BLIGHTED BODIES AND PHYSICAL DIFFERENCE IN CAIRO, DAMASCUS AND MECCA, 1400-1550 CE

by

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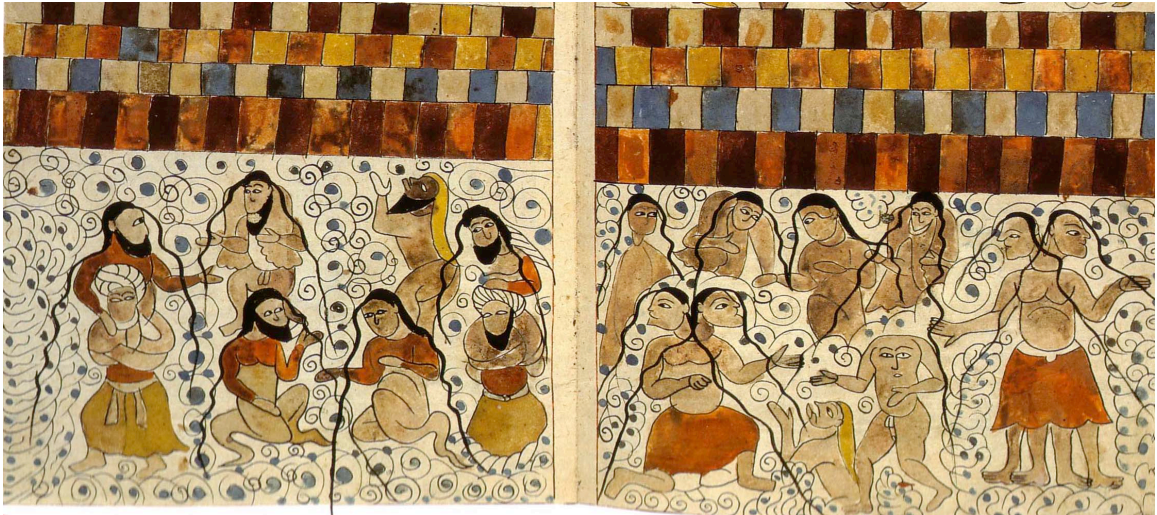
Frontispiece



Detail from an Egyptian or Syrian painting (1563),
in which anomalous bodies figure as signs of the Muslim apocalypse.

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This dissertation is dedicated to

Wednesday,

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Table of Contents

Dedication ii

Acknowledgements iii

List of Tables viii

List of Figures ix

List of Abbreviations x

Transliteration System xi

Abstract xii

Chapter 1 1

Introduction 1

Time and Place 1

Research Methodology and Theory 9

Literature Review 22

Adapting methods 29

Overview of ‘āhāt in Arabic literature, c. 800-1400 CE 31

Chapter 2 44

Juridical Sources 44

Islamic Discourses 47

Discourses on the blighted body in Qur’an and hadith 48

The Prophet Muḥammad’s Body 63

Chapter 3 67

Aestheticizing the Blighted Body 67

Balādhur 82

Al-Ḥijāzī's Literary Pursuits 91

Sexual Culture and Blighted Bodies 102

Chapter 4 111

The Body Recollected 111

Taqī al-Dīn al-Badrī al-Dimashqī 113

Memory in Literatures of Recollection 119

Reading Chapter Fourteen 122

Chapter 5 142

Cityscapes: Viewing the Body Politic 142

Domestic Spaces 148

'Āhāt in Late Mamluk-Early Ottoman Damascus 157

Conclusion 161

Chapter 6 162

Public Insults and Undoing Shame: 162

Censoring the Blighted Body 162

Ghība and Censorship 175

Honor, Shame and the Male Body 186

Chapter 7 190

Conclusion and Epilogue 190

Figures 196

Bibliography 208

Unpublished Primary Sources 209

Published Primary Sources 209

Secondary Sources 216

List of Tables

Table 1: Outline of al-Jāḥiẓ' *Kitāb al-burṣān* 35

Table 2: Outline of al-Badrī's *Ghurrat al-ṣabāḥ* 121

Table 3: Outline of Chapter Fourteen of al-Badrī's *Ghurrat al-ṣabāḥ*: 124

Table 4: Outline of Ibn Fahd's *Al-Nukat al-ẓirāf* 181

List of Figures

Figure 1: Connections Among the Six Scholars 197

Figure 2 : *Balādhur*, or *Semecarpus Anacardium Orientale*. 198

Figure 3: Detail of Map of Mamluk Cairo, showing al-Baybarsiyya and Darb al-Aṣfar.
.... 199

Figure 4: Salvador Dali, "Mahomet," 1959. 200

Figure 5: Muḥammad, Dante and Virgil 201

Figure 6: Virgil and Dante Behold Muḥammad 202

Figure 7: Angels Purify Muḥammad's Heart 203

Figure 8: Events Timeline 204

List of Abbreviations

AHR	*American Historical Review*
BEO	*Bulletin d'Etudes Orientales*
EI^2	*Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd edition
GAL	*Geschichte der Arabischen Literatur*
IJMES	*International Journal of Middle East Studies*
JA	*Journal Asiatique*
JESHO	*Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*
JRAS	*Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*
MSR	*Mamlūk Studies Review*
SI	*Studia Islamica*

Transliteration System

Consonants

	Arabic	Persian		Arabic	Persian
ب	b	b	ط	ṭ	ż
پ	---	p	ظ	ẓ	ẓ
ت	t	t	ع	ʿ	ʿ
	th	s̱	غ	gh	gh
ج	j	j	ف	f	f
چ	---	ch	ق	q	q
ح	ḥ	ḥ	ك	k	k
خ	kh	kh			
د	d	d	گ	---	g
ذ	dh	ẕ	ل	l	l
ر	r	r	م	m	m
ز	z	z	ن	n	n
س	s	s	ه	h	h
ش	sh	sh	و	w	v or u
ص	ṣ	ṣ	ى	Y	y
ض	ḍ	ḍ	ة	a or at	a or at
			ال	al- or ’l	al- or ’l

Vowels

Long	ا	ā	Diphthongs	وَ	Aw
	و	ū		يَ	Ay
Doubled	يّ	ī	Short	َ	a
	يِّ	iyy		ِ	i
	وّ	uww		ُ	u

Abstract

BLIGHTED BODIES AND PHYSICAL DIFFERENCE
IN CAIRO, DAMASCUS AND MECCA, 1400-1550 CE

by

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Co-Chairpersons: Kathryn Babayan and Michael David Bonner

This study investigates writings about "people of blights" (*ahl al-'āhāt* in Arabic) – a category that included physically different, disabled and ill individuals – that circulated among a group of Muslim male scholars connected by the social bonds of friendship and academic mentorship. Their writings challenged aesthetic and religious assumptions about "whole" bodies.

Chapter One reviews theories and historiographies of the body. Chapter Two explores the theme of *'āhāt* in religious and juridical sources. Chapter Three traces the early modern development of a body aesthetic that invited appreciation of blighted and disabled bodies, using the personal letters and poetry of the hadith specialist and writer Shihāb al-Dīn al-Ḥijāzī (d. 1471) to illustrate ways in which he realigned perceptions of his own body. Chapter Four reveals how the body is remembered in two anthologies assembled by al-Ḥijāzī's student, the Damascene Taqī al-Dīn al-Badrī (d. 1489), who compiled prose materials about the human eye and erotic verses about men with marked

bodies. Chapter Five turns to the relationship of al-Ḥijāzī with another of his Damascene students Yūsuf ibn‘Abd al-Hādī (d. 1503), who penned a biographical dictionary about hadith transmitters with blighted bodies. By shifting from a literary genre to a religio-legal one, the subject of marked bodies acquired a new legitimacy and gravity. This chapter also draws out Ibn ‘Abd al-Hādī’s close relationship with his most famous student, Ibn Ṭūlūn (d. 1546), a Damascene historian who wrote a book consoling people who were losing their eyesight. Finally, Chapter Six gives dimension to the close friendship of Ibn Ṭūlūn with Ibn Fahd (d. 1547), a Meccan historian who wrote a book that controversially exposed some of his contemporaries as being bald underneath their turbans. His work so angered these men that they seized the book from his home and washed the pages at the local mosque, dissolving the ink. He attempted to undo their shame (and his own) through public debates with the Meccan theologian Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī (d. 1567) about the lawfulness of revealing others’ physical blights and by ultimately re-writing the work, omitting the names of these bald men.

Chapter 1
Introduction

Time and Place

Upon reading the title of this study, a specialist in Islamicate history might find herself pulled between feelings of familiarity and unfamiliarity. On the one hand, urban histories are quite common in the field, but on the other hand, the subject matter and particularly the periodization do not conjure meaningful associations. As far as Islamicate history goes, this era is one of the lesser known. So why work within a period that spans the late Mamluk and early Ottoman periods in the central Arab lands? As one scholar has observed, there exists "a sharp dividing line between the rather exclusive fields of Mamluk and Ottoman studies, one to be crossed only on special occasions."[1]

To work trans-imperially may make it difficult to situate this study within a particular subfield of Middle Eastern history, but the temporal parameters of the study are adapted to ideas and connections that transcend political structures and flow easily across imperial and urban boundaries. Edward Said believed that "interesting work is most likely to be produced by scholars whose allegiance is to a discipline defined intellectually and not a 'field' like Orientalism defined either canonically, imperially, or

[1] Astrid Meier, "Perceptions of a New Era? Historical Writing in Early Modern Damascus," *Arabica* 51.4 (2004): 420.

geographically."[2] As I understand it, following intellectual concepts, like body symbolism and aesthetic theories or specific trends in literary and historical writing, allows human experience to emerge more forcefully than if one were to view history and experience as primarily defined by political dynasties or geography. Particularly in the context of the Mamluk sultanate and Ottoman empire, the average imperial subject's personal identification and involvement with political structures and court politics were tenuous at best. The population of Mamluk Cairo was particularly stratified, with a large gulf between military-political elites and the religious-intellectual establishment. Mamluks were men purchased from non-Muslim lands and imported to Cairo to serve as slave soldiers. A faction of mamluks revolted against and murdered the Ayyubid ruler Tūrānshāh in 647/1250, and subsequently established their own dynasty. This military class of mostly Turkic and Circassian men tended to convert to Islam shortly after arriving in Egypt, but the cultural differences between the rulers and their Arab Muslim, Christian and Jewish subjects were stark.

Individuals primarily constructed local identities through social relationships (i.e., family, tribe, hometown, sufi affiliation, profession, *madhhab*, household). Secondarily, they conjured up affiliations with the sultan. The sultan's household was still a prominent and powerful symbol with strong representational value. Given these complex relationships, what is it to construct an identity or a social network at this time? Do these bonds have a social purpose? Alan Bray's study of intimate male friendship in traditional English society from 1000 CE onward challenged a presumed separation between

[2] Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, [1994] 1979), 326.

sexuality and friendship. *The Friend* moves from the particular to the general, working "from the intimacy of families and friends … to that greater world beyond them in which they figured," showing how friendship intersected with sexuality, religious orders and political alliances.[3] Writing a history of friendship in the pre-modern era raises acute challenges because of the dearth of available sources. Michael Chamberlain's own reconstruction of personal affinities in Ayyubid and Mamluk Damascus illuminates the strategic concerns and ethical zones of scholarly friendships of the period. Unequal power relations between masters and disciples or teachers and students created situations of obligatory devotion, and relationships similar to these will arise in this dissertation, but other, more freely exchanged bonds of friendship thrived in these contexts too.

This dissertation investigates a chain of six male Sunni scholars who during the transition from Mamluk to Ottoman rule produced writings about individuals physically marked by "blights" (*'āhāt* in Arabic) – a category that included physically different, disabled and ill individuals.[4] Within this community of men connected by the social bonds of friendship and academic mentorship, discourses of blighted and disabled bodies circulated. Studies of discrete male friendship communities in the Islamicate world have revealed various determinants of social organization. Michael Bonner has usefully shown how networks of scholar-ascetics along the Arab-Byzantine frontier in the early Islamic period organized themselves around the principles of poverty, piety, prophetic mimesis and strict adherence to ritual purity laws. His study focuses on the efforts of key leaders

[3] Alan Bray, *The Friend* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 146.

[4] One definition of "blight" is 'an eruption on the human skin consisting of minute reddish pimples,' and it has application to an incident recounted in Chapter Three of this study. In general, however, I use this term in its more general sense as 'any cause of impairment, deterioration or decay.'

within these networks to construct particular identities as devout warrior-scholars for themselves, their friends and their disciples.[5] Relatedly, observers of erotic friendship among elite Safavid women sometimes viewed it as a disruptive social phenomenon, but participants of this love found expression for their love and angst through religious poetic imagery.[6]

By employing complementary theories of gender and disability, this study accesses how these six scholars presented blighted bodies in their writings – alternately as self, love objects, family members, literary subjects and pious authorities. These various vantage points highlight personal experience, and in many instances imbue the sources with frank expressions of pain, joy, love and confusion. All of these individuals and their writings about marked bodies shed light on bodily aesthetics, how categories of physical difference were typologized and valorized, the relationship between power, authority and rhetoric about the body, and the ways in which disability is narrated and represented. Some promising openings to knowledge about conceptual and historical bodies emerge from the interplay of disability, marginality and textual communities. I will pay close attention to the lives and experiences of authors and scribes, finding connections within an author's corpus of works, examining the specific cultural and social milieu at the time of writing and seeking archival affinities beyond discrete city borders. The archive for this period also includes non-narrative texts and material culture,

[5] Michael Bonner, *Aristocratic Violence and Holy War: Studies in the Jihad and the Arab-Byzantine Frontier* (New Haven: American Oriental Society, 1996), 107-34.

[6] Kathryn Babayan, "'In Spirit We Ate of Each Other's Sorrow': Female Companionship in Seventeenth-Century Safavi Iran," in *Islamicate Sexualities: Translations across Temporal Geographies of Desire*, eds. Kathryn Babayan and Afsaneh Najmabadi (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008).

and some of these sources, like Ottoman cadastral registers for mid-sixteenth-century Damascus, ink drawings and miniature paintings, will be integrated into the analysis.

This study connects male friendship in select Arab territories of the Mamluk and Ottoman Empires and histories of the disabled body. This project brings together 150 years of Islamicate literary and social history spanning two empires. It is an investigation of the lives, relationships and travels of six male Muslim scholars, drawing on their personal letters, (auto)biographies, travel narratives, homoerotic poetry, polemical tracts and historical and theological writings on marked and disabled bodies. This sizeable corpus of material from late-Mamluk and early-Ottoman Arab lands have yet to be synthesized and analyzed together for their historical insights on the body and the role of friendship in circulating ideas. By using the tropes of travel and mobility to investigate circulating discourses of physical difference and disability among scholarly communities, I aim to emphasize the diffusion of disability discourses transregionally and transimperially. As the North African social historian Ibn Khaldūn (d. 808/1406) remarked:

> Traveling in quest of knowledge is absolutely necessary for the acquisition of useful knowledge and perfection, through meeting authoritative teachers (shaykhs) and having contact with (scholarly) personalities.[7]

Travel, movement and circulation were central to the academic lives of early modern Muslim scholars, but were also instrumental in propagating and spreading ideologies. These men's writings challenged certain religious categories, and I argue, in part, that the centrality of physiognomic categories in Islamic theology and jurisprudence

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[7] Ibn Khaldūn, *The Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History*, trans. Franz Rosenthal (New York: Pantheon Books, 1958), 3:308.

made anomalous bodies threatening to notions of piety and religious authority. All the same, within this embracive community of men connected by the social practices of friendship and academic mentorship, physically marked people functioned as selves, lovers, family members, literary subjects and pious authorities. By analyzing religious and social perspectives of this history, I reveal the thick intertwining of identity and disability in the narratives of these subjectivized bodies. The most signifant findings are the interconnection of textual and intellectual communities, the discursive preoccupation with conceptions of the body and the substance of religious and moral debates about writing marked bodies. All of these vignettes coverge to push the historian into reconsidering how ideas about the body traveled over time and space, and they all do so without privileging official archives.

The most famous figure in this study, the historian Ibn Ṭūlūn (d. 933/1546), who lived in Damascus as a subject of both Mamluk and Ottoman rule, had little documented response to the transition of empire.

> The occupation of his hometown by the Ottoman Sultan Selīm (r. 918-26/1512-1520) in 922/1516 does not seem to have represented a break. … In his writings he only mentioned this event in passing and did not attach much importance to it. Nor does the transition of power seem to have been detrimental to his career.[8]

Though Ibn Ṭūlūn was able to de-emphasize the importance of an imperial transition and still earn a reputation as a formidable historian, by setting the temporal parameters of this study at 1400 and 1550, I am obliged to take on the political discontinuity in the final

[8] Stephen Conermann, "Ibn Ṭūlūn (d. 955/1548): Life and Works," *MSR* 8.1 (2004): 119. Ibn al-'Imād claimed that Ibn Ṭūlūn died on 11 or 12 Ramaḍān 953/1546, and this date has been generally accepted, though Conermann notes in his article (page 120, fn. 71) that Sharaf al-Dīn Mūsá ibn Ayyūb (d. 1000/1590) recorded his death year as 955/1548.

years of the Mamluk sultanate, during the Ottoman takeover in 1517 and afterwards through Ottoman establishment of rule. The archives do illuminate many interactions between empire and subject, and when appropriate, these will be brought to bear on the present study. Historical context will be integrated into the narratives and analyses of this dissertation. Still, I aim to de-emphasize the role of empire and political history as salient influences on everyday attitudes and individual lives.

In spite of these major political changes, patterns of population distribution and trends in resettlement in the region remained fairly constant. The Ottomans took regular census counts, known as cadastral registers, in Anatolia and the provinces of Syria, Iraq, Egypt and the Hijaz (western Arabia). Intercity migration, itinerancy and travels in pursuit of knowledge do not appear to have altered populations trends significantly. Such natural phenomena as earthquakes, plagues, droughts and floods affected migration more.

The Specter of Decline

The judgment that the late medieval-early modern Arab world was marked by cultural and intellectual decline looms large over this study.[9] Only Mamluk architecture and astronomical innovations have been judged culturally and scientifically valuable by most modern critics. Arabic-language literary and historical production has been judged qualitatively and quantitatively disappointing.[10] Some scholars have argued that this false perception stems from a greater academic focus on Ottoman Turkish, Safavid and

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[9] Nabil Matar, "Confronting Decline in Early Modern Arabic Thought," *Journal of Early Modern History* 9.1-2 (2005): 51-78.

[10] *Anthology of Islamic Literature from the Rise of Islam to Modern Times,* ed. James Kritzeck (Chicago: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1964), 260; Husain Haddawy, "Introduction," in *The Arabian Nights*, trans. Husain Haddawy (New York: W.W. Norton, 1990), xiii; Pierre Cachia, *Arabic Literature: An Overview* (New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2002), 103, 123; Thomas Bauer, "Mamluk Literature: Misunderstandings and New Approaches," *MSR* 9.2 (2005): 105-32.

Mughal cultural productions than from an actual decline.[11] Since Arabic was the language of Islamic studies, philosophy, science and was often used by Ottoman prose writers, Arabic texts from the Mamluk and Ottoman periods occupied a privileged place in Ottoman Turkish literary culture, as evidenced by the "large amounts of manuscripts … transferred to Istanbul [from the conquered territories]. Out of the 14,500 titles recorded in Ḥājjī Xalīfa's bibiolographical dictionary, 95% have been estimated to be in Arabic."[12] In spite of such evidence for the prominence of Arabic literary production in the early modern Islamicate world, the reputation of Mamluk literary scholarship as being subpar even persisted in the early modern period. Leo Africanus (d. ca. 1550) said of the residents of Cairo,

> many dedicate themselves to legal studies, few to literary ones. Even though the schools are always full of students, there is only ever a small number of them who take advantage of the education.[13]

In major urban centers of learning, students were not applying their educations to the furtherance of literature and learning.

A minor argument of this dissertation will be that literary output changed in form and focus at this time, but did not necessarily decline. As a result of this shift, personal travel accounts, autobiographies, anthologies, and chronicles so studded with personal events and reflections that portions of them seem like diaries were gaining more

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[11] *Night and Horses and the Desert: An Anthology of Classical Arabic Literature*, ed. Robert Irwin (New York: Anchor Books, 1999); Roger Allen, *An Introduction to Arabic Literature* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

[12] Gottfried Hagen, "Arabic in the Ottoman Empire," *Encyclopedia of Arabic Language and Linguistics*, ed. Kees Versteegh (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2006).

[13] Jean Léon l'Africain, *Description de l'Afrique*, ed. and trans. Alexis Epaulard (Paris: Adrien-Maisonneuve, 1956), 2:514.

prominence on the literary landscape.[14] Histories sponsored by rulers and commissioned by the wealthy became less common, as compared to ‘Abbasid trends of state-sponsored chronicles. The relationship of the writer to his environment became less detached and fixed. The historical subject was becoming less of an object to be observed, as historians understood their role in history as more participatory. Adopting a more self-reflexive stance, historians and biographers began inserting their own life stories into their works. For instance, without explanation or introduction al-Sakhāwī included an entry about himself in his biographical dictionary *Al-Ḍaw' al-lāmi‘*.[15] Two of the scholars in the chain of friends to be examined here, Yūsuf ibn ‘Abd al-Hādī (d. 909/1503) and Ibn Ṭūlūn (d. 953/1546), wrote known autobiographies. Ibn ‘Abd al-Hādī inserted an autobiographical entry into his *Manāqib Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal*, but this work has not been recovered, and Ibn Ṭūlūn's autobiography *Al-Fulk al-mashḥūn* covers his own life from birth to mid-life.

Research Methodology and Theory

Fundamental to post-modernist and post-structuralist debates about reproductions of knowledge, culture and behavior is the disavowal of any particular forms of these categories as natural or inherent to the human condition. Identities (gendered, racial, imperial, religious) are understood to be performative; discourses are ultimately constructed; and these illusory knowledges produce and perpetuate norms maintained by the internalization and performance of these societal norms. As Michael Taussig

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[14] See *Interpreting the Self: Autobiography in the Arabic Literary Tradition*, ed. Dwight Reynolds (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 2001); George Makdisi, "The Diary in Islamic Historiography: Some Notes," *History and Theory* 25.2 (May 1986): 173-185; and Meier, "Perceptions."

[15] Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Sakhāwī, *Al-Ḍaw' al-lāmi‘li-ahl al-qarn al-tāsi‘*, (Cairo: Dār Maktaba Qudsī, 1935), 8:2-32.

observes, the insight of social constructionism should be an appeal for researchers to ask further questions of this phenomenon. "… [W]hat was nothing more than an invitation, a preamble to investigation has, by and large, been converted instead into a conclusion. … Nobody was asking what's the next step? … To adopt Hegel, the beginnings of knowledge were made to pass for actual knowing."[16] Theorists and historians of disability and gender have extended discussions of constructionism to include questions of subject formation, liminality and reactions against constructionism. How has the body been used as a category of historical and anthropological analysis? What methods have scholars deployed in studying the body? How have different researchers used particular notions of the body to understand certain histories and to what effect? How have the analytics of disability and gender been used to form integrated body theories? And finally, how can these findings be brought to bear on this project?

Because the questions one poses while modeling theories necessarily shape the formulation of the theory, the notion of a neutral theory is dangerously misleading. Homi Bhabha has written of "the phobic myth of the undifferentiated whole white body,"[17] which undergirds colonial relations and discourses. This "myth" applies just as equally to Western theories and aesthetics about the body. Mbala Nkanga has shown how Jean Rouch and Jean Genet's cinematic works engage the black body as a subject that "has control over the message it is transmitting to the onlookers or the audience" and "as the repository of emotions and senses, of creative awareness, as opposed to the subjugated

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[16] Michael Taussig, *Mimesis and Alterity: A Particular History of the Senses* (New York: Routledge, 1993), xvi.

[17] Homi Bhabha, "Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse," in *The Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 92.

and silent bodies exhibited as freaks for ethnological curiosity in Europe in the 18th and 19th, and early 20th centuries."[18] Reactions to these films were mixed, but the disruption they caused to settled notions about the places of white and black bodies were undeniable and profound. The assumptions of particular norms influenced the direction of body theories, and those theories were unsettled by questions related to various categories of difference, like disability, gender, race and religious affiliation.

Although Emile Durkheim is remembered more for his sociological insights than his work with body theories, his *Elementary Forms of Religious Life* made important contributions to the field by illuminating human social practices and drawing links between social and bodily practices. Looking at the religious and ritual practices of Abrahamic faiths, he envisioned divinity as a projection of not only human imagination, but also of human selves. God, he argued, was created and sustained through collective physical rituals; He was made in the image of man. The male body is presumed to be the quintessentially unmarked body, normative that is divinized. The project of simultaneously normalizing and exalting the male body through theological doctrine has had profound implications for social and gender structures.

Marcel Mauss expanded on Durkheim's insights and integrated them with Robert Hertz' work on death rituals.[19] Hertz had collapsed the religious polarity between the

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[18] Mbala Nkanga, "Aestheticization of the Sentient Black Body: Jean Rouch and Jean Genet," in *The Black Body Project*, eds. S. Jackson, F. Demissie and M. Goodwin (University of South Africa Press, forthcoming), 2, 28.

[19] Marcel Mauss, "Body Techniques," in *Sociology and Psychology* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978 [1935]).

sacred and profane and explored their equivalences.[20] What happens when the sacred is profane, as in the case of dead bodies? Mauss applied this method to individual human and collective social bodies and proposed that they were so intimately connected that they could not be meaningfully or usefully separated by social theorists. These continuities between the individual and the collective had major implications for personal identity and behavior.

Kantorowicz analyzed medieval European political theory to show that of all the various ways kingship was conceived in European contexts (e.g., law-centered, polity-centered or man-centered), there was continuity among them to the effect that "[t]he King's Two Bodies thus form one unit indivisible, each being fully contained in the other."[21] Even a deputy of Queen Elizabeth noted that these two bodies consisted of "the Body natural and the Body politic[, which] are not distinct, but united, and as one Body."[22] Death was the only physical condition that abrogated this unity, a contingency that heightened the importance of the ways in which the royal body inscribed monarchical authority in medieval Europe. Kantorowicz' theoretical insights have inspired further research into historical conceptions of the sovereign's body, which will be brought to bear on our analyses of the Prophet Muḥammad and the Muslim caliphs who serve as models for comparing representations of Muḥammad.

Just as Kantorowicz developed the idea of the royal body as the embodied metaphor of the polity, so too did Mary Douglas derive the ideas about the body as a

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[20] Robert Hertz, *Death and the Right Hand* (Glencoe, Illinois: Free Press, 1960 [1909]).

[21] Ernst H. Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Medieval Political Theology* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957), 9.

[22] Ibid., 12.

metaphor through her studies of ritual.[23] She advanced the theory that notions of ritual purity were just as much about the individual body as they were about the social body. Taboo and pollution established symbolic boundaries that regulated community relations. For instance, the sexual activity of a menstruating woman is closely observed in the Jewish and Islamic traditions – an instance of physical conditions determining one's ambit of social circulation. In Middle Eastern historical and anthropological literature, studies about ritual purity have proliferated, and the authors have mostly situated their analyses within Douglas's classic framework of pollution and taboo.[24]

Michel Foucault shifted theoretical focus from the ontological body to the discursive/symbolic body, proposing the enormously influential theory that notions about the body are culturally constructed. Sexuality, gender and disability, for example, were categories of physical difference that were shaped by such things as founding myths, religious affiliation, commercial advertising, personal biases and medical discourses. Such binaries as those of homosexual and heterosexual, male and female, disabled and able-bodied were contested and problematized. According to Foucault, history's

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[23] Mary Douglas, *Natural Symbols: Explorations in Cosmology* (New York: Vintage Books, 1973) and her *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (New York: Praeger, 1966).

[24] See M.E. Combs-Schilling, *Sacred Performances: Islam, Sexuality, and Sacrifice* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989); Saul Olyan, *Rites and Rank: Hierarchy in Biblical Representations of Cult* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), esp. chapter 4 "Qualified Body: The Dyad Whole/Blemished"; Olyan, *Disability in the Hebrew Bible: Interpreting Mental and Physical Differences* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Marion Holmes Katz, *Body of Text: The Emergence of the Sunni Law of Ritual Purity* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2002); and Brannon Wheeler, "Touching the Penis in Islamic Law," *History of Religions* 44.2 (2004): 89-119 [reprinted as Chapter 2 of his *Mecca and Eden: Ritual, Ethics, and Territory in Islam* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006)].

obligation is "to expose a body totally imprinted by history and the process of history's destruction of the body."[25]

Offering new perspectives on the role of the individual in larger society, Michel Foucault and Pierre Bourdieu opened a new focus on bodily particularities "at the level of individuals, bodies, gestures and behaviour."[26] Social control begins at the level of the body: be it via the panoptic surveillance of authority or the ways in which discipline regulates the actions of the body. The biopolitical subject so prominent in Foucauldian theory becomes subject to "a 'political anatomy', which was also a 'mechanics of power' … that defined how one may have a hold over others' bodies, not only so that they may do what one wishes, but so that they may operate as one wishes, with the techniques, the speed and the efficiency that one determines."[27]

Bourdieu too examined the influence of experience and physical practice on constructions of culture, though his object of analysis was not disciplinary, penal culture. He writes:

> The essential part of the modus operandi which defines practical mastery is transmitted in practice . . . without attaining the level of discourse. The child imitates no "models" but other people's actions. Body *hexis* speaks directly to the motor function, in the form of a pattern of postures that is both individual and systematic . . . [and] charged with a host of social meanings and values.[28]

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[25] Michel Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy and History," in *The Foucault Reader,* ed. Paul Rainbow (New York: Pantheon, 1984), 148.

[26] Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison,* trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Penguin Books, 1977), 27.

[27] Ibid., 138.

[28] Pierre Boudieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, trans. Richard Nice (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 87-88.

Practice surpasses discourse as the primary mode of communicating culture. Cultural difference is most easily recognized in gestures, rather than in discursive practices.

Homi Bhabha also linked the discursive body with the experienced one, using John Berger's writings about immigrants to illustrate this connection.

> They [immigrants] watch the gestures made and learn to imitate them … the repetition by which gesture is laid upon gesture, precisely but inexorably, the pile of gestures being stacked minute by minute, hour by hour is exhausting. The rate of work allows no time to prepare for the gesture. The body loses its mind in the gesture. How opaque the disguise of words.[29]

Corporeal movements substitute for language. The physical labor of imitating gestures projects life into the description so that the reader can visualize the activity. Mimicry is enacted (writ) on the body, and the act of marginalization is physically performed, though it is transformed through language.

Judith Butler works in the phenomenological school of anthropology, which emphasizes how "the world is produced through the constituting acts of subjective experience."[30] The key to understanding existence by way of the expression and materialization of ideas, identities and beliefs through acts. Butler extended Bourdieu's theories about the (re)production of culture through daily practice to analyze how the gendered body is understood. The mimicry of particular gestures that Bourdieu described in approximating a certain identity mirrors the process of constructing gender. According to Butler,

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[29] Cited in Homi Bhabha, "DissemiNation: Time, Narrative and the Margins of the Modern Nation," in *The Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 165.

[30] Judith Butler, "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory," in *Performing Feminisms: Feminist Critical Theory and Theatre*, ed. Sue-Ellen Case (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990), 273.

> gender is in no way a stable identity or locus of agency from which various acts proceede [sic]; rather, it is an identity tenuously constituted in time – an identity instituted through a *stylized repetition of acts*. Further, gender is instituted through the stylization of the body and, hence, must be understood as the mundane way in which bodily gestures, movements, and enactments of various kinds constitute the illusion of an abiding gendered self.[31]

Her union of gender- and performance-centered scholarship repositioned the human body as historical subject and not merely object.[32]

Elaine Scarry explored the relationship between mind and body, suggesting how scholars can understand abstractions like thought, pain and language as inhering in the body, and therefore as being embodied themselves. Because they do not originate outside the body, body theories must be able to account for these abstractions. In *The Body in Pain* Scarry accepted Bourdieu's formulations of daily practice, arguing (among other things) that one's understandings of political, social and cultural modes/structures reside in the body – "its [the body's] mute and often beautiful insistence on absorbing into its rhythms and postures the signs that it inhabits a particular space at a particular time."[33] To disrupt these rhythms and postures, say through torture, is to break down other embodied practices, like language. Body, language and world perceptions are all interrelated. Interrogating the suffering body in history requires the researcher to pose a new set of questions. Pain reorganizes a subject's worldview and ruptures his ability to express his experience through language. Scarry offered interesting analytical

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[31] Ibid., 270. Emphasis my own.

[32] Carrie Sandahl also unifies theories of body and social and dramatic performances in her investigations of disability. See especially *Bodies in Commotion: Disability and Performance,* eds. C. Sandahl and P. Auslander (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005).

[33] Elaine Scarry, *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 109.

frameworks within which a researcher can understand suffering and access a person's subjectivity, but Kathleen Canning proposed the theme of embodiment to integrate the Foucauldian discursive body with the material body. Embodiment as a category of analysis is less rigid than that of the body because it "encompasses moments of encounter and interpretation, agency and resistance."[34] It recognizes that the body is experienced and lived; it does not exist fully or meaningfully outside the realm of experience. In embodiment theory the corporeal is integrated with agency, identity and subjectivity, militating against "the presumed fixity of 'body'" and of constructed categories of physical difference, which undergird, for instance, Orientalist writings that dehumanize and generalize cultures and experiences.[35]

Barbara Duden used "the body as experience" as a framework for analyzing the interactions of eighteenth-century Eisenach women with Dr. Johann Storch, as recorded in his patient histories. This study, influenced by the Annales school, is an excellent example of how the historian can use embodiment to access the subjectivity of people in the past and to historicize human experience. There exists a psychological component to the body that emerged in her study. Duden constructed the body as lived, historical experience in her work, rather than as a fixed site of biological process. She identified the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as the period when medical professionals shifted from viewing the body as a totality to viewing it as an assemblage of discrete, interdependent systems. This new conceptualization of the body had major implications

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[34] Kathleen Canning, "The Body as Method? Reflections on the Place of the Body in Gender History," *Gender and History* 11 (1999): 505.

[35] Ibid., 506.

for viewing illness. There developed "an enormous gap between the sociocultural perception of personal impairment and the medical definition of deviance from a normative health."[36] Illness moved from being "a personal event in a human existence [to being] a deficiency in relation to a medically described norm, which for the most part cannot be experienced by the senses."[37] Duden's study explored women's ideas of their bodies' conditions, as interpreted and recorded by a male physician, before the institutionalization of medicine. What emerged was a sense of how women appreciated their bodies as more than physiological entities, but as situationally and experientially determined. Their narratives about their bodies were mediated through the language of Dr. Johann Storch, a man "[whose] most important function is symbolic. He was a mediator between the age's self-evident certainties and the age's flesh."[38] In a sense the negotiating work of Storch mirrored the task of the historian of performance as professional observer and interpreter of past lives, acts and experiences. The language of the historian links material and discursive realities of the past. As the historian's craft relates to bodies and suffering, one must be aware of how perceptions of pain inform one's subjectivity. As Duden wrote of the Eisenach women, "their bodies emerge as the *expression* of a suffering that is related only in oral form; it is an undescribed, undefined, undefinable body of which they speak."[39] Her description echoed "the virtual

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[36] Barbara Duden, *The Women Beneath the Skin: A Doctor's Patients in Eighteenth-Century Germany*, trans. Thomas Dunlap (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991), 19.

[37] Ibid., 30-31.

[38] Ibid., 184.

[39] Ibid., 182.

wordlessness of pain"[40] that Scarry evokes and analyzes in her own work. The significance of her choice of method lay in her challenges to the objectivity and normalcy of the medical gaze. Storch witnessed women menstruating from body lacerations. His pronouncements appear bizarre to a modern audience, which poses the question: to what extent has culture influenced informal and medical discourses about the body?

So, various researchers have challenged theoretical assumptions about the body that neglect or underemphasize the role gender plays in history. But how have disability theorists challenged the assumptions in these and other body theories? To return to Homi Bhabha's statement which opened this essay: to what extent do these theorists and researchers presume their subjects to be whole, male, white bodies? How do these theories accommodate bodies marked by different ranges of physical ability? Examining the particularities of disability has enabled me to see how body theories presume specific material conditions and categories of otherness and reproduce social norms about the body and its representations.

Michael Davidson and Tobin Siebers have written of the ways disability studies have repositioned and reconfigured knowledge about the body. If one can view gender and the body as constructed by culture and social conventions, then one should be comfortably able to regard disability and ability as constructed categories.

> If ability is socially and symbolically produced in the manner of race, ethnicity, gender, and sexuality, then we can no longer conceive of disability as individual physical or mental defect. The defect is located in the environments, institutions, languages, and paradigms of knowledge made inaccessible to people with disabilities, and we have a responsibility to remove it.[41]

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[40] Taussig, 26.

[41] Michael Davidson and Tobin Siebers, "Introduction," *PMLA* 120, 2 (2005): 499.

By shifting the definition of disability from a bodily affliction to a socially constructed phenomenon, the authors have de-emphasized this framing of the disabled body as object and have imagined the body and its constitutive parts as historical subjects that have values assigned to and narratives attributed to them. This frame also emphasizes the positionality of the "neutral" reader who is forced to reconsider his or her place in this complex production of knowledge and social norms.

Although David Hillman and Carla Mazzio do not begin from the position of disability theorists, they do propose imagining the body and its constitutive parts as historical subjects that have values assigned to and narratives attributed to them. The bodies in these narratives unwittingly find themselves enacting multiple identities, which is reminiscent of John Emigh's formulation that "this ontological juggling of self and other within a field marked by ambiguity and paradox is characteristic of theatre."[42]

Hillman and Mazzio challenge the presumed wholeness of the body by investigating how the body in early modern Europe was imagined as existing in parts – a condition they distinguish from the body in pieces, which possesses "the spectre of violence and disintegration."[43] The partitioned body appears more inclusive, encompassing as it does bodies segmented by mutilation, a viewer's truncated perspective, medical compartmentalization, etc. Although the authors do not refer explicitly to disability in their discussions, their writings are helpful for identifying

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[42] John Emigh, *Masked Performance: The Play of Self and Other in Ritual and Theatre* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996).

[43] David Hillman and Carla Mazzio, "Introduction: Individual Parts," in *The Body in Parts: Fantasies of Corporeality in Early Modern Europe*, eds. D. Hillman and C. Mazzio (New York: Routledge, 1997), xi.

disability research that treats the body as an object often isolates “afflicted” body parts. A blind individual, for instance, is reduced to her loss of sight, obscuring her subjective experience, and we never find out how she conceptualizes her blindness. The body part substitutes for the whole body. The “body as object” approach is problematic, but Hillman and Mazzio effectively theorize how one can read the body part as subject, and the body in parts is an entity as constructed as the whole body.[44]

Thus far, one can see how societal norms about the body are enacted and performed through the repetition of gestures, language and acts. From Durkheim’s notion of humans performing the image of God’s body to Davidson and Siebers’ argument that social convention creates and structures the category of disability, social performativity is implicit in all these theories. This form of indoctrination is subtle, as most would deny such performances as occurring “under duress,” as Butler puts it. This construction of gendered and ability-centered representations of the body is not limited to discursive significance, but also influences lived experience and personal behavior. The theoretical and practical worlds are inseparable in discussions about bodies. According to Kudlick, disability is fundamental to constructions of cultural knowledge and is central to human knowledge. [45] And the same could be said of gender. The body as a site of subject formation must be negotiated symbolically and materially – most usefully for our purposes here through the complementary lenses of gender and disability.

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[44] Ibid., xxiv.

[45] Catherine J. Kudlick, “Disability History: Why We Need Another ‘Other’,” *The American Historical Review* 108.3 (2003): 793.

Literature Review

Bodies in Islamicate and Near Eastern scholarship have been approached from various theoretical positions. More broadly conceived studies on the body, like Bedhioufi Hafsi and Malek Chebel's attempts to situate the Muslim body within colonial discourses, Fuad Khuri's close readings of Islamic source-texts to understand the contemporary "Islamic" body, and Traki Zannad-Bouchrara's investigation of bodies and space have tended to be presentist in scope and sociological or anthropological in method.[46] Hafsi and Zannad-Bouchrara are both French-educated Tunisian sociologists who have interrogated the effects of colonial domination on indigenous notions of the social and ritual bodies in Islamic North Africa. Khuri, an anthropologist, draws on Islamic foundational texts (Qur'an and hadith) to discern "body ideology" in the contemporary Arab-Islamic world, then reads the body as a system of semiotic signs. His method of using seventh-century texts to decode physical gestures, movements and postures for their universal meanings in Islamic culture has been critiqued as problematic.[47] Chebel, who is also an anthropologist, examines the anatomical and symbolic dimensions of the body in late 20th-century North Africa. Looking at vocabularies of the body, reproduction, individual body parts, death, body language, superstition and magic, he evokes the ways in which the body was lived, experienced and understood.

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[46] Hafsi, *Corps et traditions islamiques: divisions ontologiques et ritualités du corps* (Tunis: Noir sur Blanc, 2000); Chebel, *Le corps dans la tradition au Maghreb* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1984); Khuri, *The Body in Islamic Culture* (London: Saqi Books, 2001); Zannad-Bouchrara, *Symboliques corporelles et espaces musulmans* (Tunis: Cérès, 1984); and Anna Barska, "Ways of Understanding Body in the Maghreb," *Hemispheres* 21 (2006): 17-29.

[47] Madeline Zilfi, "Review of *The Body in Islamic Culture*," *MESA Bulletin* 39.2 (2005): 206-7.

General works on disability are less common, and the only monograph I am aware of, Fareed Haj's *Disability in Antiquity* (1970), is rather dated. This anecdotal survey of disablement caused by disease, armed conflict and corporal punishment summarizes much of this history, but advances no arguments about it. In spite of the title, the temporal range is 632 to 1258 CE in the central Islamic lands. Recent encyclopedic entries on bodies and disabilities frame methodological and historiographical information that has not been done in the seminal survey publication of Islamicate studies – the first two editions of *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*.[48] *The Encyclopaedia of the Qur'an* includes entries on specific body parts, illnesses and sense faculties.[49] Separate entries on disabilities and the female body appear in the *Encyclopedia of Women and Islamic Cultures,* and a brief article on disabilities is included in *Medieval Islamic Civilization: An Encyclopedia*.[50] Simply the fact of their inclusion in these works signals an important recognition of these topics as legitimate categories of academic inquiry. The survey of disability history in *EWIC* covers disabilities in the Qur'an, in medieval texts and in contemporary Islamic lands. Because the temporal scope of *MICAE* is narrower, its entry for disabilities treats the subject of disability more deeply. Interestingly, both articles only address conditions and illnesses that fall under contemporary legal definitions of disability as defined by civil rights and human rights groups. Blindness, deafness and

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[48] According to a November 9, 2006, communication from Everett Rowson, the forthcoming EI[3] will include entries on the body, sexuality and disability.

[49] See s.v. "Ears," "Eyes," "Face," "Feet," "Hand(s)," "Heart," "Womb," "Insanity," "Plagues" and "Hearing and Deafness."

[50] *Encyclopedia of Women and Islamic Cultures*, 1st ed., s.v. "Disabilities, Arab States," "Body: Female," "Science, Medicalization and the Female Body"; *Medieval Islamic Civilization: An Encyclopedia*, 1st ed., s.v. "Disabilities."

lameness, for instance, are discussed, but halitosis, walleyes, black skin and blue eyes are not mentioned as belonging to the same category of physical difference in the premodern Islamicate world. This omission is significant since a number of classical and postclassical Arabic texts name all these as categories as *'āhāt* (blights; sing. *'āha*). While encyclopedic entries can not be expected to cover every aspect of a subject, premodern Arab categorizations of physical difference are subtle enough that recognizing the particularities of classification would be fundamental to historicizing disabilities and bodies.

Specialists in Semitic and Indo-European literatures have looked at representations and discourses about the body.[51] Among historians of Islamicate literatures, only Sadan and Malti-Douglas have taken up the subject of disabled bodies, with Sadan specializing in Abbasid literature about physical defects and Malti-Douglas concentrating on blindness in the Mamluk period.[52] Art historians too have taken some interest in visual representations of human forms.[53] Scholars of the Qur'an and Islamic

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[51] See, for example, Mohammad Mokri, "Esthétique et lexique du corps humain dans la littérature classique iranienne," *JA* 291.1 (2003): 249-93 and 293.1 (2005): 245-356; and Esperanza Alfonso, "The Body, Its Organs and Senses: A Study of Metaphor in Medieval Hebrew Poetry of Praise," *Middle Eastern Literatures* 9.1 (2005): 1-22.

[52] Yusuf Sadan, *Al-Adab al-'arabī al-hāzil wa nawādir al-thuqalā': al-'āhāt wa al-masāwi' al-insānīya wa makānatuhā fī al adab al-rāqī* ('Akkā: Maktabat wa-Maṭba'at al-Sarūjī, 1983); Fedwa Malti-Douglas, "*Mentalités* and Marginality: Blindness and Mamluk Civilisation," in *The Islamic World from Classical to Modern Times: Essays in Honour of Bernard Lewis*, eds. C. Issawi, C. E. Bosworth, R. Savory and A. L. Udovitch (Princeton: Darwin Press, 1989), 211-37.

[53] See, for example, Rachel Milstein, *Miniature Painting in Ottoman Baghdad* (Costa Mesa, Calif.: Mazda Publishers, 1990); Eva Baer, *The Human Figure in Islamic Art: Inheritances and Islamic Transformations* (Costa Mesa, Calif.: Mazda Publishers, 2004); Emilie Savage-Smith, "Anatomical Illustration in Arabic Manuscripts," in *Arab Painting: Text and Image in Illustrated Arabic Manuscripts*, ed. Anna Contadini (London: I. B. Tauris, forthcoming).

law have employed bodies as lenses of analysis in studies of law, ritual and piety.[54] Around the same time as these studies emerged, two other specialists were focusing their research on the *disabled* body as an analytical category in classical and contemporary legal sources.[55] Ghaly expertly explores a number of theological principles and theological debates in the classical and post-classical eras on bodies and disability. Unfortunately, Rispler-Chaim was not familiar with Ghaly's major findings before publishing her own book, for in it she claims that

> in classical Islamic sources [she] could not identify any single general term that would combine all people with disabilities as a group. … It is only in contemporary literature that we find somewhat generalized terms, such as *ashab al-'ahat* or *dhawu al-'ahat* ('owners' or bearers of impairments, defects).[56]

Later in this chapter, I will explore the vocabulary of bodily difference in classical and post-classical Arabic sources and show that such terms did indeed exist at this time, making it possible to access disability in late medieval and early modern Islamicate history. In Islamicate historical studies, research on the body has focused on ritual bodies,[57] gendered bodies,[58] sexual bodies[59] and disabled/marked bodies.[60] Two fields that

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[54] See, for example, Baber Johansen, "The Valorization of the Human Body in Muslim Sunni Law," in *Law and Society in Islam* (Princeton: Markus Wiener, 1996), 71-112; Katz, *Body of Text*; Carmela Baffioni, "Bodily Resurrection in the *Iḫwān al-ṣafā'*," in *Philosophy and Arts in the Islamic World*, eds. U. Vermeulen and D. De Smet (Leuven: Peeters, 1998), 201-8; Saba Mahmood, *Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005); and Wheeler, Chapter 4 "Tombs of Giant Prophets" of *Mecca and Eden*.

[55] See Vardit Rispler-Chaim, *Disability in Islamic Law* (New York: Springer, 2006); Mohammad M. I. Ghaly, "Islam and Disability: Theological and Jurisprudential Perspectives" (Ph.D. diss., Leiden University, 2006) and his "Islam en Handicap: theologisch perspectiven," *Theologisch Debat* 2.3 (2005): 20-3.

[56] Rispler-Chaim, 3.

[57] See, for example, Wheeler, "Touching the Penis"; Megan Reid, "Exemplars of Excess: Devotional Piety in Medieval Islam, 1200-1450 CE" (Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 2005); Shahzad Bashir, "Shah Isma'il and the Qizilbash: Cannibalism in the Religious History of Early Safavid Iran," *History of Religions* 45.3 (2006): 234-56; Bashir, *Bodies of God's Friends: Corporeality and Sainthood in Sufi Islam* (forthcoming); Scott Kugle, "The Heart of Ritual is the Body: Anatomy of an Islamic Devotional Manual

are underdeveloped are ethics and archaeology. Leslie Peirce has described what could be a promising opening into the field: two tenth/sixteenth-century Ottoman Turkish works that link morality to specific body parts and even certain illnesses.[61] Archaeologists of disease and disability have recovered considerable information about many premodern societies, though work on the Middle East could be increased. One intriguing finding was unearthed during an excavation of an Israeli grave near the presumed site of Jesus's baptism. The third/ninth-century burial site contained the remains of thirty-four Nubian men and women, many of whose skeletons showed evidence of "tuberculosis, leprosy and facial disfigurement. Those individuals, attracted to the site, traveled enormous distances in hope of washing away their illness."[62] Just as the study of disability offers

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of the Nineteenth Century," *Journal of Ritual Studies* 17.1 (2003): 42-60; Scott Kugle, *Sufis and Saints' Bodies: Mysticism, Corporeality, and Sacred Power in Islam* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007).

[58] See, for example, Leila Ahmed, "Arab Culture and Writing Women's Bodies," *Feminist Issues* 9.1 (1989): 41-55; Paula Sanders, "Gendering the Ungendered Body: Hermaphrodites in Medieval Islamic Law," in *Women in Middle Eastern History: Shifting Boundaries in Sex and Gender*, eds. Nikki R. Keddie and Beth Baron (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991).

[59] See, for example, Abdelwahab Bouhdiba, *Sexuality in Islam*, trans. Alan Sheridan (London: Saqi Books, 1998); Ze'ev Maghen, *Virtues of the Flesh: Passion and Purity in Early Islamic Jurisprudence* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2005); and Dror Ze'evi, *Producing Desire: Changing Sexual Discourse in the Ottoman Middle East, 1500-1900* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006).

[60] See, for example, Michael Dols, *Majnūn: The Madman in Medieval Islamic Society* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992); Nicholas Mirzoeff, "Framed: The Deaf in the Harem," in *Deviant Bodies: Critical Perspectives on Difference in Science and Popular Culture*, eds. Jennifer Terry and Jacqueline Urla, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), 49-77; Boaz Shoshan, "The State and Madness in Medieval Islam," *IJMES* 35 (2003), 329-40; Sara Scalenghe, "The Deaf in Ottoman Syria, 16th-18th Centuries," *Arab Studies Journal* 13.1 (2005): 10-25; and J. W. Frembgen, "Honour, Shame, and Bodily Mutilation: Cutting Off the Nose Among Tribal Societies in Pakistan," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 16 (2006): 243-60.

[61] Leslie Peirce, *Morality Tales: Law and Gender in the Ottoman Court of Aintab* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 178.

[62] Orit Shamir and Alisa Baginski, "Medieval Mediterranean Textiles, Basketry, and Cordage Newly Excavated in Israel," in *Towns and Material Culture in the Medieval Middle East* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2002), 152. Also of interest is Piers Mitchell's publication on syphilis in Mamluk Palestine: "Pre-

openings into the history of Nubian Christian pilgrimage, healing and sacred spaces, so too does it have the potential to speak to a range of disciplinary questions and historical moments.

Historians of disability in the Middle East have begun incorporating into their own works insights from the debates of theorists and historians of the body and disability. Two major currents of thought that have been integrated into the scholarship are the recognition of the constructedness of conceptions of the body and the positioning of disabled people as historical subjects, not just objects of study. Scholars of the medieval and early modern Middle East have deployed various methods in studying the body as a category of historical and anthropological analysis, and with varying effects have used particular notions of the body to understand histories of disability. In his sweeping history of mental illness, or madness, in Islamicate societies of the ninth to sixteenth centuries, Michael Dols recognizes that the definitions and boundaries of sanity are culturally constructed. To understand culturally specific ideas about the body, Dols explores the ways mental illnesses were treated. As suggested by the title, Dols examines cases of *junūn*, which though an enormous category, does not include the many degrees and types of mental illness recognized in the Islamicate world. Stephan H. Stephan has produced what could be considered a companion piece to this work in which he explores the vocabularies of mental illness.[63] Dols systematically presents medical, religious and

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Columbian Treponemal Disease from 14th-Century AD Safed, Israel, and Implications for the Medieval Eastern Mediterranean," *American Journal of Physical Anthropology* 121.2 (2003): 117-24.

[63] Stephan H. Stephan, "Lunacy in Palestinian Folklore," *Journal of the Palestine Oriental Society* 5 (1925): 1-16, esp. 2-3.

magical cures of mental illness to show how each model presumes a particular attitude to the body. For instance, a medical model of cure presupposes that illness originates within the body, whereas a religious model is based on divine origin and control of bodily processes.

Nicholas Mirzoeff examines the writings of sixteenth-century Western European visitors to the Ottoman court and their impressions of deaf court members there.[64] Many associated deafness with eroticism, violence and degeneracy – linkages that speak more to the observers' attitudes than to the lives of the deaf courtiers and servants. Here, the deaf and their use of sign language are objects of a non-participant's gaze, and their subjectivity is obscured. Mirzoeff makes no use of Ottoman sources, making this article a problematic one for someone trying to access the lives of past court subjects. M. Miles points out these same limitations of Mirzoeff's study and in his own article emphasizes the social functions and lives of the deaf. Unfortunately, he is somewhat blocked by his own linguistic limitations, since he must depend on European sources for this information.[65]

Sara Scalenghe uses the analytics of disability and gender to arrive at a more integrated body theory for the early modern Ottoman Levant. By drawing on specific material conditions and categories of otherness (intersexuality, transgender identity, deafness, mental wellness and blindness), she shows how social norms and representations were reproduced in this period. Biographical dictionaries, poetry

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[64] Mirzoeff, 49-77.

[65] M. Miles, "Signing in the Seraglio: Mutes, Dwarfs and Jestures at the Ottoman Court 1500-1700," *Disability & Society* 15 (2000): 115-34.

collections, physiognomic tracts, prose literature, legal opinions, hadith collections, local chronicles, travelogues, dictionaries make for a rich group of primary sources, many of which are still housed in manuscript collections in the United States, Europe and the Middle East.[66]

Adapting methods

Many of the body- and disability-related theories and methodologies employed in the studies previously under discussion have guided the conceptual moves that shape the coming chapters. In the second and third chapters of this dissertation, normative practices and conceptions of the male body in Islamic sources will be examined, drawing on the Prophet's body as a model for the perfectly marked form and thus the normative model of masculine physicality. Muslim theologians constructed his body as the ideal male form that was marked symbolically and physically. His marks are the proofs of his perfection. Against this figure of prototypical manhood, the conceptual category of blightedness was constructed during the formative period of Islam. The founder of one of the four Sunni schools of law not only defined the blighted body in contradistinction to the Prophet's prophet body, but ascribed negative moral qualities to it. Because the majority of the Mamluk population adhered to the Shāfiʿī legal rite, these pronouncements underlay and informed legal and popular discourses of blightedness. After a discussion of Qur'an and hadith, the chapter's analysis turns to the development in the early modern Arab world of a body aesthetic that invited appreciation of blighted and disabled bodies. The investigations of Durkheim and Mauss on the intersections of religion and body have

[66] Scalenghe, "Being Different."

revealed the nature of the conditioning influences of Abrahamic theology and religious practice on conceptions of the body, and their findings frame the methods used in Chapter Two.

The pronouncements of Hillman and Mazzio have informed much of the analysis in Chapter Four of this dissertation, in which I examine how the body is remembered in the anthologies assembled by al-Ḥijāzī's student the Damascene Taqī al-Dīn al-Badrī (d. 894/1489), who compiled prose materials about the human eye and erotic verses addressed to men with marked bodies. Al-Badrī studied under and befriended al-Ḥijāzī, a literary figure of considerable repute who provided him with some of the verses for his *Ghurrat al-ṣabāḥ* and wrote a flowery endorsement of the book. By reading the material through the lens of body part as subject, I analyze al-Badrī's undertaking of a reconfiguration of the blighted body in his anthologies. By assembling short poems that sexualized individual body parts with afflictions, al-Badrī (re)organized them to represent a novel male body, one whose every limb, organ and feature was blighted. Masculinity and maleness are reimagined through the contested analytics of sexuality and physical difference.

Questions probing the relationships between science, medicalization and the body structure Chapter Five, which turns to another one of al-Ḥijāzī's students, the Damascene scholar Yūsuf ibn ʻAbd al-Hādī (d. 909/1503), who penned a biographical dictionary about hadith transmitters with diseased and marked bodies. Ibn ʻAbd Hādī and his family experienced illness, plague and physical differences firsthand, which informed his tract on hadith specialists with *ʻāhāt*. By shifting from a literary genre to a religio-legal one in this study, the subject of marked bodies acquires a new legitimacy and gravity for

Mamluk audiences. The Islamic genre also raises different sets of concerns. The audience is presumed to be concerned with moral codes, stability of gender and marital relations and the maintenance of specific social conventions. Another focus is on Ibn ʿAbd al-Hādī's close relationship with his most famous student Ibn Ṭūlūn (d. 953/1546), a Damascene historian who wrote a book consoling people who were losing their eyesight.

Working within the intellectual frames of language, gesture and materialization of ideas through scriptive acts, I explore in Chapter Six religious polemic surrounding blighted bodies, particularly one man's attempt to understand religious and social constructions of the blighted body and to break silences around this symbolic figure. The central figures of this chapter are friends Ibn Ṭūlūn and Ibn Fahd, a Meccan historian who wrote a book on the same theme as Ibn ʿAbd al-Hādī's, except Ibn Fahd controversially exposed some of his contemporaries as being bald underneath their turbans. By making these men's secrets public, he incurred the wrath of the local elites. He attempted to undo their shame (and his own) through public debates with the Meccan theologian Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī (d. 974/1567) about the lawfulness and appropriateness of revealing others' physical faults and by ultimately re-writing the work, omitting most of the names of his contemporaries. Language is controlled to maintain the marginal status and the association of shame with blightedness.

Overview of **ʿāhāt** *in Arabic literature, c. 800-1400 CE*

In classical Arabic literature, one finds frequent incidental mentions of physical traits and blight, particularly as identifiers in personal names. Physical difference seems less arbitrary a social category once one realizes just how central physiognomy and markers of difference could be in defining a person in the medieval and early modern

Islamic world. A person with a noticeable physical difference often incorporated this attribute into his very name. As Annemarie Schimmel has noted, "the *kunya* [patronymic] reveals intellectual or moral qualities or defects, physical peculiarities. … A great number of bodily peculiarities and defects are expressed in *alqāb* [nicknames]."[67] A person's being nicknamed for his physical attributes provides some clue as to how central the body was to subject formation and how prominent it was in the social imagination.

A Thousand and One Nights, an iconic work of Arabic literature, includes stories about hunchbacks that take place in Mamluk Cairo.[68] Hilary Kilpatrick has noted that in the *Kitāb al-Aghānī* (Book of Songs), Abū l-Faraj al-Iṣbahānī (d. 356/967) "hardly ever refers to the physical appearance of his poets. If he does so, the aspects which interest him are skin colour, partial or complete blindness, lameness and extreme handsomeness. … Of the physical characteristics the most directly relevant to a poetic career is blindness."[69] In addition to these examples, narrativized and unnarrativized lists of people with *'āhāt* and lists of physical blights appear in geographies, encyclopedias, biographical works, literary prose and poetry. It is to these lists that this overview will be devoted. Exploring human difference in the medieval Islamicate world means entering into a very differently ordered world where signifiers familiar to 21st-century North American audiences are unfamiliar. My own experience has been strikingly similar to

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[67] Annemarie Schimmel, *Islamic Names* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh Press, 1989), 50, 54. For representative examples of such *alqāb*, see M. A.-C. Barbier de Meynard, "Surnoms et sobriquets dans la littérature arabe," *JA* 9 (March-April 1907): 173-244.

[68] Robert Irwin, "'Alī al-Baghdādī and the Joy of Mamluk Sex," in *The Historiography of Islamic Egypt (c. 950-1800)*, ed. Hugh Kennedy (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2001), 54.

[69] Hilary Kilpatrick, "Abū l-Farağ's Profile of Poets: A 4th/10th Century Essay at the History and Sociology of Arabic Literature," *Arabica* 44.1 (1997): 105.

Michel Foucault's reaction after reading the following taxonomic classifications in a Chinese encyclopedia.

> Animals are divided into: (1) belonging to the Emperor, (b) embalmed, (c) tame, (d) sucking pigs, (e) sirens, (f) fabulous, (g) stray dogs, (h) included in the present classification, (i) frenzied, (j) innumerable, (k) drawn with a very fine camelhair brush, (l) *et cetera*, (m) having just broken a water pitcher, (n) that from a long way off look like flies.[70]

Foucault laughed, marveling at the myriad ways humans have ordered their environs and constructed paradigms of cultural knowledge. Our exploration of taxonomies of human difference begins in third/ninth-century Iraq with a list striking for its simplicity and unfamiliarity.

The Kufan *akhbārī* (relater of histories and reports) al-Haytham ibn ʻAdī (d. between 206/821 and 209/824) organized a mostly unnarrativized list of sixty-one noble Muslim men into five categories: the blind, one-eyed, cross-eyed, blue-eyed (*azraq*) and those who had protruding teeth. *Azraq* can also mean 'blind,' 'ill-omened,' or 'deceitful,' but because Ibn ʻAdī had already used blindness as a category and all the categories were physical features, the definition of "blue-eyed" makes the most sense here.[71] The collective noun form of this word is *zurq*, and it is the only word with the triliteral root z-r-q to appear in the Qur'an. The lone verse reads: "We shall gather the guilty, blue-eyed, on that day [of Resurrection]."[72] Judging by this Qur'anic verse, blue eyes were

[70] Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994), xv.

[71] For discussions of definitions of *azraq*, see *The Laṭā'if al-maʻarif of Thaʻālibī: The Book of Curious and Entertaining Information,* trans. C. E. Bosworth (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1968): 93, fn. 27, and Geert Jan van Gelder, "Kitāb al-Burṣān: Al-Jāḥiẓ on Right- and Lefthandedness" (paper presented at the conference Al-Jahiz: A Muslim Humanist for Our Time, Beirut, Lebanon, 22 January 2005): 2, fn. 5.

[72] Qur'an 20:102. Ibn Ḥibbān (d. 354/965) related a weak hadith on the authority of ʻĀ'isha that the Prophet declared blue eyes a sign of good luck. The acknowledged unreliability of a hadith that flatly contradicts

extraordinary physical traits among Arabs, marking blue-eyed people as physically and, in this context, morally other. The Prophet, for instance, reportedly had deep black eyes. Al-Thaʿālibī (d. 873/1468), a Mālikī theologian from North Africa who is not to be confused with the fifth/eleventh-century author of *Laṭā'if al-maʿārif*, summarized the two most common interpretations of the term *zurq* in the Qur'an. The first explanation, which was also supported by Ibn ʿAbbās (d. 68/688), purports that the people to be gathered are those who have black skin and blue eyes, for these traits are ugly. After being assembled, they will then be blinded. A second interpretation is that people with blue complexions are extraordinarily ugly, because their skin is the color of ashes (*ramād*). "It is official in the speech of the Arabs that this [ashen] color is called *azraq*."[73] Another contemporary observer, al-Biqāʿī (d. 885/1480), indicated in his commentary on this verse that *zurq* referred to people with blue eyes and bodies, meaning that they were once beautiful and then their bodies changed.[74] All of these explanations presuppose the undesirability of blue eyes, and historically, it has been understood as an insult. Detractors of the fourth Umayyad caliph Marwān ibn al-Ḥakam (r. 64-5/684-5) insultingly dubbed him Ibn al-Zarqā', or "Son of the Blue-Eyed Woman." In the context of Islamic condemnation of blue-eyed people and early Arabian cultural support of this notion, al-Haytham ibn ʿAdī's coupling of blue eyes and other blights with Muslim nobility represents a significant

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the Qur'anic moral condemnation of blue-eyed people suggests an apologetic invention to temper the controversial nature of the verse.

[73] ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Thaʿālibī, *Al-Jawāhir al-ḥisān fī tafsīr al-Qur'ān* (Exquisite Jewels: On Quran'ic Exegesis), ed. ʿAmmār al-Ṭālbanī (Algiers: Al-Mu'assasa al-waṭaniyya li'l-kitāb, 1985), 3:61.

[74] Burhān al-Dīn Ibrāhīm ibn ʿUmar al-Biqāʿī, *Naẓm al-durar fī tanāsub al-āyāt wa-suwar* (Pearl Necklace: On the Link between Qur'anic Verses and Chapters) (Hyderabad: Maṭbaʿa majlis dā'irat al-maʿārif al-ʿuthmāniyya, 2006) 5:45.

social project transforming people of blights from objects of curiousity and revulsion to respectable persons.

With the exception of the section about the one-eyed, in which Ibn ʻAdī offers personal details about those listed, the other lists are enumerations of names. For sixteen of the twenty-five one-eyed men, Ibn ʻAdī indicates in which early Islamic wars, such as the Battle of the Camel or the Battle of Yarmūk, they lost an eye. Their nobility is clearly tied to the bodily sacrifice they made in the name of Islam. Ibn ʻAdī's short list has survived in a manuscript of al-Jāḥiẓ' (d. 255/868 or 9) *Kitāb al-burṣān wa'l-ʻurjān wa'l-ḥūlān wa'l-ʻumyān* (Book of the Leprous, the Lame, the Cross-Eyed and the Blind) that is currently housed in al-Khizānat al-ʻĀmma in Rabat, Morocco. The following table describes the book's contents.

Table 1: Outline of al-Jāḥiẓ' *Kitāb al-burṣān wa'l-ʻurjān wa'l-ʻumyān wa'l-ḥūlān* (1972 ed.)

Introduction (pp. 1-8)
Lepers (8-110)
• Lepers who were fathers and mothers (96-110)
• Jaundice (100)
Lame humans (110-139)
Lame animals (139-143)
• Lame hyena (139)
• Limping wolf (140)
• Lion, tiger, leopard, lynx, cat (141)
• A sparrow that was unlike other animals (142)
• Starlings (142)
• Gazelle (142-143)
Lame humans
• Gait of old men and women (148)
• Gait of old men, old women, the obese (?) and widows (149 -151)
• Gait of the mentally ill/demon possessed (*majnūn*) (151)
Lame animals (156)
• Dung beetle
Ailing and healthy legs (177)
Last chapter on the lame (237)

• Hunchback anecdote (246)
Those whose bellies are swollen with dropsy (250)
Those killed by lightning and strong winds (256-258)
Hunchbacks (258-263)
Short necks (262)
Scrotal hernia (263-270)
Facial paralysis and the like (271-277)
a. Goggle-eyes (*al-jāḥiẓ*) (276)
Semiparalyzed/Hemiplegic (277-286)
Those with a fractured skull (287-290)
Those having ears and noses like wolves and dogs (291-306)
Those having a very big or a very small head (307-316)
Men and women with very long necks (317-320)
Bald (321-325)
Partially bald (*aqzaʿ*) (326-330)
The Right-hander, the left-hander, the 'both-hander'(*al-aḍbaṭ*)[75] and the ambidextrous (331-41)
What is said on the superiority of the right-hander over the left-hander (342-359)

Al-Jāḥiẓ may have included a fragmented or condensed version of this list, as he mentions in the opening lines that he knew of Ibn ʿAdī's piece of writing (*kitāb*) about lepers, the lame, blind, deaf and cross-eyed, but the appended list does not include lepers or the deaf. However, later in the introductory section al-Jāḥiẓ does reproduce a list by Ibn ʿAdī of ten noble Muslims who were lame, adding that "he [Ibn ʿAdī] did not mention any other lame men than these. He did mention the blind, and those whom he excluded from the list number more than those he included in it."[76] This subtle critique may be due to the fact that al-Jāḥiẓ did not like the man or his personal conduct. He mentioned these feelings, but did not elaborate on them.[77] A seventh/thirteenth-century

[75] For a discussion of al-Jāḥiẓ' use of the term *al-aḍbaṭ* in this work, see van Gelder, "Kitāb," 8-12.

[76] Al-Jāḥiẓ, *Kitāb al-burṣān wa'l-ʿurjān wa'l-ʿumyān wa'l-ḥūlān*, ed. Muḥammad Mursī al-Khawlī (Cairo-Beirut: n.p., 1972), 7.

[77] Ibid., 4.

writer noted that Haytham ibn ʻAdī incurred people's hatred because he revealed their faults and shortcomings (*maʻāyib*).[78] There is no clear link between this sentiment and al-Jāḥiẓ', but if this is indeed the reason for al-Jāḥiẓ' dislike of him, it would be ironic.

Al-Jāḥiẓ must have completed *Kitāb al-burṣān* between 206/821 and 237/851, because he writes of Ibn ʻAdī's death in the book and then he refers to *Kitāb al-burṣān* in his own *Al-Bayān wa'l-tabyīn* (Elucidation and Exposition), which was composed in 237/851. But there, he refers to it as *Kitāb al-ʻurjān* (Book of the Lame). Other authors cite the title in their own works. Among these are Ibn al-Muʻtazz' *Ṭabāqāt al-shuʻarā'*, al-Suyūṭī's *Bughya,* Marzubānī's *Muʻjam*, Murtaḍā's *Amālī* and Khwānsārī's *Rawḍāt al-jannāt*. The only extant manuscript of *al-Burṣān* has been edited twice. Muḥammad Mursī al-Khawlī edited and published an edition with the Cairene-Beiruti publisher Dār al-iʻtiṣām li'l-ṭabʻ wa'l-nashr in 1972. Ten years later ʻAbd al-Salām Muḥammad Hārūn, a Jāḥiẓ specialist, edited and published another edition with the Iraqi Ministry of Culture and Education.[79]

While al-Jāḥiẓ (lit., "the goggle-eyed man"), himself marked in name and figure by ugliness, does not normalize the blighted body, he nuances the Arab concept of body and disfigurement in this book. He even includes an anecdote about a goggle-eyed (*jāḥiẓ*) man named ʻUyayna, but does not mention himself.[80]

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[78] Jamāl al-Dīn ibn al-Qiftī (d. 646/1248), *Inbāh al-ruwāh ʻalā anbāh al-nuḥāh*, ed. Muḥammad Abū al-Faḍl (Cairo: Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyya, 1950), 3:365. For more on the works of Ibn ʻAdī, see Stefan Leder, *Das Korpus al-Haiṯam ibn ʻAdī (st. 207/822): Herkunft, Überlieferung, Gestalt früher Texte der aḫbār Literatur* (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1991).

[79] Citations in this dissertation will come from the 1972 edition.

[80] Al-Jāḥiẓ, *Kitāb al-burṣān*, 276.

Al-Burṣān is distinguished from works on similar topics by its length, the variety of *'āhāt* discussed, its detailed anecdotes and the organization of afflictions from roughly the feet to the head. This last organizing principle stands in sharp contrast to the standard in Arabic and Greek medical texts of classifying disease from head to toe. The book is arranged topically, roughly from the longest section (lepers) to the shortest (handedness), a structure mimicking that of the Qur'ān. Within each topic the organizational mechanism is not obvious, for the biographical entries are presented neither chronologically nor alphabetically.[81]

Al-Burṣān is a relatively easy work to situate within the corpus of al-Jāḥiẓ' 200-plus works. For one, al-Jāḥiẓ appears to have written two other books about the body and its defects. Again in *al-Bayān*, Jāḥiẓ mentions another work of his entitled *Kitāb al-Jawāriḥ* (Book of Body Parts), which Pellat suspects is actually *al-Burṣān* under another title. Another similar title is *Kitāb dhawī l-'āhāt* (Book of Those with Physical Blights).[82] Other than the title, little is known of this latter work, for no known manuscripts have survived. Of al-Jāḥiẓ' extant works, *Kitāb al-Bukhalā'* (Book of Misers), an anthology of anecdotes about people of questionable moral character, shifts the focus in *al-Burṣān* from the physically to the morally disfigured. In some anecdotes, physical defects are associated with moral turpitude. For instance, Rāshid al-A'war, or Rāshid the One-eyed, is so avaricious that he eats fish whole, whereas most people would remove the head, tail and innards.[83] In other anecdotes, however, there is not a clear correlation between moral

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[81] See Appendix A for an outline of the thematic organization of *al-Burṣān*.

[82] Pellat, 129, 137.

[83] Al-Jāḥiẓ, *The Book of Misers*, trans. R. B. Serjeant (Reading: Garnet Publishing, 1997), 172-3.

and physical defects. To wit, Yūsuf ibn Kullī Khayr, an able-bodied man, is shown to be so stingy that even a blind man can detect this failing in him -- blindness here serving as an ironic literary trope.[84]

Other ʻAbbasid-era writers expanded on al-Haytham ibn ʻAdī's list of *ashrāf* who were physically blighted. In *Kitāb al-muḥabbar* (Book of the Elaborately Ornamented) Abū Jaʻfar Muḥammad ibn Ḥabīb's (d. 245/860) lists of the physically marked *ashrāf* include some of the same names as Ibn ʻAdī's, but also contain additional names and include anecdotes and poetry. He also adjusted the categories, adding to them leprosy, lameness and thin-beardedness, and omitting blue eyes.[85] Another work of Ibn Ḥabīb's, *Kitāb al-munammaq fī akhbār Quraysh* (Book of Embellishment about Reports on the Quraysh), follows the same structure and uses the same categories as *al-Muḥabbar*, but its lists and anecdotes only include those about the Quraysh.[86]

Ibn Qutayba (d. 276/889) compiled a list of *ahl al-ʻāhāt* (people of blights) in his *Kitāb al-Maʻārif* (Book of Knowledge). The section begins with the following information about those who were afflicted with multiple blights:

> ʻAṭā' ibn Abī Rabāḥ was black, one-eyed, paralyzed, flat-nosed and lame. Then he went blind after that. Abān ibn ʻUthmān ibn ʻAffān was deaf – extremely deaf – and had leprosy. His body turned green in places where the leprosy afflicted him, but not his face. He was hemiplegic, and it was said in Medina, ʻMay God bestow on you Abān's hemiplegia', as this was his affliction. He was also cross-eyed. Masrūq ibn al-Ajdaʻ was hunchbacked and lame because of a wound that he sustained at Qādisiyya. He was also hemiplegic. Al-Aḥnaf ibn Qays was one-eyed, and it is said that he either lost his eye in Samarqand or because of a pox.

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[84] Ibid., 102.

[85] Muḥammad ibn Ḥabīb, *Kitāb al-muḥabbar*, ed. Ilse Lichtenstadter (Beirut: Manshūrāt al-maktab al-tijārī li'l-ṭibāʻah wa'l-nashr, 1942), 296-305.

[86] Muḥammad ibn Ḥabīb, *Kitāb al-munammaq fī akhbār Quraysh*, ed. Khvurshid Aḥmad Fariq (Beirut: ʻAlam al-kitāb, 1985), 404-406.

> He had a twisted foot and walked on its outer edge. Abū al-Aswad al-Du'lī was lame, hemiplegic and suffered from halitosis. 'Amr ibn 'Amr ibn 'Udas, a cavalier of the Banū Dārim, had leprosy and halitosis. It is said that his children had mouths like dogs. Al-Aqra' ibn Ḥābis was lame and bald (*aqra'*), and for this reason was called Al-Aqra'. 'Ubayda al-Salmanī was deaf and one-eyed."[87]

Following this introduction are sections on lepers, the lame, the deaf, hand and nose amputees, those with a mutilated hand, the cross-eyed, the blue-eyed, the bald, the thin-bearded, those with protruding teeth, those with bad breath, the one-eyed and the blind. Poetry and anecdotes about the profiled men's physical conditions fill out these sections. Ibn Qutayba's major principle of organization here is to progress from the most to the least offensive blight in this list. Possessing multiple aberrant traits intensified their ugliness, which explains their prominence at the head of the section. Blindness, the final category, was an *'āha* often associated with moral goodness and insight, and was also thought to enhance one's ability to memorize and recite the Qur'ān.

Ibn Qutayba also wrote about men's and women's physical attributes in the chapter on women in his *'Uyūn al-akhbār* (Choice Anecdotes).[88] Poetry, hadith and sayings of the prophet's companions fill sections on tallness, shortness, beards, eyes (one-eyed, bleary-eyed, cross-eyed and blue-eyed), noses, halitosis, leprosy, lameness and hernia. Ibn Qutayba's lists represent an opening into the literary project of ordering and typologizing *'āhāt* into a comprehensive, hierarchical scheme.

Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn al-'Abbās al-Khwarizmī's (d. 383/993) *Mufīd al-'ulūm wa-mubīd al-humūm* (Useful Sciences and the Remover of Anxieties) is an encyclopedic compilation of what the author, a secretary at the Samanid court, judged to be useful

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[87] Ibn Qutayba, *Kitāb al-ma'ārif* (Cairo: n. d., 1882), 194.

[88] Ibn Qutayba, *Kitāb 'uyūn al-akhbār* (Cairo: Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyya, 1925-30), 4:53-69.

information for an educated reader. Chapter Eleven is entitled "Those with *'āhāt*"; Chapter Twelve is called "*'Āhāt* of the descendants of the Prophet"; and the title of Chapter Thirteen is "Also about *'āhāt*, but with some additions." None of the three chapters feature new material. Earlier recorded lists are repeated.

In *Kitāb al-a'lāq al-nafīsa* (The Book of Precious Objects), an encyclopedic work on mathematics, geography and history, the Persian author Aḥmad ibn 'Umar ibn Rusta (d. fourth/tenth c.) lists the names of famous people with *'āhāt*, those who were excessively tall and short, those who had multiple *'āhāt*, lepers, the lame, the deaf, amputees (nose, ear and hand), the cross-eyed, the blue-eyed, the bald, one-eyed descendants of the Prophet, the blind, those who were post-term infants and those were pre-term.[89] Aside from omitting the categories of mutilation, thin-beardedness and halitosis, and adding sections on height, Ibn Rusta's section follows Ibn Qutayba's rather closely, with only some minor word variations.

Al-Baṣā'ir wa'l-dhakhā'ir (Visions and Treasures), an anthology on literary topics by the Buyid writer Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī (d. 414/1023), contains a list of definitions of physical traits, some of which were considered blights. Many of these terms appear in writings about the *'āhāt*, so it serves as a helpful reference for this study, for al-Tawḥīdī's contemporary readers and for al-Tawḥīdī himself.[90]

Al-Tha'ālibī's (d. 429/1038) *Kitāb laṭā'if al-ma'ārif* (Book of Curious and Entertaining Information) is another encyclopedic compilation with a section on *ahl al-*

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[89] Aḥmad ibn 'Umar ibn Rusta, *Kitāb al-a'lāq al-nafīsa*, ed. M. J. de Goeje (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1891), 221-225.

[90] Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī, *Al-Baṣā'ir wa'l-dhakhā'ir*, ed. Wadād al-Qāḍī (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1988), 6:147.

ʿāhāt. Departing from the organizational schemes of earlier writers, he starts by dividing his list of men with *ʿāhāt* by social group: rulers, Qurayshi, poets, legal scholars. Then the list shifts to being organized by physical trait: the one-eyed, one-eyed military commanders, the blind, rulers who were blinded, the very tall, the very short, post-term and pre-term infants and bald caliphs.

In *Talqīḥ fuhūm* Ibn al-Jawzī (d. 597/1201) based his list of names of notable men and women with physical blights on the works of Ibn Rusta and al-Tha'ālibī.[91] One major difference is his section on black notables, which includes the Companions of the Prophet, the pious men who came after them, poets, ascetics and female devotees. This section is the only one with such a detailed subcategorization of people. According to our al-Badrī, al-Shams Muḥammad al-Jazarī al-Shāfiʿī (d. after 660/1262) included a list of blind notables in his similarly titled work *Tanqīḥ fuhūm al-āthār* (Re-Examination of the Knowledge of Hadith).[92]

The biographer Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Ṣafadī's (d. 764/1363) *Nakt al-himyān ʿalā nukat al-ʿumyān* (Emptying the Pockets for Anecdotes about the Blind) consists of 313 biographical entries about prominent blind men, and his much later *Al-Shuʿūr bi-al-ʿūr* (Knowledge of the One-Eyed) consists of entries about one-eyed men and women. According to al-Sakhāwī (d. 902/1497), al-Ṣafadī wrote as yet unrecovered histories

[91] ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn al-Jawzī, *Talqīḥ fuhūm ahl al-athar fī ʿuyūn al-ta'rīkh wa'l-siyar* (The Inculcation of Knowledge of Hadith Specialists: On the Best of History and Biographies) (Cairo: Maktabat al-ādāb, 1975), 446-50.

[92] Taqī al-Dīn Abū Bakr ibn ʿAbdallāh al-Badrī, *Al-Durr al-maṣūn, al-musammá bi-Siḥr al-ʿuyūn* (The Hidden Pearl, also known as, The Magic of the Eye), ed. Sayyid Ṣiddīq ʿAbd al-Fattāḥ, (Cairo: Dār al-Shaʿb, 1998), 1:105.

about weak-sighted and hunchbacked people.[93] Al-Ṣafadī had an obvious interest in visual disorders and appears to have written histories and poems about the physically different and even their caregivers. Taqī al-Dīn al-Badrī's (d. 894/1489) *Ghurrat al-ṣabāḥ* (The Shining Dawn), a work that will be treated in greater detail in Chapter Three, includes numerous romantic verses that al-Ṣafadī composed for various men, including an eye doctor, a lame man, a man with pock-marked skin, another with plague boils and a man with a wounded cheek, among others.[94] Al-Ṣafadī was a prolific poet whose *Al-ḥusn al-ṣarīḥ fī mi'at malīḥ* (The Pure Beauty of 100 Handsome Men) includes even more verses on these topics.[95]

Taken altogether, the pre-seventh/thirteenth-century sources outlined in this chapter illustrate three major types of literary production: unnarrativized lists, narratized lists and prose and poetry (exemplified by al-Jāḥiẓ and al-Ṣafadī) that emphasized anecdotal snippets of the lives of blighted persons.

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[93] Franz Rosenthal, *A History of Muslim Historiography* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1968), 432.

[94] Taqī al-Dīn Abū Bakr ibn ʻAbdallāh al-Badrī, *Ghurrat al-ṣabāḥ fī waṣf al-wujūh al-ṣibāḥ*, British Library, London, England, ms. 1423 (add. 23,445), 25 May 1471: 153a, 156a, 158a, 158b, 160a.

[95] Khalīl ibn Aybak al-Ṣafadī, *Al-Ḥusn al-ṣarīḥ fī mi'at malīḥ*, ed. Aḥmad Fawzī Hayb (Damascus: Dār Saʻd al-Dīn, 2003).

Chapter 2
Juridical Sources

The interrelatedness of body aesthetics, piety and physical difference emerged in both the Islamic source-texts and in the legal literature of the formative period of Sunni legal theory. In this chapter I will examine Imām al-Shāfiʿī's (d. 204/820) searing moral condemnations of blighted people and discuss how these teachings were understood as properly Islamic. The themes of physical difference and morality persisted in religious, literary and historical works of the late Mamluk era, particularly in majority Shāfiʿī milieus, like Mamluk Cairo. Competing depictions of physical difference (such as the pious one-eyed Abū Sufyān and the one-eyed antichrist al-Dajjāl) circulated in juridical and religious sources, exposing the capacities of Mamluk subjects for tolerance and anxiety toward a single form of difference. In spite of this dichotomous range of moral associations with blighted people, numerous sources of Shāfiʿī jurisprudence reveal negative depictions of individuals with marked bodies, informing social and theological conceptions of the body and difference in the Arab world.

In the previous chapter I traced the treatment of *ʿāhāt* in literary and historical texts and lists. These sources emphasized the living heritage of *ahl al-ʿāhāt*, thereby humanizing, personalizing and presenting this category of people as relatable. In fact, all of the Mamluk and Ottoman authors investigated in this dissertation humanize their subjects. In contrast, the juridical, religious and mystical literatures about *ʿāhāt* tend to

highlight moral concerns, and the didactic message so prominent in these other genres reveal new attitudes towards blighted people and the aesthetics of blightedness. It is worth noting that none of these genres holds a monopoly on the truth about *ʻāhāt*. All of these historical voices contribute unique perspectives on a prominent phenomenon. What Malti-Douglas has said of blindness could be just as easily applied to the broader category of physical blights. "The question of blindness is an important one in Islamic civilization, and appears in virtually all of the major types of sources in the medieval period: from the theological and the legal through the historical to the literary and the philological."[96] The body is particularly important for understanding how Mamluks navigated their own societies. Much as gender historians have shown the prevalence and centrality of gender relations in the medieval Islamicate world, *ʻāhāt* now emerges as a category with the capacity to (re)define social relationships, legal rulings, historical outcomes, literary trends and philological rules. The ways in which bodies were constructed as normal or different or disabled had implications for notions of ritual purity, charitable donations, and even legal categories of suitability for variouus

The historian's challenge lies not in finding blights in all of this material, but in identifying the literary conventions specific to each genre and negotiating one's analysis through them.

First, I would like to enter these conversations on the Islamic conception of body and difference by first re-examining the main term to be examined in this study – *ʻāha*. So just how did medieval and early modern philologists define this term? In Ibn

[96] Malti-Douglas, "*Mentalités,*" 215.

Manẓūr's seventh/thirteenth-century dictionary *Lisān al-'arab*, *'āha* is defined simply as *āfa*, which means 'blight' or 'damage'. To contextualize the term *'āha*, Ibn Manẓūr then relates a prophetic hadith in which Muḥammad "forbade the selling of fruits until they were free of the blight or damage (*al-'āha aw al-āfa*) that afflicts the seed and the fruits and rots them. Ibn 'Umar related this hadith, and when someone asked him, 'When would that be?', he replied, 'At the rising of the Pleiades.'"[97] The term *'āha* is fundamentally defined as a crop blight whose occurrence is linked to agricultural cycles and is not linked to the human body or physical ability, but rather to a mark that spoils the nature of an object.[98] The omission of a definition related to the body is a curious one, for as early as the late second/eighth century, the term had been used to mean 'physical blight'. Muḥammad ibn Idrīs al-Shāfi'ī (d. 204/820) cautioned against interacting with "anyone who has *'āha* on his body." While disability as Davidson and Siebers define it certainly exists in the sources, the term "mark" (as opposed to "disability") better captures the versatility of the Arabic *'āha* as it relates to agriculture and physiognomy. However, as convenient as it may be to use the term "marked body," this terminology also presupposes the existence of a normative, unmarked, unblighted body. Although these terms suggest a dichotomy, I seek to emphasize hybridity in these categories. The sources imply that possessors of marked bodies did not exist on the social periphery, but

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[97] Muḥammad ibn Mukarram ibn Manẓūr (d. 1311 or 1312), *Lisān al-'arab* (Language of the Arabs) (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1956), 13:520. The entries for *'āha* in al-Fīrūzābādī's (d. 1412 or 1413) *Al-Qamūs al-muḥīṭ* (Comprehensive Dictionary) and al-Zabīdī's (d. 1791) dictionary *Tāj al-'arūs* (Crown of the Bride), a commentary on *Al-Qamūs*, very closely mirror the one in *Lisān al-'arab*. See al-Fīrūzābādī, 2:579 of the 1855 Cairene edition, and al-Zabīdī, 9:401 of the 1888 Egyptian edition.

[98] Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī (d. 852/1449) corresponded with a fellow scholar about these hadiths. See al-Sakhāwī, *Al-Jawāhir wa'l-durar fī tarjama Shaykh al-Islām Ibn Ḥajar* (Jewels and Pearls: The Biography of Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Ḥajar), ed. Ibrāhīm Bājis 'Abd al-Majīd (Beirut: Dār Ibn Ḥazm, 1999), 2:865-6.

were rather well integrated into all segments of society. Blind Quran-reciters and poets, deaf imams, bald caliphs and one-eyed military commanders were some of the more important posts held, whereas blind beggars were examples of those in lower socio-economic strata. Because the status of the people of blights was not necessarily marginal, my approach to them is on the terms presented in the sources. They function differently in the sources, but they appear as love objects, city-dwellers to be counted in a census, family members, pious subjects and even in first-person narrative as the writer himself.

Islamic Discourses

The antinomian impulse central to much of sufi thought elevates paradox to the status of doctrine. By rejecting the letter of the law and embracing extra-legal expressions of devotional piety, a Muslim can achieve mystical communion with God. Public nudity (rejecting modesty guidelines), extreme fasts or diets, self-imposed poverty and/or homelessness, sexual congress with beardless youths and vows of chastity (rejecting Islam's anti-monastic tendencies) all positioned the body as the primary site of expressing antinomian piety.[99] Sufi doctrines certainly influenced styles of worship and complicated notions of orthodoxy and orthopraxy, but could mystical principles have informed aesthetic theories or trends? What do mystical and theological sources propose about an aesthetic antinomianism? The Prophet Muḥammad said that "God is beautiful and He loves beauty," and one of God's ninety-nine names is *Al-Jamāl*, or Beauty. In the spirit of paradox, communion with divine beauty could be achieved through embracing

[99] Megan Reid has found many examples of men's antinomian piety in Ayyubid and Mamluk Egypt, but "antinomian holy women seem not to have existed at all in medieval Islam." See her "Exemplars of Excess," 108.

“blighted defects of creation,” to borrow a phrase from al-Qasṭallānī. Some form of this communion is evident in the high esteem accorded to the *mu‘taqad* (revered person) in Mamluk Cairo, though he was generally “considered peculiar. [His] unusual, even deviate, behavioral traits were often complemented by physical abnormalities, due either to accidents or deformities.”[100] One such individual was ‘Alī al-Majdhūb (d. 913/1507), a holy fool for whom Cairenes displayed “a great reverence (*i‘tiqād ‘aẓīm*).” He intentionally blighted his physical appearance by shaving his head, beard and eyebrows.[101] An association of physical deviance with the embodiment of heightened spirituality and divine blessings supports a thesis of aesthetic antinomianism, but what other ways of configuring the body were current in Islamic thought?

Discourses on the blighted body in Qur’an and hadith

Islam is a praxis-oriented religion, meaning that religious devotion resides in and on the body, and is expressed through such bodily acts as ritualized prayer, fasting, dietary restrictions, modest dress and pilgrimage to Mecca. With bodies figuring so centrally in Islamic theology, it is essential for any study of bodies in Islamicate culture to examine how bodies are presented in the Islamic source-texts of Qur’an and hadith, which provide the basic narratives about the body which Muslim theologians and scholars have used for centuries in constructing and refining notions of gender, the body and physical difference.

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[100] Carl F. Petry, *The Civilian Elite of Cairo in the Later Middle Ages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), 267.

[101] Muḥammad ibn Abī Bakr al-Shillī (d. 1093/1681 or 1682), *Kitāb al-sanā’ al-bāhir bi-takmīl al-Nūr al-sāfir fī akhbār al-qarn al-‘āshir*, ed. Ibrāhīm ibn Aḥmad al-Maqḥafī (Sanaa: Maktabat al-irshād, 2004), 84.

The Islamic source-texts of Qur'an and hadith and a small corpus of s*hamā'il* writings will be used here in constructing the category of markedness in an Islamic frame. Though only one of the primary sources used in this study is strictly theological (a tenth/sixteenth-century fatwa), religious ideas infuse nearly all of the sources, written and visual. Two sources are histories about hadith specialists with *'āhāt*. Another source is a loosely organized literary anthology about eyes that has a chapter on the eye in the Qur'an. In a collection of poems, verses praising Muḥammad, Abū Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthmān, 'Alī, Ḥasan and Ḥusayn are immediately followed by verses praising a mentally ill man and a deaf man.

The Qur'an itself includes a variety of verses about different types of blights. It is worth mentioning that of all the blights, blindness (spiritual and physical) is disproportionately represented. In addition to the forty-eight verses about blindness, there are also seven on muteness, two on lameness, two about leprosy and one mention of blue eyes.[102] The Qur'anic position on the moral state of blighted people is summarized in the following verse: "there is no blame on the blind, nor is there blame on the lame, nor is there blame on the sick." Though people with these physical conditions carry no adverse moral associations, God does not view them as the same as their sighted, walking, healthy counterparts. "The blind and the seeing," God proclaims, "are not alike."[103] They

[102] For blindness see, for example, Qur'an 5:71; 6:154; 11:28; 22:46; 27:66; 28:66; 41:17, 44; 47:23, etc. For muteness, 2:17-18; 2:171; 16:76; 6:39; 8:22; 17:97. For lameness, 24:61 and 48:17. For leprosy, 3:49 and 5:110. For blue eyes, 20:102. A more detailed analysis of disability terminology and symbolism in the Qur'an can be found in Maysaa S. Bazna and Tarek A. Hatab, "Disability in the Qur'an: The Islamic Alternative to Defining, Viewing, and Relating to Disability," *Journal of Religion, Disability and Health* 9.1 (2005): 5-27.

[103] Qur'an 48:17; 35:19; 40:58. Sometimes when blindness is evoked in the Qur'an, a metaphorical, spiritual blindness is meant, so this last verse could alternatively be interpreted as a statement about

are physically distinct, physically different, and the Qur'an even addresses the unethical responses to such differences in second/seventh-century Arabian society. One reads, for example, the Qur'anic suggestion for believers to share meals with the blind, as well as the sighted.[104] This particular verse speaks to the tendency among Arabs to avoid eating with the blind, as many found the experience unsavory, allegedly because the blind would touch food in order to identify it.[105] Difference is duly acknowledged as a condition of humanity in the Qur'an, but the behavior of believers toward the physically different is regulated, not the behavior of the marked. It is incumbent on every Muslim to respond ethically to human differences.

In the six canonical Sunni hadith collections, one finds more specific and anecdotal discussions of disability. Marked bodies do appear in Sunni hadith literature, especially as subjects of anecdotes. For instance, certain accommodations are made for participation of physically disabled people in rituals, prayers and other religious obligations. But neither Muḥammad nor his companions ever referred to the ill, disabled or physically marked as a particular class of people, and the term *'āha* only appears in reference to blighted crops. Even so, several later hadith compilers who reorganized reports by topic did insert chapter headings classifying certain reports as pertaining to *dhawī al-'āhāt*. This consistency in terminology suggests that chapter headings were transmitted from a common source or sources. Qāḍī al-'Iyāḍ's *Al-Shifā'* (The Cure), al-

humans' moral states. I believe, however, that the verse was intentionally ambiguous, permitting the audience to interpret it either or both ways.

[104] Qur'an 24:61.

[105] See Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Qurṭubī, *Al-Jāmi' li-aḥkām al-Qur'ān* (Cairo: Dār al-kitāb al-'arabī li-ṭibā'a wa-nashr, 1967), 12:312-19.

Nuwayrī's *Nihāyat al-arab* (Wish Fulfillment), Ibn Ḥabīb al-Ḥalabī's *Al-Najm al-thāqib* (The Piercing Star) and al-Qasṭallānī's *Al-Mawāhib al-laduniyya* (The Mystical Blessings), for instance, are extended works about the Prophet's physical characteristics, moral behavior and divine mission. In each one's sections on Prophetic miracles (*mu'jizāt*), the authors included subsections on healing of sick and the physically blighted. These miracles are contained in Ibn Mājah's (d. 273/886) *Sunan*, which is one of the "Six Books" of canonical Sunni hadith. Ibn Mājah himself did not use the term *'āhāt*, but these later compilers did. Qāḍī al-'Iyāḍ entitled his chapter "On healing the sick and *dhawī al-'āhāt*," whereas Ibn Ḥabīb named his "On the speech of the dead and of children and on his healing of *dhawī al-'āhāt*." Al-Qasṭallānī described his chapter as being about "healing *dhawī al-'āhāt*; raising the dead; the speech of the raised dead; and the speech of young boys who confirm Muḥammad's prophethood."[106] Significantly, all three authors use the same phrase to refer to marked people. These section headings allow the reader to understand how these individual writers constructed the category of the physically blighted. It is particularly easy with al-Qasṭallānī's collection, for in his section on the physically blighted, distinguishing between reports on *dhawī al-'āhāt* and everything else is not difficult. By reading al-Qasṭallānī's list, one finds that demonic possession/mental illness (*junūn*), blindness and injury to eyes and thighs constitute *'āhāt*. With Qāḍī al-'Iyāḍ's grouping, the distinction is less distinct, for what is the

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[106] Qāḍī al-'Īyāḍ (d. 544/1149), *Al-Shifā' bi-ta'rīf ḥuqūq al-Muṣṭafā*, ed. 'Alī Muḥammad al-Bajāwī (Cairo: Maṭba'at 'Īsa al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1977), 1:451; Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb al-Nuwayrī (d. ca. 1332), *Nihāyat al-arab fī funūn al-adab* (Cairo: Maṭba'at Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyya, 1923), 18:331-3; Badr al-Dīn al-Ḥasan ibn Ḥabīb al-Ḥalabī (d. 779/1377), *Al-Najm al-thāqib fī ashraf al-manāqib*, ed. Muṣṭafā Muḥammad Ḥusayn al-Dhahabī (Cairo: Dār al-Ḥadīth, 1996), 100; Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Qasṭallānī (d. 923/1517), *Al-Mawāhib al-laduniyya bi al-minaḥ al-muḥammadiyya*, ed. Ṣāliḥ Aḥmad al-Shāmī (Beirut: Al-Maktab al-Islāmī, 1991), 2:577.

difference between a sick individual and one with physical blights? Is there an implicit overlap between the two categories, making easy separation of the two a fruitless undertaking? In any case, Qāḍī al-ʻIyāḍ's list includes the *ʻāhāt* of al-Qasṭallānī's, as well as head fractures, dropsy, amputated hands, and injuries to the leg, forearm and throat. Significantly, Muḥammad's corporeality is central to healing episodes involving *dhawī al-ʻāhāt*. After Muḥammad spits on the afflicted body part, it is healed. In one case a woman's mute son speaks after drinking water that Muḥammad had used to rinse his mouth and wash his hands. Even indirect contact with the body of the Prophet proved sufficient to cure muteness. The Prophet physically transmitted his *baraka* (spiritual wisdom and blessing transmitted from God) through a bodily fluid to people afflicted with illnesses or blights and thereby cured them.[107]

Although documentation that Muḥammad had direct bodily contact with *dhawī al-ʻāhāt* exists, fears and misgivings about the people of blights circulated in Islamic literature and popular imagination in early modern Egypt. In *Al-Maqāṣid al-ḥasana* (Excellent Goals) al-Sakhāwī (d. 902/1497), a Shāfiʻī historian and hadith specialist, scrutinizes proverbs and sayings that hold dubious hadith status in order to determine their authenticity or weakness. One such hadith reads: "Fear the people of blights (*Ittaqū dhawī al-ʻāhāt*)."[108] Al-Sakhāwī does not know the origins of this saying, but speculates that it could either be a corruption of al-Shāfiʻī's exhortation to "Beware the fair-haired"

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[107] There have also been reports of the Prophet's *baraka* being transmitted in dreams. In Mecca, a pious woman named al-Muwaffaqa (d. 634/1236-7) was cured of her lameness after dreaming that the Prophet took her hand and made her walk. For her tomb inscription, see Marco Schöller, *The Living and the Dead in Islam: Studies in Arabic Epitaphs* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2004), 2:489-90.

[108] Muḥammad ibn ʻAbd al-Raḥmān al-Sakhāwī, *Al-Maqāṣid al-ḥasana fī bayān kathīr min al-aḥādīth al-mushtahirat al-alsinah (*Egypt: Maktabat al-Khānijī, 1956), 18.

or a corruption of the prophetic hadith "(There is) no 'adwā (no contagious disease is conveyed without Allāh's permission), … nor is there any Hāmah [protection], nor is there any bad omen in the month of Safar, and one should run away from the leper as one runs from a lion."[109] The physician and theologian Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya (d. 751/1350) interpreted the Prophet's command to flee the leper as medically sound advice, as leprosy was transmitted through shared air and physical contact. Therefore, the Prophet could not have been advocating the social isolation of lepers, but was trying to protect non-afflicted individuals.[110] Al-Sakhāwī appears to accept a similar justification of the hadith, arguing that if the dubious hadith were indeed a distortion of the Prophet's words, then running from lepers in fear is the same as fearing the blighted. This transfer of ideas, he reasons, must have been how the command to fear people with physical blights gained currency as a *bona fide* hadith. Whatever the transmutations that resulted in the diffusion of this false hadith, it is nonetheless significant that the notion had become popularly accepted in Mamluk Cairo as Muḥammad's actual words.

What moral and cultural conditions existed to create a space where such a command could acquire the status of doctrine? Tobin Siebers has traced the hysteria surrounding the coding of the eye as treacherous in various cultures and times, finding that in times of chaos, people tend to search out

> the slightest discrepancy in the group in the hope of recognizing the powers of evil. Immediately a mark or blemish that was considered perfectly natural becomes a sign of the supernatural. It is viewed as being different, even though it

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[109] Muḥammad ibn Ismā'īl al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī: The Translation of the Meanings of Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, trans. Muḥammad Muḥsin Khān (Beirut: Dār al-'Arabiyya, 1985), 7:409.

[110] Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, *Medicine of the Prophet,* trans. Penelope Johnstone (Cambridge, UK: Islamic Texts Society, 1998), 113.

> does not change appearance. In other words, the community not only remarks but marks the accused.[111]

The criteria for what constitutes a mark or a blemish or an indication of difference are arbitrarily determined and socially constructed, and the process of isolating certain physical characteristics as signs of evil is not particular to Islamicate societies. Even so, there are Islamic traditions that support the association of *ʿāhāt* with immorality and avoidance, some of which have corollaries in Jewish and Christian thought. Al-Sakhāwī does not mention these sources, which might lend credence to his claim that "Fear the people of blights" was regarded as a true hadith, but they were likely well-known. The devil (*iblīs*) and the antichrist (*dajjāl*) are typically described in hadith and post-formative theological writings as one-eyed, and Iblīs's epithet is 'The One-Eyed.' Anecdotes about the untrustworthiness of one-eyed people circulated in tenth/sixteenth-century Cairo. The encyclopedist Ibshīhī related that one day, al-Mughīra ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn al-Ḥārith ibn Hishām al-Makhzūmī, a one-eyed Companion of the Prophet, was dispensing food to the poor. A fellow Arab was watching him from a distance, but did not partake in the feast. When al-Mughīra noticed him, the Arab said, "Your food looks delicious, but I am afraid of your eye." When al-Mughīra asked him to explain his feelings, he replied that al-Mughīra and al-Dajjāl have only one eye. An observer commented to the Arab that al-Mughīra lost his eye in battle while defeating the Byzantines, to which he responded, "Truly, al-Dajjāl would not have lost his eye fighting for the cause of Allāh!"[112] He finally

[111] Tobin Siebers, *The Mirror of Medusa* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1983), 21.

[112] Shihāb al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Ibshīhī (d. after 850/1446), *Mustaṭraf fī kull fann mustaẓraf* (The Most Fascinating Topics from Every Elegant Art), ed. Muṣṭafā Muḥammad al-Dhahabī (Cairo: Dār al-Ḥadīth, 2000), 643. Al-Mughīra is identified as a one-eyed noble in Ibn Ḥabīb, *Kitāb al-Muḥabbar*, 303.

deduced that al-Mughīra could not be the Antichrist. In Muslim eschatology, al-Dajjāl will appear at the end of times to lead obedient Muslims astray. Only Jesus the Messiah will be able to defeat him, and once he does, a forty-year period of peace will prevail on earth before the Day of Judgment. Al-Dajjāl will be identified by the word 'unbelief' etched into his forehead, by his obesity and blindness in one of his eyes.[113] Partial blindness has linguistic associations with the concept of deficiency and moral connotations of evil. The Arabic term for 'one-eyed' or 'blind in one eye' (*a'war*) shares a triliteral root with the words for *'awār* (blemish) and *'awra* (genitalia, women or women's voices). Shame and deficiency are common to all three words, and according to Abdelwahab Bouhdiba, this connection likely predated Islam: "From pre-Islamic times Arab society, like many others, was ill disposed towards the one-eyed, who were supposed to bring misfortune. … The one-eyed is the half-condemned."[114] Other undesirable characteristics are frequently ascribed to Iblīs and al-Dajjāl, like black skin and slitted eyes, which altogether may have fed into the popular belief that the hadith al-Sakhāwī was investigating was indeed sound.

Imām Muḥammad ibn Idrīs al-Shāfi'ī and the Blighted Body

In the above section al-Sakhāwī passes quickly over an interesting statement. Why would al-Shāfi'ī (d. 204/820), the eponymous founder of a Sunni school of legal thought, have commanded his followers to beware the fair-haired, and how significant

[113] In many medieval Christian European texts, the antichrist is described as possessing unusual physiognomic traits. See Bernard McGinn, "Portraying Antichrist in the Middle Ages," in *The Use and Abuse of Eschatology in the Middle Ages*, eds. Verbeke, Verhelst and Welkenhusen (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1988), 1-13.

[114] Bouhdiba, 62.

was such an idea to Shāfiʿī jurisprudence? These questions take on greater urgency in light of the fact that of the seven scholars featured in this dissertation, five are identified as followers of the Shāfiʿī school. The other two, Ibn ʿAbd al-Hādī and Ibn Ṭūlūn, were Ḥanbalīs from Damascus. This section's focus is not to suggest that Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal (d. 241/855) never discussed blighted bodies. In fact, he married his cousin Rayḥāna, a smart, one-eyed woman, and rejected her less intelligent, though quite beautiful, sister as a marriage partner.[115] Inner qualities of beauty prevailed over considerations of physical beauty, and this choice confirmed for his followers his deep commitment to a pious lifestyle. However, no biographies or hagiographies mention any comments he ever made about physiognomy or disability.

As for al-Shāfiʿī, it is known that his interest in theology and law developed later in life. As a young man, archery, medicine (*ṭibb*) and physiognomy (*firāsa*) captured his interest most strongly. His poetry *dīwān* even includes the following homoerotic couplet about physical recovery from illness. It is distinguished by its inversion of the common literary trope of a lover made sick by his love for a whole and healthy beloved and the circularity of illness and sound health.

> When my love fell ill, I visited him.
> Then I fell ill from being around him.
> So my beloved came to visit me,
> And his gaze upon me cured me."[116]

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[115] Christopher Melchert, *Ahmad ibn Hanbal* (Oxford: OneWorld Publications, 2006), 5. Because none of the scholars in this study belonged to the Mālikī or Ḥanafī schools, my analysis will focus on the Shāfiʿī and Ḥanbalī schools.

[116] Muḥammad ibn Idrīs al-Shāfiʿī, *Dīwān al-Imām al-Shāfiʿī*, ed. Imīl Badīʿ Yaʿqūb (Beirut: Dār al-kitāb al-ʿarabī, 1991), 115. Al-Badrī cites another version of this poem, the second verse of which reads "When my beloved was cured, he visited me, / And I was cured from his gaze upon me." (*Ghurrat*, 162b)

Al-Shāfiʿī's interests infused many aspects of his intellectual life. He even went to Yemen in search of books of physiognomy. No descriptions of his physique have been transmitted, though al-Ghazzālī (d. 505/1111) did describe him as physically unattractive.[117] The centrality of theology and medicine to al-Shāfiʿī is reflected in the maxim "Knowledge is twofold: knowledge of the body and knowledge of religion," which has been frequently attributed to the Prophet, but according to al-Dhahabī (d. 748/1348) and al-Suyūṭī (d. 911/1505), themselves both Shāfiʿīs, al-Shāfiʿī actually spoke these words. Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa (d. 668/1269 or 1270) wrote without attribution in his biographical dictionary on physicians that "knowledge of bodies has become linked with knowledge of religion,"[118] which is perhaps a corruption to the aforementioned maxim or even a reference to the specialized study of prophetic medicine (*al-ṭibb al-nabawī*). Also, followers of al-Shāfiʿī have noted the resemblance between his name and *al-Shāfi'*, which is one of God's names and means 'The Curer.'

Al-Bayhaqī (d. 458/1065-6), one of the earlier compilers of al-Shāfiʿī's teachings, reported that he urged his followers to

> 'beware the one-eyed, the cross-eyed, the lame, the hunchback, the fair-haired, the thin-bearded and anyone with a blight (*ʿāha*) on his body. And anyone who diminishes creation, beware of him, for he is a friend of controversy, and his behavior is distressing.' And he repeated, 'Truly, he is a friend of deception.'[119]

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[117] Carole Hillenbrand, "Aspects of al-Ghazali's Views on Beauty," in *Gott ist schön und Er liebt die Schönheit: Festschrift für Annemarie Schimmel zum 7. April 1992*, eds. Alma Giese and J. Bürgel (Bern, New York: Peter Lang, 1994), 256.

[118] *ʿUyūn al-anbāʾ fī ṭabaqāt al-aṭibbaʾ* (Choicest News about the Classes of Physicians), 7. ("jaʿala ʿilm al-abdān qarīnan li-ʿilm al-adyān") Michael Cooperson translates ʿilm al-abdān as 'knowledge of bodily ailments' in *Classical Arabic Biography: The Heirs of the Prophet in the Age of al-Maʾmūn* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 16.

[119] Abū Bakr al-Bayhaqī, *Manāqib al-Shāfiʿī* (Excellent Deeds of al-Shāfiʿī), ed. Al-Sayyid Aḥmad Saqr (Cairo: Dār al-Turāth, 1971), 2:132. Similar versions of this story are recorded in Ibn Abī Ḥātim al-Rāzī (d. 938), *Ādāb al-Shāfiʿī* (Manners of al-Shāfiʿī), ed. ʿAbd al-Ghānī ʿAbd al-Khāliq (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-

Identifying an entire group of people as deceptive, controversial and distressing marks their characters as fundamentally counter to *shari'a* ideals. Some of these conditions could not be altered or reversed, so a one-eyed person, for instance, is condemned for life to being morally compromised and marked as an object of apprehension. Unlike people with moral failings who can change their attitudes and actions to accord with Islamic ideals, blighted people are condemned by their own bodies and have no hope for moral redemption. This sentiment found expression in a rare oil painting completed in Egypt or Syria in 1563 detailing people with anomalous bodies on the Day of Judgment (see Frontispiece). One-eyed men, two-headed men, women with snake-like appendages instead of legs, a man with droopy elephant ears, a headless man whose face appears on his chest, and a man with a black face, white hands, black beard and waist-length yellow hair. The tableau marries blightedness with apocalyptic anxieties directly, and even suggests that the *'ulamā'* (members of the intellectual elite) will be redeemers of this moral underclass. Two turbaned men, presumably scholars, carry on their shoulders two blighted men, bearing them during the Last Days. The scholars are positioned as the ones responsible for the salvation of the people of blights, a stance vaguely echoed in the format of this dissertation as well, in which six male scholars write new stories about people with blights and hold the works aloft as ways of redeeming their despised bodies.

'Ilmiyya, 1953), 131-2 and Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 1210), *Manāqib al-Shāfi'ī* (Egypt: Al-Maktabat al-'Alāmiyya, 1862), 121. In *Al-Jawāhir wa'l-durar* 3: 1258-9, al-Sakhāwī lists more than 30 authors who penned *Manāqib al-Shāfi'ī*, which even included Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī, who will be discussed later in this chapter. A variant of the warning against those who diminish creation is transmitted in al-Rūmī's hadith collection. "Every defect is cursed." See Mihran Afshārī and Mahdī Madāyanī, *Chahārdeh risāleh dar bāb-e futuvvat-o aṣnaf* (Tehran: Chashmah, 2002), 89. I am grateful to Kathryn Babayan for this last reference.

To continue with al-Shāfiʿī's musings on blightedness, he also offered pronouncements and anecdotes about physiognomy and afflictions, including two variations of an anecdote about the fair-haired. In the first story a man approached al-Shāfiʿī with some perfume that he had purchased and began to describe it to him. Al-Shāfiʿī asked him from whom he had bought the perfume, and the man replied, "From a fair-haired man." Al-Shāfiʿī responded, "Return it to him. Nothing good has ever come to me from a fair-haired man." His reaction is deeply personal. His own experience has taught him not to expect good from this particular group, and by universalizing his experience, he acquires the authority to order his followers to steer clear of them. In the second version al-Shāfiʿī asked the man if he had bought the perfume from a thin-bearded, fair-haired man, and when the man responded yes, he ordered him to return the perfume.[120] This particular version excludes the personal dimension, though repeating the same sentiments. Full beards were, and are still today signs of masculinity and virility in the Islamicate world, so much so that sparse facial hair came to be seen as a physical defect. Fair hair may refer to Persian, Slavic or Turkish identiy.

Al-Shāfiʿī's attribution of moral deficiencies and behavioral difficulties to the entire category of *ahl al-ʿāhāt* represents a sweeping judgment that, on its face, contradicts Islamic doctrine that moral failings inhere in no individual. This seeming disconnect between al-Shāfiʿī's pronouncements and Islamic beliefs has not been treated by modern scholars, though our Ibn Fahd (d. 954/1547) did register offense at this teaching and worked to oppose the negative associations with *ahl al-ʿāhāt*. Islam does not

[120] Al-Bayhaqī, 132-3.

admit to the doctrine of 'original sin,' and many of Muḥammad's companions were among the *ahl al-'āhāt*, as shown in Chapter One, but certain Qur'anic verses can be interpreted in support of al-Shāfi'ī's ideas. Qur'an 40:58 reads: "And the blind and the seeing are not alike, nor those who believe and do good and the evildoers," and if "the blind and the seeing" refer to the physiologically unsighted and sighted, then al-Shāfi'ī's interpretation becomes possible. The sighted and unsighted represent polar opposites in terms of physical ability, just as the believer and evildoer represent dichotomous spiritual orientations. Could al-Shāfi'ī have understood this verse to suggest that moral and physical extremes are related? Neither al-Shāfi'ī nor his followers and companions offer explanations for the numerous negative judgments he made regarding a variety of physical attributes, but such readings of the Qur'an as this one allow for conclusions such as those at which al-Shāfi'ī arrived. He believed that different characteristics augured different moral connotations. For example, he deemed a blue-eyed man with no facial hair and a protruding brow to be the possessor of "the most evil physiognomic characteristics possible."[121]

The invisible blight of mental illness/demon possession (*junūn*) was also construed as a reflection of one's moral standing. Al-Shāfi'ī defined *majnūn* as the opposite of rightly guided (*rashīd*).[122] Al-Shāfi'ī drew links between physiognomic traits and intelligence, once remarking, "I have only ever seen one smart fat man."[123] Linking weight to intellect appears to have been a rare connection, as most early Islamic sources

[121] Ibid., 134.

[122] Dols, *Majnūn*, 436.

[123] Ibn Abī Ḥātim al-Rāzī, *Ādāb al-Shāfi'ī*, 132. The editor identifies this man as one Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan.

were ambiguous about the topic, leading one modern historian to declare that "it remains open to debate if the quality of corpulence implied in early and classical Islam is a positive or negative attitude."[124] However, in terms of physical aesthetics, plump women were generally considered desirable.[125]

In the same chapter on physiognomy, al-Shāfiʿī pronounced that "there is no good in Abyssinia. When Abyssinians are hungry, they steal. When they have enough to eat, they drink and fornicate."[126] Such negative opinions about Ethiopians were sufficiently widespread in al-Shāfiʿī's time that al-Jāḥiẓ, a third/ninth-century writer who is thought to have been of African descent (the evidence is inconsistent), penned a work extolling the virtues of Ethiopians.[127] The two men had met each other, but al-Jāḥiẓ gives no indication in this text that al-Shāfiʿī influenced his choice of topic. If the following exchange did, in fact, take place, then it must have been a very early meeting between these two scholars who had demonstrable interests in physiognomy and physical difference. Al-Jāḥiẓ encountered al-Shāfiʿī upon entering a mosque in Baghdad and reportedly asked him, "What do you say about a castrated man?" Al-Shāfiʿī responded,

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[124] John Nawas, "A Profile of the Mawali Ulama," in *Patronate and Patronage in Early and Classical Islam*, eds. Monique Bernards and John Nawas (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2005), 472, fn. 15.

[125] Doris Behrens-Abouseif, *Beauty in Arabic Culture* (Princeton: Markus Wiener, 1999), 56-65.

[126] Ibn Abī Ḥātim al-Rāzī, *Ādāb al-Shāfiʿī*, 135.

[127] Ethnic tensions may have been exacerbated by the rebellion of African slaves working the Basran marshlands, which lasted from 255/869 to 269/882. For more on this rebellion, see Alexandre Popovic, *The Revolt of African Slaves in Iraq in the 3rd/9th Century* (Princeton: Markus Wiener, 1998). For a review of medieval and early modern Arabic- and Turkish-language refutations of anti-Ethiopian prejudice, see Baki Tezcan, "Dispelling the Darkness: The Politics of 'Race' in the Early Seventeenth-Century Ottoman Empire in the Light of the Life and Work of Mullah Ali," *International Journal of Turkish Studies* 13.1 (2007): 85-95. The Iraq War has raised popular interest in the contemporary situation of Africans in Iraq, for which see Theola Labbé, "A Legacy Hidden in Plain Sight," *Washington Post*, January 11, 2004, A01, and Ann M. Simmons, "Back to Africa, from Iraq," *Los Angeles Times*, January 14, 2004, A1 and A14.

“Have you seen him, just as I’m looking at you now, Abū ‘Uthmān (al-Jāḥiẓ)?”[128] In other words, al-Shāfi‘ī had nothing to say because he could not identify a castrated man by casual sight; he could only speak to traits visible through ordinary social interactions.

Al-Ibshīhī (d. after 850/1446), a Cairene writer who studied with and later taught many Shāfi‘ī scholars, echoed a similar sentiment in the eightieth chapter of his encyclopedia. He terminated a section on “illnesses like halitosis, lameness, blindness, deafness, ophthalmia and paralysis” with a supplication: “O God, by your mercy, grace and magnanimity, may you keep us from the evil of blights (*sharr al-‘āhāt*)! Amen.”[129] In spite of this dramatic and negative closing, the section itself incorporates anecdotes and poems that showcase humorous and negative associations with blighted people. While the precise route of transmission of al-Ibshīhī’s knowledge is not known, he is closely linked with Shāfi‘ī circles of learning. In fact one of his students was Taqī al-Dīn ibn Fahd al-Makkī, the grandfather of our historian Jār Allāh who in his 950/1543 treatise on physically marked hadith specialists quoted al-Shāfi‘ī as saying “Beware the fair-haired, blue-eyed.”[130] This citation in a tenth-/sixteenth-century biographical work explicitly demonstrates the transhistorical significance in Muslim contexts of al-Shāfi‘ī’s teachings on physiognomy in the Muslim world.

[128] Al-Bayhaqī, 135.

[129] Al-Ibshīhī, 644.

[130] Jār Allāh Ibn Fahd al-Makkī (d. 954/1547), *Al-Nukat al-ẓirāf fī al-maw’iẓa bi dhawī al-‘āhāt min al-ashrāf* (Charming Anecdotes: An Admonition of Descendants of the Prophet with *‘Āhāt*), Chester Beatty Library, Dublin, Ireland, 1543, ms. 3838, fol. 5a.

The Prophet Muḥammad's Body

Within Arabic and Persian Islamic literatures, extensive archives of material exist about the bodies of Muslim prophets, particularly Muḥammad. In early modern Persianate and Shi'i visual arts, prophets were commonly depicted with their faces and hands exposed, unlike the practice in Arab/Sunni contexts of veiling or blanching out the faces of prophets.[131] The quality and quantity of information about Muḥammad's physical appearance and behavior far exceed what is available for earlier prophets. The written material is sufficiently vast that the genre is referred to as *shamā'il* literature. Al-Tirmidhī compiled the first major collection of hadith that dealt specifically with the behavior and physical characteristics of the Prophet. The resulting work, *Al-Shamā'il al-muḥammadiyya*, includes an entire chapter devoted to the seal of prophethood. The earliest description of Muḥammad is found in this work and has become one of the most authoritative and definitive ones for Muslims. Related by 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, the Prophet's cousin and son-in-law, it offers little subjective evaluation of Muḥammad's form. 'Alī is almost matter-of-factly descriptive in the following narrative:

> The Prophet was neither tall nor short; the fingers and the toes were thick, the head was large, the joints were broad and a long thin line of hair stretched from the chest to the navel. While walking he used to bend forward as if he was descending from a higher level to a lower. I have never known the like of him before or since.[132]

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[131] Wijdan Ali, "From the Literal to the Spiritual: The Development of the Prophet Muhammad's Portrayal from 13th-Century Ilkhanid Miniatures to 17th-Century Ottoman Art," *Electronic Journal of Oriental Studies* 4 (2001): 1-24. http://www2.let.uu.nl/Solis/anpt/ejos/pdf4/07Ali.pdf; Raya Y. Shani, "Noah's Ark and the Ship of Faith in Persian Painting: From the Fourteenth to the Sixteenth-Century," *Jerusalem Studies of Arabic and Islam* 27 (2002): 127-203; Oleg Grabar and Mika Natif, "The Story of Portraits of the Prophet Muhammad," *Studia Islamica* 96 (2004): 19-38 + 4 plates.

[132] Hidayet Hosain, "Translation of Ash-Shama'il of Tirmizi," *Islamic Culture* 7 (July 1933): 398.

Other companions and contemporaries of the Prophet were more forthcoming in their praise of him. Barā' ibn 'Azib (d. 72/691) said, "I have never seen anything more beautiful than the Prophet," and Jābir ibn Samura (d. 74/693) affirmed that "he certainly appeared to me to be more beautiful than the moon itself."[133] Ibn 'Abbās (d. 68/687) declared that "when he conversed it seemed as if light was coming out of the two front teeth."[134] These descriptions came to represent the ideal male body, one that was perfectly marked with the seal of the prophets. His name was sometimes identified with the perfect, presumably unsexed, human body.

Of the various properties attributed to the name Muḥammad, al-Qasṭallānī mentions one that inscribes the human body in the graphic form of his name. The name in Arabic is written thus: محمد, and al-Qasṭallānī notes that

> Among all which God has honored is the human being, whose form resembles the writing of this word (Muḥammad). The first is his head; the is his two sides; the is his navel; and the is his two legs. And it is said that whoever deserves to enter the hellfires will not, except for the deformed of body, out of respect for (the perfection of) the form of the word (Muḥammad).[135]

Those who are "deformed of body" are subject to a different set of rules governing their eternal fate. They will not be spared God's wrath and will consequently spend the afterlife suffering in hell if their lives have warranted such a punishment. Ibn Marzūq al-Ṭilimsanī (d. 766/1364) related this tale before him, and others like al-Ḥallāj (d. 309/922)

[133] Ibid., 398 and 400.

[134] Ibid., 401.

[135] Al-Qasṭallānī, 2:25.

and Ibn ʻArabī (d. 638/1240) recorded their own versions of the symbolism of Muḥammad's name.[136]

Muʻtazilī theologians in medieval Baghdad also contemplated the ways in which bodily marks functioned in terms of religious identification. Al-Muʻāfā al-Jarīrī (d. 390/1000) summarized a theological debate among Muʻtazilī scholars who disputed whether religious men could legitimately perform miracles or whether all claims to miraculous works after the Prophet's death necessarily came from charlatans and false prophets. Ultimately, they determined that although the visible blight (*ʻāha ẓāhira*) of having one blind eye is al-Dajjāl's distinguishing physical sign, half-blindness is not a universal mark of evil. After all, many good-hearted people share this trait with al-Dajjāl. As such, false and true prophets can not be distinguished by particular physiognomic marks. "As for prophethood, the true prophet is he who is called to prophethood, and the false one is he who lies about his claims to it. These two types are the same in physiognomy (*khilqa*), form and the human body."[137] The outer surfaces of the body provide no evidence of the authenticity of one's claims to prophethood, which is a novel reading of the outward (*ẓāhir*) reflecting the (*bāṭin*).

Muḥammad was said to have a singular marking on his body, though no sources describe it as a blight. In Qur'an 33:40 he is described as the seal of the prophets (*khātim* [or *khātam*] *al-nabiyyīn*), and hadiths and literature on *shamā'il* (physical and abstract characteristics of Muḥammad) elaborate on this characterization. In a tradition narrated

[136] Annemarie Schimmel, *And Muhammad Is His Messenger: The Veneration of the Prophet in Islamic Piety* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985), 115.

[137] Al-Muʻāfāibn Zakariyyā al-Jarīrī, *Al-Jalīs al-ṣāliḥ al-kāfī, wa'l-anīsal-nāṣiḥal-shāfī*, ed. Muḥammad Mursī Khawlī (Beirut: ʻĀlam al-kutub, 1987), 3:316.

by ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib, he is the final messenger of God who bears on his body the seal or mark of prophethood (*khātim al-nubuwwa*) – a raised disk of skin the size of a pigeon's egg located between his shoulder blades.[138] The term *khātim* can mean "stopper" or "authenticating mark," and there was considerable debate among medieval theologians about how to understand the use of this word in the Qur'an.[139] If we are to interpret this term as a mark of prophethood, then the alignment of prophethood with physical distinguishing characteristics takes on new importance. Prophetic and religious authority in Islam are encoded on the body.

[138] Muḥammad ibn ʿĪsā al-Tirmidhī, *Al-Shamā'il al-muḥammadiyya*, ed. Muḥammad ʿAwwāma (Medina: s.n., 2001), 88.

[139] Chase F. Robinson, "Neck-Sealing in Early Islam," *JESHO* 48.3 (2005): 402, fn. 2; Yohanan Friedmann, "Finality of Prophethood in Sunnī Islām," *Jerusalem Studies of Arabic and Islam* 7 (1986): 180ff.

Chapter 3
Aestheticizing the Blighted Body

The life story of Shihāb al-Dīn al-Ḥijāzī, an eighth/fifteenth-century Cairene author, provides a rich site for exploring the confluence of several aspects of this phenomenon as he encounters body aesthetics, sufism, disability, illness and sexuality in both his work and his personal relationships. Living and writing in a majority Shāfi'ī milieu, al-Ḥijāzī positions the blighted person as historical subject and as an object of desire.

An Arab Muslim name is truly a study in genealogy and affiliations. The full name of our subject is Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn 'Alī ibn Ḥasan ibn Ibrāhīm al-Ḥijāzī al-Anṣārī al-Khazrajī al-Sa'dī al-'Ubādī al-Qāhirī al-Shāfi'ī. His given name is Aḥmad, and his honorific is Shihāb al-Dīn, which means 'shooting star of the faith.' His father's name was Muḥammad, his paternal grandfather was Alī, and his paternal great-grandfather was named Ḥasan.[140] Al-Ḥijāzī also claimed descent from the Khazrajī tribe, one of the two Medinan clans that welcomed Muḥammad and his followers into the city after they had departed Mecca. The two tribes later merged and

[140] In all of the available biographies, the only deviation in al-Ḥijāzī's name comes in al-Suyūṭī's *Naẓm al-'iqyān*, where his great-grandfather's name is given as Ḥusayn. (Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī, *Naẓm al-'iqyān fī a'yān al-a'yān,* ed. Philip K. Hitti (New York: Syrian-American Press, 1927), 63.)

became collectively known as the Anṣār, or helpers. Al-Ḥijāzī's name also indicates that he claimed Cairo as his home and that he was an adherent of the Shāfiʿī legal school, which was the majority legal group in northern Egypt before the arrival of the Ottomans in 922/1517, after which time the Ḥanafī school came to predominate. Al-Shāfiʿī is also buried in Cairo's Qarāfa cemetery, and his mausoleum attracts pilgrims today seeking blessings and cures. So al-Ḥijāzī's name gives information on formal aspects of his identity that would have been intelligible to anyone with knowledge of Arabic, Islam and Middle Eastern geography, but tells little about how he functioned within specific social and cultural contexts in Mamluk Cairo.

The year of al-Ḥijāzī's birth, 790/1388, was an eventful time in Cairo. Extreme weather patterns, pestilence and an imperial project to remove eliminate poor and disabled people from the streets of Cairo were recorded in chronicles of the period. In Rabīʿ I 790/March 1388, the third month of the Islamic lunar calendar, high winds blew through Egypt, stirring up so much dirt and sand that women walking in the streets were nearly blinded.[141] Unusually strong winds were known throughout Egypt. In 1481, an Italian Jewish traveler in Alexandria noted that in June, July and August, a fierce wind "attacks people like the black plague, God forbid! Or makes them blind so that for five or six months they cannot see at all. Therefore it is that in Alexandria many people are found whose eyes are diseased."[142] Another European Jewish visitor to Alexandria in

[141] Aḥmad ibn ʿAlī ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *Inbāʾ al-ghumr bi-anbāʾ al-ʿumr,* ed. Ḥasan al-Ḥabashī (Cairo: s. n., 1969), 1:350.

[142] *Jewish Travellers,* ed. Elkan Nathan Alder (London: George Routledge and Sons, 1930), 160.

1487 commented that "most of the inhabitants are subject to diseases of the eye."[143] In 1599, Muṣṭafā ʻĀlī, an Ottoman Turkish visitor to Cairo, would remark that "most of the people of Egypt are affected by some disease and ailing. One rarely meets a person whose eyes are bright and round, who is [not] himself nor his male sex organ suffering from an illness, and whose physical health is manifest."[144] Sound health emerges as a rare physical condition in Mamluk Cairo.

Returning to the events of Rabīʻ I 790/March 1388, we also know that a fierce plague struck Egypt and lasted three full months, claiming almost 300 victims daily.[145] It would have been perceived as a minor miracle that al-Ḥijāzī's mother did not expire from the plague while carrying him. Infants and children were considered particularly susceptible to the ravages of the plague. Al-Maqrīzī attested that when the plague first struck the city in this year, scholars read portions of religious texts in the city's mosques in order to request God's mercy, and one time at al-Azhar, the audience was composed entirely of children and orphans.[146]

Plague viruses spread quickly and frequently through the urban centers of the medieval Middle East, usually with devastating effect, though the effects were less severe than in rural areas. Still, in cities, the disposal of masses of human remains in a timely manner sometimes proved difficult, thereby posing threats to public health and sanitation. A city's water supply could become polluted, thereby exposing the entire urban

[143] Ibid., 222.

[144] Andreas Tietze, *Muṣṭafā ʻĀlī's Description of Cairo of 1599: Text, Transliteration, Translation, Notes* (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1975), 42.

[145] Al-ʻAsqalānī, *Inbā'*, 1:350.

[146] Taqī al-Dīn Aḥmad al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-sulūk li-maʻrifat duwal al-mulūk*, eds. Muḥammad Muṣṭafá Ziyāda and Saʻīd ʻAbd al-Fattāḥ al-ʻAshūr (Cairo: Lajnat al-Ta'līf wa l-Tarjama wa l-Nashr, 1934), 3:577.

population to the contagion. Even survivors of earlier plague epidemics did not necessarily escape unscathed. Children and the elderly were easy victims, though the virus afflicted all segments of society. Families were destroyed or weakened by the plague. In Damascus at a later time, our historian Ibn Ṭūlūn (d. 953/1546) lost his mother Azdān to the plague before he had even learned to walk.[147]

Those infected with the plague virus may have suffered from swollen necks, armpits and groins, but were most readily identified by the characteristic pustules that erupted on the body and could permanently mar their skin or disfigure their bodies. The image of plague affliction was so ubiquitous and recognizable in eighth/fourteenth-century Mamluk lands that al-Ṣafadī (d. 764/1363) wrote an epigram about a lover who had contracted the plague:

> Plague boils (*damāmil*) broke out on the leg of my beloved,
> But far be it for adversity to overshadow his grace.
> So I said to them [the critics], "There is nothing new in this, for have you ever seen
> The dawn unaccompanied by the bright gleam of morning?"[148]

Just as dawn and morning are inseparable parts of the day, the beauty of the beloved is inseparable from grace and thus impervious to blights.

The imperial project of removing the visible blight of beggars and disabled people from the urban landscape began before al-Ḥijāzī's birth and continued during his lifetime. The first Mamluk sultan to initiate such a project was al-Ẓāhir Baybars I, who in 664/1265-66 assembled the *ahl al-'āhāt* in the Khān Sabīl and then ordered their transfer

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[147] Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Ṭūlūn, *Al-Fulk al-mashḥūn fī aḥwāl Muḥammad ibn Ṭūlūn* (The Loaded Pontoon on the Life of Muḥammad ibn Ṭūlūn), ed. Muḥammad Khayr Ramaḍān Yūsuf (Beirut: Dār Ibn Ḥazm, 1996), 27.

[148] Al-Badrī, *Ghurrat al-ṣabāḥ*, 158a-b.

to al-Fayyūm, a province southwest of Cairo, where he had established a separate living area for them. In this new place their basic needs were provided for. Many of the *ahl al-'āhāt* returned to Cairo shortly after this forced migration.[149] Why would al-Fayyum, a Christian oasis settlement with many monasteries, be a suitable place for re-establishing their lives? On 16 Dhū l-Qa'da 730/31 August 1330, Sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad decreed that all amputees and lepers (*min al-jadhmā wa'l-burṣān*) living in Cairo and Old Cairo must move to an unspecified location in al-Fayyum.[150] In Shawwāl 794/mid-September 1392, al-Ẓāhir Barqūq ordered lepers and thieves who had had their hands amputated (*al-burṣān wa'l-jadhmā'*) to leave Cairo and its surrounding areas.[151] According to Ibn al-Furāt, the thieves soon returned to the city.[152] In Shawwāl 841/April 1438, Sultan al-Ẓāhir Barsbāy ordered able-bodied beggars to leave the streets, leaving only "chronically ill, blind and blighted people" to beg publicly.[153] None of the chroniclers cite the sultans' reasons for forcibly removing lepers and other people of blights from Cairo in the seventh/thirteenth and eighth/fourteenth centuries, and none of them comments on the

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[149] Rukn al-Dīn Baybars al-Manṣūrī al-Dawādar (d. 725/1325), *Zubdat al-fikra fī ta'rīkh al-hijra*, ed. Donald S. Richards (Beirut: Al-Sharikat al-muttaḥida li'l-tawzī', 1998), 106; Badr al-Dīn Maḥmūd al-'Aynī (d. 855/1451), *'Iqd al-jumān fī ta'rīkh ahl al-zamān*, Muḥammad Muḥammad Amīn (Cairo: Hay'at al-miṣriyya al-'āmma li'l-kitāb, 1987), 1:428. The accounts by these authors are identical, suggesting an earlier common source or al-'Aynī's direct borrowing of Baybars al-Manṣūrī's words.

[150] Al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-sulūk* [1956], 2:322-3.

[151] Al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-sulūk* [1956], 3:772; Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Raḥīm al-Furāt (d. 807/1405), *Ta'rīkh Ibn al-Furāt*, ed. Constantine Zurayq (Beirut: Al-Maṭba'a al-amīrkāniyya, 1936-), 9:310; Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Ḥanafī ibn Iyās, *Badā'i' al-zuhūr fī waqā'ī' al-duhūr*, ed. Muḥammad Muṣṭafā (Cairo: 1960), 1.2:454.

[152] Ibn al-Furāt, 9:311; Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī, *Inbā'*, 3:121.

[153] 'Alī ibn Dāwūd al-Ṣayrafī (d. 1494 or 1495), *Nuzhat al-nufūs wa'l-abdān fī tawārīkh al-zamān*, ed. Ḥasan Ḥabashī (Cairo: Wizārat al-Thaqāfa, Markaz Taḥqīq al-Turāth, 1970-1994), 3:408-9. (*"al-zamanī wa'l-'umyān wa-arbāb al-'āhāt"*) The editor compiled an index of "illnesses and physical blights" for only this volume of the four total (p. 542), recognizing that these categories were prominent enough to warrant a separate tabulation.

shame attached to this particular class of people. The official decree to allow only disabled beggars to remain in the streets in the ninth/fifteenth century similarly goes unexplained. Additional incidents involving the *ahl al-ʿāhāt* were recorded in other sources, and these events help to shed light on how they functioned as a group in Mamluk Cairo.

In Ṣafar 854/March 1450, during the reign of Jaqmaq, a black freedman named Saʿdallāh or Saʿdān, who was revered for his piety, publicly cursed the *ustādār*, or royal majordomo, Zayn al-Dīn Yaḥyā ibn ʿAbd al-Razzāq (d. 874/1469), and accused him of seizing his deceased master's property.[154] Zayn al-Dīn sent messengers to arrest Saʿdān, but they were unable to approach him either through a magical spell or because of physical force. Realizing that he could not subdue his opponent, Zayn al-Dīn returned what he had taken. Upon learning of Saʿdān's victory, a group of commoners (*al-ʿawāmm*) to whom Saʿdallāh had taught piety hurried to "visit him and seek his blessing."[155] His defiance of authority and his piety made him a living saint. Al-Sakhāwī described the blessing seekers as a large mob that included Turks and women and grew to include local princes, officials and jurisprudents. Many of the blessing seekers were "chronically ill, blighted and sick people."[156] Ibn Iyās also recorded this event, but

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[154] Al-Sakhāwī, *Kitāb al-tibr*, 302. Ibn Taghrībirdī gave his name as Saʿdān and described him as a black slave.

[155] Ibid.

[156] Al-Sakhāwī, *Kitāb al-tibr,* 302. ("*wa-fīhim al-kathīr min al-zamanī wa-dhawī al-ʿāhāt wa'l-amrāḍ*"); Ibn Taghrībirdī (d. 1470), *Ḥawādith al-duhūr fī madá al-ayyām wa'l-shuhūr* (Cairo: Lajnat iḥyā' al-turāth al-islāmī, 1990), 1:200-1, 203; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *Al-Nujūm al-ẓāhira fī mulūk miṣr wa'l-qāhira* (Cairo: s.n., 1929), 15:406-7.

omitted any descriptions of the crowds that thronged Sa‘dān.[157] His charismatic leadership and brave defiance of the Mamluk power structure imbued his claims of piety with an authority that appealed to a major cross-section of Cairenes. If figures of piety held particular attractiveness for people of blights, then saints' tombs, cemeteries, shrines and hagiographies should offer windows onto the religious lives of disabled Muslims. In addition to this case, Boaz Shoshan has also discussed a number of mentions in chronicles of mentally ill individuals in Cairo at this time who were confined in hospitals and subject to harsh curative measures, noting that they were all embroiled in "religious scandals."[158] Again, faith and disability publicly intersect in the disabled bodies of this spontaneous adoring crowd in intriguing ways.

So, it was into this milieu of pestilence, extreme weather patterns and consequently, an acute awareness of the diseased, marked or blighted body that al-Ḥijāzī was born and raised. In addition to natural phenomena, Cairo's scholarly class was stirred by the presence of an eminent scholar in its midst. In Sha‘bān, the eighth month, the famed North African historian Ibn Khaldūn (d. 808/1406) had recently arrived in Cairo after completing the Meccan pilgrimage and had just begun lecturing on hadith in the ‘Arghatmish madrasa. His itinerancy was due in part to ongoing tense relations with his North African patrons and the Muslim obligation to go on pilgrimage. But he also recognized the secular importance of travel, deeming "traveling in quest of knowledge [to be] absolutely necessary for the acquisition of useful knowledge and perfection, through meeting authoritative teachers (shaykhs) and having contact with (scholarly)

[157] Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i‘*, 2.5: 2, 253.

[158] Shoshan, "The State," 337-8.

personalities."[159] His views on travel were shared by many in the Islamicate world, including the circle of scholars under study here.

In the midst of all of these events taking place during the reign of Al-Ẓāhir Sayf al-Dīn Barqūq (r. 1382-89 and 1390-99), our Shihāb al-Dīn al-Ḥijāzī was born on 27 Sha'bān 790/30 August 1388 in the old Fatimid capital of Cairo.[160] Aside from a single autobiographical anecdote about nearly suffocating at a young age from falling headfirst into a large melon, no first-person musings about his youth have survived.[161] What is known of his early life has been related by friends and associates. He was born on Yellow Lane (*Al-Darb al-aṣfar*), a side street that linked the elite Baybarsiyya madrasa-khānqāh complex to Bayn al-Qaṣrayn Street (*Shāri' Bayn al-Qaṣrayn*), a major thoroughfare reserved for royal processions and public ceremonies. (fig. 3) Incidentally, Baybars's daughter Tidhkārbāy Khātūn had already built the Ribāṭ al-Baghdādiyya in 684/1285 Yellow Lane, but only women were permitted to live there.[162] Amirs and royal women who wanted to construct visible religious institutions tended to build on streets feeding into Bayn al-Qaṣrayn Street.[163] The Mamluk amir Baybars al-Jāshankirī, also known as Baybars II, had begun construction on the Baybarsiyya compound in 706/1307-8, and it was completed in 709/1310 during his yearlong reign as sultan. The Baybarsiyya, as it

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[159] Ibn Khaldūn, *The Muqaddimah*, trans. Franz Rosenthal (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967), 3:308.

[160] Of al-Ḥijāzī's dozens of biographers, Ibn Khalīl (d. 920/1514) is the only one to give his birth year as 795/1392. See his *Nayl al-amal fī dhayl al-duwal*, ed. 'Umar 'Abd al-Salām Tadmurī (Ṣaydā-Beirut: Al-Maktabat al-'aṣriyya, 2002), 6:438.

[161] Al-Biqā'ī, *'Inwān al-zamān*, 1:221.

[162] Al-Maqrīzī, *Al-Khiṭaṭ*, 2:427-8.

[163] Susan Jane Staffa, *Conquest and Fusion: The Social Evolution of Cairo, A.D. 642-1850* (Leiden: E. J. Brill 1977), 111-2; Nasser O. Rabbat, *The Citadel of Cairo: A New Interpretation of Royal Mamluk Architecture* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1995), 238.

came to be known, was constructed on Festival Gate Street (*Shāri‘ bāb al-‘īd*) on the site of the Fatimid palace of the viziers and consisted of a sufi lodge, hospice, mausoleum for the founder and a minaret, and it benefited from considerable funding and support.[164] This institution would remain a significant one in the lives of Shihāb al-Dīn and his father, Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Ḥijāzī, who was a Qur'ān reciter renowned for "the tenderness of his voice and the beauty of his inflections."[165] His son later became a Qur'an reciter at the Baybarsiyya and was recognized as "one of the notables in Qur'an recitation."[166] Shams al-Dīn also wrote praise poems, taught his son prosody and music, and used to stroll near the Baybarsiyya with Shihāb al-Dīn on the festival *yawm al-sābi‘a* to seek blessing for them from the holy places.[167] Shams al-Dīn al-Ḥijāzī died in 809/1406, when his son was eighteen years old, and according to al-Sakhāwī, Shihāb al-Dīn related so many stories to him about his father's life that he felt as though he had actually studied with Shams al-Dīn. As he put it, "he was my *shaykh* indirectly."[168] Shihāb al-Dīn's loyalty to his family impressed another of his close friends, who claimed that

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[164] For more images and architectural details about the Baybarsiyya, see K.A.C. Creswell, *The Muslim Architecture of Egypt*, (New York: Hacker Art Books, 1979), 2:249-53 + plates 95-8, 112-3, 121, and Henri and Anne Stierlin, *Splendours of an Islamic World: Mamluk Art in Cairo, 1250-1517* (New York: Tauris Parke Books, 1997), 26-9.

[165] Al-Sakhāwī, *Al-Ḍaw'*, 8:179.

[166] ‘Alī ibn Dāwud al-Ṣayrafī (d. 1495), *Inbā' al-haṣr bi-anbā' al-‘aṣr*, ed. Ḥasan Ḥabashī (Cairo: Dār al-fikr al-‘arabī, 1970), 258.

[167] Burhān al-Dīn Ibrāhīm al-Biqā‘ī (d. 1480),*‘Unwān al-‘unwān bi-tajrīd asmā' al-shuyūkh wa-ba‘ḍ al-talāmidha wa'l-aqrān* (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-‘Arabī, 2002), 36; Al-Sakhāwī, *Al-Ḍaw' al-lāmi‘*, 2:147. I have been unable to identify this festival.

[168] Al-Sakhāwī, *Al-Ḍaw'*, 8:179.

"he loved … his family and honored them. He did not talk about any of them in a backbiting manner (*bi-ghība*) or with slander or condescension."[169]

At the Baybarsiyya and the Saʿīdiyya madrasas, al-Ḥijāzī delved into the sufi way of life, eventually receiving the sufi cloak from Shihāb al-Dīn al-Nāṣiḥ (d. 804/1402), a respected sufi shaykh in Cairo, and learning *dhikr* (a sufi devotional act) from al-Ḥāfī.[170] Shihāb al-Dīn ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī (773-852/1372-1449), who is most often recognized for his scholarly contributions to Islamic studies and his position as the Shāfiʿī chief justice of Egypt, was intermittently *nāẓir* (director) and grand shaykh of the Baybarsiyya from 813/1410 until his death 39 years later. At some point during his tenure there, al-Ḥijāzī heard hadith from this master. They cultivated a close teacher-student relationship, but it developed into a friendship that was based in part on their shared interests in writing poetry, composing riddles and exchanging personal letters. Teachers and students often described their relationships in terms of love, physical attachment and friendship. Although "lecturing, reading, writing, reproducing texts, debating, discipleship, and scholarly friendship seem so widespread as to be marginal to the interests of social historians," analyzing friendship invites access to how certain ideas were communicated. The "history of sentiment," to borrow Chamberlain's words, possesses the potential to make everyday experience accessible to the historian.[171]

The friendship of these two men endured until Ibn Ḥajar's death in 852/1449 following a two-month illness. On this solemn occasion al-Ḥijāzī wrote a lengthy,

[169] Al-Ṣayrafī, *Inbā'*, 259.

[170] Ibid., 2:147-8.

[171] Michael Chamberlain, *Knowledge and Social Practice in Medieval Damascus* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 7, 114.

touching eulogy for him, the last of many expressions of love, sympathy and warmth for his friend and teacher.[172] Al-Sakhāwī said that of the many poets who eulogized Ibn Ḥajar, al-Ḥijāzī presented the best tribute.[173] Another of the "shooting stars," al-Shihāb al-Manṣūrī, honored Ibn Ḥajar in a couplet, after witnessing the crowds of people who gathered in the rain to watch his solemn funeral cortege that included the Mamluk sultan al-Ẓāhir Sayf al-Dīn Jaqmaq (r. 842-857/1438-1453) and other political dignitaries and scholars carrying Ibn Ḥajar's funeral bier through the streets of Cairo to the Qarāfa cemetery, southeast of the city.[174] The couplet reads:

> Clouds wept on the *qāḍī al-quḍāt* with rain,
> Demolishing the pillar strengthened by the stone [*ḥajar*].[175]

Before this final illness, Ibn Ḥajar had suffered other setbacks to his health, about which his friends wrote poems. After he had been cured of ophthalmia (*ramad*), an ocular inflammation thought to be caused by sand blowing into the eye, al-Ḥijāzī wrote two verses for him during his convalescence:

> You are not embarrassed by ophthalmia and you are not afraid
> Of the envious one who possesses grains of sand.
> May God protect you from the enemy's sand.
> Yes, may He turn you from the evil of the eye.[176]

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[172] Taqī al-Dīn ibn Fahd al-Hāshimī, *Laḥẓ al-alḥāẓ bi-dhayl ṭabaqāt al-ḥuffāẓ* (Beirut: Dār iḥyā' al-turāth al-'arabī, n.d.), 339-45; Ibrāhīm ibn Ḥasan al-Biqā'ī, *'Inwān al-zamān bi-tarājim al-shuyūkh wa'l-aqrān*, ed. Ḥasan Ḥabashī (Cairo: Dār al-kutub wa'l-wathā'iq al-qawmiyya, 2001), 1:131-2; Al-Sakhāwī, *Al-Jawāhir*, 1:317, 428-31.

[173] Al-Sakhāwī, *Kitāb al-tibr*, 233.

[174] Al-Sakhāwī, *Al-Jawāhir*, 1:317.

[175] Aftab Aḥmad Raḥmānī, *The Life and Works of Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani* (Bangladesh: Islamic Foundation Bangladesh, 2000), 109.

[176] Al-Sakhāwī, *Al-Jawāhir*, 1:428. It is also cited in al-Badrī, *Al-Durr*, 1:188. It is likely that the reference to the eye (*'ayn*) in the final hemistich is a subtle attack on one of al-'Asqalānī's chief rivals, the scholar Badr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-'Aynī (d. 855/1451), so named because he was a native of 'Ayntāb. The convention of placing a double entendre at the end of a poetic line is known as *tawriyya*. Cf. a sample of al-'Asqalānī's poetry in Raḥmānī, 209. For more on these two scholars, see Anne Broadbridge's rich portrait

The date of composition is not mentioned, but Ibn Ḥajar must have suffered from ophthalmia at least twice. The poet al-Shihāb ibn Ṣāliḥ also wrote two poems for Ibn Ḥajar about his ophthalmia, and in the second one, he mentions that he is writing about a reoccurrence of the affliction. Ibn Ḥajar's illness must not have progressed to blindness in either or both of his eyes, as al-Sakhāwī described him as a man "sound of hearing and sight."[177] Otherwise, he may have been asked to relinquish his post as supervisor. Amir Baybars al-Jāshankirī stipulated in the pious endowment deed (*waqfiyya*) that "anyone whose body or clothing contradicted the perfect and sacred Islamic law" could not serve as administrator.[178] Leonor Fernandes interprets this clause as a restriction on people with disabilities or blights, among other groups, from assuming these high positions.[179] This stipulation is also curious given the fact that Baybars deposed al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, a popular sultan whose lameness figured as a large part of his public image. A song of political support for al-Nāṣir Muḥammad included the line "Bring us the lame one!" – a reference to the Egyptian people's beloved leader. The two men's contest for the sultanate was fierce, especially after it was revealed that al-Nāṣir Muḥammad had plotted

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of scholarly friendship, "Academic Rivalry and the Patronage System in Fifteenth-Century Egypt: Al-'Ayni, Al-Maqrizi, and Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani," *MSR* 3 (1999): 85-107.

[177] Al-Sakhāwī, *Al-Jawāhir*, 3:1053.

[178] My translation of Leonor Fernandes, "The Foundation of Baybars al-Jashankir: Its Waqf, History, and Architecture," *Muqarnas* 4 (1987): 39, column 2, lines 31-2. Additionally, appointees to military and bureaucratic posts may have been subject to similar restrictions. David Ayalon has cited numerous instances in which Mamluk *amir*s were dismissed for illness or advanced age in "Discharges from Service, Banishments and Imprisonments in Mamlūk Society," *Israel Oriental Studies* 2 (1972): 26, fn. 9. The author of an eleventh/seventeenth-century Andalusian text on cannon noted that only men of sound health were permitted to operate the cannons. They could not be "deaf nor weak nor paralyzed nor one-eyed nor drunk." See Matar, 68.

[179] Ibid., 27.

to overthrow his rivals in 708/1308, just at the time when Baybars was beginning construction on the Baybarsiyya complex.[180] There is insufficient evidence to conclude that this intense political experience embittered him against placing physically blighted people in positions of power, though the timing of these events is suggestive.

Another possible explanation for the inclusion of such language is the prevalence of disease – particularly ophthalmic disorders – in Egypt. The visibility of blights made it a particularly salient category in late Mamluk Cairo. In keeping with the deed's emphasis on administrators' possessing ideal bodies, an eye doctor (*kaḥḥāl ṭaba'i'ī*) was resident in the Baybarsiyya.[181] Still, in one respect, the deed's restriction provides evidence that al-Shāfi'ī's denigrating remarks against the *ahl al-'āhāt* were accepted as authentic legal doctrine, especially as Shāfi'īs are the only ones who fully accept the leadership of a blind imam; Shi'īs, Ḥanbalīs and Ḥanafīs deem leadership of a blind man reprehensible, and Mālikīs find the situation acceptable, but not preferable to a sighted imam.[182] The endowment deed specifically invokes Islamic law as the moral system that forbids blighted people from participating equally in religious offices – not the Qur'an or sunna.

Although people with certain physical disabilities were prevented from assuming high positions of power at the Baybarsiyya, the institution's charitable care of sick and dependent people resonated with the values of Ibn Ḥajar and his wife Uns Khātūn.[183] They both took time to tend to the unwell. Ibn Ḥajar "was dedicated to visiting the sick

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[180] Boaz Shoshan, *Popular Culture in Medieval Cairo* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 52-3.

[181] Fernandes, "Foundation," 27.

[182] Rispler-Chaim, 25.

[183] Some secondary sources render her name as Anas Khātūn.

and attending funerals, especially those who depended on him (*man yalūdhu bihi*). And for those who were suffering acutely, he would visit the person bearing a gift [lit., 'with something from this world']." Al-Sakhāwī attested that one time when he himself was sick, Ibn Ḥajar charitably sent al-Shihāb ibn Ya'qūb, a close friend of his, to look after him.[184] Uns Khātūn also kept company with widows and "women who depended on leaders and others" (*yaludhna bi'l-ru'asā' wa-ghayrihim*) for material support.[185] Living near al-Ribāṭ al-Baghdādiyya, a religious convent that only accepted unsupported women (divorcées, widows, abandoned wives) as residents, Uns Khātūn likely devoted time and energy there. Evidently, caring for sick and dependent people constituted a firm and shared priority in Ibn Ḥajar's household.

Baybars II, a passionately religious man, intended his madrasa to have a Shāfi'ī character. The actual endowment deed stipulates that a Shāfi'ī and a Ḥanafī imam must be resident at the Baybarsiyya, though the Shāfi'ī imam would receive a higher stipend that could be as much as forty additional dirhams every month.[186] Having dual heads at the Baybarsiyya was a political move to ensure peace between the dominant Shāfi'ī school and the increasingly numerous Ḥanafīs, who belonged to the madhhab officially supported by the Mamluk sultanate. "One of the remarkable aspects of the Mamluk society was the sharp cleavage between the Shafi'ites and the Hanafites. The cleavage became as serious as the Shi'a and the Sunni feuds in the past centuries. From Baybars's [Sultan Ẓāhir Baybars I's] time this feud went on increasing and during the 15th century it

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[184] Al-Sakhāwī, *Al-Jawāhir*, 3:1045.

[185] Ibid., 3:1212. Aftab Aḥmad Raḥmānī understands this passage to mean that Uns Khātūn cared for disabled people. See Raḥmānī, 95.

[186] Fernandes, "Foundation," 25.

reached a climax."[187] The Egyptian historian Ibn Duqmāq (d. 809/1407) identified the Baybarsiyya as an establishment shared by Shāfi'īs and Mālikīs, but al-Maqrīzī (d. 845/1442) designated it a Shāfi'ī institution.[188] Although the *waqfiyya* is the most authentic piece of evidence about its originally intended legal orientation, these remarks made by contemporary observers suggest that the affiliation changed under different leadership or due to internal or external pressures. However, all the sources agree that the Baybarsiyya catered, at least in part, to a Shāfi'ī constituency.

In addition to his early education in sufism, as a young boy al-Ḥijāzī learned Qur'anic recitation from his father and memorized al-Ḥarīrī's grammatical treatise *Mulḥat al-i'rāb* and recited it to his teacher Zayn al-Dīn al-'Irāqī (d. 806/1403) when he was only seven years old.[189] Interestingly, acquiring such knowledge and performing it publicly may have been a common rite of passage for seven-year-old boys. According to an eighth/fourteenth-century Cairene manual on morals and market inspection, "when a boy is seven years old the teacher must order him to say his prayers with the congregation."[190] Even if such feats of memorization were expected of young boys, al-Ḥijāzī still must have impressed his teacher in legal studies, because by the time he was 16 years old, al-'Irāqī had qualified him to teach hadith to others. Al-Ḥijāzī also counted Ibn Abī Majid, al-Tanūkhī, Ibn Kuwayk and al-Nūr al-Fawī among his hadith instructors.

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[187] Raḥmānī, 43.

[188] Cited in K.A.C. Creswell, 2:253.

[189] Al-Sakhāwī, *Al-Ḍaw'*, 2:148; 'Umar ibn Fahd al-Hāshimī, *Mu'jam al-shuyūkh*, ed. Muḥammad al-Zāhī (Riyadh: Manshūrāt Dār al-Yamāma li-'-Baḥth wa'l-Tarjama wa'l-Nashr, 1982), 345.

[190] Ibn al-Ukhuwwa (d. 729/1329), *The Ma'ālim al-qurba fī aḥkām al-ḥisba of Ḍiya' al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-Qurashī al-Shāfi'ī, known as Ibn al-Ukhuwwa*, ed. and trans. Reuben Levy (London: Luzac & Co., 1938), 60.

Other fields of study included jurisprudence, methodologies of jurisprudence and Arabic with al-Shams al-Suyūṭī, al-Shihāb al-Maghrāwī, Nāṣir al-Dīn ibn Anas and al-ʿIzz ibn Jamāʿa (d. 819/1416). Having studied with such scholarly luminaries, it is unsurprising that al-Ḥijāzī gained a reputation as a capable and eager student. Al-Sakhāwī, a biographer and student of al-Ḥijāzī's, praised his prodigious memory and related an intriguing story about his quest to memorize increasingly more.[191] According to al-Sakhāwī,

> he continued to be foremost in intelligence and skillful in memorization until he started taking anacardium nut (*ḥabb al-balādhur*). He took so much that his mind became illogical. He said, 'Thereupon, I was only able to memorize with enormous strain. This happened to me the year after a burning broke out on my body. More than 100 boils (*mi'at dummal*) reddened and stayed on my body, and every little one afflicted me.'"[192]

This episode influenced al-Ḥijāzī so deeply that he narrated his own experience with physical blightedness while living through it, and he also composed poetry dedicated to others like himself who suffered bodily and socially for their blights.

Balādhur

Anacardium nut had been used in the Arab world as a memory-enhancing substance since at least the third/ninth century. (fig. 2) In the Bundahishn, a third/ninth-century Zoroastrian creation myth, anacardium nut (*balātur* in Pahlavi) is cited as having

[191] Al-Sakhāwī, *Al-Ḍaw'*, 2:147-9.

[192] Ibid., 148. Al-Ṣafadī used the same term – *dummal* (plural: *damāmil* or *damāmīl*) – to refer to plague boils. The last Mamluk sultan, al-Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī, had such a large and painful *dummal* on his head that he could not comfortably don a certain ceremonial hat. (Ibn Iyās, *Badā'iʿ*, 4:212)

contradictory properties, "since sometimes in curing by poison [it] kill[s] the man."[193] According to Abū Muḥammad al-Qāsim al-Ghassānī (d. 1019/1610) in his treatise on medical botany, *balādhur* (Latin *Semecarpus anacardium*, Sanskrit *bhallātaka*) was natively grown in China, where it was used to dye hair black, in India and on Sicily's Mount Etna. Al-Ghassānī saw this nut, which resembled a chestnut in color and was shaped like a bird's heart, for sale in the Sūq al-'Aṭṭārīn (Drug and Perfume Market) in Fez. Between the outer wall and the pericarp of the nut was an amber-colored, inky, sticky, pungent juice that when ingested was thought to enhance one's memorizing powers. It was so acrid that al-Ghassānī warned that it "burned the user's tongue, as though it were wine made from mountain grapes."[194] In spite of this pungency of flavor, it was a popular remedy for a predominantly cold humor, languor following an illness, forgetfulness, and a diminished ability to memorize. Because the nut itself possessed a hot quality, people with predominantly hot humors should avoid the drug, since it heats the blood and could lead to two types of leprosy (*baraṣ* and *judhām*), itching (*saḥj*), hearing the voice of Satan (*waswās*), stupidity (*ḥumq*), rotting flesh (*'afn*) and even early death. Smoking anacardium was even said to cure hemorrhoids.[195] Today, anacardium is known as marking nut because the heavy, black ink is often used to stain linens and

[193] H. W. Bailey, *Zoroastrian Problems in the Ninth-Century Books* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1943), 81.

[194] Abū Muḥammad al-Qāsim al-Ghassānī, *Ḥadīqat al-azhār fī māhiyyat al-'ushb wa'l-'aqqār* (Flower Gardens: The Essence of Herbs and Drugs), ed. Muḥammad al-'Arabī al-Khaṭṭābī (Beirut: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī, 1985), 65; Dr. Staph, "Dell'anacardio," trans. Giuseppe Belluomini, *Annali di medicina omiopatica per la Sicilia* 4 (1838): 318-60.

[195] Al-Ghassānī, 65.

paper, but in the early modern Middle East, it marked bodies as a tattooing ink. The anacardium extract is so abrasive that it is also effective in removing tattoos.[196]

In Mamluk Cairo it was a popular drug in a society that valued memorization as a sign of intelligence and fitness for scholarly studies. Use of anacardium was likely a way to demonstrate one's dedication to learning. As such, both Muslims and Jews partook of the drug, and Arabic and Hebrew medical literatures attest to its use in treatments for forgetfulness and its possible side effects.[197] The tenth/sixteenth-century Jewish physician Judah Aryeh of Modena, a city in northern Italy, warned against the overuse of anacardium because he had "seen and known many people who because of a frequent use of [different] oils and because of the eating of all kinds of *balādhur* lost their mind and went crazy, or got sick and died before their time and were not remembered anymore."[198] Addiction to anacardium does not appear explicitly in early modern sources, though some descriptions of overuse suggest it. As recently as the 1980's and 1990's, schoolboys in northern Yemen used it as a study aid, and the broader Yemeni community regarded *balādhur* as an addictive substance.[199]

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[196] A 31-year-old man was recently treated in Burnley, England, for "redness, itching and blistering [on his forearm] followed by skin necrosis" after having applied marking nut extract to the area in order to remove a tattoo. A friend had procured the extract from Pakistan. After treating the eczema, the dermatologists found the man's arm had healed "without scarring, any visible remnants of the tattoo, or the need for debridement." A. Hafejee, et. al, "Traditional Tattoo Treatment Trauma," *British Journal of Dermatology* 153, suppl. 1 (2006): 62.

[197] Ignaz Goldziher, "Muhammedanischer Aberglaube über Gedächtnisskraft und Vergesslichkeit, mit Parallelen aus der jüdischen Litteratur," *Festschrift zum siebzigsten Geburtstage A. Berliners* (Frankfurt am Main: J. Kauffmann, 1903), 131-55; Gerrit Bos, "Jewish Traditions on Strengthening Memory and Leone Modena's Evaluation," *Jewish Studies Quarterly* (1995): 39-58.

[198] Quoted by Gerrit Bos, "*Balādhur* (Marking-Nut): A Popular Medieval Drug for Strengthening Memory," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 59.2 (1996): 234.

[199] Moshe Piamenta, *A Dictionary of Post-classical Yemeni Arabic* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1990), 1:38.

Stories about *balādhur*'s potentially debilitating or fatal effects circulated not only in Italy, but also the Middle East. The hadith specialist al-Ṭayālisī (d. 203 or 204/819-820) died at the age of seventy "after drinking a medicine made of the semecarpus anacardium nut,"[200] and the grandfather of the historian al-Balādhurī apparently "died mentally deranged through inadvertent use of *balādhur* (*Semecarpus Anacardium L.*, marking nut), a drug believed beneficial for one's mind and memory."[201] This last man's accidental death would come to mark the entire family who apparently assumed the name al-Balādhurī in remembrance of and possibly in homage to the man. This open admission of a family member's use of *balādhur* implies a lack of stigma attached to its consumption. Similarly, another famous Islamic scholar was reported to take *balādhur* regularly. Ibn al-Jawzī (d. 597/1201) took so much *balādhur*, in fact, that his beard thinned.[202]

Al-Ḥijāzī was spared death and enjoyed a long life, but he was one of the unfortunate ones who lost his mind for an unspecified period of time in his early twenties, then regained mental stability, though he ultimately lost some cognitive power, preventing him from memorizing as before.[203] He was forced to leave his religious studies behind, as he could no longer perform at the same level. He began to pursue literary studies full time. His loss of memory was not the only side effect of his overindulgence in

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[200] *EI*^{2}, s. v. "Al-Ṭayālisī."

[201] *EI*^{2}, s. v. "Al-Balādhurī."

[202] ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Aḥmad ibn Rajab (d. 795/1392), *Al-Dhayl ʿalá ṭabaqāt al-ḥanābila*, ed. Muḥammad Ḥamīd al-Faqī (Cairo: Maṭbaʿat al-sunna al-muḥammadiyya, 1953), 1:399-434. I am grateful to Maxim Romanov for this reference.

[203] Al-Ṣayrafī, one of al-Ḥijāzī's close friends, wrote an obituary claiming that he possessed "clarity of mind, lightness of spirit and sweetness of memory," (*Inbā'*, 258) ascribing a different legacy to his friend.

anacardium nut. According to a modern Indian pharmacological work, an overdose of the drug can lead to the eruption of red, inflamed sores that itch and burn.[204] Al-Ḥijāzī's outbreak of boils in Ramaḍān 815/1412-13 was so excruciating that he found himself unable to sleep for ten days. On the tenth day of sleeplessness, he wrote to his friend Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Asyūṭī (d. 859/1455) about the harrowing experience that became a test of patience. The letter is in rhymed prose (*saj'*) with some interspersed verses. Following an ornately rhetorical opening, al-Ḥijāzī writes:

> 'Praise unto God. May He take me into account in whatever He wills. There is no strength except through God. 'Truly the steadfast will be paid their reward without measure.' [Q 13:39] …
> I have spent ten nights without being refreshed by sleep, and I have had nothing to eat. So here, in this holy month [of Ramaḍān] I am fasting both night and day. The fire of this boil has covered up my heart's good fortune as though it were a salamander/phoenix. And why shouldn't it be this way since it too is alive inside the fire?
>
> Night grew long, and through it a boil afflicted me.
> It kept me from falling asleep, and I could not bear it.
> It felt as though knowing the time were a temptation, so here I am
> Keeping an eye on the night stars, waiting for the dawn.'[205]

In classical Arabic the word *samandal* can mean either 'salamander' or 'phoenix'. The connection between the two meanings stems from a belief that the salamander can not be killed by fire; in fact, the animal's cold body temperature was said to extinguish flames.[206] This belief even appears in contemporary Arabic, where one term for 'amphibian' is a direct translation from the Greek – *dhāt 'umrayn*, meaning 'having two lives.' By

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[204] Bos, "*Balādhur*," 234.

[205] Al-Suyūṭī, *Naẓm*, 65-6.

[206] For the magical properties of the salamander, see Ibn Waḥshiyya (d. 3rd/9th c.), *The Book of Poisons*, trans. Martin Levey (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1966), 56-8. For the salamander and phoenix as poetic motifs, see Walter Andrews and Mehmet Kalpaklı, *The Age of Beloveds: Love and the Beloved in Early-Modern Ottoman and European Culture and Society* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005), 96, fn. b.

drawing a comparison between surviving his fiery boils and a salamander's surviving a fire, al-Ḥijāzī may have led his friend to conjure associations with *balādhur*, the source of his suffering, as *balādhur* was commonly prescribed as an antidote to the lethal effects of the salamander's cold humor.[207] The narrator al-Suyūṭī interjects after the above epigram that "he then lost his mind from a boil whose burning bore a hole in his skin like a live coal."[208] While a known side effect of *balādhur* was mental unwellness, al-Suyūṭī may have felt obligated by friendship or professional loyalty to attribute his teacher's mental decline to a physical condition rather than to overuse of a dangerous drug. Al-Ḥijāzī himself never mentions *balādhur* in the letter, but the connection between his drug use, the boils and his loss of reason is made explicit in al-Sakhāwī's obituary.

The letter continues with details of his suffering and eventual despondency, with the writer likening the boils

> to an ordinary horseman who makes life hateful to me, attacking my soul again and again. I didn't find a way out of practicing patience. … This difficult ordeal has made death easy for me. … I gave up all hope of health … but I did not perish. Tears flowed from my eyes, as there was an obstacle between me and sleep.[209]

Then al-Ḥijāzī begins to construct his physical ordeal as an alternative form of fast and penance for Ramaḍān. Ironically, the use of *balādhur* contradicts the Islamic injunction against taking substances that would alter the mind and perception, so al-Ḥijāzī reconfigures martyrdom to reflect his own experiences, constructing a radically new way of viewing Islamic sacrifice and piety. The source of his suffering – drug use – is eclipsed

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207 *The Book of Poisons*, 58.

208 Al-Suyūṭī, *Naẓm*, 66.

209 Ibid.

by his emphasis on his bodily pain. The emotions and spiritual transformations he relates are such that he could have been writing about an arduous pilgrimage to Mecca, which he performed nearly twenty-eight years later in 843/1440.[210]

> A night of worry about the boil followed without interruption. … I bore it stoutly until the dawn overcame the night. … My body wasted away in these 10 days and nights from lack of food and sleep. Unfortunately, the truth is that crying did not make me fatter or spare me from hunger. But I swear by the dawn and the 10 days and nights that my heart has already broken this fast. Though I was cut off from anything ruling over me and I was cast a long way off, my spirit has soared. I am greater than someone who has not known suffering or who does not know the difference between convalescence and illness.[211]

Being afflicted with boils taught him piety, patience and perspective. Illness and suffering elevated him above the fray of ordinary believers, and he gained a renewed appreciation for life. Constructing himself as a Muslim martyr is similar to those Companions of the Prophet who are memorialized for the bodily sacrifices they made during war.

Khabar al-jism: Sharing a 'Story about the Body'

Al-Ḥijāzī once told his friend al-Biqāʿī that "strange things have happened to me in my life," then proceeded to recount for him stories about nearly suffocating from a headlong fall into a melon when he was just a boy, nearly drowning in an enormous water jug at the Baybarsiyya when he was a man and encountering repeated bad luck while walking through Cairo one day. After finishing these tales, al-Ḥijāzī confided in his friend, "'A lot of people think that I fabricate many of the strange things that happen to me,' but he swore by God that all of it had happened to him and that he had not contrived

[210] ʿUmar ibn Fahd al-Hāshimī, *Muʿjam*, 345; al-Biqāʿī, *ʿInwān*, 1:219.

[211] Al-Suyūṭī, *Naẓm*, 66-7.

any of it."[212] The improbability of al-Ḥijāzī's experiences and stories gave his contemporaries reason to doubt their veracity, and certain elements of this letter suggest that it was not composed spontaneously during his period of deep suffering, but were deliberately composed later. Portions are written in rhymed prose (*saj'*) and metered verses are interspersed throughout the prose. Though it is unlikely that this letter, which was reproduced by al-Suyūṭī, is an authentic, verbatim rendering of the original, the circumstances detailed within it have been substantiated by such reputable sources as al-Sakhāwī, al-Suyūṭī and al-Asyūṭī.

The recipient of this letter, al-Asyūṭī, replied to his friend with a sympathetic message. After an ornate rhetorical address, he reminded al-Ḥijāzī of the Prophet's affirmation that "there is no type of illness or pain that afflicts a believer without it becoming a penance for his sins."[213] These brief remarks are the only portion of the text addressed directly to al-Ḥijāzī. Following this section, al-Asyūṭī characterized the letter as "an honored composition that contained a complaint about the pain of boils [that] has reached me from our lord, a man who holds the reins of explication and is pointed at with the fingertips (a gesture suggesting a person's fame)." The letter itself is described as more than simply a complaint letter, for al-Ḥijāzī has "expressed a story about the body using dissimilarity and substitutions (*bi'l-taghayyur wa'l-abdāl*), giving insight on the letters of illness (? *ḥurūf al-i'tilāl*) after he had lost all remembrance of good health."[214]

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[212] Al-Biqā'ī, *'Inwān*, 1:220-2.

[213] Ibid., 68. Variations of this hadith are found in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, vol. 7, nos. 545, 551, 571.

[214] Ibid.

Al-Asyūṭī recognizes the spiritual significance of his friend's ordeal, but is quite clear in describing it as a "story about the body."

Since patient histories from Mamluk Cairo have not been recovered, Arabic auto-narratives of illness are a rare genre. Julia Bray has read al-Tanūkhī's (d. 4th/10th c.) compiled autobiographical medical anecdotes for evidence of subject-formation.[215] Personal letters are unique in that they provide an autobiographical perspective and permit individual self-expression and representation. In historical works letters can act as windows onto actors' private thoughts, offer mundane details about daily life that are usually lost in formal writings or simply shift the narrative perspective. While al-Ḥijāzī's letter is not a formal narrative of symptoms and complaint, his prose and poetry offer a view of one man's construction of illness, sanctity and fury at the circumstances.

Here, a portrait of illness is so starkly rendered that al-Asyūṭī wonders who could read his words unmoved and marvels at his endurance during such an extraordinary physical trial. Al-Ḥijāzī connected with an unidentified Mamluk soldier who had experienced a similar bout of agony.

> His pain and sleeplessness persisted during the hottest part of the day. The carcasses of animals surrounded him, many of which had turned to stone. He sought refuge from the sun under rocks, though the stones had cracked open in the heat. The deaf man (*al-aṣamm*) is he who does not pity someone painfully afflicted, and the mute man (*al-abkam*) is he who does not open his mouth though his body is speaking. I remained silent about a symptom until it was manifested on my body, about a physical anomaly until I stood up and collapsed on the ground, about something found on the heart until it was found in the eye, about a thought that had occurred to me until it became blind (? *makfūfan*) to the legs or grasped by the hands.[216]

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[215] Julia Bray, "The Physical World and the Writer's Eye: Al-Tanūkhī and Medicine," in *Writing and Representation in Medieval Islam: Muslim Horizons*, ed. Julia Bray (New York: Routledge, 2006), 229-31.

[216] Al-Suyūṭī, *Naẓm*, 69.

In early ninth/fifteenth-century Cairo, the Mamluk military corps consisted of mostly Turkic-speaking male slaves and their children (*awlād al-nās*), who were most often linguistically and culturally isolated from the Arabic-speaking residents of the city. Since Mamluk sultans were also of Kurdish, Circassian and Turkish descent and often of slave origin, the Mamluk soldiers had a more immediate identification with the power structure than with the masses. A culture of distrust characterized the relationship between the two groups. Arabic-speaking and Mamluk social networks had few overlaps, so the communion of the Mamluk and al-Ḥijāzī over their shared physical experiences and consequent social isolation is especially remarkable.[217] Al-Asyūṭī reports that the Mamluk had suffered much ("his pain was long") and had been abandoned by his friends. His suffering was lightened when al-Ḥijāzī shared "a symptom (*'ard*) of the body. Their souls suddenly came to know each other, and their spirits intermingled. Their bodies were associated with each other in good times, and their body parts were attracted to each other for their shared misfortunes."[218] Their bodies form the common grounds for companionship.

Al-Ḥijāzī's Literary Pursuits

"I am he whose literature the blind saw and whose words the deaf heard."
Abū al-'Alā' al-Ma'arrī[219]

[217] David Ayalon, "The Muslim City and the Mamluk Military Aristocracy," *Proceedings of the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities* 2 (1968): 323.

[218] Al-Suyūṭī, *Naẓm*, 69.

[219] Al-Ma'arrī was a blind Syrian poet who died in 449/1057. For more about this verse, see Franz Rosenthal, "'Blurbs' (*taqrîẓ*) from Fourteenth-Century Egypt," *Oriens* 27 (1981): 195, fn. 35.

Leo Africanus remarked in his *Description of Africa*, which he completed by 1526, that Egyptians were friendly people who were avid fans of word games.[220] Although he made this observation at least 50 years after al-Ḥijāzī's death, the description seems to have fit our poet, who, according to one biographer, was charming, gracious and a friend to many people.[221] As for word play, even the Mamluk Sultan Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī (r. 906-22/1501-16) was susceptible to the trend. He led literary sessions at court, which would typically open with a question or riddle posed to the sultan or the general assembly.[222] Outside court culture, puzzles were also popular. Al-Ḥijāzī wrote an unrecovered book on the topic entitled *Muṣannaf fī al-alghāz wa'l-aḥājī* (Composition on Riddles and Puzzles). Two cryptic letters to his friend Shihāb al-Dīn ibn al-Shāb al-Tā'ib and one letter to Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī that were in the form of riddling verse have even been preserved.[223]

Al-Ḥijāzī's literary training included studies of Ibn Rashīq's treatise on literary composition *al-'Umdah*, the Qur'an, *Nūr al-'Uyūn* (Light of the Eyes), *al-Tanbīh* (Allusions) and Ḥarīrī's *maqāma*s, "except for the insignificant ones among them."[224] Among his own literary works are a seventy-volume work on the art of composition entitled *Tadhkira fī al-adīb* and an examination of poetic meter in the Qur'an (*Qalā'id al-nuḥūr min jawāhir*), which his contemporary Shihāb al-Dīn ibn 'Arabshāh al-Dimashqī

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[220] Jean Léon l'Africain, 2:514.

[221] Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i'*, 3:57.

[222] For a riddle about an egg, see Ḥusayn ibn Muḥammad al-Ḥusaynī, *Majālis al-Sulṭān al-Ghawrī, ṣafḥāt min ta'rīkh Miṣr fī al-qarn al-'āshir*, ed. 'Abd al-Wahhāb 'Azzām (Cairo: Maṭba'a al-jinna al-ta'līf, 1941), 22. Al-Ḥusaynī recorded al-Ghawrī's court literary sessions for ten months in 910/1504 and 911/1505.

[223] Al-Suyūṭī, *Naẓm*, 64, 70-7; Al-Sakhāwī, *Al-Jawāhir*, 2:803-4.

[224] Al-Sakhāwī, *Al-Ḍaw'*, 2:147.

(791-854/1392-1450) recited to him. Al-Ḥijāzī apparently judged his recitation satisfactory and authorized Ibn ʿArabshāh to teach it to others.[225] Our al-Ḥijāzī also wrote works of literary commentary (*Al-Qawāʿid fī al-maqāmāt*, *Sharḥ al-muʿallaqāt*) and anthologies of poetry (*Kitāb rawḍ al-ādāb*, *Al-Lumaʿ al-shihābiyya min al-burūq al-ḥijāziyya*) that his students updated with his later verses. An autograph copy of his 275-folio *dīwān* at the Escorial Library in Spain includes samples of his poems in many genres.[226] In 826/1422 al-Ḥijāzī completed *Kitāb rawḍ al-ādāb* (Book of the Garden of Civilities), a compilation of Arabic "verse, prose, love poems, praise poems, riddles, literary debates, oral strophic poems, *muwashshaḥāt*, anecdotes, among other genres" from the pre-Islamic era through his own lifetime, even including some of his own work.[227] He also anthologized a diverse collection of anecdotes into a volume titled *Nawādir al-akhbār wa-ẓarāʾif al-ashʿār* (Anecdotal Reports and Charming Poetry). Though none of his biographers names this work among his writings, two of them do note that he was recognized as a man who had memorized many anecdotes.[228]

He was also widely praised for his literary gifts. Al-Sakhāwī described him as the "master littérateur of the age," and as befits someone with that title, his poetry enjoyed

[225] Ibid., 2:148. Ibn ʿArabshāh was taken prisoner by the Mongols during their siege of Damascus in 1400. The experience of captivity remained with him for a long time, and he eventually wrote a scathing biography of Timur-e Lang (Tamerlane).

[226] J. R. Smart, "The Muwaššaḥāt of al-Šihāb al-Ḥijāzī," in *Poesía estrófica; actas del Primer Congreso Internacional sobre Paralelos Romances (Madrid, diciembre de 1989)*, 347-56, eds. F. Corriente and A. Sáenz-Badillos (Madrid: Instituto de Cooperación con el Mundo Arabe, 1991).

[227] Al-Biqāʿī, *ʿInwān*, 1:220.

[228] Abdul Qayyum, "Al-Ḥijāzī, The Author of *Nawādir al-akhbār*," *Islamic Culture* 18 (July 1944): 257, 260-1.

considerable popularity and a wide circulation.[229] One finds a sample of his verses in "The Story of the Two Viziers: Nūr al-Dīn 'Alī al-Miṣrī and Badr al-Dīn Ḥasan al-Baṣrī" in an eleventh/seventeenth- or twelfth/eighteenth-century Egyptian manuscript of *The Thousand and One Nights*.

> Say thou to skin "Be soft," to face "Be fair,"
> And gaze, nor shall they blame howso thou stare:
> Fine nose in Beauty's list is high esteemed;
> Nor less an eye full, bright and debonnair:
> Eke did they well to laud the lovely lips
> (Which e'en the sleep of me will never spare);
> A winning tongue, a stature tall and straight;
> A seemly union of gifts rarest rare:
> But Beauty's acme in the hair one views it;
> So hear my strain and with some few excuse it!"[230]

The same story in the earliest known manuscript of the *Nights*, an eighth/fourteenth-century Syrian text in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, omits this poem and includes no discussion of the aesthetic merits of hair nor any mention of al-Ḥijāzī. These textual differences support the scholarly opinion that the *Nights* was largely amended in late Mamluk Cairo, and it is this form that has been transmitted to modern audiences.[231] Patrice Coussonnet, for instance, has analyzed specific elements of this story across the various editions and manuscripts and has concluded that the final recension is actually

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[229] Al-Sakhāwī, *Al-Jawāhir*, 3:1082; al-Sakhāwī, *Al-Ḍaw'*, 11:197; al-Sakhāwī, *Dhayl al-Tām 'alá duwal al-islām li'l-Dhahabī* (Beirut: Dār Ibn al-'Imād, 1992-), 2:246; al-Sakhāwī, *Wajīz al-kalām fī al-dhayl 'alá duwal al-islām*, eds. Bashār Ma'rūf, Aḥmad al-Khaṭīmī and 'Iṣām Fāris al-Ḥarastānī (Beirut: Mu'assassat al-risāla, 1995), 2:824.

[230] *The Book of the Thousand Nights and a Night: A Plain and Literal Translation of the Arabian Nights Entertainment*, trans. Richard F. Burton (Privately printed by the Burton Club, 1900). See also Muhsin Mahdi, *The Thousand and One Nights* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1995), 1:124.

[231] Robert Irwin, *The Arabian Nights: A Companion* (New York: Routledge, 1994).

from early ninth/fifteenth-century Cairo, placing its completion just at the apex of al-Ḥijāzī's literary career.[232]

Along with representing the heights of Cairo's literary culture, al-Ḥijāzī was also a dedicated observer of current events. On occasion, historians cited verses that he had composed as social commentaries, as will be seen.[233] But he has also been recognized for the meticulous records he assembled of the Nile's water levels between 1/622 and 874/1470 and his detailed descriptions of the Nile and the Nilometer, which had pre-Islamic origins.[234] His status as a writer was sufficiently strong that sometime between 815/1412-13 and 852/1449 he was named one of the seven best poets in Cairo at this time. Because all seven poets were named Shihāb al-Dīn, an honorific meaning "shooting star of the faith," they were known collectively as the "Seven *Shihāb*s," meaning "Seven Shooting Stars."[235] The eldest was the esteemed Shihāb al-Dīn ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī, who is largely remembered today for his theological and legal writings and activities. Current judgments do not reflect past ones, but his work resonated strongly with contemporary Egyptians. Aside from being popularly known for his poetry, Ibn Ḥajar himself appears to have been rather proud of his work, even though he reportedly stopped

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[232] Patrice Coussonet, "Pour une lecture historique des 'Mille et Une Nuits': Essai d'analyse du conte des deux vizirs égyptiens," *Institut des Belles Lettres Arabes* (1985): 85-115.

[233] Al-Sakhāwī, *Kitāb al-tibr,* 267-8.

[234] See his *Nayl al-rā'id fī al-nīl al-zā'id*, Bankipore Public Library, Bankipore, India, ms. 1069. For examples of modern scientific and historical citations, see Mamdouh M. A. Shahin, *Hydrology and Water Resources of Africa* (New York: Springer, 2002), 294, and Paul P. Howell and John A. Allan, *The Nile: Sharing a Scarce Resource: A Historical and Technical Review of Water Management and of Economical and Legal Issues* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 37.

[235] Ibn Iyās, *Badā'ī'* 3:58; Al-Suyūṭī, *Naẓm*, 36. Shihāb al-Dīn al-Manṣūrī is mentioned as being one of the seven *Shihāb*s ("*aḥad al-shuhub al-sabi'a"*) in Ibn Mullā al-Ḥaṣkafī, (d. 1004/1595), *Mut'at al-adhhān min al-Tammatu' bil-iqrān bayna tarājim al-shuyūkh wal-aqrān* [= extracts from Ibn Ṭūlūn's *Al-Tammatu' bil-iqrān bayna tarājim al-shuyūkh wal-aqrān*], ed. Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Khalīl al-Shaybānī al-Mawṣilī (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1999), 2:873.

composing poems by 816/1413-14.[236] "The importance that Ibn Ḥajar assigned to his own poetic production is shown by the fact that he himself composed three different recensions of his Dīwān,"[237] a work that includes verses about the Prophet, panegyrics to caliphs, princes and other elites, and love poems. The following love poem is even dedicated to a one-eyed male youth, whose afflicted eye is as dark as an eclipsed sun.

> My lover has been afflicted in the center of this beauty
> In the eye of perfection, just as when the sun passes through an eclipse.
> Scorching fires have ruined his eye. Still, I ask detractors:
> Is a piece of paper ever rejected for the fault of a single letter?
> His face is public beauty, and his first beard growth resembles
> Rows of handwriting. This eye is a letter that has lost its luster.[238]

By rejecting the equation of sexual attractiveness with physical perfection, the poem's speaker is realigning beauty norms, allowing one to find beauty among the "ruins" of an afflicted eye. The poem also shows how physical difference can be acknowledged for what it is without sensationalizing or denigrating it. This sentiment was not for Ibn Ḥajar simply a poetic conceit. While teaching at al-Azhar mosque, he once had a cross-eyed student who attended his lectures. One day another student wrote on the wall next to the cross-eyed boy's seat: "There is no power or strength except with God" (*lā ḥawla wa lā quwwata illā bi-llāhi*). In Arabic, the second word could also be read *ḥawala*, meaning 'cross eyes.' The cross-eyed student read the graffiti as a taunt about his physical condition. Embarrassed and upset, the student sought a legal opinion on the matter from

[236] Sabri Khalid Kawash, "Ibn Ḥajar al-Asqalānī (1372-1449 A.D.): A Study of the Background, Education, and Career of a 'Ālim in Egypt," Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 1969, 214.

[237] Thomas Bauer, "Ibn Ḥajar and the Arabic Ghazal of the Mamluk Age," in *Ghazal as World Literature,* eds. Thomas Bauer and Angelika Neuwirth (Beirut: Ergon Verlag, 2005), 1:35.

[238] Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī, *Dīwān Shaykh al-Islām Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī*, ed. Firdaws Nūr 'Alī Ḥusayn (Cairo: Dār al-Faḍīla, 2000), 262. The Arabic word for eye (*'ayn*) and the eighteenth letter of the Arabic alphabet (*'ayn*) are homonyms.

his teacher, expecting him to censure the graffiti writer. Instead of condemning the perpetrator, Ibn Ḥajar wrote a legal opinion consisting of the same words as the graffito message: *lā ḥawla/ḥawala wa lā quwwata illā bi-llāhi*. Ibn Ḥajar does not explain whether he intends the second word to read 'power' or 'cross eyes', because either interpretation would be acceptable. Either one, he wrote, can be considered "one of the treasures of heaven."[239]

The other five men who shared this name were Shihāb al-Dīn ibn al-Shāb al-Tā'ib (d. 832/1429), Shihāb al-Dīn ibn Ṣāliḥ (d. 861/1456-7), Shihāb al-Dīn ibn Mubārak Shāh al-Dimashqī (d. 862/1458), Shihāb al-Dīn ibn Abī al-Sa'ūd (d. 868/1464 or 870/1466), and Shihāb al-Dīn al-Manṣūrī (d. 887/1482).[240] The designation of this literary group as the Seven Shooting Stars was an identity that they all readily assumed, and their bonds of friendship appear to have been rather firm.[241] They composed verses to console each other about illnesses, eulogies to commemorate their lives, commentaries on current events that

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239 Al-Sakhāwī, *Al-Jawāhir*, 3:1039.

240 Ibn Iyās, *Badā'ī'* 3:58. For Ibn al-Shāb al-Tā'ib, who was also a sufi and a *khāṭib*, see *GAL* 2:147ff., Ibn al-'Imād, *Shadharāt al-dhahab fī akhbār man dhahab* (Damascus-Beirut: Dār Ibn Kathīr, 1986-), 7:198. For a description of Ibn Abī al-Sa'ūd as *muwaswis* (mumbling to himself and obsessed by demonic delusions), see al-Biqā'ī, *Iẓhār al-'aṣr li-asrār ahl al-'aṣr: ta'rīkh al-Biqā'ī*, ed. Muḥammad Sālim ibn Shadīd al-'Awfī (Giza: Hajar li'l-ṭibā'a wa'l-nashr wa'l-tawzī, 1992-), 1:208, and also al-Suyūṭī, *Naẓm*, 36, where he is referred to as Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn Ismā'īl al-Sa'ūdī and is described explicitly as one of the seven Shihābs. For al-Manṣūrī, who moved to Cairo from Manṣūra in 825/1422 and remained there until his death, see al-Sakhāwī, *Al-Ḍaw'*, 2:150-1; al-Suyūṭī, *Naẓm*, 77; Brockelmann, *GAL Supplement*, 2:12; *Dā'ira al-ma'ārif: qāmūs 'āmm li-kull fann wa maṭlab*, ed. Fu'ād Afrām al-Bustānī (Beirut: n.p., 1956), 4:116.

241 Modes of social configuration in Mamluk/early Ottoman academic circles are interesting sites of friendship analysis, especially as they relate to categories of physical difference. Bonds were formed according to professional guilds, fraternal orders, clans and tribes, among other group identifiers, but social clusters were occasionally based on physical characteristics or nicknames. Ibrāhīm al-Kharīzātī al-Ṣāliḥī al-Uṭrūsh (d. 15 Rabī' II 933/18 January 1527) is identified by one biographer as "one of the slightly deaf authors of masterpieces (*aḥad al-mudṭa'īn al-uṭrūsh*)," suggesting the existence of a group of deaf writers. See Ibn al-Mullā al-Ḥaṣkafī, 1:248. For tenth/sixteenth-century Syrian uses of the word *uṭrūsh*, see Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm ibn al-Ḥanbalī (d. 1563), *Baḥr al-'awwām fīmā aṣāba fīhi al-'awāmm* (Cairo: Dār al-thaqāfat al-'arabiyya, 1990), 255.

personally affected them and friendly letters on a host of subjects. Their shared name engendered a number of puns. Once, four of them – Ibn Ḥajar al-ʻAsqalānī, al-Ḥijāzī, Ibn Ṣāliḥ and Ibn Abī al-Saʻūd – wrote scathing reviews for an epigram that one Walī al-Dīn had composed about the strength of a man whose tooth had been pulled because of an illness. Ibn Ḥajar, for one, felt that the poet had "shitted this short poem out," and Cairenes joked that Walī al-Dīn had been hit by four shooting stars.[242] The Shihābs banded together in a firm display of solidarity.

Another group of seven Shihābs exhibited similar dynamics of identifying intensely with the group. Al-Sakhāwī related an anecdote about this particular group of men:

> One time our shaykh [Ibn Ḥajar al-ʻAsqalānī] was sitting with al-Shihāb ibn Taqī, al-Shihāb al-Shayrajī [sic], al-Shihāb al-Rīshī, al-Shihāb al-Ḥijāzī, and another al-Shihāb. So along with the subject of this biography, there were seven people. Al-Ḥijāzī said, 'O Mawlānā, you (m. pl.) have named your comets 'The Seven Planets,' who are gathered here today.' Then our shaykh said suddenly, 'Whoever comes among the comets will be consumed in the fire.' How excellent is the speaker! Whoever claims knowledge of what he does not know lies about what he knows. What do you think of someone who is unbearable to everyone?[243]

Although two of the members of 'The Seven Shooting Stars' were also named as part of 'The Seven Planets', the groups were distinct from each other through their different collective foci. The former group shared literary interests, and the latter centered their religious lives around the Baybarsiyya. Al-Shihāb ibn Yaʻqūb was Ibn Ḥajar's *naqīb*

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[242] Al-Sakhāwī, *Al-Jawāhir*, 2:883.

[243] Ibid. For al-Shihāb ibn Taqī's (d. 844/1440) biography, see Al-Sakhāwī, *al-Ḍaw'*, 1:229-30, 2:78-80. The name "al-Shihāb al-Shayrajī" should read "al-Shihāb al-Sayrajī." This man was a friend of Ibn Ḥajar al-ʻAsqalānī. He was born in 778/1376 and died in Muḥarram 862/1457. For his biography, see al-Suyūṭī, *al-Naẓm*, 90-2; Al-Sakhāwī, *al-Ḍaw'*, 2:249. Al-Shihāb al-Rīshī was born in the Egyptian village of Kūm Rīshī in 775/1373-4. He died in Cairo on 11 Muḥarram 852/17 March 1448, four years before his son Muḥammad was led to prison in chains (Al-Biqāʻī, *Iẓhār*, 1:245). For al-Shihāb al-Rīshī's biography, see Al-Sakhāwī, *Al-Ḍaw'*, 2:2; Al-Biqāʻī, *'Unwān*, 20-1; Al-Biqāʻī, *'Inwān*, 1:58, fn. 105.

(deputy) and was frequently in his teacher's company.[244] Al-Ḥijāzī told al-Sakhāwī that one day he was reciting the Qur'an to a large group, while standing by a window at the Baybarsiyya, as was his duty. This position was a respected one at the Baybarsiyya, and reciters earned thirty dirhams monthly. The institution's endowment deed stipulated that the Qur'an be read before one of the five lower windows in the vestibule of the mausoleum, all of which faced al-Darb al-Aṣfar. One window had even been brought from one of the 'Abbasid palaces in Baghdad, a forceful reminder of the intersections of royal power and religious life in Mamluk Cairo.[245] Suddenly, Ibn Ḥajar and al-Shihāb ibn Ya'qūb came by just as the group was reciting Qur'an 4:6: "He will teach you the interpretation of sayings, and make His favor complete to you and the children of Ya'qūb." Ibn Ḥajar took notice of this recitation and met with al-Ḥijāzī afterwards to ask if the recitation were deliberate or accidental. Al-Ḥijāzī swore to him that it was accidental, and Ibn Ḥajar was encouraged by this omen.[246] Whether al-Shihāb ibn Ya'qūb had been appointed *naqīb* before or after this event is unclear, but evidently, these three men all had some ties to the Baybarsiyya. Of course, this was not necessarily an exclusive affiliation. Later in his life, al-Ḥijāzī spent most days at *majālis* at the Qarāsunquriyya madrasa, which was next door to the Baybarsiyya and even shared a nearly contiguous façade, and in the evenings he would retire to the home of his friend

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[244] Al-Biqā'ī wrote biographical notices for both al-Shihāb ibn Ya'qūb and his wife Zaynab bint 'Abd al-Raḥīm ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn 'Abd al-Raḥīm, the daughter of al-Zayn al-'Irāqī, for which see *'Unwān*, 42-3, 82.

[245] Leonor Fernandes, *The Development of a Sufi Institution in Mamluk Egypt: The Khanqah* (Berlin: K. Schwartz, 1988), 27.

[246] Al-Sakhāwī, *Al-Jawāhir*, 2:651, 3:1041.

Qāḍī Muwaffaq al-Dīn (d. 877/1472-3) at Birkat al-Ratl.[247] The length of time that al-Ḥijāzī spent at al-Qarāsunquriyya is unclear, as the available sources are sparsely distributed, but al-Ḥijāzī's affiliation with this particular madrasa extended over decades. Al-Biqā'ī had a conversation with al-Ḥijāzī on Tuesday, 14 Dhū l-Qa'da 837/22 June 1434 at the Qarāsunquriyya, and in another book he remarked that al-Ḥijāzī was a resident there in Jumādā I 864/February 1460.[248]

Al-Ḥijāzī had certainly meditated on the obligations and meaning of friendship in *Nawādir al-akhbār*. Dedicating an entire section to the subject, he cited a number of earlier Muslim thinkers who voiced contradictory opinions. Al-Ḥijāzī himself concluded that neither distance nor adversity should separate friends, as this bond was too precious to go unnurtured. One of his close friends, al-Ṣayrafī, described him as "an excellent man who behaves humbly and affectionately to his friends and avidly desires visits from them."[249] These two men spent many days and nights together at al-Ṣayrafī's home.

As for the six eminent poets whom he called friends, his affection for them is most obviously evidenced in his poetry and letters. He composed two verses after a fire raged in Būlāq in 862/1457 destroying more than 300 housing units:

> My grief is for Old Cairo (*miṣr*) and her residents
> And a tear for her has been freed from my eye
> For her who witnessed the crowds of the dead and its horrors, and
> Who suffered sorrowfully through the agony of the fire.[250]

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[247] Al-Ṣayrafī, *Inbā'*, 259; Al-Sakhāwī, Al-*Ḍaw',* 5:4.

[248] Al-Biqā'ī, *'Inwān*, 1:221; Al-Biqā'ī, *Iẓhār*, 3:221.

[249] Al-Ḥijāzī, *Nawādir al-akhbār wa-ẓarā'if al-ash'ār*, Panjab University Library, India, folio 7a-10a; Al-Ṣayrafī, *Inbā'*, 258.

[250] Al-Suyūṭī, *Naẓm,* 77. Ibn Taghrībirdī (d. 874/1470) wrote of this fire in his *Al-Manhal al-ṣāfī wa'l-mustawfā ba'da al-wāfī*.

The fire broke out just before the death of his fellow poet Shihāb al-Dīn ibn Mubārak Shāh al-Dimashqī, so if he composed these verses after his friend's death, the sorrow expressed in the poem could have had double resonances.

As for these friends showing support and love for one another, we have the example of al-Manṣūrī dedicating two verses to al-Ḥijāzī upon hearing of what would be his final illness:

> People say that al-Shihāb is ailing, and I say, 'What a pity!
> What does Aḥmad think about not being free of illness (*'ilal*)?'
> The measure of the spiritual link between man and God comes from the sacrifice that releases the bond,
> And its distinguishing mark is in the arts of learning and of labor.[251]

According to one literary scholar, using the name "Aḥmad" in this couplet likely offended sensibilities in Mamluk Cairo, as it was forbidden to use this word in poems.[252] But the lines are significant for another reason. In a thematic echo of al-Ḥijāzī's letter to al-Asyūṭī, al-Manṣūrī constructs sickness as a form of pious suffering, making al-Ḥijāzī an object of sacrifice who demonstrates his love of God through pursuits of learning and the poetic craft. The illness that claimed al-Ḥijāzī's life was a long and intense gastrointestinal disease, and his companions stayed with him through it.[253] Taqī al-Dīn Abū Bakr al-Badrī (d. 894/1489), a friend and pupil of al-Ḥijāzī, said that he "watched

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[251] Ibn Iyās, *Badā'ī'*, 3:57. In the 1894 edition (2:126), the poem's third line reads "… the sacrifice that *permits* the bond." Al-Manṣūrī also wrote a poem about his own long bout with hemiplegia (*fālij*), which immobilized him and confined him to his home, where he was entirely dependent on a male servant. (*Badā'ī'* 2:213-4)

[252] Aḥmad Ṣādiq al-Jammāl, *Al-Adab al-'āmmī fī miṣr fī al-'aṣr al-mamlūkī* (Cairo: Al-Dār al-qawmiyya li'l-ṭibā'a wa'l-nashr, 1966), 56. Unfortunately, al-Jammāl does not explain why this name was forbidden, and I have found no other source to corroborate this claim.

[253] Al-Ṣayrafī, *Inbā'*, 258-9; Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn al-Ḥimṣī (d. 934/1527), *Ḥawādith al-zamān wa-wafayyāt al-shuyūkh wa'l-aqrān,* ed. 'Umar 'Abd al-Salām Tadmurī (Ṣaydā-Beirut: Al-Maktabat al-'aṣriyya, 1999), 1:195.

closely over him in the illness that carried him to his grave."[254] Al-Ḥijāzī certainly considered his legacy after his death and wrote:

> They say: 'When a dead man has not left behind any memories,
> He is forgotten.' So I say to them: 'In some of my poems,
> My friends will remember me after death
> Through what I leave of my thoughts.'[255]

Al-Ḥijāzī died Wednesday, 7 Ramaḍān 875/28 February 1471 in his home, which was located near Sultan Barqūq's (d. 801/1399) tomb in the Qarāfa cemetery. Incidentally, he was born during Barqūq's reign.[256] The poet al-Shihāb al-Manṣūrī eulogized al-Ḥijāzī in thirteen lines of poetry.[257] After the sixth Shihāb of their group died, the last remaining member, al-Manṣūrī, composed fifteen lines eulogizing all six of them. In his estimation, Cairo's literary scene had just suffered a devastating blow, marking a decline in the poetry of the era. "The heavens of style have been deprived of the radiance of the shooting stars (*shuhub*) / And now, the horizons of poetry and literature have darkened."[258] Al-Manṣūrī's experiences with this close-knit group of friends imbues these brief lines with a depth that aptly commemorates the love and respect he felt for them and gives dimension to intimate aspects of everyday life.

Sexual Culture and Blighted Bodies

> "During his lengthy and wholly unsexy illness, he had never ceased to be sexy to me."
> -Jennifer Glaser, writing about her boyfriend who had died of leukemia (2007)

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[254] Al-Badrī, *Al-Durr al-maṣūn*, 2:281. This is an edited version of a lithograph of a 23 Rajab 1276/24 January 1860 manuscript printed in Cairo under the title *Kitāb siḥr al-'uyūn*. The author's and copyist's names are not found in this manuscript, and the colophon indicates that it was copied for the Egyptian writer 'Abd al-Hādī Najā al-Ibyārī (d. 1305/1888).

[255] Ibid.; Al-Sakhāwī, *Al-Ḍaw'*, 2:148.

[256] Al-Biqā'ī,*'Unwān*, 36.

[257] Ibn Iyās, *Badā'ī'*, 3:57-8. In the 1894 edition (2:126), only the first eight lines are included.

[258] Ibid., 58-9. In the 1894 edition (2:126), only the first five lines are included.

The anthropologist Sheila Webster examined Moroccan proverbs about gender and marriage to understand how notions of gender and matrimony were transmitted culturally. Among proverbs about a potential bride's physical beauty, advice about certain features "are surprising. For example, 'Don't marry a blue-eyed woman, even though she has money in her box'. … Yet blue-eyed and preferably blonde-haired and fair-skinned women are often sought as exotically attractive."[259] The proverb does not reflect modern aesthetic preferences, and Webster has no frame of reference for how blue eyes could be or have ever been undesirable physical traits in North Africa. Although she works within an indigenous cosmology constructed by local aphorisms, by not historicizing sexuality, desirability and aesthetics, she is unable to account for this disjuncture. Similarly, Andreas Tietze translated Muṣṭafā 'Ālī's description of a man in 1599 Cairo as "he may be a young lad on horseback his head wrapped, thick-lipped, with churlish feet, with boorish claws, with sores on his cheeks and wounds on his back, mis-shapen and ugly, when he opens his mouth resembling a blue-eyed (?) ogre."[260] In a litany of terms signifying physical unattractiveness and disgusting mien, the inclusion of blue eyes as a category of ugliness confounded the translator, leading him to question his reading or the copyist's accuracy.

It is tempting to wonder if the medieval practice of inscribing desirability and sexuality on blighted bodies did eventually serve to normalize them as sexual objects, but such considerations fall beyond the scope of this particular project. Arabic erotic verses

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[259] Sheila K. Webster, "Women, Sex, and Marriage in Moroccan Proverbs," *IJMES* 14.2 (1982): 180.

[260] Tietze, 53. The question mark is the translator's.

to individuals with physical blights like blue eyes, crossed eyes and ophthalmia date back to Abbasid times,[261] so these Arab writers of the ninth/fifteenth and tenth/sixteenth centuries are not initiating new poetic themes. But in the context of their own lives and times, how did these writings function? Whether or not they hoped to change popular or legal opinions about people of blights, their writings do give new dimension to everyday life, love, courtship and friendship and create particular visions of desirability.

Al-Ḥijāzī's twin collections of romantic epigrams have recently been edited together. The editor Rajāb ʻAkkāwī works from Muḥammad Amīn al-Kutubī's 1908 edition of three of al-Ḥijāzī's short treatises, which was rife with diacritical and orthographic errors. In addition to the two that ʻAkkāwī edited, there was another entitled *Qalā'id al-nuḥūr min jawāhir al-buḥūr*.[262] The first is *Al-Kunnas al-jawārī fī al-ḥisān min al-jawārī* (Retrograde Running Stars [Q 81:16] On Beautiful Maidens), a compendium of *mu'annathāt,* or love poetry addressed to women. The second is *Jinnat al-wuldān fī al-ḥisān min al-ghilmān* (The Paradise of Youths: On Beautiful Males), an anthology of *mudhakkarāt,* or love poetry addressed to men. The latter work represents one of many contemporary books on this same subject. Al-Ṣafadī's *Al-Ḥusn al-ṣarīḥ* has already been mentioned, but ʻUmar ibn al-Wardī's (d. 749/1349) *Al-Kalām ʻalā mi'at ghulām*, Muḥammad al-Nawājī's (d. 859/1455) *Marātiʻ al-ghizlān fī al-ḥisān min al-*

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[261] Abū al-Ḥasan ibn Aḥmad Sarī al-Raffā (d. 4th/10th c.), *Al-Muḥibb wa'l-maḥbūb wa'l-mashmūm wa'l-mashrūb*, ed. Miṣbāḥ Ghalāwinjī (Damascus: Majmaʻ al-Lughat al-ʻArabiyya, 1986), 1:91-124. Cited in Thomas Bauer, *Liebe und Liebesdichtung in der arabischen Welt des 9. und 10. Jahrhunderts: eine literatur und mentalitätsgeschichtliche Studie des arabischen Gazal* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1998), 285-7.

[262] Rajāb ʻAkkāwī, "ʻAmalnā fī risālatayn," in Shihāb al-Dīn al-Ḥijāzī, *Al-Kunnas al-jawārī fī al-ḥisān min al-jawārī, wa-bi-dhaylihi, Jinnat al-wuldān fī al-ḥisān min al-ghilmān*, ed. Rajāb ʻAkkāwī (Beirut: Dār al-Ḥarf al-ʻArabī, 1998), 18.

ghilmān and Aḥmad ibn al-Mullā's (d. 1003/1594-5) *'Uqūd al-jummān fī waṣf nubdha min al-ghilmān* are additional poetry collections on male beauties. Al-Nawājī's work served as a model for al-Ḥijāzī's complementary collections *Al-Kunnas al-jawārī* and *Jinnat al-wuldān*.[263] These two anthologies, like his *Kitāb rawḍ al-ādāb*, feature epigrams to bakers, hunters, flutists and other men and women of professions.[264] His *Kunnas al-jawārī* contains epigrams about women who are bald, mentally ill, blind, deaf, who cast harmful spells with their eyes and those who have the speech impediment of switching the letters (a 'k' sound) and (a glottal stop). His *Jinnat al-wuldān* contains epigrams about men who are mentally ill, deaf, blind, one-eyed, bleary-eyed (*armad*), feverish (*maḥmūm*), who have the power to kill others with a glance and those who confuse the letters س (a soft 's' sound) with ث (a soft 'th' sound) and ر (an 'r' sound) with ع (a voiced pharyngeal fricative with no Latinate equivalent).[265]

The challenge of writing an effective epigram lies in condensing emotion and sometimes wit into only two lines of verse. A skilled poet must be able to render an effective picture, all while following strict metrical conventions. In addition to the linguistic and technical dexterity required for a epigrammatic composition, the subject matter investigated here is layered with notions of shame, body aesthetics and love. Al-Ḥijāzī masterfully evokes the playful seduction of a mentally ill (*majnūn*) woman. The

[263] Bauer, "Mamluk Literature," 123.

[264] For more on the types of workers featured in *Kitāb rawḍ al-ādāb*, see Joseph Sadan, "Kings and Craftsmen, a Pattern of Contrasts: On the History of a Medieval Arabic Humoristic Form (Part I)," *Studia Islamica* 56 (1982): 33. Cf. also with the *shahrangiz* poetic genre in Persian, Turkish and Urdu literatures, which praises male beauties of various crafts and professions.

[265] The final speech peculiarity may actually be a substition of ر with غ, which is a relatively ommon speech idiosyncracy found in the Arabic-speaking world today. Someone who speaks confuses these two letters is referred to as *althagh bi'l-rā'*.

Arabic term for mental illness, *junūn,* derives from the word for demon or invisible spirit (*jinn*), because the illness was sometimes equated with demonic possession. So, al-Ḥijāzī described a man's love for a woman so enchantingly beautiful that even the *jinn* fell in love with her, possessing her body and driving her to illness. No human or spirit could resist her charms, no matter what her mental state.

> I was concerned about the woman who went mad,
> And I started to waste away over her.
> By reason she has captivated a man,
> As she continued to enchant the jinn.[266]

Similarly, in portraying love for a mentally ill man, it is the afflicted one who maintains control of the courtship. The speaker is "shackled by his love" and when he "recite[s] poetry for him sweetly, he plunged me into his mind."[267] In a reversal of the archetype of the lover ill from the fervor of his love, here it is the beloved who suffers from a mental illness as a result of a jinn's obsession with her.

Another theme in these poems is that of the person with the blighted body being shielded from hearing, seeing or understanding the pain that people with unmarked bodies encounter. In these epigrams al-Ḥijāzī employs the standard motif of two lovers weathering the mockery, gossip and/or reproach of their detractors. Of a deaf man, he writes:

> My reproachers have found fault with a beloved who has become
> Deaf. I said, 'Speak censure.
> It can cause no harm, because he
> Is deaf and cannot hear the slanderers' words.'[268]

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[266] Al-Ḥijāzī, *Kunnas*, 29.

[267] Ibid., 125.

[268] Ibid.

And regarding two deaf women, he muses about communicating through sign language and becoming figuratively deaf:

> I was infatuated with a young lady who could not hear
> The words of slanderers when obscene language increased.
> You make my heart skip when you are joined to me
> And you deafen my mind with your absence.[269]
>
> I became very attached to a deaf woman
> Whose face is to me like a halo around a full moon.
> Because of her deafness, I say, 'Beware the detractors,'
> Though I conveyed my speech to her through gestures.[270]

Deafness affords a particular protection for the male lover, who can remain blissfully oblivious of the turmoil that their relationship is causing in the community.[271] In the case of the female beloved, her lover does not attempt to shield her from public reactions to their courtship, even using sign language to communicate this fact to her. In an oral society like Mamluk Cairo, deafness must have been considered a distinct and significant social disadvantage. As such, eroticizing or privileging deafness may have had a stronger impact on a contemporary reader or lector of these verses than on a modern one. Still, the imagery is striking, and the motif of a disability or blight protecting someone from the undesirable aspects of the world sometimes reappears in modern literature.[272]

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[269] Ibid., 30.

[270] Ibid., 30-1.

[271] The tenth/sixteenth-century Arab scholar Maḥmūd ibn al-Baylūnī (d. 1599) remarked to his biographer al-Ghazzī that his being hard-of-hearing was a gift from God, as it permitted him to ignore idle gossip and listen only to recitations of the Qur'an. See Scalenghe, "Being Different," 168-9.

[272] A similar sentiment is found in this Egyptian short-story excerpt: "Ali can talk himself into believing that it is a hundred times better to be blind than sighted. It is better to be blind because a blind man can love through his ears. His hearing is sharpened and he packs his memory with smells and delicate sounds. … A blind man – in Ali's analysis – has only the injuries he might incur bumping into an iron railing, tripping over a stone or brick, or a careless movement from the razor to worry about. The injuries of a sighted man, on the other hand, consist in the consciousness of his own feebleness every time he looks at the stone or

Other verses raise questions about the speaker's gaze. The following epigram about a bald woman seems fairly straightforward, as unrequited love is a common enough poetic theme.

> There is a young lady who has no hair on her head,
> But in her eyes is languish.
> What pleasure her desire would give me.
> I am dying of grief, and she knows nothing of it.[273]

Is the speaker referencing a figurative baldness, wherein the traditional veil covers the hair, creating the appearance of hairlessness? Or does the speaker, in fact, mean a woman with "no hair on her head?" This latter possibility raises many questions of the male speaker's access to the woman in question. In a culture where respectable Muslim women are veiled in public spaces and when they are around men who are not close family members, an unknown man peering beneath the veil suggests a violation of privacy through subterfuge, class difference or surveillance. Other possibilities are that the bald woman is a slave, a non-Muslim or both. Perhaps he happened to feel her head and determined that there was no loose hair or knotted bun on her head.

Lastly, illness or blights can also serve to increase the desirability of the love object, inverting social and literary expectations of a physically whole and healthy beloved. On a man stricken with fever, he mused:

> Like a rose, his fever has returned
> Doubly strong to the cheek of my beloved.
> God has augmented his beauty
> With this illness. Now diminish the fever![274]

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hole that tripped him despite being in perfect physical health." From Ashraf Abdelshafy, "Imagination of the Blind," *Banipal* 25 (Spring 2006): 105-6.

[273]Al-Ḥijāzī, 31.

Rosy cheeks were a widely recognized mark of beauty for men and women in Mamluk Cairo, but an accentuation of this feature through illness likely marks a departure from archetypal representations of beauty.

In all these verses the symbols of beauty, seduction and sexual attractiveness are inverted, representing an antinomian approach to body normatives. Al-Ḥijāzī has advanced an alternate vision of devotion, dignity and desirability here, departing from predominant writings of sexual culture that valorized ideal standards of beauty. There exists a well-established Arab literary tradition of praising the undesirable and demeaning the beautiful, an exercise known as *taghayyur*. Renaissance English writers of prose, poetry and drama praised the 'deformed mistress' to "reproduce the literary and cultural models of beauty and ugliness that they seem to interrogate, revealing the extent to which beauty is a masculine construct, imposed on a 'naturally' ugly female body."[275] Much of the English rhetoric can be attributed to a Christian belief in the moral and physical corruption of the human body through original sin, a doctrine that does not exist in Islamic theology. A different current motivates Arab writers. A mark of a writer's technical agility and skill was his ability to evoke unexpected emotions on mundane topics. Al-Tha'ālibī compiled an anthology on this subject called *Taḥsīn al-qabīḥ wa-taqbīḥ al-ḥasan* (Beautifying the Ugly and Uglifying the Beautiful). Geert Jan van Gelder has found antecedents of this tradition in ancient Greek practices and considers poems of

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[274] Ibid., 130.

[275] Naomi Baker, "'To Make Love to a Deformity': Praising Ugliness in Early Modern England," *Renaissance Studies* 22.1 (February 2008): 87.

the type that al-Ḥijāzī wrote representative of *taghayyur*. He attributes al-Jāḥiẓ' essay on blacks and whites to his interest in this technique,[276] and while this may be part of al-Jāḥiẓ' motivation, I am not convinced that it accounts for all of it. Al-Jāḥiẓ' subjectivity, the zeitgeist of the medieval Middle East and evidence of black discontent at the time (i.e., black slave revolts in lower Iraq) are elided in this evaluation. But bringing in a historical perspective illuminates how al-Jāḥiẓ' epistle is relevant to period concerns. Likewise, identifying aspects of al-Ḥijāzī's life makes his writings on blighted and disabled bodies more than just a literary exercise. As skillful as he is at *taghayyur*, he is even more skillful at de-stigmatizing the gaze of the unblighted towards the blighted and acknowledging the sexuality of marked people.

[276] Geert Jan van Gelder, "Beautifying the Ugly and Uglifying the Beautiful: The Paradox in Classical Arabic Literature," *Journal of Semitic Studies* 48.2 (2003): 339.

Chapter 4
The Body Recollected

Individuals and collective memories inform the assembly and audience reception of literary anthologies, and thus prove to be rich sites of analysis.[277] The academic investigation of memory is a cross-disciplinary one that Victor Turner, who was "convinced that social anthropology should intertwine with history, like the snakes in Hermes's *caduceus*, wherever sound documentation exists,"[278] would have approved. The openings created by the intersection of anthropology, history and literature allow researchers to use space, memory and performance as access points to subjectivity, emotion and experience. The act of rendering past events legible for a modern audience requires the anthropological historian to venture into the field. As Joseph Roach has observed, "the pursuit of performance does not require historians to abandon the archive, but it does encourage them to spend more time in the streets. When students ask about the problems of reconstructing historic performances … I now ask them: What evidence do we have that they ever died out?"[279] Roach's approach raises questions about disciplinary

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[277] Marvin Carlson, *The Haunted Stage: The Theatre As Memory Machine* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2003), 3, 5.

[278] Victor Turner, *The Anthropology of Performance* (New York: PAJ Publications, 1987), 108.

[279] Joseph Roach, *Cities of the Dead: Circum-Atlantic Performance* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), xii.

definitions of memory, historicity and pastness. By incorporating different notions of finitude and time into the analysis, one can even view performances that have changed over time as sites of memory that give information on how traditions are remembered.

In Chapter Two al-Ḥijāzī's capacity for memorization, which was at various times natural, enhanced or stunted, emerged as a central aspect of his popular and scholarly reputations. Although he paid dearly for his efforts to increase his memory's capabilities, he was able to capitalize on the experience and narrate intimate experiences of people of blights. In this chapter the friendly and professional ties binding Shihāb al-Dīn al-Ḥijāzī to his pupil Taqī al-Dīn al-Badrī al-Dimashqī (d. 894/1489) will be reconstructed, and their roles in generating a particular discourse on marked bodies will be explored.[280] Close readings of al-Badrī's two anthologies, *Ghurrat al-ṣabāḥ* and *Al-Durr al-maṣūn*, will form the basis of this chapter for two reasons. First, the formative influence of al-Ḥijāzī is rather apparent in these memory works, and al-Badrī masterfully integrates historical and contemporary voices into a canon of literature about the blighted body. So, how do al-Badrī's methods of anthologizing poems, histories and anecdotes of blighted bodies create or contribute to what counts as a story about blightedness? Secondly, the compendia raise questions about historical and narrative uses of memory in compilations and the process of fashioning literary canons on particular themes.

[280] Brockelmann incorrectly lists his death date as 909/1503. (*GAL* 2:132, *GAL Supplement* 2:163.) Al-Sakhāwī, one of al-Badrī's teachers, gives his full name as Abū Bakr ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn ʿAbd Allāh Taqī al-Dīn ibn al-Jamāl Abū al-Tuqā al-Badrī al-Dimashqī al-Qāhirī al-Shāfiʿī al-Shāʿir al-Wafāʾī. He also claimed that he was known as Ibn al-Badrī, though no other biographer confirms this name. (Al-Sakhāwī, *Al-Ḍaw'*, 11:41)

Taqī al-Dīn al-Badrī al-Dimashqī

Although al-Badrī enjoyed a strong reputation as an author of literary and historical works, his biography was not as widely recorded as al-Ḥijāzī's, so in a departure from Chapter Two, this chapter will be constructed less as a work of biography in which particular moments are revealed and interrogated for their relevance to historical matters of friendship and production and transmission of discourses of the body and more as an interrogation of the shared intellectual life of this particular teacher and student and a close reading of al-Badrī's anthologies.

Al-Badrī was born in Rabīʿ I 847/1443 in Damascus and grew up there. At this time the Banū Badriyya were a settled clan in the Damascus suburb of al-Ṣāliḥiyya. Other than the reputation of the Badrīs for engaging in Sufism, few details are known about them, not even whether our al-Badrī was a member of this clan or whether this clan had ancestral ties to the emir Badr al-Dīn Ḥasan ibn al-Dāya, the founder of Madrasat al-Badriyya, a Ḥanbalī school established in 638/1240-1.[281] Because the Ṣāliḥiyya suburb was mostly Ḥanbalī, there is a possibility that some members settled in Damascus and adopted the Shāfiʿī rite. Al-Badrī later moved to Cairo for a while with his father. He moved between the two cities, working off and on in Egypt and Syria as a copyist and a professional witness. The instability and lack of prestige in his professional life suggest humble origins. To reinforce this impression, his biographers do not mention any shaykhs

[281] Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Al-Qalāʾid al-jawhariyya fī taʾrīkh al-Ṣāliḥiyya* (Jeweled Necklaces: The History of al-Ṣāliḥiyya), ed. Muḥammad Aḥmad Duhmān (Damascus: s.n., 1949-56), 1:124; Muḥammad ibn ʿĪsá ibn Kinnān (d. 1153/1740), *Al-Murūj al-sundusiyya al-fasīḥa fī talkhīs Taʾrīkh al-Ṣāliḥiyya* (Wide Silken Meadows: A Summary of The History of al-Ṣāliḥiyya), ed. Muḥammad Aḥmad Duhmān (Damascus: Maṭbaʿat al-tarqī, 1947), 63; ʿAbd al-Qādir ibn Muḥammad al-Nuʿaymī (d. 927/1521), *Al-Dāris fī taʾrīkh al-madāris* (The Student: On the History of Madrasas) (Damascus: Maṭbaʿat al-tarqī, 1948), 1:477.

with whom he studied as a youth or masters who authorized him as a young man to teach, which was an uncommon gap in a scholar's life story. What has been recorded of his formal education took place when he was in his forties. Al-Badrī forged his own professional path as an adolescent, operating just outside the traditional elite process of inheriting social connections from one's father or, to a lesser extent, from one's mother. His upbringing and education differ sharply from al-Ḥijāzī's access to the best teachers (such as Ibn Ḥajar al-ʻAsqalānī and al-Zayn al-ʻIrāqī), admission to elite religious institutions (like al-Baybarsiyya and al-Qarāsunquriyya) and consequently the professional cachet to attract the era's most promising students (such as al-Suyūṭī and al-Sakhāwī). What contacts al-Badrī made were hard won. Al-Ḥijāzī was probably his first real connection to elite scholarship, and this association gave him entrée to a wide set of influential intellectuals. Among his more famous teachers were al-Shihāb al-Manṣūrī, al-Samhūdī (d. 912/1506) and al-Sakhāwī, and rather than the usual course of learning from them in his youth, he only studied with the latter two in the final two or three years of his life. He also claimed to have studied with some lesser known shaykhs like al-Shams Muḥammad ibn al-Najjār and Abū al-Faḍl ibn al-Amīn.

The emergence of his writing career from unconventional beginnings set the tone for the rest of his career. Al-Badrī wrote books in a number of genres –history, geography, poetry and prose – but the intertextuality within his corpus of works created generic overlaps. In addition to referencing his past writings, he tended to quote the same authors in all of his works, like Ibn Nubātah, Ibn Qalāqis, Ibn Ḥajar and Ibn Makānis. Drawing from a fixed corpus of writers did not limit his literary production or his choice of subjects. His biographer Ibn Ṭūlūn introduced him as "the author of a well-known

poetry collection and a history entitled *Tabṣirat ūlī al-abṣār fī inqirāḍ al-ʻumariyyin bi'l-layl wa'l-nahār*."[282] He wrote at least eleven other books, of which only two have been edited and published, on such subjects as Damascene topography and agriculture, moon phases, local history, contemporary literary tastes, caliphs, table companions and close friends.[283]

The tragedy of his wife's passing was a bit of a financial boon for al-Badrī, as she left him an ample inheritance. After a period of poverty, he put his affairs in order, then traveled to Mecca, and later moved to Syria, where he wrote *Kitāb rāḥat al-arwāḥ fī al-ḥashīsh wa'l-rāḥ* (The Book of Comfort of Souls: On Hasish and Wine), the most extensive Arabic-language treatise on the history and uses of hashish and wine in the Middle East.[284] This book was likely his earliest one, which he claimed to have written in 867/1462-3 at the age of twenty, and with its publication he established himself as a formidable presence on the Cairene literary scene. He cited al-Ḥijāzī's poetry and anecdotes in various sections of this work, suggesting that the two writers met during al-Badrī's late adolescence.[285] His *Kitāb rāḥat al-arwāḥ* defined his career and legacy, and a decade later in his topographical treatise, *Nuzhat al-anām fī maḥāsin al-shām* (The

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[282] Ibn al-Mullā al-Ḥaṣkafī, 1:229.

[283] For a list of his works, see al-Badrī, *Al-Durr al-maṣūn*, 1:9; Brockelmann, *GAL* 2:132 and *GAL Supplement* 2:163.

[284] For more on *Rāḥat al-arwāḥ*, see Franz Rosenthal, *The Herb: Hashish versus Medieval Muslim Society* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1971), 13-5; Indalecio Lozano Cámara, "Un Fragmento del Kitāb rāḥat al-arwāḥ fī l-ḥašīš wa-l-rāḥ," *Miscelanea de Estudios Arabes y Hebraicos* 38 (1989-90):163-83; and Lozano Cámara "Un Nuevo Fragmento del *Kitāb rāḥat al-arwāḥ fī al-ḥašīš wa al-rāḥ* de Taqī al-Dīn al-Badrī," *BEO* 49 (1997): 235-48; Fabio Zanello, *Hashish e Islam: tradizione e consumo, visioni e prescrizioni nella poesia, nella letteratura e nelle leggi* (Rome: Cooper & Castelvecchi, 2003). Zanello's study derives mostly from Rosenthal's work, rather than from primary sources. Even though much of the material is borrowed, the study includes many inaccuracies. Zanello states, for instance, that al-Badrī is "presumably Egyptian." (p. 42, fn. 17)

[285] Lozano Cámara, "Un Fragmento," 174.

Recreation of Mankind: On the Beauties of Damascus), he still referred to it as a relevant text.[286] He also wrote *Ghurrat al-ṣabāḥ fī waṣf al-wujūh al-ṣibāḥ* (The Shining Dawn: On the Description of Fair Faces) in Damascus, telling al-Sakhāwī that it was completed around 865/1460-1, but Franz Rosenthal has challenged the accuracy of al-Sakhāwī's report. Based on clues within the text, he argues that it was composed between 868/1464 and 871/1467.[287]

Al-Badrī was in Cairo in Ramaḍān 875/February 1471 at the time of al-Ḥijāzī's death, as he mentioned that he had cared for him in his final days.[288] There is some evidence that he remained in the region of Egypt and Syria until at least 25 Dhū al-Ḥijja 876/3 June 1472, when Shāh Suwwār ibn Dhī l-Qādr, a rebellious vassal to the Egyptian Mamluk sultanate, was captured by Mamluk forces at his fortress in Zamanṭū, a city on Anatolia's southeastern border with Syria. On 18 Rabīʻ I 877/23 August 1472, Shāh Suwwār and his sixteen-person entourage were led into Cairo. All but one of them were strung up on hooks on the Bāb Zuwayla, where their bodies were left suspended for a day and a half. Al-Badrī composed a couplet about the event, which he wrote from the perspective of Shāh Suwwār, leading one to believe that al-Badrī witnessed the gruesome punishment. He wrote, "the angels who thrust the damned into Hell are at the Bāb

[286] Al-Badrī, *Nuzhat al-anām fī maḥāsin al-shām* (Cairo: Al-Maṭbaʻat al-salfiyya, 1922-3), 62. In al-Badrī's autograph manuscript, which is catalogued as History manuscript no. 1642 in Cairo's Dār al-Kutub, the completion date is given as 877/1472.

[287] Al-Sakhāwī, *Al-Ḍaw'*, 11:41; Franz Rosenthal, "Male and Female: Described and Compared," in *Homoeroticism in Classical Arabic Literature*, eds. J.W. Wright and Everett K. Rowson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 50-1, fn. 45.

[288] Ibid., 2:281.

Zuwayla, and they have seized my life with hooks."[289] The public spectacle of capital punishment was a frequent and well-attended occurrence in Mamluk Cairo. Displaying flayed and mutilated bodies reminded the sultan's subjects of the corporeal consequences of disobedience. That al-Badrī could assume in his poetry the voice of a disgraced, dying political criminal indicates an ability and willingness to enter into and appropriate others' suffering and life experiences. Whether motivated by the literary challenge or social commentary or even a sense of empathy, his responses to suffering bodies is echoed in his chapter in *Ghurrat al-ṣabāḥ* about afflicted body parts. Unfortunately, al-Badrī's full historical chronicle has not been recovered, and to date, this brief fragment in Ibn Mullā al-Ḥaṣkafī's biographical dictionary represents the only preserved section of it. This window into al-Badrī's historical writing shows his willingness to insert his own voice into the historical record and even manipulate the voices of deceased actors by imagining their words. His tendency to insert personal details about his life into his writings will also be addressed in our discussion of his literary anthologies. The lost chronicle may also contain al-Badrī's diary entries – a technique commonly employed by many contemporary Egyptian and Syrian chroniclers – or other first-person narratives of al-Badrī's life, which might explain his whereabouts and activities between 877/1472 and 892/1486-7, when he moved to Medina. There, he wrote a book about the works of al-Samhūdī, a blind religious scholar who lived in Medina from 892/1486 until his death in 921/1506 and was also a teacher of Jār Allāh ibn Fahd's. Al-Badrī stayed for less than one year, and by 893/1487 or 1488 had moved to Mecca to hear hadith from al-

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[289] Ibn al-Mullā al-Ḥaṣkafī, 1:229. Citing al-Badrī, *Tabṣirat ūlī l-abṣār fī inqirāḍ al-'umarayn bi'l-layl wa'l-nahār*, an unrecovered chronicle.

Sakhāwī.[290] While there, he wrote about al-Sakhāwī's works and also wrote poems praising the judges of Mecca. To earn a living, he worked as a merchant in Mecca and may have sat in a *ḥānūt*, which was a room beneath religious buildings that merchants rented as shops, warehouses, or stand-alone stores. The rented rooms funded building upkeep in Mecca during the pilgrimage festivities. Al-Badrī sometimes traveled from Mecca, and he was at sea in the beginning of Muḥarram 894/1489, just after the Muslim pilgrimage season had ended. He had reached Mount Sinai (*al-ṭūr*), then the city of Gaza when death overcame him in Jumādā I or II, at the age of forty-seven. The news reached al-Sakhāwī four or five months later, in the month of Shawwāl. Two or more children and maybe his father survived al-Badrī.[291] None of his biographers provides a date of death, and even al-Sakhāwī's account of his last days is vague. How many children did he actually have? Was his father alive at the moment of al-Badrī's death? In what month did he actually die? Aside from these questions, even more are raised by what was left unsaid in the obituary. Was al-Badrī returning to his family's home in Syria after a long absence? Was he traveling alone? Did he die in a remote area? The journey from Mount Sinai to Gaza was a treacherous one, as many pilgrims to Jerusalem were well aware. Just eight years before al-Badrī's trip, the Italian rabbi Meshullam Ben R. Menahem traveled from Cairo to Jerusalem, passing through Gaza. He warned future pilgrims about a host of dangers in the vicinity of the city of Gaza, including swirling dust and sand, intense heat, riding animals sinking irretrievably into the sands, lack of fresh water and bandits who ambushed caravans. "And sometimes they kill them; but generally they rob but do

[290] Ibid., 1:230-1.

[291] Al-Sakhāwī, *Al-Ḍaw'*, 11:42.

not kill them."[292] Al-Badrī could have easily fallen victim to any of these circumstances, but having just worked as a merchant in Mecca, he was likely carrying goods and money, making him a choice candidate for robbery.

Memory in Literatures of Recollection

The anthology (*majmū'a*) was a popular, well-regarded literary form in Mamluk Cairo and Damascus. The popularity of the anthology, more than any other aspect of Mamluk literature, has led to the modern characterization of this period's literature as derivative, unimaginative and substantially poor, for where is the innovation in assembling other writers' materials? Abdelfattah Kilito has weighed in on this debate with the argument that this literature challenges literary historians' conceptions of authorship and originality.[293] When the practice of anthologizing is viewed through the lens of memory, anthologies become vehicles for showcasing compilers' prodigious memories. The anthology profiles a writer's competence, access to prominent contemporary authors, and facility in navigating and organizing large quantities of poetry. The more verses that someone had memorized from reading books and listening to shaykhs' recitations, the greater the prestige that attached to him. As al-Ḥijāzī's drug overdose poignantly illustrated, a demonstrably strong memory was a source of pride and honor that could be sought at enormous cost. Collecting and reorganizing literary fragments were also central to other forms of literature in this period. After reviewing Arabic-language Mamluk and Ottoman literary production, Albert Hourani found that

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[292] *Jewish Travellers*, 181-2.

[293] Abdelfattah Kilito, *The Author and His Doubles: Essays on Classical Arabic Culture*, trans. Michael Cooperson (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2001).

most of the period's writings consisted of "'literature of recollection': dictionaries, commentaries upon literature, manuals of administrative practice, above all historiography and geography."[294] Hourani's list incorporates genres of writing centered on collecting disparate pieces of information and organizing them according to a scheme (thematic, alphabetical) in order to preserve them for posterity. In this way, remembrance and the reordering of knowledge for public consumption formed a significant basis of scholarly production. When one speaks of 'literatures of recollection,' the reference is to works based on memory, introspection and reminiscence. However, the term 'recollection' means more than just 'remembrance.' It is also defined as 'reassemblage,' which captures the sense of reordering information to affect the way an audience reacts to it. It is Hourani's understanding of "literatures of recollection" that has inspired this chapter's title and topic, as this genre neatly encapsulates the essence of al-Badrī's literary corpus.

Of al-Badrī's two anthologies the first to be discussed will be the one about poetry, and secondly the one dedicated to the eye. In a chapter of *Ghurrat al-ṣabāḥ*, al-Badrī compiled *mudhakkarāt* (love verses to men) with blighted bodies. To understand his method of recollecting and reorganizing these epigrams and transmitting knowledge on male bodies, it is important to learn more about the structure of the work. The book itself is prefaced by five endorsements, followed by seventeen chapters on an assortment of themes, and it terminates with a unique poem in which the first letter of each line is in alphabetical order.

[294] Albert Hourani, *A History of the Arab Peoples* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991), 200.

Table 2: Outline of al-Badrī's *Ghurrat al-ṣabāḥ*

Chapter	Theme
1	Men's names
2	Beautiful men
3	Clothes and jewelry
4	Political elites
5	Soldiers
6	Archers and hunters
7	Public officials
8	Merchants and jewelers
9	Laborers and porters
10	Petty merchants and those who eke out a living
11	Sellers of fruits and flowers
12	Artisans and merchants
13	Physical attributes
14	Afflicted body parts
15	Miscellanea
16	Beauty moles
17	Beard down

The fourteenth chapter on afflicted body parts is significant for two reasons: 1) its clues about aesthetics of imperfect bodies in late medieval Islamicate culture and 2) its placement after the chapter on physical attributes. Both chapters center on the aesthetics of male bodies, but in a fundamental sense, so do all seventeen chapters. Grouping these two categories together created continuities of subject matter, but also demonstrates a particular view of the body. Between these two particular chapters were substantive and grammatical overlaps. In Arabic the categories of color and physical blight are linguistically linked. The singular masculine adjectival forms of such physical abnormalities as strasbismus (***Ḥ**a**W**a**L***), leprosy (***B**a**R**a**Ṣ***) and a flat nose (***F**a**Ṭ**a**S***) are strabismic (*a**ḤW**a**L***), leprous (*a**BR**a**Ṣ***), and flat-nosed (*a**FṬ**a**S***). The adjectives all follow the form a**a*, where each asterisk represents a consonant in the triliteral root. The relationships between nominal and singular masculine adjectival forms of colors like

whiteness/white (*bayāḍ*/*abyaḍ*), blueness/blue (*zaraq*/*azraq*) and yellowness/yellow (*ṣafār*/*aṣfar*) all follow nearly the same grammatical pattern as adjectives related to physical difference. The connections hold for variations of these words based on number and gender, so dual feminine adjectives and plural masculines, for instance, are similarly constructed. Biblical Hebrew features a similar grammatical pattern for physical defects, also classifying such traits as baldness and left-handedness as abnormal physical characteristics.[295] A comparative study of physical difference in Jewish and Islamic contexts may yield more profound conclusions about the ways in which linguistic categories reflect or create cultural ones.

In modern European-language books of Arabic grammar, this particular grammar topic is typically introduced as "Adjectives of colors and physical defects" or a close variation of this phase.[296] Separating color from physical difference speaks more to twenty-first-century conceptual categories in non-Islamicate societies than to classical Arabic grammar rules and social categories. In late medieval Arabic grammatical works, the categories of color and body are elided and the distinction is often not explicitly made between blight and color.

Reading Chapter Fourteen

The title of this chapter does not contain the word *ʻāha* or the phrase *dhawū l-ʻāhāt*, terms that would have drawn attention to the mark itself or the people bearing the

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[295] Jeremy Schipper, *Disability Studies and the Hebrew Bible: Figuring Mephibosheth in the David Story* (London and New York: T & T Clark, 2006), 65-6.

[296] Luc-Willy Deheuvels, *Manuel d'arabe moderne* (Paris: Langues & Mondes – L'Asiathèque, 1996), 2:46-7; Wheeler M. Thackston, *An Introduction to Koranic and Classical Arabic* (Bethesda, MD: Iranbooks, 1994), 224-6.

mark. Al-Badrī's choice of title words "Those with Afflicted Limbs and Body Parts" refocuses attention to the part of the body bearing the blight, thereby constructing bodily organs and limbs as subjects in possession of agency. Reading this chapter alongside his *Al-Durr al-maṣūn* proves an effective study of normative and aberrant bodies, because al-Badrī has constructed them both as centered on pieces of the body. But how does writing the body in parts alter the boundaries of the discursive body? And how does a focus on individual afflicted body parts differ from an emphasis on people with blights? What critical work is done in subjectivizing body parts instead of bodies?

In the twenty-five folios that comprise Chapter Fourteen, approximately 160 poems (one to four lines each) from a wide range of authors have been assembled. Among the earliest poets featured are Imām al-Shāfiʿī (d. 204/820) and ʿAlī ibn al-Jahm (d. 249/863), who appear alongside some of al-Badrī's contemporaries, like al-Ḥijāzī. Additionally, the authors come from all over the Arabic-speaking world. In fact, the three authors just mentioned hail from Baghdad, Basra and Cairo, respectively. Some of them had afflicted and missing body parts themselves. In 812/1409 the Mamluk sultan al-Nāṣir Faraj accused the Damascene poet Aḥmad ibn Yūsuf al-Zuʿayfarīnī (d. 830/1426) of treason and ordered the removal of a portion of his tongue and all of the fingers of his right hand. Al-Maʿarrī, who only has one poem featured in this chapter, was blinded at the age of four after suffering complications from smallpox.[297] An index of the contents of Chapter Fourteen is below:

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[297] Taha Thalji Tarawneh, *The Province of Damascus during the Second Mamluk Period (784/1382-922/1516)* (Jordan: Publications of the Deanship of Research and Graduate Studies, Mu'tah University, 1994), 176.

Table 3: Outline of Chapter Fourteen of al-Badrī’s *Ghurrat al-ṣabāḥ*: ‘Those with Afflicted Body Parts’[298]

Folio	Subject of poem	Poet
152b	Doctor	Al-Zayn ibn al-Wardī (d. 749/1349)
	Doctor	Daftarkhwān (d. 7th/13th c.)
	Doctor	Al-Jamāl ibn Maṭrūḥ (d. 649/1251)
153a	Medical professor	Al-Jamāl ibn Maṭrūḥ (d. 649/1251)
	Eye doctor	Al-Ṣalāḥ al-Ṣafadī (d. 764/1363)
	Eye doctor	Al-Ṣalāḥ al-Ṣafadī (d. 764/1363)
	Eye doctor	Daftarkhwān (d. 7th/13th c.)
	One who performs cupping	Al-‘Izz al-Mawṣilī
	Barber	Ibn al-Faḍl ibn Abī Wafā
153b	Teacher of bloodletting	Ibn al-Faḍl ibn Abī Wafā
	Hunchback	Maḥāsin al-Sh*wā (d. 635/1237)
	Hunchback	Ibn al-‘Azīz
	Flat-nosed	Ibn al-‘Azīz
	Blind	Al-Zayn ibn Labīkum
	Blind	Al-‘Alā al-Wardī
154a	Blind	Ibn Nubātah (d. 768/1366)
	Blind	Ibn Nubātah (d. 768/1366)
	One-eyed	Al-Zayn ibn al-Wardī (d. 749/1349)
	One-eyed	Al-Zayn ibn al-Wardī (d. 749/1349)
	One-eyed	Al-Shihāb al-Ḥijāzī (d. 875/1471), see also *Kunnas*, 129.
	One-eyed	Ibn Abī Ḥajala (d. 766/1375)
	One-eyed	Ibn al-‘Afīf al-Tilimsānī (d. 688/1289)
154b	Eye	Al-Burhān al-Qīrāṭī (d. 781/1379)
	Jaundice	Ibn Sanā’ al-Mulk (d. 609/1211)
	Cross-eyed	Ibn Sanā’ al-Mulk (d. 609/1211)
	Cross-eyed	Al-Ṣadr ibn al-Wakīl (d. 716/1316)
	Close-set eyes	Abū al-Ḥasan al-Muqrī (d. 402/
	Having a contorted eye	Abū al-Ḥasan al-Muqrī
	Deaf (*aṭrash*)	Abū al-Ḥasan al-Muqrī
155a	Deaf (*dhā ṣamam*)	Al-Shihāb al-Ḥijāzī (d. 875/1471), see also *Kunnas*, 125.
	Deaf (*aṣamm*)	Ibn Ḥajar (d. 852/1449)

[298] Blank cells in Table 2 indicate a lacuna or undecipherable section of the manuscript.

	Deaf (*aṣamm*)	Al-Zayn ibn Labīkum
	Having fallen off a roof and hit the ground	Al-Zayn ibn Labīkum
	Stutterer	Al-Zayn ibn Labīkum
	With a chipped front tooth	Al-Shihāb al-Thaqafī
	Stutterer	Al-Shihāb al-Thaqafī
155b	Stutterer	Sarī al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Barr ibn al-Shiḥna al-Ḥanafī (d. 921/1515-6)
	Lisp (*altha‘*)	Sarī al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Barr ibn al-Shiḥna al-Ḥanafī (d. 921/1515-6)
	Lisp	Al-Shihāb al-Ḥijāzī, direct transmission (d. 875/1471), see also *Kunnās*, p. 126.
	Lisp	Ibrāhīm al-Mi‘mār (d. 749/1348)
	Lisp	Al-Zayn ibn al-Wardī (d. 749/1349)
	Lisp	Daftarkhwān (d. 7th/13th c.)
	Lisp	Al-Qayyim al-Fākhūrī
156a	Lisp	Al-Zayn ibn al-Wardī (d. 749/1349)
	Lameness	Al-Zayn ibn al-Wardī (d. 749/1349)
	Lameness	Abū Barakāt al-Andalusī
	Lameness	Al-Ṣalāḥ al-Ṣafadī (d. 764/1363)
	Lameness	Ibn ___
	Ophthalmia	Ibn ___
156b	Ophthalmia	Ibn al-Mu‘tazz (d. 296/908)
	Ophthalmia	Ibn Dāniyāl (d. 710/1310)
	Ophthalmia	Ibn al-‘Aṭṭār (d. 777/1375)
	Ophthalmia	Al-Jamāl al-Nabulusī
	Eye reddened from ophthalmia	Al-Shihāb al-Ḥijāzī, direct transmission (d. 875/1471), see also Kunnas, p. 130
	Eye reddened from ophthalmia	Al-Azm*wī
	Who complains about his eye	Al-Azm*wī
157a	Veiny eyes from ophthalmia	Al-Azm*wī
	Swollen eye	Al-Majd ibn Makānis (d. 822/1419)
	Broken tooth	Al-Muḥibb al-Zura‘ī
	Freckle-faced	Al-Muḥibb al-Zura‘ī
	Freckle-faced	Al-Nāṣir ibn al-Naqīb (d. ca. 687/1288)
	Freckle-faced	Al-Zayn ibn Labīkum
	Halitosis	Ibn ‘Arabī (d. 656/1258)
157b	Measles	Al-Sirāj ‘Umar al-Warrāq (d. 695/1296)
	Measles	Al-Majd ibn Makānis (d. 822/1419)
	Leprosy (*bahaq*)	Al-Shihāb ibn Yūsuf al-Zu‘ayfarīnī (d. 830/1426)
	Mange	Al-Shihāb ibn Yūsuf al-Zu‘ayfarīnī (d. 830/1426)

	Itching sking eruption	Ibn ‘Aṭṭār (d. 777/1375)
	Smallpox	Al-Zayn ibn al-Wardī (d. 749/1349)
	Smallpox	Al-Majd ibn Makānis (d. 822/1419)
158a	Adolescent acne	Ibn Lu’lu’ al-Dhahabī (d. 680/1281)
	Adolescent acne	Al-Ṣalāḥ al-Ṣafadī (d. 764/1363)
	Bump on cheek	Al-Majd ibn Makānis (d. 822/1419)
	Bump on cheek	Ibn al-‘Afīf al-Tilimsānī (d. 688/1289)
	Bump on cheek	Al-Badr Ḥasan al-Ghazzī al-Z*‘ārī (b. 706/1306)
	Bump	
	Smallpox	Al-Ṣalāḥ al-Ṣafadī (d. 764/1363)
	Wounded mouth	Al-Ṣalāḥ al-Ṣafadī (d. 764/1363)
158b	Plague boils	Al-Ṣalāḥ al-Ṣafadī (d. 764/1363)
	Stung by scorpion	Ibn Maṭrūḥ (d. 649/1251)
	Bee-stung lips	Al-‘Alā’ al-*m*dī
	Enchanted (*masḥūr*)	Maḥāsin al-Sh*wā (d. 635/1237)
	Demon possession/Mental illness	Maḥāsin al-Sh*wā (d. 635/1237)
	Demon possession/Mental illness	Muḥammad al-Azharī
159a	Crucified	Muḥammad ibn ‘Abdallāh al-Aḥṭar
	Dancer and musician	‘*mmān al-Yamanī
	Broken hand	‘*mmān al-Yamanī
	Broken hand	Al-Zayn ibn al-Wardī (d. 749/1349)
	Mute	Al-Shihāb ibn Yūsuf al-Zu‘ayfarīnī (d. 830/1426)
	Whose leg was cupped	Al-Shihāb ibn Yūsuf al-Zu‘ayfarīnī (d. 830/1426)
	Who underwent cupping	Al-Shihāb ibn Yūsuf al-Zu‘ayfarīnī (d. 830/1426)
	Who underwent cupping	Al-Zayn ibn Labīkum
159b	Bloodletting	Al-Qayyim al-Fākhūzī
	Whose forearm was cupped	Al-Qayyim al-Fākhūzī
	Attempted cupping	Al-Qayyim al-Fākhūzī
	Felt pain in his limbs	Al-Qayyim al-Fākhūzī
	Whose broken bones were set	Al-Majd ibn Makānis (d. 822/1419)
160a	Slashes on cheek	Al-Majd ibn Makānis (d. 822/1419)
	Fractured forehead	Al-Muḥyī ibn ‘Abd al-Ẓāhir (d. 692/1292)
	Wounded cheek	Al-Muḥyī ibn ‘Abd al-Ẓāhir (d. 692/1292)
	Wounded cheek	Al-Ṣalāḥ al-Ṣafadī (d. 764/1363)
	Wounded cheek	Al-Ṣalāḥ al-Ṣafadī (d. 764/1363)
	Wounded cheek	Ibn Aybak al-Dimashqī (d. 801/1398)
160b	Wound	Ibn al-Muraḥḥal (d. 699/1300)
	Cut open his palm	Ibn al-‘Afīf al-Tilimsānī (d. 688/1289)
	Burned his hand in a fire	Al-Nāṣir ibn al-Naqīb

		(d. ca. 687/1288)
	Wounded forehead	Ibn Ḥabīb al-Ḥalabī (d. 779/1377)
	Wound	
	Skin incision/Long cut	Al-Ṣalāḥ al-Ṣafadī (d. 764/1363)
161a	Skin incision/Long cut	Ibn Nubātah (d. 768/1366)
	Skin incision/Long cut	Ibn al-ʻAṭṭār (d. 777/1375)
	Skin incision/Long cut	Maḥāsin al-Sh*wā (d. 635/1237)
	Molar pain	Maḥāsin al-Sh*wā (d. 635/1237)
	Broken tooth	Maḥāsin al-Sh*wā (d. 635/1237)
	Pulled out tooth	Al-Ṣafī al-Ḥalabī
	Not working (*mutaʻaṭṭal*)	Daftarkhwān (d. 7th/13th c.)
	Not working	Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Ghassānī al-Wa'wā' al-Dimashqī (d. ca. 385/995)
161b		Al-Sirāj al-Maḥḥār (d. 711/1311)
	Fever	Al-Sirāj al-Maḥḥār (d. 711/1311)
	Fever	Ibn Ḥabīb al-Ḥalabī (d. 779/1377)
	Fever	Al-Qāḍī ʻAbd al-Raḥīm al-Fāḍil (d. 596/1200)
	Fever	Ibn Sanā' al-Mulk (d. 609/1211)
	Fever	Al-Shihāb al-Ḥijāzī (d. 875/1471)
	Fever	Ṭaraf al-Qā'il
	Fever	Al-Najm ibn Isrā'il (d. 667/1268)
	Fever	Al-Sirāj ʻUmar al-Warrāq (d. 695/1296)
	Fever	Daftarkhwān (d. 7th/13th c.)
	Whom a doctor visited and treated	Daftarkhwān (d. 7th/13th c.)
162b	Who fell ill from something he ate	Daftarkhwān (d. 7th/13th c.)
	Fever	Ibn al-Muʻtazz (d. 296/908)
	Worshipper?	Ibn al-Muʻtazz (d. 296/908)
	Sick	Imām al-Shāfiʻī (d. 204/820)
	Who regained health	Imām al-Shāfiʻī (d. 204/820)
	Speaker honors lover through breaking fast, not through fasting	Al-Burhān ibn Shajāʻ
	Who drank medicine	Al-Burhān ibn Shajāʻ
163a	Who drank medicine	Abū al-Ḥasan Muḥammad ibn Muẓaffar
	Who drank medicine	Ibn Nubātah (d. 768/1366)
	Who drank medicine	Ibn al-ʻAṭṭār (d. 777/1375)
	Cauterized hand	Al-Najm ibn Isrā'il (d. 667/1268)
	Cauterized hand	Tāj al-Dīn al-Naqīb
	Cauterized hand	Al-Jamāl Mūsá ibn Yaghmūr (d. 664/1265)
	Whose health improved, then declined	Al-Jamāl Mūsá ibn Yaghmūr (d. 664/1265)
163b	Whose health improved, then declined	ʻAlī ibn al-Jahm (d. 249/863)
	Ill (*ʻalīl*)	ʻAlī ibn al-Jahm (d. 249/863)

	Sick (*marīḍ*)	Ibn Sanā' al-Mulk (d. 609/1211)
	Ailing (*saqīm*)	Abū al-Faḍl ibn al-Amīn (direct transmission)
	Visiting a sick lover	Shams al-Dīn al-Qādirī
	In the throes of death	Al-Shihāb al-Ḥijāzī, direct transmission (d. 875/1471)
	Who was near death	Ibn al-ʻAṭṭār (d. 777/1375)
164a	Who embraced his dying lover	Al-Ṣalāḥ al-Ṣafadī (d. 764/1363)
	Who kissed his dying lover	Al-Ṣalāḥ al-Ṣafadī (d. 764/1363)
	Eulogizing a dead man	Al-Shihāb al-Ḥijāzī, direct transmission (d. 875/1471)
	Eulogizing a dead man	Al-Shihāb al-Ḥijāzī, direct transmission (d. 875/1471)
	Eulogizing a dead man	Al-Shihāb al-Ḥijāzī, direct transmission (d. 875/1471)
	Eulogizing a dead man	Ibrāhīm al-Miʻmār (d. 749/1348)
	Crying for his love and devotion	Ibrāhīm al-Miʻmār (d. 749/1348)
	Beautiful black man crying behind his bier	Maḥāsin al-Sh*wā (d. 635/1237)
164b	Whom the earth took	Al-Shihāb al-Ḥijāzī, direct transmission (d. 875/1471)
	Whom the earth took	Al-Shihāb al-Ḥijāzī, direct transmission (d. 875/1471)
	Whom the earth took	Al-Shihāb al-Ḥijāzī, direct transmission (d. 875/1471)
	Someone addressing his beloved's grave	Al-Ṣalāḥ al-Ṣafadī (d. 764/1363)
	maqri?	Ibn al-ʻAfīf al-Tilimsānī (d. 688/1289)
	Visiting beloved's tomb	Ibn al-ʻAfīf al-Tilimsānī (d. 688/1289)
165a	Who planted a flower at his grave	Al-Ṣalāḥ al-Ṣafadī (d. 764/1363)
	Who planted a flower at his grave	Al-Ṣalāḥ al-Ṣafadī (d. 764/1363)
	Orphan	Al-Ṣalāḥ al-Ṣafadī (d. 764/1363)
	Orphan	Fakhr al-Dīn ibn Makānis (d. 794/1392)

Selecting and splicing together material from different genres, periods and places is a liberty uniquely accorded to the anthologist, and al-Badrī in this capacity is able to create a new context and moment in which to appreciate the verses. *Ghurrat al-ṣabāḥ* effectively obliterates the original historical, social and literary contexts in which these verses were originally written. The experience of reading a single poem on blights in a

poet's *dīwān* differs significantly from reading the same poem alongside similarly themed works by other authors. With anthologies the process of extracting and reassembling is essential to the genre. Al-Badrī does not describe his selection process, so we may never know what he chose to leave out. Even so, there is much to learn from the material he chose to include. In an epigram or short poem, the author can only present a succinct and sometimes partially developed scene or idea. These literary snippets allow his audiences to absorb the material quickly. Accordingly, more text fits onto the page, giving a visual sense of copious, easy-to-digest poetic samples. Through brevity comes the impression of length and substance. In this way anthologies manipulate audience responses to the material at hand. Al-Badrī's work had the potential to create new associations with standard texts by reconfiguring their spatial arrangements. These new sites of analysis make possible an innovative presentation of blighted bodies, as al-Badrī has rendered past utterances about blights legible to his audiences. Poetic traditions are re-archived, informing the ways in which their particular subjects are remembered. While anthologizing does not necessitate the creation of original material, the opportunity to fashion new canons, thereby establishing new site of collective memory, stands as a rather broad project with major social, political and literary significance. Indeed, al-Badrī's reassembly of this set of poems presents a sense of continuity, as he has constructed a quasi-narrative about the cycle of life, illness and death. From beginning to end, Chapter Fourteen follows a teleological arch of illness, opening with poems praising medical workers who treat afflicted patients, moving then to men with various afflictions, sufferers of declining health, death, burial and men visiting their beloveds' tombs. The author's conceptualization of illness follows the model for progression of disease in

Prophetic medicine (*al-ṭibb al-nabawī*). Al-Badrī writes in his later anthology about the eye: "Every illness (*maraḍ*) shifts, and it has four stages: onset, increase, end and decline."[299] The associations from poem to poem are not always thematic. Most often, each successive verse was chosen either for its thematic relevance to the previous one or for its having been written by the same author as the previous one. Rosenthal found this organizational principle somewhat disruptive, remarking that "the decision as to where to put some of the epigrams seems at time to have caused a small problem for him."[300] The chapter's final poems praise young boys who have been orphaned by illness and in their isolation seek solace with the poems' male speakers. The sexual gaze of the speakers on the now extremely vulnerable boys is a striking and haunting end to the chapter.

The reassembly of poems about subjectivized body parts and their body parts come together to created a hybrid corpus of work and a conglomerate human body that is the sum of its individual diseased parts. Al-Badrī is not only assembling a set of poems, but also reassembling a *segmented human body*. This act of "textual fragmentation of the body," to borrow Terry Wilfong's phrase, is gendered male in this anthology, but al-Ḥijāzī and other authors wrote about women's blighted body parts too.[301] In his study of Coptic communities in Egypt from 400 to 1000 CE, Wilfong reads isolated body parts to understand how they are differently valorized in magical, medical, religious, poetic,

[299] Al-Badrī, *Al-Durr*, 1:91. For the sake of consistency within secondary sources, I have maintained Penelope Johnstone's translation of the four stages. See Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, 110. However, the third term, which is literally translated as "end," may have referred to what we today would call a "peak in illness."

[300] Rosenthal, "Male and Female," 34.

[301] Terry Wilfong, "Reading the Disjointed Body in Coptic: From Physical Modification to Textual Fragmentation," in *Changing Bodies, Changing Meanings: Studies on the Human Body in Antiquity*, ed. Dominic Montserrat (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), 118.

visual and historical sources and in the confined spaces of convents, monasteries and homes. The wide variance of constructions of segmented male and female bodies and the impossibility of deriving a single unitary theory of the body arise from this study. In much the same way, al-Badrī has not advanced a unified vision of male-male homoerotics in this period, but has produced a worthy contribution in the genre of literature about body parts, like al-Nawājī's (d. 859/1455) study of birthmarks, and literary traditions about blights.

The Mamluk era ushered in a flood of literature related to blighted bodies, distinguished from 'Abbasid lists, anecdotes and occasional poetry by its inclusion in new genres. First-person narratives of illness and blight, and love poetry were increasingly common. The literary historian Aḥmad Ṣādiq al-Jammāl summarized this shift in literary sensibilities thus: "We know that Arabic literature is filled with descriptions of young boys, women and large eyes, but customs changed here [in early Mamluk Egypt] as poets started composing love poems about close-set eyes,"[302] which were considered extraordinarily ugly. In the Arab hierarchy of body parts, the eye is the most exalted feature for both sexes. Afflictions of the eye (like ophthalmia, blindness and strabismus) and aberrations in its color, shape and size were unattractive traits. To illustrate his point, al-Jammāl cited poems about beloveds with close-set eyes that had been written by Ibn Nubātah (d. 768/1366) and Muḥyī al-Dīn ibn 'Abd al-Ẓāhir (d. 692/1292), a scribe in the Mamluk chancery. Of course, a reading of al-Badrī's chapter reveals that Ayyubid poets too wrote love poetry about ill and blighted people, requiring

[302] Al-Jammāl, 46.

a slight modification of al-Jammāl's statement. Rather than an abrupt change in literary topics in Mamluk Egypt, the Mamluk era witnessed an increased production of existing themes. Furthermore, Abbasid and Ottoman Arab eulogistic and panegyric poetry sometimes centered on praising someone whose health had been restored after an illness.[303] Almost invariably the author is subservient to the addresses, reinforcing the identification of whole, healthy bodies with power and the restoration of health as a sign of meriting power.

As a historian and literary anthologist, al-Badrī foregrounded this trend of increasing interest in imperfect bodies, fashioning collective memory related to blights. In both this dissertation chapter and the previous one, the analysis turns on the human capacity for memorization and on literary-historical uses of memory in ninth/fifteenth-century Cairo and Damascus. These two Mamluk capital cities were administratively, economically, militarily and culturally significant in the sultanate, even more so than the Hijaz, which although the site of Islam's two holiest cities, was semiautonomous. As such, Cairo and Damascus served as twin academic pillars that were closely identified with the Mamluk sultanate. Cairo functioned as al-Badrī's intellectual center, although Damascus was his birthplace, and the dual importance of these locales in his life moved him to take both cities' names into his own *nisba*. Even in his topographical work on Syria, he made references to and comparisons with Cairo.[304] His hybrid identity was not

[303] Allen, *Introduction*, 84-5.

[304] Al-Badrī, *Nuzhat*, 74. Al-Ḥijāzī probably would not have approved of the comparison, as he himself wrote a poem in which he proudly declared, "I would not exchange my city for Damascus / Because its flowers and almonds are not my land." See Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Maqqarī (d. 1041/1631 or 2), *Al-Nafḥ al-ṭīb min ghuṣn al-Andalus al-raṭīb* (The Sweet Fragrance from the Green Bough of Andalusia), ed. Iḥsan ʻAbbās (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1968), 2:405.

an unusual one, as itinerancy and interregional movement characterized many scholars' lives. The early Mamluk poet Ibn Nubātah himself took advantage of his ties to Cairene and Damascene intellectual circles to meld two of their literary forms into a new hybrid school of literary practice. Known as "The School of Licit Magic" (*madrasat al-siḥr al-ḥalāl*), its hallmark was blending the Egyptian and Syrian forms of *tawriyya* (double entendre). Among his students and adherents were al-Ṣafadī (d. 764/1363), who himself wrote a treatise on *tawriyya*,[305] al-Zayn al-Wardī (d. 749/1349) and al-Burhān al-Qīrāṭī (d. 781/1379). Of this school, it has been said that "the 'seven *Shihāb*s' were its most prominent students."[306] The influence of this school of thought and of Shihāb al-Dīn al-Ḥijāzī, one of the seven Shihābs, on al-Badrī's two anthologies – *Ghurrat al-ṣabāḥ* and *Al-Durr al-maṣūn* – is evident, as he frequently cites in them the works of these poets. More indicative of al-Ḥijāzī's influence than these citations is his generously worded blurb for the younger man's anthology of homoerotic poetry, *Ghurrat al-ṣabāḥ*.

Referring to his student in it as "Al-Shaykh Taqī al-Dīn Abū Bakr al-Badrī al-Dimashqī,"[307] al-Ḥijāzī's endorsement is the first of five that come at the beginning of the only known manuscript of this work – a copy dated 5 Dhū l-Ḥijja 875/25 May 1471 (just months after al-Ḥijāzī's death) that is housed at the British Museum. Endorsements from five of al-Badrī's fellow writers accompany this text. They were written by: 1) Shihāb al-Dīn al-Ḥijāzī, on 16 Jumādā II 871/23 January 1467; 2) Shihāb al-Dīn al-Manṣūrī; 3) 'Abd al-Barr ibn al-Shiḥna (d. 921/1515), who wrote a book on religious riddles; 4) Abū

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[305] Al-Ṣafadī, *Faḍḍ al-khitām 'an al-tawriyya wa'l-istikhdām* (Breaking the Seal on Double Entendre and Usage), ed. al-Muḥammadī 'Abd al-'Azīz al-Ḥinnāwī (s.l.: s.n., 1979).

[306] Al-Jammāl, 59.

[307] Al-Badrī, *Ghurrat*, 2b.

Bakr Muḥammad ibn ʻUmar ibn al-Naṣībī (b. 851/1447); and 5) Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Awtārī (dates unknown). Al-Sakhāwī mentioned five other eminent writers who wrote verses for al-Badrī's collection, including al-Burhān al-Bāʻūnī (d. 870/1465) and his two unidentified brothers, Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Abī Bakr al-Qādirī (b. 824/1421, death date unknown) and the historian-poet Badr al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Qurqmās al-Sayfī al-ʻAlā'ī (d. 942/1535). Al-Sakhāwī himself was also asked to compose a blurb (*taqrīḍ*) for the collection and he claimed to have produced a lovely one, but this text has not been recovered.[308] Although none of these endorsements appear in the London manuscript, they may have been appended to other versions of the work or perhaps were never used. But to return to the preserved blurbs, al-Ḥijāzī's was written earliest and would have carried a lot of weight for anyone familiar with his achievements and fame. Because he had already written a well-received collection of love poems addressed to male youth (*Jinnat al-wuldān*), his endorsement carried considerable authority. The two men's shared interests in homoeroticism has led Rosenthal to raise the question of who influenced whom, leading him to conclude that "the possibility that al-Ḥijāzī could have conceived the idea for his work upon hearing about al-Badrī's project can safely be excluded; more likely, it was he who suggested the project to al-Badrī."[309] Another source of possible inspiration was al-Nawājī's anthology of homoerotic poems. Al-Badrī himself acknowledges no forebears or contemporaries for influencing or inspiring his work, though he does remark in the foreword that "one of the elites … asked me to compile a

[308] Al-Sakhāwī, *Al-Ḍaw'*, 11:41. An alternate spelling for *taqrīḍ* is *taqrīẓ*, and both spellings were in usage in the late medieval Arabic world, for which see Ibn al-Ḥanbalī, *Baḥr*, 221.

[309] Rosenthal, "Male and Female," 33.

unique anthology for him about young boys." However, he was so taken aback by the moral implications of writing about male beauty that he needed time to reflect. "I responded to his question after it had occurred to me that I had a duty to obey his example. So I gathered together for him these jewels and stars, luminous and splendid."[310] The identity of the commissioning party is left deliberately vague because the entire passage is a formulaic rhetorical device frequently deployed in literary introductions. These sections typically consist of an outside request for an artist to produce a work, an artist's protests about his inability to carry out such a project, followed by his reconsidered acceptance. Al-Badrī reappropriated this humble and pious mode of introduction to underscore his reputation as someone whose literary subjects tested the boundaries of public morality. Hashish, wine and now male-male eroticism were the topics of his most extensive works. For a man who had staked his professional reputation on authoring literature characterized by a "lack of moral scruples," pausing to consider the acceptability of assembling an erotic anthology rings patently false and is humorously self-conscious.[311]

In the spirit of a mentor eminently proud of his pupil's achievements, al-Ḥijāzī used ornate rhetoric and hyperbole to describe the scope of al-Badrī's composition. Writing on Friday, 16 Jumādā II 871/23 January 1467, at nearly 80 years old, al-Ḥijāzī situated *Ghurrat al-ṣabāḥ* as a strong composition within a deep tradition of Arabic literature that would have deeply affected the lives of past writers.

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[310] Al-Badrī, *Ghurrat*, 1a. The work 'anthology' derives from two Greek components: *anthos* (flowers) and *legein* (gather). Here, al-Badrī echoes this etymology when describing his process of composition as the gathering of gems and stars, so applying the term 'anthology' is appropriate for *Ghurrat al-ṣabāḥ*.

[311] Rosenthal, *The Herb*, 15.

> If Ibn Qalāqis [Alexandrian poet who died in 567/1172] had heard al-Badrī's composition, then he would have lowered his head shamefully and we would then submit to him on our fingertips. If Ibn al-Khaṭīb [Andalusian historian and poet who died in 776/1374] had seen the grandeur of his minaret (*manār*), then he would have said that this man is an unparalleled compiler. If Ibn Namātī (?) had beheld his collection, he would have been saved from illness, even at the moment of death. And Ibn Nubātah [poet and prose writer who died in 768/1366] would have been embarrassed by a master of the word who was not inferior to his own speech.[312]

Comparing the current author to past luminaries was a generic convention among writers of such endorsements in eighth/fourteenth and ninth/fifteenth-century Cairo, and in 795/1393 Ibn Ḥajar al-ʻAsqalānī even employed a similar "allusion to a shared literary heritage" in a blurb for Ibn Damāmīnī's (d. 827/1424) *Nuzūl al-ghayth* (The Descent of Rain).[313] Al-Ḥijāzī's endorsement carried such force because it depicted *Ghurrat al-ṣabāḥ* as a composition that had the power to humble, embarrass, impress and even spare past literary giants from fatal illnesses. By invoking the memory of these literary predecessors, al-Ḥijāzī amplifies the worth of this individual work. The reading and listening publics were not the only intended audiences for al-Ḥijāzī's writings. The compiler himself, al-Badrī, paid close attention to his teacher's comments about Ibn Qalāqis, later echoing his teacher's language in the conclusion of his circa-893/1487 anthology *Al-Durr al-maṣūn, al-musammá bi-Siḥr al-ʻuyūn* (The Guarded Pearl, also known as, The Magic of the Eyes), but inverted the imagery about Ibn Qalāqis.[314] Writing nearly twenty-one years after al-Ḥijāzī had completed his endorsement, al-Badrī

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312 Ibid., 3a.

313 Rosenthal, "'Blurbs'," 189, 195.

314 Dating the text is possible because within the text, al-Badrī reported the death of al-Salāmī ibn Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn ʻAbd Allāh in 893/1487-8, and al-Badrī himself died the following year in 894/1488. See *Al-Durr*, 2:197.

concluded the lengthy work thus: “Let us content ourselves, in this book of ours, with Ibn Qalāqis’s words that made heads bow to him. According to what the pen has recorded (i.e., historical records), people pointed to him with their fingertips (i.e., he was a famous, remarkable man).”[315] Al-Ḥijāzī deeply admired Ibn Qalāqis’s poetry and included numerous samples of his verse in his anthology *Rawḍ al-ādāb*.[316] Al-Badrī too felt an attachment to Ibn Qalāqis and paid homage to him, and by extension, to al-Ḥijāzī’s mentorship in *Al-Durr al-maṣūn*.

Al-Badrī’s choice of the eye as the subject of the anthology *al-Durr al-maṣūn* confirms the high regard for this organ in Arab culture. The field of ophthalmology thrived in the medieval Islamicate world and the advancements achieved in this time surpassed in scope and depth the knowledge of neighboring civilizations. Arabs were renowned for their preeminence and expertise in the sciences of the eye, so al-Badrī had a wealth of information at his disposal and recourse to earlier works in the field when he began composing his own work. His massive anthology about the eye has been characterized as “a synthesis of ophthalmological observations and poetry emulating al-Ṣafadī’s *Ṣarf al-‘ayn* [*wa ‘arḍ al-‘ayn fī waṣf al-‘ayn*].”[317] Al-Ṣafadī’s large anthology comprises materials on Islamic jurisprudence, Arabic language, literature and

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[315] Al-Badrī, *Al-Durr*, 2:281.

[316] Muḥammad Zakariyya ‘Anānī, *Al-Nuṣūṣ al-ṣiqilliyya min shi‘r Ibn Qalāqis al-Iskandarī (567 AH) wa-athārihi al-nathriyya* (Sicilian Texts in the Poetry of Ibn Qalāqis al-Iskandarī (d. 567 AH) and His Prose Works) (Cairo: Dār al-ma‘ārif, 1982), 11.

[317] Andras Hamori and Thomas Bauer, “Anthologies,” in *EI*[3], eds. Gudrun Krämer, Denis Matringe, John Nawas and Everett Rowson. Brill, 2008. Brill Online. Univ. of Michigan-Ann Arbor. 13 March 2008. http://www.encislam.brill.nl.proxy.lib.umich.edu/subscriber/entry?entry=ei3_COM-0031. Bauer also briefly describes *Al-Durr al-maṣūn* in his “Literarische Anthologien der Mamlūkenzeit,” in *Die Mamluken. Studien zu ihrer Geschichte und Kultur. Zum Gedenken an Ulrich Haarmann (1942-1999)*, eds. S. Conermann and A. Pistor-Hatam (Hamburg: Asien und Afrika, 2003), 119.

alphabetically arranged selections of poetry, and al-Badrī's collection comprises much more than just eye-related medical information and verse. Historical anecdotes, prophetic hadith, Qur'anic scripture, fables, legal debates, letter magic, aphorisms and literary references to eyes round out *Al-Durr al-maṣūn*. Compiled in 893/1487 or 1488 towards the end of his short life, the sum of al-Badrī's mentors' influences are prominent in this text. A veiled reference to al-Ṣafadī appears in the opening pages of the book. "I named this work *Siḥr al-'uyūn* because the essence [lit., "eye"] of a thing is its name, and by my life, it is known to literary critics and arbiters of refined literary taste who understand what there is of utility, double entendre, eloquence and harmony in this name."[318] The reference to utility and double entendre mirrors the language of the title of al-Ṣafadī's treatise on double entendre and its uses as a poetic device, another subtle reference to the value he assigned to al-Ṣafadī and the School of Licit Magic.

If Chapter Fourteen of *Ghurrat al-ṣabāḥ* represents a uniquely ordered selection of homoerotic poetry praising blighted bodies, then *Al-Durr al-maṣūn* is its counterpart rooted in historically normative practices of writing about eyes, blighted or otherwise. Blights among the *ashrāf* are explored in traditional fashion as lists of names or partially narrativized lists. Here, al-Badrī explores etymologies, definitions and grammatical variations of blight-related terms. All in all, it is an expansive exploration of eyes from many perspectives – that of medical workers, jurists, religious scholars, men and women of letters, practitioners and believers of magic, and historians. Due to the range of points

[318] Al-Badrī, *Al-Durr*, 1:15.

of view incorporated into this work, popular and elite registers of voices find representation in his compendium.

The first chapter of *al-Durr* centers on "the power of vision," or the agency of the eye. Magical tables, incantations and diagrams of the magical properties of the eye concretize popular beliefs about the eye's ability to influence the physical world. The chapter closes with a disturbing story of violence against a blue-eyed woman from the central Arabian region of al-Yamāma who could see three days into the future and used her ability to protect her clan from surprise attacks. Interestingly, her rare ability is not constructed as supernatural foresight, but rather as the result of vision so acute that "she could spot a white hair in milk."[319] One day she claimed to see trees approaching their settlement to attack, and the people of al-Yamāma roundly denounced her as feeble-minded and insane. She was also accused of lying, then was seized and had her eyes gouged out. It turned out that the enemy horsemen had covered themselves and their riding animals with leaves to disguise their advance and, as a result, successfully ambushed the settlement and defeated the settlers handily.[320]

This story raises a number of questions about the nature of the Blue-Eyed Woman's ability. The pairing of sharply piercing sight with clairvoyance may be a hyperbolic statement or an indication of how sight was configured. Relatedly, common Arab lore credited blind individuals with greater "vision of the heart" or the ability to discern feelings and to access piety with greater ease. Figurative conceptions of sight

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[319] Al-Badrī, *Al-Durr*, 1:59.

[320] Ibid. Al-Jāḥiẓ too related the story of the Blue-Eyed Woman from al-Yamāma, so it has deep historical roots in Arabic-speaking areas.

(through time *and* space, and with organs other than the eyes) bespeak a view of the body that rejects neat compartmentalizations and boundaries of physical abilities. The heart can see, and the eye can discern the future. The Blue-Eyed Woman's eyes had agency and possessed abilities that belonged solely to the eyes. The blue color of her eyes only heightened the 'otherness' of her abilities. A reinforced sense of her difference contributed to the violent reactions of her peers to her suspected lies. The punishment of removing offending body parts is rooted in Islamic jurisprudence, and the amputation of limbs was essentially an order of death for the part of the body that had transgressed moral order. No judge, however, ordered this woman's punishment, and her fellow tribespeople exacted this gruesome sentence as a form of impromptu justice against a woman who threatened their peace and their sense of honor and transgressed physical and gender norms. In later sections about the magical properties of the eye, women figure as the main possessors of these abilities. Even when they are shown to use "licit magic," they are accused of being or found to be treacherous.

In the fifth chapter al-Badrī describes different parts of the eye, emphasizing that even units of a whole can be particularized and divided into even smaller units. The eye is not a unitary organ, and many of its smaller components find recognition in this chapter. Indeed, al-Badrī writes about the inner corner of the eye, as well as the follicles on the eyelids from which eyelashes grow. Ibn Nubāta praised these follicles as the best part of a woman's eye.[321] The enchanting capabilities of women's eyes, which references the book title, are detailed in random places throughout these volumes. In another

[321] Al-Badrī, *Al-Durr*, 1:159.

instance, a man encounters a slave woman with eyes so beautiful that they compel him to pay 40,000 dirhams for her.[322]

To return to Joseph Roach, whose words introduced this chapter, the restoration of historical performances by anthologizing multiple performances changes their original meanings and significations. Al-Badrī's anthologies resituated knowledge about blighted bodies. By focusing on the literary body, al-Badrī heightens the abilities, identities, cultural and aesthetic ascriptions and fetishes of individual body parts. When treated singly as subjects, limbs and organs transform into literary or historical subjects with agency and identity, calling into question the notion of a person's control over his or her own body. Control is an illusion when the constitutive parts of a body possess identities and wills. Ascribing agency to one part of the human body creates a particular relationship of the part to the whole, and the technique works to different effect in each anthology. In *Ghurrat al-ṣabāḥ* illnesses play out over every inch of the human body, and in the end, every part of this wholly afflicted body dies. In *al-Durr* the multi-layered seductive, coercive, symbolic and magical forces of the eye find expression in this miscellany dedicated to this singular organ – the eye.

[322] Al-Badrī, *Al-Durr*, 2:9.

Chapter 5
Cityscapes: Viewing the Body Politic

In the previous chapter we saw how al-Badrī's poetic anthology documented sexual responses to afflicted male bodies in the Ayyubid and Mamluk periods, and how his miscellany reflected current perceptions of the eye in Damascus and Cairo. The cross-pollination of historical and cultural influences makes it nearly impossible to write the history of any region in the Arab East in isolation. As in Cairo, plague raged fiercely in Damascus devastating families and the commercial sector and crippling crop production and raising the prices of commodities. Against the backdrop of public health crises and economic instability, communities of scholars and friends unified around shared devotions to learning and social companionship, and their works began to reflect the experiences of people confronting disease, pain and death all too often in their daily lives.

In this chapter we will focus on the ways the city of Damascus and its various classes of inhabitants were imagined by two of our scholars – Ibn ʻAbd al-Hādī and Ibn Ṭūlūn – and also by the Ottoman administrators of the metropolis. Although urban spaces serve as the background of all of these chapters, here in Damascus particular spaces inside the city offer insights into how individual human bodies related to the Damascene body politic. The spaces of the city are as much subjects in this history as the people who inhabit them. Both Ibn ʻAbd al-Hādī and Ibn Ṭūlūn wrote geographical works about their native al-Ṣāliḥiyya, a community just outside the city walls.

The core of the community web being constructed in this study is based on friendships, scholarship, travels and writings on a particular theme. For some of these men, illness, disability or physical difference touched their lives quite personally, adding a dimension of lived experience to their writings that offers a broader context for understanding the text. Furthermore, although this particular study focuses overwhelmingly on the body, why should this interest be the only one to connect them? Yossef Rapoport has revealed another fascinating way that some of our writers' texts and lives intersect. He notes that

> Working women were the subject of at least three intriguing literary works composed during the second half of the fifteenth century. **Ibn Ṭūlūn** devoted a treatise to traditions about spinners, entitled *Qiṭf al-Zahrāt fīmā qīla fī al-Ghazzālāt* (Bunch of Flowers on the Sayings concerning Female Spinners). The Cairene litterateur **Shihāb al-Dīn al-Ḥijāzī al-Ḥazrajī** [sic] (d. 875/1471) composed a collection of epigrams directed to various types of women, including spinners, seamstresses and other women of professions. The Damascene **Ibn al-Mibrad** (d. 909/1503) collected an anthology of traditions and anecdotes about women, most of them in praise of women who work the spindle.[323]

That our three writers recognized not only the productive labor of women workers, but also the presence of physically blighted people in their communities speaks to their sensibility to members of the social landscape who may not have shared their position and class. It could also signal a basic uniformity of experience for intellectual elites in capital cities in the Arab lands. Whatever the case may be, uncovering other converging interests within this group of writers again confirms their connectedness and supports our thesis of interregional friendship networks of learning, as it makes their shared awareness

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[323] Yossef Rapoport, *Marriage, Money and Divorce in Medieval Islamic Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 49. Boldface added for emphasis. As a note, al-Ḥijāzī's epigrams on spinners appear in his *Kunnās al-jawārī*, the same collection containing verses on physically marked women.

of corporeal themes seem less like accidental convergences and more like a concentrated set of scholarly contacts.

Rapoport extends his discussion of Ibn al-Mibrad to note that his wife Bulbul bint ʻAbd Allāh, an emancipated slave, donated her earnings from spinning to charity.[324] These men's writings suggest that women's labor was not as concealed as has been suggested in modern scholarship, where the seclusion of women in domestic and public spaces, behind veils and under long robes is a popular theme of academic literature. In the case of Bulbul bint ʻAbd Allāh, the favorite of his thirteen wives and concubines, Ibn ʻAbd al-Hādī reported that "she stayed with me for ten years without ever leaving my house, until her brother's marriage. He asked me if she could attend his wedding, so I talked with her about it, but she refused to go. When I asked her why, she responded, 'I swore to my father that I would only leave this house when I was dead.'"[325] Her insistence on never leaving the marital home was not typical of urban working women. There existed public spaces in the city where women's activities, professional and otherwise, were visible to male observers. In Ibn Ukhuwwa's (d. 729/1329) inspection manual, a work that paints a vivid portrait of bustling markets in late medieval Cairo, any profession that requires interaction with women is identified as such. Flax-spinners, spindle-makers, astrologers and letter-writers had mostly female clients, and these male professionals were cautioned

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[324] Yūsuf ibn ʻAbd al-Hādī, *Akhbār al-nisā' al-musammá al-Rusā li'l-ṣāliḥāt min al-nisā'*, ed. Māhir Muḥammad ʻAbd al-Qādir (Homs: Dār al-Maʻārif, 1993), 16-17. Cited in ibid., fn. 112. Bulbul's onomastic designation as "a daughter of the servant of God (*bint ʻAbd Allāh*)" marked her as a manumitted slave.

[325] Ibn ʻAbd al-Hādī, *Luqaṭ al-sanbal fī akhbār al-Bulbul* (Leftover Sandalwood in the Reports of Bulbul), Ms. 3186/2. Al-Asad Library, Damascus, Syria, fol. 68b. Cited in Shubayr, 54.

to be honorable.[326] Ibn al-Ḥājj (d. 737/1336-7), a Fez-born contemporary who also lived in Cairo, explicitly warned shopkeepers to

> be careful when a woman comes to buy something, to look at her behavior, for if she was one of those women dressed up in delicate clothes, exposing her wrists, or some of her adornments, and speaking in a tender and soft voice, he should leave the selling transaction and give her his back until she leaves the shop peacefully. … This is a great affliction nowadays, for one rarely sees the shop of the cloth merchant without the presence of women dressed in delicate clothes which expose their adornment, and behaving as if they were with their husbands, or members of their family.[327]

Veiled women were capable of threatening the tranquility of public market spaces. Physical gestures, low vocal registers and jewelry complicated the notion of veils rendering women invisible. Ibn al-Ḥajj's suggestion for men to turn away from women whose presence is troubling them constitutes the only surefire method of excluding women from public recognition. Veiling was not a definitive cover, but offered varying degrees of seclusion.

Besides the shopkeeper, the market inspector was another figure who had rare access to women's worlds. "The muḥtasib must visit the places where women congregate, such as the thread and cotton markets, the river-banks, and the doorways of the women's bath-houses."[328] Al-Maqrīzī's descriptions of the markets of late Mamluk

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[326] Ibn al-Ukhuwwa, 46, 67, 90.

[327] Cited in Huda Lutfi, "Manners and Customs of Fourteenth-Century Cairene Women: Female Anarchy versus Male Shar'i Order in Muslim Prescriptive Treatises," in *Women in Middle Eastern History: Shifting Boundaries in Sex and Gender*, eds. Nikki R. Keddie and Beth Baron (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991), 103-4.

[328] Ibn al-Ukhuwwa, 10.

Cairo corroborate an atmosphere of tension surrounding the public activity and visibility of women.[329]

Although Bulbul was secluded in her home for at least ten years, her husband exposed her life, personality and deeds in a biography he wrote of her, so as one scholar has found, "efforts to reconceptualize the topography of women's lived experience in graded terms of seclusion and mobility seem more promising."[330] That said, Ibn ʻAbd al-Hādī's biography still represents a significant departure from normative practices regulating domestic disclosure and seclusion. His disciple Ibn Ṭūlūn was so discreet about his marriage and children that the prevailing consensus among modern scholars is that he was a "committed bachelor" who died "without issue"[331] – a conclusion most likely drawn from the ambiguously and unusually worded statement in al-Ghazzī's obituary of Ibn Ṭūlūn that "when he died, he had no children and no wife."[332] Indeed, he had married Karīmat al-ʻAllāma bint al-Shaykh Ibrāhīm ibn Muḥammad ibn ʻAwn al-Shāghūrī al-Ḥanafī (d. after 923/1517), the daughter of a prominent Damascene shaykh, sometime before 915/1509.[333] Together, they had three children – one son and two

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[329] André Raymond and Gaston Wiet, *Les marchés du Caire: traduction annotée du texte de Maqrīzī* (Cairo: Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale, 1979), 78-83; Mounira Chapoutot-Remadi, "Femmes dans la ville mamlūke," *JESHO* 38 (1995): 145-64.

[330] Elizabeth Thompson, "Public and Private in Middle Eastern History," *Journal of Women's History* 15.1 (2003): 53.

[331] Conermann, 120; *EI*^{2}, s.v. "Ibn Ṭūlūn," 3:957.

[332] Najm al-Dīn al-Ghazzī, *Kawākib al-sā'ira bi-a'yān al-mi'ah al-'ashira* (Shooting Stars: On the Notables of the Tenth Hijri Century), ed. Jibrā'il Sulaymān Jabbūr (Beirut: Al-Maṭba'at al-Amīrikāniyya, 1945), 2:54.

[333] For biographical details on Ibn Ṭūlūn's father-in-law Burhān al-Dīn Ibrāhīm ibn Muḥammad ibn ʻAwn al-Shāghūrī al-Ḥanafī (d. 916/1511), see Ibn al-Mullā al-Ḥaṣkafī, 1:282-3, 2:661; al-Sakhāwī, *Al-Ḍaw'*, 1:146-7; Ibn al-ʻImād, *Shadharāt*, 8:73; al-Ghazzī, *Kawākib*, 1:13, 260-1, 2:174. He also taught Ibn Ṭūlūn and awarded him an *ijāza* in *iftā'* (the deliverance of formal legal opinions) on 29 Rabīʻ II 911/29 August 1505. See Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Al-Fulk*, 52.

daughters, all of whom predeceased their father. One can only assume that al-Ghazzī's delicately worded formulation was understood by contemporary audiences as a couched reference to a set of tragic events. His linguistic subtlety was entirely lost to modern readers, which is a testament to the complexity of classical Arabic, and was mistakenly read as confirmation of the absence of wife and children. Even allowing for these linguistic difficulties, al-Ghazzī's obituary was not the only historical source about Ibn Ṭūlūn's life, as he himself wrote an autobiography and histories in which he recorded his personal experiences. Ibn Ṭūlūn did not completely eliminate his family from his histories, but integrated them quietly into these works. He recorded without commentary that his "one and only wife" met with al-Shihāb ibn al-Mu'īd (or al-Mu'ayyad) in this same man's courtyard on 3 Jumādā I 923/24 May 1517.[334]

Ibn Ṭūlūn also wrote about his children after their deaths. 'Uthmān ibn al-Shams ibn Ṭūlūn died on 9 Dhū l-Qa'ada 938/13 June 1532 at the age of seven. In addition to having read a portion of the Qur'an, learned many texts and receiving authorization from several scholars to transmit texts, "his father honored him."[335] Sitt al-'Ulamā' Khadīja (Rabī' II 915 – Dhū l-Qa'ada 920/July 1509 – December 1514), who in her short life had received an *ijāza* from al-Sirāj al-Ṣayrafī, died of the plague. 'Ā'isha, who was also called Maryam, passed away on 13 Rabī' I 943/30 August 1536, just ten days shy of her

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[334] Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Mufākahat al-khillān fī ḥawādith al-zamān: ta'rīkh miṣr wa'l-shām* (Friendly Banter on Current Events: The History of Egypt and Greater Syria) (Cairo: Al-Mu'assasat al-miṣriyya al-'āmmah li'l-ta'līf wa'l-tarjama wa'l-ṭibā' wa'l-nashr, 1964), 2:61.

[335] Ibn Mullā al-Ḥaṣkafī, 1:27, 492. On page 27, 'Uthmān's death date is given as 19 Dhū l-Qa'ada, whereas on page 492, it is noted as 9 Dhū l-Qa'ada. Since Ibn al-Mullā al-Ḥaṣkafī's text preserves the only currently known biographical notice about 'Uthmān, the precise date of his death remains uncertain without recourse to the manuscript copy of *Mut'at adhhān*.

seventeenth birthday.[336] In her lifetime she had sat at the feet of many teachers and had received numerous certificates of transmission. Of the obituaries of Ibn Ṭūlūn's immediate family members, only the ones he wrote for his children are extant, and he takes care to outline their scholarly achievements, reflecting his own ideas of what made a life memorable and noteworthy. Even in the home, scholarship was a valued pursuit.

Domestic Spaces

Ibn al-Mubarrad (sometimes rendered Ibn al-Mibrad) was the patronymic for Jamāl al-Dīn Yūsuf ibn ʻAbd al-Hādī al-Ḥanbalī, a historian and legal scholar who was born in Damascus in 840 or 841/1437. When Ibn Ṭūlūn asked him about the origins of this patronymic, which means "the son of the man with a handsome face," Ibn al-Mubarrad claimed that his grandfather Aḥmad's paternal uncle gave him this *laqab* out of respect for him.[337] Our Ibn al-Mubarrad grew up in al-Ṣāliḥiyya, a village just outside the city walls of Damascus and situated on the slope of Mount Qāsiyūn. (Today, the city's boundaries have expanded to include al-Ṣāliḥiyya as a quarter within Damascus proper.) The community was established by the Banū Qudāma, a clan that fled Palestine during the Crusades, and the Banū ʻAbd al-Hādī were among the more prominent families of the Ṣāliḥiyya quarter. When the Banū Qudāma first arrived, they lived temporarily in the Abū Ṣāliḥ mosque. To honor the significance of this shelter, the neighborhood was named for the mosque. Ibn Ṭūlūn presents an alternative possibility for the origins of the

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[336] Ibid., 2:870, 876-7.

[337] Ibn al-Mullā al-Ḥaṣkafī, 2:839.

quarter's name: its founder was a man named Ṣilāḥ.[338] Whatever the origins of the name, the area soon gained a reputation as a scholarly community with Ḥanbalī leanings. Of the six men profiled in this study, the only non-Shāfi'īs are the two from al-Ṣāliḥiyya – Ibn 'Abd al-Hādī and Ibn Ṭūlūn, both Ḥanbalīs. The neighborhood also acquired strong pious and sufi associations. Notably, the important sufi figure Muḥyī al-Dīn ibn 'Arabī (d. 638/1240) is buried at the Jāmi' Salīmiyya/Sulaymiyya there. According to our al-Badrī, al-Ṣāliḥiyya was "filled with sufi lodges (*zawāyā*), tombs and Qur'anic schools."[339] This neighborhood also boasted numerous gardens, markets and mosques. For both men, Damascus and its environs were their intellectual centers. By decentering Damascene history, they forced audiences to recognize the value of lives lived outside the center, and this perspectival shift was necessary to understand the relations between the city and its surrounding areas.

Male and female inhabitants of al-Ṣāliḥiyya often adopted strong ties to the neighborhood, taking the *nisba*s of al-Ṣāliḥī and al-Ṣāliḥiyya, respectively, in addition to or instead of al-Dimashqī or al-Dimashqiyya. This practice of naming probably "reflects the awakening consciousness of the inhabitants to their quarter,"[340] and its relationship to the metropolis. A separate identity was being asserted here that situated them in a very distinct and distinguished physical, social and intellectual space. Mikhail Bakhtin

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[338] Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Al-Qalā'id*, 1:24-5; Ibn Kinnān, *Al-Murūj*, 15.

[339] Al-Badrī, *Nuzhat*, 320. Portions of this text (pp. 24ff.) have been translated into French. See *Description de Damas*, ed. and trans. H. Sauvaire (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1896), 2:407-41. The authorship of *Nuzhat al-anām* has been disputed, but on page 62 of *Nuzhat al-anām*, our al-Badrī mentioned his *Rāḥat al-arwāḥ fī ḥashīsh wa'l-rāḥ*, a book on hashish and wine that he had written as a young man.

[340] Toru Miura, "The Ṣāliḥiyya Quarter in the Suburbs of Damascus: Its Formation, Structure, and Transformation in the Ayyūbid and Mamlūk Periods," *BEO* 47 (1995): 131.

famously observed that "the most intense and productive life of culture takes place on the boundaries."[341] Here, in a liminal geographic and social space along an urban border, a new awareness of the constitution of the body politic led to novel appreciations for bodies on the margins. Ibn ʻAbd al-Hādī's identification with the quarter was such that he composed poetry about the splendors of al-Ṣāliḥiyya and wrote a local history of the quarter entitled *Ta'rīkh al-Ṣāliḥiyya*.[342] His influence on the historical writings of Ibn Ṭūlūn was tremendous[343] and is seen, in part, in Ibn Ṭūlūn's continuation of Ibn ʻAbd al-Hādī's local history, which he titled *Qalā'id al-jawhariyya fī ta'rīkh al-Ṣāliḥiyya*. Fortunately, what has survived of Ibn ʻAbd al-Hādī's text is found in this work by Ibn Ṭūlūn and in Ibn Kinnān's (d. 1153/1740) *Al-Murūj al-sundusiyya al-fasīḥa fī talkhīs Ta'rīkh al-Ṣāliḥiyya*. Both books focused on the history of the neighborhood's mosques, markets, the origins of the quarter, Qur'an schools, sufi lodges, prominent clans and the biographies of notables who had lived there. In addition to representing his native land textually, Ibn ʻAbd al-Hādī was once elected by the residents of al-Ṣāliḥiyya to be the quarter's spokesperson. In 903/1497, armed rebels representing the governor of the province of Damascus and amīr Āqbirdī al-Dawādār requested that the residents of al-Ṣāliḥiyya abandon support for the Mamluk sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad. That their allegiance was sought indicates the politically strategic importance of the quarter in the province of Damascus. Ibn ʻAbd al-Hādī served as the official representative of the quarter, literally embodying al-Ṣāliḥiyya. Ultimately, the populace refused to form an

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[341] Mikhail Bakhtin, *Speech Genres*, eds. Carol Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986): 2.

[342] Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Al-Qalā'id*, 2:381-2.

[343] *EI*^{2}, s.v. "Ibn Ṭūlūn," 3:958.

allegiance with the rebels. At various stages of his life he represented al-Ṣāliḥiyya through his body and his written words.[344]

Ibn Ṭūlūn was also one of al-Ṣāliḥiyya's native sons, and this shared background with his mentor cemented their working and personal relationships. Ibn Ṭūlūn was born in the quarter in 880/1473 to Azdān, a woman of Anatolian origin who spoke the language of the *arwām* (people of Rūm), and an Arab father named ʿAlī.[345] As was briefly mentioned in the introductory chapter, Azdān died of the plague before Ibn Ṭūlūn had even learned to walk, placing her death in the first year or two of life. With her passing, his ties to his Anatolian family and culture appear to have been minimal. In his autobiography he painstakingly detailed every book he had ever read and those he had written. Of his languages, he did not name Greek or any Turkic ones among them, suggesting that his father did not speak his wife's language and that her family did not teach it to him. Ibn Ṭūlūn himself admitted that he had grown up with his father, his paternal uncle Jamāl al-Dīn Yūsuf ibn Ṭūlūn (*muftī* of the Dār al-ʿAdl) and his great-uncle al-Khawājā Burhān al-Dīn ibn Qindīl, a wealthy merchant.[346] His mentor had a similar upbringing that was shaped by the male members of his family.

Ibn ʿAbd al-Hādī grew up under the guidance and support of his father Badr al-Dīn and his paternal grandfather Shihāb al-Dīn. His family claimed descent from the second caliph ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb and also considered themselves part of the Banū

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[344] Miura, 164.

[345] Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Al-Fulk*, 27. Henri Laoust claimed that Azdān was a Greek woman from Anatolia. See his "Introduction," *Les Gouverneurs de Damas*, ed. and trans. Henri Laoust (Damascus: Institut Français de Damas, 1952), x.

[346] Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Al-Fulk*, 27; Ibn al-Mullā al-Ḥaṣkafī, 1:264; Richard Mortel, "The Mercantile Community of Mecca during the Late Mamluk Period," *JRAS* 4.1 (1994), 18, fn. 15.

Qudāma, a clan that fled Palestine during the Crusades. Ibn ʻAbd al-Hādī lectured on jurisprudence and hadith at the ʻUmariyya madrasa, a grand Ḥanbalī school founded by the Banū Qudāma in al-Ṣāliḥiyya, as well as at the Umayyad Mosque in Damascus. He was a lecturer and teacher of great erudition and learning. For his personal library of 3,000 books, he recorded the titles, authors' names, certificates of transmission and copyists' names himself. Six hundred of these volumes were his own compositions. He transmitted hadith to Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Shuwaykī (d. 939/1532), ʻAbd al-Raḥmān al-Kutubī (d. 932/1525), Muḥammad ibn ʻAbd al-Raḥmān al-Mardāwī (d. 909/1503), Najm al-Dīn al-Mātānī (d. 960/1552) and Ibn Ṭūlūn. He also taught his children, grandchildren, wives, concubines, clients, relatives and his children's wives and concubines.[347] Such an inclusive education of male and female household members continues the legacy of the Banū ʻAbd al-Hādī as a clan committed to universal education. Several women in their family gained interregional renown for their intellect and scholarship. Ibn Ḥajar al-ʻAsqalānī studied with Fāṭima bint Muḥammad ʻAbd al-Hādī (d. 903/1400), and Taqī al-Dīn ibn Fahd heard hadith from ʻĀ'isha bint Muḥammad ibn ʻAbd al-Hādī and received an *ijāza* from her.[348]

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[347] Muḥammad ʻUthmān Shubayr, *Al-Imām Yūsuf ibn ʻAbd al-Hādī al-Ḥanbalī wa-atharuhu fī'l-fiqh al-Islāmī* (Imām Yūsuf ibn ʻAbd al-Hādī al-Ḥanbalī and His Influence on Islamic Jurisprudence) (ʻAmmān: Dār al-Furqān, 2001), 55; Yehoshu'a Frenkel has translated a certificate in which Ibn ʻAbd al-Hādī's family members, including a five-day-old son, are named as audience participants in his "Women in Late Mamluk Damascus in the Light of Audience Certificates (*Samāʻāt*)," in *Egypt and Syria in the Fatimid, Ayyubid and Mamluk Eras*, ed. U. Vermeulen (Leuven: Peeters, 2006), 409-23; Fedwa Malti-Douglas, "Yûsuf ibn ʻAbd al-Hâdî and His Autograph of the *Wuqûʻ al-Balâ* [sic, *al-Balâ'*] bil-*Bukhl wal-Bukhalâ*," *Bulletin d'Etudes Orientales* 31 (1979): 29.

[348] Al-Sakhāwī, *Al-Ḍaw'*, 9:282. Taqī al-Dīn's grandson, our Jār Allāh ibn Fahd, reportedly heard hadith from ʻĀ'isha as well. Al-Sakhāwī, however, gives her death date as 816/1413 – more than seventy years before Jār Allāh's birth. This discontinuous sequence of transmission may have been acceptable to a Shāfiʻī audience, as the Shāfiʻī jurist al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī (d. 463/1072) was one of the first scholars to claim that one can award *ijāza*s to individuals not born yet or who had no personal contact with the teacher. Ibn Ḥajar

Our Shihāb al-Dīn al-Ḥijāzī, whom al-Ghazzī described as *al-adīb al-muḥaddith*, was Ibn ʻAbd al-Hādī's teacher and even certified him to teach hadith.[349] Although most of al-Ḥijāzī's students were of Cairene origin, he did attract students from all over the central Islamic lands, including Mesopotamia, Syria, the Hijaz and rural Egypt.[350] Mamluk and early Ottoman scholars recognized al-Ḥijāzī's contributions to hadith studies and other fields of Islamic studies, as he was frequently cited as instructing many luminaries in this field.[351] When most of Yūsuf ibn ʻAbd al-Hādī's biographers mentioned al-Ḥijāzī, they offered no biographical identifiers, making it hard for modern scholars to locate this particular teacher.[352] Unfortunately, this vagueness has led to some misidentifications. One scholar has incorrectly conjectured that the teacher might have been Aḥmad al-Shihāb al-Ḥijāzī (d. 893/1488), a scholar who lived in Old Cairo.[353] Ibn

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al-ʻAsqalānī, also a Shāfiʻī, claimed that this process persisted in late Mamluk Egypt, and he himself liberally awarded *ijāza*s. See Jonathan Berkey, *The Transmission of Knowledge in Medieval Cairo: A Social History of Islamic Education* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 32.

[349]Al-Ghazzī, 1:252.

[350] Al-Shillī, 231, 263, 272; Ibn al-Ḥimṣī, 1:196; ʻAbd Allāh Murdād Abū l-Khayr (d. 1924 or 5), *Al-Mukhtaṣar min kitāb nashr al-nūr wa'l-zahr fī tarājim afāḍil Makka* (Abridgement of the Book of the Diffusion of Light and Flowers: On the Biographies of Virtuous Meccans), eds. Muḥammad Saʻīd al-ʻĀmūdī and Aḥmad ʻAlī (Judda: ʻĀlam al-maʻrifa, 1986), 142.

[351] Ibn al-Mullā al-Ḥaṣkafī, 1:105, 167, 256, 394, 2:529, 780-1.

[352] Muḥammad al-Shaṭṭī, *Mukhtaṣar ṭabaqāt al-ḥanābila* (Damascus: Maṭbaʻat al-Taraqqī, 1920), 2:75; Muḥammad Asʻad Ṭalas, "Muqaddima," in Yūsuf ibn ʻAbd al-Hādī, *Thimār al-maqāṣid fī dhikr al-masājid* (Fruits of Meaning: On Mosques), ed. Muḥammad Asʻad Ṭalas (Beirut: s.n., 1943), 13; Ṣalāḥ Muḥammad Khiyamī, "Jamāl al-Dīn Yūsuf ibn ʻAbd al-Hādī al-Maqdisī al-Dimashqī, al-mutawaffa sana 909 H: ḥayāt wa-āthāruhu l-makhṭūṭa wa l-maṭbūʻa," *Majallat Maʻhad al-Makhṭūṭāt al-ʻArabiyya* 26.2 (1982): 777.

[353] Malti-Douglas, "Yûsuf," 22.

Ṭūlūn definitively confirmed al-Ḥijāzī's identity as one of Ibn ʻAbd al-Hādī's teachers in a book about the forty masters who helped direct his intellectual career.[354]

Ibn ʻAbd al-Hādī (d. 909/1503) composed an eleven-folio biographical dictionary of hadith transmitters who had illnesses and *ʻāhāt* titled *Al-Ḍabṭ wa'l-tabyīn li-dhawī al-ʻilal wa'l-ʻāhāt min al-muḥaddithīn* (The Comprehension and Illustration of Hadith Transmitters Who Had Illnesses and Physical Blights), and his autograph is today housed in al-Asad Library in Damascus.[355] Because he used diacritical marks sparingly and did not write neatly, his script is difficult to decipher. To complicate matters, his handwriting was such that even native readers of Arabic have had to adjust their paleographical assumptions.[356] The letter   in its terminal and independent forms is written like , and the tail of the   in its terminal and independent forms curves like the Latin letter ʻc.' The biographical entries in *Kitāb al-ḍabṭ* are arranged alphabetically, and among the categories explored are "the blind[, …] the hemiplegic, the wall-eyed, the flat-nosed, and the large-mouthed."[357] Additionally, the author composed a number of works about ailments and the ailing body. He wrote treatises about medical treatments for two types of

[354] Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Ṭūlūn, *Kitāb al-arbaʻīn ʻan arbaʻīn shaykh*[an], Al-Asad Library, Damascus, Syria, ms. 958: 46a; Ibn al-Mullā al-Ḥaṣkafī, 1:105, 107, 167, 256, 394, 2:529, 553, 590, 684, 780-1.

[355] Yūsuf ibn ʻAbd al-Hādī (a.k.a. Ibn al-Mibrad/al-Mubarrad), *Al-Ḍabṭ wa'l-tabyīn li-dhawī al-ʻilal wa'l-ʻāhāt min al-muḥaddithīn*, Al-Asad Library, Damascus, Syria, ms. 3216, folios 158-68, 889 or 890 AH/1484 or 1485 CE. Copies of this manuscript can be found in three Saudi libraries: the Imām Muḥammad ibn Saʻūd Islamic University Library in Riyadh, the Library of the Kaʻaba in Mecca and the Islamic University of Medina Library.

[356] Khiyamī, 775-809; Al-Shaṭṭī, 77; Malti-Douglas, "Yûsuf," 25, 27; Muḥammad Khālid al-Kharsah, "Tarjamat al-mu'allif," in *Nujūm al-masā takshuf maʻānī al-rasā li'l-ṣāliḥāt min al-nisā'*," ed. Muḥammad Khālid al-Kharsah (Damascus: Maktabat al-bayrūtī, 1990), 22.

[357] Malti-Douglas, "*Mentalités*," 218.

leprosy (*Adwiyat al-bahaq wa al-baraṣ*),[358] coughs (*Adwiyat al-wāfida ʻalā al-hummā al-bārida*) and eye diseases (*Al-Funūn fī adwiyat al-ʻuyūn*). He also wrote about death resulting from the plague and other epidemics (*Funūn al-manūn fī al-wabā' wa'l-ṭāʻūn*). His interest in this last subject was shared by many other Mamluk and Ayyubid writers, as Michael Dols has shown, perhaps because like many of these other men, plague had personally affected members of his immediate family.[359] Of his thirteen wives and concubines Ibn ʻAbd al-Hādī's favorite was his second wife Bulbul bint ʻAbd Allāh, who was mentioned earlier in this chapter as the subject of one of his books. She bore him two children – ʻĀ'isha and ʻAbd al-Hādī – before dying of the plague in 883/1478-9. After her death he took into his household another concubine, who was also named Bulbul. She bore six children by him, among them Badr al-Dīn Ḥasan, an adolescent son who died of the plague in 897/1492. Remarkably, nine more of Ibn ʻAbd al-Hādī's children died from plague infections in this same year.[360]

The vulnerability of life, particularly of children's lives, led many bereaved parents in the late Mamluk period to write about their grief and the saving grace of religious devotion. Avner Giladi has identified a corpus of these consolation treatises that were composed during a time characterized by frequent outbreaks of the plague.[361] Al-

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[358] The terms *bahaq* and *baraṣ* are difficult to define with any precision. In some contemporary Arabic dialects *baraṣ* designates a white face covered with freckles. For a discussion of possible meanings of these terms, see C. Elgood, "On the Significance of al-Baras and al-Bahaq," *Journal of the Proceedings of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* 27 (1931): 177-81.

[359] Michael Dols, *The Black Death in the Middle East* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977).

[360] Shubayr, 53-4. Badr al-Dīn Ḥasan must have died after 13 Jumādā I 897/25 March 1492, as his father related hadith to him on this day. See Frenkel, "Women," 422.

[361] Avner Giladi, "Islamic Consolation Treatises for Bereaved Parents: Some Bibliographical Notes," *SI* 81 (1995): 197.

Sakhāwī, for instance, wrote one after his son's death in 863-4/1458-9 from the plague.[362] Ibn ʻAbd al-Hādī completed his own treatise *Al-Irshād ilá ḥukm mawt al-awlād* (Guidance on Children's Deaths) in late 897/1492, the devastating year in which he lost ten children. The approximately 500-page work is divided into 58 chapters and treats an assortment of topics. The Prophet Muḥammad lost an infant son named Ibrāhīm, so relevant hadiths are discussed here, along with poetry, historical anecdotes on grief and loss, popular responses to children's deaths, advice on exhibiting patience and steadfastness in the face of tragedy, and actions that parents must not do in their grief. Every forbidden action regulates the parents' bodies. Disciplining the body encouraged stoicism and acceptance of the reality of a child's passing. Parents were advised not to scar themselves, shed tears, slap or scratch their cheeks, shave their beards, rend their clothes or blacken their faces. These ritualistic acts expressed mourning and anger and also served to venerate the dead in the early modern Islamic world.[363] Ibn ʻAbd al-Hādī's recommendations demand even greater personal restraint of the mourner than the Prophet Muḥammad's commands for the bereaved, who reproached a woman for weeping openly when her granddaughter died. She asked him if he ever cried, and he responded, "I do not weep (loudly) but silently when I feel moved."[364] Bodily practice informs piety and serves an index of religious formation. The rest of this lengthy book is dedicated to Ibn ʻAbd al-

[362] Giladi, "'The Child Was Small … Not So the Grief for Him': Sources, Structure, and Content of al-Sakhāwī's Consolation Treatise for Bereaved Parents," *Poetics Today* 14.2 (1993): 371.

[363] Ignaz Goldziher, "On the Veneration of the Dead," in *Muslim Studies*, ed. S. M. Stern, trans. S. M. Stern and C. R. Baker (Chicago: Aldine Pub. Co., 1973), 1:224-7. See also Leor Halevi's new study on mourning: *Muhammad's Grave: Death Rites and the Making of Islamic Society* (Columbia: Columbia University Press, 2007), esp. chapters four and five.

[364] M. Hidayat Hosain, "Translation of Ash-Shama'il of Tirmizi," *Islamic Culture* 8 (July 1934): 381.

Hādī's own children, and upon his death, the book was subsequently owned by his surviving offspring, Ibn Ṭūlūn and others.

'Āhāt ***in Late Mamluk-Early Ottoman Damascus***

Ottoman Syria, or Bilād al-Shām, consisted of three provinces (*mamālik*): Damascus, Aleppo and Tripoli. The Ottoman conquerors saw fit to consolidate the administrative geographies of the Mamluk sultanate by absorbing the provinces of Ḥama, Safed and al-Karak into these larger units. Damascus was indisputably the largest, most populous and most strategically important province of the region, and its history was correspondingly the most extensively recorded of all of the Syrian provinces. Part of its popularity was due to its religious significance for Christians and Muslims, a feature that attracted Turkic peoples, North Africans, Venetians and Persians to the provincial capital city of Damascus for pilgrimage and settlement. Numerous Christian relics are reputedly there, most notably the head of John the Baptist occupies a reliquary in the Umayyad Mosque in Damascus. The funerary and memorial architecture for saints, caliphs and mystics lent a historical presence to the city. The intersections of collective historical memory and popular expressions of piety created a dynamic religious space. Perhaps not coincidentally, the texts examined in this chapter all approach the subject of *'āhāt* through an Islamic lens. So in addition to Ibn al-Mubarrad's work on hadith specialists with physical blights, we can also find that Damascenes in the early Mamluk period wrote on these same themes. The Damascene judge Shihāb al-Dīn al-Khuwayyī al-Shāfi'ī (626-693/1229-1294) wrote a religious consolation treatise titled *Al-Muṭṭalib al-asnā fī imāmat al-'umī* (The Beautiful Perspective [or Prayer Direction] of the Blind), one example of thematically representative compositions of the time. Al-Badrī's two

anthologies highlighted early Mamluk Syrian authors who wrote on these and similar themes.

In her studies of blindness in the Mamluk period, Malti-Douglas has identified blindness as "a kind of metaphor for a significant group of concepts, values, and ideals in medieval Islamic civilization."[365] The ways in which medieval Muslim subjects conceptualized medicine, the body, physical difference and illness defined the boundaries of marginality and physical otherness. Kudlick has praised Malti-Douglas's study for its exposure of just how the 'other' "reveals and constructs notions of citizenship, human difference, social values, sexuality and the complex relationship between the biological and social worlds."[366]

Just as certain Mamluk sultans decreed the expulsion from Cairo of people with blights, the government of early Ottoman Damascus also found blightedness a relevant category of social difference. Islamic and civil law converged on the subject of disability in the process of census-taking, a fascinating documentation in imperial literature of the place of people of blights within an urban society. Tenth/sixteenth-century cadastral registers for Damascus record population figures for Muslim, Christian and Jewish male heads of household, and this practice was immediately instituted upon Ottoman seizure of the city. On 2 Ramaḍān 922/28 November 1516, the day after Sultan Selīm entered Damascus triumphantly, a census was taken of the city.[367] The totals for each category

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[365] Malti-Douglas, "*Mentalités*," 211.

[366] Kudlick, 793.

[367] Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Mufākahat*, 2:31. The results of this survey have not been recovered today, but the transition from Mamluk to Ottoman rule was likely a chaotic and disruptive time. Nine days after the census was

consisted of the numbers of households, *mujarrad* (bachelors or foreigners), religious functionaries, descendants of the Prophet and disabled people, and the population figures for these subgroups are listed separately. Only four categories of disability were recognized: blind (*a'mā*), lame (*a'raj*), mentally ill/possessed (*majnūn*) and severely lame to the point of losing mobility (*mukassaḥ*).[368] Under Ḥanafī law a person must possess full reason or sanity to carry out a required duty, preventing a mentally ill or possessed person from being required to pay *zakat*, or the charitable tax, which typically amounted to a yearly donation of 2.5% of one's assets. An assumption that people of blights are not sufficiently productive members of society to afford these dues or that they are the recipients of charity underlies this rule. The dictates of Shi'ī, Mālikī, Ḥanbalī and Shāfi'ī law all differ from Ḥanafī law on this point, as they obligate the *majnūn* to pay *zakat*.[369] The other disabilities relating to sense and mobility are not exempt from paying these charitable donations. Because heads of households possessing these physical traits were exempt from paying *zakat*, the Ottoman Arab tradition may have been a special case of merging *shari'a* with local custom.

Aside from the *majnūn*, who has protected status under Ḥanafī law, the other three categories of physical difference, which included blindness and various degrees of

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taken, Ibn Ṭūlūn attests that armed soldiers forced him from his home and destroyed his books. (*Mufākahat*, 2:34)

[368] Muhammad Adnan Bakhit, "The Christian Population of the Province of Damascus in the Sixteenth Century," in *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire: The Functioning of a Plural Society*, eds. Benjamin Braude and Bernard Lewis (New York: Holmes and Meier Publishers, 1982), 2:20; Bakhit, *The Ottoman Province of Damascus in the Sixteenth Century* (Beirut: Librairie du Liban, 1982), 49; Wolf-Dieter Hütteroth and Kamal Abdulfattah, *Historical Geography of Palestine, Transjordan and Southern Syria in the Late Sixteenth Century* (Erlangen: Palm und Enke, 1977), 37-8.

[369] Rispler-Chaim, *Disability*, 38.

lameness, are attributed a uniform legal identity. Treatises like Ibn al-Mubarrad's *Al-Ḍabṭ wa'l-tabyīn* work against this homogenization of group identity. In his work hadith transmitters, who perform a useful and respected service to their faith and fellow subjects of the empire, are shown to have blights too. What is more, biographical dictionaries feature hundreds of men and women with physical blights who had contributed their leadership, scholarship and religious expertise to Damascene society.

The census included an administrative accounting of disability in the domestic units of the Ottoman Empire, and Ibn al-Mubarrad's *Al-Ḍabṭ wa'l-tabyīn* also explores the category of blightedness locally. Ibn al-Mubarrad found in his immediate environs inspiration for his writing. He wrote a detailed topography of his beloved birthplace al-Ṣāliḥiyya, a biography of his favorite wife Bulbul, a treatise about plague which took the lives of Bulbul and many of his children, a series of epistles about Damascus and a slim pamphlet about women. He also wrote about himself, having included an autobiographical sketch in his *Manāqib al-Imām Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal*, an unrecovered work.[370] The personal became fodder for his intellectual projects. Just as he wrote a consolation work for bereaved parents after he himself had lost ten children in a single year, so too did he look at his own life when writing *Al-Ḍabṭ wa'l-tabyīn*, a biography of bodies – ill bodies in particular. The work is a very embodied text, as corporeality is foregrounded in the title and the biographical entries. Ibn 'Abd al-Hādī himself transmitted hadith, so his immersion in the life of religious scholarship gave shape to this particular work, lending authority and weight to his text. As previously discussed, his

[370] Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Al-Fulk*, 24.

medical writings addressed leprosy and eye diseases, so the afflicted body was a topic that he had previously investigated and knew well. A painful, aggressive illness claimed his own life around the age of sixty-four. Jamāl al-Dīn Yūsuf ibn ʻAbd al-Hādī died 16 Muḥarram 909/14 September 1503 and was buried in al-Ṣāliḥiyya, at the foot of Mount Qāsiyūn.

Conclusion

The figures of men and women with blights emerged in tenth/sixteenth-century Damascus and al-Ṣāliḥiyya as imperial subjects, family members and literary subjects. No single manifestation of a person with blights arose, but rather multiple identities developed in these spaces. The visibility of *ahl al-ʻāhāt* in public space, domestic space and political territory forced people to reevaluate ideas about blightedness. Boundaries, transgressions and public and private spaces figured prominently in this chapter. Geographical and social boundaries were delineated, blurred and transgressed in turn. The blighted body emerged as a contested site of moral reckoning and cultural valuation, where societal values are writ small.

The subjects of pain and grief and the spectacle of death resurfaced here as well. Loss is a humanizing emotion, and reading about Ibn al-Mubarrad's and Ibn Ṭūlūn's familial losses gave dimension to their writings about *ahl al-ʻāhāt*. The apparent trauma they suffered affected each differently: Ibn Ṭūlūn withdrew from public life and died a recluse, and Ibn al-Mubarrad sought (and found?) solace in sharing his experiences with other bereaved parents. Even so, their trauma did not lessen their capacities for empathy, and we, as historians, face the challenge of not compromising or obscuring these insights into emotions that lay bare interior worlds.

Chapter 6
Public Insults and Undoing Shame: Censoring the Blighted Body

From the eighth/fourteenth to the tenth/sixteenth century, the Banū Fahd maintained a distinguished position in Meccan social and scholarly circles. In this time four generations of male scholars in the Fahd clan defined modes of Arabic historical writing through their choice of subjects, prolific written output and association with local scholarly elites. Furthermore, they meticulously recorded and interpreted Meccan social history and instructed generations of students, many of whose reputations as historians would eventually eclipse their eminent teachers'. By claiming 'Alid descent through Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥanafiyya, they established exclusive blood ties to Mecca through a prestigious family line that carried great weight in Mecca. This prestige also enabled them to arrange strategic marriages with prominent Meccan families, thereby solidifying their status and influence. Their reputation extended beyond the city, as travel in pursuit of knowledge (*ṭalab al-'ilm*) brought students from all over the Muslim world – Africa, Spain, Greater Syria, Mesopotamia, Central Asia and India – to Mecca for pilgrimage. Many took advantage of their time there to study with prominent scholars. The reverse trend led the Fahd scholars to Cairo, Syria, the Yemen and elsewhere to learn and teach. The circulation of knowledge was embodied in the practices of learning. The visibility and reputation of the Banū Fahd also spread because several family members earned

livings as merchants, traveling throughout the Islamic world. The nearby Red Sea port of Jidda made Mecca accessible to traders and scholars from Africa and the Indian Ocean Basin. The cosmopolitan nature of the city was more ethnic than religious, as most visitors and inhabitants of this holy city were Muslims from all over the world.

In each generation a single man from the Banū Fahd emerged as the family's representative scholar, and the role was passed from father to son. The four Fahd scholars were:

1) Taqī al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Fahd al-Makkī (787-871/1385-1466),
2) Najm al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Fahd al-Makkī (812-885/1409-1480),
3) ʻIzz al-Dīn ʻUmar ibn Fahd al-Makkī (850-921/1447-1515) and
4) Muḥibb al-Dīn Jār Allāh Muḥammad ibn Fahd al-Makkī (891-954/1486-1547).

Of all the scholars of the Banū Fahd, Taqī al-Dīn ibn Fahd had the farthest reaching influence and acquired the most prestigious reputation as a historian. His chronicles about contemporary Mecca served as a core text upon which his descendants expanded. Najm al-Dīn ibn Fahd wrote two major histories, *Al-Durr al-kamīn*, an extension of Taqī al-Dīn al-Fāsī's (d. 832/1428) Mecca-centered biographical dictionary *Al-ʻIqd al-thamīn fī ta'rīkh al-Balad al-Amīn,* and *Itḥāf al-wará bi-akhbār Umm al-Qurá*, a chronicle of the first 600 years of Islamic history. ʻIzz al-Dīn ʻUmar ibn Fahd's *Bulūgh al-qirá* was a continuation of this work, and Jār Allāh's *Nayl al-muná* extended this history until Rajab 946/November 1539.

Among Taqī al-Dīn ibn Fahd's associates were some of the most lauded scholars in late Mamluk society, and he is tied to nearly all of the scholars heretofore mentioned in this study. He had forged a close relationship with Ibn Ḥajar al-ʻAsqalānī, whom he first met when Ibn Ḥajar made a pilgrimage to Mecca, and during that time Taqī al-Dīn learned from him. (Both men also wrote extensions of al-Dhahabī's [d. 1248] *Ṭabaqāt al-*

ḥuffāẓ.) They exchanged letters and anecdotes, and Ibn Ḥajar even wrote to Najm al-Dīn ibn Fahd, his friend's son, about his reliance on Taqī al-Dīn for information about the lives of Meccan and Yemeni scholars.[371] When Ibn Ḥajar died, Taqī al-Dīn honored his friend's memory and their relationship with a beautiful tribute in his *Laḥẓ al-alḥāẓ*, a continuation of *Ṭabaqāt al-ḥuffāẓ*.[372] In this tribute he remarks on the beauty and eloquence of al-Shihāb al-Ḥijāzī's eulogy for Ibn Ḥajar. Taqī al-Dīn himself taught a number of illustrious students, most notably the Egyptian historians al-Sakhāwī (d. 902/1497) and al-Suyūṭī (d. 911/1505), who would later develop a fierce professional rivalry that was played out in the public sphere. Al-Sakhāwī publicly attributed al-Suyūṭī's prolific literary output to plagiarism, expressed doubts about his ability to understand what he read and criticized his tendency to cite his own writings.[373] A string of such serious allegations from a prominent intellectual had the potential to discredit al-Suyūṭī, the self-styled *mujaddid* (renewer) of the ninth/fifteenth century. In rebuttal to these claims, al-Suyūṭī published a short treatise titled *Al-Kāwā fī al-radd ʻalá al-Sakhāwī* (The Searing Brand in Response to al-Sakhāwī).[374] Ibn Ṭūlūn dutifully included his teacher's biography in his *Kitāb al-arbaʻīn ʻan arbaʻīn shaykh*, where he had also mentioned Ibn ʻAbd al-Hādī as one of his formative historical influences.

Taqī al-Dīn avidly collected books and wrote on a range of subjects: stories of the prophets, the biography of the Prophet Muḥammad, the Quraysh tribe, the Three

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[371] Al-Sakhāwī, *Al-Ḍaw'*, 6:129.

[372] Al-Sakhāwī, *Al-Jawāhir*, 1:317.

[373] Al-Sakhāwī, *Al-Ḍaw'*, 4:65-70.

[374] Al-Sakhāwī, *Al-Ḍaw'*, 4:70.

Mosques (Al-Masjid al-Ḥarām in Mecca, Al-Masjid al-Nabī in Medina and Al-Masjid al-Aqṣā in Jerusalem), local Meccan geography (Jabal Nūr, Ḥarā and Ja‘rana), Qur’an and sunna. He also created an index of Kamāl al-Dīn al-Damīrī’s (d. 808/1405) zoological encyclopedia *Ḥayāt al-ḥayawān* (The Lives of Animals).[375] Although born in the Upper Egyptian city of Aṣfūn, Taqī al-Dīn’s professional reputation was staked on his metonymous representation of the city of Mecca. His father claimed ‘Alid descent through Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥanafiyya. His father moved the family from Aṣfūn to Mecca when the boy was only eight years old. His intellectual career began in this adopted city, where he memorized the Qur’an and studied the *‘Umda*, *al-Tanbīh*, hadith and Arabic grammar. One teacher in particular, Jalāl al-Dīn ibn Ẓuhayra, evoked a deep love of learning in him. Al-Sakhāwī came to be a true champion of the Fahd family. In al-Sakhāwī’s major biographical dictionary *Al-Ḍaw’ al-lāmi‘* he often noted whether someone had studied history with Taqī al-Dīn, and the occurrences were frequent even among women.[376] Although most of the people profiled in the dictionary hailed from Egypt, he included numerous references to Meccan scholars and families, drawing on the writings of Taqī al-Dīn and al-Fāsī (d. 832/1428) in these cases. Perhaps al-Sakhāwī’s professional and personal support of the Fahds led al-Suyūṭī to resent his own teacher, or maybe Taqī al-Dīn somehow alienated his former student. The sources do not speak clearly to the roots of this conflict, but whatever the cause, al-Suyūṭī appears to have

[375] Nāṣir ibn Sa‘d al-Rashīd, “Banū Fahd: Mu’arrikhū Makka al-Mukarrama wa’l-Ta‘rīf bi-Makhṭūṭ al-Najm ibn Fahd *Itḥāf al-warā bi-akhbār Umm al-Qurā*,” in *Sources for the History of Arabia*, eds. Abdelgadir M. Abdalla, Sami al-Sakkar and Richard Mortel, (Riyadh: Riyadh University Press, 1979), 1.2:70-1. Other sources indicate that Taqī al-Dīn wrote on Jabal Thawr, not Jabal Nūr. Both mountains are near Mecca. (Brockelmann, *GAL*, Supplement 2, 538)

[376] For entries about women who studied history with Taqī al-Dīn, see vol. 12, entry nos. 15, 18, 38, 66, 69, 76, 85, 95, 195, 214, 279, 326, 416, 446 and 448.

renounced any ties and affection for Taqī al-Dīn. When al-Suyūṭī later wrote an extension of *Ṭabaqāt al-ḥuffāẓ*, he omitted a biographical entry for his teacher Taqī al-Dīn ibn Fahd who commanded much respect in the community. His family was justifiably troubled by this lack of recognition. Excluding his biography would have struck a ninth/fifteenth and tenth/sixteenth-century observer as a significant slight, considering Taqī al-Dīn's eminent reputation and fame.[377] Taqī al-Dīn's great-grandson Jār Allāh considered the omission "careless" in a note he appended to a manuscript of al-Suyūṭī's *Dhayl ṭabaqāt al-ḥuffāẓ*. Al-Suyūṭī did include a terse entry for Taqī al-Dīn in his *Naẓm al-'iqyān*.[378] The original note in Jār Allāh's handwriting is extant, and in it Jār Allāh expressed how personally wounding he had found this disregard for the legacy of a man who was not only his great-grandfather, but also al-Suyūṭī's own teacher. Jār Allāh's critique of al-Suyūṭī was rather reserved and did not rise to the level of censure. By deeming the omission a careless mistake, Jār Allāh did not accuse al-Suyūṭī of willfully leaving out any mention of Taqī al-Dīn, but in spite of this circumspection, it must have been apparent to Jār Allāh that al-Suyūṭī's silence on the subject of Taqī al-Dīn was intentional and likely motivated by feelings of ill will. Jār Allāh was certainly aware of the politics of biographical dictionaries and understood the insult that was being leveled against his venerable great-grandfather. Because biographical dictionaries were such politicized spaces, "many a quarrel between notable households had its roots in unfavorable mentions in, or

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[377] Many scholars of the era praised his intellect, character and morality. Al-Rashīd, 71.

[378] Al-Suyūṭī, *Naẓm*, 170-1.

exclusions from, biographical works."[379] This particular moment in Jār Allāh's life demonstrates his awareness of how insults can be quietly, but forcefully, integrated into a scholarly work. His attempt later in life to insult some his living contemporaries backfires on him, as their reaction is not so muted as Jār Allāh's was to al-Suyūṭī's omission, but shows that he was all to willing to engage in the same tactics that he had earlier decried.

Not only was Taqī al-Dīn one of al-Suyūṭī's more influential teachers, but he was also a close friend of Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī, the scholar whose biography concludes al-Suyūṭī's dictionary. As his biographer, al-Suyūṭī must have been acutely aware of the close relationship between Ibn Ḥajar and Taqī al-Dīn. As compensation for this omission, Jār Allāh directed his readers to his biography of Taqī al-Dīn in his *own* extension of al-Dhahabī's *Ṭabaqāt* entitled *Tuḥfat al-ayqāẓ bi-tatima dhayl al-ḥuffāẓ*, which he had completed in two sittings, the last of which was 12 Rabī' II 944/17 September 1537.[380] This bit of information usefully places the time of writing between this date and Jār Allāh's death ten years later.

In this period Jār Allāh was the lone living representative of his family's scholarly legacy, as his father had passed away at least twelve years before. None of Jār Allāh's children were readying to further the family legacy. Perhaps he felt protective of the Fahds' reputation and wanted to preserve it for posterity. Jār Allāh's loyalty towards his family and its reputation demonstrates a closeness evidenced in his writings and in third-party notices. His father and grandfather largely directed his course of study, and even his

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[379] Khaled El-Rouayheb, *Before Homosexuality in the Arab-Islamic World, 1500-1800* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 50.

[380] Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī, *Dhayl ṭabaqāt al-ḥuffāẓ li'l-Dhahabī* (Beirut: Dār Iḥyā al-Turāth al-'Arabī, 1980), 382. Unfortunately, no manuscript of Jār Allāh's work has yet been located.

mother Kamāliyya bint al-Muḥibb Abī Bakr Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Fahd al-Hāshimiyya al-Makkiyya (b. Dhū l-Qa'da 867/July-August 1463, death date unknown) influenced him. His parents were first cousins, as their fathers were brothers.

Jār Allāh owed his intellectual successes to the support and direction of his family. His father's peregrinations structured his pursuits of knowledge throughout the Islamicate world. Jār Allāh was born the night of Saturday, 20 Rajab 891/22 July 1486 in Mecca. He left his home there, where his father was teaching him Qur'an and hadith, to live for a time in Medina in 909/1503 where he studied the six canonical Sunni collections of hadith, al-Samhūdī's (d. 912/1506) fatwas and histories, as well as *shamā'il* using the text of Qāḍī al-'Iyāḍ's *al-Shifā'*.[381] In 913/1507 just before reaching the age of 23, he traveled to Cairo to learn hadith, visited Jerusalem, then spent July through November of 914/1508 studying with the historian 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn al-Dība' (d. 944/1537) in the Yemen. Years later, he traveled around the Syrian province in 921/1515, spending much time with his friend Ibn Ṭūlūn and remaining there until Jumādā II 923/July 1517.

Ibn Ṭūlūn and Jār Allāh likely first met each other in 920/1515, when Ibn Ṭūlūn made the pilgrimage to Mecca. During this trip Ibn Ṭūlūn studied hadith and *shamā'il* with his friend's father, 'Abd al-'Azīz ibn Fahd on 6 Dhū l-Ḥijja 920/21 January 1515 in a public gathering place (*dār al-nadwa*).[382] Ibn Ṭūlūn was ten years older than his friend,

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[381] 'Abd al-Qādir ibn Shaykh ibn 'Abd Allāh al-'Aydarūs (d. 1037/1627), *Ta'rīkh nūr al-sāfir 'an akhbār al-qarn al-'āshir* (History of the Traveler's Light: Reports of the Tenth Hijri Century) (Egypt: s.n., 1980-1986), 242; Ibn al-'Imād, *Shadharāt*, 10:432-3.

[382] Ibn al-Mullā al-Ḥaṣkafī, 1:429; Ibn Ṭūlūn, *I'lām al-wará bi-man wulliya nā'iban min al-atrāk bi-Dimashq al-Shām al-kubrá* (Damascus: Wizārat al-thaqāfa wa'l-irshād al-qawmī, 1964), 208; Ibn al-'Imād, *Shadharāt*, 10:146. Muḥammad al-Ḥabīb al-Hīla erroneously places their first meeting in 922/1516-7 in

but in spite of this age difference, they shared similar interests and were both committed to traveling around the Mamluk (and soon Ottoman) Arab provinces to establish academic networks with other scholars, read new books and compose original histories. Ibn Ṭūlūn integrated him into his social circles in Damascus and Jār Allāh sought out his expert opinion on the reliability of certain hadith transmitters.[383] During his journey Jār Allāh made his way to Aleppo, coincidentally entering the city in 922/1517 at the same time as Sultan al-Ghawrī. We noted earlier that Ibn Ṭūlūn recorded little about this event. Jār Allāh, on the other hand, found so much inspiration in the events that he devoted ten notebooks to the subject. Consisting entirely of rhymed prose, the resulting work *Bulūgh al-arab fī tamalluk al-sulṭān Salīm li-arḍ al-ʻajam wa'l-ʻarab* was praised as a "beautiful book."[384] Jār Allāh also visited Damascus in this year to tour the city and study with scholars.[385] His father ʻIzz al-Dīn ibn Fahd died on or just before Friday, 13 Jumādā II 923/3 July 1517, while Jār Allāh was in Damascus. He learned of his father's passing when a funeral prayer was read at the Umayyad Mosque to honor ʻIzz al-Dīn on this Friday.[386] That prayers were recited for ʻIzz al-Dīn in a distant city testified to the high

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Damascus, for which see his *Al-Ta'rīkh wa'l-mu'arrikhūn bi-makka min al-qarn al-thālith al-hijrī ilá al-qarn al-thālith ʻashar* (History and Historians of Mecca from the Third to the Thirteenth Hijri Century) (Mecca: Mu'assasat al-furqān li'l-turāth al-islāmī, 1994), 196.

[383] Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Al-Rasā'il al-ta'rīkhiyya* (Historical Letters) (Damascus: Maṭbaʻat al-Turqī, 1929), 2:2-4; Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Mufākahat*, 2:6-10, 14.

[384] Al-Shillī, 148.

[385] Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm ibn al-Ḥanbalī, *Durr al-ḥabab fī tā'rīkh aʻyān Ḥalab* (The Pearls of the Beloved: The History of the Notables of Aleppo), eds. Maḥmūd Aḥmad al-Fākhūrī and Yaḥyá Zakariyya ʻAbāra (Damascus: Wizārat al-thaqāfa, 1972), 1:434.

[386] Modern biographers of ʻIzz al-Dīn have listed his death year as 921/1515, because Ibn Ṭūlūn wrote in *Iʻlām al-wará* about meeting him in Mecca at this time. Before the publication of *Mufākahat al-khillān*, the *Iʻlām* passage was widely accepted as the latest record of ʻIzz al-Dīn being seen alive.

esteem in which his fellow Arabs held him. Jār Allāh left Damascus for Mecca the following day, arriving at his family's home sometime later in the same month.[387] His biographers remarked that his time away from Mecca so strengthened his retention of information that when he re-entered Mecca in 923/1517, he had surpassed his father in knowledge and scholarly excellence. As a material confirmation of what his return signified, Ibn Fahd was sure to record that he had brought back from his travels books on biography, language and hadith, like Qāḍī al-'Iyāḍ's *al-Shifā*. Returning home, as he did, two years after his father's death, he, his family and his community must have poignantly felt the significance of his stepping into his father's role as the city's premier historian of the era. Only six months after his arrival he began writing his major history of Mecca, a continuation of his father's *Bulūgh al-qirá*, which terminated in the year 600/1203-4. Jār Allāh was continuing his father's historical writings and his legacy as a local historian. Indeed, at this time Jār Allāh and Ibn Ṭūlūn regarded themselves as the unofficial historians of the Hijaz and Greater Syria, respectively, exchanging private letters every year in which they reported the deaths of notables from their home regions.[388] At times, information that they traded as friends was also incorporated into their chronicles and biographical dictionaries intended for public consumption, but their more informal channels of knowledge transmission signal what types of events they found personally important and also the place of friendship in late Mamluk-early Ottoman historical

[387] Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Mufākahat*, 2:63.

[388] Al-Suyūṭī, *Dhayl*, 383; Al-Ghazzī, 1:67, 2:117, 158.

production in the Arab provinces.[389] Aside from the possibility of history being documented in personal communications, the temporal gap between the end of ʻIzz al-Dīn's history of Mecca and the beginning of Jār Allāh's are not accounted for in the family's linked corpus of historical production. Jār Allāh's record of his travels, which is as yet unrecovered, would be the likeliest candidate for a work that closes this gap.[390]

From Dhū l-Ḥijja 923/December 1517 to Rajab 946/November 1539, Jār Allāh recorded local news and events, natural phenomena, marriages, births, illnesses and deaths in *Nayl al-muná*, resulting in a work that reads like a personal diary and city chronicle. It was not uncommon for annalistic histories to have the author's personal voice integrated throughout it, lending such works a conversational or improvisational tone. It is this aspect of Jār Allāh's writing that grants access to his intimate life. As personal as this work is, Jār Allāh did not intend for it to stand alone as a record of his life. Some personal events that are mentioned in this history are treated in greater detail in separate works. For example, he made a second trip to Damascus and Aleppo in 928/1522 and also made his way to Bursa and Istanbul. He took a third trip to Damascus and Aleppo in 934/1528 and stayed to meet a number of scholars. His travels are detailed in his travelogue *Al-Jawāhir al-ḥisān* (Exquisite Jewels).

Jār Allāh incorporated different composition methods while writing *Nayl al-muná*. It is organized chronologically, and the events of a single month are always grouped together and reported as a unit. Some parts appear to have been compiled from

[389] For instance, Jār Allāh wrote to Ibn Ṭūlūn about Muḥammad ibn ʻIrāq's death and burial in Medina, and his subsequent disinterment and reburial in Mecca in Ṣafar 933/1526 (Al-Ghazzī, 1:67), and Jār Allāh related this same event in his chronicle of Mecca (*Nayl al-muná*, 1:388-90).

[390] The travelogue is mentioned in al-Ghazzī, 2:139.

earlier drafts or written some time after the events had passed. For instance, in a passage about his marriage to Zaynab bint Qāḍī al-Muslimīn in Muḥarram 924/1518, Ibn Fahd wrote that they consummated the marriage on the wedding night and were blessed with offspring. A daughter, whom they named Zaynab after her mother, was born the following year.[391] In another instance, Jār Allāh proudly recorded his delight and other people's congratulations for the birth of his son, Najm al-Dīn 'Umar Abū al-Qāsim, on 22 Ramaḍān 933/21 June 1527. Thirteen months later, he related that Najm al-Dīn died from cranial bleeding after two days of suffering and was buried in Ma'lāh alongside Jār Allāh's paternal uncle.[392] The joy of the birth passage is presented with intense emotion and immediacy, suggesting that the author did not know his son's fate at the time of writing. As revealing and interesting as *Nayl al-muná* seems, it does not appear to have been widely cited by contemporary or later historians. The Indian scholar al-Nahrawānī (d. 987/1580) also wrote a history of Mecca, and in it referred to his forebears in the field. He credited al-Azraqī (d. 244/858), al-Fākihī (d. 285/898), al-Fāsī (d. 832/1428) and Jār Allāh's father and grandfather with inspiring his work on Mecca, but he never referred to Jār Allāh in his entire manuscript. Jār Allāh's biographers consistently mentioned his history *Nayl al-muná*, along with otherworkshe penned on more specialized topics, so his corpus of writings did have a general audience. Even so, he did have some books to his name that were virtually unacknowledged by successive generations of scholars.

[391] Muḥibb al-Dīn Jār Allāh ibn Fahd al-Hāshimī al-Makkī, *Kitāb nayl al-muná bi-dhayl bulūgh al-qirá li-takmilat itḥāf al-wará: ta'rīkh makka al-mukarrama min sanat 922H ilá 946H*, ed. Muḥammad al-Ḥabīb al-Hīla (Riyadh: Mu'assasat al-furqān li'l-turāth al-islāmī, 2000),1:90

[392] Jār Allāh ibn Fahd, *Kitāb nayl*, 1:412, 424.

His 948/1541 biographical compilation *Al-Nukat al-ẓirāf fī man ubtuliya bi'l-'āhāt min al-ashrāf* (Charming Anecdotes about Descendants of the Prophet Who Were Afflicted with *'Āhāt*), which incorporated the same strategy deployed in *Nayl al-muná* of infusing historical writings with personal references, does not appear in any of his later biographies. This text was deemed slanderous and unIslamic by local elites, because it disclosed the *'āhāt* of some of the author's Meccan contemporaries. When the book was published, it came under fire from many in the community. An anonymous petitioner sought a legal opinion from the prominent Meccan Shāfi'ī jurist Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī (909-974/1504-1567) about the possibility that this book was unlawful. Although the exchange is constructed as a question, followed by the jurist's response, there is a strong possibility that al-Haytamī formulated and answered his own question. He certainly was not an objective observer of the scandal surrounding Ibn Fahd's book, as he had been named as cross-eyed (*aḥwal*) in the book. What more is known about *Al-Nukat al-ẓirāf* comes in this question, located in the chapter on marriage in Ibn Ḥajar's compilation of fatwas:

> A question is asked about a man who wrote a book named *Al-Nukat al-ẓirāf fī man ubtilá bi'l-'āhāt min al-ashrāf*. The author mentioned a group of men living today, about whom he said, 'So-and-so is bald, and so-and-so is lame, and so-and-so is leprous, and so-and-so is blind.' He devoted a chapter to each type of blight, and then went on to mention a group of the Prophet's companions as being bald. The author claims that this work is an admonition (*maw'iẓa*), and the purpose of this book is nothing more than this. So, is this or is this not a form of the forbidden backbiting (*al-ghība al-muḥarrama*)? And what connects the book's author to objections about the book? Is it or is it not incumbent upon a Muslim to destroy this book for the damage suffered by its existence and spread?[393]

[393] Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī, *Al-Fatāwá al-kubrá al-fiqhiyya* (Grand Juridical Fatwas) (Cairo: 'Abd al-Ḥamīd Aḥmad Ḥanafī, 1938), 4:82.

The petitioner is not only asking for clarification about the lawfulness of a particular book, but also about a person's legal and moral responsibility for the content of his own writing and about the appropriate reaction of the Islamic community. In response, Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī issued a fatwa condemning the book's revelations as *ghība* (speaking ill of someone in his absence; slander; backbiting), which is considered one of Islam's gravest sins. In his lengthy response Ibn Ḥajar makes explicit what is considered *ghība* and how it can be expressed. In his words:

> Yes, what has been said is a form of the forbidden backbiting, because the Islamic community has agreed upon it, and the Prophet has designated it as something that one would hate to have mentioned about himself, regardless of whether it was about his body (like being tall, bleary-eyed, one-eyed, bald, black, yellow) or his name or his character or his deeds (like eating a lot) or his clothes (like having wide sleeves) or his child or his wife or his slave or his riding animal or his home (like its being cramped). *Ghība* is the same if it is uttered with the tongue or committed to writing.[394]

Ibn Ḥajar argues that the people mentioned in *al-Nukat al-ẓirāf* determine whether or not an act falls under the category of *ghība*, making this sin an entirely subjective one to judge. With the public support of one the most famous jurists of the era and region, some of the bald men mentioned in *al-Nukat al-ẓirāf* stormed Ibn Fahd's home on 5 Sha'bān 948/23 November 1541, less than one month after the book had been written. They seized his book and washed it at the local mosque, causing the ink to run from the pages. This lone copy was summarily destroyed. Twenty days later, floodwaters damaged the Ka'aba, as well as many other religious libraries and buildings in Mecca, inspiring one unidentified poet to compose a poem that interpreted the deluge as evidence of God's wrath against the men who destroyed *al-Nukat al-ẓirāf*.

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[394] Ibid.

Ghība and Censorship

One of the earliest Qur'anic revelations augurs badly for malicious gossipers, proclaiming "Woe to every slanderer, defamer!" In another verse Muslims are warned that *ghība* is tantamount to cannibalism. "Spy not nor let some of you backbite others. Does one of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother? You abhor it!"[395] The Qur'anic position is unambiguously opposed to the practice. Even so, later Sunni theologians generally agreed that *ghība* was permissible in six situations. The six are: redressing grievances (*taẓallum*), eliminating wrongdoing (*isti'āna 'alá taghyīr al-munkar*), asking for a legal opinion (*istiftā'*), warning Muslims of evil (*taḥdhīr min al-sharr*), communicating about a known fault (*tajāhur bi'l-fisq*) and for purposes of identifying someone (*ma'ruf*), even if by a person's physical blight. After laying out in his fatwa the six cases in which *ghība* is permissible, Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī concluded that Ibn Fahd's work did not fall under any of them.[396] Ibn Fahd may have responded immediately and at length to the seizure and destruction of his book and to Ibn Ḥajar's condemnation of his project, but all we know is that he defended the book as an admonitory work. Ibn Fahd's insistence that his book escaped these charges of *ghība* because it was a form of admonition was a wholly unacceptable defense to Ibn Ḥajar, who asked: "What is the admonition in saying, 'Such-and-such a deceased person was one-eyed or such-and-such a person was visibly leprous?'"[397] Even if one could legitimately classify *al-Nukat al-ẓirāf* as admonition, it still would not fall under one of the six exceptional categories. Ibn Ḥajar

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[395] Qur'an 49:12, 104:1.

[396] Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī, *Al-Fatāwá*, 4:82.

[397] Ibid.

continued in his attack of Jār Allāh’s weak defense to castigate the author as someone who “claimed that by mentioning these physical blights he intended the work to be an admonition, which is an absurd claim since no one has counted admonition among the justifications for slander.”[398] He then likened him to “an ignorant ass who thinks he is beautiful” and warned against his resemblance to the self-deceiver in the Qur’an “whose evil deed is made fair-seeming to him so that he considers it good.”[399] In Ibn Ḥajar’s judgement such statements about physical blights cause harm to the person named whether or not the named person is living or dead. He continued by citing the Prophet as saying whoever harms a jurist (*faqīh*) harms the Prophet, and whoever harms the Prophet harms God, so given the severity of Jār Allāh’s offenses, Ibn Ḥajar ruled that “the author must think about this and repudiate this work by destroying it, and he must then repent to God.”[400] The “jurist –> Prophet –> God” hierarchy places Jār Allāh outside the direct line of authority between man and God and positions the jurist’s (Ibn Ḥajar’s) body and soul as coextensive and interchangeable with the essence of God, essentially eliminating any moral authority to which Jār Allāh the historian had lain claim.

Although the petitioner never identified the author of the work, surely Ibn Ḥajar was aware of its existence and authorship. As will be seen, Jār Allāh learned quickly of Ibn Ḥajar’s pronouncement, since both men moved in the same social and professional circles. In Ramaḍān 943/1537, just four years before this incident, Jār Allāh listened to Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī recite Qāḍī al-‘Iyāḍ’s *al-Shifā’* in the presence of the Mughal vizier

[398] Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī, *Al-Fatāwá*, 4:83.

[399] Ibid.; Qur’an 35:8.

[400] Ibid.

Āsif Khān al-Kujarātī (Gujarati, in English) and was so impressed with his reading that he referred to him as *al-shaykh al-ʻalāma muftī al-muslimīn*, which is high praise for his legal opinions and his command of Islamic subjects.[401] At the end of this same month, Ibn Ḥajar fell ill with a stomach illness and blood fever, but was cured soon thereafter. Jār Allāh attributed this quick recovery to the healing power of reading *al-Shifā'*.[402] No objections were ever raised to this revelation of a personal illness, because illness was not a controversial biographical topic. Jār Allāh exhibited frankness about the illnesses of his household members and the effects of the disease upon their bodies. Just as he attributed Ibn Ḥajar's cure to divine intervention, so too did he credit God with the illness of his father's emancipated slave Kawkab (lit., "Star"), who originated from sub-Saharan Africa and helped raise Jār Allāh and his brothers as children. "She left our home with arrogant pride, and God afflicted her with syphilis (*al-ḥabb al-faranjī*). She grew weak from it. She start visiting us less often, then she felt pain for a long time – two years – and began to recover until God ordained her death in Sūq al-Layl [in 927/1520]. Someone came upon her after two days." If Jār Allāh begrudged her her troubled departure from his father's household, his feelings did not overshadow his sense of propriety and duty. He graciously arranged her burial preparations, the recitation of prayer for her at the Masjid al-Ḥarām and her plot assignment at Maʻlāh cemetery.[403] Jār Allāh also noted that his six-

[401] Jār Allāh ibn Fahd al-Makkī, *Kitāb nayl*, 2:664. Jār Allāh's interests in India were such that he visited the Gujarati king to present him with a copy of Ibn Ḥajar al-ʻAsqalānī's *Fatḥ al-Bārī* that his father and uncle had copied.

[402] Jār Allāh ibn Fahd al-Makkī, *Kitāb nayl*, 2:668.

[403] Jār Allāh ibn Fahd al-Makkī, *Kitāb nayl*, 1:312. Jār Allāh's great-grandfather Taqī al-Dīn also owned a sub-Saharan African slave named Kawkab bint ʻAbd Allāh al-Zanjiyya. When she died on ʻĀshūra' 935/1528 at the approximate age of ninety, she was also buried in Maʻlāh. (*Nayl*, 434-5) Within this branch

year-old daughter Sayyida died after suffering from smallpox (*judarī*) for nearly three weeks. "Disease," he wrote, "swelled her body."[404] … So given Jār Allāh's uninhibited stance on writing about disease, the two brief entries about Ibn Ḥajar demonstrate the utmost respect. Even after allowing for the possibility that he rewrote these passages after Ibn Ḥajar had issued his fatwa, the excerpts still demonstrate Jār Allāh's lack of bitterness or ill will.

The men's cordial relations did not prevent their differences of opinion from igniting a two-year argument about the licitness of Jār Allāh's writings. Convinced of the acceptability of his text, Ibn Fahd wrote a defense of his project in 949/1542 entitled *Al-Nuṣra wa'l-is'āffī al-radd 'alá al-muntaqidīn li-mu'allif al-Nukat al-Ẓirāf* (Advocacy and Succor against the Critics of the Author of *Charming Anecdotes*) that is unrecoverable. Jār Allāh completed other writing projects during this period that are regrettably unavailable. His continuation of al-Sakhāwī's biographical dictionary *Al-Ḍaw' al-lāmi'* was completed between 950/1543 and 954/1547, the year of his death. If, as his title implies, he wrote about living people, he may have identified the men who destroyed his book or the poet who rallied behind his cause.[405]

In 951/1542 he also dispatched letters to four Cairene judges, representing each of the Sunni schools of law – Abū al-Fayḍ ibn 'Alī al-Sulamī al-Ḥanafī, Aḥmad ibn al-

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of the Fahd clan, the names of both slave and free women, like Kawkab, Zaynab and Kamāliyya, appear to have been inherited.

[404] Jār Allāh ibn Fahd al-Makkī, *Kitāb nayl*, 2:765.

[405] The historian Muḥammad ibn 'Abd Allāh ibn Ḥumayd (d. 1878) appears to have used this biographical dictionary as a source, suggesting that he had a copy of this work at his disposal. See his *Al-Suḥub al-wābila 'alá ḍarā'iḥ al-ḥanābila* (Rain Clouds Over Ḥanbalī Tombs) (s.n.: Maktabat al-Imām Aḥmad, 1989), 24, 67, 69, 80, 83, 101, 136, 212, 238, 347, 353, 431, 473, 487.

Najjār al-Ḥanbalī, Nāṣir al-Laqānī al-Mālikī and Aḥmad al-Bulqīnī al-Shāfi'ī – and one Ḥanbalī scholar of Damascus (his personal friend Ibn Ṭūlūn), requesting their legal opinions on the matter.[406] Of these five men, Ibn Ṭūlūn was Jār Allāh's closest personal friend, as their friendship had formed years ago when they were both students of the same teachers. Even in their student years, Jār Allāh turned to his friend for guidance on scholarly matters. In Rabī' I 922/1516, for instance, he studied traditions related directly by Abū al-Dardā' under the supervision of Ibn Ṭūlūn.[407] Two months later, in Jumādā I 922/1516, Ibn Fahd witnessed a royal gathering in Syria involving Sultan al-Mutawakkil and the judges of Cairo and Syria, among whom was Aḥmad al-Bulqīnī al-Shāfi'ī.[408] The other three Cairene judges may have had such limited dealings with Jār Allāh prior to 949/1542 that records of them have not survived or were never kept in the first place. In any event, by Jār Allāh's account, all of them responded that his work accorded with the tenets of Islam and could not be categorized as *ghība*. Ibn Ṭūlūn even cited Ibn Mufliḥ's (d. 763/1362) *Al-Ādāb al-shar'iyya* (Legal Customs) to the effect that *ghība* only applies to religion, not to opinion or created things. Even though Ibn Ṭūlūn supported the book publicly, the uproar surrounding practices of *ghība* made him cautious about his own writings. At the same time as the scandal, Ibn Ṭūlūn was composing a work about Allāh's blessings on "those who were patient upon losing their eyesight" and was sufficiently intimidated by the turn of events in Mecca to leave out names of his contemporaries who

[406] Jār Allāh ibn Fahd al-Makkī, *Al-Nukat,* 14a-15a.

[407] Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Rasā'il*, 2:2.

[408] Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Mufākahat*, 2:14.

were suffering from failing sight.[409] As Mohammad Ghaly has observed, Jār Allāh's choice of judges may have been strategically motivated. Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī completed much of his legal training in Cairo, and may have therefore regarded the judgments of his teachers and their peers as authoritative.[410] Furthermore, the Meccan academic elite may have been sufficiently scandalized and polarized by the debates surrounding the book that a change of venue was necessary to garner objective judgments. In spite of these judges' reassurances, Jār Allāh completed a new version of *al-Nukat al-ẓirāf* in Jumādā I 950/August 1543 that represented a compromise between his critics' objections and his own belief in the justness of his work. He omitted most of his contemporaries' names, but chose to name Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī as cross-eyed (*aḥwal*) in this new version. To justify the inclusion of his critic, Jār Allāh opined, "Obscurity is a blessing but everyone rejects [it,] whereas celebrity is wrath but everyone wishes [for it]."[411]

Jār Allāh sought to make explicit his motivation for compiling a text on *dhawī l-ʿāhāt* by adjusting the title to reflect his defense against charges of *ghība*. This newly revised edition was titled *al-Nukat al-ẓirāf fī mawʿiẓa bi-dhawī l-ʿāhāt min al-ashrāf* (Charming Anecdotes: An Admonition of Descendants of the Prophet with Physical Blights), clearly marking this text as a book of counsel or moral sermon.[412] He organized

[409] Jār Allāh ibn Fahd al-Makkī, *Al-Nukat*, 15a.

[410] Mohammad Ghaly, "Writings on Disability in Islam: The 16th-Century Polemic on Ibn Fahd's *al-Nukat al-Ziraf*," *Arab Studies Journal* (Fall 2005/Spring 2006): 9-38.

[411] Ibid., 15.

[412] The style of the new title raises some questions. First, to keep in accordance with classical Arabic grammatical conventions, it should read "fī al-mawʿiẓa," and secondly, it is constructed as a clumsy rhyme. Most Arabic literary titles did rhyme, following a basic rhythmic scheme, but Jār Allāh's title is distinguished by its heaviness and awkwardness. Franz Rosenthal has said that Jār Allāh did not compose a lot of original work, and although this particular work has many original elements, the title may have been borrowed from Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī's study of hadith entitled *Al-Nukat al-ẓirāf ʿalā al-aṭrāf*. Ibn Fahd's

this new fifty-nine-page folio treatise somewhat differently from the original version and also from earlier examples of Arabic literature about physically blighted people. The first section is a lengthy introduction, and he divided the following chapter into biographical entries (*tarjamāt*) for prominent Muslims, rather than using physical difference as the organizing principle of his work. Within each entry of this first chapter, he quoted supporting sources.[413] In later sections he presented lists of people who possessed specific physical attributes. Among the sources he used to compile his book were hadith studies, Qur'anic commentaries, biographical dictionaries, biographies of the Prophet Muḥammad and manuals of Islamic ethics.

Table 4: Outline of Ibn Fahd's *Al-Nukat al-ẓirāf fī maw'iẓa bi-dhawī l-'āhāt min al-ashrāf* (950/1543)

Title Page (folio 1a)
Incipit (*fātiḥah*) (2a-b)
Foreword (*amā ba'd*) (2b-4a), which surveys prose and poetry about *dhawī l-'āhāt*
Al-Khwarizmī's *Mufīd al-'ulūm* (3a)
Ibn Qutayba's *Ma'ārif* (3a)
Al-Sakhāwī's *Al-I'lān bi'l-tawbīkh* (3a)
Al-Ṣafadī's *Nakt al-himyān 'alā nukat al-'umyān* (3a)
Al-Ṣafadī's *Al-Shu'ūr bi'l-'ūr* (3a)
Al-Jāḥiẓ' *Kitāb al-'urjān* (3a)
Ibn al-Athīr al-Jazarī's *Kitāb al-lubāb* (3b)
Introduction (*muqaddima*) (4a)
Islamic discourses about *dhawī l-'āhāt* (4a-9a), citing al-Qasṭallānī, Ibn al-'Imād, al-Sakhāwī, Imām al-Shāfi'ī, Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī, al-Nawāwī, al-Mawardī and others

grandfather Najm al-Dīn was a student of al-'Asqalānī and copied a portion of this text in 857/1453. It is likely that Jār Allāh inherited his grandfather's library and had access to his copied texts. Even if he did use al-'Asqalānī's title, the subjects of the two works are vastly different.

[413] See Appendix B for an organizational outline of *Al-Nukat al-ẓirāf* (1543).

Author's defense of his 948/1541 version of *al-Nukat al-ẓirāf* (9b-16b)
Chapter One: "Concerning those with *'āhāt* and examples of honorable men among them"
Al-Khwarizmī's three chapters about people with *'āhāt* (16b-17b)
Profile of Abū Quḥāfah, father of Abū Bakr (19a-b)
Abū Sufyān (19b-20a)
Ibn 'Abbās (20a-21b)
'Itbān (21b)
'Amr ibn Qays ibn Umm Maktūm (22a)
M*ḫ/kh*r/z*mah (22a-b)
Al-Bukhārī (22b-23a)
Al-Tirmidhī (23a)
Abū l-Qāsim ibn Firruh ibn Khalaf ibn Aḥmad al-Ru'aynī al-Shāṭibī (23a)
Abū l-'Alā' al-Ma'arrī (23b)
Abū Zayd al-Raḥmān ibn 'Abdallāh al-Shahilī (23b)
Blind People (23b-24a)
'Abbasid caliphs (24b)
Zakariyyā' al-Anṣarī (24b)
Scholars (25a)
Ibn Mulayk al-Ḥamawī (25b)
Companions of the Prophet (36a-44b)
One-Eyed Companions
Bald Companions (41b-44b)
Chapter Two: "On the Classes of 'Āhāt" (47a-54b)
One-eyed
Cross-Eyed
Bald
Lame
Leprous
Explicit (*khātimat al-kitāb)* (54b-59b)

The most original aspect of *al-Nukat al-ẓirāf* is the introduction where the author discussed three of his predecessors who had written about *dhawī al-'āhāt*: al-Khawarizmī, al-Jāḥiẓ and al-Ṣafadī.[414] Of the vast Arabic literary tradition on the theme of people with blights, he aligned his project mostly with these men's works, constructing

[414] Jār Allāh ibn Fahd al-Makkī, *Al-Nukat*, 3a. The relevant contents of these texts were detailed in the introductory chapter of this dissertation.

his own as a mélange of their defining characteristics. He claimed to have mimicked al-Khawarizmī's technique of listing names of people with particular blights, al-Jāḥiẓ' humorous assembly of anecdotes about his contemporaries and al-Ṣafadī's biographical dictionary of deceased luminaries. Jār Allāh's defense strategy of establishing literary precedences and religious justifications for his book's message is strikingly similar to the actions of Buyid author Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī (d. 414/1023) about his own book composed entirely of invective against a sitting prince. Al-Tawḥīdī positioned his book *Akhlāq al-wazīrayn* as the latest in a long chain of works of *hijā'* (satire), and he also attempted to insulate his project from moral attacks by arguing that Islamic doctrine required Muslims to make public the moral and executive failings of their leaders. "Passing off satire as a pious act" appears to have worked better for al-Tawḥīdī than it did for Ibn Fahd, as his arguments never convinced his critics of his innocence.[415]

The artlessness of Ibn Fahd's claims of admonition made them unconvincing. For one, Jār Allāh seems to have been unaware of several important works in this genre about people with blights. He was possibly uninterested in understanding the history of this genre because he was appropriating it to legitimize his insults against his contemporaries. The cursory historiography of *'āhāt* literature that he presents lacks most of the works cited in Chapter One of this dissertation, but also does not include Ibn 'Abd al-Hādī's biographical dictionary of hadith specialists with *'āhāt*. Ibn Ṭūlūn did own the original copy of this treatise, but did not mention this work to his friend. As mentioned in the previous chapter, Ibn Ṭūlūn's library was destroyed by Ottoman troops in 922/1516, so

[415] Frédéric Lagrange, "The Obscenity of the Vizier," in *Islamicate Sexualities: Translations Across Temporal Geographies of Desire*, eds. Kathryn Babayan and Afsaneh Najmabadi (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008), 175.

he must have acquired the manuscript after that date from one of Ibn ʻAbd al-Hādī's children. Since he probably had the book when he received Jār Allāh's letter, one can only speculate as to why he did not tell his friend of its existence. Ibn Ṭūlūn demonstrated his friendship by visiting Mecca that year during the pilgrimage season, which fell seven months after Jār Allāh had completed the revised latest version of *al-Nukat al-ẓirāf*. At this point in his life, Ibn Ṭūlūn had already suffered great losses. Thirty-one years earlier, Ottoman forces had displaced him and his family from their Ṣāliḥiyya home, forcing them to relocate to al-Mizza, a village three miles southwest of al-Ṣāliḥiyya. While in exile, his wife and his children ʻĀ'isha and ʻUthmān died, leaving him alone in this new place, prompting him to leave al-Mizza and take up residence in al-Yūnusiyya, a Damascene sufi lodge.

For Jār Allāh, comparing his book with those of well-regarded writers, as we have seen, was a conscious strategy to distance it from associations with *ghība* and to align it with acceptable literary standards. Jār Allāh's defenses also felt weak and disgenuous because of their ambiguity and poor formulation. He devoted several pages in the introduction of the 1543 *al-Nukat al-ẓirāf* to defending his earlier version, asserting that not only did one of the six exceptions to *ghība* fit his case, but he never mentioned which exception was applicable here. Faced with such serious charges from a leading member of the religious class, Jār Allāh's refusal or inability to identify clearly the grounds of his innocence weakens his stance. He apparently believed that his veiled insults about Meccan elites would have circulated without opposition, which explains the surprise he registered at being asked to consider his own relation to and responsibility for the content of his writing, an issue which the anonymous petitioner of the legal opinion wondered

himself. Secondly, he asserted that his text could not have been written with malicious intent because he had named himself as bald, his maternal grandfather as lame, and a number of his teachers as blind.[416] Jār Allāh's strong ties to family and his protectiveness of its reputation were evidenced in his commentary on his great-grandfather's absence from al-Suyūṭī's *Dhayl ṭabaqāt al-ḥuffāẓ*. Earlier in this chapter, we saw how his willingness to expose himself, his family and his revered masters as blighted proved that baldness for him was not a shameful condition. Thirdly, he explained that he did not view *'āhāt* as a negative trait or a deficiency. "When I wrote of *dhawī l-'āhāt*, I did not have defect (*naqīṣa*) in mind. On the contrary, I wanted to identify these people, console them and present a light admonition."[417] Fourthly, he appealed to the deeds of 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb (d. 23/644), the second caliph of Islam, who declared that "*ghība* of bodies is not something forbidden." Plus, the Prophet Muḥammad referred to people as "black and short" and "thin-bearded," so many eminent Muslim men have identified people for their physical differences.[418]

To his peers the appropriate category may have been too obvious to warrant naming, but Jār Allāh may also have been mounting a vague defense to allow a multitude of interpretations. If elite Meccan men wore turbans in public, then how did Jār Allāh know whether someone was bald? The public baths and ritual cleansing prior to prayer offer opportune moments to see a man's bare head. Because it was bald men who ambushed him in his home, their anger did not likely stem from the disclosure of their

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[416] Jār Allāh ibn Fahd al-Makkī, *Al-Nukat*, 13b.

[417] Ibid.

[418] Ibid.

known baldness. Jār Allāh must have identified them as bald, and they would have preferred to conceal this fact.[419]

Honor, Shame and the Male Body

How did our tenth/sixteenth-century subjects conceptualize honor and shame in relation to their own bodies? For Muslim men honor and its negative counterpart – dishonor – reside in and on the body, and the body parts most closely identified with honor are the beard and the head. Full beards signified male virility and power, and men sometimes dyed their beards bright colors like red or blue or decorated them with metal beads to showcase this feature. Like veils for women, beards were central to adult men's gender identity in the Muslim world and were markers of honorability.

As for the head, an elaborate turban marked a man as learned. In fact, in Arabic another phrase designating the scholarly class was "men of turbans." Both Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī and Jār Allāh wrote entire books on turbans, indicating the centrality of this article of clothing for elite male identity. With the publication of *al-Nukat al-ẓirāf* in 948/1541, the men that Ibn Fahd named as bald had the most forceful reaction to finding their names in print. They certainly viewed the scriptive act of identifying them as bald as a violation of personal physical space, a literary removal of a protective, honorable head covering, exposing private body parts.

Honor resided in and on male bodies. In *Morality Tales* Leslie Peirce reads the sixteenth-century court registers of the provincial Ottoman city Aintab to understand how moral standards were mapped onto male bodies. "Zones of honor for the adult male

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[419] Ghaly, "Writings," 16.

[were] therefore potential targets of insult."[420] In Mecca in this same year Ibn Fahd violated moral codes governing the respectability of the body, but not just any body, but named bodies who commanded respect in their communities and possessed local social capital. With his pen Jār Allāh was able to loosen and unravel scholars' turbans, exposing them on the page in ways these men would have never considered doing in their daily lives. Ghaly has suggested that Ibn Fahd saw men's bare heads during the obligatory ablutions before prayer. The Ḥanbalī and Shāfiʿī rites permit washing the turban or washing the forehead without removing the turban, but the Mālikī and Ḥanafī schools require the turban to be removed and the bare head washed. Alternatively, Ibn Fahd could also have seen these men's heads in the public baths, where turbans would have been routinely removed.[421]

The intersections of honor and the male body came to a forceful head in mid-tenth/sixteenth-century Mecca, but the themes have permeated every chapter of this dissertation. For al-Ḥijāzī taking *balādhur* to improve his memory brought him honor and marked him as a dedicated student. It was only after the drug had caused boils to erupt all over his body that he was ostracized by his community and regarded with skepticism. He tried to shift public perception of them by depicting his ordeal as suffering in God's name. From this experience comes an effort to ascribe other postive values to blighted bodies. Many of his poems, as well as those compiled by his student al-Badrī, directly address the disbelief and shame of outsiders who found it difficult to believe that a person with blights could be found desirable. Al-Badrī arranged a selection of love poems about

[420] Peirce, 195.

[421] Ghaly, "Writings," 16.

men with afflicted body parts into a quasi-narrative of love, pain, medical treatment, recovery and death, situating disease and blight, both temporary and permanent, as natural features of a virile man's life. Ibn ʻAbd al-Hādī merged the respectable class of hadith specialists with the fraught category of physical blights. Associating the presumed moral rectitude of religious scholars with blights could favorably shift popular perceptions of people of blights. In this era disease and blightedness were prevalent enough to contribute to the diffusion of these themes in religious, literary and historical discourses and in the public consciousness of both native residents of Cairo, Damascus and Mecca and visitors to these cities. Ibn ʻAbd al-Hādī inscribed blighted bodies with honor.

Ibn Fahd's provides a unique view into contemporary debates about *ghība,* the body, physical blights and the ways in which these tropes were deployed in intellectual, Islamic and personal circles. The controversy did not derail Ibn Fahd's career and reputation altogether, and he was still well regarded within his family. Although none of his sons became historians, other family members recognized and benefited from his intellect. A younger relative of his named Taqī al-Dīn ibn Ḥazan ibn Fahd (d. 987/1580) was his student and grew up to become a respected jurist.[422] In 953/1546, the year of Ibn Ṭūlūn's death, the famous Aleppan historian Ibn al-Ḥanbalī (d. 971/1563) came to Mecca to study with Jār Allāh, who presented this student with a copy of his own book of poetry

[422] Al-Shillī, 567; ʻAbd Allāh Mardād Abū l-Khayr, *Al-Mukhtaṣar min kitāb nashr al-nūr wa'l-zahr fī tarājim afāḍil Makka*, ed. Muḥammad Saʻīd al-ʻĀmūdī and Aḥmad ʻAlī (Judda: ʻĀlam al-maʻrifa, 1986), 150.

that included verses praising his teachers.[423] Less than one year later Jār Allāh died in Mecca and was buried in the city's Ma'lah cemetery – a prestigious burial ground that was also his family's traditional resting place. In his own history of Aleppo, Ibn al-Ḥanbalī mentioned whether a man liked young boys, and in an echo of Jār Allāh's experiences, many of Ibn al-Ḥanbalī's peers felt that stating someone's preference for young male sexual partners was tantamount to *ghība*. In Aleppo, however, the debate never escalated to the point of destroying copies of the written work.

Ibn Fahd's study of the relationship of the body to Islamic history and doctrine began with earlier training and contacts, but who could have foreseen just how scholarship and the public shame of physical blights explosively converged, bringing into sharp relief the degree to which shame and notions of acceptability shaped bodily perceptions? Both Jār Allāh's opponents efforts to silence his speech and preserve their own honor and Jār Allāh's stubborn defense of his work divided the Meccan elite, but today permit the reading of living bodies in their local environs.

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[423] Ibn al-Ḥanbalī, *Durr*, 1:434-6.

Chapter 7
Conclusion and Epilogue

Medieval Christian polemics against Islam were frequently directed against the Prophet Muḥammad's body. What was for these polemicists a charged site of pointed critique represented for Muslims a model for their daily lives. The materiality and physical languge of his body symbolized Islam. John of Damascus, a Greek Orthodox writer of the early eighth century CE, claimed in his *De Haeresibus* that Muḥammad was a heretic, liar and epileptic.[424] The trances he reportedly entered when receiving revelation from the archangel Jibrīl (Gabriel, in English) were evidence, John contended, of epileptic seizures, not divine inspiration. Later Byzantine thinkers reiterated these charges as truth and variations of this claim still circulate today worldwide.[425]

In late thirteenth century CE Italy Dante Alighieri (d. 1321) levied new charges against Islam, mediated through a luridly violent and, for some, "peculiarly disgusting" assault on the body of the Prophet.[426] In his *Divina Commedia*, which may have been inspired by the story of Muḥammad's tour of heaven and hell, the eighth of nine circles

[424] John V. Tolan discusses the history of European conceptions of Islam at greater length in his book *Saracens: Islam in the Medieval European Imagination* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002).

[425] In 2006 the Canadian not-for-profit organization Epilepsy Toronto proudly named Muḥammad as a historical figure with epilepsy. Once administrators at the organization learned of the ahistoricity of their claims, they removed his name from the list. This incident demonstrates how over time polemics can gain the status of fact.

[426] Said, 84.

of hell is populated by deliberately fraudulent people whose deceptions divided society.[427] As Virgil guides Dante through this circle of hell, he gestures to Muḥammad and his cousin and son-in-law ʻAlī, who deceived people with false religious messages that created schisms in contemporary Christendom and exclaims, "See how Mahomet's mangled and split open! Ahead of me walks Ali in his tears, his head cleft from the top-knot to the chin"—a punishment that a demon was repeatedly exacting in perpetuity. Muḥammad speaks to the two, narrating his pain, offering details about his humiliating disembowelment.[428] Unlike John of Damascus, Dante positioned Muḥammad as "a schismatic, a sower of religious dissent, a categorization that has troubled some critics because it would imply an untypical perception of Islam as a schism rather than a heresy."[429] Islam, in Dante's reckoning, was responsible for social and political splits within Christian Italy – an immediate and palpable threat to the reigning social order, rather than a distant religious order with vague relevance to medieval Italy. The divisions within the Italian body politic were mapped onto the "mangled and split" body of Muḥammad, and later anxieties about Islam similarly found expression through appropriations of this scene.

Dante's vivid portrayal of Muḥammad in hell inspired European artists and writers over many centuries to interpret the scene of Dante and Virgil gazing upon him in different mediums – as an oil on canvas, watercolor, ink drawing, engraving, editorial

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[427] For arguments supporting the influence of the *miʻrāj* on the plot of *Divina Commedia*, see Miguel Asín Palacios, *Islam and the Divine Comedy*, ed. and trans. Harold Sutherland (London: Cass, 1968) and María Rosa Menocal, *The Arabic Role in Medieval Literary History* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1987), 115-35.

[428] Dante Alighieri, *The Inferno*, trans. John Ciardi (New York: Modern Library, 1996).

[429] Menocal, 130.

comic, theatrical play and poems. (figs. 3-6) A scene of such violence occuring repeatedly and eternally against a despised 'other' who threatened a particular way of life aroused interest in Christendom, but the depiction of Muḥammad's punishment in *Divina Commedia* made no perceptible impression on late medieval and early modern Islamdom.

While Menocal has convincingly shown Dante's familiarity with Bonaventura da Siena's Latin translation of the Prophet Muḥammad's Night Journey (*mi'rāj*), in which the archangel Jibrīl led Muḥammad on a tour of heaven and hell, it is less likely that Dante was familiar with the biography of the Prophet.[430] If he had been, he might have been interestd to learn that the punishment he assigned to Muḥammad mirrored an episode in the Prophet's life. Whether Dante drew inspiration for the scene in *Inferno* from another Islamic text is a matter that falls outside the scope of this dissertation. It is feasible and more useful to link the particulars of these stories to more larger symbols and codes about marked bodies. Ibn Isḥāq (d. between 150-153/767-770), the Prophet's earliest biographer reported that Muḥammad had his belly split open by two angels, corroborating God's statement in Qur'an 94:1, "Have We not opened up your heart and lifted from you the burden that had weighed so heavily upon your back?" Al-Ṭabarī, al-Qasṭallānī and other later authors have also transmitted this story with slight variations. Related in Muḥammad's voice, it unfolds as follows:

> One day while I was in a wide plain in Mecca, two angels appeared to me. One of them fell to the earth, and the other hovered between the earth and sky. One asked the other, 'Is this the one?', to which he replied, 'This is he.' Then the first angel commanded the second one to rip open my belly and take out the heart. The angel cleansed the heart of Satan's influence, then performed the ritual cleansing on both the heart and belly. (fig. 7) Next, the first angel commanded the second angel

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[430] Ibid., 123-7.

> to sew me back up, and the seal (*khātim*) of prophethood appeared between my shoulder blades just after this incident.[431]

In these Italian and Arabic versions, the same prophetic body is marked by nearly identical physical conditions (an open belly).

In Dante's imagination Muḥammad's disembowelment in the afterlife was a divinely ordained punishment for his moral deceptions, and in Islamic prophetology splitting open the young Muḥammad's torso before the onset of prophethood was divinely ordained to purify his body and soul to ready him to assume the highest calling to which humans can aspire. Once the cleansing was complete and his torso sewn up, the seal materialized on his body, symbolizing the unification or completion of the Abrahamic prophetic tradition. For Muslims Islam represents a seamless continuation of Christianity, not a reactionary belief system against it. Still, it is significant how these literary and religious depictions cast radically different lights on the same body marked by nearly identical physical conditions (an open belly) within starkly different contexts. On the one hand, the location is the depths of hell, and the other is a plain in Mecca. We are confronted with the figure of a sinner and a Prophet; punishment and purification; a scene of afterlife and life; eternal disembowelment and a healed body; a body marked in shame and the exalted human form. In both tellings Muḥammad's body represents something greater than simply the sum of its parts; he embodies either a menacing Islamic community or the realization of final prophethood.

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[431] Ibn Hishām, *The Life of Muhammad: A Translation of Isḥāq's Sīrat Rasūl Allāh*, trans. A. Guillaume (Lahore and Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1967), 72; Al-Ṭabarī, *Annals*, 1016; Al-Qasṭallānī, *Al-Mawāhib*, 1:166.

Dante and Virgil's distant gaze on the fallen, mutilated Muḥammad renders him a spectacle, a scene standing in sharp contrast to Ibn Isḥāq, al-Ṭabarī and al-Qasṭallānī's elaborations of the Qur'anic tale where the angels' touch is the mode of knowing the Prophet's body, not sight. The spectacle of Dante's imagined torture is tempered only at the moment when Muḥammad speaks, and this very speech act restores his humanity and subjecthood. His expressions of compassion for a living Italian man and of physical pain on the other render him human. In the Islamic story, only the angels speak. Muḥammad is silent, making his desubjectivized body the central focus of the event. Muḥammad's body is mythologized for Christian and Muslim audiences through the imposition of particular ideas and values on his person. The myth engendered by manipulating his prophetic and historical identities define perceptions of Islam.

In this dissertation we have seen just how the substance of stories about the body could transform notions of masculinity, femininity and blightedness by forcing the audience to reassess notions of beauty and desirability. Human subjects are the essence of this study, and because the body is central to all of human experience, the themes of aberrant and ideal bodies will always have a certain resonance. This window onto late medieval and early modern Islamicate worlds should not be considered an isolated moment with no relevance to other peoples and places. This project encompasses 150 years of Islamicate literary and social history spanning two empires. Here, I have synthesized a sizeable corpus of material from late-Mamluk and Ottoman Arab lands that had yet to be analyzed together for their insights on histories of the body and on the role of friendship in the circulation of ideas. The most significant findings from studying these materials are the interconnectedness of textual and intellectual communities, the

discursive preoccupation with conceptions of the body and the substance of religious debates about writing marked bodies. All of these vignettes came together to push the historian into reconsidering how ideas about the body traveled over time and space.

Furthermore, this study has interrogated how interpersonal relationships affected the ways in which these scholars told stories about blighted bodies. Al-Ḥijāzī narrated to a friend his experience of painful boils and sores and the companionship he found with a Mamluk soldier who had also suffered skin eruptions. I argue that these intimate exchanges about shared physical circumstances informed the direction and substance of his art. Al-Badrī compiled individual and collective memories of marked bodies and afflicted body parts, emphasizing the ways in which artistic endeavors could shape and preserve specific ideas about bodies. Ibn ʻAbd al-Hādī and Ibn Ṭūlūn lost children, spouses and concubines to illnesses. Ibn Fahd claimed to have more empathy towards his subjects' blights because of his and his family members' baldness and his teacher's lameness, and Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī related to people of blights through his own experiences. This single theme of blightedness was sustained in public and private discourses over 150 years – filtered through different mediums: poetry, literary and historical prose, religious polemic, letters of friendship, moral consolation and biography. In these threads of conversations and narratives, I have searched out indications of just how each distinct blight was differently valued depending on context. By describing a taxonomy of blights, the complex significations of late medieval and early modern bodies in the Islamicate Arab lands have been revealed.

Figures

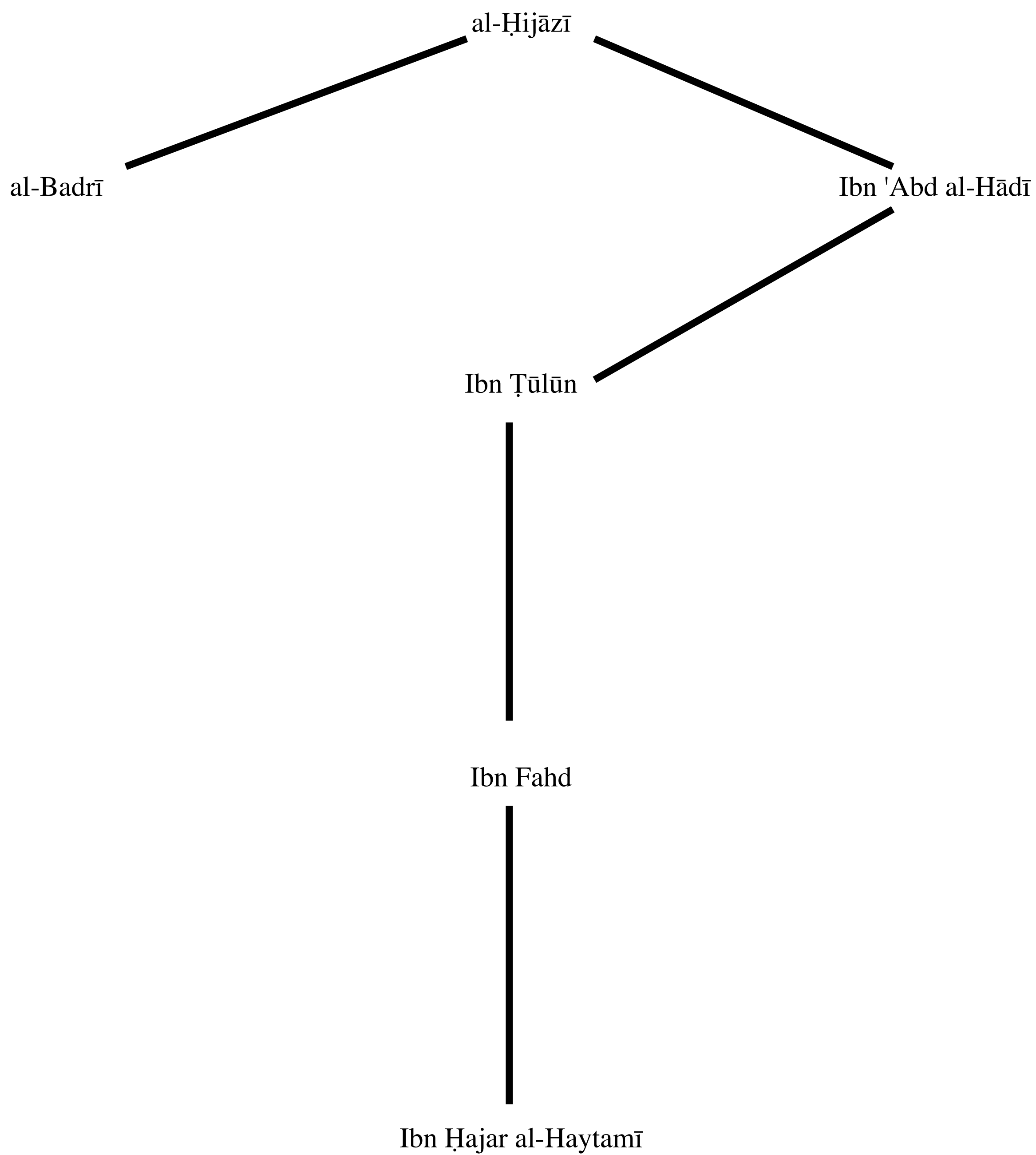

Figure 1: Connections Among the Six Scholars

Figure 2 : *Balādhur*, or *Semecarpus Anacardium Orientale*.

Source: Edward Hamilton, *The Flora Homoeopathica, or Illustrations & Descriptions of the Medicinal Plants Used in Homoeopathic Remedies* (London: Leath and Ross, 1852), 1:27.

In the lower right corner, the fourth drawing of a cross-section of the nut shows the cells that produce the thick juice.

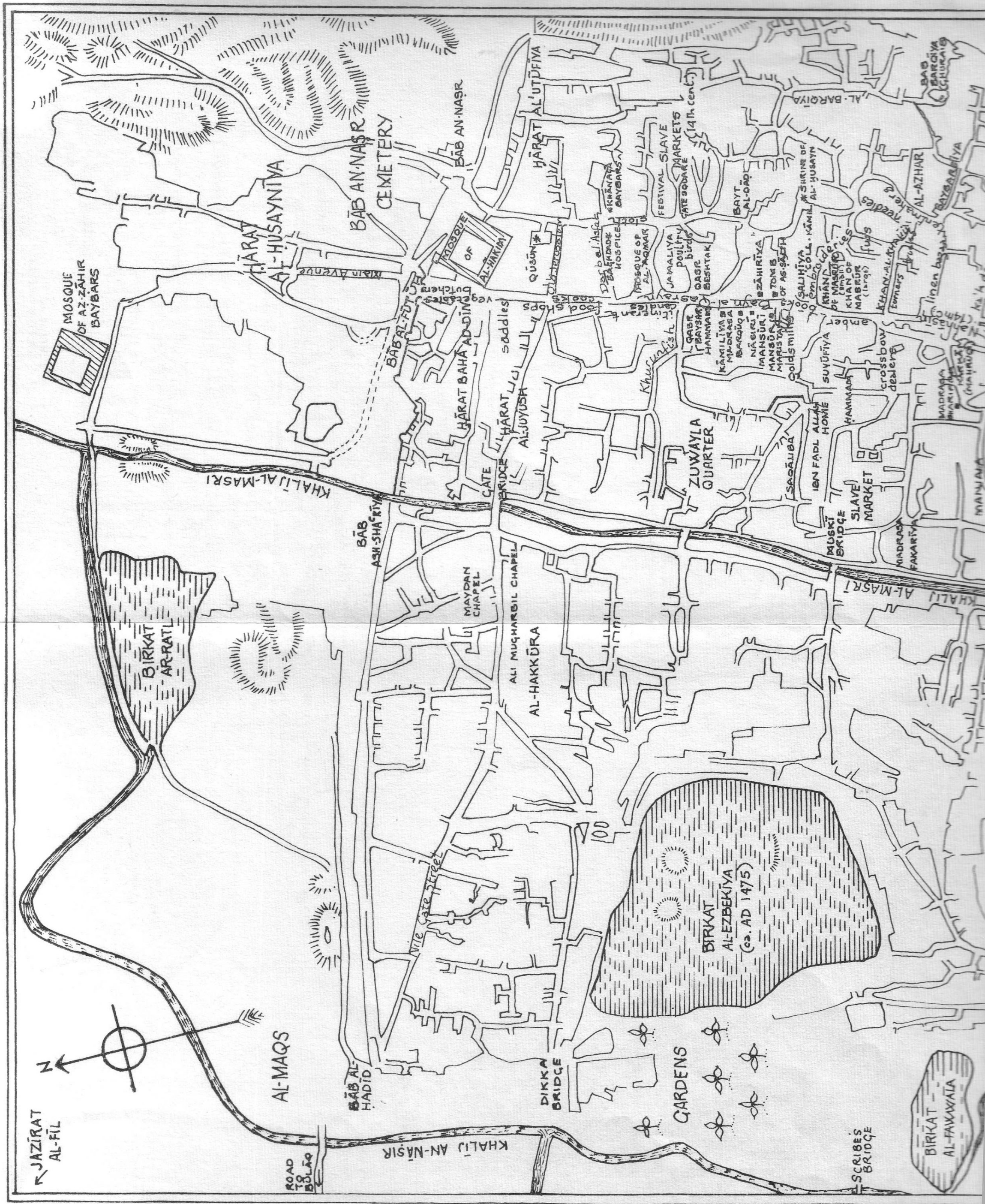

Figure 3: Detail of Map of Mamluk Cairo, showing al-Baybarsiyya and Darb al-Aṣfar.

Source: Susan Jane Staffa, *Conquest and Fusion: The Social Evolution of Cairo, A.D. 642-1850*, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1977.

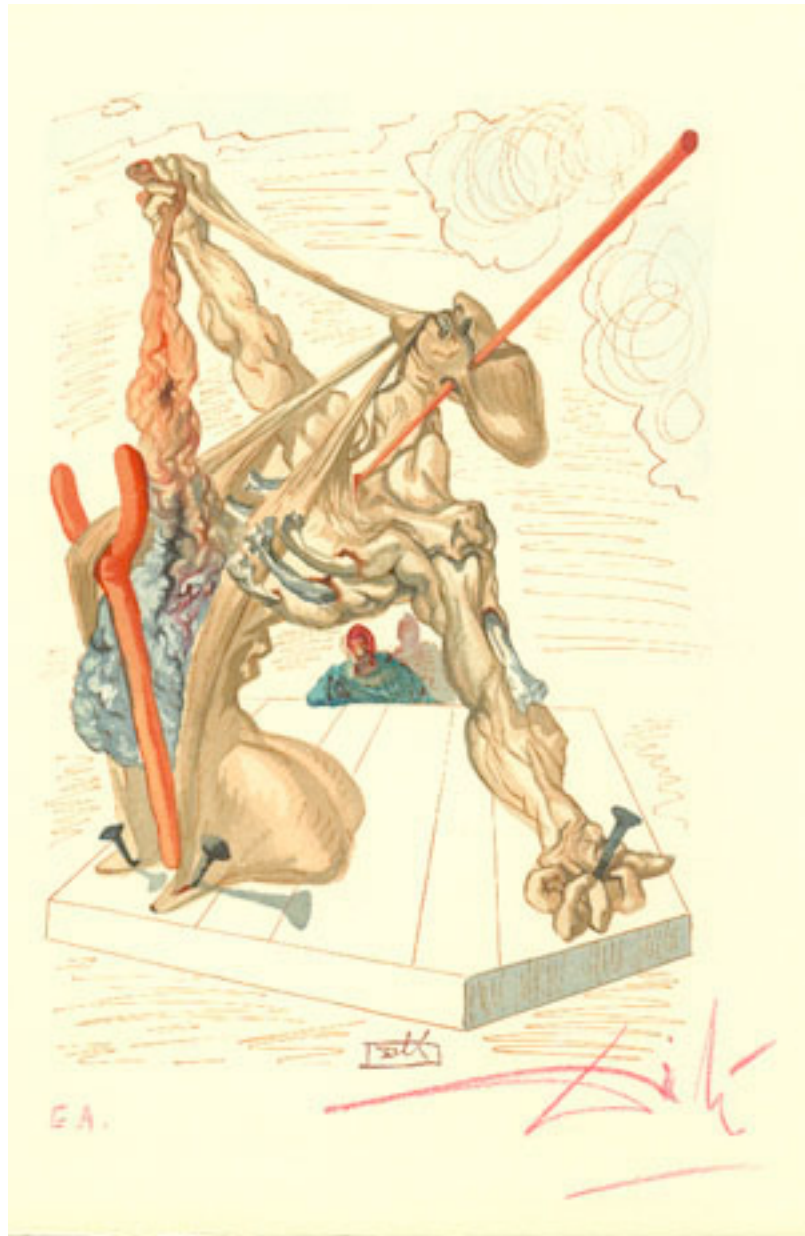

Figure 4: Salvador Dali, "Mahomet," 1959.

Kitāb al-mi'rāj.

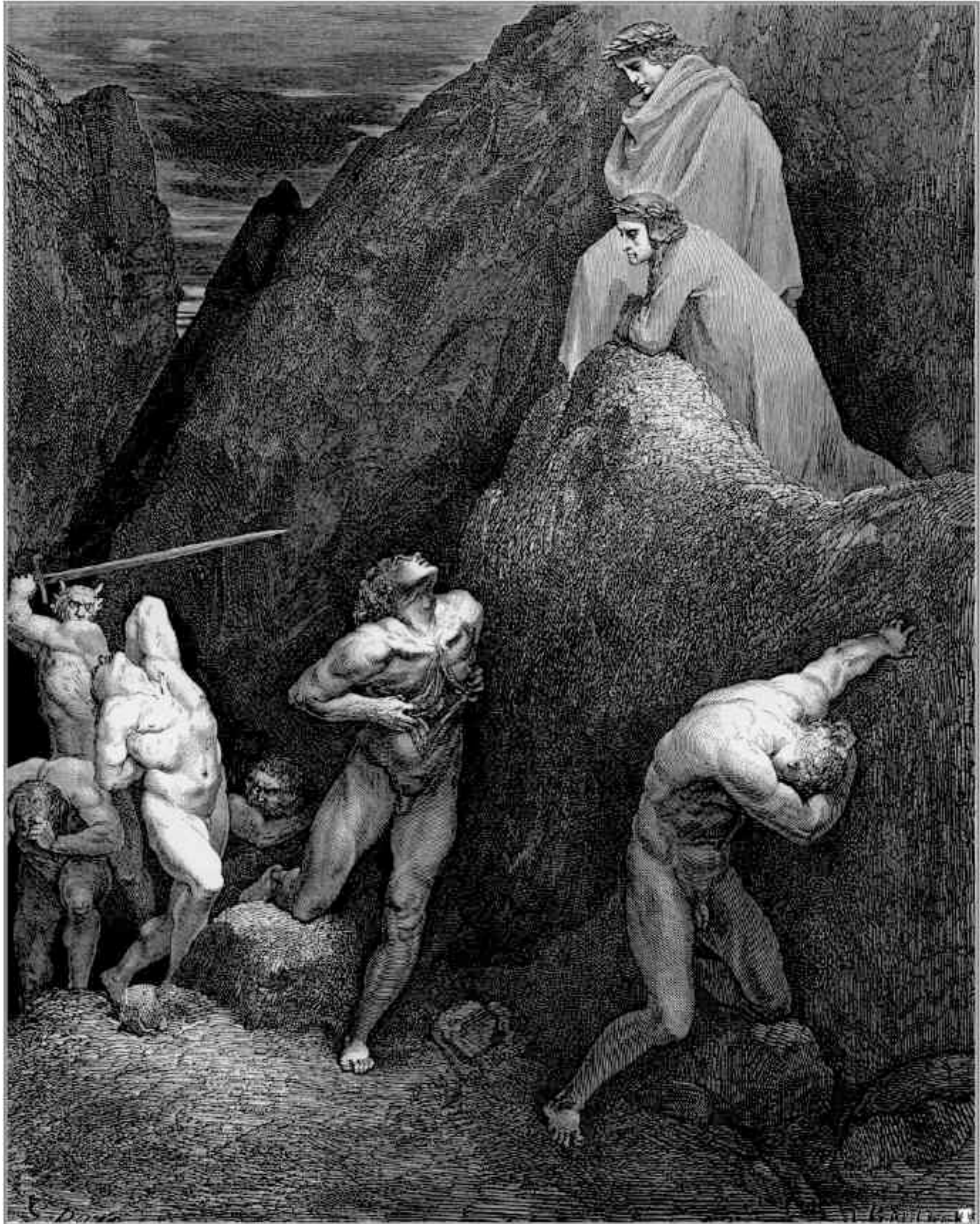

Figure 5: Muḥammad, Dante and Virgil

Gustave Doré's illustration of Muḥammad's punishment in an 1869 French translation of *Kitāb al-mi'rāj*.

Figure 6: Virgil and Dante Behold Muḥammad

Source: Bodleian Library, University of Oxford, MS. Holkham misc. 48, fol. 42.

Figure 7: Angels Purify Muḥammad’s Heart.

Source: Washington, D.C., Freer Gallery of Art, 57.16, fol. 138a.

In this painting three figures are cleansing Muḥammad’s heart, as opposed to the two named in al-Ṭabarī’s version of the tale. The figures also do not have the typical mien of angels in medieval Iranian portraiture. This painting is found in Balʿamī’s Persian translation of al-Ṭabarī’s *Ta’rīkh al-rusul wa’l-mulūk* (History of Prophets and Kings).

Figure 8: Events Timeline

al-Ḥijāzī	al-Badrī	Ibn 'Abd al-Hādī	Ibn Ṭūlūn	Ibn Fahd	Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī	Political
790/1388: Born in Cairo						
815/1412: Wrote letter about his boils						
826/1422: Completed *Rawḍ al-Ādāb*						
		841/1437: Born in Damascus				
843/1440: Made pilgrimage to Mecca						
	847/1443: Born in Damascus					
	c. 1460: Wrote *Durr al-maṣūn*					
	After 868/1464: Wrote *Ghurrat al-ṣabāḥ* in Damascus					
871/1467: Endorsed al-Badrī's *Ghurrat*						

al-Ḥijāzī	al-Badrī	Ibn 'Abd al-Hādī	Ibn Ṭūlūn	Ibn Fahd	Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī	Political
						872-901/1468-96: Qāytbāy's reign as Mamluk sultan
875/1471: Died in Cairo.						
			880/1473: Born in Damascus			
				891/1486: Born in Mecca		
	894/1489: Died in Gaza					
						1497: Vasco da Gama sails around Cape of Good Hope
						906-22/1501-16: Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī's reign as Mamluk sultan
		909/1503: Died in Damascus		909/1503: Moved with his father to Medina	Late 909/1504: Born in Egypt	
				913/1507: Studied in Cairo		

al-Ḥijāzī	al-Badrī	Ibn 'Abd al-Hādī	Ibn Ṭūlūn	Ibn Fahd	Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī	Political
				914/1508: Studied history in the Yemen for four months		
			920/1514: Made pilgrimage to Mecca			920/1514: Ottomans defeat Safavids in the Battle of Chaldiran
				922/1516: Entered Aleppo at the same time as Sultan al-Ghawrī.		922/1516: Ottoman occupation of Syria
				Jumāda II 923/1517: Returned to Mecca		
				Dhū'l Ḥijja 923/1517: His concubine died.		
				924/1518: Married Zaynab bint Qāḍī al-Muslimīn		
				948/1541: Wrote his first version of *Al-Nukat al-ẓirāf*		

al-Ḥijāzī	al-Badrī	Ibn 'Abd al-Hādī	Ibn Ṭūlūn	Ibn Fahd	Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī	Political
				949/1542: Defended his work against attack		
			950/1543: Made pilgrimage to Mecca	950/1543: Completed second version of *Al-Nukat al-ẓirāf*		
			953/1546: Died in Damascus			
				954/1547: Died in Mecca		
					974/1567: Died in Mecca	

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