols his intelligence with the words "he was one of the most intelligent men *(min adhkiyāʾ al-ʿālam)*" and describes his versatility saying that "he was able to deal with whatever science and was courageous enough to write books on whatever science."[7] This versatility—he also states—was due more to his brilliant mind than to his skill, thus suggesting that he was an enthusiast rather than an experienced man of science. Al-Ṣafadī's appraisal also seems to cast a shadow on his personality: "obviously, he knew what can subjugate the mind and manipulate the heart of the inexperienced *(aghmār)*."[8] Both al-Ṣafadī and Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī seem to hold *Kitāb al-siyāsah fī ʿilm al-firāsah* in high esteem and mention it in positive terms in al-Dimashqī's biography. Al-Ṣafadī describes it as "a good book" *(kitāb ḥasan)* and Ibn Ḥajar affirms that "he produced an excellent work" *(wa-ajāda fīhi)*.[9] If we trust al-Ṣafadī, this treatise was also appreciated by other distinguished men of science, among them the Iraqi-Egyptian physician Ibn al-Akfānī,[10] who also dealt with physiognomy in some of his works. Al-Ṣafadī obtained from al-Dimashqī permission to transmit it *(tanāwaltuhu minhu)* in 724/1323, after he had copied it with his own hand *(katabtuhu bi-khaṭṭī)*.

Kitāb al-siyāsah fī ʿilm al-firāsah (also known as *ʿIlm al-firāsah li-ajl al-siyāsah*, *Nihāyat al-kiyāsah fī ʿilm al-firāsah, Aḥkām al-firāsah,* and other variants) was composed before 723/1323 in Ṣafad.[11] It was conceived as a comprehensive work on physiognomic knowledge elaborated in preceding centuries, and also includes

[7] *Wāfī,* 3:136; Ibn Ḥajar, *Durar,* 3:458, is more critical: "he wrote books on every science, had he knowledge of it or not."

[8] *Wāfī,* 3:137.

[9] Ibid.; Ibn Ḥajar, *Durar,* 3:458; Ḥājjī Khalīfah, *Kashf al-ẓunūn ʿan asāmī al-kutub wa-al-funūn,* ed. M. Sh. al-D. Yāltkāya/R. Bīlka al-Kilīslī (repr. Beirut, n.d.; original ed. Istanbul, 1945–47), 2:1011.

[10] He seems to have been born in Sinjar, Iraq; he moved to Egypt, where he stayed until his death. I thank Paulina Lewicka for having drawn my attention to this and for her careful reading and valuable suggestions for this article.

[11] Toufic Fahd, *La Divination arabe: études religieuses, sociologiques et folkloriques sur le milieu natif de l'islam* (Leiden, 1966), 386, claims that the author penned it in Acre (ʿAkkā) in 723/1323, on the basis of the date and place contained in the colophon of MS Bursa Hüseyin Çelebi 882 (fol. 53b). This seems to be a misinterpretation: at the beginning of the following treatise on laudable eyes (fol. 54a), the anonymous author states that al-Dimashqī penned *Kitāb al-siyāsah fī ʿilm al-firāsah* in Ṣafad *(waḍaʿahu … fī Ṣafad)* and granted him the license to transmit it in Ṣafar 724 (*wa-naqaltuhu min ḥifẓihi wa-nāwalanīhi wa-ajāzanī riwāyatahu ʿanhu fī ṣafar* 724). The mention of Acre and the year 723 in the colophon of *Kitāb al-siyāsah* (fol. 53b) refers to the place where the autograph was kept *(mā wujida min khaṭṭ… bi-jāmiʿi thaghri ʿAkkā)*.

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other forms of divination. Physiognomy is the discipline that interprets visible physical features as hints at internal character traits: in brief, the art of inferring character from bodily features or, in general, the art of inferring what is concealed from what is visible. Though now considered a form of divination,[12] it was then classified rather as a branch of the natural sciences, like medicine, and was in the realm of physicians and—as the texts say—"Hellenizing philosophers" *(falāsifah).* It also had practical purposes and was deemed useful in choosing associates, a good wife, or buying slaves. The exhaustive character of *Kitāb al-siyāsah* is obvious in the wide-ranging quotations and in the list of authorities that aims at covering all the significant scientific production in this field. Thus, Greeks like Aristotle and Polemon feature in the list of sources alongside Muslim physicians (Abū Bakr al-Rāzī), philosophers (Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī), jurists (al-Shāfiʿī), and mystics (Ibn ʿArabī). Al-Dimashqī had recourse to an abbreviated system of references, apparently not used before his time: he attributes an abbreviation to each author (e.g., Ṭ corresponds to Aristotle, B to Ibn ʿArabī, etc.) and cites each source by means of this short reference. The work opens with a general introduction on fundamentals and methodology, followed by chapters on animals (the so-called zoological method), on ethnicities (the so-called ethnic method), and on the physiognomic interpretation of colors, temperaments, and individual body parts. Al-Dimashqī's *Kitāb al-siyāsah* must have had a wide circulation, as over thirty copies are known to be extant today.[13] The illuminated opening and the quality of the copy preserved at the National Library of Medicine of Bethesda (MS A 58) under the title of *Kitāb jalīl fī ʿilm al-firāsah,*[14] probably produced around 1400 in Egypt, also point to its circulation in wealthy milieus. The treatise is available in several printed editions: the first, uncritical, was published in Cairo in 1882; the latest was published in Cairo in 1983.[15]

[12] As such it is extensively dealt with in Fahd, *Divination.*

[13] See Ali Rıza Karabulut and Ahmet Turan Karabulut, *Dünya kütüphanelerinde mevcut İslam kültür tarihi ile ilgili eserler ansiklopedisi= Muʿjam al-tārīkh al-turāth al-islāmī fī maktabāt al-ʿālam* (Kayseri, Turkey, n.d.), 2497, n. 6757.1; Brockelmann, *GAL* 2:130; idem, *GAL* S2:161. A copy is also preserved in the Ghazi Husrev-bey Library, Sarajevo (MS 7167,8=R 3749,8) (I thank Prof. Lewicka for this reference).

[14] See D. M. Schullian and F. E. Sommer, *A Catalogue of Incunabula and Manuscripts in the Army Medical Library* (New York, [1950]), 316 (https://www.nlm.nih.gov/hmd/arabic/physiognomy3.html [accessed on November 20, 2017]). Not *Kitāb al-Ǧalīl* as indicated there.

[15] *Kitāb al-siyāsah fī ʿilm al-firāsah* ([Cairo], 1882); *Al-Siyāsah fī ʿilm al-firāsah,* ed. Muḥammad ibn al-Ṣūfī (Cairo, 1983). The latter, described in the web page of the National Library of Medicine of Bethesda as an "edition employing several manuscripts (though not the one at NLM)," reproduces the same text as the 1882 Cairo edition, without the abridged references to the sources. Other editions are Cairo, 1332/1914, and Istanbul, 1289/1872 (see Karabulut and Karabulut, *Dünya kütüphanelerinde,* 2497, n. 6757.1).

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Firāsah and the Purchase of Slaves

Texts dealing with "the art of purchasing slaves" belong to different genres: relevant information can be found in treatises on medicine, physiognomy, geography, and ethics, in normative works such as *ḥisbah* treatises, and in literary sources like *adab* literature and poetry.[16] Physiognomy, like medicine, obviously had a role to play in choosing slaves since it was thought to be a means of discovering hidden things from visible elements, notably hidden illnesses or flaws often concealed by slave sellers or, more specifically, the characters and aptitudes of slaves. Treatises of medicine that include chapters which draw attention to signs implying defects or diseases and give useful suggestions concerning the purchase of slaves also often contain information drawn from physiognomy. Specific medical treatises penned in different periods by physicians like Ibn Buṭlān (d. 458/1066) or Ibn al-Akfānī (d. 749/1348) suggest recourse to physiognomy in assessing the character of slaves.[17] Ibn Buṭlān also hints at a branch of *firāsah* specifically devoted to women *(firāsat al-nisāʾ),*[18] but states that he prefers not to delve into it out of decency, thus suggesting its marked erotic slant. Indirect sources, like the travelogues of foreigners quoted by Barker, also give evidence of the application of physiognomy in relation to the inspection of slaves: "[a general survey], which Fabri called consideration *(consideratio),* was conducted at a distance and based on knowledge of physiognomy."[19] Likewise, treatises of a different nature, like books of erotology, may contain chapters on the purchase of slaves where physiognomy plays a significant role.[20]

[16] For a wide-ranging overview see Hans Müller, *Die Kunst des Sklavenkaufs: Nach arabischen, persischen und türkischen Ratgebern von 10. bis zum 18. Jahrhundert* (Freiburg, 1980).

[17] See, e.g., the example of *Risālah jāmiʿah li-funūn nāfiʿah fī shirá al-raqīq wa-taqlīb al-ʿabīd* of Ibn Buṭlān, where the third *fann* is entitled *Fī maʿrifat akhlāq al-ʿabīd bi-qiyās al-firāsah ʿalá madhhab al-falāsifah.*

[18] This is a branch of physiognomy connected to erotology *(ʿilm al-bāh);* on this see Antonella Ghersetti, "Fisiognomica e stereotipi femminili nella cultura araba," *Quaderni di Studi Arabi* 14 (1996): 195–206, and eadem, "Mondo classico e legittimazione del sapere nella cultura arabo-islamica: il trattato *Firāsat al-nisāʾ* attribuito a Polemone di Laodicea," in *Scienza e islam: Atti della giornata di studio, Venezia 30 gennaio 1999/a cura di G. Canova,* QSA Studi e testi 3 (Venice, 1999), 59–68.

[19] Hannah Barker, "Purchasing a Slave in Fourteenth-Century Cairo: Ibn al-Akfānī's Book of Observation and Inspection in the Examination of Slaves," *Mamlūk Studies Review* 19 (2006): 16. Barker underlines the normative character of Ibn al-Akfānī's manual and therefore questions other sources (*ḥisbah* manuals and travelogues) to give an idea of the real practices in the slave marketplace. Felix Fabri (d. 1502) is a Swiss Dominican theologian who wrote of his pilgrimage experiences to Jerusalem.

[20] An example is *Nuzhat al-aṣḥāb fī muʿāsharat al-aḥbāb* of Muʾayyid al-Dīn Abū Naṣr al-Samawʾal al-Isrāʾīlī al-Maghribī (d. 570/1174), which contains a long section on the purchase of slaves *(al-jumlah al-ʿāshirah fī bayʿ wa-shirá al-raqīq): Nuzhat al-aṣḥāb fī muʿāsharat al-aḥbāb* (Beirut, 2008),

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Treatises of physiognomy may also devote specific sections to the purchase of slaves, as in the case of *Kitāb al-siyāsah*. Unlike other authors who penned works on slave acquisition, such as Ibn al-Akfānī and al-ʿAyntābī—who both served as physicians at the Manṣūrī hospital in Cairo, not far from the famous slave markets[21]—al-Dimashqī seemingly had no practical experience in the inspection of slaves. As a consequence, this section is clearly inspired more by previous literature than by personal experience: any advice about how to proceed with examination is lacking, at the advantage of a detailed—even if brief—description of some parts of the human body, contrary to the "checklist for a thorough head-to-toe inspection of the slave's body" of Ibn al-Akfānī.[22] The twelfth chapter, exclusively devoted to women, is conceived as an extension of the eleventh chapter, whose title is roughly "On the signs of illnesses a prospective purchaser must take into consideration when buying slaves *(al-mamālīk wa-al-jawārī)* and on women's condition not commendable in relation with sexual intercourse; this is a self-contained kind *(nawʿ tāmm)* of physiognomy." These two sections (the eleventh and the twelfth) come after the *maqālah* devoted to signs hinting at temperament *(mizāj).* This arrangement clearly echoes the pattern of *Al-Manṣūrī fī al-ṭibb* of Abū Bakr al-Rāzī, which al-Dimashqī mentions as one of his sources.

The Representation of *Jawārin* in *Kitāb al-Siyāsah*

In contrast to the wider scope of other treatises, where bodily features and ethnic origin are thoroughly scrutinized to assess the aptitude of slaves to accomplish domestic work, to satisfy their master's pleasure, and to give birth, the chapter on slave girls contained in *Kitāb al-Siyāsah* is notable for its narrower scope and its erotic slant. This places it at the intersection of physiognomy and erotology, a cross-influence also confirmed by the sources mentioned by al-Dimashqī. The erotic slant was already noticed by Bouhdiba, who underlined the "erotic developments" in the description of the tender parts of the body.[23] That slave women,

118–43. This treatise is dealt with by P. Myrne, "Purchasing a slave for pleasure: From Ibn Buṭlān (d. 1066) to al-Samaw'al al-Maghribī (d. 1175)," *Journal of Global Slavery* 2019 (forthcoming). It is also worth emphasizing that the passage on how defects of *jawārin* were hidden is immediately followed by the description of nice features of women.

[21] Barker, "Purchasing a Slave," 6; on the different locations of slave markets over the Mamluk period see 6–9.

[22] Ibid., 10; the chapters on the purchase of slaves in other works penned by physicians (e.g., *Nuzhat al-aṣḥāb* of al-Samaw'al al-Maghribī, a Jewish physician who worked in Baghdad) also show the professional expertise of their authors.

[23] "… l'analyse descriptive de l'anatomie des parties molles du corps fournit une occasion, dont l'auteur ne se prive pas, à maints et maints développements érotiques." Abdelwahab Bouhdiba, *La Sexualité en Islam* (Paris, 1975), 196.

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whether bought for domestic tasks or for entertainment, were also supposed to serve in bedchambers is clearly perceived in the textual representation of slave girls in *Kitāb al-siyāsah*. Starting from the title, the scope of examination is drastically restricted to their "hidden condition" *(aḥwāl mastūrah),* i.e., the shape and state of their genitals; as a matter of fact, the bodily features of *jawārin* and *imā'* are all taken as hints at their aptitude for copulation. This means that where for a male slave *(mamlūk)* bodily features like the color of the skin or hair are taken as clues about physical condition or psychological features, for a *jāriyah* bodily features are used to assess her genitals' shape and her aptitude to have sexual intercourse. Thus, *jawārin* are never described as "intelligent" or "cowardly" but are systematically described as "lecherous" *(kathīrat al-shabaq)* or "nymphomaniac" *(lā ṣabr lahā ʿan al-nikāḥ)* and so on. A biased narrative rules out any aspect connected to health and psychology, thus enhancing the perception of a fragmented body seen only as a commodity. Considering the poor quality of the existing editions, the translation of the chapter on female slaves has been carried out based on the manuscript of *Kitāb al-siyāsah* preserved in Bursa (whose title on the front page is given as *Kitāb al-firāsah*), copied from the autograph.[24]

Translation

[15a] The twelfth chapter: on the assessment of slave girls' condition made thanks to signs hinting at their hidden condition.

Ṣ [= Abū Bakr al-Rāzī's *Al-Manṣūrī*] and R [= Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī] said:[25] those who want to buy [15b] a slave girl *(jāriyah)* or a bondmaid *(amah)* must consider visible signs pointing to their hidden body parts that will be mentioned [in what follows]. Amongst those [are the following]: if the woman's mouth is large, her vulva is likewise; if [the woman's mouth] is small, [her vulva] is small; if [the woman's mouth] is round and protruding, [her vulva] is similar. If the tip of her nose is big and her lips are thick, the labia of her vulva *(ṭablatay al-farj)* are thick; if her tongue is intense red, her vulva lacks humidity. If her nose is humped, she does not crave sexual intercourse. If her palate is high,[26] her vulva is elevated and

[24] We have also checked the text in the 1882 Cairo edition; apart from some differences in wording and order, the most evident being the inverted order of the two passages respectively attributed to al-Burjānī (al-Barrajānī?) and the author of *Jāmiʿ al-ladhdhah,* contents are globally the same. In the Cairene edition the eighth chapter contains the eleventh and twelfth chapters of the manuscript.

[25] It is worth noticing that the sources mentioned do not contain any passage on *jawārin:* the section on purchase of slaves *(shirá al-mamālīk)* in the second *maqālah* of Abū Bakr al-Rāzī's *Al-Manṣūrī* is devoid of any specific reference to female slaves; likewise, Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī's *Kitāb al-firāsah* lacks any explicit allusion to female slaves. In the two Cairene printed editions there is no mention of these two authorities.

[26] *Ṭawīlat al-ḥanak;* an interlinear note suggests *murtafiʿ*.

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with scarce hair on it. If she has a large face and a thick neck, this is a sign of small buttocks and a big and narrow vulva. If her palate is small, she has a low vulva. If the flesh of the exterior part of her feet and hands is firm, her vulva is considerably large and she easily offers herself to you. If she is extremely beautiful *(nabīlah)* and the flesh of her feet and her hands is compact, she is very lascivious and she cannot abstain from sexual intercourse. If she is hot to the touch[27] at any time, her lips and gums are red, and her buttocks are firm, she is a delightful sought-after partner for sexual intercourse.[28] If she has [16a] reddish skin and blue eyes, she is libidinous. If she laughs a lot, is cheerful, and moves quickly she hungers for sexual intercourse. Black and big eyes point to a strong carnal appetite and a narrow vulva. If she has big ears and small buttocks, she has a sizeable vulva. Heels protruding backwards are a sign of a wide vulva. If her body is fat, flabby, white, and a little yellowish, and her eyes are motionless and devoid of any appearance of joy, all these signs point to a humid and cold vulva.

The author of *Ǧāmiʿ al-ladhdhah*[29] said, describing slave girls *(jawārin)* and the marks they carry on which there is consensus or disagreement [in relation to sexual intercourse]: know that women are of eight kinds and classes. Each kind and class has a specific degree of carnal appetite: [the woman belonging to a certain class] will not be fully satisfied unless she reaches [that degree] nor will she submit to the man with obedience, love him, and be regardful of him in any circumstance *(ḥifẓihi fī al-ghayb).* I will now mention the man suited to each of these types of women. People of experience define women in specific ways: fatty *(shaḥīmah),* sticky *(laziqah),* hollow *(jawfā),* [16b] deep *(qawrā),* bright *(baljā),* large-

[27] *Majassah,* a reading confirmed by the analogous passage in *Ǧāmiʿ al-ladhdhah,* MS Aya Sofya 3836, fol. 88a. We wish to thank Pernilla Myrne, who kindly shared with us a digital copy of this manuscript, which is dated 533/1139. Both Cairo editions have *miḥnah.*

[28] The manuscript has *ladhīdhat al-ṭalab lil-nikāḥ* (a reading confirmed by an analogous expression in *Ǧāmiʿ al-ladhdhah,* 88a); the Cairo edition has *shadīdah lil-nikāḥ.*

[29] *Ǧāmiʿ al-ladhdhah* (or *Ǧawāmiʿ al-ladhdhah*) (Encyclopedia of pleasure) was penned by ʿAlī ibn Naṣr al-Kātib (*floruit* tenth century). On this see Pernilla Myrne, "Pleasing the beloved: sex and true love in a medieval Arabic erotic compendium," in *Beloved: Love and Languishing in Middle Eastern Literatures,* ed. Michael Beard, Alireza Korangy, and Hanadi al-Samman (London, 2017), 216–36; and eadem, "Of Ladies and Lesbians and Books on Women from the Third/Ninth and Fourth/Tenth Centuries," *Journal of Abbasid Studies* 4 (2017): 187–210.

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mouthed *(fahwā),* alluring (?) *(ḥalyā'),*[30] "the one with a threshold" *(sakfā).*[31] The fatty *(shaḥīmah)* is the one who has a plump and firm vulva, full of fat; she does not reach pleasure unless the penis is long enough to reach the neck of the uterus and she will let the fetus *(al-walad)*[32] settle in the deepest and most remote part of her vagina. The Indian *(al-Hindī)* said that the measure of a long penis is twelve joined fingers[33] or more; the measure of a medium one is nine fingers and more, up to eleven; the short one measures six to eight joined fingers….[34] [17a] The sticky *(laziqah)* is the one whose vulva is joined to the surrounding parts and became skinny after being meaty; this feature is only found in the black woman, and she does not reach pleasure unless the penis is short and thick. As for the hollow *(jawfā),* the exterior part of her vulva is joined while the interior is hollow; she does not reach pleasure in sexual intercourse unless the penis is medium and thick so to fully touch the sides of the vulva [which does not occur] with a thin penis. As for the deep *(qawrā),* this is the one with a long vulva and a distant neck of the uterus; for her an extremely long penis is suitable, and nothing else. As for the bright *(baljā),* she is the one with a proportioned vulva; anything we mentioned is suitable for her. As for the large-mouthed *(fahwā),* she has a wide and fatty vulva; a long and thick penis is suitable, or a medium as well. As for "the one with a threshold" *(sakfā),* she is the one with a kind of threshold *(musakkafah)* [which means that] in her vulva there are two bones almost coming together, and those hinder [17b] the insertion [of the penis]; for this one a long and thin penis is suitable. With few exceptions, if she is pregnant, she dies during delivery, before the baby comes out, because the way out is too narrow.

[30] The MS has *ḥalyā,* which we have not been able to locate in the dictionaries; the Cairene edition have *ḥalbā* which Lane (Edward William Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon,* s.v.) translates as "a female slave who kneels by reason of her indolence," taking the meaning from *Tāj al-ʿArūs (al-amah al-bārikah li-kaslihā),* which does not seem the most plausible translation in this context. The word occurs only in the list and only once in the descriptive passage, where no explication is given, so it is impossible to put forward a hypothesis about the true meaning of this term.

[31] I've not been able to find this word in any of the dictionaries currently used; this is a tentative translation based on the context.

[32] *Walad* can also be used for an unborn child, i.e., a fetus: Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon,* s.v.

[33] 1/24 of the standard cubit, i.e., 2.078 cm., or of the black cubit, i.e., 2.252 cm.; in Egypt, a finger roughly corresponded to 3.125 cm.: see Walther Hinz, *Islamische Masse und Gewichte: Umgerechnet ins metrische System* (Leiden, 1955), 54.

[34] The paragraph on sexual habits of men and women in Abyssinia, which we do not translate in consideration of its digressive character, does not feature in the Cairene editions, nor in al-Manūfī's *Akhbār* or *Jāmiʿ al-ladhdhah.*

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Al-Burjānī[35] said: he who seeks pleasure in sexual intercourse must choose the short woman and he who desires to have children must choose the tall one. He also said that women are of seven types in relation to the pleasure one can experience with them: women's faces can be [like a] painting *(naqsh),* ugly but agreeable *(naghsh),*[36] radiant *(bahī),* beautiful *(jamīl),* amazed *(dahish),* handsome *(ḥasan),* or pleasant *(malīḥ),* and this one is the most perfect of the [other] six. This kind of gracefulness *(malāḥah)* is described in these terms: [the pleasant woman] has deep black eyes, hair, and eyebrows; long lashes (of eyelids); white body, teeth, cornea, and hands; red tongue, lips, cheeks, and gums; round-shaped head, ankles, buttocks, and bosoms. She is tall, has a long neck, and long hair and eyebrows; her nose, mouth, armpits, and vulva smell good; she has thin hairs, waist, nose, and tongue, and delicate lips, complexion, fingers, and toes, prominent cheekbones, chin, and navel, and the same for the fingers; small mouth, hands, feet, and nose, bulging fingernails, vulva, nipples, and dorsum of hand. She talks nicely, and sweet are the spittle from the tip of her tongue and the saliva [coming out] from the corners of her lips and from between her teeth; soft are her neck, the palm of her hands, her belly, and feet; well-built *(sabiṭ)* are her neck, legs, forearms, palm of the hands; flushing-skinned are her neck, legs, cheeks, and breast; as are her throat, elbows, hips, and knees; soft to the touch are her body, her tongue, her cheeks, the back of her vulva; hot are her breath, her body, her vulva, and the palm of her hands. He also said: moreover, she has proportionate body parts, equal head and face; harmonious feet; soft and humid extremities; long hair that covers her shoulders;[37] beautifully-arched eyebrows; front teeth wide apart; widely spaced eyebrows, with deep-black extremities; swaying buttocks; no [visible] veins; melodious speech. He also said: the daughter of Muḥkam al-Shaybānī[38] had the greatest part of these features. And God knows more.[39]

[35] This probably refers to the book entitled *Burjān/Barjān wa-Ḥabāḥib/Ḥubāḥib fī akhbār al-nisā'* penned by Abū al-Ḥasan al-Namlī (the boon companion of al-Mutawakkil), which is among the sources quoted by ʿAlī ibn Naṣr al-Kātib. "Burjān and Ḥabāḥib are two elderly women who give sexual advice and expertise to an anonymous king" (Myrne, "Of Ladies and Lesbians," 200, and fn. 44 for variants of the title; on the contents of this book see ibid., 200–1).

[36] R. Dozy, *"Supplément aux dictionnaires arabes,"* s.v. *nghsh,* states that the word (not vocalized) refers to a girl or a young woman who, though ugly, is not devoid of grace.

[37] The manuscript has *ḥalāl,* which does not seem the most plausible meaning; it could be *"jilāl,"* the plural of *jull* also used as a singular, which means a cloth (for horses or other animals) covering their shoulders and part of their back and chest (R. Dozy, *Supplément aux dictionnaires arabes,* s.v. *jull*).

[38] The Cairene editions have Arāyās (?) ibn Muḥkam al-Shaybānī.

[39] The description in the Cairene edition revolves around quatrains and has a slightly different arrangement but the contents are the same. This description, taken from *Jāmiʿ al-ladhdhah* (fol. 92b=93b; whenever folios have been renumbered we give both numbers) and reproduced in later

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Intertextual Relations

As we have already seen, the first part of the chapter has no textual antecedents in the sources quoted by al-Dimashqī: Abū Bakr al-Rāzī's *Al-Manṣūrī* and Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī *(Kitāb al-firāsah).* In al-Rāzī's *Al-Manṣūrī* there is no specific section on slave girls and the treatment of the topic is limited to the evaluation of hidden physical defects or diseases of slaves in general; al-Rāzī seemingly has no interest in giving an erotic bias to the inspection of slave girls.[40] The same holds true for Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī's *Kitāb al-firāsah*. The erotic turn al-Dimashqī gives to the physiognomic evaluation of *jawārin* is rather the consequence of the cross influence between medical/physiognomic and erotic discourse. Indeed, the second source quoted in the text belongs to the genre of erotica: *Ǧāmiʿ al-ladhdhah* of ʿAlī ibn Naṣr al-Kātib, a well-known treatise referred to by many authors of the following centuries. We have compared al-Dimashqī's quotations with the Aya Sofya manuscript of *Ǧāmiʿ al-ladhdhah* (see n. 27) and, all in all, the quotations seem to be rather faithful; nevertheless, a certain degree of variance is visible. First of all, in *Ǧāmiʿ al-ladhdhah* slave women *(al-imāʾ)* are divided into two categories: those whom it is advisable to choose for pleasure *(lil-mutʿah)* and those whom it is advisable to choose for childbearing *(lil-walad)* (fol. 53a); however, for both categories detailed information on the "hidden parts" is missing. The author of *Ǧāmiʿ al-ladhdhah* states that the topic has been thoroughly dealt with by Muḥammad ibn Kāmil al-Miṣrī; thus, he prefers to quote additional sources, among which is Jābir al-Ḥayyān. The following text is nothing other than a catalogue of the diverse ethnicities, also found in well-known treatises like that of Ibn Buṭlān or in other works like al-Shayzarī's *al-Īḍāḥ fī asrār al-nikāḥ*. In addition, it contains short anecdotes, wise sayings, and verses of poetry. This text also hints at the practice of exposing female slaves in the markets, adding remarks on their color and ways of making them more attractive, quoting in this connection a passage on the authority of al-Jāḥiẓ. The part of *Ǧāmiʿ al-ladhdhah* corresponding to the one reproduced by al-Dimashqī does not appear in the chapter on slave women. It appears instead in a section on the physiognomy of the lustful woman *(firāsat al-marʾah al-shadīdat al-shahwah)* that, after a description of this kind of

works, has been labelled by Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Munajjid as "the canon of beauty" for the Arabs: Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Munajjid, *Ǧamāl al-marʾah ʿind al-ʿArab,* 2nd. ed. (Beirut, 1969), 109–10. This essay offers a wide range of texts on the concept of feminine beauty in Arabic literature.

[40] The same holds true for the Egyptian Christian physician Ibn Buṭlān, who penned a booklet on the purchase of slaves: he refrains from mentioning *(aḍrabnā ʿan dhikrihā)* that branch of physiognomy concerning women and giving remarks on their dispositions, body parts, and sexual appetite, "because of its obscenity" *(li-qabāḥihāh):* Ibn Buṭlān, "Risālah fī shirá al-raqīq wa-taqlīb al-ʿabīd," in *Nawādir al-makhṭūṭāt,* ed. ʿAbd al-Salām Hārūn (Cairo, 1954 [1373]), 1:401. The statement can be taken as a hint at the use of slaves as commodities for the bedchamber, something that seems to embarrass Ibn Buṭlān.

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woman, furnishes a detailed list of signs pointing to dimensions and conditions of the vulva (*al-dalālāt ʿalá aḥwāl farj al-marʾah,* fol. 88a=89a) mentioned on the authority of Ibn Kāmil al-Miṣrī. This catalogue, only partially corresponding to that of al-Dimashqī, is followed by a section on the features of women preferred by men (most probably as a concubine, *ḥaẓīyah*), whose authorship is attributed to Aristotle: there is probably no need to say that the pseudo-Aristotelian *Kitāb al-firāsah* does not contain anything similar. The following part of the text is focused on how to infer the features of women by their gaze and the way they walk. The passage of *Jāmiʿ al-ladhdhah* taken from "the Indian" *(al-Hindī)* dealing with the dimensions of the penis, a passage more concise than that found in *Kitāb al-siyāsah*, is situated at a certain distance (fol. 109a=110b) from the other excerpts. The same holds true for the description of the beautiful woman in *Jāmiʿ al-ladhdhah* (fol. 92b=93b), which is also set well apart from the catalogue of different types of women. This catalogue (fol. 111a=112a) only very partially corresponds to the analogous list in al-Dimashqī's text. As a matter of fact, wording, order, and contents disagree: the epithets (*mutashaḥḥimah*, *laziqah*, *qaʿrāʾ*, *qaʿrah, ḥawqāʾ*, *munkhatimah*, *shafrāʾ*, *muḥqibah,* fols. 111a=112a to 112a=113a)[41] are slightly different in form and order. So are the definitions given for each type of woman: detailed in *Jāmiʿ al-ladhdhah,* they have been considerably abridged in al-Dimashqī's *Kitāb al-siyāsah*. Likewise, there is another notable divergence between the two texts consisting in the lack of symmetry in evaluation of bodily features in *Jāmiʿ al-ladhdhah* and *Kitāb al-siyāsah.* In other words, passages of *Jāmiʿ al-ladhdhah* on women's bodily features pointing to their lust are paralleled by similar parts on men: for example, the passage on physiognomic assessment quoted on the authority of Jābir in relation to carnal appetite is equally assigned to men and women (*firāsat al-rijāl wa-al-nisāʾ fī al-shahwah wa-maqādīr al-farj,* fol. 89b=90b). This is not the case in *Kitāb al-siyāsah*, which focuses on feminine bodies at the expense of masculine bodies, which are completely absent. This balanced distribution of *Jāmiʿ al-ladhdhah* is visible throughout the text; nothing similar can be noticed in al-Dimashqī's chapter, which is exclusively focused on women. All in all, the text of *Jāmiʿ al-ladhdhah* reproduced in *Kitāb al-siyāsah* seems to have been considerably manipulated: items are roughly unchanged but have been selected, abridged, and rearranged. Al-Dimashqī might have had access to *Jāmiʿ al-ladhdhah* through secondary sources, epitomes, or oral sources; or he may have deliberately picked out only the passages that he deemed relevant to the topic he was treating, thus

[41] It is worth noticing that there seems to be a certain fluctuation in the categories: the chart at fol. 111a=112a revolves around six categories, plus two, *al-shafrāʾ* and *al-muḥqibah,* that have been added respectively to al-*qaʿrāʾ* and *al-qaʿrah;* but these two "additional" categories feature at the end of the following descriptive part of the section without any sign of emendation.

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bearing the responsibility of conferring on his text the biased erotic slant already noticed by scholars.

Al-Dimashqī's section on female slaves seems to have had a certain renown. It is also contained, almost verbatim, in a work of a very different nature: *Kitāb akhbār al-uwal fī man taṣarrafa fī Miṣr min arbāb al-duwal,* a work on the history of Egypt penned by the Egyptian Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Muʿṭī al-Manūfī, whose birth and death dates are unknown, but who was active in 1032/1623.[42] The seventh chapter of *Akhbār al-uwal,* on the Bahri Mamluks, contains digressions of diverse natures. Remarkable is a quotation from Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī on rhetoric and the art of writing, immediately followed by a passage taken from *Al-Manṣūrī* of Abū Bakr al-Rāzī on the purchase of slaves and female slaves *(al-mamālīk wa-al-jawārī)* which is worth mentioning, al-Manūfī says, in case of need *(lā baʾsa bi-dhikrihā ʿinda al-iḥtiyāji ilayhā).*[43] The section on female slaves, of a pronounced erotic character, is concluded with the suggestion of choosing a small woman to have sex, followed by an abrupt transition to the reign of Baybars. A comparison of the section on slave girls contained therein, entitled *Al-qawl fī iʿtibār aḥwāl al-jawār* [sic],[44] with the same section in al-Dimashqī's *Kitāb al-siyāsah* demonstrates that al-Manūfī heavily depends on al-Dimashqī. The texts are almost identical, with the exception that al-Manūfī's text abruptly stops at the beginning of the passage on the different kinds of women attributed in *Kitāb al-siyāsah* to al-Burjānī. Besides some short sentences being missing, the catalogue of different types of women is shorter and slightly different (seven types instead of eight: *al-shaḥmāʾ, al-zaliqah* [probably a slip of the pen for *al-laziqah*], *al-jawfāʾ, al-qawrāʾ, al-baljāʾ, al-fahwāʾ, al-sakfāʾ; ḥalyāʾ* does not appear). Contrary to al-Dimashqī, reference to possible sources is lacking. Considering wording and arrangement of the passages we can conclude that most probably al-Manūfī reproduced al-Dimashqī's text, without quoting his source, from the Bursa manuscript or a closely related one.

As we have already underlined, passages of the same tenor as that of al-Dimashqī can be found in works of an erotic nature more often than in medical treatises on the purchase of slaves, where the medical approach prevails. A quick comparison with the chapter on "clues about genitalia of women and their sexual appetites" found in a text of erotology most probably penned by al-Shayzarī,[45] *Al-*

[42] See Müller, *Die Kunst,* 190–91.

[43] Al-Manūfī, *Kitāb akhbār al-uwal fī man taṣarrafa fī Miṣr min arbāb al-duwal* (Cairo 1310/1892–93), 128.

[44] Ibid., 129.

[45] ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Naṣr ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn Muḥammad al-ʿAdawī al-Ṭabarī al-Shayzarī was a man of letters, physician, and qadi of Tiberias regarding whose life details are scarce. His date of death is uncertain: *GAL* has 589/1093; the editor of *Al-Īḍāḥ,* Muhammad Saʿīd al-Ṭarīḥī, following ʿUmar Riḍá Kaḥḥālah (*Muʿjam al-muʾallifīn* [Beirut, 1414/1993], 2:125), gives 774/1372 but his

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Īḍāḥ fī asrār al-nikāḥ, shows a strong similarity with *Kitāb al-siyāsah* in contents and arrangement. Al-Shayzarī includes in his treatise a whole chapter on how to infer, from exterior signs, features of the vulva and whether a woman has an aptitude for sex: the chapter is contained in the section *(juzʾ)* on "women's secrets" *(asrār al-nisāʾ)* and has the very explicit title "On signs from which to seek information on the vulva of women and how to judge if their lust is great or little and other things, in the way physiognomy does."[46] It is worth noticing that the part of *Al-Īḍāḥ* on bodily features pointing to the nature of the genitals and the woman's sexual appetite matches almost exactly—with some minor exceptions—the first part of al-Dimashqī's text. The catalogue of the different types of women, which in *Kitāb al-siyāsah* was ascribed to the author of *Ǧāmiʿ al-ladhdhah*, also features in *al-Īḍāḥ*. Nevertheless, in *Al-Īḍāḥ* there is no mention of the source and the text shows significant differences. Only four types of women correspond exactly, in terminology and description, to the first types listed by al-Dimashqī: the fatty *(shaḥīmah),* the sticky *(laziqah),* the hollow *(jawfāʾ),* and the deep *(qawrāʾ).* Information taken from "the Indian" on dimensions of male sexual organs are also present in both *Kitāb al-siyāsah* and *Al-Īḍāḥ,* in the same order but with slightly different wording. The rest of the chapter in *Al-Īḍāḥ,* from p. 104 on, contains a rich catalogue of ethnicities (*al-Rūmīyāt*, *al-Andalusīyāt*, *nisāʾ al-Turk*, etc.) with their different bodily features, and a list of categories of women focused on their suitability for being good spouses. This is not present in *Kitāb al-siyāsah*.

Slave Girls' Bodies: Narratives vs. Documentary Evidence

Notwithstanding its reminiscence of sources from the Abbasid period, the narrative of *Kitāb al-siyāsah* is in sharp contrast with the anecdotal, literary image of the luxury female slave, a construct of Abbasid romantic literature. In this kind of text qualities praised in a slave girl are both physical and intellectual: slave girls are often soul-mates who can dominate their masters, thus subverting ordinary ownership relations.[47] On the contrary, in the physiognomic discourse the

floruit seems to be dated to the last quarter of the sixth/twelfth century (Kh. Semah, "Rawdat al-qulub by al-Shayzari; a Twelfth Century Book on Love," *Arabica* 24 [1977]: 188–92). He authored a work on the interpretation of dreams, a mirror for princes, a well-known treatise on *ḥisbah (Nihāyat al-rutbah),* and a treatise on love *(Rawḍat al-qulūb).*

[46] ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Shayzarī, *Kitāb al-īḍāḥ fī asrār al-nisāʾ,* ed. Muhammad Saʿīd al-Ṭarīḥī (Beirut, (1407/1986), 101–7.

[47] "In this fictional context, the normal relations between slave and free are turned upside down: the master … is dominated by the slave" (Julia Bray, "Men, Women and Slaves in Abbasid Society," in *Gender in the early medieval world: East and West, 300–900,* ed. Leslie Brubaker and Julia M. H. Smith [Cambridge, 2004], 137); in satirical texts the slave girl is also represented as an individual, being a "notorious drain of wealth, and a source of instability" (Bray, "Men, Women

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representation of *jawārin* is dramatically restricted to bodily traits picked out as clues about their suitability for sexual intercourse: psychological and behavioral features are not in the scope of this narrative. The representation of slave women emerging from the text we have translated, and from texts of a similar tenor, is thus extremely partial. The individual disappears and only separate body parts are described, in a blinkered and fragmented manner. The *jāriyah* is rated on the basis of her capacity to serve as an instrument of pleasure, an attitude that takes the textual form of a skewed deconstruction of her body. This is patent in the first section of the text, with its crude anatomical details, but also holds true in the second part of the text taken from *Jawāmiʿ al-ladhdhah*, that also recalls what (for a different period and in a different context) el-Cheikh defines as "microscopic objectification."[48] This construct is patently a vehicle of sexual objectification[49] and mirrors the practices of the slave markets described in sources of a different nature, such as travelogues.

The insistence on this fragmentary and biased description of slave girls in *Kitāb al-siyāsah* and in related texts is thus a textual construct, a kind of "textual voyeurism," which does not have a counterpart in other types of texts also connected to female slaves. The discourse revolves around the "microscopic" description of a woman's physicality, depicting the female body "as a function of male desire."[50] This minute—even if very slanted—description of slave girls contrasts

and Slaves," 136). On the intimate relationship between slave girls and their masters see also the remarks of Matthew Gordon, "Abbasid Courtesans and the Question of Social Mobility," in *Concubines and Courtesans: Women and Slavery in Islamic History,* ed. Matthew S. Gordon and Kathryn A. Hain (Oxford, 2017), 11–51.

[48] Nadia Maria el-Cheikh, "In search for the ideal spouse," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 45, no. 2 (2002): 188.

[49] "Sexual objectification occurs when a woman's body, body parts, or sexual functions are separated from her person, or regarded as if they are capable of representing her." Jamie L. Goldenberg, and Tomi-Ann Roberts, "The Beast within the Beauty: An Existential Perspective on the Objectification and Condemnation of Women," in *Handbook of Experimental Existential Psychology,* ed. Jeff Greenberg, Sander L. Koole, and Tom Pyszczynski (New York, London, 2004), 78. As a matter of fact, representations of slave girls in *Kitāb al-siyāsah* are focused on the description of single parts and neglect the whole; this process of fragmentation has the peculiarity of turning the woman's body into an object and in the end results in a "loss of the person." Evangelia (Lina) Papadaki, "Feminist Perspectives on Objectification," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Summer 2014 edition), ed. Edward N. Zalta, 3. "Kant believes that eventually the concubine … loses her person and is made 'into a thing'" (Kant, *Lectures on Ethics,* trans. Louis Infield [New York, 1963], 166), http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2014/entries/feminism-objectification/ (accessed November 15, 2017).

[50] Mirella Cassarino, "Interpreting Two Stories of the *Kitāb al-Aġānī:* A Gender-Based Approach," *QSA* n.s. 10 (2014): 192.

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with the absence or succinctness of such descriptions in other comparable documents of the same period.

A survey of medical literature containing advice on how to buy the best slave girl shows the irrelevance of attention to sexual aptitudes in the global economy of medical inspection, to the advantage of aspects connected to health: in this sense, the description of body parts does not denote any peculiarity in assessing slave girls' attributes.

In the—scarce—legal deeds attesting the purchase of a *jāriyah,* descriptions of women's bodies have almost no textual relevance. Documentary evidence shows that, in practice, slave girls (and slaves in general) were described only by their race, faith, approximate age, and proper name. Since this was considered sufficient to identify the commodity to be purchased, a more detailed description, although recommended by jurists, is rarely found in these documents. There is no image of slave girls in purchase deeds; they are vague figures alluded to by a name and little more. The description of bodily features is, with few exceptions, minimal: usually skin color, summarily referred to (no recourse to the rich gamut of colors typical of the Arabic lexicon), sometimes age, and any peculiar marks. In all the specimens studied by Little ("the only original documents of their type pertaining to slavery which are known to have survived from the Mamluk period"[51]) dated between 783/1381 and 795/1393, there is not even the most basic description of bodily features.[52] Cursory descriptions found in these documents seem to conflict with the procedures recommended by jurists in the treatises of *shurūṭ* that call for full descriptions, including physical attributes.[53] In this light, even the hasty statement found in other documents of a later period, referring to the fact that the female slave was "exempt from the flaws usual in slaves" *(ʿuyūb al-raqīq)*[54] seems rather exceptional.[55] An important feature for slave girls, virginity, is not mentioned in the deeds studied by Rāġib (with one exception: a deed dated 687/1288 that also mentions the age of the girl[56]), which means that girls referred to in all the remaining deeds were deflowered.[57] Other documentary evidence

[51]Little, "Six Fourteenth Century Purchase Deeds," 298.

[52]Ibid., 336: "none took the trouble to describe the physical attributes by which the slave could be identified."

[53]Ibid., 304–5, on the basis of al-Asyūṭī (but positions were not uniform: earlier Hanafi jurists accepted a less detailed description; see ibid., 306).

[54]Bauden, "L'achat d'esclaves," 274.

[55]Ibid., 283.

[56]Rāġib, *Actes,* 1:37–41.

[57]Ibid., 2:40. Virginity was in principle a feature conferring a higher value on the slave, excepting—as Rāġib emphasizes—cases where the slave girl was devoted to her master's bed, but deeds rarely mention it. On this point see ibid., 2:38–39.

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of the Mamluk period, even if scanty,[58] points to the same: even an elemental description of body parts of women sold is lacking. It must also be said that no luxury female slave features in the deeds, which refer to slaves sold and bought for domestic service;[59] the market of luxury slaves had a different circulation. Be that as it may, the image of the *jawārin* emerging from these documents is at least nebulous, if not completely absent, thus contrasting with the palpable materiality of details emerging from the chapter on slave girls in al-Dimashqī's treatise. This is what we defined as "textual voyeurism," a narrative where imagination can elaborate on verbal description, where the word replaces the image and the texts function as substitutes for sight,[60] hinting—through an indirect act of seeing—at the pleasure that female slaves can give: in other words, as a vehicle for sexual arousal.[61]

The Importance of Sight

The limited emphasis on describing slaves' bodies in legal deeds does not necessarily indicate cursory inspection. As a matter of fact, sight had a crucial role in the slave market in connection with the medical inspection of slaves: jurists compared the absence of visual inspection with the purchase of an absent commodity, which could be a source of controversy.[62] Limitations existed in regard to visual inspection: some jurists considered the sight of the face enough to judge the rest of the body; others allowed for seeing the entire body, excepting the part between the knee and the navel.[63] Actual practices in the slave market contrasted with the chasteness exhibited in legal documents and in the obsessive prescriptions of ju-

[58]Rāġib has only three documents of the Mamluk period, all dating back to Qalāwūn's reign; he underlines that in general "les descriptions physiques des esclaves sont généralement sommaires" and speaks of "absence de signalement descriptif" (ibid., 2:35, 40).

[59]Ibid., 1:xiii.

[60]It is interesting to read the remarks of a nineteenth-century Frenchman on the differences between showing a woman's body and describing it: "Chez nous on aime assez le décolleté en sculpture, en peinture, en dessins, celui qu'on voit de l'oeil ; mais on ne pardonne pas à celui qui est écrit seulement et que l'on ne voit que par l'esprit. … Pruderie affectée! Pudeur d'extérieur!… En arabe, ce qui se voit, ce que l'on a besoin de voir, ce qui se fait, se dit, se parle, s'écrit" (M. Le Dr. Perron, *Femmes arabes avant et depuis l'islamisme* [Paris-Algiers, 1858], 530). Nicolas Perron was, among other positions, head of the École de médecine d'Égypte and of the Collège impérial arabe-français, and a member of the Société Asiatique of Paris.

[61]Fatima Mernissi, *Beyond the veil* (New York, 1975), 83, alludes to the importance of sight in connection to gender relationships in the Muslim world: "According to al-Ghazali, the eye is undoubtedly an erogenous zone in the Muslim structure of reality, as able to give pleasure as the penis."

[62]Raġib, *Actes,* 2:62, 65.

[63]Ibid., 2:65.

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rists regarding the concealment of the female body or hiding the family's women from the sight of the passers-by.[64] It is worth stressing that, as we shall see later, the legal status of women (free or slave, Muslim or not) was relevant in relation to zones of shame and related prescriptions; slave girls usually were not Muslim, so legal prescriptions in principle were different. Nevertheless, in general, the feminine body was considered "legal nudity" and, as such, subject to the devil's sight: "la femme est nudité *(ʿawra)* légale, si elle sort Satan l'observe."[65] Zones of shame *(ʿawrah)* were gender specific, i.e., they could have different meanings for persons of the same or the opposite sex, and in the case of women, the legal status was also relevant and zones of shame changed in relation to freedom or slavery. Even in similar situations there was a difference in obligations related to shame zones between free and slave women: e.g., Brunschvig recalls that the obligation to "hide her nakedness" *(satr al-ʿawrah)* was less rigorous for slaves than for free women.[66] As for the act of looking, jurists considered an unwarranted glimpse of a woman's sex an illicit sexual act, except in marriage and in the ownership relation between a master and his female slave, where a lascivious look at a woman's shame zones was permitted.[67] As demonstrated by Johansen (for Hanafite and for Muslim Sunni law in general), there was the assumption that the purchaser of a female slave was fully authorized to look at her, treating her as a commodity with little or no right to gendered social distance,[68] which corresponded to the commercial appropriation of the female slave and was considered a legitimate form of sale.[69]

The rigorous recommendations of jurists concerning the sight of women's bodies, even if far less strict in the case of slaves, seems to have been somehow contravened by medical practice (inspection of slaves is a topic dealt with in medical works) and by custom in the slave market. The vivid description of the conditions of sale given by Rāġib[70] shows that reality often conflicted with theory. Jurists prescribed decency by limiting the inspection of female slaves to face and hands,

[64] On this see Mounira Chapoutot-Remadi, "Femmes dans la ville mamlūke," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 38 (1995): 145–64, esp. 149–51 and 159.

[65] Ibid., 147 (quoting al-Dhahabī, *Kitāb al-kabāʾir*). The term *ʿawrah* (along with *fitnah*) is recurrent, as Chapoutot remarks, in texts regulating the behavior of women (ibid., 163).

[66] Quoted in Baber Johansen, "The Valorization of the Human Body in Muslim Sunni Law," *Princeton Papers: Interdisciplinary Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 4–6 (1996–97): 80.

[67] On this see ibid., 75. Religious tradition also regards the two as similar when it "speaks metaphorically of marriage as a form of slavery for the wife" (ibid., 78).

[68] Ibid., 81. In relation to the idea that slaves were commodities it is worth stressing that *ḥisbah* treatises deal with slaves and animals in the same chapter.

[69] Ibid., 88. On this also see Barker, "Purchasing a Slave," 12.

[70] Yūsuf Rāġib, "Les Marchés aux esclaves en terre d'Islam," in *Mercati e mercanti nell'alto medioevo: L'Area Euroasiatica e l'area Mediterranea* (Spoleto, 1993), 734 ff.

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on the assumption that seeing a part was enough to judge the entirety.[71] This notion, also common in the physiognomic tradition, explains the importance given to the description of facial features as hints at the hidden parts *(al-farj),* which, as we shall see, is considered in normative texts the essence of the slave girl's body. Legal prescriptions were nevertheless ignored in practice and evidence says that the slaves, regardless of gender, were often exhibited in the market completely naked or, if they were dressed, clothes were soon removed.[72] Moreover, simple observation was not considered sufficient to judge "the merchandise" and buyers often requested a closer inspection, including tactile inspection, in separate rooms or settings.[73] The *jawārin* were also inspected or, more precisely, "tested" at the buyer's property before the purchase contract was concluded.[74] This is only one among many examples of the divergence between theory in Islamic law and practice in society that characterize the Islamicate world in the pre-modern (and not only the pre-modern) period.

As we have seen, notwithstanding the importance of visual inspection in law and the habit of practicing it in commercial transactions,[75] legal deeds do not bear any allusion to this practice in the form of a detailed description of the slave body: they did not certify that the inspection had been carried out, and formulas attesting that the buyer had seen the slave's body are also infrequent.[76]

Practices related to visual inspection of slave girls and the importance of sight in commercial transactions do not have textual reflection in the documents. This conflicts with the "verbal exhibition" of the (hidden) parts of the feminine body

[71] The face was considered the most important component of the body and the most fit for giving an idea of the rest: ibid., 735, 736.

[72] Ibid., 736, quoting several first-hand testimonies of travelers.

[73] In principle, only reliable women were allowed to inspect female slaves, but we are informed that the act of touching every part of the body was common practice both for males and females sold on the market, a practice that—it is said—drew masses of people into the markets: Rāġib, "Marchés," 737–40. Also see Barker, "Purchasing a Slave," 16 ("a second and more comprehensive appraisal (probat emendum, literally testing the thing to be bought)… included public viewing and touching of the slave's naked body… the slave-buying manuals' advice to inspect the shame zones prevailed over the *muḥtasib*'s responsibility to prevent it").

[74] Rāġib, "Marchés," 741. Humiliation, increased by inspecting naked slaves in public, deriving from this practice "served to reinforce the powerlessness and dishonor of slaves through the profanation *(ibtidāl)* of their bodies in contrast to the inviolability *(ḥurmah)* of the free body": Barker, "Purchasing a Slave," 2–3.

[75] "…the *ḥisbah* manuals indicate that doctors should not publicly examine the naked bodies of slaves or advise non-doctors on how to do so, while the slave-buying advice manuals recommend the opposite." (Barker, "Purchasing a Slave," 12). Barker also relates, to this end, the testimony of Ibn Mujāwir's travelogue: "Finally he [=a wicked merchant] casts a direct eye over her vulva and anus, without her having on any covering or veil" (ibid., 13).

[76] Raġib, *Actes,* 2:65.

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displayed in *Kitāb al-siyāsah* and in texts of a similar tenor. This "textual voyeurism," in contrast with the scanty verbalization of female slaves' bodies in legal deeds, seems to be paralleled in legal treatises that profusely enumerate the redhibitory defects of female slaves (redhibitory defects are those that nullify a sale): tellingly, they are all flaws hindering sexual use by her owner[77] and as such, are all located in the genital area *(al-farj),*[78] the same zone on which al-Dimashqī's text is focused. The emphasis put on this area of the body in *Kitāb al-siyāsah* seems to condense the essence of the *jāriyah* in a metonymy, a linguistic strategy that has an equivalent in texts of a different nature, i.e., normative texts. In this connection, the remarks of al-ʿAynī (d. 855/1451) on the validity of manumission formulae are revealing. In his commentary on *Kanz al-daqāʾiq* of Aḥmad ibn ʿAbd Allāh al-Nasafī (d. 710/1310) he explains that, to be legally acceptable, manumission formulae must refer to the totality of the person. Expounding on this, al-ʿAynī gives interesting examples: for a slave, it is not correct to use sentences like "*yaduka ḥurr*" instead of "*anta ḥurr*" because the word *yad* does not refer to the entire body. Sentences like *raʾsuka ḥurr* and *wajhuka ḥurr,* instead of *anta ḥurr,* are however considered legally valid for male slaves since *raʾs* and *wajh* can refer to the totality of the person. On the contrary, there is only one alternative to the standard manumission formula *(anti ḥurrah)* for slave girls: *farjuki ḥurrun* (your vulva is free). This is considered a valid expression to use for a female slave *(amah)* since it refers to the entirety of the person *(al-farj yuʿabbir ʿan al-kull fī al-marʾah dūna al-rajul).*[79] This difference, rooted in the perception of the different nature of male and female slaves, considered as two different genera,[80] shows that a plurality of body parts (the head or the face) can be used as a metonym for men, while for women nothing is considered representative enough except *al-farj.* The prominence attributed to this zone in legal reasoning thus finds a perfect match in the sections on *jawārin* in texts of a different nature, like that of al-Dimashqī.

[77] In Rāġib's words: "[vices qui] rendaient la femme impropre à l'usage," usually anatomical vices and tumors of the vulva or prolapse of genitalia (Rāġib, "Marchés," 760–61). On redhibitory vices also see Johansen, "Valorization," 86.

[78] Rāġib, *Actes,* 2:82–83.

[79] Badr al-Dīn al-ʿAynī, *Sharḥ al-kanz* (Būlāq, 1285), 237.

[80] The different genus is determined by their functions: female slaves have the function of concubinage *(istifrāsh)* and the production of children, something that male slaves cannot do. This essential difference also entails that "the ownership of a female slave includes the right to the use of her sexual organs by her master—which the ownership of the male slave, clearly, does not" (Johansen, "Valorization," 84).

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Slave Girls, Concubinage, and Mamluk Society

One could wonder how the erotic slant of this text can be explained if compared to treatises on the purchase of slaves like that of Ibn al-Akfānī, and what the relevance of a chapter like that on slave girls in *Kitāb al-siyāsah,* so reminiscent of texts belonging to the Abbasid period, was in the different historical context of the Mamluk period.

The connection between erotology and slavery, or the erotic connotation given to texts related to slave girls, was well attested in the Abbasid period when, beside medical books on coitus *(bāh),* a new kind of treatise appeared, which Ibn al-Nadīm considered written in a new sexually arousing style. Revealing titles like *Kitāb al-ḥurrah wa-al-amah* (The Book on the freewoman and the slave girl) and *Kitāb al-jawārī al-ḥabāʾib* (The Book of the beloved slave girls) belong to this genre, which a century later was already popular.[81] This new genre of texts, and in general *ʿilm al-bāh,* relied considerably on the institutions of slavery and concubinage: it is thus obvious that "authors of the *bāh*-books took it for granted that their male readers had concubines at their disposal or could at least purchase one if they wanted."[82] The intimate association between eroticism and slavery is due to the fact that licit sexual activity in Muslim society can be in the frame of marriage *(nikāḥ)* or in the frame of the ownership relation between a man and his slave girls. Marriage and slavery were linked by analogy since both implied a kind of ownership *(milk):* in marriage *(nikāḥ),* the consequence of the payment of a certain sum was "the right to exclusive sexual access" while the purchase of slaves gave the right to "ownership of the physical person."[83] This analogy is also emphasized by Bouhdiba, who paradoxically claims that concubines were the double of wives (more precisely "anti-wives") in that pleasure with them was devoid of any obligation.[84] That slavery and concubinage were strictly intertwined and that "concubine" could be considered a hyponym of "slave girl" (and, accord-

[81] See Patrick Franke, "Before *scientia sexualis* in Islamic culture: *ʿilm al-bāh* between erotology, medicine and pornography," *Social Identities* 18, no. 2 (2012): 168. Franke, who investigates *ʿilm al-bāh* and its diverse connections in pre-modern Islamic culture, labels this new genre of treatises as "pornographic *bāh,*" in opposition to "*ʿilm al-bāh* as ars erotica" and "the medical *bāh* tradition"; all the three merged eventually in a universal discipline at the Ottoman court in the early modern period (ibid., 170).

[82] Ibid., 170.

[83] Shaun E. Marmon, "Domestic Slavery in in the Mamluk Empire: A Preliminary Sketch," in *Slavery in the Islamic Middle East,* ed. Shaun E. Marmon (Princeton, 1999), 19.

[84] Bouhdiba, *La Sexualité,* 130: "la concubine 'double' en quelque sorte l'épouse et permet une sursatisfaction du désir. Avec elle le plaisir est délié en quelque sorte de toute contrainte puisque, en principe, elle est soustraite à la procreation"; 131 "…la concubine a fini pour devenir une veritable 'anti-épouse,' par usurper la féminité et par la bloquer en entier"; and also ibid., "les jawârî sont devenues des véritables 'anti-épouses.'"

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ingly, many texts of Arabic literature refer to *jawārin* obviously in the sense of "concubines," even if other terms like *surrīyah* or *ḥāẓiyah mawṭūʾah* did exist—all of them bearing a sexual meaning) is well known and we need not explore this here.[85] The ownership of concubines was widespread in Abbasid times as a habit of royal and noble individuals: caliphs like Hārūn al-Rashīd and al-Mutawakkil were said to possess hundreds or thousands of concubines. The social relevance of slave girls for Abbasid society has been underlined by scholars and many works deal with *jawārin* and their diverse features and activities, including music and poetry. Anecdotal materials are also to be found in such works as the *Risālat al-qiyān* of al-Jāḥiẓ, the *Kitāb al-aghānī* of al-Iṣfahānī, and *Al-Faraj baʿd al-shiddah* of al-Tanūkhī, where slave girls feature as characters or are the main protagonists of the narratives.[86] *Jawārin* were also relevant from an economic viewpoint and large amounts of money were dedicated to the purchase of slave girls, which explains literature focused on the purchase of slaves like the treatise of Ibn Buṭlān, *bāh* treatises related to slave girls, or the abundant literary materials describing slave girls and their merits (or demerits).

Slavery remained a prominent practice in the Mamluk period.[87] ʿAbd ar-Rāziq distinguishes three categories of female slaves: concubines and those destined for pleasure and entertainment, singing slaves, and—on a lower level—servants destined for housework and childcare.[88] Documentary evidence and legal sources confirm this division into categories: expressions like *wakhsh al-raqīq* (or simply *wakhsh*), or other demeaning titles like *waḍīʿ* or *danīʾ*, were used for the lower level, thus denoting that, in principle (but only in principle), they were not intended for their master's pleasure *(li-ghayr al-mutʿah).*[89] Slaves belonging to the superior category *(aʿlá/ʿilyat/ʿilá al-raqīq)* were those intended for pleasure, tellingly called, in legal sources, *jawārī al-waṭʾ* or *nisāʾ waṭʾ al-bāʾiʿ* and referred to with diverse

[85] On this see Shaun E. Marmon, "Concubinage, Islamic," in *Dictionary of the Middle Ages,* ed. Joseph R. Strayer (New York, 1989), 3:527–29; see, e.g., "While not all female slaves were necessarily concubines, all concubines were by definition slaves," 527; "the concubine … is a woman of servile status who performs sexual services for the man who owns her," ibid.

[86] On this see, e.g., Hilary Kilpatrick, "Women as Poets and Chattels: Abū al-Faraǧ al-Iṣbahānī's 'al-Imāʾ al-šawāʿir'," *QSA* 9 (1991): 161–76.

[87] On female slaves (races, prices, etc.) in the Mamluk period see Aḥmad ʿAbd ar-Rāziq, *La Femme au temps des Mamlouks en Égypte* (Paris, 1973), 49–56, based on information taken mostly from chronicles penned in Egypt (al-Maqrīzī, Ibn Taghrībirdī, Ibn Iyās), biographical dictionaries, literature *(The Arabian Nights),* contracts of marriage, and witnesses of foreign travelers. Information of this kind must be confronted and complemented with other kind of documents like purchase contracts or archaeological evidence.

[88] ʿAbd ar-Rāziq, *La Femme,* 54–55.

[89] Rāġib, *Actes,* 2:45.

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epithets hinting at their beauty and their superiority to their less fortunate colleagues.[90]

Historians inform us that Byzantine, Nubian, Ethiopian, Turkish, and Slavonic, but also Egyptian, female slaves were sold in the market.[91] The presence of slaves was a kind of obligation for wealthy homes, a demonstration of well-being and social status, and possession of costly slaves was considered a sign of prestige.[92] Contrary to other communities, like Christians and Jews,[93] in the Muslim community of Mamluk society "the role of the female slave as a sexual object and as a potential mother of free children was a crucial one."[94] As Frenkel explains, the reasons for this were mostly demographic, but also political: concubinage "contributed to the construction of patrimonial households and increased the likelihood of progeny" and strengthened male dominance in society.[95] So significant was the phenomenon of concubinage that some scholars seem inclined to see Mamluk slavery as a "primarily female phenomenon."[96] Having recourse to concubinage was an easy resource against child mortality on the part of the military elite, but this does not mean that the practice was restricted to the military elite: it was significantly widespread in different sectors of society, e.g., among intellectuals and scholars,[97] particularly in the first half of the fourteenth century. This also seems supported by most reports on concubinage among the civilian elite of the Mamluk period, where "it is the sexual aspect that is emphasized."[98]

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[90] Ibid., 2:46–47.

[91] ʿAbd ar-Rāziq, *La Femme,* 50. The documents studied by Little give evidence, even though modest, of the vitality of the African slave trade in the late fourteenth century (out of five slaves, three came from Africa: a Nubian, a Takruri, and a Damoti). (Little, "Six Fourteenth Century Purchase Deeds," 336–37).

[92] Marmon, "Domestic Slavery," 9, 10, 19, and the sources quoted therein, esp. al-Ghuzūlī.

[93] These communities disapproved of any sexual relations outside marriage. In Judaism intercourse with a slave girl was a sin punishable by death (Sh. D. Goitein, "Slaves and Slavegirls in the Cairo Geniza Records," *Arabica* 9 [1962]: 6). This along with other factors, among which was the cost of slaves (very high in case of attractive and/or educated slave girls), made slave girl concubinage a "phenomenon of limited dimensions and importance in Geniza society" (idem, *A Mediterranean Society,* vol. 5, *The Individual: Portrait of a Mediterranean Personality of the High Middle Ages as Reflected in the Cairo Geniza* [Berkeley, 1988], 322).

[94] Marmon, "Domestic Slavery," 4.

[95] Frenkel, "Slave Girls," 165.

[96] Yossef Rapoport, "Women and Gender in Mamluk society," *MSR* 11 (2007): 9.

[97] Significant, e.g., is the case of the Mamluk ʿālim Burhān al-Dīn Ibrāhīm al-Biqāʿī (d. 885/1480), who had a modestly-sized harem; he accurately describes his life in his autobiography. On this see Li Guo, "Tales of a Medieval Cairene Harem: Domestic Life in al-Biqāʿī's Autobiographical Chronicle," *MSR* 9, no. 1 (2005): 101–21.

[98] Ibid., 39.

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Revealing in this respect is the testimony of al-Ṣafadī, who expresses his appreciation for a jurist friend's fair allocation of his time, devoting equal attention to pleasure and culture by alternately frequenting the slave market and the book market.[99] Foreigners staying in Muslim countries, far from their wives, would also buy slaves to keep as concubines, as attested by documentary evidence.[100] That the purpose of the female slave was sexual service, along with childbearing, is thus the generally accepted assumption, notwithstanding the fact that some ethnicities were seemingly more likely than others to be sold for the bedchamber.[101] Thus, the textual representation of slave girls in al-Dimashqī's treatise is well in tune with the background depicted in the sources, with their emphasis on the sexual dimension of slavery and the interest in purchasing female slaves to satisfy sexual desire.

Conclusions

The analysis of the chapter on slave girls in *Kitāb al-siyāsah* demonstrates that this text does not aim to offer advice to prospective buyers. This skillful construct, combining information allegedly taken from natural sciences (physiognomy and medicine, through the so-called "quotations" from its sources) with erotica, is instead a narrative in which the *jāriyah* is represented as an instrument of pleasure and the female body "as a function of male desire." The "microscopic objectification" consisting in the skewed deconstruction of the *jāriyah*'s body, patent in the crude anatomical details and in the quotations from *Ǧawāmiʿ al-ladhdhah,* functions as a vehicle of sexual objectification. The insistence on the fragmentary description of slave girls, equivalent to a kind of "textual voyeurism" in sharp contrast with the meager descriptions found in the few purchase deeds we have, thus constitutes an interesting counterpart to this kind of text. The portrait of *jawārin* contained in *Kitāb al-siyāsah*, which is in tune with the legal discourse

[99]Ibid., 11: "Al-Ṣafadī speaks with admiration about his friend the jurist Ibrāhīm ibn Aḥmad al-Zarʿī (d. 741/1342), who on Fridays would alternately frequent the slave market and the book market, thus cultivating the pleasures of both body and mind. His association with Turkish slave-girls was such that he learned to speak their language." In the following century the phenomenon was apparently decreasing: "In contrast to the first half of the fourteenth century, when the supply of slave girls to Near Eastern cities appears to have reached a peak, the number of concubines in military households steadily decreased in the fifteenth century" (ibid., 13).

[100]Bauden, "L'achat d'esclaves," 297: "Cela laisse sous-entendre que les esclaves féminines qu'ils acquéraient au cours de leur séjour jouaient essentiellement le rôle de concubines en l'absence de leur épouse."

[101]Rāġib, "Marchés," 732–33; the veracity of this statement, based on the treatise penned by Ibn Buṭlān in the eleventh century, cannot be taken for granted uncritically with reference to the Mamluk period.

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and general assumptions revealed by historical sources for the Mamluk period, can thus be an interesting complementary source for the understanding of the representation of slave girls in the Mamluk period.

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Women and Men in al-Suyūṭī's Guides to Sex and Marriage

This article examines the sexual ethics in three works by Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī on marital sex *(nikāḥ)* and gender norms: *Al-Wishāḥ fī fawā'id al-nikāḥ,*[1] *Shaqā'iq al-utrunj fī raqā'iq al-ghunj,*[2] and *Nuzhat al-muta'ammil wa-murshid al-muta'ahhil.*[3] *Wishāḥ* is al-Suyūṭī's main contribution to the genre of Arabic-Islamic sex manuals, a genre that originated in the fourth/tenth century in Baghdad, and was influenced by translations of Greek, Persian, and Indian medicine and erotology.[4] In *Wishāḥ,* al-Suyūṭī attempts to reconcile the earliest erotological tradition with the Islamic sciences, something he does more consistently than his predecessors. The result is an extensive investigation of the sexual pleasures permitted for Muslims—particularly men, but also, to a certain degree, women. Women's sexual behavior and obligations are treated by al-Suyūṭī in *Shaqā'iq al-utrunj* and *Nuzhat al-muta'ammil,* which rely partly on the same sources as *Wishāḥ.*[5]

Al-Suyūṭī draws on an imposing number of earlier sources from different fields of knowledge, especially the hadiths, but also lexicography, historical anecdotes *(akhbār),* medicine, and erotology. In *Wishāḥ* and *Shaqā'iq al-utrunj,* al-Suyūṭī acts

[1] There is an edition of *Al-Wishāḥ* by Ṭal'at Ḥasan 'Abd al-Qawī (Damascus, 2001). It is based on an unidentified manuscript that sometimes differs from the manuscripts I have consulted: MS Lala Ismail 577, dated 973 AH, MSS Paris, BnF Arabe 3066 and 3067, and MS King Saud University 797.

[2] *Shaqā'iq al-utrunj fī raqā'iq al-ghunj* has been edited several times in Damascus. I use the edition by Ḥusayn 'Umar Ḥamādah (Damascus, 2008), a scholarly edition based on five manuscripts. In addition to these, the editor lists twelve extant manuscripts in his introduction. I am aware of five additional manuscripts, but there must be many more; the book seems to have been quite popular.

[3] *Nuzhat al-muta'ammil wa-murshid al-muta'ahhil,* ed. Jalāl al-Dīn al-Tunjī (Beirut, 1989, 2nd printing); based on two manuscripts, one from the British Museum and one from Damascus.

[4] The definition of sex manuals as a genre is provisional, and will be explored in a future project. The term often used is "erotic literature," which is misleading, as the manuals are meant to be edifying and include subjects like sexual health and hygiene, in addition to entertaining and titillating stories.

[5] For al-Suyūṭī's works in the erotic genre, see Aḥmad Jagham, *Al-Ǧins fī a'māl al-Imām Ǧalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī* (Tunis, 2001); Haytham Sarḥān, *Khiṭāb al-jins: Muqārabāt fī al-adab al-'Arabī al-qadīm* (Beirut, 2008), 157–67; and Jaakko Hämeen Anttila, "Al-Suyūṭī and Erotic Literature," in *Al-Suyūṭī, a Polymath of the Mamlūk Period,* ed. Antonella Ghersetti (Leiden, 2016), 227–40. For a discussion of the notion of *ghunj* and its expressions in *Shaqā'iq al-utrunj,* see Daniela Rodica Firanescu, "Revisiting Love and Coquetry in Medieval Arabic Islam: Al-Suyūṭi's Perspective," in *Al-Suyūṭī,* ed. Ghersetti, 241–59.

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as a compiler and rarely adds any comments, whereas the authorial voice is somewhat more present in *Nuzhat al-mutaʾammil*. Nevertheless, by means of selection and arrangement of hadiths and historical anecdotes, central themes are established. In this article, I will discuss al-Suyūṭī's use of earlier sex and marriage manuals and examine some of these central themes: the prominent standing of marital sex *(faḍl al-nikāḥ),* ideal masculinity, and ideal femininity. The themes are not new, but al-Suyūṭī's consequent focus on and combination of specific parts of the erotic heritage is quite unique.

Arabic-Islamic Sex Manuals and al-Suyūṭī's Sources

Al-Suyūṭī uses two of the most important works in the sex manual tradition as the basis for different parts of *Wishāḥ: Jawāmiʿ al-ladhdhah* and *Tuḥfat al-ʿarūs wa-nuzhat* (or *mutʿat) al-nufūs.* He also quotes these, and numerous other sources, in *Shaqāʾiq al-utrunj* and *Nuzhat al-mutaʾammil*. These two works were written at different times—there are some three centuries between them—and they convey different messages. The first, *Jawāmiʿ al-ladhdhah,* was probably written in the fourth/tenth century by an author with Shiite inclinations, and is a quite libertine sex manual, heavily influenced by Indian erotology. The second, *Tuḥfat al-ʿarūs,* dates from the eighth/fourteenth century, and is a more traditional Islamic marriage manual based on hadiths and relatively wholesome historical anecdotes, poetry, and some erotology. *Jawāmiʿ al-ladhdhah* and *Tuḥfat al-ʿarūs* are representatives of two different—although somewhat overlapping—fields of sexual knowledge and practice: the first being *bāh* (erotology), and the second, *nikāḥ* (marital sex). By combining these contradictory sources, al-Suyūṭī makes a serious attempt to reinterpret the erotological heritage in light of the orthodox Islamic tradition.

Jawāmiʿ al-ladhdhah is the first extant erotic compendium in Arabic and contains extensive quotations from the literature that was available at the time. As such, it represents the Abbasid heritage, with original works in Arabic as well as translations from Greek medicine, Indian erotology, and Persian wisdom. Much of this heritage has been lost, except for occasional quotations in later literature, primarily in *Jawāmiʿ al-ladhdhah.*[6]

The author of *Jawāmiʿ al-ladhdhah,* ʿAlī ibn Naṣr, explicitly addresses the cosmopolitan elite of his time and, characteristically, quotes both Shiite and Sunnite

[6]For some stories with female protagonists in *Jawāmiʿ al-ladhdhah* mentioned in Ibn al-Nadīm's *Fihrist* see Pernilla Myrne, "Of Ladies and Lesbians and Books on Women from the Third/Ninth and Fourth/Tenth Centuries," *Journal of Abbasid Studies* 4, no. 2 (2017): 187–210; and idem, "Words of Advice: Women as Erotic Experts and Advisors in Premodern Arabic Erotica," in *Les mots du désir: La langue de l'érotisme arabe et ses traductions,* ed. Frédéric Lagrange and Claire Savina (Paris, 2018).

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authorities.[7] Several chapters are devoted to sexual technique, some of it translations from Indian and Persian erotology, with classifications of sex positions and sex couples, as well as different kinds of women.[8] Mutual pleasure is the ideal for amorous relationships, according to *Jawāmiʿ al-ladhdhah,* which also adopts a relatively tolerant attitude towards male and female same-sex relationships and extramarital relations.

When al-Suyūṭī refers to the knowledge conveyed by *Jawāmiʿ al-ladhdhah,* he uses the term *bāh,* meaning "Abbasid erotology." Initially, the term was reserved for sexual medicine *(ʿilm al-bāh),* and books on sexual health and aphrodisiacs were often called *kutub al-bāh.*[9] In *Jawāmiʿ al-ladhdhah,* the term denotes sexology in general, that is, a combination of erotology and sexual medicine. Several later works in this tradition were devoted to sexual hygiene, medicine, and pharmacology, or retained parts of the erotological material in *Jawāmiʿ al-ladhdhah* and added new anecdotes and erotic stories.[10] Al-Suyūṭī occasionally quotes a later, relatively unique contribution to this tradition, *Rushd al-labīb ilá muʿāsharat al-ḥabīb,* written in the eighth/fourteenth century by the Yemenite author Aḥmad ibn Falītah.[11]

[7]The identity of the author is not entirely established. For a discussion of its possible origin and its vision of love relationships, see Pernilla Myrne, "Pleasing the Beloved: Sex and True Love in a Medieval Arabic Erotic Compendium," in *The Beloved in Middle Eastern Literatures: The Culture of Love and Languishing,* ed. Michael Beard, Alireza Korangy, and Hanadi al-Samman (London, 2018).

[8]The classifications are highly theoretical, however, and the prospect of putting them into practice is often improbable. The aim of the book is probably not to give the readers practical tools, but rather to provide the sophisticated male elite with exclusive knowledge.

[9]Cf. Patrick Franke, "Before scientia sexualis in Islamic culture: *ʿilm al-bāh* between erotology, medicine and pornography," *Social Identities: Journal for the Study of Race, Nation and Culture* 18, no. 2 (2012):161–73. *Bāh* is the scientific term for coitus in premodern Arabic sex manuals, and so in the manuscripts of *Wishāḥ* consulted for this study. The edition has instead the term *bāʾah.*

[10]For these works and premodern Arabic erotica in general, see Everett K. Rowson, "Arabic: Middle Ages to Nineteenth Century," in *Encyclopedia of Erotic Literature,* vol. I, ed. Gaétan Brulotte and John Phillips (New York, 2006), 43–61.

[11]Al-Suyūṭī quotes *Rushd al-labīb* in *Shaqāʾiq al-utrunj* and *Nuzhat al-mutaʾammil.* In the later book the quotation is unattributed and could have been taken from another source. The exact name of the author differs on the extant manuscript copies of *Rushd al-labīb;* see Carl Brockelmann, *Geschichte der arabischen Litteratur* (Leiden, 1868–1956), 1:232, suppl. 1:416. The book was written in 764/1363, according to the copyist of one of the manuscripts (Sabbagh's introduction to Ibn Falītah, *Rushd* (Erlangen-Nürnberg, 1973), iv. There is a series of editions with German translations based on two manuscripts and covering most parts of the book: 1–3, ed. Ghadhban Al-Bayati (Erlangen-Nürnberg, 1976); 4, ed. Adnan Husni-Pascha (Erlangen-Nürnberg, 1975); 5, ed. Jalal Elias Yousif (Munich, 1977); 6.1, ed. Boulus al-Khouri (Erlangen-Nürnberg, 1975); 6.2, ed. Abdul Khador Abdul Hassan (Munich, 1983); 6.3, ed. Adnan Zeni (Munich, 1978); 9–11, ed. Mohamed Zouher Djabri (Erlangen-Nürnberg, 1968); 12–14, ed. Elian Sabbagh (Erlangen-Nürnberg,

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Around 700, ʿAbd Allāḥ ibn Muḥammad al-Tijānī, a scholar and chancellor at the Hafsid court, wrote *Tuḥfat al-ʿarūs wa-nuzhat* (or *mutʿat*) *al-nufūs,* a sex manual based on hadiths.[12] Unlike other works in the genre, *Tuḥfat al-ʿarūs* only treats licit sexual relations, and even though it contains some explicit sexual material, there is virtually nothing that violates orthodox Islam. According to al-Suyūṭī in his introduction to *Wishāḥ,* it is the best book on *nikāḥ*—a term that signifies both marriage and marital sex, including, as evident in *Tuḥfat al-ʿarūs,* sex with slave concubines. *Tuḥfat al-ʿarūs* takes up themes from hadith literature on marriage, such as the incitement to marry, spousal rights and obligations, and the marriage banquet. The main concern is piety; believers should resist their passions and keep to the right path. Sexual attraction and pleasure are allowed and encouraged, but only within marital bounds; there should be no opportunity for men and women to look at each other outside marriage and concubinage.

A major difference between the books written in the traditions of *bāh* and *nikāḥ* is their attitude to homosexuality and women's sexual agency. *Jawāmiʿ al-ladhdhah* and *Rushd al-labīb* devote whole chapters to female and male homosexuality, which are seen as more or less natural variants, and so do other major works in the genre: *Nuzhat al-aṣḥāb fī muʿāsharat al-aḥbāb* by al-Samaw'al (d. 570/1175), and *Nuzhat al-albāb fīmā lā yūjad fī kitāb* by al-Tīfāshī (d. 651/1253). Al-Tijānī, on the other hand, is conspicuously silent about homosexuality in *Tuḥfat al-ʿarūs,* in line with the negative attitude towards homosexuality in hadith literature. Al-Suyūṭī also remains silent, and although he quotes *Jawāmiʿ al-ladhdhah* and *Rushd al-labīb,* he ignores the sexual orientations described in these books. His texts on sexuality are firmly within the *nikāḥ* tradition, although he permits himself to quote more light entertainment.

Al-Suyūṭī's reliance on *Jawāmiʿ al-ladhdhah* is remarkable, considering its libertine content and the author's ambiguous religious inclinations, but it is not unprecedented. Earlier Mamluk authors had apparently read *Jawāmiʿ al-ladhdhah* and quoted it. Mughulṭāy (d. 762/1361) mentions the book, and it is quoted in *Akhbār al-nisā',* attributed to Ibn Qayyim al-Jawzīyah,[13] and by Shams al-Dīn al-Dimashqī.[14] Of the known extant manuscripts, two were copied in the eighth/fourteenth century. Another erotic work by al-Suyūṭī, *Nawāḍir al-ayk fī maʿrifat*

1973). For the remaining chapters, I have consulted an unscholarly edition with no named editor (al-Mayah, 2002). I have not had the opportunity to consult manuscripts for this article.

[12] Plessner and Achèche, "Al-Tidjānī," *The Encyclopaedia of Islam,* 2nd ed., 10:463–64.

[13] As pointed out by Hilary Kilpatrick, this attribution is almost certainly wrong. It has also been attributed to Ibn al-Jawzī, which Kilpatrick deems similarly unlikely; Kilpatrick, "Some Late ʿAbbāsid and Mamlūk Books about Women: A Literary Historical Approach," *Arabica* 42, no. 1 (1995): 69–70.

[14] See Antonella Ghersetti's article in this volume.

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al-nayk, which is more entertaining than edifying, draws heavily on *Jawāmiʿ al-ladhdhah,* with both attributed and unattributed quotations.[15]

Conflicting Ideals for Female Sexuality in al-Suyūṭī's Sources

As in practically all premodern Islamic literature, the intended readers of sex manuals are primarily men, and the norm is male domination and female subordination. However, gender roles vary between the different manuals, especially with regard to women's agency. *Jawāmiʿ al-ladhdhah* has a characteristically female voice and contains many female protagonists and narrators of erotic stories. The women are outspoken and voracious; they take the initiative in sexual relations, and their sexual behavior is unconstrained. Special emphasis is placed on their sounds and movements during intercourse.[16] They have what we could call "erotic agency," and at the same time they are a construction that appeals to a certain male erotic fantasy—a feminine erotic archetype that appears to have been cherished by the readers of Abbasid erotica. Many of the erotic quotations are taken from lost third/ninth century stories that originated in the Abbasid court.[17]

A central theme in both *Jawāmiʿ al-ladhdhah* and the later Yemenite work *Rushd al-labīb* is women's sexual appetite *(shahwah).* This is, according to Ibn Naṣr, Ibn Falītah, and their sources, greater than that of men and must be satisfied. This is a notable contrast to *Tuḥfat al-ʿarūs,* which is more concerned with the need to satisfy the male sexual appetite. Ibn Falītah quotes a hadith saying that women were given nine tenths of *shahwah* and men one tenth, but because women were also given a sense of shame *(ḥayāʾ),* they deny their desire.[18] The first part of the saying is attributed to a Persian wise woman, Bunyāndukht, in *Jawāmiʿ al-ladhdhah,* and is illustrated by (fictional) women's erotic stories, sometimes about their own sex lives. In *Rushd al-labīb,* the saying is followed by anecdotes about Arab women, such as queen Zubaydah, who suffered greatly when her spouse, Hārūn al-Rashīd, was travelling.[19]

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[15] See Rowson, "Arabic," 56–57. It also relies on the popular *Rujūʿ al-shaykh ilá sibāh fī al-qūwah ʿalá al-bāh;* see ibid.

[16] This peculiar theme was treated from a lexicographic perspective already by al-Jāḥiẓ; see Myrne, "Who was Ḥubbā al-Madīniyya?" in *Arabic and Semitic Linguistics Contextualized: A Festschrift for Jan Retsö,* ed. Lutz Edzard (Wiesbaden, 2015), 329–30.

[17] See Myrne, "Of Ladies and Lesbians." Two lost "books" reoccur in *Jawāmiʿ al-ladhdhah,* both mentioned in *Fihrist* and with female protagonists; see idem, "Words of Desire." One of them is referred to as Persian and both are inspired by Indian erotology. In addition to these two, the legendary Ḥubbā al-Madīnīyah is the protagonist in a number of narratives.

[18] Ibn Falītah, *Rushd al-labīb,* ch. 3, 16 (Arabic text).

[19] Ibid., ch. 3, 17 (Arabic text).

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Admittedly, the emphasis on women's *shahwah* is part of a misogynist trope: women's agency is dictated by their own bodies, as *shahwah* is seen as a biological impulse that overshadows reason. Nonetheless, women's wishes and preferences are taken seriously by Ibn Naṣr and Ibn Falītah. The ideal for Ibn Naṣr is a harmonious relationship built on mutual love, and the best way to reach this, he claims, is simultaneous orgasm, or rather simultaneous ejaculation. This is inspired by the medical theory of his time, according to which conception takes place only if the male and the female sperm mingle. Ibn Naṣr devotes a chapter to the female orgasm, with classifications of different women and their ways of feeling pleasure. Yet, the numerous descriptions of how different women achieve orgasm, allegedly there to instruct men, are grouped into highly hypothetical and far-fetched classifications, which seem far removed from reality.

Ibn Falītah also devotes a chapter to women's sexual wishes and preferences, and describes women's different routes to orgasm in a slightly more realistic manner than Ibn Naṣr does in *Jawāmiʿ al-ladhdhah*. The point of departure for women's desires and aversions is the same as for men: "everything women dislike in men, men dislike in women."[20]

The representations of women and the female ideal differ considerably in *Tuḥfat al-ʿarūs,* at least concerning the issues discussed above. Although the last part of the book makes some use of the erotological heritage, al-Tijānī avoids anecdotes and stories about women who take erotic initiative. A woman's capacity to act is strictly limited; she should not be given the chance to follow her passions to begin with. Instead, male desires and preferences are highlighted. Although the most valued characteristic in a woman is fertility, al-Tijānī dwells on a woman's ideal appearance; he goes through all parts of the female body, from the hair to the feet, including the genitals.[21] The ideal woman is beautiful and obedient, and she reserves her beauty for her husband.

Al-Tijānī makes clear in the introduction that love should be reciprocal but hierarchical. This hierarchical structure has certainly also guided the author of *Jawāmiʿ al-ladhdhah,* but *Tuḥfat al-ʿarūs* is even more explicitly normative, and the normative gender order is consistently sustained thorough the book. The consequence of Q 2:228: "their men have a degree above them" is that a woman must obey and serve her husband.[22] The author introduces some classic misogynist motifs in the introduction: women are dangerous; they cause disorder and seduction *(fitnah);* they were created from a crooked rib and are more prone to evil—the

[20] Ibid., ch. 5, 1 (Arabic text).

[21] Al-Tijānī, *Tuḥfat al-ʿarūs,* 70–71, 271–350.

[22] Al-Tijānī, *Tuhfat al-ʿarūs* (London, 1992), 153. This and all translations of the Quran are from Arberry, *The Koran Interpreted* (London and New York, 1955).

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majority of the population in hell are women.[23] This characterization of women's intellectual and moral flaws, which is quite common in literature on women and often leads to the conclusion that women should be carefully guarded, gives al-Tijānī the opportunity to advise men to treat their women gently and with patience. Men should treat women well because they are inferior and fallible. A woman's position in relation to her husband is like that of a slave to his or her owner (see below). Therefore, fathers should be careful with their choice of husbands for their daughters. They should not marry their daughters to men who are much older and uglier than they are.[24]

Nevertheless, as the book focusses on men's privileges, women's desires are on the whole considered less important. Women cannot request intercourse more than once a month, for example, whereas they should always be available for their husbands.[25] Even then, there is no guarantee they will be satisfied. Far from it, as a matter of fact, as men are allowed to have sex with their women the way they wish, regardless of a woman's feelings and complaints. This, according to al-Tijānī's sources, is the meaning of Q 2:223: "Your wives are a place of sowing of seed for you, so come to your place of cultivation however you wish."[26]

Al-Suyūṭī's Erotic Literature

By using the term *nikāḥ* in the title—*Al-Wishāḥ fī fawā'id al-nikāḥ* means "The Sash on the merits of *nikāḥ*"—al-Suyūṭī clearly signals that *Wishāḥ* treats sex in the context of Islamic law and tradition, and not sexual pleasure in general, with its various manifestations. He does not, for example, mention homosexuality or explicitly illicit relationships.

Al-Suyūṭī's project was ambitious; he initially set out to write a much larger book.[27] What he eventually achieved is a relatively short manual, but impressive nevertheless. *Wishāḥ* is a systematic study of the central themes encompassed by the earlier sex manuals. It is divided into seven parts, each devoted to a specific branch of knowledge *(fann).* In the first part, on hadiths and legal reports *(fann al-ḥadīth wa-al-athār),* al-Suyūṭī quotes numerous exegeses and hadith collections. The second part, on language *(fann al-lughah),* consists of a list of sexual vocabulary taken from several sources. The long lists of words evoke a universe

[23]For example, al-Tijānī, *Tuhfat al-ʿarūs,* 31–32 (*fitnah,* several hadiths, e.g., from Muslim and al-Bukhārī), 154 (the crooked rib, quoted from al-Bukhārī), 162–63 (women are the main population of hell, from al-Ghazālī).

[24]Ibid., 145ff.

[25]Ibid., 359.

[26]Ibid., 385–86.

[27]See ibid., 229.

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of sexual pleasures, primarily for men, but always within legal bounds. The third part, on anecdotes and historical reports *(fann al-nawādir wa-al-akhbār),* conveys the ordinary corpus of Abbasid anecdotes in addition to quotations from *Tuḥfat al-ʿarūs*. The fourth, on anatomy *(fann al-tashrīḥ),* and the fifth, on medicine *(fann al-ṭibb),* would usually have been presented as one branch. The fields of medicine and anatomy in *Wishāḥ* are curiously undeveloped, considering that al-Suyūṭī had written about medicine elsewhere and should have been relatively familiar with the subject. In the anatomy section, he repeats the idea that the uterus is an inverted scrotum, an idea that had been prevalent ever since Galen's works were translated to Arabic in the third/ninth century—but the bulk of the chapter is extracted from *Jawāmiʿ al-ladhdhah,* which he quotes virtually verbatim. The quotations contain some odd ideas, such as an attribution to Galen claiming that women have five wombs—two for female fetuses, two for male, and one for intersex. This bizarre idea is contradicted by another quotation from *Jawāmiʿ al-ladhdhah,* and al-Suyūṭī's decision to reproduce it is curious.[28] The bulk of the chapter on medicine is a long, almost verbatim quotation from the book on sexual medicine *(Kitāb al-bāh)* by Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn Zakarīyā al-Rāzī (ca. 251–313/865–925). But even here al-Suyūṭī quotes *Jawāmiʿ al-ladhdhah,* in spite of its occasionally odd ideas. Al-Suyūṭī's only contribution is a summary of non-pharmacological sexual stimuli, such as reading books about coitus, and erotic stories, which he probably took from earlier texts on sexual health.

The main part of the chapter on coitus *(fann al-bāh)* also consists of verbatim quotations from *Jawāmiʿ al-ladhdhah.* However, al-Suyūṭī has put more effort into this chapter and sometimes summarizes main ideas and inserts hadiths commenting on critical issues. This indicates a greater degree of engagement in the field of erotology, and an attempt to make it relevant for his contemporaries and compatible with Islamic piety. He has left out everything that could be provocative, such as descriptions of homosexuality and extra-marital affairs. Instead, he uses hadiths to comment upon the erotological material, making an effort to present it as serviceable and respectable reading for believers.

He used these same sources for some of his other works on marriage and sex. In *Shaqāʾiq al-utrunj* and *Nuzhat al-mutaʾammil* he develops some of the themes found in *Tuḥfat al-ʿarūs,* supplemented with hadiths from numerous sources, and he relies on *Rushd al-labīb* by Ibn Falītah. In *Shaqāʾiq al-utrunj,* he also quotes *Jawāmiʿ al-ladhdhah.*[29]

[28]Early Arabic-Islamic ideas about women's sexuality, including those in *Jawāmiʿ al-ladhdhah,* will be discussed in a forthcoming monograph: *Female Sexuality in the Early Medieval Islamic World.*

[29]In one or two other books, namely *Nawāḍir al-ayk fī maʿrifat al-nayk* and *Al-Īḍāḥ fī ʿilm al-nikāḥ,* al-Suyūṭī uses the same sources as in *Wishāḥ,* but these books are more entertaining than

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Major Themes in al-Suyūṭī's Guides to Sex and Marriage

The overall theme in *Wishāḥ* and, to a lesser degree, in *Nuzhat al-mutaʾammil* is sex as a gift from God. This theme is mentioned in practically all premodern Arab-Islamic sex manuals, but not always with the same emphasis. Furthermore, two central themes are shared in the three works analyzed here: ideal masculinity and ideal femininity. Ideal masculinity is a main theme in *Wishāḥ* but is also prominent in *Nuzhat al-mutaʾammil,* and can be summed up with the hadith, "the best man is the one with most women." Ideal femininity is the main theme in both *Nuzhat al-mutaʾammil* and *Shaqāʾiq al-utrunj* and can be summed up with the saying, "the best woman is chaste and lustful *(ʿafīfah ghalimah).*"

Sex is a Gift from God

In the first chapter of *Wishāḥ,* al-Suyūṭī relies on Quran exegeses and hadiths in order to present sex as God's gift to humanity. This is the overall theme in *Wishāḥ,* and quotations set the tone for the rest of the book. According to Ibn Abī Ḥātim (d. 327/938), Q 20:50: "He said, 'Our Lord is He who gave everything its creation, then guided it'" refers to the divine supervision of the way men should have intercourse with women. Ibn Mundhir (d. 318/930) interprets "love and mercy" as sexual intercourse in Q 30:21: "He created for you, of yourselves, spouses, that you might repose in them, and He has set between you love and mercy."[30] Sex is part of God's plan for his creation, and, al-Suyūṭī emphasizes, not only for procreation and the production of new believers, but to remind the believers of Paradise. The pleasure of sexual intercourse, which is great but minor in relation to heavenly bliss, will make the believer long for the greater pleasures of Paradise and consequently repent and correct his behavior so as to have a share in it.[31] Al-Suyūṭī quotes al-Ghazālī's *Iḥyāʾ ʿulūm al-dīn,* but the elevation of sexual intercourse is much more thoroughly addressed in *Wishāḥ.* Al-Ghazālī regarded this divine motive behind human libido as less important than the urge to marry in order to reproduce and stay chaste, and this is al-Suyūṭī's focus in *Nuzhat al-mutaʾammil,* where the reminder of Paradise is the second and less important merit of *nikāḥ (fawāʾid al-nikāḥ).*[32] In *Wishāḥ,* however, sexual pleasure as a reminder of Paradise appears as the most prominent of the merits of sexual intercourse. This approach permits al-Suyūṭī to introduce the erotological tradition by means of a quotation

edifying and therefore not treated here. The attribution of the latter to al-Suyūṭī is contested. Hämeen-Anttila is quite certain it is wrong ("Al-Suyūṭī," 234–35). He estimates that al-Suyūṭī wrote *Wishāḥ, Shaqāʾiq,* and *Nawāḍir* by using the same sources and then divided the material into three different works (ibid., 232).

[30] Al-Suyūṭī, *Wishāḥ,* 39–40.

[31] Ibid., 41–42.

[32] Al-Suyūṭī, *Nuzhat al-mutaʾammil,* 21–24.

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from *Jawāmiʿ al-ladhdhah* in the last part of the book, which teaches the believers various sex positions, among other things. It enables believers to enjoy sex and (male believers in particular) the variety of pleasures legally available to them. The vocabulary catalogued by al-Suyūṭī in *Wishāḥ* is testimony to the abundance of sexual options available for men. There are, for example, specific words for initiating sexual intercourse with a slave woman and ejaculating in another, and having sex with a woman when another woman—most probably a slave concubine—is listening.[33]

Ideal Masculinity

The Best Man is the One with the Most Potency

After having established the divine origin of marital sexuality in *Wishāḥ,* al-Suyūṭī continues with examples of the prophets and pious men. Muḥammad was the only man who was allowed to be married to more than four wives, and he also had great potency. This was given to him by God, as great potency is a sign of divine preference; an oft-quoted hadith states that the best man is the one with the most women.[34] One of the variants of this hadith is quoted by al-Tijānī in *Tuḥfat al-ʿarūs:* "The best man in this *ummah* is the one with most women."[35] According to another hadith, God gave Muḥammad preferences in four things; one was great potency *(kathrat al-jimāʿ).*[36] Al-Suyūṭī was influenced by *Tuḥfat al-ʿarūs,* but did not have to quote al-Tijānī directly; there are several variants of these hadiths available in numerous hadith collections. In *Wishāḥ* and *Nuzhat al-mutaʾammil,* al-Suyūṭī extracts hadiths on Muḥammad's sexual potency from al-Bukhārī, Ṭabarānī, Ibn ʿAsākir, Abū Bakr al-Ismāʿīlī, Muḥammad Ibn Saʿd, ʿAbd al-Razzāq, Ibn ʿAdī, Ibn al-ʿArabī, Ibn Abī Ḥātim, Anis, and Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal.[37]

The hadith scholars did not agree on exactly how great Muḥammad's potency was. According to a hadith retold by Ibn Saʿd, the Prophet had the potency of forty men, a number that is confirmed by Ibn ʿAdī. In one of the hadiths taken from ʿAbd al-Razzāq, the number has inflated; his potency was that of forty-five men. Ibn Abī Ḥātim, who also interpreted some of the verses in the Qurʾan sexually, is even more generous: God's messenger was given the potency of more than seventy young men, and the Jews envied him for that, which was the reasoning

[33] Al-Suyūṭī, *Wishāḥ,* 93, 113 (the first example); 93, 124 (the second example).

[34] Al-Suyūṭī, *Nuzhat al-mutaʾammil,* 16–17.

[35] Al-Tijānī, *Tuḥfat al-ʿarūs,* 356 (from al-Bukhārī and ʿIyāḍ). Al-Tijānī adds, quoting al-Khaṭṭābī, that women here are obviously wives, as any man could possess as many slave women as he wished, due to the former's lower standing than that of free women; ibid, 356–57.

[36] The others were generosity, courage, and strength in war and fighting *(baṭsh);* al-Tijānī, *Tuḥfat al-ʿarūs,* 354; from ʿIyāḍ ibn Mūsá (476–544/1088–1149).

[37] Al-Suyūṭī, *Wishāḥ,* the section on potency, 42–51.

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behind the revelation in Q 4:54: "are they jealous of the people for the bounty that God has given them?" The phrase "God's bounty" refers to the great potency God gave to some people.[38]

According to a hadith in *Wishāḥ* extracted from al-Bukhārī, Muḥammad slept with each of his eleven wives at one o'clock every day and night, and he had the potency of thirty men.[39] Al-Tijānī has a somewhat more restrained variant: the Prophet visited his wives at one o'clock every day *or* night, and, he points out, he had not more than nine wives at the same time.[40] Characteristically, al-Suyūṭī quotes the higher number without reservation; he does not seem to be looking for the exact truth. For him, having many women and great potency are the attributes of a prophet.[41] Potency was given to all prophets, most of all to Solomon. He had an extremely large number of women—three hundred wives and seven hundred concubines—and, according to various authorities; he slept with ninety, one hundred or, even one thousand women every day.[42]

Great potency is not reserved for prophets, however. The most devoted of Muḥammad's relatives and followers had many wives and slave concubines.[43] Having sexual stamina is the same as loving women, and all members of Banū ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib loved women.[44] The need for potency is traced by al-Suyūṭī to Arabs' physical temperaments *(amzijah),* which are characterized by a greater sexual appetite. Al-Tijānī quotes an intriguing argument from al-Khaṭṭābī (388/998), suggesting that when God chose a messenger from among the Arabs, he choose the best man according to the qualities that were most valued by the Arabs, one of which was sexual stamina.[45]

Al-Suyūṭī gives examples with reports about the sexual behavior of famous men. The companion Saʿd ibn Mālik used to have intercourse with ten slave

[38] Ibid., 44–45.

[39] Ibid., 42–45.

[40] Al-Tijānī, *Tuḥfat al-ʿarūs,* 354–55. The hadith from al-Bukhārī seems to be more common with "and" than "or," but it is easy to confuse these words in Arabic. Either of them may be a scribal error. I have not checked the manuscripts of *Tuḥfat al-ʿarūs,* but as for *Wishāḥ,* all manuscripts available to me have the same phrase: "night and day" (MSS BnF 3066, fol. 2b; 3067, fol. 3a; King Saʿūd 797, fol. 4b; Lala Ismail 577, fol. 3a).

[41] Al-Suyūṭī, *Wishāḥ,* 48; from al-Tirmidhī.

[42] Al-Suyūṭī, *Wishāḥ,* 45. According to al-Tijānī, Solomon had the potency of forty men. He mentions the stories about Solomon's potency briefly in the chapter on slave concubines *(al-sarārī): Tuḥfat al-ʿarūs,* 174, and then again in the chapter on the benefits and harms of sexual intercourse, where the focus is how many concubines he had intercourse with each day, seventy, ninety, or one hundred; ibid., 357–58.

[43] Al-Suyūṭī, *Wishāḥ,* 47; from Ibn ʿUyaynah.

[44] Ibid., 46; from Abū al-Qāsim Hamzah ibn Yūsuf al-Sahmī (d. 427/1035–36).

[45] Al-Tijānī, *Tuḥfat al-ʿarūs,* 356–57.

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women every night.[46] ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib remarried seven days after the death of Fāṭimah; his son al-Ḥasan married altogether over two hundred or seven hundred women.[47] In *Nuzhat al-muta'ammil,* al-Suyūṭī provides more details: ʿAlī had four wives and seventeen slave concubines, and al-Ḥasan used to marry and divorce four women at the same time.[48] Ibn ʿUmar, one of Muḥammad's most devoted followers, claimed that he was given the potency of forty men.[49] He used to break the fast with sexual intercourse, in order to empty his heart of earthly desire. Al-Tijānī quotes al-Ghazālī in this regard, who adds that Ibn ʿUmar slept with three slave girls every night during Ramadan.[50] Sexual stamina does not distinguish only Arab men. In fact, everybody who fears God has a greater sexual appetite.[51] Therefore, every believing man is given the potency of ten men.[52] In Paradise, pious believers are rewarded with the potency of one hundred men, according to hadiths from al-Tirmidhī and al-Bayhaqī.[53]

Al-Suyūṭī does not guide the reader or offer any comments on the veracity of conflicting hadiths. Instead, by quoting from a vast number of traditions, though conflicting, and exaggerating the sexual activities of the predecessors, he develops a central claim: there is no shame for a man to enjoy sex and to have many women—he can still be pious. In this way, al-Suyūṭī not only presents potency and heterosexual hypersexuality as essential parts of masculinity, he also introduces them as Islamic ideals.

Ideal Male Behavior towards Women

The tendency to equate ideal masculinity with potency can be seen in *Tuḥfat al-ʿarūs* and other earlier works, but they often restricted this ideal to the Prophet, and did not consistently include ordinary believers. Instead, they often laid more emphasis on men's code of conduct. Al-Tijānī, for example, exhorted fathers to look after their daughters, as mentioned above. He also instructed men to take care of their appearance and make an effort to be handsome and clean when they approached women, just as they expected women to look beautiful for them.[54] This code of behavior is not ignored by al-Suyūṭī. For example, he quotes a com-

[46] Ibid., 50 (from Ibn Abī Shaybah) and 51.

[47] Ibid., 51.

[48] Al-Suyūṭī, *Nuzhat al-muta'ammil,* 17.

[49] Ibid., 48–49.

[50] Al-Tijānī, *Tuḥfat al-ʿarūs,* 363.

[51] Al-Suyūṭī, *Wishāḥ,* 49; from Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī's commentary on *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī.*

[52] Ibid., 49.

[53] Ibid., 86.

[54] Al-Tijānī, *Tuḥfat al-ʿarūs,* 145–46.

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mon hadith on the importance of kissing and talking before intercourse, and hints at men's responsibility for women's wellbeing. He also, in line with the erotological tradition, points to the importance of women's sexual satisfaction.

In the chapter on *bāh* in *Wishāḥ,* al-Suyūṭī quotes and summarizes sections from *Ǧawāmiʿ al-ladhdhah*'s descriptions of the female orgasm, and how women can be stimulated. To this he adds his own thoughts and quotations from legal literature. The chapter contains, for example, advice to men on how to delay or hasten their ejaculation so as to reach simultaneous orgasm. In order to hasten the process, the author of *Ǧawāmiʿ al-ladhdhah* suggests that the man imagine that his female partner is exceedingly attractive and beautiful. Al-Suyūṭī changed the sentence slightly, so that the man is advised to imagine that he is having sex with another woman, "who is exceedingly beautiful and pleasurable."[55] This was apparently controversial among hadith scholars, and al-Suyūṭī therefore quotes hadiths discussing whether imagining another partner is *zinā* or not (al-Suyūṭī is quite certain it is not). Another question for hadith scholars was female ejaculation, which was influenced by medical theory. After a synopsis of the views of "Indian philosophers" taken from *Ǧawāmiʿ al-ladhdhah,* on whether women ejaculate or not, al-Suyūṭī continues with hadiths on women's sperm, the difference between female and male sperm, and whether women can experience nocturnal ejaculation—and if so, whether they have to perform the full-body ablution *(ghusl),* which men must do (the answer is yes).

In addition, al-Suyūṭī quotes some prophetical hadiths advising men to see to the needs of their wives and create a good atmosphere.[56] They should not cover their women like animals, but kiss and talk to them first. According to one hadith taken from Ibn ʿAdī (d. 365/975–76), God loves and rewards men who play with their wives.[57] In a couple of similar hadiths, one from al-Ghazālī's *Iḥyāʾ,* the Prophet advises men to ensure that their women get sexual satisfaction, as it is good behavior *(adab).* Al-Ghazālī is obviously influenced by the medical tradition when he claims that withholding ejaculation (i.e., orgasm) is dangerous for women.[58]

Yet, neither al-Tijānī nor al-Suyūṭī hesitate to relate and give advice about male behavior that disregards women's feelings. Al-Tijānī describes early Muslims whose potency was so extraordinary that it caused suffering to their women.[59] The women's complaints are recorded, but only as testimonies to their husbands' manliness. Otherwise, women's feelings are irrelevant for al-Tijānī, al-Suyūṭī,

[55] Ibid., 376–77.

[56] Al-Suyūṭī, *Wishāḥ,* 71–73.

[57] Al-Suyūṭī, *Wishāḥ,* 73.

[58] See the forthcoming *Female Sexuality in the Early Medieval Islamic World.*

[59] Al-Tijānī, *Tuḥfat al-ʿarūs,* 362–63.

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and their sources. Moreover, despite their belief in men's potency, al-Tijānī and al-Suyūṭī realized that satisfying multiple wives could be difficult for men, especially if they also had slave concubines. Al-Tijānī notes that women cannot legally demand intercourse more than once a month, and al-Suyūṭī quotes hadiths stating that men do not have to divide their sexual attention fairly between their wives.[60] According to al-Suyūṭī's sources, this is the meaning of Q 4:129: "You will not be able to be equitable between your wives, be you ever so eager."

Ideal Femininity

The Best Woman is Chaste and Lustful

Ideal femininity is the main theme in both *Nuzhat al-mutaʾammil* and *Shaqāʾiq al-utrunj,* and a minor theme in *Wishāḥ.* Al-Suyūṭī has attempted to combine the conflicting representations of femininity in the erotological and hadith literature—what I have labelled the *bāh* and the *nikāḥ* traditions—and the result is interesting. In short, whereas erotology often portrays voracious women who openly express their desire, hadiths are more concerned about female chastity and marital obedience. The objectives of these two literary forms are obviously different: erotic stories about voracious women are meant to be arousing and possibly entertaining, whereas hadiths are normative. Yet, the eroticization of women in al-Suyūṭī's sources has apparently inspired him, most visibly in the short treatise *Shaqāʾiq al-utrunj fī raqāʾiq al-ghunj,* where he sets out to defend female sensuality and even teach women how to express it.

In *Wishāḥ,* al-Suyūṭī supplies a rich vocabulary for sexual activities that enhance pleasure for both parties, some of them performed by women.[61] There are, among other words, several synonyms for women's sounds during intercourse—words that were amply used by the author of *Jawāmiʿ al-ladhdhah* when presenting female protagonists of erotic stories.[62] In *Shaqāʾiq,* al-Suyūṭī also describes female sexual behavior, but is careful to point out that it has to be confined to legal intercourse; it has to be directed to the husband or legal owner. The notion of female lustfulness is connected to the assumption that women have a greater sexual appetite than men have. Al-Suyūṭī quotes a hadith in *Wishāḥ* and *Nuzhat al-mutaʾammil* claiming that women were given ninety-nine percent of all *shahwah* and men only one percent.[63] This saying is also mentioned in *Jawāmiʿ al-lad-*

[60] Ibid., 359; al-Suyūṭī, *Wishāḥ,* 61.

[61] Al-Suyūṭī, *Wishāḥ,* 189–96.

[62] See Myrne, "Words of Advice."

[63] Al-Suyūṭī, *Nuzhat al-mutaʾammil,* 25; *Wishāḥ,* 78. In the latter, he quotes two hadiths, one taken from al-Bayhaqī and one from al-Ṭabarānī. The printed edition has *ladhdhah* (pleasure) in both these hadiths, implying that women feel much more pleasure than men during intercourse. This reading is supported by MSS BnF arabe 3067, fol. 8b; Lala Ismail 577, fol. 13a; and King Saʿūd 797,

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hdhah and *Rushd al-labīb,* where it is more in keeping with the rest of the content, as female desire is the focus in these books. There, women are given somewhat less of all *shahwah*—ninety percent rather than ninety-nine—and in *Ǧawāmiʿ al-ladhdhah* the saying is attributed to the female protagonist and narrator of erotic stories, not to the Prophet.[64]

The central word is *ghunj*—amorous, sensual behavior—a word that is only used for women. Daniela Firanescu identifies its "semantic core" as "women's verbal expression of sensuality," but it also includes female attractiveness and sexual behavior in general, including sounds and movements before and during intercourse.[65] The meaning of *ghunj* is ambiguous. On the one hand, it may be an expression of real desire, as, after all, women have so much more *shahwah* than men have. One the other hand, it must be expressed in certain ways in order to please the husband. Al-Suyūṭī quotes a section from *Rushd al-labīb* by Ibn Falītah, where he describes women's different ways of expressing their desire. The short excerpt chosen by al-Suyūṭī presents different types of *ghunj,* to the effect that there is good and bad *ghunj,* and good *ghunj* is a performance enacted by the woman to arouse her husband.[66] A woman who can perform well is soft and submissive—shy at the beginning, but then unable to hide the lust her husband arouses in her. She sighs and moves excitedly during intercourse, but not too loud and not too much. Women who perform badly, whose *ghunj* is not exciting, are too loud and ugly and move too much.

By combining *ghunj,* the sensual behavior described in the *bāh* tradition, with the female chastity advocated by the *nikāḥ* tradition, al-Suyūṭī endorses *ghunj* as an Islamic behavior. This combination is far from new. A saying stating that the best woman is chaste *(ʿafīfah)* but lustful *(ghalimah)* towards her husband can

fol. 17a. MS BnF arabe 3067, fol. 11a, has *shahwah* in al-Bayhaqī's hadith and *ladhdhah* in the one from al-Ṭabarānī.

[64] See Myrne, "Words of Advice."

[65] Firanescu, "Revisiting Love," 244.

[66] Al-Suyūṭī, *Shaqāʾiq al-utrunj,* 87–92. The quotation in *Shaqāʾiq* differs somewhat from *Rushd al-labīb* and is abbreviated. Firanescu, who wrongly attributes parts of the extract to al-Suyūṭī and al-Bayhaqī, uses fragments of it as examples of *ghunj* signifying women's "vocal erotic behaviour": Firanescu, "Revisiting Love," 245, 247–50. While I agree that vocal expression was considered an important part of *ghunj,* Ibn Falītah begins with describing behavior and makes clear that vocal expression is only one part of it (*ghunj huwa al-taraffuq wa-al-tadhallul wa-al-dhubūl wa-taftīr al-ʿuyūn wa-tamrīḍ al-jufūn wa-irkhāʾ al-mafāṣil min ghayr ḥarakah; Shaqāʾiq al-utrunj,* 87). Women can even express their sexual desire in a sensuous way without sounds (ibid., 91). In erotic stories in *Ǧawāmiʿ al-ladhdhah,* however, *ghunj* is more or less equivalent with women's lustful sounds; see Myrne, "Words of advice."

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be traced back at least to Ibn Qutaybah (d. 276/889), who attributes it to ʿAlī.[67] In *Shaqāʾiq al-utrunj,* the saying is a prophetical hadith, with some variants extracted from Ibn ʿAdī, al-Daylamī, and al-Zamakhsharī.[68] The demand for chastity is essentially gender-neutral, and dominates many writings on *nikāḥ.* The combination of chastity and "lustfulness," however, is principally a female characteristic, which is discussed in *Shaqāʾiq al-utrunj* with the help of Quran exegeses and hadiths. For example, ʿ*uruban* in Q 56:37, a description of the women in Paradise, are, according to al-Suyūṭī's sources, women who manifest love for their husbands. They are, according to al-Ṭabarī, *al-mutaḥabbibāt al-mutawaddidāt ilá azwājihinna,* loving towards their husbands.[69] Their love includes sexual attraction. They are ʿ*awāshiq li-azwājihinna*—passionately in love with their husbands—according to the exegetics of al-Ṭabarī, Ibn al-Mundhir, Ibn Ḥātim, Hannād ibn al-Sarī, and ʿAbd al-Ḥumayd. Others use similar epithets for women who love their husbands and express it.[70]

Ḥusn al-Tabaʿʿul and Marital Obedience

The notion of the ideal woman as chaste and lustful is not new, but through the sheer number of hadiths and *akhbār* collected on this issue, al-Suyūṭī takes this further than his predecessors. As Firanescu also points out, al-Suyūṭī advocates for the inclusion of *ghunj* as part of the notion *ḥasanat/ḥusn al-tabaʿʿul,* which signifies a woman who is obedient to her husband.[71] Marital obedience is central to the feminine ideal in the *nikāḥ* tradition, and is elaborated on in *Tuḥfat al-ʿarūs.* The inclusion of expressions of sensuality into the notion of *ḥusn al-tabaʿʿul* is suggested by earlier scholars. Both al-Tijānī and al-Suyūṭī quote a lost book by al-Tīfāshī (580–651/1184–1253), describing an exemplary woman who is clever *(faṭinah)* and obedient to her husband *(ḥasanat al-tabaʿʿul)* and therefore endeavors to rouse her husband's desire and enhance his pleasure. She makes herself beautiful and attractive when he has sex with her, and lets him know that she loves and desires him.[72]

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[67] Ibn Qutaybah, *ʿUyūn al-akhbār* (Cairo, 1930), 4:2; the report goes, "The best of your women is she who is chaste with her vagina, but lustful to her husband."

[68] Al-Suyūṭī, *Shaqāʾiq al-utrunj,* 77–78. The first two attribute it to Muḥammad, but regard it as *ḍaʿīf,* while al-Zamakhsharī attributes it to ʿAlī, and a variant to Khālid ibn Ṣafwān; both found in Ibn Qutaybah's *ʿUyūn al-akhbār.*

[69] Al-Suyūṭī , *Shaqāʾiq al-utrunj,* 64.

[70] Ibid., 64–67. Al-Suyūṭī uses the same sources in *Al-Durr al-manthūr fī al-tafsīr bi-al-maʾthūr,* ed. ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿAbd al-Muḥsin al-Turkī (Cairo, 1424/2003), 14:201–5.

[71] Al-Suyūṭī, *Shaqāʾiq al-utrunj,* 68–69, 75, 83. Firanescu, "Revisiting Love," 254.

[72] Al-Suyūṭī, *Shaqāʾiq al-utrunj,* 80–81; al-Tijānī, *Tuḥfat al-ʿarūs,* 130.

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Al-Suyūṭī mentions the notion of *ḥusn al-tabaʿul* in *Wishāḥ,* quoting a hadith stating that *ḥusn al-tabaʿul* is women's jihad.[73] As female behavior is not a major focus in this book, however, marital obedience is mentioned only in passing, while emphasizing men's right to have sexual intercourse the way they wish, regardless of their wives' objections, in accordance with the exegesis of Q 2:223, which is discussed below. The obligation for women to obey their husbands is instead forcefully established by al-Suyūṭī in *Nuzhat al-mutaʾammil*. It is, in fact, the main theme of this book, which is written as an appeal to women to obey their husbands, and to men to control their wives and make them obey them. Punishment and reward will be delivered to women in the hereafter on the basis of their obedience to their husbands, or lack thereof.

In *Nuzhat al-mutaʾammil,* al-Suyūṭī quotes two hadiths containing imaginative depictions of women's position in the hierarchical gender order. Both are also quoted by al-Tijānī. According to the first hadith, attributed to ʿĀʾishah, women are men's dolls *(luʿab),* and men decide how they want their dolls to be adorned.[74] This means that even when the wife makes herself beautiful for her husband, she has to follow his instructions. Al-Tijānī quotes several other sources with the same meaning, adding that compliance with the husband's aesthetic and other preferences is her primary route to happiness. This is, in fact, his central message to women. A harmonious marriage requires a woman's total submission to a man's commands and desires. Obedience towards the husband is more important than obedience to God, which means that if men forbid their women to fast or pray or attend their parents' funerals, they have to conform.[75] He criticizes women who do not adorn themselves, and claims that even the Prophet had something to say about women's kohl and henna, and condemned women who look like men.[76] Al-Suyūṭī also describes women's preferred appearance in detail, in line with the conviction that women's beauty is central to marital happiness.[77]

The second hadith declares that wives are their husbands' slaves.[78] Al-Suyūṭī quotes one and al-Tijānī two hadiths with this meaning, one from al-Shāfiʿī: "Marriage is a form of slavery *(riqq).* She is his slave, and must obey him completely.

[73] Al-Suyūṭī, *Wishāḥ,* 82; taken from al-Bayhaqī.

[74] Al-Suyūṭī, *Nuzhat al-mutaʾammil,* 39; al-Tijānī, *Tuḥfat al-ʿarūs,* 129, 156. *Luʿab* can signify toys in general, but it is obvious from the contexts that the intention here is dolls.

[75] Al-Tijānī, *Tuḥfat al-ʿarūs* (from al-Ghazālī), 161–62. Similar hadiths are quoted by al-Suyūṭī elsewhere; see Manuela Marin, "Disciplining Wives: A Historical Reading of Qurʾān 4:34," *Studio Islamica* 97 (2003): 36–38, who mentions a quotation in *Al-Durr al-manthūr,* implying that men can forbid their wives to do the voluntary fast; ibid., 37.

[76] Al-Tijānī, *Tuḥfat al-ʿarūs,* 131–33.

[77] Al-Suyūṭī, *Nuzhat al-mutaʾammil,* 39–41.

[78] Ibid., 45.

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She should not resist anything that he asks from her," and one from a variant of the Prophet's farewell speech, "women are your slaves *(ʿawān).*"[79] A woman's position as her husband's slave should prompt fathers to be careful with their choice of husbands for their daughters, according to al-Tijānī.[80] Al-Suyūṭī instead emphasizes fathers' responsibility to instruct their daughters to be good, obedient wives. *Nuzhat al-mutaʾammil* includes Muḥammad's alleged instruction to his daughter Fāṭimah to make herself beautiful for her husband, so that her husband enjoys looking at her. When he looks at her, she should lower her gaze and feign shyness before she looks back at him. This will increase his love for her. During intercourse, she should behave like a virgin, and when he has finished, she should be exceptionally tender towards him, which will make him love her.[81]

Women are a Tillage for You

Consenting to men's wishes is part of women's obligatory obedience to their husbands, an issue that is strongly emphasized by al-Tijānī in *Tuḥfat al-ʿarūs* and al-Suyūṭī in *Nuzhat al-mutaʾammil,* as we have seen. There are numerous hadiths, quoted here and elsewhere, exhorting women to obey their husbands, whatever they are doing, and whatever their husbands order them to do. Al-Suyūṭī makes it clear that the divine authorizes this gender order by quoting Quran exegesis. Most significant for him was perhaps Q 2:223: "Your women are tillage for you, so come unto your tillage as you wish."[82] This verse was revealed, according to traditions taken from Abū Dāwūd, al-Ḥākim, al-Bayhaqī, and others, when a man from Quraysh married a woman of the *anṣār,* just after the *muhājirūn* entered Medina. The Qurayshites were used to "enjoying their women" in various ways, face-to-face or from behind, whereas the people in Medina were more conventional in their sexual behavior. Hence, when the Qurayshite attempted to have sex with his new wife the way he wanted, she rejected him and went to the Prophet, complaining. Then the verse was revealed to Muḥammad, which gave all men full authority in this matter.[83] The implication of this exegesis is that men can have sex with their women the way they want, without the consent of their women and despite their possible aversion. According to other hadiths about this verse, however, the Jews in Medina first complained about the sexual behavior of the *muhājirūn*. A variant quoted by al-Suyūṭī combines both these causes: first the Jews complained and tried to prevent the *anṣārī* from taking up the custom

[79] Ibid., 161 (al-Shāfiʿī) and 155 (the farewell speech, commented on by al-Tirmidhī).

[80] Ibid., 145ff.

[81] Ibid., 46–47.

[82] Al-Suyūṭī, *Wishāḥ,* 62–64.

[83] Ibid., 62.

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of the *muhājirūn*. Then a woman refused to obey her husband when he wanted sex with her in a way she did not like, and after that the verse was revealed.[84] The verse is discussed at length in al-Suyūṭī's *Al-Durr al-manthūr*. He quotes as many as 101 hadiths and reports on this sentence alone, which is only the first part of the verse.[85] This is to be compared with an average of two to three hadiths per verse in the sample from *Al-Durr al-manthūr* analyzed by Stephen Burge.[86] As many as 36 hadiths claim that the verse was revealed in order to oblige women to obey their husbands' sexual wishes. The crux of the matter for the jurists was whether God gave men the right to have vaginal sex with their wives the way they wished or if they were also allowed to have anal sex. In *Wishāḥ,* the message is summarized neatly: the verse was revealed in order to make it easy for men, regardless of women's feelings.[87]

Conclusion

Al-Suyūṭī's ambition seems to have been to reinterpret the erotological heritage for the benefit of his contemporaries. *Wishāḥ* represents the apex of the genre of sex and marriage manuals.[88] Similar sex and marriage manuals were still written after 1500, but none drew from the Arab erotic heritage and the Islamic heritage to the extent al-Suyūṭī did. The originality of *Wishāḥ* lies in the way it combines the different branches of sexual knowledge, with the science of hadith as the focal point. Al-Suyūṭī provides a new and modernized version of the earlier sexual science *(ʿilm al-bāh)* and demonstrates that it is not inconsistent with an Islamic vision of sexuality, based on hadith. Whereas most earlier manuals, not least *Jawāmiʿ al-ladhdhah,* present marital intercourse as one of several possible manifestations of sexuality, *Wishāḥ* only deals with legal relationships. Admittedly, earlier manuals expressed the view that licit intercourse was to be preferred, and they added prophetic tradition to their arguments, but illicit sex was often not clearly condemned, and homosexuality was treated as a natural variation. In fact, several of the principal manuals have chapters devoted to same-sex desire, female and male. *Tuḥfat al-ʿarūs,* the popular marriage manual relying on hadith, on the other hand, has almost no material from the *ʿilm al-bāh* tradition and hardly mentions anything beyond licit sex, and definitely not homosexuality. By

[84] Ibid., 64.

[85] Al-Suyūṭī, *Al-Durr al-manthūr,* 2:589–618.

[86] Stephen R. Burge, "Scattered Pearls: Exploring al-Suyūṭī's Hermeneutics and Use of Sources in *al-Durr al-manthūr fī'l-tafsīr bi'l-ma'thūr,*" *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 24, no. 2 (2013): 251–96.

[87] Al-Suyūṭī, *Wishāḥ,* 64.

[88] In the same way as al-Suyūṭī contributed to mediaeval science; Geoffroy, "Al-Suyūṭī," *EI2,* 9:913–16.

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incorporating the *ʿilm al-bāh* tradition, al-Suyūṭī opens up a wider range of sexual pleasures for believers, within legal bounds. In light of this, his choice not to mention homosexuality is certainly intentional.[89]

In al-Suyūṭī's vision, men would be allowed to enjoy the sexual techniques and practices elaborated by his Abbasid predecessor, some inspired by Indian and Persian erotica. Together with the Islamic extension of the notion of marital bonds, which gave men the right to have sexual relations with an unlimited number of slave women, quantity became a measure of sexual quality for men. Obviously, women occupy a totally different position in this sexual universe, but al-Suyūṭī's stance on women is also quite unique. He attempted to unite the sexually voracious women who were so common in Abbasid erotica with the ideal woman in sex and marriage manuals that were built on hadiths; al-Ghazālī and al-Tijānī are major authorities in *Wishāḥ.* The result is an utterly complex and ambiguous vision of women, their role, and their expected contribution to matrimonial happiness.

In the introduction to *Wishāḥ,* al-Suyūṭī praises God for having embellished women with large buttocks, obviously for the enjoyment of men, and this sets the tone of the book.[90] In the following sections, women are primarily vehicles for men's enjoyment. Yet, they are expected to enjoy the sexual act, and their ability to achieve satisfaction is taken seriously in the last part of the book, on *bāh,* but also treated in the hadith section.

There are several conflicting notions in al-Suyūṭī's sexual ethics. For example, men should, according to some of his sources, be attentive to women's feelings and make sure that women are sexually satisfied. Yet, women should always consent to their husbands' wishes, regardless of their own feelings and objections. Conveniently, Q 4:129, which states that "You will not be able to be equitable between your wives, be you ever so eager," indicates, according to the exegesis quoted by al-Suyūṭī, that men do not have to have sex with all their wives, and they do not have to love them equally.[91]

One could argue that these two directives balance each other, but in the *nikāḥ* tradition, to which al-Suyūṭī belongs, women's obedience is an obligation, whereas men's attention to their wives is only recommended. Moreover, it is noticeable that women in this tradition are not supposed to seek their own pleasure. They focus on their husbands' needs and are, at best, satisfied by them. Men, on the other hand, are supposed to seek pleasure, and have the right to demand it, not only from their wives but also from slave concubines, whenever and however

[89] A topic discussed by Hämeen-Anttila, "Al-Suyūṭī," 237–38.

[90] *Zayyana al-marʾah bi-al-ḥashafah* (*Wishāḥ,* 33). The word *ḥashafah* is often translated "glans of the penis," but al-Suyūṭī explains that it signifies "having large buttocks"; *Wishāḥ,* 188.

[91] Al-Suyūṭī, *Wishāḥ,* 61.

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they want. In light of this, "whatever happens between two consenting adults is their own concern" is not a relevant summary of the message in *Shaqā'iq al-utrunj,* as suggested by Jaakko Hämeen-Anttila.[92] Hämeen-Anttila is probably right, however, in saying that al-Suyūṭī is "able to show himself to be a man who enjoys life in all its variety," as this is precisely the message his books have for men—but it should be noted that this message is highly gendered.[93] In his guides to sex and marriage, al-Suyūṭī endorses male and female ideals that are shaped by erotology and justified by hadiths. The result is an "erotic utopia" with a variety of licit sexual pleasures available for men. Women also have access to pleasure, but they are dependent on their husbands' good will. Their role in the erotic utopia is primarily to enhance men's sexual experience and fulfil men's desires.

[92]This is the meaning of *idh khalawtum fa-if'alū mā shi'tum* according to Hämeen-Anttila, "Al-Suyūṭī," 231. However, the statement is addressed to men, who are the ones who are free to do as they wish, whereas women have to obey them. Moreover, the interpretation of *idh khalawtum fa-if'alū mā shi'tum* is not relevant, as the remark is not made by al-Suyūṭī but is a later addition. Some of the manuscripts have additions after the colophon, noted by the editor Ḥusayn 'Umar Ḥamādah in his introduction (*Shaqā'iq al-utrunj,* 21, 22, 23), which is not uncommon in manuscripts. Hämeen-Anttila relies on al-Rifā'ī's (Damascus, 2001) edition, in which pages 106–8 are an addition, not noted as such by the editor, corresponding to the addition in Cairo, Dār al-Kutub MS 3490 (acc. to Ḥamādah, 16, 23). Al-Rifā'ī's edition is not scholarly; it is based on one single unidentified manuscript and contains a few serious corruptions and lacunas compared to the Ḥammādah edition.

[93]Hämeen-Anttila," Al-Suyūṭī," 238.

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Medieval Arabic Islam and the Culture of Gender: Feminine Voices in al-Suyūṭī's Literature on Sex and Marriage

Introduction

This article examines the feminine voices perceptible in works attributed to the renowned polymath of the Mamluk period, Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī (d. 911/1505), pertaining to the field of *adab al-nikāḥ,* literature on sex and marriage, or, more generally, erotic literature. As much of the early Arabic erotic literature—produced in the ninth and tenth centuries—was "lost without a trace,"[1] it is fortunate that later authors, such as al-Suyūṭī, preserved some of this early production in their compilations and the (sometimes ample) quotations from earlier authors that they inserted in their own works.

It is worth noting that while in Europe the woman's voice had to wait until the eleventh century to be heard in literature—as "before [the eleventh century] almost all texts were written by men for a male audience and primarily dealt with male issues, apart from theological topics, disregarding some, certainly remarkable exceptions"[2]—female Arab poets had an ancient heritage, dating from pre-Islam through the first Islamic eras, counting hundreds of female poets from al-Khansā' (seventh century) to Wallādah bint al-Mustkafī (eleventh century), according to some sources.[3] However, despite the early feminine presence in Arabic literature, according to Rapoport "for most of the Mamluk period we have no female authors who speak to us in their own voice; nearly the entire corpus of surviving Mamluk texts has been written by men."[4]

Elucidating the cause of the absence of female authors in the Mamluk period would represent, per se, the subject of a laborious—though certainly necessary—study. Nevertheless, we can consider here a related, fundamental question: is the voice of women completely absent from Mamluk texts in general, and from al-

[1]Cf. E. K. Rowson, "Arabic Erotic Literature: Middle Ages to Nineteenth Century," in *Encyclopedia of Erotic Literature,* ed. G. Brulotte and J. Phillips (New York, 2006), 1:41–61.

[2]Albrecht Classen, "Introduction," in *The Power of a Woman's Voice in Medieval and Early Modern Literatures: New Approaches to German and European Women Writers and to Violence Against Women in Premodern Times* (Berlin-New York, 2007), 1.

[3]Radwa Ashour, Mohammed Berrada, Ferial J. Ghazoul, and Amina Rachid, "Introduction," in *Arab Women Writers: A Critical Reference Guide 1873–1999,* ed. Ashour, Ghazoul, and H. Reda-Mekdashi (Cairo, 2008), 1.

[4]Yossef Rapoport, "Women and Gender in Mamluk Society: An Overview," Mamlūk Studies Review 11, no. 2 (2007): 38, https://doi.org/10.6082/m1x34vm5 (accessed October 10, 2017).

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Suyūṭī's texts in particular? Or can we identify feminine voices? If so, what is the purpose of feminine speech inserted in men's speech and what are the topics to which the feminine speech is related? We confine the scope of this investigation to a part of al-Suyūṭī's "erotic" literature, a domain in which the presence of feminine voices is, presumably, to be expected.

Our purpose is to detect women's verbalized reactions presented as "direct speech" or ascribed by the author to women and quoted as such. While analyzing women's statements related to the parts they play in sex and marriage relations, we aim to observe the discursive and ideological functions of the feminine speech inserted in the male-oriented general frame of the texts.

The corpus examined includes the entire small erotic treatise *Shaqā'iq al-utrunj fī raqā'iq al-ghunuj*[5] (ʿĀdil al-ʿĀmil's edition, hereafter abbreviated *Shaqā'iq*), known in translation as *The Citron's Halves* or, as we have proposed,[6] *The Citrons' Sisters: on Women of Sensitive Coquetry*. As we have approached this text in detail in previous articles,[7] here we focus on the feminine voices detectable in the text. Other examples are excerpted from *Fann al-nikāḥ fī turāth shaykh al-islām Ǧalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī,*[8] the first of the three tomes devoted by the editor George Kadar to the compiled texts of al-Suyūṭī on this topic, namely from two chapters (pp. 67–104) that approach the topic of sex and marriage as reflected in the Prophetic tradition, the Quran, and its exegesis.

The translation of the excerpts from both parts of the corpus is ours.

Contextualization of the Corpus

In al-Suyūṭī's time, *nikāḥ* was already a well-established term; to give only one illustrious example, the imam al-Ghazālī (450–505/1058–1111), about four centuries earlier, used it in *Kitāb ādāb al-nikāḥ*[9] (the second chapter of the section devoted to customs, *ʿādāt,* in his magnum opus *Iḥyā' ʿulūm al-dīn* [The Revival of religious

[5]Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī, *Shaqā'iq al-utrunj fī raqā'iq al-ghunuj,* ed. ʿĀdil al-ʿĀmil (Damascus, 1988).

[6]Daniela R. Firanescu, "Revisiting Love and Coquetry in Medieval Arabic Islam: al-Suyūṭī's Perspective," in *Al-Suyūṭī: A Polymath of the Mamlūk Period: Proceedings of the Themed Day of the First Conference of the School of Mamlūk Studies (Ca' Foscari University, Venice, June 23, 2014),* ed. Antonella Ghersetti (Leiden-Boston, 2016), 243.

[7]Ibid. Also see D. R. Firanescu, "De l'amour et la coquetterie en islam arabe médiéval: la perspective d'as-Suyuti," *Romano-Arabica,* New Series, II (Discourses on Love in the Orient), ed. N. Anghelescu and G. Grigore (Bucharest, 2002), 55–62.

[8]*Fann al-nikāḥ fī turāth shaykh al-islām Ǧalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī,* in *Al-aʿmāl al-kāmilah,* ed. George Kadar (Beirut, 2011), 3 vols.

[9]Al-Ghazālī, "Kitāb Ādāb al-nikāḥ," in *Iḥyā' ʿulūm al-dīn* (Cairo, n.d.), 2:32–89. Also Arabic text, http://www.Ghazālī.org/ihya/ihya.htm external link j2-k02.doc. (accessed May 10, 2017).

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sciences]), a work that al-Suyūṭī knew very well.[10] The fact that al-Ghazālī's text refers to "marital" sexual relations is obvious to the reader of the Arabic original; it is emphasized, as well, by the fact that the word *nikāḥ* is rendered in translations of the title as "marriage."[11] Unfortunately, in the transliteration of the word *ādāb* (manners, etiquette; sometimes translated as "proper conduct"[12]) into Roman characters, the omission (sometimes) of the diacritics obscures the difference (that we highlight below) between the singular *adab* and its plural *ādāb.*[13]

The fact that the term *nikāḥ* was, at an early stage, a technical term for "marriage" (besides its other related sense, "coitus") is obvious as well in the way it is defined, for instance—approximately two centuries before al-Suyūṭī—in Ibn Manẓūr's (630–711/1233–1312) *Lisān al-ʿArab*[14] as: (1) marriage (legal marriage; contract of legal marriage); (2) conjugal life; (3) conjugal sexuality; (4) sexual intercourse (in general, not necessarily "conjugal"—the completion is ours).

In *Kitāb ādāb al-nikāḥ,* al-Ghazālī was mainly preoccupied with the religious point of view on the sexual behavior of spouses or couples acting within the conjugal frame; *nikāḥ,* for him, seems to have the meaning that some contemporary authors still confer on this term, when noting that "marriage is the act that gives a concrete form to the order of existence and gives sexuality a new significance. *Nikāḥ* is coitus transcended."[15] Al-Ghazālī had always in mind the intention to indicate the merits, but also the disadvantages, of marriage, and to formulate Islamic prescriptions to be followed by Muslims in every detail. A more accurate translation of the syntagm *ādāb* (plural!) *al-nikāḥ* would be: "manners of conjugal erotic behavior," stressing what was precisely, in our view, al-Ghazālī's topic and purpose in *Kitāb ādāb al-nikāḥ.*

Authors after al-Ghazālī who wrote in the field of what had become, in their times, *adab* (singular!) *al-nikāḥ* kept in mind the foundation created by their master predecessor in the field of *ādāb* (plural!) *al-nikāḥ,* but only to a certain extent. *Nikāḥ* still meant marriage, in some contexts; but, beyond this, later authors brought significant developments and innovations that turned "manners of conjugal erotic behavior" *(ādāb al-nikāḥ)* into a type of "literature on sex and

[10] There are numerous citations from al-Ghazālī's *Kitāb ādāb al-nikāḥ* in al-Suyūṭī's works, even if their number is not notable in the corpus examined here (ex.: one citation in *Shaqāʾiq,* 36; three in the examined part of *Fann,* 73–74).

[11] See, for instance, the translation by Muhtar Holland of *Kitāb ādāb al-nikāḥ,* under the title *Ādāb al-nikāḥ: The Proper Conduct of Marriage in Islam* (Kuala Lumpur, 2012).

[12] Ibid.

[13] Both words are frequently transliterated in the same way: *adab.*

[14] Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-ʿArab* (Cairo, n.d.), 6 vols.

[15] Abdelwahab Bouhdiba, *La Sexualité en islam* (Paris, 1975). English translation quoted here: *Sexuality in Islam* (Routledge, 2008), 15.

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marriage" or even—using a wider term corresponding to these later authors' libertine views—"erotic literature," *adab* (singular) *al-nikāḥ,* i.e., anecdotic, entertaining literature, focusing on aspects of purely "sexual" intimacy (not necessarily matrimonial) and pure sexual desire and pleasure, often considered outside (or without specific reference to) the religious, contractual, and legal aspects of marriage. What al-Ghazālī treats in terms of moral and legal duties incumbent on spouses, according to the contractual conjugal relationship, appears in later texts pertaining to *adab al-nikāḥ* as matters of behavioral traits and actions that may increase or decrease the sexual appetite, and are thus liable to attract or repel the sexual partner that is only sometimes referred to as "the spouse." Al-Suyūṭī's *Shaqā'iq* and *Fann al-nikāḥ* are illustrations *par excellence* of this type of anecdotic literature characterized by a vivid spirit of licentiousness, known in Arabic literature as *mujūn.*[16] In this type of later Arabic erotica, exalting the hedonistic way of life, the words "man" *(rajul)* and "woman" *(imra'ah)* often replace the words meaning "spouse" *(zawj,* feminine *zawjah,* used by al-Ghazālī in his *Kitāb ādāb al-nikāḥ),* and *nikāḥ* often means just intercourse, coitus. The titles of chapters included in this type of book give us a glimpse of this trend of dealing with sexual relations beyond or even outside the marital context. In *Rushd al-labīb ilá muʿāsharat al-ḥabīb,*[17] attributed to Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī al-Yamanī (Ibn Falītah) (d. fourteenth century), we find "What women love from men and what they dislike" *(Mā tuḥibbu al-nisā' min al-rijāl wa-mā yakrahnahu)* and "What men love from women and what they dislike" (*Mā yuḥibbu al-rijāl min al-nisā' wa-mā yakrahūnahu*). Similarly, we find "On the laudable/endearing women" *(fī al-maḥmūd min al-nisā')* and "On the laudable/endearing men" *(fī al-maḥmūd min al-rijāl)*—as well as on "repellent" *(makrūh)* men and, respectively, women (as we read in other titles of symmetrical chapters that seem to be more concise versions of those from *Rushd al-labīb*)—in a famous fifteenth-century book, *Al-Rawḍ al-ʿāṭir fī nuzhat al-khāṭir* (The Perfumed garden of sensual desire).[18]

The excerpts from al-Suyūṭī's texts examined herein need to be read in the light cast by these brief notes on their contextualization.

[16]Literary trend manifested in Arabic literature starting, probably, with the Abbasid period, displaying "roughly, libertinism, licentiousness, frivolity, indecency, profligacy, shamelessness, impertinence, etc.," as defined by Zoltan Szombathy, *Mujun: Libertinism in Medieval Muslim Society and Literature* (Exeter, 2013). Electronic book, Introduction, https://www.kobo.com/us/en/ebook/mujun-libertinism-in-medieval-muslim-society-and-literature (accessed November 14, 2017).

[17]Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Falītah al-Yamanī, *Rushd al-labīb ilá muʿāsharat al-ḥabīb* (Al-Māyah, Libya, 2006). [Editor's note: On al-Suyūṭī's use of this source see also Myrne's article in this issue.]

[18]English translation by Jim Colville of *Al-Rawḍ al-ʿāṭir by Muhammad ibn Muhammad al-Nafzawi* (London-New York, 1999).

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Is a Woman's Voice Shameful *(Hal Ṣawt al-Marʾah ʿAwrah)?*

It would be difficult to determine when exactly this question was asked for the first time in Islam, but there is evidence that it has preoccupied Islamic scholars since early times. We agree with Denise Spellberg's statement:

> I propose, as a historian of the medieval period, that the most contested issues of the modern era are, in fact, an extension of previously exclusively male-defined male directives about the definition of the female and the feminine in Islamic society.[19]

Nowadays, this is a recurrent question on many Islamic web pages and sites, and numerous shaykhs and imams formulate answers to it on their internet pages, the more moderate among them denying that a woman's voice is shameful, and others, more radical, stating that it is. As a reaction to this statement (which has become a saying, *maqūlah*) largely spread among Muslims, social media is full of postings on the matter (young Muslim women have created a Facebook account called "A woman's voice is revolution," *ṣawt al-marʾah thawrah*).

We adopt the translation "shameful" for the Arabic word *ʿawrah* as being metaphorically convenient and linguistically versatile, but other possible translations (semantic values of this substantive) are nakedness; (private) parts of the body that must be covered; faultiness; sin; and even "woman," among others. The term does not refer uniquely to women, but it is related to them more frequently than to men, as P. Sanders notes:

> Many prescriptions for dress, demeanor, and segregation are based on this concept of modesty, called in Arabic *sitr al-ʿaura,* literally, "covering [one's] nakedness." The exhortation to preserve modesty applies equally to men and women in Islam, but the various law schools have diverging definitions of what constitutes the ʿaura for men and women, and they usually emphasize women's responsibility.[20]

The expression *ṣawt al-marʾah ʿawrah* seems to us to convey a "meaning beyond the meaning" (borrowing from the Arabic grammatical tradition the term *maʿná al-maʿná,* used in rhetoric, *balāghah*) that, as she must cover not only the corporeal intimate parts of her body, as well as all the parts (like the hair) that

[19] Denise A. Spellberg, "History Then, History Now: The Role of Medieval Islamic Religio-Political Sources in Shaping the Modern Debate on Gender" in *Beyond the Exotic: Women's Histories in Islamic Societies,* ed. Amira El-Azhary Sonbol (Syracuse, 2005), 3.

[20] Paula Sanders, "Gendering the Ungendered Body: Hermaphrodites in Medieval Islamic Law," in *Women in Middle Eastern History: Shifting Boundaries in Sex and Gender,* ed. Nikki R. Keddie and Beth Baron (New Haven, 1991), 89–90.

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may be tempting to men, a woman should also "cover," in a figurative sense, this impalpable feature of hers that is her voice, by speaking to men in an appropriate way, without softening or undulating her voice. This is because the voice may carry sexually suggestive inflections that may cause a man temptation, expressed by the commonly used term *ighrā'* (incitement, temptation, seduction) or its more technical synonym, *fitnah.*

The Quran and the Prophetic hadith are commonly invoked by those who maintain the idea that listening to a woman's voice is not a sin or shameful in itself. The Quranic excerpt frequently quoted is verse 32 from the chapter *al-Aḥzāb* (given here in two translations):

> O wives of the Prophet, you are not like anyone among women. If you fear Allah, then do not be soft in speech [to men], lest he in whose heart is disease should covet, but speak with appropriate speech.[21]

> Wives of the Prophet, you are not as other women. If you are god-fearing, be not abject in your speech, so that he in whose heart is sickness may be lustful; but speak honourable words.[22]

The Arabic expression translated by "do not be soft in speech" (in the first example) and "be not abject in your speech" (in the second) is *lā takhḍaʿna bi-al-qawli.* The notion of "being soft in speech" *(al-khuḍūʿ bi-al-qawl)* is sometimes rendered explicit by Quran commentators using as a synonym the notion of *al-takassur fī al-kalām,* a notion that appears with al-Suyūṭī, that we have translated[23]—based on its contextual meaning in al-Suyūṭī's *Shaqā'iq*—as "the babied, pampered, coddled, rhythmic way of speaking." Another recurring synonym used by commentators is *tarkhīm al-kalām,* which we have translated with reference to al-Suyūṭī's *Shaqā'iq* as "waving in speaking, modulating the voice with grace/harmoniously, undulating the voice."[24]

While the Quranic text clearly implies—in the verse quoted above—that a woman's voice may be tempting for men, it also clearly states that temptation is felt by "he in whose heart is disease" (or "sickness," considering both translations of the word *maraḍ*). In our understanding, the verse logically implies that not all men are tempted by a woman's voice and that feeling tempted by a wom-

[21] Sahih International translation of the Quran, https://quran.com/33 (accessed November 10, 2017).

[22] Arthur J. Arberry's translation of the Quran, http://www.theonlyquran.com/quran/Al-Ahzab/english_arthur_john_arberry/?ayat=31 (accessed November 10, 2017).

[23] Firanescu, "Revisiting Love," 244.

[24] Ibid.

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an's voice is a state of sickness. Consequently, the recommendation that women speak to men "with appropriate speech" or "honorable words" is meant to prevent situations when a sick man who listens to a woman's voice may "covet" or feel "lustful." Interestingly, this logical inference does not seem to have drawn the commentators' and jurists' special attention; they rather seem to apply general restrictions to manifestations of a woman's voice out of an excess of caution and care for men's vulnerability.

Researching early hadith sources, we find, for instance, that in his commentary[25] on *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim,* the imam al-Nawawī (631–76/1234–78) refers to a hadith—the transmission chain *(sanad)* of which goes back to ʿĀ'ishah, the Prophet's wife—relating that the Prophet used to receive women searching for advice and guidance in religious matters and that he talked to them in order to reach an agreement, without touching their hands. In the case of a commercial transaction with a woman, ʿĀ'ishah attests (in the same hadith) that he touched a woman's hand only in order to conclude a contract, but, immediately after, he dismissed her. Usually, ʿĀ'ishah continues, he said to women: "I reached an agreement with you through speech/I concluded with you a verbal agreement *(qad bāyaʿtukunna kalāman).*" Al-Nawawī interprets therefore:

> (…) فيه إنّ كلام الأجنبية يباح سماعه عند الحاجة وإنّ صوتها ليس بعورة وانه لا يلمس بشرة الأجنبية من غير ضرورة كالتطبب و فصد و حجامة و قلع ضرس وكحل العين ونحوها.

> The meaning of this is that it is allowed, in case of necessity, to listen to the voice of a foreign [from outside the family] woman; that her voice is not shameful; and that touching a woman's skin is not allowed if it is not a case of necessity (like opening a vein, letting blood, scarification, tooth extraction, coloring the eyes with kohl and similar activities).

This interpretation implies that listening to a foreign woman's voice is not prohibited, but that some conditions are imposed, as hearing the feminine voice is comparable to touching a woman's skin. These are two actions that a man is allowed to perform only when it is necessary for activities such as business, contracts, medical treatment, etc., when there is no woman to perform them.

[25] Al-Nawawī, *Saḥīḥ Muslim bi-Sharḥ al-Nawawī,* (Cairo, 1930), chapter 13, 10, https://ia902303.us.archive.org/35/items/alhelawy05/shsm13.pdf (accessed November 30, 2017).

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A fatwa[26] given on the popular site Islamweb.net[27] invokes the Quranic chapter *Al-Aḥzāb,* verses 53 and 32, to reinforce the idea that the woman's voice is not shameful, with the condition that the woman respects the injunction of "not being soft in speech" (*ʿadam al-khuḍūʿ bi-al-qawl;* we adopt here the first translation given above), the expression being explained in the commentary as "modulating the voice and smoothing it" *(tarkhīm al-ṣawt and tarqīquhu).* The author of the fatwa continues:

> وإن كان صوت المرأة يتلذذ به السامع أو يخاف على نفسه الفتنة فحرام عليه استماعه، وإن كان غير ذلك فلا يحرم ، لأنه ليس بعورة.
>
> If he who listens to the woman's voice feels lust or fears being tempted, then listening to it is prohibited; if he does not feel so, then it is not forbidden because it [the woman's voice] is not shameful [in itself].

Early jurists from the four main schools of Islamic jurisprudence had to answer, among other complicated questions, whether a woman was or was not allowed to lead men in prayer, having in view her "unavoidable role as temptress."[28] Does the voice play a role in this? According to Jalajel,[29] the Maliki jurist al-Māzirī (453–536/1061–1141) "also justifies not allowing a woman to lead prayer because her voice is shameful." As for a woman being a judge, the Shafiʿi jurist al-Rāfiʿī "states that it is inappropriate for a woman to be a judge because she will unavoidably sit among men and raise her voice in their presence."[30] The same author[31] states also regarding a major Shafiʿi jurist:

> Al-Māwardī describes the woman as a "shameful being" and that her leading prayers will cause male worshippers to feel temptation towards her. One of the reasons it is allowed for a male slave to lead men in prayers but not a free woman is because his voice will not bring temptation to the men following him.

[26] On the powerful role of the fatwa genre in researching gender matters in Islam, see Judith E. Tucker, "And God knows Best: The Fatwa as a Source for the History of Gender in the Arab World," in *Beyond the Exotic,* 165–79.

[27] http://fatwa.islamweb.net/fatwa/index.php?page=showfatwa&Option=FatwaId&Id=1524, 3 (accessed August 8, 2017).

[28] David Solomon Jalajel, *Women and Leadership in Islamic Law: A Critical Analysis of Classical Legal Texts* (Oxford, 2017), 133.

[29] Ibid., 131.

[30] Ibid.

[31] Ibid., 131–32.

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Even from the above snapshot of the issue of a woman's voice being heard by men, it results that there are religious considerations that some take into account to credit the idea that, at least in religious and juridical contexts of action and behavior, a woman's voice may be perceived as tempting to men; the degrees of temptation may vary and be interpretable, but "the woman's unavoidable role as temptress"[32] seems to be a common factor in the debate.

It would certainly be of interest to establish whether al-Suyūṭī discusses the notion of *ʿawrah* (shamefulness) as an attribute of a woman's voice in his purely theological work; as for his erotic literature, we have not encountered it, at least not in the examined corpus. Perhaps this is due, indeed, to the fact that al-Suyūṭī seems to have written freely on the topic of erotica; as it has been noted by Jaakko Hämeen-Anttila,[33] while referring to *Shaqāʾiq:*

> That he freely quotes in this serious work, as also in his other works on *nikāḥ,* from various erotic manuals shows that works of explicitly erotic content were considered by him and his readers to be authoritative mainstream works, suitable to be quoted side by side with lexicographical authorities….

We would add, regarding the specific topic of the woman's voice, that al-Suyūṭī has probably produced in *Shaqāʾiq* a mini-treatise unique in Arabic literature, devoted to the erotic role of the woman's voice, in which he thoroughly depicts the polyphony of the many interweaving tonalities, vocalizations, inflexions, breathing tools, verbalizations, etc., all parts of the feminine vocal erotic arsenal that he places under the umbrella of *ghunj*. We have presented elsewhere[34] the complex notion of *ghunj* (a woman's erotic vocalization before and during intercourse) to which al-Suyūṭī devotes ample explanations and descriptions in his *Shaqāʾiq,* and emphasized that a woman's voice plays, in this author's vision, an important, very useful role in the intimate life of couples, as "the man participating in the sexual intercourse is presented as the beneficiary of this facility or tenderness services offered by the female partner."[35] Not only is the woman's voice not shameful in al-Suyūṭī's erotica, but it is the very proof of "sensitive coquetry," to the point that the term *ghunj,* which initially was related to vocalization/verbalization during intercourse, acquires for al-Suyūṭī the extended meaning of "feminine flirtatious, seductive, and erotic behavior directed towards man/husband's pleasure and satisfaction."[36] One should note that women's "babied, pampered, coddled, rhyth-

[32] Jalajel, *Women and Leadership,* 133.

[33] "Al-Suyūṭī and Erotic Literature," in *Al-Suyūṭī: A Polymath of the Mamlūk Period,* 231, n.14.

[34] Firanescu, "Revisiting Love" and "De l'amour et la coquetterie."

[35] Firanescu, "Revisiting Love," 246.

[36] Ibid., 254.

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mic way of speaking" *(al-takassur fī al-kalām)* and "waving in speaking, modulating the voice with grace/harmoniously, undulating the voice" *(tarkhīm al-kalām),* banned as they are in other situations mentioned above, become laudable virtues in the specific context of the art of seduction.

Feminine Voices Audible in the Corpus

Excerpts from *Shaqā'iq*

Ex. 1 (Shaqā'iq, 35)

أخرج البيهقي عن أسماء بنت يزيد الأنصارية أنها قالت: يا رسول الله، إنكم، معاشر الرجال، فُضلتم علينا بالجمعة والجماعات وعيادة المرضى وشهود الجنائز والحج بعد الحج وأفضل من ذلك الجهاد في سبيل الله، فقال رسول الله: حسن تبعل إحداكن لزوجها وطلبها مرضاته [واتّباعها موافقته] يعدل ذلك كله.

Al-Bayhaqī narrated from Asmā' bint Yazīd al-Anṣārīyah[37] that she said: "O Messenger of Allah: you, the community of men, have been given, over us [women], the privileges of the Friday prayer, the gatherings, the visit of the ill, the attendance of funerals, the pilgrimage after pilgrimage, and, above all, the sacred war/struggle on the path of Allah *[jihād].*" The Messenger of Allah replied: "A woman's satisfying conduct towards her husband and her struggle towards his satisfaction/happiness [and seeking his consent/agreement] equal all these."

Ex. 2 (Shaqā'iq, 43)

أخرج أبو الفرج في الأغاني من طريق المدائني عن فلانة [قلابة] قالت: كنت عند عائشة بنت طلحة، فقيل: قد جاء عمر بن عُبيد الله، يعني زوجها، قالت: فتنحيت ودخل فلاعبها مدة، ثم وقع عليها، فشخرت و نخرت وأتت بالعجائب من الرهز، وأنا أسمع فلما خرج، قلت لها: أنت في نسبك وشرفك وموضعك تفعلين هذا! قالت: إنّا نستهب لهذه الفحول بكل ما نقدر عليه وبكل ما يحركها فما الذي أنكرت من ذلك؟ قلت: أحب أن يكون ذلك ليلاً، قالت: ذاك هكذا وأعظم منه، ولكنه حين يراني تتحرك شهوته وتهيج، فيمد يده إليَّ، فأطاوعه فيكون ما ترين.

Abū al-Faraj narrated in *Al-Aghānī,* reporting on al-Madā'inī, who narrated from a woman[38] [or Qallābah] who said: "I was visiting ʿĀ'ishah bint Ṭalḥah when it was announced that her husband,

[37] The editor notes that her *kunyah* is Umm Salamah and that she reported on the Prophet *aḥādīth ṣāliḥah* (correct/valid traditions). *Shaqā'iq,* 35, n. 56.

[38] The editor's note (p. 43, n. 2) indicates that the name Qallābah appears in another manuscript instead of the impersonal *fulānah* (unspecified woman).

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ʿUmar ibn ʿUbayd Allāh, arrived." The woman said: "So I withdrew, and he came in and caressed her for a while then he jumped her and she snorted/snored and sobbed/moaned, and performed astonishing varieties of *rahz,*[39] while I was hearing. After he left, I told her: 'You, with your descent, honorable position, and rank, are doing this?!' She replied: 'We strive to stir up the desire in these virile males in every way we can and by all means that set them in motion: so, of what did you disapprove in this?' I said: 'I like this to happen by night.' She retorted: 'That one is like this one, and even greater; but when he [the husband] sees me, his sexual appetite is stimulated, he becomes excited, so he grabs me, and I obey him, then what you've witnessed happens.'"

The editor mentions (p. 43, n. 4) a final reply found in *Tuḥfat al-ʿarūs* by al-Tijānī:

فقلت لها: يا عائشة، لقد أوتي عمر منك ما لم يؤته أحد من أزواجك.

I told her: "O ʿĀ'ishah, indeed, ʿUmar was presented by you with what none of your [ex-]husbands had been presented."

Ex. 3 (Shaqā'iq, 43)

وفي كتاب نثر الدر [للآبي]: لما زُفّت عائشة بنت طلحة إلى زوجها مصعب بن الزبير، سمعت امرأةٌ بينهما، وهو يجامعها، شخيرا وغطيطا في الجماع لم يُسمَع مثلُه، فقالت لها في ذلك، فقالت لها عائشة: إنّ الخيل لا تشرب إلا بالصفير. (أورده صاحب تحفة العروس).

In the book "Nathr al-durr" by al-Ābī is related: when ʿĀ'ishah bint Ṭalḥah was given in marriage to her husband, Muṣʿab ibn al-Zubayr, a woman heard between the two of them, while he was making love to her, noises of snorting and heavy snoring never heard before. She told her this, and ʿĀ'ishah answered: truly, horses don't drink water without snorting. (Related by the author of *Tuḥfat al-ʿarūs*).

Ex. 4 (Shaqā'iq, 46)

و فيه [في كتاب جامع اللذة]: قيل لامرأة: أي شيء أوقع في القلوب وقت النكاح؟ قالت: موضع لا يسمع فيه إلا النخير والشهيق، ويجلب الماء من غشاء الدماغ ومخارج العظام.

[39] A woman's rhythmic vocalizations facilitating the man's movements during intercourse.

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> In it [the same book, *Jāmiʿ al-ladhdhah,*[40] there is also]: A woman was asked: what is the most pleasurable thing during intercourse? She said: a position in which one hears nothing but snorting and moaning/groaning/sighing that brings the water out from the brain's membrane and the bones' articulations.

Excerpts from Other Texts Authored by al-Suyūṭī Included in the First Volume of *Fann al-nikāḥ*

These texts[41] approach the topic of sex and marriage as reflected in the Prophetic tradition, and in the Quran and its exegesis.

Most of the examples of feminine speech presented as "direct" are inserted in passages where women are depicted as advice seekers, or as "learners"—often directly from the Prophet Muhammad or from him via authoritative feminine figures—in matters of sexual behavior considered recommendable or a wife's duty towards her husband:

Ex. 1

> أخرج البزار عن ابن عباس أن امرأة قالت: يا رسول الله، أخبرني ما حق الزوج على الزوجة؟ قال: فإن حق الزوج على زوجته إن سألها نفسها، وهي على ظهر بعير، لا تمنعه نفسها.

> Al-Bazzār reported, on the authority of Ibn ʿAbbās, that a woman said: "O Messenger of Allah, let me know: what is a husband's right over his wife?" He said: "A husband's right over his wife is this: if he asks her to give herself to him while she is on the back of a camel, she shouldn't refuse [to give] herself [to him]/obstruct him." (Chapter: *al-Nikāḥ fī fann al-ḥadīth,* 76)

Another version:

> وأخرج البيهقي في شعب الإيمان عن ابن عمر، عن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم عن امرأة أتته، فقالت: ما حق الزوج على الزوجة؟ فقال: لا تمنعه نفسها، وإن كانت على ظهر قتَب.

[40] The editor of *Shaqāʾiq* does not indicate the author of the book quoted by al-Suyūṭī as *Jāmiʿ al-ladhdhah* (*Shaqāʾiq,* 45); he may be ʿAlī ibn Naṣr al-Kātib, the tenth-century author of *Jawāmiʿ al-ladhdhah* (Encyclopedia of pleasure) (whose title appears sometimes with the singular *Jāmiʿ* instead of the plural *Jawāmiʿ*). On this see Pernilla Myrne, "Pleasing the beloved: sex and true love in a medieval Arabic erotic compendium," in *Beloved: Love and Languishing in Middle Eastern Literatures,* ed. Michael Beard, Alireza Korangy, and Hanadi al-Samman (London, 2017), 216–36. [Editor's note: On al-Suyūṭī's use of *Jāmiʿ al-ladhdhah* see also Myrne's article in this issue.]

[41] *Fann al-nikāḥ,* in *Al-Aʿmāl al-kāmilah,* 1. The chapters' titles follow the excerpts.

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> Al-Bayhaqī narrated in *Shuʿab al-īmān* on the authority of Ibn Omar, who transmitted from the Prophet—peace be upon him—that a woman came to him and said/asked: "What is a husband's right over his wife?" He answered: "She shouldn't refuse [to give] herself [to him] even if she were on a [camel] hump."
> (Chapter: *al-Nikāḥ fī fann al-ḥadīth,* 76–77)

The accompanying explanation (attributed to al-Tirmidhī) of the above passage makes as clear as daylight the crucial obligation of the woman/wife to give herself to the man/husband unconditionally (even if she is "in the child delivery situation"), at any time he requests:

> This means that the midwives were taking the woman, who was about to give birth, out in the desert [and lifting her] on the back of a camel/a camel's hump to facilitate the delivery. So, he [the Prophet] said she shouldn't refuse [to give] herself [to him] even if she was on a camel hump, meaning in the child delivery situation. (p. 77)

Ex. 2

> وأخرج عبد الرزاق و عبد بن حميد والبيهقي في الشُعب من طريق صفية بنت شيبة، عن أم سلمة، قالت: لما قدم المهاجرون المدينة أرادوا أن يأتوا النساء من أدبارهن في فروجهن فأنكرن ذلك، فجئن أم سلمة فذكرن ذلك لها، فسألت النبي صلى الله عليه و سلم عن ذلك فقال: {نساؤكم حرث لكم فأتوا حرثكم أنى شئتم} صماماً واحداً.

> ʿAbd al-Razzāq and ʿAbd ibn Ḥamīd narrated, as did al-Bayhaqī in *Shuʿab,* transmitting from Ṣafīyah bint Shaybah, who narrated from Umm Salamah [who said]: "When *al-muhājirūn* [the Meccans who emigrated to Medina accompanying the Prophet] came to Medina, they wanted to practice with their women the rear-entry position of penetration into the vagina; the women rejected this and came to Umm Salamah to tell her about this, so she asked the Prophet—peace be upon him!—who said: *Your women are a tilth for you (to cultivate) so go to your tilth as ye will,*[42] [but] one single/precise valve/orifice [vagina].[43]
> (Chapter: *al-Nikāḥ fī al-Qurʾān al-karīm wa-tafāsīrihi,* 83)

[42] Sūrat al-Baqarah:223, Mohammed M. Pickthall's translation, http://corpus.quran.com/translation.jsp?chapter=2&verse=223 (accessed September 23, 2017).

[43] [Editor's note: This episode is discussed in Myrne's article, under the heading *Women are a tillage for you.*].

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Other Examples of Feminine "Direct" Speech Included in the Same Section of *Fann al-nikāḥ* Mentioned Above

In some other chapters, such as *Al-Nikāḥ fī al-Qurʾān al-karīm wa-tafāsīrihi* (pp. 81–104; here examined: 81–90), women's voices are heard almost exclusively in relation to one single topic: the correct spot and best positions of penetration (e.g., standing, face to face, side position, rear-entry position, etc.), according to the Islamic rules (and in comparison with the different customs and practices of the Supporters of Medina *[al-Anṣār]*).

The discourse produced by al-Suyūṭī in this section turns around the explanation of the meaning and interpretation of the Quranic verse 223 from Sūrat al-Baqarah (mentioned above: *Your women are a tilth for you [to cultivate] so go to your tilth as ye will…*), focusing mainly on inquiring about the Prophet's attitudes, reactions, and replies when asked about various sexual positions and penetration practices.

Notes on Feminine Voices within the Corpus

Occurrence, Authenticity, Identity

There are few occurrences of feminine voices in the examined texts, despite the high degree of expectancy that one may have to detect such voices in texts of this nature.

Women's speech in the corpus is in fact reported by men and only allegedly presented as "direct" and quoted as such. There is always a man (or male nodes) in the chain of transmitters, although other women transmitters may be involved; the supreme reporting authority is, finally, the author, al-Suyūṭī, whose methods of selecting and rendering the quoted speeches we have no means of validating.

As for the identity of the women whose speech is rendered, the great majority of voices belong either to illustrious female figures or to influential women in Islam. These are the categories:

(a) The Prophet's wives Umm Salamah (it is probably Umm Salamah bint Abī Umayyah, one of the most influential wives of the Prophet and a reputed hadith transmitter, who is mentioned in the above section on other texts authored by al-Suyūṭī and in a few examples not included here) and Hafṣah Umm al-Muʾminīn (Hafṣah bint ʿUmar, in examples not included here).[44]

(b) Women from the Prophet's family such as ʿĀʾishah bint Ṭalḥah (the niece of the Prophet's wife ʿĀʾishah bint Abū Bakr, mentioned in the above section on *Shaqāʾiq*) and Hafṣah bint ʿAbd al-Raḥmān (probably Hafṣah bint ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Abī Bakr al-Ṣiddīq, who "was of the contemporaries of the *Ṣaḥabah,* and a

[44] Al-Suyūṭī, *Fann al-Nikāḥ,* 84.

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trustworthy narrator of *ḥadīth*. She narrated on the authority of her father, her paternal aunt ʿĀʾishah, and her maternal aunt Umm Salamah,"[45] in other examples not included here).[46]

(c) Aristocratic women from important families close to the Prophet, such as Asmāʾ bint Yazīd al-Anṣārīyah (who also had the *kunyah* Umm Salamah, "known to have related 81 sayings from the prophet Muḥammad and her uncle Maḥmūd ibn ʿAmr al-Anṣārī and Abū Sufiyān and others reported and quoted her. She is also known to have been a woman of science and a defender of women's rights"[47]), mentioned in the above section on *Shaqāʾiq,* and Ṣafīyah bint Shaybah (daughter of one of the Companions, *ṣaḥabah,* listed by some scholars among the Companions and by some others among the Successors,[48] mentioned in the above section on other texts authored by al-Suyūṭī).

(d) Ordinary women, perhaps considered not important, whose names are not mentioned; they are anonymous voices belonging to *fulānah* (someone/some woman; French *une telle*) or simply *imraʾah* (a woman), in the above sections on *Shaqāʾiq* and in other texts authored by al-Suyūṭī, as well as in other examples not included here.

Topics of Feminine Speech and Women's Roles

Given the nature of the corpus and the specific field that it belongs to (see above, Contextualization of the corpus), women's "direct" speech is inserted in the texts in relation with the main topic and illustrates a delimited number of roles.

Topics

(a) The main framing topic is women's adequate behavior in their relation with their husbands, as prescribed or recommended by the author, according to moral teachings that he bases on Islamic authoritative sources; al-Bayhaqī's narration from Asmāʾ bint Yazīd al-Anṣārīyah quoted above offers the general view that a woman's most important duty, the "satisfying conduct towards her husband *[ḥusn al-tabaʿul li-zawjihā]* and her struggle towards his satisfaction/happiness [and seeking his consent/agreement] …," equals all Muslim men's duties and privileges, according to a Prophetic hadith.

(b) From the framing topic derives the sub-topic that represents in fact the author's peculiar object of attention in the analyzed corpus: a woman's adequate

[45] https://sijjada-bakria.com/en/blog/2017/05/17/hafsah-bint-abdel-rahman-bin-abi-bakr-al-siddiq/ (accessed December 3, 2017).

[46] Al-Suyūṭī, *Fann al-Nikāḥ,* 73 and 83.

[47] Bouthaina Shaaban, "The Muted Voices of Women Interpreters," in *Faith and Freedom: Women's Human Rights in the Muslim World,* ed. Mahnaz Afkhami (Syracuse, 1995), 62.

[48] Asma Sayeed, *Women and the Transmission of Religious Knowledge in Islam* (Cambridge, 2013), 74.

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"sexual" behavior towards her husband. One may note that al-Suyūṭī refers elsewhere, in other writings pertaining to the literature of sex and marriage, not only to a woman's recommended, ideal behavior towards her husband, but also, by extension, towards men, in general; thus, the fact that, within our corpus, the feminine speech reported as "direct" is inserted in contexts related to "conjugal" sexual relations becomes relevant: a woman's voice expressing sex-related statements is to be heard only by her husband.

One example from *Shaqāʾiq* cited above does not explicitly refer to the conjugal context, but simply states that "a woman" is asked "what is the most pleasurable thing during intercourse;" this may be just a matter of omission or a sign of a negligent manner of quoting. However, this example is interesting because it has a purely anecdotic character, with no (at least no transparent) moral or ethical purpose; a woman is simply asked about her own sexual taste and pleasure. This kind of woman-centered speech, delivered by a woman, seems to us to be rare within al-Suyūṭī's erotic literature, which usually displays men's preferences and desires. One should note as well that this unusual topic (women's sexual preference) appears in a quotation from which the transmission chain is omitted either by al-Suyūṭī or by the author from whose text he cites. This omission reinforces the anecdotic character of the narration, depriving the woman's opinion of the importance normally conferred by the existence of a respectable chain of transmission (or, at least, of a respectable node within the chain), presenting it as a rather weightless opinion, credited by no authority.

(c) Another topic—subordinate to the framing topic (a) and the sub-topic (b)—in connection with which the women's "direct" speech is inserted, is that of "the husband's right over his wife," *ḥaqq al-zawj ʿalá al-zawjah,* illustrated in the report from al-Bazzār and its alternate version cited above (in both, the person who inquires is "a woman"), and also found repeatedly in the second part of the examined section of *Fann al-nikāḥ.*

(d) Finally, directly related to the above-mentioned topic (b), is that of correct (in the sense of allowed/recommended) penetration positions and spots, conforming with the Prophet's teaching (reflected in the hadith), with the Quranic text, and—less frequently—according to the prescriptions of important figures in Islam. Judging by its frequency in the corpus (the narrative from Umm Salamah and other examples, not included here, from the same chapter, *Al-Nikāḥ fī al-Qurʾān al-karīm wa-tafāsīrihi*) this topic is only apparently subsidiary since, in fact, it is largely illustrated with details stressing women's need of guidance in matters of the sexual practices of the men of Quraysh, compared to those of the male Supporters of Medina *(al-Anṣār).*

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Roles

Women's roles illustrated in the corpus are:
(a) Witness of a marital sexual encounter, described in an anecdote included above used by al-Suyūṭī as a didactic argument serving his purpose of teaching women/wives about the desirable sexual conduct that they should adopt in intimate relations with their husbands.
(b) Sexual advice seekers and teachable "learners," requesting guidance and knowledge in sexual matters: directly from the Prophet (in the report from al-Bazzār and its alternate version cited above); from the Prophet, via important, authoritative feminine figures (in the report from Ṣafīyah bint Shaybah via Umm Salamah); from important, respected, more experienced women (the narrative from *Al-Aghānī* given above, in which a patronizing woman—or one who is elder or in a superior social position, possibly named Qallābah—reproaches another woman for what she sees as inappropriate behavior).
(c) Teachers[49] or mentors for other women: a woman in a position of authority (noble, learned, close to authoritative male figures of Islam) teaching or guiding other women on the right path in matters of recommended sexual behavior, such as Umm Salamah and ʿĀ'ishah bint Ṭalḥah (see above, Occurrence, Authenticity, Identity), whose social position enables her to reverse the roles and become the teacher of another woman/Qallābah, who had attempted to give her a lesson.

Final remarks

The analysis of the corpus allows for some significant remarks:
(1) Women's voices are audible in relation to a restrained and restrictive palette of male-centred eroticist topics that consider practical, material aspects of conjugal intercourse and only very rarely refer to the core principles of intimacy. Women are represented as primarily and ultimately preoccupied by their sexual duties towards men and manifesting concern for acquiring the means to please them, with very rare exceptions when their voices express feminine interests or preferences. Their speech, in its content and spirit, follows and reinforces the manly perspective on sexual relations and intimacy in general.
(2) The main (sometimes intertwining) roles assumed by women (seekers of sexual advice, learners from authoritative sources, and mentors of other women) are represented in the texts as means to fulfilling the needs of men and satisfying

[49] On women as teachers in Mamluk sources, Yehoshua Frenkel makes the point that "women teachers and transmitters were perceived by their environment as charismatic authorities who empowered the community *(baraka)*, regardless of their gender" ("Slave Girls and Learned Teachers: Women in Mamluk Sources," in *Developing Perspectives in Mamluk History: Essays in Honor of Amalia Levanoni,* ed. Yuval Ben Bassat [Leiden-Boston, 2017], 175).

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men. Providing this satisfaction is allegedly (or must be) women's own supreme satisfaction. Women's principal goals, as they are depicted in the texts, are to be perfect servants of pleasure-seeking men and to acquire (or transmit to other women) proper education enabling them to conform to rules prescribed by men in positions of religious authority, thus becoming men's efficient retainers in the realm of carnal pleasure.

(3) Ultimately, this approach enables us to remark that al-Suyūṭī, as an influential medieval Islamic figure, contributed to the perpetuation and authoritative reinforcement of the culture of gender in Arab-Islamic society during the Mamluk period and, perhaps, far beyond it. This needs to be more thoroughly substantiated; however, the glimpse that we are given through the texts examined here, as well as other of his erotic texts, seems to agree with observations made in a recent study related to al-Suyūṭī's authoritative discourse in his legal writings:

> Al-Suyūṭī's story, as I tell it here, is ultimately a story about authority. I agree with Bruce Lincoln's assertion that authority can be studied not as an abstract concept, but as an aspect of discourse or speech…. Association and persuasion, for example, are two strategies that occur throughout al-Suyūṭī's legal writing (…) Al-Suyūṭī's efforts did not end with his death, but have echoes today in the discourse of modern jurists striving to respond to their own set of challenges.[50]

Echoes of al-Suyūṭī's authoritative legal discourse are easily detectible in his erotica as well, while feminine voices audible in the background are employed to benefit his "performative, directive-declarative discourse"[51] in the sense that this type of speech aims at instituting a model of the well-guided, exemplary, submissive woman, ideal lower-grade companion of an ideal man (ironically, shaped by the same cultural factors that consolidate his higher position, and, sometimes, his deeper unhappiness!). The institutionalizing tone emanating from the author's erotic literature, as we have previously noted,[52] is that of "an Islamic moral law of conduct imposed to [sic] women, a law that, ultimately, al-Suyūṭī represents, serves, and promotes…" through the texts herein observed and other similar writings.

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[50]Rebecca Skreslet Hernandez, *The Legal Thought of Jalal al-Din al-Suyūṭī: Authority and Legacy* (Oxford, 2017), 23, referring to Bruce Lincoln, *Authority: Construction and Corrosion* (Chicago, 1994), 2.

[51]Using Searle's and Vanderveken's terms, operational in linguistic pragmatics, and, on a larger scale, in discourse typology. John Searle and Daniel Vanderveken, *Foundation of Illocutionary Logic* (Cambridge, 1985), 37.

[52]Firanescu, "Revisiting Love," 256.

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The Woman as a Construct: Reconsidering Men's Image of Women in the Arabic-Islamic World—the Case of Seventeenth-Century Cairo

The aim of the present article is to present and discuss a relatively unknown text, which, written in the Sufi environment of early post-Mamluk Cairo, constitutes noteworthy evidence of male patterns of thinking and fantasizing about women. The text is a part of the still unedited manual composed by ʿAbd al-Raʾūf al-Munāwī (1545–1621) titled *Tadhkirat ūlī al-albāb bi-maʿrifat al-ādāb,* which can be translated as "Memorandum for knowledgeable persons on the rules of [decent] behavior" or, alternatively, "What every knowledgeable Muslim male should know about life."[1] Used as a demonstration model, the text provides a chance to examine the multidimensional context of the way in which the "women's issue" was conceptualized and problematized in the Arabic-Islamic intellectual discourse in the period of the Mamluk-Ottoman transition.[2]

Focused on the culture-specific layer of the problem, the article deals, above all, with a variety of elements, situations, processes, and phenomena determined by, or related to, the Arabic-Islamic aspect of late Mamluk and early Ottoman Cairo. However, since the way men construct their images of women is, at its

[1]The still unedited work survives in a number of copies which are catalogued under different titles in different libraries. For the time being, I have identified three of them. There are two copies in Dār al-Kutub wa-al-Wathāʾiq al-Qawmīyah (Bāb al-Khalq branch) in Cairo: the older one, dated 1023/1614–15 and in many places unreadable, is catalogued under 3083 *taṣawwuf;* in the present study it is referred to as "MS Cairo1." The other Dār al-Kutub copy, here referred to as "MS Cairo2," is catalogued under 230 *akhlāq* and is dated 1035/1626 (ref.: *Fihris al-kutub al-ʿarabīyah al-mawjūdah bi-al-Dār li-ghāyat al-sānah 1921* (Cairo, 1342/1924), 1:36; also Carl Brockelmann, *Geschichte der arabischen Literatur* (Leiden, 1937), S1:417. I would like to thank Prof. Frédéric Bauden for helping me with identifying Brockelmann's reference with the reference provided in the *Fihris*. The third and most recent copy of al-Munāwī's *Tadhkirah* belongs to Yale University, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library; in the present study it is referred to as "MS Yale." Catalogued as Landberg MSS 163, it is not dated; according to the library information, it dates back to the nineteenth century. The copies are not identical as far as their contents and composition are concerned.

[2]For a multi-aspect discussion of the transition period which followed the Ottoman conquest of the Mamluk Sultanate see *The Mamluk-Ottoman Transition: Continuity and Change in Egypt and Bilād al-Shām in the Sixteenth Century,* ed. Gül Şen and Stephan Conermann (Bonn, 2017), passim. For a more detailed discussion of al-Munāwī's work in this context: Paulina B. Lewicka, "Challenges of Daily Life in Early-Ottoman Cairo: a Learned Sufi's Perspective: Preliminary Remarks on al-Munāwī's Memorandum on Decent Behavior," in ibid., 59–85.

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early stage, powered by the near-universal mechanism of misogyny, the extra-cultural dimension of al-Munāwī's text is also taken into account here.[3] As a psychological trait, misogyny involves the irrational fear, hatred of, contempt for, and disgust or abhorrence toward, women as an undifferentiated social category. "Visceral and irrational," based on passion, not thought, it is focused exclusively on denouncing and harming women.[4] However, while being an aspect of male psychology, misogyny interacts with culture. On the one hand, it translates into laws, norms, thoughts, and actual behavior and, as such, constitutes a causative force in producing the social-cultural reality. On the other hand, it can be encouraged and intensified by certain social and cultural circumstances[5] typical for a given space-time. Perceived from such a perspective, al-Munāwī's text can be analyzed as an example of the culturally-determined manifestation of an instinctual, near-universal prejudice activated in the shared psychic course of the male of the human species.

ʿAbd al-Raʾūf al-Munāwī al-Ḥaddādī was a well-educated, high-ranking Egyptian religious scholar of the Shafiʿi *madhhab* who, like many Cairenes of that time,

[3]For a discussion of those features of culture, society, language, behavior, and mind that are common to all humans, their culture notwithstanding see Donald Brown, *Human Universals* (New York, 1991).

[4]David D. Gilmore, *Misogyny: The Male Malady* (Philadelphia, 2001), 13. Defined as an irrational but ubiquitous prejudice stemming "from unresolved inner conflicts in men" (ibid., xii and 14), misogyny is also determined by the mechanisms governing human attitudes to the Other, including "irrational self-hate of one's negative identity and the irrational repudiation of inimical otherness"; Erik H. Erikson, "Autobiographic notes on the identity crisis," *Daedalus* 99, no. 4 (1970): 733, discussed by Patricia Martin Doyle in her "Women and Religion: Psychological and Cultural Implications," in *Religion and Sexism: Images of Woman in the Jewish and Christian Traditions,* ed. Rosemary R. Ruether (New York, 1974), 20. Some scholars link it to an existential need to distance humanity from the natural world and argue that misogynic reactions to feminine nature are at least partly a result of existential concerns associated with the awareness of our vulnerability toward death; see Jamie L. Goldenberg and Tomi-Ann Roberts, "The Beast within the Beauty: An Existential Perspective on the Objectification and Condemnation of Women," in *Handbook of Experimental Existential Psychology,* ed. Jeff Greenberg, Sander L. Koole, and Tom Pyszczynski (New York, London, 2004), 71–85.

[5]David Gilmore argues that "although psychogenic in origin, misogyny is often exacerbated by certain social and cultural conditions, and under special conditions can reach the proportion of a full-blown epidemic. These special conditions include certain forms of patrilineal, patrilocal organization, a certain kinship ideology that favors fraternal solidarity at the expense of the husband-wife bond, the persistence of chronic warfare, feuding or other forms of intergroup violence, religious puritanism or other forms of asceticism such as sexual prudery, unrealistic moral idealism, and certain kinds of domestic arrangements that occur in exogamous preindustrial societies." Gilmore, *Misogyny,* 10.

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was also a Sufi.[6] Born in the mid-sixteenth century, he witnessed the Mamluk-Ottoman transition and participated in processes which the Ottoman occupation of Egypt initiated. Influenced by the cultural capital of both the Mamluk and the Ottoman periods, al-Munāwī's rich literary output constituted, in a way, a record of the waning cultural, intellectual, social, and mental heritage of the Mamluk era as present in early-Ottoman Cairo.

This dual character relates to his *Tadhkirah* in a special way, for this book was much more personal than the almost one hundred others he produced throughout his life.[7] Despite what its Arabic title may suggest, *Tadhkirat ūlī al-albāb bi-maʿrifat al-ādāb* is not an etiquette handbook. Rather, it can be defined as a compendium of fundamental, practical-spiritual knowledge related to a number of everyday issues. At the same time, it includes hints about correct ways of behaving in certain situations. As such, it is an example of educational literature written in sixteenth/seventeenth-century Cairo according to a general model of a multi-topic, religiously inspired compendium set up by Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī in eleventh-century Baghdad.[8]

"Memorandum" consists of an introduction and twelve chapters, which cover various aspects of daily life. The titles of the chapters include: "the rules related to eating and drinking"; "the rules related to dress"; "the rules related to sexual intercourse and sexual potency"; "the rules related to sleeping"; "the rules related to bathing"; "the rules related to child-rearing"; and "the rules related to socializing." One of the chapters is devoted to women. Meaningfully enough, it is titled "On the rules related to relations with a wife and on what pertains to this problem."[9] Very generally speaking, the author features in it a collective profile of women

[6]For more biographical data on ʿAbd al-Raʾūf al-Munāwī see Lewicka, "Challenges of Daily Life," 59–64, and the references therein.

[7]Al-Munāwī's literary production, somewhat typical for an erudite Islamic theologian, covered quite diverse fields of knowledge. In his case the topics ranged from hadith commentary and Quranic exegesis to philosophy, medicine, and Sufism.

[8]Al-Ghazālī's (ca. 1058–1111) "Rubʿ al-ʿĀdāt" was, in fact, the first comprehensive Arabic-Islamic guide to various questions of daily life and to correct ways of behaving in various situations, a kind of a treatise on "what every Muslim should know on everyday issues" (the topics included table manners, rules of sexual intercourse, of travelling, of isolation, rules related to various kinds of relations with people, the Quranic rule of "ordering good and forbidding evil," etc.). As such, it became a model to follow for many future authors of various works of this kind. Al-Ghazālī, who is mentioned relatively frequently in *Tadhkirah*—even if not so frequently in the chapter under discussion—was for al-Munāwī an important and, in a way, obligatory paragon also for another reason: like al-Munāwī, al-Ghazālī was a Sufi who combined Sunni theology with Sufism; see Abū al-Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyāʾ ʿUlūm al-Dīn* (Cairo, 2005), 432–876.

[9]"Fī ādāb muʿāsharat al-zawjah wa-mutaʿalliqāt dhālika," *Tadhkirah,* MS Yale, fols. 29a–32b; MS Cairo1, fols. 26a–29a; MS Cairo2, fols. 42a–46a (pp. 81–89 according to numbers applied on the sheets of the manuscript).

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and provides suggestions as to the ways of dealing with them and with the threat they constitute. Following the tradition of justifying assumptions by quoting authorities, al-Munāwī naturally constructed his chapter upon quotations taken predominantly from the Quran and the Sunnah. The Prophet Muḥammad and the caliph ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb are mentioned here most frequently, but among the authorities one can also find ʿAlī, ʿĀʾishah, al-Ḥasan, Abū Bakr, Imam al-Shāfiʿī, and other Islamic classics, Luqmān the Wise included. Interestingly enough, al-Ghazālī's name is mentioned only once, despite the fact that many fragments of the chapter seem to have been taken from al-Ghazālī's *Iḥyāʾ ʿUlūm al-Dīn*—or, more precisely, from its section titled "Etiquette of Cohabitation and What Should Take Place During Marriage, and the Obligations of Husband and Wife," which constitutes chapter three of the "Book on the Manners of Marriage" *(Kitāb ādāb al-nikāḥ).*[10]

The key thoughts which run through the chapter involve the idea that women are intellectually defective *(nāqiṣāt ʿaql),* that they are bad, strange, deceitful, lustful, greedy, and lead men astray. As such, they are dangerous and men should constantly beware of them. Another key message is that men are naturally superior to women and, consequently, have a duty to dominate and control them. These motives are quite often interrelated and involve a cause-and-effect connection between each other, as the information about inferiority, malice, greed, intellectual incompetence, and other annoying traits of women goes hand-in-hand with the statements about appropriate ways of handling them.

The most typical examples of this kind of approach involve sentences such as: "The husband is obligated to be just and polite towards them [i.e., his wives] … and to tolerate insults from them out of pity for the deficiency of their minds."[11] Or: "It is necessary to follow the path of moderation both in disagreement and in agreement, and to follow the truth in it all, so as to be safe from their [i.e., women's] evil; because their scheming is great, their evil is widespread; their predominant characteristics are ill nature and weakness of mind, and this can-

[10] Which, in turn, is a section of a part titled "Norms of Daily Life" ("Rubʿ al-ʿādāt"). Interestingly enough, al-Munāwī ignored a meaningful fragment of al-Ghazālī's teachings, according to which the husband has the right "to chastise and induce her forcibly to obey" and, if preaching, warning, threatening, and avoiding her all fail, "he should beat her but not excessively, that is, to the point that he would inflict only pain but without breaking a bone or causing her to bleed." Al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyāʾ,* 488; Engl. transl. in *Book on the Etiquette of Marriage Being the Second Book of the Section on Customs in the Book The Revival of the Religious Sciences by Abu Hamid al-Ghazali,* transl. Madelain Farah, available from: http://www.ghazali.org/works/marriage.htm (accessed August 30, 2017), chapter 3. "Etiquette of Cohabitation," pt. 1. 'Etiquette of cohabitation.'

[11] *Tadhkirah,* MS Yale, fol. 29a; MS Cairo1, fol. 26a; MS Cairo2, fol. 42a (p. 81 according to numbers applied on the sheets of the manuscript).

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not be set straight except through a certain amount of kindness combined with diplomacy."[12]

Interestingly enough, in al-Munāwī's times these tactics seem not to have been a mere theoretical model. Some men apparently followed them in daily life. Such was the case of ʿAbd al-Wahhāb al-Shaʿrānī (897–793/1492–1565), the most famous of al-Munāwī's Sufi masters. While obviously taking women's inferiority for granted, the shaykh al-Shaʿrānī seems to have been mindful enough to consider his four wives' feelings and emotions. And, as a head of a polygamous family, he at least tried to supervise his *ḥarīm* with a mixture of kindness and diplomacy rather than with violence or blackmail. "Remarkably sympathetic" (to use Michael Winter's words)[13] towards his wives, he might have been a caring husband. But he was also careful, for example, not to praise any of them in the presence of another, for he knew quite well that "pleasing one of them will anger the other."[14] At the same time, he took care that his wives never approved of, or made friends with, each other, as this sooner or later would backfire.[15]

Today it is impossible to say how popular the attitude practiced by al-Shaʿrānī was. Nevertheless, kindness combined with diplomacy was in fact the only reasonable method to deal with women successfully—at least judging by the convictions expressed in al-Munāwī's text. And it simply could not be otherwise: "women are made of a rib"[16] and they are like a rib: crooked and irreparable; "…If you try to straighten it, you will break it. Leave it alone and enjoy it in spite of its crookedness," the Prophet was reported to have taught.[17] In other words, women's

[12] *Tadhkirah,* MS Yale, fol. 31a; MS Cairo1 (the fragment is not identifiable); MS Cairo2, fol. 43a (p. 83 according to numbers applied on the sheets of the manuscript).

[13] Michael Winter, *Society and Religion in Early Ottoman Egypt: Studies in the Writings of ʿAbd al-Wahhāb al-Shaʿrānī* (New Brunswick and London, 1982), 292.

[14] Ibid., 295.

[15] Ibid.

[16] *Tadhkirah,* MS Yale, fols. 29b, 30a; MS Cairo1, fol. 28b; MS Cairo2, fols. 43a (p. 83 according to numbers applied on the sheets of the manuscript), 45b (p. 88 according to numbers applied on the sheets of the manuscript).

[17] See al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyāʾ*, 484–85; Engl. transl. in *Book on the Etiquette*. In *Iḥyāʾ* the maxim is introduced not as a hadith but as a *khabar*. The version quoted in *Tadhkirah,* MS Cairo2, fol. 43a (p. 83 according to numbers applied on the sheets of the manuscript), is shorter than that transmitted by al-Ghazālī; the version included in *Tadhkirah,* MS Yale, fol. 29b, is introduced in the form of an anonymous rhyme. The hadith as transmitted in al-Bukhārī's *Ṣaḥīḥ* reads: "Treat women with care, for woman was created from a rib, the most crooked part of which is the highest. If you try to straighten it [the rib], you break it and if you leave it, it remains crooked. So treat women carefully." See Denise A. Spellberg, "Writing the Unwritten Life of the Islamic Eve: Menstruation and the Demonization of Motherhood," *Journal of Middle East Studies* 28, no. 3 (1996): 311, and the references therein. Ibn Ḥanbal's version as transmitted in *Musnad* differs slightly: "Women were created from a rib which was not straightened at creation; if you straighten it …" (*Musnad,* 2:497,

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dysfunctional disposition is natural and attempts to improve it make no sense and are doomed to fail. That was exactly why the Prophet did his best to be kind to his women, so much so that he even joked and played with them although in order to do this he had "to lower himself in thoughts and actions to the level of their minds."[18] But the effort was worthwhile, as joking and fun-making "softened their hearts."[19]

Interestingly enough, the Muḥammadan description of woman as created from the man's rib had little to do with the Quranic narrative about the creation. In the Quran both individuals who make the first couple, and who remain unnamed, are created one after the other from one soul *(nafs).*[20] The account about woman having been created from man's rib, borrowed from the Book of Genesis[21] via the Jewish or Christian environment, was inserted into Islamic culture as late as approximately the eighth–ninth century, when the post-Quranic literary and institutional foundations of Islam were being established.[22] In other words, the

as quoted in *Book on the Etiquette,* n. 53. Whatever the spiritual value of the Sunnah, it should be remembered that the six official collections of hadiths were compiled during the ninth century on the basis of oral transmission and, despite the process of authentication to which they were subjected, cannot be considered a trustworthy source of information on seventh-century events, situations, or any other details.

[18] *Tadhkirah,* MS Yale, fol. 29b; MS Cairo1, fol. 26a; MS Cairo2, fol. 42a (p. 81 according to numbers applied on the sheets of the manuscript).

[19] *Tadhkirah,* MS Yale, fol. 29b; MS Cairo1, fol. 26a; MS Cairo2, fol. 42a (p. 81 according to numbers applied on the sheets of the manuscript).

[20] Quran 4:1; 39:6; the verses are discussed in Spellberg, "Writing the Unwritten Life," 311.

[21] Gen. 2:20–22: "but for the man there was not found a helper as his partner. So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then he took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man." The Bible with the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books. New Revised Standard Version, Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America 1989, available at: http://www.allsaintstupelo.com/Bible_NRSV.pdf (accessed August 29, 2017).

[22] While discussing this question, Spellberg argues that "Muslims were active in the selection and synthesis of Jewish and Christian materials within their own emerging Islamic religious tradition. These borrowings were effectively shaped by Muslim scholars in their inexorable march to manufacture meaning from archetypal sacred figures and events"; Spellberg, "Writing the Unwritten Life," 306. Earlier on (p. 305) the same author states that "while borrowing from Jewish and Christian sources may have been officially rejected, assumptions about these materials continued to influence early Islamic written interpretations." Revealing as it is in many aspects, Spellberg's article does not include comments regarding the possible nature of the process of selection and use of Jewish and Christian materials. In fact, many aspects of the sophisticated context of this operation remain unclear. See especially Dimitri Gutas, *Greek Thought, Arabic Culture: The Graeco-Arabic Translation Movement in Baghdad and Early ʿAbbasid Society (2nd–4th/5th–10th c.)* (London, 2005).

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newly constructed tradition ascribed to the Prophet Muḥammad words which not only disagreed with the Quranic narrative about creation, but successfully challenged the Quranic revelation.

Endorsed by al-Bukhārī and Ibn Ḥanbal (in both cases referring to the authority of Abū Hurayrah), the Prophet's alleged statement about women having been made of a rib was popularized by the fundamental texts of the subsequent centuries, such as al-Ghazālī's *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn* (eleventh–twelfth century), which seems to have been one of al-Munāwī's principal sources.[23] A reference to Eve's Genesis-based beginnings can be also found in a *khabar* included in al-Ṭabarī's *History* (ninth–tenth century), according to which Adam's wife was created from Adam's rib when he was asleep.[24]

Inconsistent as it was with the Quranic account, the Biblical information about the creation of woman/Eve from a rib offered a consistent, convincing, reliable, and, above all, much desired explanation of the reason behind women's "essential" evil, the faultiness of their character and intellect, and their immutable nature.[25] Apparently closer to the male intuition[26] than the Quranic version, with time the concept became an inherent part of the Islamic textual tradition which could thus become a part of the broader monotheistic discourse on women. Meaningfully enough, al-Munāwī's—and Muslims' in general—reading of the account matched the understanding of Christian theologians, who also noticed the significance of the curvature of the bone from which Eve was created.

"These defects can also be noticed in the original shaping of woman, since she was formed from a curved rib, that is, from the rib of the chest that is twisted and contrary, so to speak, to man. From this defect there also arises the fact that since she is an imperfect animal, she is always deceiving, and for this reason she is always deceptive," wrote inquisitors Heinrich Kraemer and Jacob Sprenger in their *Malleus maleficarum* (1487).[27] St. Albert, a thirteenth-century Dominican

[23] See above and nn. 8 and 10.

[24] Anonymous in the Quranic version, in al-Ṭabarī's *History* she is named Ḥawwā', Eve; al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-rusul wa-al-mulūk,* ed. Muḥammad Abū al-Faḍl Ibrāhīm (Cairo, n.d.), 1:103; Engl. transl. in Spellberg, "Writing the Unwritten Life," 309. For the discussion of the various Islamic versions of the creation of the first woman see ibid., 309 ff.

[25] As David Gilmore observed, "misogynists are 'essentialists,' positing a stereotypical 'essence' in women, a basic, immutable and evil nature allowing for no individual variation." Gilmore, *Misogyny,* 14.

[26] In the Jungian understanding of the term, i.e., as "perception via the unconscious"; see Carl Gustav Jung, *Psychological Types* (Princeton, 1971), 399.

[27] *Malleus Maleficarum,* I/42B, in Christopher S. Mackay, *The Hammer of Witches: A Complete Translation of the* Malleus Maleficarum (Cambridge, 2009), 165; the fragment is mentioned in Guy Bechtel, *Les quatre femmes de Dieu: La putain, la sorcière, la sainte & Bécassine* (Paris, 2000), 28. Cf. also, for example, *Élévations sur les mystères* (1694–95) by bishop Jacques-Bénigne Bossuet, who

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theologian of Cologne, did not mention the rib itself, but he referred to woman as a clumsy by-product of the Creation: "Woman is a misbegotten man and has a faulty and defective nature in comparison to his. Therefore she is unsure in herself. What she cannot get, she seeks to obtain through lying and diabolical deceptions. And so, to put it briefly, one must be on one's guard with every woman, as if she were a poisonous snake and the horned devil.... Thus in evil and perverse doings woman is cleverer, that is, slyer, than man. Her feelings drive woman toward every evil, just as reason impels man toward all good," St. Albert would teach in his *De animalibus.*[28]

In the Jewish tradition, Eve's creation from the rib also explains the imperfect nature of women. While answering a series of questions which people asked him in this regard, Rabbi Joshua explained, for example, that "'Adam was created from the earth, which never stinks, while Eve was created from a bone; if flesh is left for three days without salt, it will immediately stink' [that is why women use perfume: to conceal the stench of flesh]." Or: "'Adam was created from the earth, and if you put a drop of water on it, it immediately absorbs it. Eve was created from a bone; and if you soak a bone in water, even for several days, it will not absorb the water' [consequently, a woman is difficult to appease]."[29]

Against this defective character of women the Muḥammadan tradition recommended a protective measure, which, however, had to be applied skillfully and only on a limited scale. As al-Munāwī's text teaches, diplomacy and kindness should by no means imply yielding to women's views as these were not only useless and irresponsible, but also dangerous. As al-Munāwī put it, "they are [made of] a rib and because of their deficient intellect whoever relies upon their opinion or pays attention to what they say will suffer loss and will regret."[30] "Let no one consider opinions of women or act according to their reasoning, for whoever arranges anything in line with their views or acts in line with their words will lose

maintained that woman was a product of the additional bone of man; Jacques-Bénigne Bossuet, *Élévations a Dieu sur tous les mystères de la religion chrétienne* (Paris, 1838), 59; the fragment is mentioned in Bechtel, *Quatre femmes,* 28.

[28] St. Albertus Magnus, *Quaestiones super De animalibus,* Book XV, Q 11, quoted in Stan Goff, *Borderline: Reflections on War, Sex and Church* (Eugene, Oregon, 2015), 67.

[29] Genesis Rabba 17:8, quoted in Tamar Kadari, "Eve: Midrash and Aggadah," in *Jewish Women's Archive: Encyclopedia,* https://jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/eve-midrash-and-aggadah (accessed August 30, 2017). Cf. the collation of the Haggada as arranged by Louis Ginzberg in 1909 under the title *The Legends of the Jews,* I/1, "Women," available from: http://www.sacred-texts.com/jud/loj/ (accessed August 30, 2017).

[30] *Tadhkirah,* MS Yale, fol. 30a; MS Cairo1, fol. 28b; MS Cairo2, fol. 45b (p. 88 according to numbers applied on the sheets of the manuscript).

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his money,"[31] announces Khosrow, the king of Persia,[32] after his beloved slave Shirin made him act like a fool.

In the story about Shirin and Khosrow as quoted by al-Munāwī the otherwise mighty ruler is naïve, innocent, non-assertive, and unable to think on his own; tempted to do something nonsensical, he mindlessly follows the woman's suggestion and, dragged into a tricky situation, he inevitably loses.[33] The tone of the story corresponds, by the way, with the message which can be found in the *1001 Nights* collection, where the main plot of a number of the tales—such as "The Woman who Wanted to Deceive Her Husband," "Women's Wiles," and "The Craft and Malice of Women, or the Tale of the King, His Son, His Concubine, and the Seven Viziers"—is focused on the idea of woman leading man astray. In al-Munāwī's narrative the story of Shirin and Khosrow is presented as an eye-opening illustration of what may befall men, who, disregarding women's deficient intellect and faulty character, follow their opinions. However, neither the story about Shirin and Khosrow nor the tales included in the *Nights* collection are just examples of how popular literature dealt with women's deceitful nature. After all, the idea they communicated resembled that expressed in the narrative of the Fall as featured in Genesis. As such, they transmit a more serious message: men are exposed, and vulnerable, to the fundamental danger posed by females.

[31] *Tadhkirah,* MS Yale, fol. 30b; MS Cairo1, fol. 28b; MS Cairo2, fol. 46a (p. 89 according to numbers applied on the sheets of the manuscript).

[32] Khosrow II, the last great king of the Sasanian Empire, reigned from 590 to 628.

[33] *Tadhkirah,* MS Yale, fols. 30a–b; MS Cairo1, fols. 28b–29a; MS Cairo2, fols. 45b–46a (pp. 88–89 according to numbers applied on the sheets of the manuscript); the same story is also included in Ibn Abī al-ʿĪd al-Mālikī's *Ḥilyat al-kuramā' wa-bahjat al-nudamā',* ed. Al-Sayyid Yūsuf Aḥmad (Beirut, 2010), 131–32. In fact, it is quite possible that both al-Munāwī and Ibn Abī al-ʿĪd al-Mālikī (fifteenth century) copied the story from *Al-Tibr al-masbūk fī naṣīḥat al-mulūk,* which book, attributed to Abū al-Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī (eleventh–twelfth centuries), circulated in the Arabic-Islamic world from the second half of the twelfth century, when it was first translated from Persian into Arabic. However, those who read, and copied from, its chapter VII, titled "On women and their good and bad points," could not have known that the entire second part of *Naṣīḥat al-Mulūk,* the chapter on women included, was not the work of al-Ghazālī but some other, as yet unidentified, person. In the present article references to this text will refer to its author as (Pseudo-)al-Ghazālī. For a discussion of the misattribution to al-Ghazālī of the second part of *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk* see Patricia Crone, "Did al-Ghazali Write a Mirror for Princes? On the Authorship of *Naṣīḥat al-Mulūk,*" *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 10 (1987): 167–91. Many thanks to Prof. Antonella Ghersetti for turning my attention to Ibn Abī al-ʿĪd al-Mālikī's work and Patricia Crone's arguments regarding the authorship of *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk*. For a discussion of *Ḥilyat al-kuramā'* see Antonella Ghersetti, "An Unpublished Anthology of the Mamluk Period on Generosity and Generous Men," *Mamlūk Studies Review* 13, no. 1 (2009): 107–20. For the story of Shirin and Khosrow as presented by (Pseudo-)al-Ghazālī see Abū al-Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī, *Al-Tibr al-masbūk fī naṣīḥat al-mulūk* (Beirut, 1988), 130–1; English translation in F. R. C. Bagley, *Ghazali's Book of Counsel for Kings* (London, 1964), 171–72.

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For man, a woman is a threat—both in everyday space and in the dimension of cosmic transcendence. Strange, mysterious, wicked, deceptive, greedy, and immoral, she not only cleverly manipulates him, deliberately misguides him, bothers him, and provokes quarrels, but also tempts him, makes him lose control over his mind, and draws him away from religion. In short, she is a *fitnah*—anarchy, chaos, and a menace to the unity of the Islamic community.[34] It was not without reason that the Prophet warned the believers: "I am not leaving behind me a more harmful *fitnah* for men than women."[35] "And this is because," as al-Munāwī explains Muḥammad's words, "woman always instructs her husband to do evil and always encourages him to do evil. And the least corruption of hers is that she wants him to love this world so eagerly that he devotes himself to it. And there is no wickedness more harmful than that. This is apart from other things, such as the natural inclination to passionate love, hatred towards the hereafter,[36] looking after children as well as other kinds of disorders and calamities."[37] Therefore, urges al-Munāwī, "it is a duty of an intelligent and conscious man to be on his guard as far as the issue of women is concerned …; for calamities, ruin, and ordeals/misfortune occur only through women."[38]

Intriguingly enough, al-Munāwī's reluctance regarding females' "natural inclination to passionate love" agrees with what St. Jerome (fourth century) would teach in this respect: "Woman's love in general is accused of ever being insatiable; put it out, it bursts into flame; give it plenty, it is again in need; it enervates a man's mind, and engrosses all thought except for the passion which it feeds."[39] In fact, the natural inclination to love was so alarming because it implied one of the gravest and most destructive aspects of woman's nature, that is her generally unbridled lust. This, fused with satanic powers and deceptiveness, made of her the source of temptation that deprived man of the ability to control himself. Woman

[34] Cf. Nadia M. El-Cheikh, "Describing the Other to Get at the Self: Byzantine Women in Arabic Sources (8th–11th Centuries)," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 40, no. 2 (1997): 240.

[35] *Tadhkirah,* MS Yale, fol. 30b; MS Cairo1 (the fragment is not identifiable); MS Cairo2 (the fragment is not identifiable).

[36] Cf. al-Ghazālī's comment in this respect as expressed in *Iḥyā',* 469: "As for a married man, he is most often driven into the paths of evil by following the whims of his wife and selling his hereafter for this world." Engl. transl. in *Book on the Etiquette,* chapter I. "Advantages and Disadvantages of Marriage," section 'Disadvantages of marriage.'

[37] *Tadhkirah,* MS Yale, fol. 30b; MS Cairo1 (the fragment is not identifiable); MS Cairo2 (the fragment is not identifiable).

[38] *Tadhkirah,* MS Yale, fol. 31b; MS Cairo1, fol. 29a; MS Cairo2, fol. 46a (p. 89 according to numbers applied on the sheets of the manuscript).

[39] St. Jerome, *Against Jovinianus,* I/29, http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/30091.htm (accessed August 30, 2017).

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was a trap. Woman was the tool of the devil. "You are the blade of my army, you are the locus of my secret, you are my arrow which I will shoot, and I will never miss…,"[40] the devil was supposed to have said when woman was created. So, at least, goes al-Munāwī's narrative, which also includes what seems to be the explanation—however obscure—of this enigmatic quote.

> Looking at women's charms is one of the arrows of the devil. The devil shoots it toward the heart and there is no way to ward it off except by lowering one's eyes and moving away from the shooter; for when he shoots this arrow with a bow of the image [*sic*],[41] and you do not stop in its path, the arrow will miss you; but if you display your heart and make it a target, it will hit you…

This way or another, the devil made females a trap for males:

> …he creates attractive visions in men's hearts, and tempts men with them, and makes men commit adultery—just like the hunter who prepares his hunting net and provokes the prey to fall in its threads.[42]

The image of the tempting, lustful, devilish woman perversely destroying man's innocence, honesty, and holy peace of mind was not an exclusive obsession of al-Munāwī's. Nor was it limited to educated Sufi males of his time who constituted his spiritual-intellectual milieu and who, most probably, shared his anxieties. The insatiate lust as well as satanic powers and deceptiveness were stressed also in Mamluk-period sources. Probably the best known representative of this kind of thinking is Ibn al-Ḥājj, an uncompromising fourteenth-century Maliki

[40] *Tadhkirah,* MS Yale, fol. 32a; the fragment does not seem to be included in MS Cairo1 or MS Cairo2. "And you are my envoy when I need you" *(wa-anti rasūlī fī ḥājatī)* adds al-Ghazālī, whose version of the maxim differs slightly; according to him, the devil was supposed to have said: "You are half of my army etc." *(anti niṣf jundī).* Al-Ghazālī also explains what "half of [the devil's] army" means: "half of his army is lust and the other half is anger" *(fa-niṣf jundihi al-shahwah wa-niṣf jundihi al-ghaḍab);* see al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyāʾ,* 986 ("Kitāb kasr al-shahawāt"). Al-Munāwī quoted the maxim in his *Fayḍ al-qadīr* as well; see ʿAbd al-Raʾūf al-Munāwī, *Fayḍ al-qadīr sharḥ al-Ǧāmiʿ al-ṣaghīr* (Beirut, 1391/1972), 5:436. Cf. also the version in, for example, al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī, *Al-Manhīyāt* (Cairo, n.d.), 129. Cf. also the hadith according to which the Prophet declared: "When a woman approaches, she approaches in the image of the devil …"; al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyāʾ,* 464; Engl. transl. in pt. I, "Advantages and Disadvantages of Marriage," chapter 'Advantages of marriage.'

[41] *"Fa innahu innamā yarmī hadhā al-sahm ʿan qaws al-ṣūrah …"*

[42] *Tadhkirah,* MS Yale, fol. 32a.

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scholar from Maghreb, who resided in Cairo and for whom the presence of the female body constituted a fundamental threat to the order governing men's world.[43]

The mentality which associated woman with disaster and God's anger made some Muslim thinkers go even further and assign women to the leading role in the apocalyptic literature they produced.[44] The visions which such a literature promoted differed in details. Nonetheless, the general idea underlying the thinking and fantasizing of its authors was that in the waning time of the world women would abound; this, in turn, would cause a disaster in the form of their gaining control of society.[45] The fourteenth/fifteenth-century Cairene theologian Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī was of the opinion that when the world becomes filled with women, knowledge would be forgotten and ignorance would prevail—a vision which, by the way, constituted one of the most frequently mentioned signs of the apocalypse. Al-Nawawī, a thirteenth-century theologian from Syria, linked the possible increase in the number of women with the coming of corruption, and frightened his readers with a vision of the world which, inhabited by shameless women, would be engrossed in fornication.[46] Abū ʿAbd Allāh al-Qurṭubī, an Andalusian living in Cairo and al-Nawawī's contemporary, insisted that when the end of time comes, women, overwhelmed by insatiate lust, would force men to fornicate with them, screaming and calling them in.[47]

Interestingly enough, these kinds of visions, having first developed in the minds of religious scholars, at some point started to have a life of their own. The "real" stories into which they transformed confirmed the validity of the theologians' arguments and the actuality of the danger. In the annal devoted to the events of 778/1376, the Cairene chronicler Ibn Iyās (fifteenth–sixteenth century) reported that in both Upper (Ṣaʿīd) and Lower Egypt there were "special districts [*ḥārāt*] for prostitutes and music," or places where adultery, wine drinking, and other abominable things were practiced openly—so much so that if a stranger

[43]Huda Lutfi, "Manners and Customs of Fourteenth-Century Cairene Women: Female Anarchy versus Male Sharʿi Order in Muslim Prescriptive Treatises," in *Women in Middle Eastern History: Shifting Boundaries in Sex and Gender,* ed. Nikki R. Keddie and Beth Baron (New Haven, 1999), 100.

[44]For an excellent discussion of the motif of woman as present in Islamic writings referring to the apocalypse see Walid Saleh, "The Woman as a Locus of Apocalyptic Anxiety in Medieval Sunnī Islam," in *Myths, Historical Archetypes and Symbolic Figures in Arabic Literature: Towards a New Hermeneutic Approach,* ed. Angelika Neuwirth, Birgit Embalo, Sebastian Günter, and Maher Jarrar (Stuttgart, 1999), 123–45.

[45]Saleh, "Woman as a Locus," 131.

[46]Ibid., 133, 135–36.

[47]Ibid., 134, 137.

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found himself there by accident, with no intention to commit adultery, prostitutes of the district would catch him and force him to fornicate with them.[48]

The phobias related to the abundance of shameless women, prevalent prostitution, and obligatory, if not forced, fornication, apparently psychogenic in origin, seem to be associated with men's pathological fear of being murdered or otherwise destroyed by female sexual organs and the sexual act itself.[49] Clearly typical for the Arabic-Islamic intellectual discourse of the Mamluk Near East, such fears are not directly expressed in al-Munāwī's text. Nevertheless, they might have been familiar to him and, if so, played a role in shaping his frame of mind.

Be that as it may, the idea of men's exposure and vulnerability to the fundamental danger posed by females permeates the entire chapter. Interestingly enough, its author's convictions, consistent with the narrative of the Fall as offered in the Book of Genesis, harmonize with the direction indicated by its earliest, pre-Islamic interpretations, which insisted that it was the woman who was to be blamed for what had happened—even though man and woman had succumbed to sin together.[50] Presumed guilty and considered the original trespasser, the first woman became the reason behind misfortunes and calamities. "From a woman sin had its beginning, and because of her we all die," one could learn from the apocryphal Book of Sirach (ca. 200 to 175 B.C.).[51] "And Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner,"[52] St. Paul (d. 64–67) would stress. "You are the devil's gateway; you are she who first violated the forbidden tree and broke the law of God. It was you who coaxed your way around him whom the devil had not the force to attack. With what ease you shattered that image of God: Man! Because of the death you merited, even the Son of God had to die…" wrote Tertullian from Carthage, "the father of Latin theology" (ca. 155–240).[53]

Distant as he was from those authors and from the texts they shared, al-Munāwī himself produced a text which, having constituted a link in the reac-

[48] See Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad Ibn Iyās, *Badāʾiʿ al-zuhūr fī waqāʾiʿ al-duhūr,* ed. Muḥammad Muṣṭafá (Wiesbaden-Cairo, 1961–75), 1:2:167 (the annal for 778/1376).

[49] See Gilmore's discussion of such fears among, for example, New Guinean Etoro, Gimi, and Sambia people, Melanesians, Amazonian Tukanoan Indians, and Myanmar Buddhists; Gilmore, *Misogyny,* 30–32, 34–35, 52–53, 63, respectively; also his references in this respect to Greek mythology, 58, and to the expressions used by Bernard of Cluny, Walter Map, and William Shakespeare, 37.

[50] Cf. Bechtel, *Quatre femmes,* 86.

[51] Sirach 25:24.

[52] 1 Timothy 2:14.

[53] Tertullian, *De cultu feminarum,* I/1.2., http://www.tertullian.org/anf/anf04/anf04-06.htm#P277_54727 (accessed August 30, 2017). Also quoted in Rosemary Radford Ruether, "Misogynism and Virginal Feminism in the Fathers of the Church," in Ruether, *Religion and Sexism,* 157.

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tion chain initiated by the Biblical image of Eve, associated them in the same discourse community.[54] This is valid also for the account of the way the first woman was punished for her disobedience: "I will greatly increase your pangs in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children, yet your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you,"[55] God communicates to Eve in Genesis. Tertullian, clearly content with the line of the sentence, wanted women to understand God's words properly. He insisted that guilty, punished, and suffering Eve should be identified with her entire gender: "In pain shall you bring forth children, woman, and you shall turn to your husband and he shall rule over you. And do you not know that you are Eve? God's sentence hangs still over all your sex and His punishment weighs down upon you."[56]

The Genesis-based idea of women being punished for disobedience and the negative equation of Eve with all women[57] caught the attention of Muslim theologians, too. Al-Munāwī devotes a significant fragment of his chapter on women to this issue. The fragment, which specifies punishments inflicted by God upon Eve, is much more elaborate than the list recorded in the Bible.

> They say that after Eve had disobeyed God in the Garden He punished the woman with eighteen punishments: menstruation; childbearing; childbirth and being soiled by it; separation from her mother; moving in with a stranger who marries her; no control over her own affairs; the inferior nature of her inheritance and of her testimony, for testimony of two women is worth that of one man; no right to divorce; the requirement of staying at home; covering

[54] Thomas Kuhn used the term "textual community" to refer to epistemological communities with shared texts, interpretations, and beliefs. See entry "Interpretive community" in *Oxford Dictionary of Media and Communication* (Oxford, 2011), 223; also Brian Stock, *The Implications of Literacy: Written Language and Models of Interpretation in the 11th and 12th Centuries* (Princeton, 1983), 80–151, as presented by Maren R. Niehoff, "Did the *Timaeus* create a Textual Community," *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 47 (2007): 162.

[55] Gen. 3:16.

[56] Tertullian, *De cultu feminarum,* 1/1.1.

[57] In the Islamic tradition, the negative equation of Eve with all women was authorized by the words ascribed to the Prophet Muḥammad: "Were it not for Ḥawwā' [Eve], the female would not deceive her husband." Al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ,* 4:161, as discussed in Spellberg, "Writing the Unwritten Life," 311. Cf. also Spellberg's remarks (p. 314) on a statement included in al-Ṭabarī's *Tārīkh:* "Divine condemnation of Eve leads ineluctably to the characterization and punishment of all women: 'If it were not for the misfortune which befell Eve, women on Earth would not menstruate and they would be good-natured and would have easy pregnancies and births.'" Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh,* 1:109. Again, the alleged originator of the hadith was Abū Hurayrah (d. 678), the Prophet's Companion, "who had attested interests in the Torah and the Christian Bible"; Spellberg, "Writing the Unwritten Life," 311.

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> her head; not being allowed to go out without a male guardian; no chance, which men have, to pray on Fridays, and during feasts and funeral processions, and to wage holy war; no permission to lead men or to have authority over them or to judge; no ability to acquire knowledge; and while the [Heavenly] Reward and Pay equals 1000 units, women receive one unit only. And women-whores will be punished with half a punishment [inflicted on] the community on the Day of Judgement.[58]

The list, which remains anonymous, does not seem to have been widely distributed. Apart from al-Munāwī's *Tadhkirah,* it was also quoted in Ibn Abī al-ʿĪd al-Mālikī's *Ḥilyat al-kuramāʾ wa-bahjat al-nudamāʾ,* a Sufi source originating in fifteenth-century Cairo, but the two versions, i.e., Ibn Abī al-ʿĪd's and al-Munāwī's, differ slightly.[59] As is the case with the story of Shirin and Khosrow,[60] it is quite probable that both authors copied the text from (Pseudo-)al-Ghazālī's *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk,* which apparently circulated in Cairene Sufi circles.[61]

The text deserves a multi-aspect analysis and interpretation. As this would exceed the scope of this article, I will only refer briefly to one aspect of it—namely, that al-Munāwī (or, more properly, the source he follows) places in one basket elements belonging to categories which at first glance seem unmixable. One of these categories covers aspects of female biology that men universally dislike, abhor, are scared of, or in other ways are disturbed by.[62] The other involves a variety of gender-based discriminative regulations and practices that men imposed on women within the framework of Islamic society. The issue of prostitutes, to which the author points in the end of the list, belongs to yet another category of problems.[63] In the text that al-Munāwī presents all are collectively labeled God's punishments inflicted upon women for the disobedience of Eve.

[58] *Tadhkirah,* MS Yale, fols. 32a–b; MS Cairo1, fol. 28a; MS Cairo2, fol. 44b (p. 86 according to numbers applied on the sheets of the manuscript).

[59] Ibn Abī al-ʿĪd al-Mālikī, *Ḥilyat al-kuramāʾ,* 153–54.

[60] See above at n. 33.

[61] See Bagley, *Ghazali's Book,* 164. In the 1964 Beirut edition of *Al-Tibr al-masbūk* the fragment is omitted.

[62] See Gilmore, *Misogyny,* 17–56, passim.

[63] Apart from apparently being an aspect of misogyny (cf. above, n. 49, and the references therein), male anxieties associated with prostitutes found social expression in the regulations of Islamic law that ban prostitution (see Quran 24:33). Together with wine, prostitution constituted an essential part of what medieval Islam generally branded as vice (the category could also include beer, hashish, musical instruments, singers, and sometimes also homosexuality). For the anti-vice campaigns directed against prostitution in the Mamluk sultanate see Paulina B. Lewicka, "Kobieta w społeczeństwie miejskim średniowiecznego Egiptu: Czasy Mameluków, 1250–1517," in *Kobieta w literaturze i kulturze Egiptu,* ed. Katarzyna Pachniak (Warsaw, 2016), 57–59.

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Such an arrangement of the list, intriguingly, brings to mind the pattern already used in Genesis, where out of the threefold punishment to which the first woman is sentenced two elements belong to the category of female biology and woman's role in reproduction, while the remaining one has a social character and involves woman's submission to man. In a way, then, al-Munāwī reproduced the idea which had been verbalized at least two millennia earlier in the grand Biblical narrative and which, in fact, epitomizes the essence of misogyny.[64] Was, however, the list al-Munāwī quoted indeed a literary meme,[65] a reworked, elaborated model originating from Genesis, or was the entire reason-effect/crime-punishment structure a topos, an archetypal pattern associated with the universal "gendered psychosis,"[66] as misogyny was once called? Or was it both?

While commenting on the post-Quranic references to the Genesis-based image of Eve, Denise A. Spellberg noticed that the echoes of Genesis 3:16 as present in al-Ṭabarī's *History* omit a key part of the punishment meted out to women through Eve. "Then He [Allah] said: 'O Ḥawwā', you are the one who beguiled My slave [Adam]. You shall not have a single pregnancy that will not be difficult. When you desire to give birth to what is in your womb, you will quite often be on the verge of death,'" reads al-Ṭabarī's account. Spellberg's conclusion was that "Muslims did not need to turn to Genesis or Jewish and Christian tradition to document male superiority as divinely ordained; they had the Quran to express a similar gender-power relationship: 'Men are in charge of women, because Allah made one of them to excel the other' (Quran 4:34)."[67]

Indeed, al-Ṭabarī's account does not mention women's subordination to men among God's punishments. But the Quran does not present it this way, either. The category covering the major examples of Islamic gender-based discrimination as featured in al-Munāwī's work (and earlier in Ibn Abī al-ʿĪd's *Ḥilyat al-kuramā'*) is all the more intriguing in this context—who introduced this analogy (however inconspicuous) to Judeo-Christian tradition into the Islamic discourse and why?

[64] Interestingly enough, contemporary scholarship dealing with misogyny, while making use of these two aspects of the phenomenon, reorganizes their arrangement and presents them as a cause-and-effect relationship. According to contemporary understanding, men's instinctual imperative to exercise superiority over women constitutes a re-enactment of the traumas which seem to stem from unresolved inner conflicts in men (cf. Gilmore, *Misogyny,* 14) that are related to women's role in reproduction. For a survey of psychological and psychoanalytical theories related to the role of the mother in generating women-hating see Gilmore, *Misogyny,* 151–68.

[65] As genes transmit biological information, memes act as units transmitting ideas, behaviors, or styles that spread from person to person within a given culture. While self-replicating through imitation, they modify human behavior and contribute to spreading a given culture pattern. See, above all, Richard Dawkins, *The Selfish Gene* (Oxford, 1989).

[66] Adam Jukes quoted in Gilmore, *Misogyny,* 14.

[67] Spellberg, "Writing the Unwritten Life," 314.

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Who included the sufferings resulting from gender-based social inequality into the Islamic list of divine punishments inflicted upon women? Was the list included by al-Munāwī's predecessor in his *Ḥilyat al-kuramā'* the invention of its author or did he take it from some earlier source? If so, what was it?

Whatever it was, one cannot resist the impression that by defining the discriminative measures as divine punishments the author of the list projected upon God the responsibility for the way he and other men contributed to the discomforts, humiliation, and distress of women. Quite possibly, he somehow tried to rationalize not only the dissimilarity of the sexes but also the immense asymmetry in male-female relations, and such an explanation could have soothed him somehow—all the more so in that from this perspective women appeared to deserve their miserable fate. Moreover, this fate proved to have been their (i.e., Eve's) own fault and for all their sufferings they could only blame themselves. This way the author of al-Munāwī's source could make certain that contributing to somebody's hardship and humiliation was not only just and legal but, endorsed by the highest authority of all, it proved obligatory and undisputable. True, al-Munāwī was not the original author of this text; but it fitted his way of thinking enough to make him choose it from a broad spectrum of other texts and to include and promote it in his book.

The persistence of the ever-present image of woman as subhuman and evil incarnate could not, and did not, remain neutral. On the contrary, it generated reactions which followed the pattern valid universally wherever discrimination becomes an institutionalized and encouraged norm. It should not be surprising, then, that one projected upon women all one hated and feared; one tended to be increasingly prejudiced and suspicious and to voice accusations and insults. And one was deeply convinced that women naturally deserved degradation, humiliation, and shame.

In his chapter on women al-Munāwī went so far as to introduce an element of dehumanization, otherwise rarely used in Arabic-Islamic literature in reference to humans of inferior status. Nevertheless, the entire last page of the approximately seven-page chapter is dedicated to comparing women to ten kinds of animals, as nothing could illustrate the bad and contemptible features of female nature in a more vivid way.

> Know that women are of ten kinds, and that the feature of each of them resembles a feature of a certain animal. So the first one is like a pig—the only things which she does well are eating, drinking, having a full stomach, and breaking vessels. She is not concerned with where she goes and does not care for anything. She does not think of the hereafter or about the Punishment or Reward. She does

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> nothing to take care of children, to raise them or educate them. She wears dirty clothes and smells bad.…[68]

Then he goes on with his list, which includes monkey, dog, viper, donkey, scorpion, mouse, bird, fox, and sheep. None of the comparisons is nice, except that involving a sheep—a woman compared to this animal is useful and full of loving care for her husband, her relatives, her neighbors, and her children:

> …The second is like a monkey: she cares for wearing colorful clothes, pearls, jewels, and trinkets, and she is proud in front of her companions. And even though she knows she means something to her husband, she nevertheless deceives him. The third one is like a dog: if her husband talks to her, she jumps at his face, shouts at him, quarrels with him, and falls upon him like a dog. And when she notices that his pouch is filled with gold, silver, and coppers, and his house loaded with goods, livestock, grains, and fruits, she becomes fond of him, treats him politely, and says "I am devoted to you." And when his condition is contrary to this, she jumps like a dog at his face, and expels him from his house, and destroys his life with her. The fourth is like a viper: she speaks to her husband softly and, at the same time, she harbors ill will against him and does not wish him well—like a viper with its soft touch and its killing poison. The fifth one is like a she-donkey: when she stops on the bridge she does not move when beaten and remains stubborn, sticking to her opinion and proud of herself. The sixth is like a scorpion. She keeps spreading calumnies and slanders in the houses of neighbors, and listens to what they say so as to use it to sow dissension, enmity, quarrels and strife among them—just like a scorpion which stings wherever it appears. The seventh is like a mouse: she steals wheat from her husband's house, and his means of subsistence, and gives them to *al-ghazzālāt.*[69] The eighth is like a bird: she goes round in circles all day and never stops circulating, and says to her husband, "Where have you been, you don't need me anymore, you love another, and you are not honest with me or tender to me." The ninth is like a fox: as soon as her husband leaves

[68] *Tadhkirah,* MS Yale, fol. 32b; MS Cairo1, fols. 28a–28b; MS Cairo2, fols. 44b–45a (pp. 86–87 according to numbers applied on the sheets of the manuscript).

[69] *"… wa-taʿṭīhi lil-ghazzālāt";* I tend to interpret *al-ghazzālāt* as "spinners." However, the meaning of the sentence remains unclear. Bagley's translation of the relevant fragment of (Pseudo-)al-Ghazālī's *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk* reads: "She steals barley, wheat, rice and miscellaneous supplies and gives away yarn for spinning." See Bagley, *Ghazali's Book,* 166.

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> his house she eats whatever she sees and sleeps and pretends to be sick. And when her husband comes home she says, "You left me in the house alone and ailing," which she does to start a quarrel. The tenth is like a sheep: she is blessed, and everything coming from her is beneficial; this is a virtuous woman, with a lot of benefits and loving care for her husband, her relatives, her neighbors, and her children.[70]

Judging by its extremely rare occurrence, the text was not popularly known. Again, it is quite probable that al-Munāwī quoted it from (Pseudo-)al-Ghazālī's *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk,* which seems to be the only extant Arabic work to transmit the list.[71] Unlike the story of Shirin and Khosrow and the list of eighteen punishments which God had inflicted upon women for Eve's disobedience, the list of ten animals to which women were compared was not quoted by Ibn Abī al-ʿĪd al-Mālikī in his *Ḥilyat al-kuramāʾ*.

Comparing women (or other humans of inferior status) to animals is not a commonplace feature in premodern Arabic-Islamic literature, but such a motif was used from time to time.[72] Typically enough, the pre-Islamic poets of the sixth century, such as Imruʾ al-Qays, Ṭarafah, or al-Nābighah al-Dhubyānī compared women to gazelles—in praise of their beauty, of course.[73] But some two centuries later a reverse standard appeared. Abū Tammām (eighth–ninth century), an Abbasid-era Arab poet and a Muslim convert born to Christian parents, compared women to a dog, a viper, a hyena, a crocodile, a magpie (thief), and a monkey.[74] Such comparisons are but a few of many sarcastic, women-insulting threads which can be found in his *Kitāb al-ḥamāsah* or, more precisely, in two chapters of the anthology.[75] In fact, it cannot be excluded that Abū Tammām's verses were the original inspiration for the author of the text quoted by al-Munāwī.

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[70] *Tadhkirah,* MS Yale, fol. 32b; MS Cairo1, fols. 28a–28b; MS Cairo2, fols. 44b–45a (pp. 86–87 according to numbers applied on the sheets of the manuscript).

[71] However, the fragment is missing from some Arabic editions of *Al-Tibr al-masbūk,* such as that published in Beirut in 1964. For the translation see Bagley, *Ghazali's Book,* 165–66. Cf. also Crone, "Did al-Ghazali Write a Mirror for Princes?," 179.

[72] See Barbara Ostafin's fascinating analysis of Abū Tammām's *Kitāb al-ḥamāsah,* where such comparisons are discussed; Barbara Ostafin, "Piękna czy brzydka? Występna czy cnotliwa? Wybrane wizerunki postaci kobiety w literaturze arabskiej do X w.," in *W kręgu zagadnień świata arabskiego,* ed. Adnan Abbas and Adrianna Maśko (Poznań, 2015), 1–13.

[73] Ibid., 3.

[74] Ibid., 6.

[75] Meaningfully enough, the chapters are titled "Satire" *(Hijāʾ)* and "Condemnation of Women" *(Madhammat al-nisāʾ).*

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Occasionally, women were compared to animals in religious texts, too. As the Prophetic Tradition has it, Muḥammad once compared a virtuous woman to a white crow in order to stress the rarity of the former,[76] while ʿĀ'ishah was angered at the notion that women might be religiously unclean, considering that this was equating women with dogs and donkeys.[77] Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī, a tenth-century hadith scholar, jurist, and Sufi from Baghdad, used such a device for technical reasons: he compared women to animals (and garments) to explain the institution of polygamy. Just as some people become tired of riding the same kind of animal, he maintained, some men get tired of the same woman. And just as God created four different kinds of riding animals—donkeys, mules, horses, and camels—He created the institution of polygamy, thus allowing men to change women as they would change mounts, because, just as the gaits of donkeys, mules, horses, and camels differ, women, too, differ in bed.[78]

It should probably not be surprising that in their discussions of the subject of women, Christian theologians also used the motif of animals. Peter Damian, an eleventh-century Benedictine monk and Church reformer, called women she-tigers and she-snakes,[79] while bishop Roger de Caen (eleventh–twelfth century) defined them as predatory she-wolves.[80] For Petrus Comestor, a twelfth-century French theological writer and the Chancellor of Notre Dame in Paris, women were annoying animals. Vincent of Beauvais, a thirteenth-century Dominican friar and the author of the *Speculum Maius,* the major medieval encyclopedia, called women mares. For Gilles Bellemère (fifteenth century), women connoted ephemeral flies which die young because of their weak constitution.[81]

While commenting on the approach of the Christian theologians, Guy Bechtel stressed that their emphasis on women's animality was meant to demonstrate that women were men's deadly enemies. Moreover, equating women with ani-

[76] "A virtuous woman amongst other women is like a white-footed crow [*aʿṣam*] among a hundred crows." *Tadhkirah,* MS Yale, fol. 31a; MS Cairo1 (the fragment is not identifiable); MS Cairo2, fol. 43a (p. 83 according to numbers applied on the sheets of the manuscript); quoted by al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyā',* 484; Engl. transl. *Book of the Etiquette,* chapter 3, "Etiquette of Cohabitation," pt. 1. 'Etiquette of cohabitation.'

[77] Leila Ahmed, *Women and Gender in Islam: Historical Roots of a Modern Debate* (New Haven, 1992), 47.

[78] Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī, *Qūt al-qulūb fī muʿāmalat al-maḥbūb* (Cairo, 1893), 2:244, as discussed by Beatrix Immenkamp, "Marriage and Celibacy in Medieval Islam: A Study of Ghazali's Kitāb Ādāb al-Nikāḥ" (Ph.D. diss., University of Cambridge, 1994), 118.

[79] Bechtel, *Quatre femmes,* 42.

[80] Ibid.

[81] Ibid., 43.

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mals implied that they were more or less intellectually handicapped.[82] Be that as it may, such a device was certainly not innocent, if only because dehumanization, apart from reflecting disdain for the dehumanized, is one of the central processes in the transformation of ordinary, normal people into indifferent or even wanton perpetrators of evil.[83] In other words, an animalized perception of women involved an insidious mechanism which could, and most probably did, cause a lot of harm—especially so in that in the environment where the inferiority of one social category was an institutionalized norm, dehumanization was probably an inherent element of the language.

One wonders, however, whether—or to what extent—the narrative about the Fall was responsible for such an attitude toward women. In fact, the story about the first man and the first woman as featured in the Book of Genesis proved immensely influential, persuasive, and compelling. Seemingly dating back to the sixth–fifth centuries B.C.E., it not only defined woman's place in Judaism but, from late antiquity on, inspired generations of Christian theologians and ecclesiastical writers. Then, drawn into a constant, never-ending process of recycling of texts, sometime between the eighth and ninth centuries the story entered the Arabic-Islamic textual culture. Replicated, recycled, processed, and referred to by ever new authors, the successive remakes of the Biblical narrative influenced successive circles of readers and listeners. The process was fundamental for the popularization and preservation of the vision of woman as originally offered in the Book of Genesis.

As the author of his "On the rules related to relations with a wife…" al-Munāwī plays an active role in this process. While composing the *adab*-style collection of stories, maxims, statements, and commandments, he follows the tradition practiced by generations of Arabic-Islamic authors who transmitted and replicated knowledge about woman as a weird, faulty, corrupt, wicked, and dreadful kind of creature. It was due to this tradition that the symbolic fundamental of thinking about women, at least among educated people, was uninterruptedly informed by messages included in the Quran, the Sunnah, and other early post-Quranic writings. Such messages, some of which were inspired by the Genesis-based image of Eve, ranged from the Quranic verse 4:34, according to which "men are superior to women on account of the qualities with which God has gifted the one above the

[82] Ibid.; cf. Sarah Shaver Hughes and Brady Hughes, *Women in World History*, vol. 1, *Readings from Prehistory to 1500* (Armonk, New York, 1995), 3, where the authors argue that "women in the premodern, literate historical world lived, often with few civil rights, in societies dominated by men. Many women were sold by their fathers to their husbands, abused by them, and legally considered to have no more intellectual capacity than a child."

[83] See Philip Zimbardo, *The Lucifer Effect: Understanding How Good People Turn Evil* (New York, 2007), xii.

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other,"[84] to countless sayings ascribed to Muḥammad—such as the one insisting that women are "intellectually and religiously defective."[85] Stories, maxims, and statements credited to other Islamic authorities, as well as anonymous folk tales such as that about Shirin and Khosrow or those included in *1001 Nights,* complemented Muslims' body of knowledge pertaining to the nature of women.

Constantly reverberating in all kinds of narratives, such messages remained inherent elements of religio-social discourse throughout the centuries. And, having permeated the cultural climate and social mood of the community, they accompanied each of its members throughout life, thus contributing to defining one's frame of mind in this respect. As such, they shaped, spread, and preserved the common belief in women's "natural," God-ordained inferiority, evil, and intellectual incompetence, which features were perceived as an indisputable axiom. Women continued thus to be a problem and a threat, both to an individual man and to the entire Islamic community. Like all other members of this community, al-Munāwī, too, had this axiom burned in his mind; moreover, he never knew any alternatives to it.

As an element of the lasting, text-based continuum, al-Munāwī's chapter reveals how hatred and fear of women and contempt towards them as well as norms imposing the lack of symmetry between the sexes were shared between cultures.[86] But, while constituting a part of the cross-cultural grand narrative about woman

[84] "Men are superior to women on account of the qualities with which God has gifted the one above the other, and on account of the outlay they make from their substance for them. Virtuous women are obedient, careful during the husband's absence, because God has of them been careful. But chide those for whose refractoriness you have cause to fear; remove them into beds apart, and scourge them: but if they are obedient to you, then seek not occasion against them: verily, God is High, Great!"; Quran 4:34, transl. by John Medows Rodwell.

[85] *Al-nisāʾ nāqiṣāt ʿaql wa-dīn;* a number of similar hadiths are quoted by Shirley Guthrie, *Arab Women in the Middle Ages: Private Lives and Public Roles* (London, 2001), 162, 163. See also El-Cheikh, "Describing the Other," 240. Cf. a similar line of thought as penned by Kramer and Sprenger in their *Malleus Maleficarum:* "This is clear in the case of the wife of Samson, who, after importuning him greatly to reveal to her the riddle that he had given to his companions, revealed to them what he had said and thus committed deception. It is also clear in connection with the first woman that they have less faith by nature, since in response to the serpent's question as to why they did not eat of every tree in paradise, she said, 'From every . . . lest we may die' [Gen. 3:2–3]. In this she shows that she is doubtful and does not have faith in the words of God. All this is also demonstrated by the etymology of the noun. For the word *'femina'* [the Latin word for woman] is spoken as 'fe' and 'minus,' because she has and keeps less [Latin *'minus'*] faith [Latin *'fidem'*]." *Malleus Maleficarum,* I/42C, in Mackay, *Hammer,* 165; the fragment discussed in Bechtel, *Quatre femmes,* 130.

[86] Cf. the argument of Leila Ahmed, according to whom "the attitudes to women expressed in the urban centers of the Mediterranean Middle East appear to have formed a part of a cultural

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as an intellectually and socially inferior category, the chapter reflects, above all, the frame of mind typical for the Islamic culture within which certain constructs were transmitted from one generation to the next. However, apart from those broad contexts, al-Munāwī's textualized vision also had a very local, specific, tangible dimension.

Learned normative or didactic texts do not tell us directly what was happening on the ground. Nevertheless, they are records of the state of knowledge and mind of their authors as members of certain social groups and, as such, may be indicative of some aspects of the social-cultural reality in which a given group lives.[87] After all, meant for a particular group (or community), they contribute to molding its styles of thought and, in this way, affect the convictions, values, and patterns of behavior that are shared by this group.

In the case of al-Munāwī, the group, or his immediate spiritual-intellectual milieu, comprised, above all, a network of educated males with Sufi inclinations who lived in Cairo in the first hundred years of the Ottoman occupation. It was their texts, their philosophy, their system of values, and their mental habits that informed al-Munāwī's perception of, and attitude towards, the world, women included. The messages included in the *Tadhkirah* were addressed, above all, to readers from this group, to people like al-Munāwī himself: well-educated males, concerned with religion, and in one way or another influenced by Sufism. By promoting among them aversion to—and contempt towards—women, his text stimulated such feelings. In this way it generated and sustained a "hostile imagination," a dangerous psychological construct that, embedded deeply in human minds, makes people hate and harm the Other,[88] which category, in this case, covered humans of the female sex.

In a community whose religious law and social norms promoted denouncing and despising women and, at the same time, encouraged, if not imposed, polygamy,[89] family life must have been a difficult experience, and one's home, filled with stressed, competing wives and concubines, must have been an un-

continuum extending over the territories that had formed part of the Byzantine and Sasanian empires." Ahmed, *Women and Gender,* 68.

[87] As is usually the case with literature—including that of al-Munāwī—the author, having been shaped by and through the culture of his community, produces messages addressed to this community. Consequently, the community to which the author belongs not only influences him, but is also in turn influenced by his texts, which contribute to shaping its styles of thought and, through these, affect not only the culturally specific ideas, but also the patterns of behavior that are shared by its members.

[88] Zimbardo, *Lucifer Effect,* 11, 14. The term is also used by social philosopher Sam Keen, *Faces of the Enemy: Reflections of the Hostile Imagination* (New York, 1986).

[89] Although studies by Yossef Rapoport point, in a way, to the bright side of the situation; see especially his *Marriage, Money and Divorce in Medieval Islamic Society* (Cambridge, 2005).

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friendly place to stay. In order to avoid or counter various kinds of mental and physical threats they feel from women, men in many cultures establish male-only spaces, structures, associations, rituals, and events that provide them much coveted safety—such as the Japanese island of Okinoshima, gentlemen's clubs in the United Kingdom and the United States, or Melanesian ceremonial men's houses, to name but a few examples. In Cairo such secure, women-free spaces could be found in Sufi *zāwiyah*s and *khānqāh*s, which in the late Mamluk and early Ottoman period were quite numerous in the city.[90] Moreover, many—if not the majority of—Cairenes, ʿAbd al-Raʾūf al-Munāwī included, were adherents of not one, but several Sufi *ṭarīqah*s,[91] which situation, apart from increasing men's opportunities to prove their piousness, multiplied the number of retreats they could attend. Just as in the cases of many other exclusively male spaces, spending time in Sufi places provided a perfect way to avoid one's home, to escape from challenges which one was not able to face, and to stay away from all kinds of pressures, tensions, animosities, conflicts, and the countless daily traumas which polygamous family life generated for all its members. In other words, among the causes of the immense popularity of Sufism in the Mamluk and Ottoman periods, Cairene males' need to stay away from home and to frequent male-only spaces should not be disregarded, all other spiritual, social, economic, and political reasons for this phenomenon notwithstanding.[92]

[90] The *khānqāh* was introduced to Egypt by Saladin, that is in the beginning of the Ayyubid period. The origins of the *zāwiyah* and the date of its introduction to Egypt remain unknown; see Leonor Fernandes, *The Evolution of a Sufi Institution in Mamluk Egypt: The Khanqah* (Berlin, 1988), 13–16; ʿĀṣim Muḥammad Raziq, *Khanqāwāt al-Ṣūfīyah fī Miṣr fī al-ʿAṣrayn al-Ayyūbī wa-al-Mamlūkī,* 2 vols. (Cairo, 1997); on *khānqāh*s and *zāwiyah*s and the differences between these institutions see also Éric Geoffroy, *Le Soufisme en Égypte et en Syrie sous les derniers Mamelouks et les premieres Ottomans: Orientations spirituelles et enjeux culturelles* (Damascus, 1996), 165–75; Jean-Claude Garcin, "Les soufis dans la ville mamelouke d'Égypte: Histoire du soufisme et histoire global," in *Le développement de soufisme en Égypte a l'époque mamelouke,* ed. Adam Sabra and Richard McGregor (Cairo, 2006), 11–40; and Nathan Hofer, *The Popularisation of Sufism in Ayyubid and Mamluk Egypt, 1173–1325* (Edinburgh, 2015), 35–102.

[91] For the profile of these *ṭarīqah*s as present in early Ottoman Cairo see Michael Winter, *Egyptian Society under Ottoman Rule* (London and New York, 1992), 133–42; idem, *Society and Religion,* 88–125.

[92] On the popularity of Sufism in early Ottoman Egypt and the impact of the Ottoman occupation on the further spread of it see Winter, *Society and Religion,* 19–20. However, Michael Winter's references to the late Mamluk and post-Mamluk/Ottoman period as one of decadence, stagnation, literary decline, etc., are disputable, particularly in light of recent research tendencies. Cf. also Fernandes, *Evolution,* 2–3, where the reasons behind the Mamluks' encouragement of the development of Sufism are mentioned; and, above all, the comprehensive study of the popularization of Sufism in medieval Egypt by Nathan Hofer, *Popularisation,* passim.

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But the attitude which al-Munāwī's vision reflected did not translate exclusively into the family lives of Cairene Sufis, while the social expression of it was not limited to men's withdrawal into women-free structures. Since male superiority implies, above all, power and control over females and their sexuality, the authorities residing in late Mamluk and early Ottoman Cairo focused on the idea of covering and secluding the woman's body so as to make it invisible. The body was the most dangerous of all the fearsome attributes a woman possessed: being an abode of sin, it threatened the existing social order in a particular way. If left uncontrolled, it was, moreover, not only a potential source of *fitnah,* but could also provoke God's anger and His subsequent punishment in the form of natural disasters and plagues. Hiding women's bodies and making them unseen could increase the chances of averting calamity.[93] The belief in a cause-and-effect connection between women's visibility and natural disasters was especially manifest in fifteenth-century Egypt, where the political-religious authorities decided to fight the recurring waves of plague by demonstrating piousness, which measure implied, above all, banning women from leaving their homes.[94] In this way the authorities demonstrated that they were doing their best to protect the population and, at the same time, pointed out those who were naturally responsible for all the misfortunes. Thus, if the measures taken did not work, it was not the fault of the inaction of those in power but of women as such. During the first years of the Ottoman occupation, decisions banning women from leaving their homes were issued a number of times, albeit for different reasons.[95]

[93]Cf. Saleh, "Woman as a Locus," 139–44. One of the key issues in this respect was to separate women from men because, as some authors maintained, mixing the two constituted "the root of every disaster and evil and one of the major causes of collective punishments from God…. It is the cause of epidemics death and uninterrupted plagues." See Ibn al-Jawzī as quoted in ibid., 144.

[94]The key moment in the history of women's seclusion came in 1437, when the high-ranking judiciaries and theologians assembled at a meeting with sultan Barsbāy (1422–38) in order to decide how to deal with the extremely aggressive recurrence of plague and the deadly harvest it reaped. Having agreed that the phenomenon was caused by the prevalence of adultery and a great number of women who day and night showed up in the streets, the learned shayhks convinced the sultan to absolutely and completely ban women from leaving their homes so as to "stop the spread of the epidemics"; Aḥmad ibn ʿAlī al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-Sulūk li-Maʿrifat Duwal al-Mulūk,* ed. Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Qādir ʿAṭā (Beirut, 1997), 7:350; see also Ibn Iyās, *Badāʾiʿ,* 5:462. Atypically enough, the ban was immediately and zealously implemented: Dawlāt Khūjah, the sadistic *muḥtasib* of Cairo, patrolled the streets together with his assistants and beat the women they caught. Some chroniclers provide details of one or two cases of women for whom the confrontation with the *muḥtasib*'s patrol had tragic consequences; al-Maqrīzī, *Sulūk,* 7:354; Ibn Iyās, *Badāʾiʿ,* 2:185–86; Yūsuf ibn Taghrībirdī, *Al-Nujūm al-Zāhirah fī Mulūk Miṣr wa-al-Qāhirah,* ed. Muḥammad Ḥusayn Shams al-Dīn (Beirut, 1992), 14:275–79.

[95]The bans issued in 1518 and 1519 were meant to protect women (as well as slaves and boys) from Turkish troops who apparently practiced abduction on a significant scale; Ibn Iyās, *Badāʾiʿ,*

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While commenting on "many male medieval [Islamic] jurists'" concern with "the preservation of sexual boundaries and the avoidance of illicit dalliances" Jonathan Berkey once observed that "their fears on this score are often intriguing, and would amply reward a psychological analysis."[96] Indeed, psychoanalytical techniques might prove helpful in explaining al-Munāwī's attitude toward women.[97] Moreover, they might also enhance our understanding of the way this attitude was formed by and through culture.[98] However, psychoanalysis generally cannot be done without very detailed personal data, especially those related to one's emotional growth. We do not have such data for al-Munāwī or any other educated urban males of early Ottoman Egypt whose way of thinking in this respect presumably did not differ much from his.[99]

5:188 (the annal for 923) and 283 (the annal for 924). In 1522 a new announcement was issued: the Ottoman governor and *qāḍī al-ʿaskar* banned women from walking in the streets and riding donkeys assisted by a donkey-driver. Those who violated the new regulations were to be flogged or dragged through the streets of Cairo, their hair tied to a horsetail (Ibn Iyās, *Badāʾiʿ,* 5:461–62 [the annal for 928]). While discussing the impact of the ideals of seclusion and invisibility on social reality Leila Ahmed argues that "ideals, even though undercut by economic and functional exigencies, are nevertheless an important and influential component of the system of meanings determining the psychological experience of being for both women and men. In addition to their impact on the real but often intangible domains of psychological experience, they constitute part of the conceptual ground upon which laws relating to marriage, divorce, property and other matters are based; and indeed in the matters of law as well as the social ideal, there are parallels between Byzantine and Islamic legal thought." Ahmed, *Women and Gender,* 27.

[96] Jonathan P. Berkey, "Tradition, Innovation, and the Construction of Knowledge in the Medieval Near East," *Past and Present* 146 (1995): 56.

[97] In fact, attempts to explain misogyny in psychological and psychoanalytical terms have already been undertaken; see, for example, Fatna A. Sabbah, *Woman in the Muslim Unconscious* (New York, 1984); Page duBois, *Sowing the Body: Psychoanalysis and Ancient Representations of Women* (Chicago and London, 1991). For a survey of appropriate theories see Gilmore, *Misogyny,* 151–68, and the references therein.

[98] Robert Golding, "Freud, Psychoanalysis, and Sociology: Some Observations on the Sociological Analysis of the Individual," *The British Journal of Sociology* 33, no. 4 (1982): 545.

[99] Although such simple generalizations are not always permitted, it is very tempting to assume that the educated males of early Ottoman Egypt emerged out of relatively similar style of childrearing and, as such, shared not only collective childhood experiences but also the psychic conflicts resulting from them. Such an assumption would allow us to consider them members of the same psychoclass. The concept of psychoclass is key to the thought of Lloyd deMause, the pioneer of psychohistory. It emerges out of a particular style of childrearing and child abuse at a particular period of a society's development. Another key psychohistorical concept is that of group fantasy, which deMause regards as a mediating force between a psychoclass's collective childhood experiences (and the psychic conflicts emerging therefrom) and the psychoclass's behavior in politics, religion, and other aspects of social life. According to his psychogenic theory of history, it is not "economic class" or "social class" but "psychoclass"—shared childrearing modes—that is the real basis for understanding motivation in history; see Lloyd deMause, *Foun-*

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But culture matters, too, and the inner psychic word of any social individual is far from being free of its impact.[100] Although we know virtually nothing about what he went through as a child, we can still deal with al-Munāwī as a product of the time, place, and community in which he lived, a product of the patterns of culture, norms, values, ideas, stereotypes, symbols, and practices that surrounded him and were instilled in his mind through socialization and the experiences of everyday life. Among all the elements which contributed to forming his mindset and developing his vision of women, the texts he read (which are, in fact, the only hard proof at our disposal) must have played a very special role. After all, his entire chapter is composed of quotations which, since they were taken from authoritative, reliable, convincing sources, circulated within the Arabic-Islamic tradition as undisputable truth. Fundamental for defining the trajectory of Muslims' attitudes, many of these texts—just like those composed by Christian theologians—carried literary memes which, having moved from culture to culture, transmitted the elements of the negative vision of woman taken from outside.[101]

Obviously enough, the role of the Biblical account of Eve in shaping Islamic visions of woman was significant, but within the framework of Mediterranean antiquity this account was by no means unique—it was, after all, consistent with the story of Pandora, who released all the evils of humanity from her jar, as well as with the philosophy of Aristotle (384–322 B.C.E.), whose central idea concerning women was that females existed as natural deformities or imperfect males[102] and that "the male is by nature superior, and the female inferior; and the one rules, and the other is ruled."[103] There were the hostile writings of St. Paul, which,

dations of Psychohistory, II (New York, 1982), available from: http://www.psychohistory.com/htm (accessed August 30, 2017).

[100]However, while arguing that psychoanalysis can enhance our understanding of the way in which the individual is formed by and through culture, Golding stressed that "it also cautions us against making simple generalizations about the impact of culture upon the person, showing that the individual never submits himself unequivocally to its demands and interdicts." (Golding, "Freud," 557). Obviously enough, the psychological mechanisms determining every individual's reaction to the social situation cannot be disregarded if only because, as Golding put it, "the relationship between individual and society is complex, tense and contradictory…" (Golding, "Freud," 547).

[101]As Leila Ahmed argues while commenting on the Islamic stance in this respect, "the attitudes to women expressed in the urban centers of the Mediterranean Middle East appear to have formed a part of a cultural continuum extending over the territories that had formed part of the Byzantine and Sasanian empires." Ahmed, *Women and Gender,* 68.

[102]Aristotle, *Generation of Animals: With an English Translation by A.L. Peck* (London, 1943), II.3.737a; IV.6.775a.

[103]*Aristotle's Politics: Translated by Benjamin Jowett, with Introduction, Analysis and Index by H. W. C. Davis* (Oxford, 1920), I.5.1254b; quoted in Ahmed, *Women and Gender,* 29. For more on the Ancient Greek approach see Ruth Padel, "Women: Model for Possession by Greek Daemons," in

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guided as they were by the Biblical account, were no less affected by Greek philosophers, who had always perceived woman as a source of all problems.[104] The same, by the way, seems to be valid for the statements included in the Book of Sirach: "Any iniquity is small compared to a woman's iniquity; may a sinner's lot befall her!"[105] The philosophies behind the approach typical for ancient and late ancient Middle Eastern cultures, such as the Mesopotamian or Persian, did not, by the way, differ much.[106]

Whether the cross-cultural similarities regarding the negative image of woman resulted from borrowing or developed "accidentally," independent of outside influences, is not always possible to say. Whatever the case, the original reason behind the similarities apparently lies in the shared psychic course of the male of the species.[107] The provenience of the author notwithstanding, he constructed his vision of woman in agreement with certain universal, archetypal patterns that, recorded somewhere in men's collective unconscious,[108] constituted the protosource of various local, culturally-determined renditions of the master idea.

Images of Women in Antiquity, ed. Averil Cameron and Amélie Kuhrt (Detroit, 1983), 3–19; and Hughes and Hughes, *Women in World History,* essays collected in chapter 5, "Greece: Patriarchal Dominance in Classical Athens," 79–96.

[104]Bechtel, *Quatre femmes,* 33.

[105]Sirach 25:19.

[106]For a survey of the Mesopotamian approach to women see Ahmed, *Women and Gender,* 11–24; also an insightful article on witchcraft in Assyria: Sue Rollin, "Women and Witchcraft in Ancient Assyria," in *Images,* ed. Cameron and Kuhrt, 34–45. For the Sasanian culture see Jenny Rose, "Three Queens, Two Wives, and a Goddess: Roles and Images of Women in Sasanian Iran," in *Women in the Medieval Islamic World,* ed. Gavin R. G. Hambly (New York, 1998), 29–54.

[107]Cf. Gilmore, *Misogyny,* 10.

[108]Cf. Carl Gustav Jung, *The Archetypes and The Collective Unconscious* (Princeton, 1981).

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Between Venice and Alexandria: Trade and the Movement of Precious Metals in the Early Mamluk Period

The investigation of coinage and monetary systems in the Ayyubid and Mamluk dominions has gained in intensity in the last decades.[1] The meticulous examination of coins, combined with textual evidence, has yielded new insights into the operation of these systems from the second half of the twelfth century onward. It is commonly acknowledged in general terms that the import of gold and silver from the West, both bullion and coins, strongly impacted upon the monetary evolution and economies of Egypt and Syria. However, much textual evidence on this movement has remained untapped, a result of the compartmentalization of Islamic and Western studies. Contemporary sources drafted in Western languages offer precious evidence on the movement of precious metals. In some cases the Latin or vernacular version of treaties between Egypt and the main Western maritime nations, Venice, Pisa, and Genoa, is the only extant one, while in others it provides information absent from the corresponding Arabic version. Western trading manuals, official records, and private documents yield data not found in Arabic sources on a variety of monetary issues in Egypt, which include the transfer, sale, and refining of precious metals, the minting of coins, mint charges, coin circulation, moneys of account, and exchange rates. Moreover, they offer a Western perspective on these issues. The present article addresses some of them in the period extending from ca. 1250 to ca. 1350 within the context of contemporary trade patterns, with special attention to Venice, a prominent bullion market and a major trading partner of Egypt.

The last Frankish strongholds along the Levantine seaboard were captured by the Mamluk sultan al-Ashraf Khalīl within three months in 1291. Acre was entirely occupied by May 18.[2] After learning of the city's fall, Pope Nicholas IV decreed on August 23 a total embargo on trade with Mamluk territories for ten years, which was subsequently extended by his successors.[3] This policy was strongly supported by various Crusader propagandists. In addition, they advocated a blockade of Mamluk territories aimed at cutting off their revenue deriving

[1]See "Numismatics" in the subject list of the Chicago Online Bibliography of Mamluk Studies (http://mamluk.lib.uchicago.edu/subjects.php?id=2).

[2]Steven Runciman, *A History of the Crusades* (Cambridge, 1953–54), 3:420–22.

[3]Jean Richard, "Le royaume de Chypre et l'embargo sur le commerce avec l'Égypte (fin XIIIe–début XIVe siècle)," *Comptes-rendus de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* (Janvier–Mars 1984): 120–34.

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from the commercial operations of Western merchants and from Western pilgrimage. The blockade would undermine the economy of the Mamluk state and weaken its military capabilities, enabling thereby the liberation of the Holy Land from Muslim rule. To support his arguments in favor of the blockade, the Venetian Marino Sanudo the elder provided precious data regarding Egypt's economy, trade, and finances in a treatise composed between 1306 and 1309 and revised before September 1321.[4]

The implementation of the papal embargo was only partly effective. Christian merchants from several nations pursued their trading in Egypt, some openly and others clandestinely, especially those supplying timber, iron, and pitch, which were indispensable for the strengthening of the Egyptian navy and army.[5] One of these merchants was Viviano de Ginnebaldo, a former resident of Acre settled in the Cypriot port of Famagusta, who in 1301 obtained papal pardon for shipping war materials to Egypt.[6]

The Venetians were conspicuous among the merchants resuming trade in Mamluk lands shortly after the fall of Acre in 1291.[7] They clearly acted with the backing of their government, eager to ensure the continuous supply of oriental spices, condiments, and colorants, as well as Egyptian alum (mainly used for the fixing of dyes on textile fibers), soda ash from Syria and Egypt for the Venetian glass industry, and salt.[8] Both Egypt and Venice had a vested interest in the

[4]See David Jacoby, "Marino Sanudo Torsello on Trade Routes, Commodities, and Taxation," in *Philanagnostes: Studi in onore di Marino Zorzi,* Biblioteca/Istituto ellenico di studi bizantini e postbizantini di Venezia 27, ed. Chryssa Maltezou, Peter Schreiner, and Margherita Losacco (Venice, 2008), 185–197, repr. in David Jacoby, *Travellers, Merchants and Settlers across the Mediterranean, Eleventh–Fourteenth Centuries* (Farnham, 2014), no. XI.

[5]See Richard, "Le royaume de Chypre"; Eliyahu Ashtor, *Levant Trade in the Later Middle Ages* (Princeton, N. J., 1983), 17–44; Damien Coulon, *Barcelone et le grand commerce d'Orient au moyen âge,* Bibliothèque de la Casa de Velázquez 27 (Madrid-Barcelona, 2004), 26–28, 30–32, 44–48; David Jacoby, "The Venetians in Byzantine and Lusignan Cyprus: Trade, Settlement, and Politics," in *La Serenissima and la Nobilissima: Venice in Cyprus and Cyprus in Venice,* ed. A. Nicolaou-Konnari (Nicosia, 2009), 65–69, repr. in David Jacoby, *Medieval Trade in the Eastern Mediterranean and Beyond* (Farnham, 2017), no. II; David Jacoby, "Venice and the Papal Embargo against Mamluk Egypt, 1291–1344" (in press).

[6]David Jacoby, "Refugees from Acre in Famagusta around 1300," *The Harbour of all this Sea and Realm: Crusader to Venetian Famagusta,* CEU Medievalia 17, ed. Michael J. K. Walsh, Tamás Kiss, and Nicholas S. H. Coureas (Budapest, 2014), 58–59, 62–64.

[7]Jacoby, "Venice and the Papal Embargo."

[8]On Egyptian alum, see David Jacoby, "Production et commerce de l'alun oriental en Méditerranée, XIe–XVe siècles," in *L'alun de Méditerranée,* Collection du Centre Jean Bérard 23, ed. Philippe Borgard, Jean-Pierre Brun, and Maurice Picon (Naples/Aix-en-Provence, 2005), 219–43, 257–58. On soda ash, see *Pietro Pizolo, notaio in Candia* (1300, 1304–1305), Fonti per la storia di Venezia, Sez. III, Archivi notarili, ed. Salvatore Carbone (Venice, 1978–85), I, no. 321, in 1300; for

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continuation of their commercial exchanges. In 1301 Venice established a shipping service to Alexandria operated by annual convoys of state-owned galleys, which was interrupted after their return in 1312.[9] To counter the papal embargo Sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad submitted attractive proposals to induce Venetian merchants to increase the volume of their business in Mamluk territories and especially to supply timber and iron. In turn Venice took advantage of the situation to obtain new concessions enlarging the privileges which its citizens and subjects had previously enjoyed in Egypt and Syria. In 1302 Venice concluded a new treaty with Egypt, which blatantly infringed the papal embargo. Al-Nāṣir Muḥammad issued two documents, one on August 2 and the other on August 5, covering all the issues agreed upon by the two parties except one, discussed below. A clause of the Egyptian-Venetian treaty allowed Venetian merchants delivering commodities prohibited by the Church, namely war materials, to invest the proceeds from their sale in any article of their choice and export it without paying duties.[10]

On August 7, 1302, al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and the Venetian ambassador Guido da Canal reached a separate agreement, largely overlooked so far.[11] It deserves special attention in view of the precious information it provides regarding Venetian trade in Egypt shortly before the fall of the Frankish states in 1291, its implications for Venetian imports of precious metals to Alexandria, and a variety of other monetary issues. This agreement, known from the Latin version of two documents issued by the sultan, deals with compensation for a Venetian ship carrying goods and a large consignment of bullion and coins, which the Egyptian authorities had confiscated in the port of "Gadere" in the reign of al-Malik-al-Ashraf. The exact circumstances of the seizure are not mentioned.

Wilhelm Heyd has rightly identified "Gadere" with Gaza.[12] However, his suggestion that the ship carrying the consignment was caught in 1291 after fleeing from Acre, besieged by the Mamluk forces, is clearly incorrect for several reasons.

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the use of alumen or lumen in that sense, see D. Jacoby, "Raw Materials for the Glass Industries of Venice and the Terraferma, about 1370–about 1460," *Journal of Glass Studies* 35 (1993): 67–68, repr. in D. Jacoby, *Trade, Commodities and Shipping in the Medieval Mediterranean* (Aldershot, 1997), no. IX. Other cases from 1301–1304: *Cassiere della Bolla Ducale,* ed. Elena Favaro, nos. 121, 138, 217 (return to Venice with salt), 400, 438.

[9]Doris Stöckly, *Le système de l'incanto des galées du marché à Venise (fin XIIIe–milieu XVe siècle)* (Leiden, 1995), 130–34.

[10]The two documents are extant in a Latin version only: *Diplomatarium veneto-levantinum,* ed. Georg Martin Thomas and Riccardo Predelli (Venice, 1880–99), 1:5–9, no. 4.

[11]Ibid., 9–11, no. 5. Brief references in W. Heyd, *Histoire du commerce du Levant au moyen-âge* (Leipzig, 1885–86), 2:37–38; Subhi Y. Labib, *Handelsgeschichte Ägyptens im Spätmittelalter (1171–1517),* Vierteljahrschrift für Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte, Beiheft 46 (Wiesbaden, 1965), 75; Alan M. Stahl, *Zecca: The Mint of Venice in the Middle Ages* (Baltimore and New York, 2000), 212.

[12]Heyd, *Histoire du commerce du Levant.*

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It is inconceivable that a Western ship would sail southwards in the direction of Mamluk territories during the Mamluk siege of Acre. Moreover, one of the documents issued by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad notes that the seizure of the ship had occurred in 1290. Since the document was delivered at Venice's request, the date was obviously stated according to the Venetian calendar. The Venetian year had begun on March 1, 1290, and ended on February 28, 1291. The siege of Acre started more than a month later, in early April of that year. Finally, as stated in one of the documents, the incident involving the vessel took place under the rule of al-Malik al-Ashraf, which began on November 11, 1290. It follows that the seizure occurred between that date and the end of February 1291.

By that time Western ships engaging in trans-Mediterranean voyages had already left eastern ports on the way to their home bases.[13] The vessel seized by the Mamluk authorities is called barca. Like a barca sailing from Laiazzo in Cilician Armenia to Acre in 1279,[14] the vessel carrying the precious metals in 1290 was a small- or middle-sized craft sailing exclusively in Levantine waters.[15] This is further suggested by the Venetian decree issued four years earlier, in 1286, prohibiting ships with a carrying capacity below 250 *milliaria,* or 120 metric tons, from joining convoys leaving from Venice for the Eastern Mediterranean.[16] The seized vessel was presumably sailing to Alexandria, where most Venetian merchants visiting Egypt operated, rather than to Damietta.[17] Those on board would have obtained Egyptian currency at Alexandria's mint in return for their bullion and coins.[18]

[13] See John H. Pryor, *Commerce, Shipping and Naval Warfare in the Medieval Mediterranean* (London, 1987), 1–7; D. Jacoby, "A Venetian Sailing to Acre in 1282: Between Private Shipping and Privately Operated State Galleys," in *In Laudem Hierosolymitani: Studies in Crusades and Medieval Culture in Honour of Benjamin Z. Kedar,* ed. Iris Shagrir, Ronnie Ellenblum, and Jonathan Riley-Smith (Aldershot, 2007), 404.

[14] *Notai genovesi in Oltremare: Atti rogati a Laiazzo da Federico di Piazzalunga (1274) e Pietro di Bargone (1277, 1279),* ed. L. Balletto, Collana storica di fonti e studi, diretta da G. Pistarino, 53 (Genoa, 1989), 296–97, Pietro di Bargone, no. 69.

[15] On the barca, see U. Tucci, "L'impresa maritima: uomini e mezzi," in *Storia di Venezia dalle origini alla caduta della Serenissima,* II, *L'età del Comune,* ed. Giorgio Cracco and Gherardo Ortalli (Rome, 1995), 640.

[16] David Jacoby, "Venetian Anchors for Crusader Acre," *The Mariner's Mirror* 71 (1985): 6, repr. in Jacoby, *Trade,* no. XII.

[17] On Western merchants trading in both cities in the second half of the thirteenth century, see David Jacoby, "The Economic Function of the Crusader States of the Levant: a New Approach," in *Relazioni economiche tra Europa e mondo islamico, Secc. XIII–XVIII,* ed. S. Cavaciocchi, Istituto Internazionale di Storia Economica "F. Datini," Atti delle Settimane di Studi e altri convegni, 38, no. 1) (Florence, 2007), 181–82, repr. in Jacoby, *Medieval Trade,* no. IV.

[18] As recorded by al-Makhzūmī in the late twelfth century, Western merchants also arrived with gold and silver at Damietta and Tinnis: Claude Cahen, *Douanes et commerce dans les ports médi-*

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The journey to Egypt off season, despite the navigation hazards in the winter months,[19] enabled cheaper purchases of unsold oriental goods after the departure of foreign merchants from Egypt in the autumn and before their arrival and the new peak of demand in the following spring. Extended stays of Venetian merchants in Alexandria, attested from the early thirteenth century onward, served the same purpose. [20]

There is good reason to believe that the seizure of the ship in the winter of 1290–91 was related to the slaughter of Muslim merchants and peasants in Acre and its hinterland in August 1290.[21] Sultan al-Manṣūr Qalāwūn requested the delivery of the men guilty of the killings, yet Acre's authorities refused to hand them over. Once Qalāwūn's ambassadors returned empty-handed from their mission he began preparations for an assault on Acre, yet died before carrying out the projected attack.[22]

It is unclear whether these preparations were already known in Venice in the first months of 1291. On 18 February of that year the Venetian Great Council adopted a resolution allowing the departure of ships to any destination in the Eastern Mediterranean and the Black Sea after mid-March. Acre is explicitly mentioned in that context, and Venetians were thus not deterred from sailing to this port. On the other hand, it was decided that voyages to Egypt would require special permission from the doge and his council.[23] It is possible that the seizure of the ship carrying the consignment of bullion and coins was the main reason for the cautious attitude regarding trade with Egypt.

The presence of the ship in Gaza requires an explanation. In the thirteenth century Gaza did not serve as port of call for Western vessels engaging in traffic with Egypt, but only as occasional haven in case of bad weather. The Venetian

terranéens de l'Égypte médiévale d'après le Minhadj d'al-Makhzumi (Leiden, 1964), 227, 289, 293. On the existence of a mint at Damietta in the late thirteenth century, see below. Tinnis was destroyed in 1227.

[19]Sailing along the Levantine seaboard was generally interrupted during the winter: Shlomo D. Goitein, *A Mediterranean Society: The Jewish Communities of the Arab World as Portrayed in the Documents of the Cairo Geniza* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1967–93), 1:316–17.

[20]David Jacoby, "Les Italiens en Égypte aux XIIe et XIIIe siècles: du comptoir à la colonie?," in *Coloniser au Moyen Age,* ed. Michel Balard and Alain Ducellier (Paris, 1995), 82–84, 86–89.

[21]There are differing accounts of the events: Erwin Stickel, *Der Fall von Akkon: Untersuchungen zum Ablinken des Kreuzzuggedankens am Ende des 13. Jahrhunderts* (Frankfurt/M, 1975), 25–28; Donald P. Little, "The Fall of ʿAkkā in 690/1291: The Muslim Version," in *Studies in Islamic History and Civilization, in Honor of Professor David Ayalon,* ed. Moshe Sharon (Leiden, 1986), 159–81.

[22]Runciman, *History of the Crusades,* 3:410–11.

[23]*Deliberazioni del Maggior Consiglio di Venezia,* ed. Roberto Cessi (Bologna, 1931–50), 3:291, no. 170.

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vessel may have been sequestered after seeking refuge in Gaza. It seems more likely, though, that it was forcibly brought there.

Venice was not to blame for the massacre of Muslims in Acre and its countryside in 1290, although the fleet of twenty vessels that had brought Crusaders or pilgrims to the city, some of whom had carried out the killings, had sailed under the command of Niccolò Tiepolo, son of the Venetian doge.[24] It appears, therefore, that the capture of the ship was not an act of reprisal, a conclusion enhanced by the absence of any other Egyptian seizure of Western vessels at that time. Rather, the seizure was prompted by other considerations. It is not impossible that Muslim merchants or spies operating in Acre had transmitted information on the content and value of the cargo to the Egyptian authorities before the ship left port. Since pirates were not involved in the vessel's capture and its transfer to Gaza, these operations must have been ordered by the sultan or a Mamluk official. The bullion and coins on board the ship could contribute to the financing of the planned military expedition against Acre, and their confiscation may have been carried out precisely for that purpose.

Confiscation by the Mamluk authorities is also implied by the transfer of the seized bullion and coins from Gaza to the "camera soldani" or sultan's treasury at the "castrum Montane." The reference to the sultan's treasury enables the identification of the Castle of the Mountain with the *qalʿah,* or citadel, located on the Muqaṭṭam mountain overlooking Cairo and physically separated from the city. Sultan al-Malik al-Kāmil moved his treasury to the Citadel in 622/1225–26 and ordered that, in addition to the mint operating at al-Qāhirah, mints should also be established at Miṣr and at the Citadel, yet these operated only temporarily.[25] It is likely that a portion of the Venetian consignment of precious metals was converted into Egyptian currency in Cairo in the winter of 1290–91.

One of the documents issued by al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's chancery offers precious evidence on the composition and value of that consignment. The latter consisted of gold bars or ingots estimated at 21,830 old Egyptian bezants or dinars, Venetian gold ducats valued at 16,624 old bezants and 21 carats or kirats, silver bars or ingots estimated at 2,557 old bezants, Venetian silver grossi valued at 29,421 dirhams, and 22,724 dirhams in coins.[26] It is impossible to determine whether these sums reflected the combined total of individual assets or the capi-

[24] See above, n. 21.

[25] Nasser O. Rabbat, *The Citadel of Cairo: A New Interpretation of Royal Mamluk Architecture* (Leiden, 1995), 77, 82; Neil D. MacKenzie, *Ayyubid Cairo: A Topographical Study* (Cairo, 1992), 80; Andrew S. Ehrenkreutz, "Contributions to the Knowledge of the Fiscal Administration of Egypt in the Middle Ages," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 16 (1954): 508, who, however, cites the year 1126, a misprint for 1226.

[26] Thomas and Predelli, *Diplomatarium,* 1:11, no. 5.

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tal of a merchant consortium, established voluntarily to increase the bargaining power of its members and lower purchase prices in Alexandria.[27]

The value of each item must have already been stated in Egyptian old bezants in the Venetian request for compensation. This was indispensable for the ingots, yet also necessary for the Venetian coins. The ducat was issued from 1285 with a fineness of 23.75 and a weight of ca. 3.545 grams, and in the thirteenth century the Venetian silver grosso had a consistent high-grade silver fineness of 95–98% and a weight ranging between 2.178 and 2.185 grams, a variance of 0.3%.[28] The actual Mamluk dinar coin was heavier and, therefore, contained around 18% more gold than the ducat, yet varied more in weight around the contemporary Egyptian *mithqāl* standard of about 4.3 grams. The Venetian compensation claim does not specify the nature of the dirhams included in the consignment. In any event, Ayyubid and Mamluk dirhams widely differing in weight with a silver fineness of 65–75%, of lower value than the Venetian grosso, were in circulation. The actual Mamluk dirham coin weighed about 3 grams per dirham, but the weight of individual coins was not tightly controlled as in the early Ayyubid days and they were usually much lighter. In Mamluk territories both the dinar and the dirham passed by weight and not by count, their primary value depending on the amount of bullion they contained.[29] This is confirmed by the Florentine Francesco Balducci Pegolotti, author of a trading manual completed around 1340: because of their variable weight both dinars and dirhams are weighed in Alexandria.[30]

[27]Precisely for that purpose the Venetian consul serving in Alexandria in 1288 was ordered to examine with his council whether to compel the Venetian merchants active in the city to establish a cartel for the collective purchase of pepper: Cessi, *Deliberazioni del Maggior Consiglio,* 3:211, no. 87. For the sake of comparison, see the size of a silver consignment sent by a single Venetian merchant to Cyprus in 1344, below.

[28]Stahl, *Zecca,* 29–31 (ducat), and 16–20, 355–57 (grosso).

[29]Stefan Heidemann, "Economic Growth and Currency in Ayyubid Palestine," in *Ayyubid Jerusalem. The Holy City in Context, 1187–1250,* ed. Robert Hillenbrand and Sylvia Auld (London, 2009), 284, 289–91; Warren C. Schultz, "Medieval Coins and Monies of Account: The Case of Large-Flan Mamluk Dinars," *Al-ʿUsur al-Wusta: The Bulletin of Middle East Medievalists* 12, no. 2 (October 2000): 29–33; idem, "Mamluk Metrology and the Numismatic Evidence," *Al-Masāq* 15 (2003): 59–75; idem, "The Circulation of Dirhams in the Bahri Period," in T*he Mamluks in Egyptian and Syrian Politics,* ed. Michael Winter and Amalia Levanoni (Leiden-Boston, 2004), 221–44, and see esp. 226, Figures 1 and 2, for the wide variety in weight of dirhams from the reigns of Baybars and Qalāwūn, relevant for the discussion here. See also Michael L. Bates and D. M. Metcalf, "Crusader Coinage with Arabic Inscriptions," in *A History of the Crusades,* ed. Kenneth M. Setton (Madison, Wisconsin, 1969–89), 6:457–72.

[30]Francesco Balducci Pegolotti, *La pratica della mercatura,* ed. Allan Evans (Cambridge, MA, 1936), 71–72. On Pegolotti's life, career, and the approximate dating of particular sets of data in his manual and of the latter's completion, see ibid., xvi–xxxiii.

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In these circumstances, *all* the sums mentioned in the Venetian compensation claim in old bezants or "old" dinars and in dirhams must have referred to moneys of account with a fixed value, rather than to actual coins. For the dinar the basic unit in early Islamic ideal money of account was the *mithqāl* of 4.25 grams. The ideal ratio oscillated around 20 dirhams containing 66.2% silver and weighing about 3 grams.[31] The value of the confiscated gold bullion and specie was thus around 38,500 old bezants, surpassing by far the value of silver, the equivalent of around 5,150 bezants, the grand total reaching some 43,650 old bezants in money of account.[32]

An unpublished trading manual compiled by a Venetian merchant or notary in Acre around 1270 refers to the old bezant as a fixed unit, though without the appellation "old": "The [Venetian] mark of gold yields by the weight of bezants of Alexandria 55 [units] by bezants weight."[33] The same ratio is mentioned with respect to the "bexante veio" or old bezant in an entry of another Venetian trading manual, the so-called *Zibaldone da Canal*. The entry may be dated 1311, if not revised shortly after 1320: "In Alexandria there is a gold money which is called the old bezant. And the old bezant of Alexandria is of a fineness of 23 carats and 3.5 grains. And the Venetian mark of gold of 23 carats and 3.5 grains would make 55 old bezants by weight."[34] The old bezant weight was the Western term for *mithqāl*. The reference to silver in both manuals also points to dirhams of account, rather than to actual coins. The Acre manual states that "the mark of silver of Venice yields in Alexandria by the weight of *miaresi* ("apesi de migaresi") 79 weight [units]," while the *Zibaldone da Canal* reports that "the mark of Venice, by which one weighs silver, becomes 78 weight [units] in Alexandria."[35] The mark

[31] On the ideal weights, see Schultz, "Mamluk Metrology," 60–61; see also the other studies by Schultz, above, n. 29.

[32] For silver the total is reached as follows: 2,557 bezants + 1,471 (= 29,421: 20 for the conversion from dirhams to bezants covering the grossi) + 1,136 (= 22,724: 20 for the conversion of the dirhams).

[33] On this manual, see David Jacoby, "A Venetian Manual of Commercial Practice from Crusader Acre," in *I comuni italiani nel regno crociato di Gerusalemme,* ed. Gabriella Airaldi and Benjamin Z. Kedar, Collana storica di fonti e studi, diretta da G. Pistarino, 48 (Genoa, 1986), 403–28, repr. in David Jacoby, *Studies on the Crusader States and on Venetian Expansion* (Northampton, 1989), no. VII. I am currently preparing the edition of this manual with a commentary.

[34] *Zibaldone da Canal: Manoscritto mercantile del sec. XIV,* ed. Alfredo Stussi, Fonti per la storia di Venezia, Sez. V—Fondi vari (Venice, 1967), 68; another reference to the dinar of account, ibid., 65, mentions that "the gold mark of Venice weighs 55 bezants in Alexandria." I have slightly altered the translation of the passae published by John E. Dotson, *Merchant Culture in Fourteenth Century Venice: The Zibaldone da Canal* (Binghamton, N. Y., 1994), 120 and 115 respectively. For the dating of the sections in this manual, see Stussi, *Zibaldone da Canal,* LV–LVI.

[35] *Zibaldone da Canal,* 68.

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of Cologne, a unit adopted by Venice, weighed about 238.5 grams.[36] At 55 units per mark, the early Mamluk dinar would have weighed 4.33 and the dirham 3.01 grams at 79 per mark, slightly higher than the early Islamic ideal weights of the gold dinar and the silver dirham, respectively 4.25 grams and 2.975 grams, used as monies of account.

Venetian sources of the late thirteenth century offer three different valuations of the old bezant of Alexandria, namely 40, 55, and 60 Venetian soldi a grossi. The respective nature of these valuations and the relation between them require some attention. In 1285 the Great Council of Venice fixed the rate at which Venetian officials serving overseas should collect a tax of one percent on the value of goods, owed by merchants who had failed to pay it at the Ternaria office in Venice for earlier imports of specific commodities. The tax was to be collected in local currency, according to the following ratios between Venetian currency and three foreign denominations: for every unpaid 40 soldi a grossi, one old bezant, a reference to Egypt; for every 20 soldi a grossi, one Saracen bezant, the gold coin issued and circulating in the Frankish states of the Levant; and for every 20 soldi a grossi, one hyperpyron, the Byzantine coin.[37]

The ratio of one bezant of Alexandria to 55 soldi a grossi appears in a list of exchange rates in money of account applied by the Ternaria office in Venice for the payment of import taxes on several commodities.[38] The undated list has been ascribed to the years around 1268.[39] The inclusion of Ultramare, the continental Crusader states of the Levant, points to the fall of the Kingdom of Jerusalem to the Mamluks in 1291 as *terminus ad quem* for its compilation.

The rate of 3 lire or 60 soldi a grossi to the old bezant of Alexandria appears in the instructions of 1284 to the Venetian consul in Alexandria. It was applied to

[36]Stahl, *Zecca,* 19, 361. Pegolotti and another fourteenth-century manual cite an intermediate figure of 78.5 miaresi per mark of silver: Pegolotti, *La pratica della mercatura,* 74; Gino Arrighi, *Libro d'abaco: Dal Codice 1754 (sec. XIV) della Biblioteca Statale di Lucca* (Lucca, 1973), 159. This apparently Florentine manual has much in common with Pegolotti's compilation, yet differs from it in several ways. Two watermarks in the paper date the manuscript to ca. 1345–ca. 1360: Marco Paoli, "I Codici," in *Giovanni Sercambi e il suo tempo: Catalogo della mostra* (Lucca, 1991), 228–30, esp. 229. However, the data appear to belong to the first half of the fourteenth century: see also Gino Arrighi, "La 'pratica della mercatura' del cod. 175 (sic) della Biblioteca Statale di Lucca," *Actum Luce: Rivista di Studi Lucchesi* 13–14 (1984–85): 269.

[37]Cessi, *Deliberazioni del Maggior Consiglio,* 3:78, no. 109. On the Ternaria office, see Giorgio Zordan, *I Visdomini di Venezia nel sec. XIII: Ricerche su un'antica magistratura finanziaria* (Padua, 1971), 27–33, 99–119, 280–90, 502–23.

[38]Edition by Frederic C. Lane and Reinhold C. Mueller, *Money and Banking in Medieval and Renaissance Venice,* vol. 1, *Coins and Moneys of Account* (Baltimore and London, 1985), 626–27, and 295, Table 8; in this table, col. 3, the mistaken figure "200" for the bezant of Alexandria should be replaced by "55," as stated ibid., 627.

[39]Lane and Mueller, *Money and Banking,* 626.

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the consul's salary, if paid in Venice because it could not have been collected from the Venetian state revenue in Alexandria.[40] The rate was indeed applied in 1290 in Venice to the payment of arrears to a former consul in Alexandria.[41] It is further confirmed by the *Zibaldone da Canal,* whether in 1311 or shortly after 1320, and around 1340 by Pegolotti, who explicitly refers to the value of the old bezant of Alexandria when calculated in Venice.[42]

The rates of 40, 55, and 60 soldi a grossi to the old bezant just mentioned have been considered official exchange rates between moneys of account reflecting the progressive rise in value at Venice of the Egyptian old bezant, in accordance with the rise in the bimetallic ratio between 1250 and 1290.[43] However, such a progressive rise is contradicted by the rate of 3 lire or 60 soldi a grossi to the bezant of Alexandria already mentioned in the instructions of 1284 to the Venetian consul in Alexandria, thus one year *before* the decree of 1285 fixing the rate at 40 soldi a grossi.[44] A close look at the circumstances in which the three rates were applied reveals striking differences between them. As noted above, the rate of 40 soldi a grossi to the old bezant was imposed in Alexandria on merchants who had not fulfilled the mandatory payment of the import tax in Venice. For every unpaid 40 soldi they were charged in Alexandria one old bezant, substantially higher than the customary exchange rate of 60 soldi in money of account. Indeed, if for instance they had failed to pay 200 soldi they were charged 5 old bezants, which at the official exchange rate of 60 soldi were worth 300 soldi. It follows that the charge of 40 soldi was a punitive rate.[45] This is also implied by the language of the decree of 1284, which after stating the rate adds: "Nevertheless, a fine of 5 soldi should be collected [in addition] for every unpaid Venetian lira a grossi," which was equal to 3 soldi.[46] The collection of the unpaid tax and the fine is attested in

[40] These instructions were not available to Lane and Mueller (cited in the previous note). Text and commentary in David Jacoby, "Le consulat vénitien d'Alexandrie d'après un document inédit de 1284," in *Chemins d'outre-mer: Études sur la Méditerranée médiévale offertes à Michel Balard,* ed. Damien Coulon, Catherine Otten-Froux, Paule Pagès, and Dominique Valérian, Byzantina Sorbonensia, 20 (Paris, 2004), 2:462–63 and 472, par. 19. The rule for the payment of the salary in Alexandria was adopted in 1271: Cessi, *Deliberazioni del Maggior Consiglio,* 2:358, V/II.

[41] Cessi, *Deliberazioni del Maggior Consiglio,* 3:273, no. 89.

[42] Stussi, *Zibaldone da Canal,* 65; Pegolotti, *La pratica della mercatura,* 75.

[43] Lane and Mueller, *Money and Banking,* 304.

[44] See above.

[45] The fine for tax unpaid in Venice collected in local currency in the Crusader states and the Byzantine Empire was even heavier, namely 20 soldi to the Saracen bezant and the hyperperon, respectively, in other words 600 soldi for 200 of each of these currencies. For that rate, see above, n. 37.

[46] Cessi, *Deliberazioni del Maggior Consiglio,* 3:78, no. 109.

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1292 for Cilician Armenia.[47] In contrast, the rate of 55 soldi a grossi on the value of goods in old bezants was a straightforward tax charge, imposed on the goods of all Venetian merchants arriving in Venice from Alexandria. It was advantageous to the merchants, being lower than if imposed according to the official rate of 60 soldi. The Venetian government presumably adopted it to encourage imports from Egypt. As for the official rate, mentioned in 1284 and around 1340, it remained unchanged throughout that period.

So far we have examined the information regarding the dinar and dirham in money of account versus Venetian denominations, as expressed in official documents and trade manuals. The old bezant was also used in actual business transactions for trade in Egypt, as illustrated by notary charters drafted in 1274 at Laiazzo in Cilician Armenia. It is mentioned in several ways: "old gold bezants of Cairo at the common" or "correct weight of Cairo,"[48] "old bezants of Cairo at the customary weight of the land of Egypt,"[49] or "of Alexandria at the common weight of Alexandria."[50] The price of half a ship sold at Laiazzo was also stated in old bezants, presumably because the vendor envisaged to sail to Egypt on that same ship.[51] A loan in new Armenian dirhams was to be reimbursed from the first old bezants obtained from the sultan's *dīwān* in Damietta for the delivery of timber.[52] Several agreements concluded in old bezants in the Cretan city of Candia from 1300 to 1304 for trade in Egypt also refer to Egyptian money of account. A payment of 365 old bezants and 18 carats was to be made in Alexandria. It is noteworthy that carats, in fact kirats, refers to weight and not to actual coins. Interestingly, two Catalan mariners who were serving on a Catalan vessel returning from Alexandria demanded the payment of their salary in old bezants.[53] A loan in Cypriot white bezants granted to two Genoese in Famagusta in 1302 was to be repaid in old bezants within fifteen days after the ship belonging to one of them, anchored in Laiazzo, would unload its cargo in the course of its planned sailing, whether entirely or partly. Interestingly, one of the Genoese owned five female and four male Mongol slaves who were on board the vessel, which was clearly heading toward Egypt.[54] The reference to the old bezants in all these con-

[47] Ibid., 3:319–20, no. 38.

[48] Balletto, *Notai genovesi,* 48–49, no. 36; 70–71, no. 48.

[49] Ibid., 86–87, no. 59

[50] Ibid., 74–75, no. 50; 83–84, no. 57.

[51] Ibid., 119–20, no. 86.

[52] Ibid., 146–47, no. 106.

[53] Carbone, *Pietro Pizolo,* I, nos. 25, 70, 473; II, nos. 804, 1026.

[54] *Notai genovesi in Oltremare: Atti rogati a Cipro da Lamberto di Sambuceto (Gennaio–Agosto 1302),* ed. Romeo Pavoni, Collana storica di fonti e studi diretta da Geo Pistarino, 49 (Genoa, 1987), no. 248. The contract refrains from naming the destination, obviously because the business venture

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tracts was aimed at securing payments unaffected by the varying value of coined dinars, their equivalent in another currency, or in bullion.

The bullion carried by the ship captured in the winter of 1290–91 clearly originated in the Venetian mint, where it had been cast into ingots, the weight and fineness of which was certified. Merchants bought ingots from the mint for use in long-distance trade involving large purchases overseas.[55] The Venetian coins also came from the mint. Venice was the most active and best supplied bullion market and the large output of its mint was a major source of precious metals in ingots and coins, especially silver.[56] The import of Venetian bullion and coins to Alexandria is generally viewed as an aspect of bilateral commercial exchanges between Venice and Egypt. Yet one should not overlook the intermediaries stationed along the navigation route linking Venice to Egypt, who contributed their share to the flow of goods and precious metals to Egyptian ports. The shipping of bullion and Venetian coins to Egypt on board the barca, a ship only sailing along the Levantine seaboard, as noted above, implies transshipment in a Frankish port. Indeed, cargo was often transshipped in Acre, the major Frankish emporium, an indispensable port of call and the most important transit station for Western merchants and goods on the way to Egypt. Its residents fulfilled an important role as middlemen in commercial and monetary transactions. Venetian settlers were prominent among them after the ouster of the Genoese from the city in 1258.[57] It is quite possible, therefore, that the bullion and coins on the seized ship belonged to Venetian merchants settled in Acre, whether partly or entirely.[58] The circulation of the ducat in Acre shortly before its fall in 1291 is further suggested by 21 ducats coined between 1285 and 1291 included in a hoard found in Aleppo, which may have been part of the booty collected by the Muslims in Acre in 1291.[59] Incidentally, another Western gold coin, the florin, apparently enjoyed

breached the papal embargo on trade with Egypt, which also covered the conveying of male slaves required for the Egyptian army.

[55] Stahl, *Zecca,* 334–35, 355–57. The silver exported from Venice was uniformly "of sterling (fineness)": Stussi, *Zibaldone da Canal,* 6.

[56] On its supply in bullion and the mint's operation in the thirteenth century, see Stahl, *Zecca,* 126–28, 136–42, 168–75, 190–93, 196–97.

[57] David Jacoby, "Acre-Alexandria: A Major Commercial Axis of the Thirteenth Century," in *Studi in onore di Franco Cardini,* ed. Marina Montesano (Ospedaletto, Pisa, 2007), 151–67, repr. in Jacoby, *Medieval Trade,* no. V. On Venetian settlers in Acre, see David Jacoby, "L'expansion occidentale dans le Levant: les Vénitiens à Acre dans la seconde moitié du treizième siècle," *Journal of Medieval History* 3 (1977): 225–64, repr. in D. Jacoby, *Recherches sur la Méditerranée orientale du XIIe au XVe siècle: Peuples, sociétés, économies* (London, 1979), no. VII.

[58] See below

[59] On the hoard: Philip Grierson, "The Coin List of Pegolotti," in *Studi in onore di Armando Sapori* (Milan, 1957), 1:488–89, repr. in idem, *Later Medieval Numismatics (11th–16th Centuries)* (London,

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a larger circulation in the city, since it was produced from 1252 onward. A hoard of 30 florins has been found in Acre's harbor, and some 600 florins were included in the Aleppo hoard.[60]

The sum mentioned in the Venetian compensation claim in dirhams of account covered actual dirham coins. Two sources may be envisaged for them. Although Venice's balance of trade with Egypt was negative, individual Venetian merchants residing in Venice or in Acre may have occasionally returned home with a favorable one or without having spent all the Egyptian coinage they had obtained from the Alexandria mint or from moneychangers. These merchants either stored the coins until their next voyage to Egypt, or transferred them to other merchants planning such a journey. Alternatively, merchants acquired dirhams in Acre, either by their own transactions or by purchase from local moneychangers or merchants. It is likely that some of the latter accepted Mamluk currency as payment for goods sold to merchants from Mamluk territories trading in Acre, who thereby avoided exchange premiums or mint charges for the conversion of their coins into local currency. Such transactions were also beneficial to local merchants in Acre, who saved coining fees when arriving in Alexandria. The treaty of 1283 between Qalāwūn and Acre implies that Mamluk merchants were fairly active in Acre, some arriving there by boat, others by land.[61] Acre's importance as a market visited by Mamluk merchants was fully stressed by Qalāwūn: "For Acre is a caravanserai to which our merchants resort, a place from which comes a wider range of choice for us."[62] Some Muslim merchants were killed in the city in 1290, as noted above.

The apparently intensive trading of these merchants in Acre is not reflected by numismatic evidence which, it should be stressed, is not necessarily repre-

1979), no. XI. My thanks to Robert Kool for a scan of an unpublished letter sent by the French archaeologist and numismatist Henri Seyrig to Phillip Grierson in April 1955, in which he provided details about the hoard's content.

[60]Robert Kool, "A Thirteenth Century Hoard of Gold Florins from the Medieval Harbour of Acre," *The Numismatic Chronicle* 166 (2006): 301–20.

[61]Peter M. Holt, *Early Mamluk Diplomacy (1260–1290): Treaties of Baybars and Qalawun with Christian Rulers* (Leiden, 1995), 82–84, pars. 10, 13–14. On Egyptian ships sailing along the Levantine seaboard, see also R. Irwin, "The Supply of Money and the Direction of Trade in Thirteenth-century Syria," in *Coinage in the Latin East: The Fourth Symposium on Coinage and Monetary History,* ed. Peter W. Edbury and David M. Metcalf, British Archaeological Reports, International Series 77 (Oxford, 1980), 82–83.

[62]Holt, *Early Mamluk Diplomacy,* 73. Linda S. Northrup, *From Slave to Sultan: the Career of Al-Manṣūr Qalāwūn and the Consolidation of Mamluk Rule in Egypt and Syria (678–689 A.H./1279–1290 A.D.),* Freiburger Islamstudien, 18 (Stuttgart, 1998), 156–57 and 293–94, states that there was a Muslim *funduq* in Acre in 1290. This claim rests on a misinterpretation. There is no evidence to support it.

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sentative in this respect, in view of the limited archeological excavations in the Crusader city, totally destroyed in 1291. Only a few Mamluk dirhams issued in the reigns of Baybars and Qalāwūn have been found so far in Acre.[63] The few Ayyubid and early Mamluk dirham coins discovered at Frankish Atlit, south of Acre, had been most likely brought from that city.[64] However, it is impossible to determine to what extent Mamluk dirhams circulated in Acre in the thirteenth century. The references to dirhams in notary charters drafted in Acre in 1279, 1281, and 1285 record loans granted in money of account according to the standard of Damietta for business ventures in this Egyptian port. These dirhams are mentioned as "dirhams of Damietta," "caliph dirhams," or "silver dirhams at the weight" or "correct weight of Damietta."[65] This suggests the existence of a mint in Damietta in the late thirteenth century.

Twelve years elapsed after the confiscation of the Venetian ship and its consignment of bullion and coins before the issue resurfaced. Venice took advantage of Egypt's eagerness to attract Venetian trade and demanded reparations for the seizure of the vessel and its cargo. At first Sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad rejected Venice's request, claiming that the confiscation had occurred under the rule of one of his predecessors. However, at the insistence of the Venetian ambassador, Guido da Canal, the sultan granted full compensation for the precious metals, while Venice renounced obtaining reimbursement for the ship and the goods on board. In practice one half of the taxes collected by the Egyptian authorities from Venetian merchants trading in Alexandria was to be handed over to the Venetian consul serving in the city, until the full value of the precious metals would be reimbursed. The scribe who copied the Latin version of the agreement into one of the Venetian chancery registers thus rightly added the heading "Agreement regarding the restitution of the money" ("Pactum restitutionis pecunie").[66] Nevertheless, the Latin version of the original Arabic injunction regarding the implementation of the agreement sent from Cairo to the amir of Alexandria only mentions the sum of 21,830 old Egyptian bezants covering the gold ingots.[67] The omission of the other sums is presumably due to the negligence of the Venetian scribe.

[63] Personal communication from Robert Kool.

[64] On these finds, see David M. Metcalf, Robert Kool, and Ariel Berman, "Coins from the Excavations at Atlit (Pilgrim's Castle and its Faubourg)," *ʿAtiqot* 37 (1999): 93–96, 106–7, 126–33.

[65] Documents edited by C. Froux Otten, "Les Pisans en Egypte et à Acre dans la seconde moitié du XIIIe siècle: documents nouveaux," *Bollettino Storico Pisano* 52 (1983): 181–83, 187–90, respectively nos. VIII–IX, XIV–XV.

[66] Thomas and Predelli, *Diplomatarium,* 1:9.

[67] Ibid., 1:9–10.

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The arrival of Venetian and other Western merchants with bullion and coins in Egypt was a common feature. Although precious metals were considered marketable commodities, on par with other goods, their import was indispensable in view of the negative balance of trade of which these merchants generally suffered in their commercial exchanges with Egypt.

The import of gold and silver was strictly controlled by the Egyptian authorities. They were taxed at 10 percent in the late twelfth century, a rate also attested by the Egyptian-Pisan treaty of 1215.[68] There is no further evidence regarding the tax until the fourteenth century.[69] All imported precious metals were auctioned off soon after arrival, as explicitly stated in the Egyptian-Venetian treaty of 1254. Gold and silver were either acquired by the mint, or sold to private individuals, one may assume mostly goldsmiths. Payment for the bullion was sometimes delayed. The Egyptian-Venetian treaty of 1238 stipulated that it should be carried out immediately by the mint. Laxity in this respect required the renewal of the injunction in 1254.[70] The Egyptian-Genoese treaty of 13 May 1290 and the Egyptian-Venetian treaties of 1302 and 1345 ordered individuals to pay without delay for gold or silver bought from Western merchants.[71]

The Venetian author of the trading manual compiled in Acre around 1270 devotes an entire section to precious metals in Alexandria. It is likely that he obtained the bulk of his information from fellow Venetians, perhaps mainly from Venetian settlers in Acre involved in trade with Alexandria.[72] The manual reveals that Venetians imported to Alexandria gold varying in fineness. The author advises merchants to bring refined rather than unrefined gold and, if possible, gold with the required fineness of 23.75 carats, in order to save mint charges when requesting Mamluk currency. If the merchant wishes to have his gold refined, he should buy firewood to fuel the furnace and, for the refining process, salt and cement, which consisted of fine powder obtained by crushing and sifting red bricks. At the mint a small sample was taken from each ingot and put into the furnace. If the gold did not reach the required fineness, the procedure was repeated. Once the standard was reached, the coins could be struck. The brief notes regarding the

[68] Hassanein Rabie, *The Financial System of Egypt, A.H. 564–741/A.D. 1169–1341* (London 1972), 91; *I diplomi arabi del R. Archivio Fiorentino,* ed. Michele Amari (Florence, 1863), 283, par. 6, 288, par. 6.

[69] The issue is discussed below.

[70] *Urkunden zur älteren Handels- und Staatsgeschichte der Republik Venedig,* ed. Gottlieb L. Fr. Tafel and Georg M. Thomas (Vienna, 1856–57), 2:340–41, 488–89. Cahen, *Douanes et commerce,* 253, failed to take sales to individuals into account.

[71] *I Libri Iurium della Repubblica di Genova, I/7,* ed. Eleonora Pallavicino, Fonti per la storia della Liguria, XV; Pubblicazioni degli Archivi di Stato, Fonti XXXV (Genoa, 2001), 82; Thomas and Predelli, *Diplomatarium,* 1:6, and 293, par. 5.

[72] See above.

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refining process and the fineness standard at the Alexandria mint roughly correspond to the more detailed information offered by Ayyubid and Mamluk sources, such as the treatise composed by Manṣūr ibn Baʿrah during the reign of Sultan al-Kāmil (1218–38).[73] However, the Acre manual of ca. 1270 adds some interesting details.

The Egyptian-Venetian treaties of 1238 and 1254 specify that Venetians will pay the customary mint charges, yet fail to mention rates.[74] According to Ayyubid sources, the *shāhid,* or witness, collected the coining charges in his capacity as representative of the *dīwān,* or finance ministry, in the mint.[75] The strikers received a salary directly from private customers requesting the minting of coins in return for their bullion.[76] The Acre manual of ca. 1270 reports that the "witnesses" deduct 6% from the coins, and the "masters," or coin strikers, receive 16 carats or ⅔ dinars per 100 bezants, in fact actual dinars. The private customers bore all the costs of production.[77] The distinction in the Acre manual between the fee charged for converting coins and ingots into local coins, called seignorage in monetary studies, and the cost of minting, called brassage, is not found in other Western sources.

The Egyptian-Genoese treaty of May 13, 1290, which stipulates the payment of the customary mint charges, confirms the expense of 6⅔% combining coining charges and the strikers' salary. However, it specifies that this expense relates to the minting of gold coins, whereas 4.5% are paid for silver coins and the same

[73] Andrew S. Ehrenkreutz, "Extracts from the Technical Manual on the Ayyūbid Mint in Cairo," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 15 (1953): 423–47. According to Ibn Baʿrah, the brick used for the cement should be new and soft: Ehrenkreutz, "Extracts," 446. Without referring to Egypt, Pegolotti, *La pratica della mercatura,* 333–36, states that the brick should be old and well-baked, and that the cement is composed of crushed brick and salt; in addition he provides a full technical description of the use of cement in the refining process.

[74] Tafel and Thomas, *Urkunden,* 2:340–41, 488–89. According to Irwin, "The Supply of Money," 88, the agreement of 1238 seems to "have allowed the Venetians themselves to use the mint in Alexandria." He further asserts that they acquired minting privileges elsewhere in the Levant. These assumptions, also made by other scholars, rest on a misreading of the evidence regarding the striking of gold and silver coinage, convincingly dismissed a long time ago by Wilhelm Heyd, "Über die angeblichen Miünzprägungen der Venetianer in Accon, Tyrus und Tripolis," *Numismatische Zeitschrift* 11 (1879): 237–42.

[75] On his functions, yet without reference to the collection of mint charges, see Ehrenkreutz, "Contributions," 512; Helen W. Brown, "The Medieval Mint of Cairo: Some Aspects of Mint Organization and Administration," in *Later Medieval Mints: Organisation, Administration, and Technique,* ed. N. J. Mayhew and Peter Spufford, British Archeological Reports, International Series, 389 (Oxford, 1988), 32–33.

[76] Regular salaries were paid by the mint, as attested in 1191: see Ehrenkreutz, "Contributions," 513.

[77] Ibid., 514, yet without reference to salary in that context.

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amount for the reminting of gold and silver coins. In these last two cases the charge is expressed in bezants or dinars. It must have been calculated by taking into account the ratio between dinar and dirham.[78] The Egyptian-Venetian treaty of 1302 merely refers to the customary mint charges.[79] On the other hand, the Venetian Marino Sanudo confirmed between 1306 and 1309 and in any event before September 1321 the rate of 6⅔% for the minting of gold coins and 4.5% for silver minting in Alexandria. He added that "at present" the sultan grants a favor to some merchants, who pay only 3.5%. In passing he notes that since gold is expensive in the West it is "presently" not brought over and merchants arrive with silver. Sanudo further mentions a much heavier fee, 10%, for silver coining in the Cairo mint, for which he fails to provide an explanation.[80] He must have collected the information during his own visits in Alexandria and from fellow Venetians.[81] The high value of gold in relation to silver in Venice is indeed attested from the 1280s, as a result of increasing supplies of silver.[82] It is unclear to what date or circumstances one should ascribe the reduction of the minting charge on silver in Alexandria. In any event, it is likely that those who benefited from this measure were Venetians, rather than merchants from other nations. The Venetian author of the *Zibaldone da Canal* only noted the fee for the minting of dinars, whether in 1311 or when he revised his manual ca. 1320.[83] The data provided by these sources reveal that by ca. 1270 the mint charges were higher than in the late twelfth century.[84] It is unclear whether they were raised under the last Ayyubid rulers or in the early Mamluk period.

Sanudo's reference to the higher charge for silver minting in Cairo implies that some Western merchants were traveling inland to this city in the early fourteenth century. Free movement in Egypt had already been granted to them by the Egyptian-Venetian treaty of 1208 and confirmed in 1244, the Egyptian-Pisan

[78] Pallavicino, *I Libri Iurium,* 79. The clauses dealing with specific issues survive in a Latin version only. With respect to precious metals, this text uses "drictus," a general term for "tax" or "fee" open to interpretation, yet the confrontation with data in the Acre manual of ca. 1270 points to mint charges.

[79] Thomas and Predelli, *Diplomatarium,* 1:6.

[80] Marino Sanudo Torsello, *Liber secretorum fidelium crucis super Terrae Sanctae recuperatione et conservatione,* in *Gesta Dei per Francos, sive orientalium expeditionum et regni Francorum Hierosolomitani historia,* II, ed. Jacques Bongars (Hanoviae, 1611), 24. For the dating of Sanudo's treatise, see above, n. 4.

[81] On his journeys to Alexandria in the late 1280s and between the fall of Acre in 1291 and 1321, see Jacoby, "Marino Sanudo Torsello," 186–87.

[82] Lane and Mueller, *Money and Banking,* 136–52, 280–313. The value of gold reached a peak in Venice between 1327 and 1335: Stahl, *Zecca,* 47–48.

[83] Stussi, *Zibaldone da Canal,* 65.

[84] On these charges, see Rabie, *The Financial System of Egypt,* 116.

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treaties of 1208 and 1215, and the treaty of 1290 with Genoa, which explicitly mentions merchants carrying dirhams exempt of taxes for trade in Cairo.[85] In addition, Western pilgrims proceeding from Alexandria to the monastery of St. Catherine in Sinai may have occasionally turned to the Cairo mint to obtain cash when passing through the city. This pilgrimage itinerary is already attested by 1323.[86]

With respect to gold supplies, Venice faced the competition of Pisa, Genoa, and Florence receiving African gold. Venetian gold exports were continuous and appear to have been quite substantial in the 1290s, judging by the Venetian compensation claim. The outflow of gold could not be prevented, since it supported Venetian trade with Egypt, yet it may have also been fueled by speculation on regional differences in the relative value of gold and silver bullion and coins. The export of gold took place at a time of gold scarcity in Egypt.[87] On the other hand, in Venice the ratio of gold versus silver was on the rise.[88] The problems encountered by Venice are illustrated by a series of measures adopted in the 1280s and 1290s to attract gold and keep its price down.[89]

A short time before 1281 Venice tightened its control over the export of gold to Alexandria. The Venetian consul serving in the Egyptian port was at first told to inquire who among the Venetians was bringing gold and in what amount, and to transmit the information as fast as possible to the doge. Somewhat later the consul was enjoined to personally interrogate all Venetians arriving in Alexandria about the gold they carried and, in addition to their names, register the weight and fineness of the metal. These orders were incorporated in the set of instructions delivered to the newly appointed consul on August 9, 1284.[90] Venice was especially sensitive to the issue of gold export at that juncture. It would seem that these instructions were related to an attempt to limit gold exports from around 1281 in order to ensure a sufficient amount of metal in Venice, within reach of the mint, should a decision to strike gold coins be taken. There is good reason to believe that an intense debate about the minting of that coin took place, about

[85] Tafel and Thomas, *Urkunden,* 2:186, 193, 416; correct dating of the first treaty by Heyd, *Histoire du commerce du Levant,* 1:401–4. For Pisa, see Amari, *I diplomi arabi,* 283, 285, par. 3, 286, par. 18; and for Genoa, see Pallavicino, *I Libri Iurium,* 78–79, 82.

[86] *Itinerarium Symonis Semeonis ab Hybernia ad Terram Sanctam,* ed. Mario Esposito, Scriptores latini Hiberniae, IV (Dublin, 1960), 48; dating of his journey, ibid., 6–21. On the itinerary to Sinai, see David Jacoby, "Christian Pilgrimage to Sinai until the Late Fifteenth Century," in *Holy Space, Hallowed Ground: Icons from Sinai,* ed. Robert S. Nelson and Kristen M. Collins, exh. cat. (Los Angeles, 2006), 58.

[87] On which see Rabie, *The Financial System of Egypt,* 190.

[88] See above.

[89] Lane and Mueller, *Money and Banking,* 280–85; Stahl, *Zecca,* 126–29, 133–34, 136–39.

[90] Jacoby, "Le consulat vénitien d'Alexandrie," 462–63, 468, and 473, pars. 27, 29.

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which nothing is known.[91] On October 31, 1284, some two months after providing the consul with instructions, Venice decided to strike the gold ducat. Significantly, silver too was exported to Egypt, as attested for 1290, yet is not mentioned in the instructions to the consuls serving in Alexandria. This omission reflects the relative abundance of silver supplies from beyond the Alps, from which Venice benefited thanks to its location and its prominence in the bullion trade.

Sultan Qalāwūn made two important concessions to Genoa in May 1290, which illustrate the extent to which he was eager to attract gold and silver. The compulsory auction of all bullion arriving in Egypt was lifted, and the Genoese were allowed to re-export their precious metals.[92] The liberalization of control was devised to stimulate trade and encourage the import of gold and silver financing it, to the benefit of both parties.

The fall of the Frankish states to the Mamluk forces in 1291 and the imposition of the papal embargo that followed required a restructuring of Western trading and shipping networks in the Eastern Mediterranean. As noted above, the Venetians pursued their exchanges with Egypt, yet these were redirected through Candia in Crete and especially through Famagusta in Cyprus,[93] which replaced Acre as port of call and transshipment station along the maritime route linking Venice to Egypt. Greeks and Oriental Christians in Cyprus familiar with the Levantine seaboard, who did not consider themselves bound by the papal embargo, acted as middlemen. Some of them enjoyed Venetian status.[94] In 1302 Venice requested from King Henry II of Cyprus new privileges improving the condition of its nationals in the island.[95] The move was clearly connected with the function of Cyprus as commercial intermediary between Venice and Egypt. Significantly, Venice conducted in the same year negotiations with Sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, which led to the treaty of August 1302 between them.[96] In this treaty the sultan went beyond the concessions made to Genoa in 1290. In addition to the lifting of compulsory auction of all the imported bullion and permission to re-export it, he exempted the Venetians from import duties on precious metals, the first time

[91] Stahl, *Zecca,* 30–31, on the absence of evidence.

[92] Pallavicino, *I Libri Iurium,* 82.

[93] David Jacoby, "Creta e Venezia nel contesto economico del Mediterraneo orientale sino alla metà del Quattrocento," in *Venezia e Creta (Atti del Convegno internazionale di studi, Iraklion-Chanià, 30 settembre–5 ottobre 1997),* ed. G. Ortalli (Venice, 1998), 95–98, repr. in David Jacoby, *Commercial Exchange across the Mediterranean: Byzantium, the Crusader Levant, Egypt and Italy* (Aldershot, 2005), no. VII.

[94] Jacoby, "The Venetians in Byzantine and Lusignan Cyprus," 68–69, 78, 80.

[95] However, in Cyprus Venice did not obtain a charter of privileges until 1306: ibid., 67–70.

[96] On the treaty with Egypt, see above.

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such privilege was ever granted in Egypt.[97] The abolition of compulsory auction in Alexandria is also implied by Sanudo's reference to merchants carrying silver to the Cairo mint, mentioned above.

The tax exemption on imported precious metals was added to a clause appearing in the Egyptian-Venetian treaty of 1254 freeing Venetians from import duties on luxury items, namely precious stones, pearls, and various furs.[98] Furs imported from the Black Sea region by Venetian and Genoese merchants were in high demand in Egypt, especially in the Mamluk period.[99] Although not mentioned in the treaty of 1302, it is significant that in the same year the Egyptian customs accepted Venetian gold ducats for the settlement of import duties. This apparently was not a one-off occurrence.[100] The payment in ducats was beneficial both to Venetian merchants, since they lowered the cost of goods acquired in Egypt, and to the Mamluk authorities, since they encouraged the import of bullion and coins.

It would seem that the waiving of compulsory auction and the right to export were extended after 1302 to other merchants, though without the exemption from custom duties. The *Libro d'abaco,* an anonymous trading manual of the first half of the fourteenth century, mentions an export tax on gold and silver, which implies the occasional re-export of precious metals from Egypt.[101]

Venetian exports of precious metals to Egypt continued in the following period, despite the papal embargo. On April 3, 1304, Pope Benedict XI issued a bull insisting once more on its implementation. On April 8 it was reported in Venice that he had orally allowed the Venetians to trade with Mamluk territories in all commodities not explicitly prohibited in his bull. In 1317 Doge Giovanni Soranzo relied on this declaration when demanding that Venice be allowed to export gold, silver, and various other goods to Egypt.[102]

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[97] Thomas and Predelli, *Diplomatarium,* 1:6–7, to compare with the clauses of 1254 in Tafel and Thomas, *Urkunden,* 2:489.

[98] Treaty of 1254: Tafel and Thomas, *Urkunden,* 2:487. The Egyptian-Genoese treaty of 1290 also exempted these commodities from import dues: Pallavicino, *I Libri Iurium,* 79.

[99] On the fur trade, see David Jacoby, "The Economy of Latin Constantinople, 1204–1261," in *Urbs capta: The Fourth Crusade and its Consequences: La IVe Croisade et ses conséquences,* ed. Angeliki Laiou, Réalités Byzantines, 10 (Paris, 2005), 212, repr. in Jacoby, *Travellers,* no. VII.

[100] Rabie, *The Financial System of Egypt,* 191. A hoard of ducats has been found in Cairo: personal communication from Stefan Heidemann. One has to wait for its publication to learn its approximate dating.

[101] Arrighi, *Libro d'abaco,* 157. However, on this manual's rates of taxation on precious metals, see below.

[102] Thomas and Predelli, *Diplomatarium,* 1:19–21, nos. 9–10, bulls of the pope; Riccardo Predelli, *I Libri Commemoriali della Republica (sic) di Venezia: Regesti (1293–1787)* (Venice, 1876–1914), 1:38, lib. I, no. 166; 183–84, lib. II, nos. 64–65.

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In 1323 Venice, under papal pressure, prohibited trade with Mamluk territories. Trading nevertheless continued, though probably hampered to some extent.[103] Restricted imports of gold bullion and coins to Egypt resulting from diminished exchanges with the West may explain a temporary scarcity in coin supply in the marketplace, such as that before the 1324 Cairo visit of the ruler of Mali, Mansa Musa, who left a large amount of precious metal in the city.[104] Another temporary shortage occurring in 1335 prompted al-Nashw, nāẓir al-khaṣṣ, or supervisor of the sultan's fisc, of Sultan al-Nāṣir, to order merchants and goldsmiths to deliver gold in their possession to the mint.[105]

The function of Famagusta as major bullion and money market and as trading intermediary between Venice and Egypt is well illustrated. From the 1320s the growing demand for silver drove down the price of gold and the bimetallic ratio in the West. Venice enjoyed a large supply of silver at the time the price of the metal was rising. Silver was much in demand in Cypriot and Mamluk mints. From Egypt, silver was sent to India to pay for spices, as well as to China. The shipping of silver in bullion and coin to the eastern Mediterranean, coupled with the transfer of gold from the Middle East to Western mints, became more profitable. Pegolotti offers precious information on the movement of gold and silver in both directions, which reflects conditions existing roughly between 1323 and 1340.[106] He lists fourteen types of silver coins and ingots from several sources, among them Venice, as well as gold bullion, ducats, and florins traded in Famagusta, and states the ratio between Venetian and Cypriot silver and gold weights.[107] The export of gold from Venice to Alexandria is indirectly illustrated by the ratio between their respective gold weights, one ounce versus 6 bezants and 21.75 carats.[108]

In 1343, a time of an unusually large supply of silver in Venice, large amounts of it in the form of certified ingots were shipped from Venice to Famagusta. One of the exporters, Francesco Querini, instructed his agent to invest the proceeds from the sale of silver in gold, to be conveyed to Venice by the state galleys re-

[103] Jacoby, "Creta e Venezia," 98–99; idem, "The Venetians in Byzantine and Lusignan Cyprus," 71–72; Ashtor, *Levant Trade,* 45–54, on Venetians and other nations; Jacoby, "Venice and the Papal Embargo."

[104] Rabie, *The Financial System of Egypt,* 191–92. Warren C. Schultz, "Mansa Musa's Gold in Mamluk Cairo: A Reappraisal of a World Civilizations Anecdote," in *History and Historiography of Post-Mongol Central Asia and the Middle East: Studies in Honor of John E. Woods,* ed. Judith Pfeiffer and Sholeh A. Quinn, in collaboration with Ernest Tucker (Wiesbaden, 2006), 428–45.

[105] Labib, *Handelsgeschichte Ägyptens,* 187–88. Schultz, "The Circulation of Dirhams," 243, rightly warns against simplistic assumptions that hoarding was a factor contributing to scarcity in the marketplace.

[106] For this dating, see above, n. 30.

[107] Pegolotti, *La pratica della mercatura,* 81–83, 96–98.

[108] Ibid., 74; Arrighi, *Libro d'abaco,* 159.

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turning that year from Cyprus, provided the net profit amounted to 8% or more. Otherwise the proceeds were to be invested in either cotton or spices, the latter clearly purchased in Egypt. It follows that the success of the business venture was not self-evident if exclusively aimed at speculation on precious metals. Before his death in 1344, Leone Morosini, a Venetian nobleman, had accumulated in Famagusta 7,000 ducats worth of gold, some in Alexandrian dinars, which his executors sent to Venice for sale.[109] The Egyptian currency had clearly been acquired before the relaxation of the papal embargo in 1344, despite the Venetian ban on trade with Mamluk territories at that time, either by Morosini himself, through an agent operating on his behalf in Egypt, in Famagusta from moneychangers, or else from merchants not bound by the papal embargo.

In 1344 Pope Clement VI relaxed the papal embargo on Mamluk territories. In August of that year Venice decided to send an envoy to Egypt to obtain a new treaty based on the one concluded in 1302, with improved conditions. As noted above, that treaty had granted the Venetians full exemption from import duties on gold and silver. However, at some time after 1302 these duties had been re-imposed at the respective rates of 4 and 3.5%. Venice was eager to obtain a reduction of all import taxes, especially on silver. Strangely, whereas the trade tax rates for Egypt were known in Venice, the Venetian envoy was ordered to obtain information regarding those imposed in Damascus, Aleppo, Amman, and elsewhere in Syria, although a Venetian merchant resided in Beirut at that time.[110] The envoy was also ordered to request that the Alexandrian mint striking dirhams be re-established and that these coins be accepted in payment for merchandise.[111] Clearly, the coining of dirhams in the city had been interrupted following the halting of direct Venetian trading in Egypt in 1323, which lasted until 1344. This is also suggested by Venice's request that the sultan take measures to re-activate trade in Alexandria.[112] The reference to dirhams was aimed at ensuring payment in these coins only, to the exclusion of gold bullion or specie.[113] Venice was particularly anxious to promote the largest possible outflow of silver and ease thereby the

[109] Lane and Mueller, *Money and Banking,* 365–68, 374.

[110] *Venezia–Senato: Deliberazioni miste, Registro XXIII (1345–1347),* ed. Francesca Girardi (Venice, 2004), 176, nos. 355 and 353 respectively. On Beirut, see Ashtor, Levant Trade, 48.

[111] *Venezia–Senato,* 175–77, nos. 352–55, 357.

[112] Ibid., 176, no. 356.

[113] On the background to the envoy's mission, see Ashtor, *Levant Trade,* 64–68, who, however, fails to deal with Venice's interest in the minting of dirhams. See also Lane and Mueller, *Money and Banking,* 368–70, who claim that Venice demanded that the dirham be made legal tender. This is implausible, since the dirham was already fulfilling that function.

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pressure on its domestic silver market, although it also experienced a gold glut at that time.[114]

The Venetian envoy, Niccolò Zeno, was partly successful. The Egyptian-Venetian treaty of 1345 fixed the import and export taxes on gold and silver at 2%.[115]

The Venetian transportation service by galleys to Alexandria was resumed in the same year.[116] The Venetian Senate issued instructions for the payment of freight charges. Significantly, they refer to silver and other commodities, yet not to gold. This confirms Venice's policy regarding the outflow of silver mentioned above. On the other hand, 800 gold ducats were earmarked for a present to the sultan and 200 more for gifts to his "barons."[117] The resumption of direct trading between Venice and Egypt contributed to a decline in the value of gold after 1345.[118]

Some short conclusions. Western sources regarding the movement of precious metals, whether in bullion or specie, between Venice and the Levant in the early Mamluk period, neglected so far, offer evidence not found in Arabic sources on a variety of monetary issues. They suggest the important role of Crusader Acre, until 1291, as intermediary between Venice and Egypt, as well as in the accumulation of Ayyubid and Mamluk coinage and its return to Egypt. Western sources underline the importance of account money, widely used as a stable and credible standard, in the business transactions of Western merchants regarding Mamluk territories. The flow of precious metals between Venice and Egypt, as well as the balance between gold and silver, fluctuated over time, since it was largely determined by the supply of the two precious metals to Venice, the market ratio between them, and political circumstances.[119]

[114] On this glut, see Stahl, *Zecca,* 48–50.

[115] Thomas and Predelli, *Diplomatarium,* 1:292, par. 1. Another clause, ibid., 293, par. 3, appears to contradict this one. It deals with tax exemption on pearls, precious stones, furs, and in addition, "de auro et condux (sic)." The addition of the last words is clearly due to a scribe's slip. This is also revealed by a comparison with the more generous clause of 1302 granting exemption on these same commodities, as well as on gold and silver: see above, n. 86.

[116] Not in 1344 as stated by Stöckly, above, n. 9.

[117] *Venezia–Senato,* 59–60, nos. 161 and 160 respectively.

[118] Lane and Mueller, *Money and Banking,* 378.

[119] My thanks to Stefan Heidemann, Reinhold Mueller, Robert Kool, Warren Schultz, and Alan Stahl for valuable information and advice. Full responsibility for the content of this study is my own.

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Book Reviews

Sarah Büssow-Schmitz, *Die Beduinen der Mamluken: Beduinen im politischen Leben Ägyptens im 8./14. Jahrhundert* (Wiesbaden: Reichert, 2016). Pp. x + 169.

Reviewed by Frank H. Stewart, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

Egypt has been called "the beloved of the Bedouin *(maʿbūdat al-ʿarab),*"[1] and with good reason: through the centuries, beginning even before the Islamic conquest, Arabic-speaking nomads have poured into the country from east and from west. Yet this Lorelei that so much attracts them has in fact lured them to their doom—not as individuals, but as tribes. For among the flatlands of the Arab world, Egypt is the least hospitable to pastoral nomads. The reason lies in its geography: broadly speaking, the country is divided between those areas that lend themselves so easily to cultivation that they have for millennia supported dense populations—these are the Nile valley, its delta, and the Fayyum; and other areas that are so barren that they can support almost no population at all—these are the Eastern and Western Deserts. The exceptions to this pattern, apart from a few oases in the Western Desert, are the northern margins of the Delta: al-Buḥayrah in the west and al-Sharqīyah in the east, both of which shade off into steppe. The tendency has been for the nomads who stayed in Egypt (many merely passed through) to settle down and gradually merge with the sedentary population; but for much of the Islamic period there was at the same time an inflow of new tribespeople, so that some tribal Arabs were always present. These immigrants have probably never made up a large part of the population, but their importance in Egyptian history has been disproportionate to their numbers.

That importance has been both political (of this more below) and cultural. It has been said that the main factor in the spread of Arabic in Egypt was the gradual settlement of Arab nomads in the rural areas.[2] To this day, rural upper Egypt, with its blood-feuds and customary law, is an unmistakably tribal society, and there is every reason to believe that this is not an inheritance from pre-Islamic times but rather the result of centuries during which the Bedouin dominated the

[1] Luṭfī al-Sayyid, *Qabāʾil al-ʿArab fī Miṣr* (Cairo, 1935), 82.

[2] C. H. Becker, *Islamstudien* (Leipzig, 1924), 1:151f. Becker contrasts the profound Arabization of Egypt with the superficial Hellenization that preceded it. The leading experts on Egyptian dialects write that "there is no dialect area in Egypt where Bedouin tribes were not present somehow, and still are, and have thus contributed through mixing and coexistence with the autochthonous population to its linguistic evolution." Peter Behnstedt and Manfred Woidich, "The Formation of the Egyptian Arabic Dialect Area," to appear in *Arabic Historical Dialectology,* ed. Clive Holes (Oxford, forthcoming). My thanks to the authors for providing me with a pre-print of this chapter.

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region. There are also undoubtedly wider Bedouin influences on Egyptian culture, though we cannot perceive them with any clarity; we lack not only the data, but also the intellectual tools, that would allow us to do so.[3]

From a historiographical point of view, one can distinguish three periods in the history of the Egyptian Bedouin. The pre-Ottoman centuries have attracted a number of scholars, and the general level of the research is high. Of particular relevance to the book under review is the unpublished doctoral dissertation by Yigal Shwartz, "The Bedouin in Egypt during the Mamluk Period," a study that laid solid foundations for all subsequent work on the subject.[4] For the Ottoman period (1516–1798) there is almost no secondary literature, in part, no doubt, because of the paucity of sources. The modern era is the subject of a fair number of publications, but most of them are of inferior quality.

The central theme of Büssow-Schmitz's book is the relationship between the Mamluks and the Egyptian Bedouin in the fourteenth century, or more exactly in the years 1310–99. This was the century that opened with the brilliantly successful Mamluk expedition against the Bedouin of Upper Egypt in 1302; that saw increasing Bedouin troubles in the 1340s, resulting in another major expedition to Upper Egypt in 1353; and that ended with the gradual loss of control over the western and southern border regions of the country.[5]

Büssow-Schmitz begins with two introductory sections: the Introduction proper and Part I of the book. The former covers the topics that one would expect (e.g., sources, methods, survey of the literature), and also deals with the question of who will count as Bedouin for the purpose of this work. The reply that Büssow-Schmitz gives—an eminently sensible one—is, in effect, that the Bedouin are the people whom the sources call *ʿarab, aʿrāb, ʿurbān,* or (much less often) *badw,* or who are referred to by tribal names. She describes these people as distinguished from others by "language, descent, values and traditions" (p. 5). This is broadly speaking correct, but it is perhaps worth adding that Büssow-Schmitz's statement should not be taken to imply that the people whom the Mamluk authors lumped

[3]See further Frank H. Stewart, "Tribalism," in *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Islamic Political Thought,* ed. Gerhard Böwering and others, 563–67, which argues that in about 1800 almost the whole rural population of the Arab world either still retained, or had to a large degree adopted, tribal values.

[4]Shwartz's dissertation ("Ha-Bedwim be-Mitsrayim ba-Tequfa ha-Mamlukit," 2 vols., Tel-Aviv University, 1987) is over a thousand pages long. Büssow-Schmitz uses a German translation of the central part of the work which has appeared under the title *Die Beduinen in Ägypten in der Mamlukenzeit*. In what follows references to Shwartz will be to the Hebrew original, since its pagination is given in the translation. The translation (which includes the English abstract of the dissertation) is available on line at http://www.nomadsed.de/fileadmin/user_upload/redakteure/Dateien_Projekte/SHWARTZ_BEDUINEN__2011_.pdf

[5]Shwartz, "Ha-Bedwim," 1:298.

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together as Bedouin had all these features in common, or that such features invariably distinguished between Bedouin and others. It is not even certain that all these Bedouin spoke Arabic, and those who did speak Arabic certainly spoke a variety of dialects, not all of them of a distinctly Bedouin type.[6] As for descent, it is likely that all or very nearly all the various Bedouin groups represented themselves as descended from Arabian ancestors. In reality, however, many groups were mainly of Berber, Beja, or native Egyptian descent, and there were people not classified as Bedouin who prided themselves on their Arabian descent. The values and traditions of the Bedouin groups must also have been quite varied: in particular, there must have been a contrast between those that came to Egypt from North Africa and those that came directly from Arabia; and this is to say nothing of the differences between recent arrivals, those who had been in Egypt for generations, and those who were in fact the descendants of native Egyptians. Büssow-Schmitz mentions two further features that distinguished the Bedouin: they were armed and they were organized in tribes (p. 36). The former feature they shared, of course, with the Mamluks; the latter—vague though it is—was perhaps their central identifying feature.[7]

Büssow-Schmitz's Introduction includes a useful section on the effects of the Black Death (1347–49). The Bedouin seem to have been more troublesome to the Egyptian authorities in the second half of the fourteenth century than they were in the first half. Some scholars have suggested that this was because the Bedouin suffered less from the plague than did other inhabitants, so that they came to form a larger proportion of the (now much diminished) total population. Büssow-Schmitz argues (on the basis of her extensive research on the subject, which she has published elsewhere) that the Bedouin were affected to much the same degree as other Egyptians.

Part I of the book is an excellent discussion of where and how the Bedouin lived in medieval Egypt. Here the author (quite rightly) does not limit herself to data from the fourteenth century. The main source of livelihood for the Bedouin was undoubtedly agriculture, and there is extensive evidence of their involvement in both animal husbandry and crop cultivation. Now there are plenty of communities in the Middle East and North Africa that combine these activities with a more or less nomadic way of life, but Ibn Faḍl Allāh al-ʿUmarī, writing in the first half of the fourteenth century, describes the Egyptian Bedouin as sedentary farmers.[8] As Büssow-Schmitz points out (p. 31), this was certainly not true of all of them, but it was true of many. The most detailed testimony to this effect comes from an-

[6] See the remarks below on the Bedouin of the Fayyūm.

[7] Cf. Shwartz, "Ha-Bedwim," 1:5.

[8] Quoted by Büssow-Schmitz, 21 and 31. (The statement about Rapoport in n. 99 of p. 21 actually belongs to n. 100.)

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other work that Büssow-Schmitz uses here, Abū ʿUthmān al-Nābulusī's so-called *Tārīkh al-Fayyūm,*[9] a cadastral survey produced in the mid-1240s. His chapter on the inhabitants of the Fayyūm is headed *fī dhikr al-sākinīn bi-hi wa-inqisāmihim ilá al-badw wa-al-ḥaḍar.* What follows makes it clear that al-Nābulusī is not drawing a distinction between nomads and sedentaries, but rather between two groups of sedentaries: the Muslims, who constituted the great majority of the inhabitants and were mostly *badw* (organized in tribes, about which al-Nābulusī gives many details), and the small Christian minority, who were all *ḥaḍar.* In his publications on al-Nābulusī's work, Yossef Rapoport has argued convincingly that all, or virtually all, of these Bedouin were direct descendants of the ancient Christian population of the Fayyūm.[10] He is able to show that their conversion to Islam probably took place not more than a couple of hundred years before the time of al-Nābulusī, and was therefore simultaneous with, or quite closely followed by, their assumption of a Bedouin identity. Rapoport's views can be supported by the dialectological evidence. We are authoritatively told that "the Fayyūm dialects belong to the earliest linguistic stratum."[11] This indicates that, just as Rapoport argues, there was no major nomadic influx after the Arab conquest. It also shows that the Fayyūm *badw* did not speak a distinctively Bedouin dialect.

Rapoport demonstrates that the Fayyūmīs had excellent fiscal reasons for becoming Bedouin. The tribes whose identities they adopted are well known, and there must have been contact of some kind between them and the Fayyūmīs. The exact nature of that contact remains a matter of speculation.

Rapoport believes that what we know of the Fayyūm is largely true of the rest of Egypt in the thirteenth century (and no doubt later). In particular he holds that:

1. "The sedentary life of the Arab tribesmen of the Fayyūm was…not an exception, but rather the rule in most Egyptian provinces along the Nile valley."[12] Büssow-Schmitz seems to accept this, saying that Rapoport's thesis implies that the term Bedouin *(ʿarab* etc., *badw)* in fourteenth-century Egypt referred to people with a particular identity and status, not to people who engaged in distinctive economic activities and followed a special way of life (p. 34).

[9]Ed. B. Moritz, Cairo, 1898. A new edition (with an English translation) by Yossef Rapoport and Ido Shahar is in press. They discovered that the title *Tārīkh al-Fayyūm* was supplied by Moritz.

[10]Rapoport's arguments were first set out in "Invisible Peasants, Marauding Nomads: Taxation, Tribalism, and Rebellion in Mamluk Egypt," *Mamlūk Studies Review* 8 (2004): 1–22. A more developed statement of his views is to be found in "Where Did the Christians Go? Peasants and Tribesmen of the Fayyum, 1060–1240," to appear in *Egypt and Empire: Religious Identities from Roman to Modern Times,* ed. Elisabeth R. O'Connell (London, forthcoming). My thanks to Dr. Rapoport for providing me with a pre-print. He has in press a book entitled *Rural Economy and Tribal Society in Islamic Egypt: A Study of al-Nābulusī's "Villages of the Fayyum."*

[11]Behnstedt and Woidich, "The Formation."

[12]Rapoport, "Invisible Peasants," 18.

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2. Most of the Egyptian Bedouin were not (as is widely believed) descendants of Arab (or Berber) tribespeople who became sedentary, but rather of native Egyptian peasants. Büssow-Schmitz accepts this thesis (p. 34). Genetic research may at some future date give us a clearer picture of the ancestry of the inhabitants of the various regions of Egypt.

3. "Most of the Muslim peasantry in the Egyptian countryside had an Arab tribal identity."[13] Büssow-Schmitz notes this claim (p. 34), but does not tell us her own opinion of it. Whatever the truth of Rapoport's view, it is clear that some tribes—or perhaps one should say, the tribes of some regions—were much more important than others. These are the ones that had to be dealt with by the Mamluk sultans as more or less independent entities, and whose leaders were addressed with the respectful formulas that we find in the *inshā'* works.

Büssow-Schmitz offers much interesting detail about Bedouin stock raising, together with an account of the large herds of horses, camels, and small stock held by some of the Mamluks. She shows too how the Bedouin were involved in carrying and trading. Their basic food was grain, and in addition to growing it themselves, they sometimes acquired it by trade, sometimes by robbery, and sometimes were even supplied with it from the Mamluks' granaries. A section is devoted to the ʿĀ'id tribe, which gained substantial wealth through control of the routes to Syria and the Hijaz. Some of their number were in charge of the sultan's riding camels. Further sections of Part I of the book discuss particular regions of Egypt and the Bedouin activities peculiar to them, e.g., the natron trade of Buḥayrah and the slave trade of Upper Egypt.

Part II of Büssow-Schmitz's book tells of how the Bedouin are treated in the Mamluk chronicles. She contrasts the stereotypes of the Bedouin as he appears in works of religion and *adab*—poor, crude, and irreligious, a figure of fun because of his naiveté, though also eloquent and outspoken—with the more varied and down-to-earth representations in the chronicles. Here what counts is above all the significance of the Bedouin for the Mamluk empire (p. 57). Mostly they came to the attention of the authorities as disturbers of the peace. In this context Büssow-Schmitz analyzes at length the chroniclers' use of the two terms *fasād* and *nifāq*. They regularly apply the latter word to expressions of Bedouin unrest, and use the associated verb *nāfaqa ʿalá* in the sense of "to revolt against." Büssow-Schmitz describes how this usage developed from the terminology of the Quran and hadith. She then considers four different fourteenth- and fifteenth-century accounts of the great Bedouin rising in the mid-fourteenth century. They are of

[13]Ibid., 21. This statement applies especially to Middle and Upper Egypt (cf. ibid., 18). In a personal communication Dr. Rapoport writes that "it is possible (though unlikely, in my view) that in the Delta more peasants did not have tribal identity."

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course not favorable to the Bedouin, but they show no trace of the stereotypes mentioned above.

Büssow-Schmitz goes on to report on what Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī (1327–70) has to say about the Bedouin in his *Muʿīd al-Niʿam.* Like not a few other medieval Muslim authors, he contrasts the Bedouin *(ʿarab)* with "the Muslims," implicitly denying the former membership in the community of believers. He tells us that the nomadic *umarāʾ al-ʿarab* of his time were endowed (by the sultan) with great wealth *(al-arzāq al-wāfirah wa-al-iqṭāʿāt al-hāʾilah)* in order to induce them not to harm the Muslims; and that if the sultan withdraws the *iqṭāʿ* of one of these amirs, then the latter turns to highway robbery and bloodshed.[14] In her analysis Büssow-Schmitz points out that this theme of wealth combined with depravity is not one that has hitherto been noted in the classical literature. Al-Subkī adds that the worst of the Bedouin are those of the Ḥijāz, some of whom perhaps even think that it is legitimate to rob the pilgrims. He proceeds to list further evil practices of the Bedouin: many of them marry in a fashion that is not in accordance with the shariʿah; their daughters do not inherit; and no restrictions are placed on sexual intercourse between their slaves. There can be little doubt as to the accuracy of these three charges.

Part II ends with a discussion of what Büssow-Schmitz calls the instrumentalization of the Bedouin. By this she means the way in which certain authors used statements about the Bedouin as a means of putting over a particular message. She gives us three examples. Ibn al-Dawādārī writes about the Bedouin in such a way as to glorify his late father, who at one point in his career was in some sense responsible to the authorities for the Bedouin of the Sharqīyah. Al-Maqrīzī more than once uses episodes in the relations between the Bedouin and the government as an opportunity to criticize the Mamluk regime. Ibn Iyās, writing at the very end of the Mamluk period, may have intended his depiction of the great anti-Bedouin expedition of 1353 as an encouragement to the sultan to act with equal energy against the encroaching Ottomans (though Büssow-Schmitz also offers other possible interpretations of the chronicler's aims).

The last and longest part of the book, Part III, deals with relations between the Bedouin—including on occasion those of Syria—and the Mamluks. This part opens with a chapter that surveys various conflicts between Mamluks and Egyptian Bedouins in the fourteenth century. Büssow-Schmitz contrasts the determination of the Mamluks to crush and dominate the Egyptian Bedouin with their

[14]I follow here the translation of this passage given by Stefan Leder, "Nomadische Lebensformen und ihre Wahrnehmung im Spiegel der arabischen Terminologie," *Die Welt des Orients* 34 (2004): 72–104, rather than the one given by Büssow-Schmitz. It looks as if Leder reads at this point *qaṭaʿa* (as in the Beirut, 1983 ed., 54), while Büssow-Schmitz reads *aqṭaʿa* (as in the London, 1908 ed., Arabic text, 75).

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more relaxed policy towards the Syrian Bedouin. She ascribes this partly to the difficult relations between the various Bedouin groups in Egypt—it was often their conflicts with each other and the resulting disorders, rather than revolt against the government as such, that led to Mamluk intervention. In Syria it seems that relations between the tribes were more stable, and Büssow-Schmitz suggests that this was because of the domination of the Āl Faḍl.

The survey of conflicts between Bedouin and Mamluks is followed by a chapter that details how such conflicts were settled, with special attention to the practice of intercession *(shafāʿah)*. Generally it was the Bedouin who were asking for peace and offering to return to obedience to the sultan. The sultan would demand that the Bedouin leaders assume certain responsibilities, and would offer them favors—notably *iqṭāʿāt*—in return.

The third chapter of Part III is entitled "Rules of Symbolic Communication." By "symbolic communication" Büssow-Schmitz means non-verbal communication, a term she also occasionally uses (p. 116 and cf. p. 6). She points out that a single action, e.g., an execution, may have both a practical and a communicative function, and indeed starts her discussion of symbolic communication between Mamluks and Bedouin with communications connected to the use of force. Among them are the triumphal procession through Cairo that followed the suppression of al-Aḥdab's revolt in 1354 and the display in 1378 of the heads of eleven leaders of the Awlād al-Kanz on the Bāb Zuwaylah in the capital. Büssow-Schmitz does not mention any cases of Bedouin using force with communicative intentions, and this is presumably because such cases—and they must have existed—left no trace in the chronicles. The sources are always niggardly with information about the tribes, but still, if the Bedouin had resembled the Mamluks in committing such acts as the public flogging of their captives or the building of structures from the skulls of their victims, then surely some record of it would have reached us.

The next section of this chapter deals with gifts and honors, and here the Bedouin appear on both sides of the transactions. Their notables were sometimes recipients of the robes of honor that were an important feature of Mamluk ceremony, and sometimes of the many other gifts and honors that were at the sultan's disposal, among them *iqṭāʿāt*. Horses were probably the most important gifts given by the Bedouin to the sultan, but they also offered (among other things) camels, wild animals, and slaves. Büssow-Schmitz offers a careful analysis of the varied circumstances in which gifts and honors were bestowed. One of the most important was when a Bedouin leader who had revolted *(kharaja ʿan al-ṭāʿah)* returned to obedience. This was usually done at court, and accompanied by an oath of fealty.

From here the book moves naturally into a chapter on the integration of the Bedouin into the Mamluk state. As was mentioned above, the Mamluks had to

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deal with certain tribes, and not only those on their borders, as more or less independent entities. This is a situation in which many states have found themselves, and the Mamluk way of dealing with it was of a familiar kind: they gave the tribal leaders titles (accompanied by *iqṭāʿāt* and other favors) that implied that those leaders were part of the normal administrative apparatus of the state. We see this reflected in *inshāʾ* works and the like, where Bedouin tribal leaders with the title of amir are listed alongside other functionaries such as the qadis or the governors of provinces. Sometimes this integration was little more than nominal, a face-saving fiction, but at other times it was real enough.

There were various ranks of amir. The most senior offered to the Bedouin was *amīr al-ʿarab,* the holder of which was sometimes also called *malik al-ʿarab*. In general, there were at any given time several Egyptian Bedouin who bore this title. In principle an amir was supposed to rule not only over his own tribe but also over those in the area for which he was responsible. Büssow-Schmitz suggests, however, that in practice his powers were usually limited, and that he acted rather as the representative of the Bedouin in a given region. The Bedouin were people to whom the Mamluks found direct access difficult, and all communications to and from them were supposed to go through the amir. The title often became hereditary, but given the nature of Bedouin society, this probably did not in itself weaken whatever power the sultan had over the tribes.

The last chapter of Part III of the book is an extended account of the most spectacular Bedouin revolt of the fourteenth century, that of al-Aḥdab, who at some time around 1353 declared himself sultan, and surrounded himself with the ceremonial paraphernalia of the Mamluk court. Büssow-Schmitz uses the narrative as an opportunity to illustrate the various themes that were treated earlier in the book.[15]

With this the book ends, apart from a brief final summary. The strengths of *Die Beduinen der Mamluken* lie in the author's wide knowledge of the sources, clarity of language, and invariable good sense. The arrangement of the material leaves something to be desired—here and there the reader is conscious of some overlapping and repetition. But this is a work on an important subject, and one that deserves to be read by all serious students of Mamluk history.[16]

[15] A fuller version of this chapter is available in English: Sarah Büssow-Schmitz, "Rules of Communication and Politics between Bedouin and Mamluk Elites in Egypt: The Case of the al-Aḥdab Revolt, c. 1353," *Eurasian Studies* 9 (2011): 67–104.

[16] My thanks to Sarah Büssow-Schmitz and Etan Kohlberg for their helpful comments on a draft of this review.

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A Note on the Use of Nineteenth-Century Sources

In Part I of her book Büssow-Schmitz makes occasional use of sources from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in order to supplement the limited information available in the medieval material. This is a reasonable procedure provided that (as in this case) the modern data are used in a sensible fashion. There is, however, a minor problem here. Büssow-Schmitz depends mainly on three modern sources (p. 21 n. 101); two of them are unexceptionable,[17] but the third is badly chosen. It is *Les Bédouins* (Paris, 1816), a work in three volumes of which Büssow-Schmitz uses the first. The only name that appears on the title page of this book is that of F. J. Mayeux, and Büssow-Schmitz takes him to be the author (e.g., p. 34). In actuality Mayeux was (as he himself states in his preface) merely the editor. The author was Dom Raphaël de Monachis (1759–1831), a Greek Catholic monk who was born in Egypt. This remarkable man became a member of Napoleon's Institut d'Egypte and was later a colleague of Silvestre de Sacy, and a teacher of Jean-François Champollion, at the Ecole des Langues Orientales in Paris.[18]

Büssow-Schmitz refers several times to Dom Raphaël's report on the Hanādwah Bedouin of Upper Egypt.[19] On p. 22 n. 109, she writes that they were mainly nomadic (and similarly p. 34), while on p. 32 she implies that they were mainly sedentary. Dom Raphaël's account could be used to support either conclusion. He tells us that the tribe is one of the largest in Egypt, extending from Beni Suef to Girga; and that in this region, "qu'elle parcourt incessament à l'usage des Nomades," they allow no other tribe to set up camp.[20] But he also emphasizes the fertility of the region, and says that the tribespeople's main concern is agriculture, their days being divided between work in the fields and the care of their numerous

[17] Detlef-Müller Mahn, *Fellachendörfer* (Stuttgart, 2001), a work that, despite what its title suggests, contains useful information about a Bedouin village in the Minya governorate; and Fuad Ibrahim and Barbara Ibrahim, *Ägypten* (Stuttgart, 2001), a geographical study (of which an English version was published in 2003).

[18] The best biography remains Charles Bachatly "Un membre orientale du premier Institut d'Égypte, Don Raphaël," *Bulletin de l'Institut d'Egypte* 17 (1934–35): 237–60. For Dom Raphaël's Bedouin studies, see Serga Moussa, *Le mythe bédouin chez les voyageurs aux XVIIIe et XIXe siècles* (Paris, 2016), 141–49. The substance of these pages is also to be found in Sarga Moussa, "Le mythe des Bédouins à l'aube du XIXe siècle: l'exemple de dom Raphaël de Monachis," in *Livre du monde, le monde des livres: Mélanges en l'honneur de François Moureau* (Paris, 2012), 847–57. Downloaded from https://hal.archives-ouvertes.fr/hal-00910047.

[19] The tribe's name is usually given as al-Hanādī, but the form Hanādwah is recorded by Amédée Jaubert, "Nomenclature des tribus d'Arabes qui campent entre l'Egypte et la Palestine," in *Description de l'Égypte* (2nd ed., Paris, 1821–30), 16:107–37 at 131, noted by Max v. Oppenheim, *Die Beduinen* (Leipzig and Wiesbaden, 1939–68), 1:295n.

[20] *Les Bédouins,* 1:44.

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herds.[21] As Büssow-Schmitz points out, numerous herds do not necessarily imply nomadism, and my guess is that the people whom Dom Raphaël describes were largely sedentary. He mentions the Hanādwah's incessant coming and going not in the context of stock raising, but rather in the context of maintaining control of the tribal territory. We know from Dom Raphaël's contemporary Edme Jomard that each of the more powerful Bedouin tribes on the Nile had a well-defined territory, within which some of the land was directly exploited by the Bedouin themselves, while the rest was cultivated by the defenseless and oppressed fellahin. Each Bedouin tribe stayed within its own territory, guarding it jealously, and, in particular, preventing any other tribe from despoiling the fellahin who lived in that territory.[22]

The problems presented by Dom Raphaël's book do not, however, arise merely from some uncertainty as to what he wishes to convey to us. There is, rather, a general question as to the authenticity of his information. Certainly, what he writes about the Hanādwah does not inspire much faith. This is a tribe of North African origin, elements of which had recently arrived in the Nile Valley after much fighting with other tribes in the Western Desert. If Dom Raphaël had had any real contact with the tribespeople, he would surely have learned this and reported it. Instead he describes at some length what he views as Christian elements in the customs and beliefs of the Hanādwah, and suggests that the tribespeople are of Coptic origin.[23] And there is also another oddity in his account. While he is right in describing the Hanādwah as a large tribe, the claim that their territory ran from Beni Suef to Girga, a distance of some four hundred kilometers, is much exaggerated. Jaubert places them in Girga alone,[24] and Jomard, who writes in some detail about the Bedouin of Beni Suef and Minya (Ashmunein) provinces,[25] does not mention the Hanādwah at all.

Serga Moussa points out that Dom Raphaël was a scholar rather than a fieldworker, and that his data on the Bedouin are at least in part dependent on written sources.[26] Moussa himself does not attempt to trace these sources or to evaluate the reliability of what Dom Raphaël tells us. Until this has been done, we must exercise caution in using Dom Raphaël's book.

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[21] Ibid., 46.

[22] E. Jomard, "Observations sur les Arabes de l'Égypte moyenne," in *Description de l'Égypte,* 12:267–327 at 294f.

[23] Büssow-Schmitz seems to accept this suggestion (p. 34), citing it (not quite consistently) in support of Rapoport's thesis that the Fayyūm Bedouin were of Coptic descent.

[24] "Nomenclature," 131.

[25] "Observations," 267n.

[26] *Mythe bédouin,* 142.

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In the work under review, a small mistake on page 41 n. 257 needs to be corrected. In contrast to what is suggested there, the ʿĀ'id (or ʿĀyid) and the ʿAyāydah are two unrelated tribes.[27] The ancestor of the one is ʿĀ'id (or ʿĀ'idh), and of the other ʿAyyād. Both tribes still have descendants in Egypt,[28] and the present-day ʿAyāydah are quite well documented.[29] The passages from Murray, *Sons of Ishmael* (London, 1935), and Burckhardt, *Notes on the Bedouins and Wahábys* (London, 1830), that Büssow-Schmitz refers to in note 257 relate to the ʿAyāydah, and are therefore irrelevant to her work: only the ʿĀ'id are known from the period that concerns her.[30] It may be added that the reference to Burckhardt's *Notes* given by

[27] Both Muḥammad Sulaymān al-Ṭayyib, *Mawsūʿat al-Qabā'il al-ʿArabīyah,* 1:724 n.; 2nd ed. (Cairo, 1997), 1/2:557 n., and Aymān Muḥammad Zaghrūt, *Muʿjam Qabā'il Miṣr* (Cairo, 2010), 646, explicitly reject the conflation of the two tribes. There is indeed no real evidence that the two names refer to the same tribe, though it has been asserted by reputable authorities, e.g., Alfred v. Kremer, *Aegypten* (Leipzig, 1863), 1:116, and ʿAbbās Muṣṭafá ʿAmmār, *Al-Madkhal al-Sharqī li-Miṣr* (Cairo, 1946), 126, 178. Even ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Jabartī gets the names muddled up: he refers to a member of the Abāẓah lineage, which is well known to belong to the ʿĀyid, as shaykh of the ʿAyāydah. *ʿAjā'ib al-Āthār fī al-Tarājim wa-al-Akhbār* (Jerusalem, 2013), 3:43 = ibid (Bulaq, 1879–80), 3:38 = *Napoleon in Egypt: Al-Ǧabartī's Chronicle of the First Seven Months of the French Occupation, 1798* (Princeton, 1993), 116. De Chabrol, writing at about the same time as al-Jabartī, leaves no doubt that there were actually two distinct tribes. "Essai sur les moeurs des habitans modernes de l'Égypte," in *Description de l'Égypte,* 18/1:26.

[28] Zaghrūt, *Muʿjam,* 515–16, 646–48; for the Sharqīyah, see also Fahmi Abul-Fadl, *Volkstümliche Texte in arabischen Bauerndialekten der ägyptischen Provinz Šarqiyya* (Münster, 1961), 2f. (on the ʿĀyid and their villages in the area called Bilād al-ʿĀyid or Kufūr al-ʿĀyid); further village names in the Sharqīyah relating to the ʿĀyid are noted in Shwartz, "Ha-Bedwim," 1:513 n. 217, drawing on Muḥammad Ramzī, *Al-Qāmūs al-Ǧughrāfī lil-Bilād al-Miṣrīyah* (Cairo, 1953–63), 1:82 and 2/1:103, 162; see also Gabriel Baer, *Studies in the Social History of Modern Egypt* (Chicago, 1969), 4. My impression is that the modern-day descendants of the ʿĀyid no longer constitute a social unit of the kind we would call a tribe; the ʿĀyid are indeed already absent from the official lists of Egyptian tribes in the census of 1882 and the Qānūn al-ʿUrbān of 1906 (Luṭfi al-Sayyid, *Qabā'il al-ʿArab,* 32ff.).

[29] Clinton Bailey and Avshalom Shmueli, "The Settlement of the Sinaitic ʿAyāydah in the Suez Canal Zone," *Palestine Exploration Quarterly* 109 (1977): 27–38; Joseph Ginat, *Bedouin Bishaʿh Justice* (Brighton, 2009); Salim Alafenisch, *Die Feuerprobe* (Zurich, 2007). For the Arabic dialect of the ʿAyāydah, see Rudolf de Jong, *A grammar of the Bedouin dialects of the northern Sinai littoral* (Leiden, 2000). There is a village in the Sharqīyah called Kafr ʿAyyād Kurayyim (Ramzī, *Qāmūs,* 2/1:80).

[30] The earliest certain mention of the ʿAyāydah that I know of is from the year 1739: Richard Pococke, *A description of the East and some other countries* (London, 1743–45), 1:137, noted by Oppenheim, *Die Beduinen,* 2:140 n. 4. It has been stated that a manuscript from St. Catherine's Monastery refers to the ʿAyāydah in about 1600. Clinton Bailey, "Dating the Arrival of the Bedouin tribes in Sinai and the Negev," *Journal of the Social and Economic History of the Orient* 28 (1985): 20–49 at 49 n. 92. This may be correct, but it has not so far been possible to identify the manuscript in question. Frank H. Stewart, "Notes on the Arrival of the Bedouin tribes in Sinai,"

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Büssow-Schmitz is taken from Murray, and was apparently not checked against the original: Burckhardt speaks of the ʿAyāydah as numbering about six hundred horsemen a hundred years before his time, i.e., in the early eighteenth century. Büssow-Schmitz, perhaps misled by Murray's paraphrase of this passage, says that Burckhardt gives this figure for the early nineteenth century.

JESHO 34 (1991): 97–110 at 98, 107 n. 15. Al-Ṭayyib (*Mawsūʿat al-Qabāʾil,* 1:721n., 2d ed. 1/2:554 n.) states that the ʿAyāydah are mentioned by ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Jazīrī (mid-sixteenth century) under the name Banī ʿAyyād. I have not been able to find exactly this name (al-Ṭayyib gives no page or folio number), but al-Jazīrī does refer to a people called the Awlād ʿAyyād. The context implies that they are a substantial group, and they may indeed be our ʿAyāydah. *Al-Durar al-farāʾid al-munaẓẓamah fī akhbār al-ḥājj wa-ṭarīq Makkah al-Muʿaẓẓamah* (Beirut, 2002), 2:119. Perhaps it should be mentioned that there is also a small group in Karak called Awlād ʿAyyād (Frederick G. Peake, *A History of Trans-Jordan and its Tribes,* Amman, 1934, 2:371) or ʿYāl ʿAyyād (Alois Musil, *Arabia Petraea,* Vienna, 1908, 3:97).

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Adam Talib, *How Do You Say "Epigram" in Arabic? Literary History at the Limits of Comparison* (Leiden: Brill, 2018). Pp. 362.

Reviewed by Hakan Özkan, University of Münster

How would Australian wildlife specialists explain to non-Australians, who have never seen a kangaroo before, what one actually looks like? Most probably they would say a kangaroo is something like an oversized hare that puts her young in a pouch on her belly. They would use comparison to an indigenous species that comes closest to the kangaroo in order to create a familiar image. The situation that scholars of Arabic literature of the last centuries faced when they described short forms of pre-modern Arabic poetry must have been something similar. They used the term epigram as *locus comparationis* to describe these forms. Yet, in the case of the epigram the comparison is not an innocent one, because scholars trained in Western literary traditions not only likened these forms to Western ones, but also evaluated non-Western forms against Western forms to judge their quality. The issue, which a large part of Talib's study hinges on, is that of commensurability—hence the programmatic subtitle, *Literary History at the Limits of Comparison*. Western scholars based their studies on readily available but fundamentally unrelated categories of the Classical Greek and Roman models and their successors, coming up with definitions and evaluations that fell prey to Eurocentrism and failed to do justice to short forms of pre-modern Arabic poetry. On the other hand, pre-modern Arab critics provided sketchy categorizations, inconclusive generic classifications according to themes and obscure denominations, so that scholars were squeezed between these two insufficient but firmly rooted positions. Talib's book argues that these two positions or paradigmatic pillars, which long prevailed in the study of short pre-modern Arabic poetry, are inadequate and "serve only the interest of its creators and prestige users" (p. 2).

The study is divided into two parts. In the first Talib dwells on the history of the poetic form of *maqṭūʿ* from 1200 to 1900; he describes its features, its operational logic, and the contexts in which it appears. In the second part the author widens his scope to include broader issues in the study of pre-modern Arabic poetry and examines the relationship between the world-literary category "epigram" and its equivalents in pre-modern Arabic poetry.

The first chapter of part one ("A Bounding Line") sounds out the limits of the term *maqāṭīʿ* (sing. *maqṭūʿ* or *maqṭūʿah*) chronologically, thematically, structurally, stylistically, paratextually, and formally. All these aspects point to the emergence of a *maqāṭīʿ* genre in the thirteenth century. At that time Arab littérateurs used the term *maqāṭīʿ* for short poems without explaining it. In Talib's opinion, the most plausible reason for the lack of explanation is that its meaning is suf-

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ficiently clear from its use in context. In some of the biographical notices in his *Wafayāt al-aʿyān,* Ibn Khallikān (d. 681/1282) refers to short poems as *maqāṭīʿ,* whereas earlier biographers "would not have thought to use the term" (p. 40). Later, authors of *maqāṭīʿ,* such as Ibn Nubātah (d. 768/1366) and Ibn Abī Ḥajalah (d. 776/1375), were "more enthusiastic about using the term *maqāṭīʿ* to describe their work and to situate it within an emerging and flourishing genre" (p. 50).

Talib adduces the table of contents of Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī's *Dīwān,* in which one of the seven chapters bears the title *maqāṭīʿ* (p. 14). Five of the remaining chapters include long poems classified according to their main themes, and one chapter according to the form of the poems *(muwashshaḥ).* The *maqāṭīʿ* chapter also includes formally distinct poetic forms such as *dūbayt* and *mawālīyā.* These organizational chapter divisions can also be observed in a more detailed fashion in poetry collections such as in Shihāb al-Dīn al-Ḥijāzī's (790–875/1388–1471) *Rawḍ al-ādāb* or his *dīwān* (pp. 55–61). This raises the question of whether the concurrent emergence of formally distinct poems such as the *muwashshaḥ*, *dūbayt, zajal, kān wa-kān, mawālīyā* and *qūmā* in the twelfth/thirteenth century created the pressure and/or the opportunity to establish a term for short poetic forms, i.e., *maqāṭīʿ*, that except for their length are formally not as distinct as the forms *dūbayt, qūmā,* and *mawālīyā,* but that could also be used as a broader, generic term encompassing formally unmarked short poems *and* the formally marked ones.

In what follows, Talib gives a survey of some major *maqāṭīʿ* collections from the fourteenth century, showing that most of the poems have two verses (pp. 17–19). He then describes the structure and logic of *maqāṭīʿ*. A large portion of the poems end in a point powered by a *tawriyah* (a figure of double meaning). In other cases, as in some *maqāṭīʿ* on names, the concluding point resides in the resolution of a dialectical tension between signifier and signified or in resolution by some witty turn or other (pp. 20–24). These resolutions are part of an operational structure that Talib condenses in the formula *premise–exposition–resolution* (pp. 24–29). At one point he rightly draws attention to the possibility that short poetic forms were used as song lyrics (pp. 45–47). Citing the headings of *maqāṭīʿ* collections by Ibn Ḥabīb (d. 779/1377) and al-Ḥijāzī (790–875/1388–1471) he addresses their thematic relatedness and gives some examples of their playful aspects and rich depictions of the urban tapestry of that time (pp. 47–70).

In the second chapter ("The Sum of Its Parts") Talib focusses on the importance of context for the formation and recognition of *maqāṭīʿ* as a genre. I concur with his assumption that *maqāṭīʿ* did not fully acquire their status as genre before they were anthologized or, as Talib writes, "before context singled them out as a distinct form of short poetry in Arabic" (p. 71). The main context in which *maqāṭīʿ* are found is that of anthologies and poetry collections that became highly popular in Mamluk times. These anthologies were not hotchpotches of unrelated

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poems thrown together according to simple criteria like the alphabetical order of authors' names or chronological criteria. To the contrary, the process of selecting and joining, or "stitching together" (p. 89), poems in order to create "a new whole" (p. 77) was one of invention and innovation that demanded creativity and a thorough knowledge of a large range of poems and their quality, themes, logic, structure, stylistic features, etc. Therefore, Talib is right in referring to this process as "curating" (p. 74). Common to most of the anthologies is their rootedness in the time in which they were composed and their function as a medium of correspondence (pp. 117–28), a social grooming tool between poets so to say, or as a venue for literary competition (p. 94). Talib proceeds by citing and translating a micro-anthology by Muḥammad Khalīl al-Murādī (d. 1206/1791) and the *maqāṭīʿ* collection on *mujūn* in al-Ḥijāzī's *Rawḍ al-ādāb,* where he shows how curating actually manifests itself and how the anthologist gathers single *maqāṭīʿ* or groups of *maqāṭīʿ* (pp. 94–116 and pp. 131–56).

The second part of the study is devoted to the term "epigram" in world literature and its application to pre-modern Arabic poetry. As outlined at the beginning of this review, commensurability is a major issue that scholars who take a comparative stance have to come to grips with more seriously. Therefore, Talib rightly questions the legitimacy of the term epigram in the title of the book, *How Do You Say "Epigram" in Arabic?,* because "the question itself contains epistemological, historical, and ultimately political subtexts" (p. 158). In the three chapters in this part Talib sets out to tackle these issues.

Chapter three ("Epigrams in the World") starts with a definition of the term, its epigraphic pre-history, and the contexts of its usages in the Hellenistic and Latin traditions (pp. 162–71), followed by a section on the early modern epigram as composed by European poets who "repurposed, accommodated, and grafted features of Greek and Latin epigram to vernacular epigrammatic forms to produce a literary hybrid that satisfied the ambitions of their renaissance project" (p. 176). Before Talib assesses the Western reading of short pre-modern Arabic poetry in chapter four, he addresses the parallel case of the Japanese *haiku,* which has also fallen victim to the Eurocentric attitude that tried to fit an alien type of literature into Western categories. Similar to short pre-modern Arabic poems, the Japanese *haiku* and *tanka* have been dismissed as essentially fragmentary, hackneyed, and intellectually defective—attributes that, on a more general level, were used to mark the East as a whole and that allegedly preclude a European-style "genius."

Chapter four ("Hegemonic Presumptions and Atomic Fallout") returns to pre-modern Arabic poetry and illustrates how modern and contemporary scholarship (mis-)treated it. This attitude towards Arabic poetry goes back to a tendency that long prevailed in modern scholarship, namely to see Islamic civilization as an "unimportant, but essential, intermediary between the Classical Greek (and

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to a lesser extent, Roman) tradition and what Europe calls its renaissance and enlightenment" (p. 184). As a consequence, the short Arabic poem has generally been reduced to a Latinate understanding as satiric or invective verse in the style of Martial (p. 186). In other cases, the term epigram was used to describe the Arabic *qiṭʿah* ("piece, fragment") which is an ancient term used as an antithesis to *qaṣīdah.* The term *qiṭʿah* denotes short poems or poems with only one theme, distinguishing it from the term *maqṭūʿ,* which acquired a special, generic status in the period Talib focuses on. It would have strengthened Talib's case positing a *maqāṭīʿ* genre if he had examined the differences between the *qiṭʿah* and the *maqṭūʿ* earlier in the first part of his study. Instead, he prefers to consider the term *qiṭʿah* and its uses much later in his work (p. 194 sqq.) without explaining in detail what made the poetry of Ibn Lankak, an Abbasid poet who wrote a considerable number of short poems (d. ca. 360/970), for example, so different from the *maqāṭīʿ* he examined.

A large portion of chapter four deals with two opposing currents in studies of Arabic poetry: the age-old Orientalist *Weltanschauung* that Arabic poetry is atomistic by nature and the opposing revisionist view of organic unity that spread in the post-colonial era (p. 187 sqq.). Talib concludes the chapter by expressing his discontent over how much Western concepts still influence the way short premodern Arabic poetry is presented today, even in the recent entry on "Epigram 1. Classical Arabic" by Geert Jan van Gelder in the latest version of the *Encyclopaedia of Islam* (pp. 211–12).

In the last chapter ("Epigrams in Parallax") Talib calls for parallactic examination (following the concept of parallax by Karatani and Žižek) of short pre-Arabic poetry: if students of Arab literary history shift their point of observation, this may result not only in a new "subjective" view of a particular poem as "an independent, autonomous entity" (p. 220) but also in an ontological change in the poem itself. He says, "Poems that look and sound quite similar to soi-disant *maqāṭīʿ*-poems had existed for centuries before the emergence of this new genre and some of these older poems were reborn as *maqāṭīʿ*-poems simply by inhabiting a new generic context" (p. 220). Once you change your point of view on a given poem as part of specific contexts, it undergoes a substantial change of character and you are able to see old poems in a completely new light; you see them "reborn…in a new generic context," to use the author's words.

Talib does not organize his work in a linear manner. Accordingly, he declares the genre status of the poems at the beginning (p. 2) but does not treat the definition of genre he uses and why *maqāṭīʿ* fit in this definition until the end of the last chapter (pp. 216–21). Readers might be surprised by his decision, which, however, proves not to be a disservice to the persuasiveness of his theses as the understanding of the type of genre that is at play unfolds in the course of his work.

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Any *a priori* definition of genre would have implied the application of Western categorizations to non-Western concepts that Talib so carefully eschews.

The book is completed by an appendix that lists sources such as biographical dictionaries, *dīwān*s, anthologies, treatises, etc., in chronological order. Talib cites and translates passages in biographical notices, commendations, prefaces, titles, and chapter and rubric headings, where *maqāṭiʿ* and cognate terms are mentioned (pp. 223–63). Worthy of note is an annotated bibliography of unpublished sources (pp. 264–86). I spotted two misspellings of names: on page 143 and elsewhere it should not read Nūr ad-Din al-Asʿardī but al-Isʿirdī, and Ibn Khaṭīb Dāriyā should be Dārayyā (p. 141). Typos and other misspellings are few in number.

It should be clear by now that I highly recommend Talib's study as a major contribution to the history of pre-modern Arabic literature, especially as he pays heed to the Arabic *maqāṭiʿ* tradition in its own right. Talib adduces a multitude of published and unpublished sources and demonstrates that he is as knowledgeable about Arabic literature as he is about Western literature and literary theory. I cannot finish this review without commenting on the work of the publisher: even if the unquestionable value of this study can hardly be measured in pecuniary terms, the price of the volume ($135) is, to put it mildly, outrageous, especially if one considers that Brill obviously does not proofread the books it publishes and becomes more and more miserly with regard to print and paper quality.

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ء	ʾ	خ	kh	ش	sh	غ	gh	م	m
ب	b	د	d	ص	ṣ	ف	f	ن	n
ت	t	ذ	dh	ض	ḍ	ق	q	ه	h
ث	th	ر	r	ط	ṭ	ك	k	و	w
ج	j	ز	z	ظ	ẓ	ل	l	ي	y
ح	ḥ	س	s	ع	ʿ				
		ة	h, t (in construct)			ال	al-		

ـَ	a	ـُ	u	ـِ	i
ـً	an	ـٌ	un	ـٍ	in
آ	ā	ـُو	ū	ـِي	ī
ـَا	ā	ـُوّ	ūw	ـِيّ	īy (medial), ī (final)
ى	á	ـَو	aw	ـَي	ay
				ـَيّ	ayy

Avoid using apostrophes or single quotation marks for *ʿayn* and *hamzah*. Instead, use the Unicode characters ʿ (02BF) and ʾ (02BE).

Capitalization in romanized Arabic follows the conventions of American English; the definite article is always lower case, except when it is the first word in an English sentence or a title. The *hamzah* is not represented when beginning a word, following a prefixed preposition or conjunction, or following the definite article. Assimilation of the *lām* of the definite article before "sun" letters is disregarded. Final inflections of verbs are retained, except in pausal form; final inflections of nouns and adjectives are not represented, except preceding suffixes and except when verse is romanized. Vocalic endings of pronouns, demonstratives, prepositions, and conjunctions are represented. The hyphen is used with the definite article, conjunctions, inseparable prepositions, and other prefixes. Note the exceptional treatment of the preposition *li-* followed by the article, as in *lil-sultān*. Note also the following exceptional spellings: Allāh, billāh, lillāh, bismillāh, miʾah, and ibn (for both initial and medial forms). Words not requiring diacritical marks, though following the conventions outlined above, include all Islamic dynasties, as well as terms which are found in English dictionaries, such as Quran, sultan, amir, imam, shaykh, Sunni, Shiʿi, and Sufi. Common place-names should take the common spelling in American English. Names of archaeological sites should follow the convention of the excavator.

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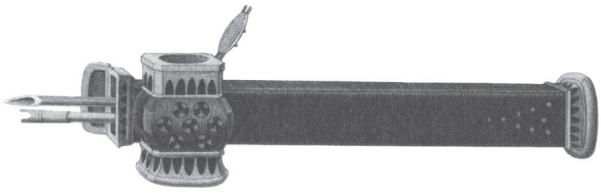

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