



Faculty of Arts and Sciences
Sheikh Zayed Chair for
Arabic and Islamic Studies



The American University of Beirut (Lebanon)
and The University of Bamberg (Germany)

Cordially invite you to a virtual conference on

HOW TO END THINGS IN ARABIC LITERATURE

كيفية إنهاء الأمور في
الادب العربي

Organized by
Bilal Orfali
Lale Behzadi

Conference
4 - 5 June, 2021
09:30 Start of Zoom Session
(Time Zone: Amsterdam, Berlin,
Rome, Stockholm)
10:00 Opening – Words of
Welcome



Panel I “Novel” (Chair: Lale Behzadi)

- 10:15 - 10:30  **Shereen Abouelnaga**
The Discourse of Umm Saad and Its Discontents:
What Happened to All the Women?
- 10:30 - 10:45  **Imad Ghannoum**
في رواية «عودة الطائر إلى البحر» لحليم بركات جدلية البداية والنهاية
- 10:45 - 11:00  **Katarína Bešková**
Resisting Closure, Defying the System:
Two Dystopian Novels from Egypt
- 11:15 - 12:00  **Discussion, Wrap-up**

Panel II “Philosophy, Theology, Education” (Chair: Regula Forster)

- 13:00 - 13:15  **Sebastian Günther**
Textual Endings as Educational Beginnings:
An Inquiry into the Epistles of the Brethren of Purity
- 13:15 - 13:30  **Vahid Behmardi**
“Conclusions” in Selected Works by Mulla Sadra
- 13:30 - 13:45  **Rocio Daga Portillo**
Christian Arabic Apologetical works:
Copists and Author’s Endings
- 14:00 - 14:45  **Discussion, Wrap-up**

Panel III “Structuring the End” (Chair: Johannes Stephan)

- 15:45 - 16:00  **Ursula Bsees:**
Change the Paper, Add the End, Keep the Colophon for
Later: *Multiple Material and Textual Endings in a Manuscript
from Egypt*
- 16:00 - 16:15  **Lina Jammal**
ظي بساط الحديث: الخاتمة في الموسوعات الأدبية والبسط المملوكية
- 16:15 - 16:30  **Bilal Orfali**
The Art of the Khātima in the Works of Abū Maṣṣūr al-
Tha‘ālibī
- 16:45 - 17:30  **Discussion, Wrap-up**

Panel IV "Poetry" (Chair: Beatrice Gründler)

- 18:00 - 18:15** ⚙️ **Kevin Blankinship**
As Barren as Mother Eve: Why Some Poems End Better than Others, According to Classical Arabic Critics
- 18:15 - 18:30** ⚙️ **Alfred el-Khoury**
And the She-Camel Reaches the King's Court: On Abū Tammām's Endings
- 18:30 - 18:45** ⚙️ **Boutheina Khaldi**
The Critique of Closure in Classical Arabic Self-Elegy
- 19:00 - 19:45** ⚙️ **Discussion, Wrap-up**

Sat., June 5

Panel V "Narratives I" (Chair: Bilal Orfali)

- 10:00 - 10:15** ⚙️ **Beatrice Gründler**
Closed Open Endings: Subtale and Follow Up in Kalīla wa-Dimna
- 10:15 - 10:30** ⚙️ **Johannes Stephan**
Ending Things in the Beginning:
Or Why and How Premodern Frame Narratives in Arabic do not Really End
- 10:30 - 10:45** ⚙️ **Theodore Beers**
Ending without Closure in the Shāhnāmah and Kalīla wa-Dimna
- 11:00 - 11:45** ⚙️ **Discussion, Wrap-up**

Panel VI "Narratives II" (Chair: Theodore Beers)

- 12:45 - 13:00** ⚙️ **Johannes Thomann**
Deconstructive Narratives, Decreasing Doublets, Deceptive Cadences, and the Design of Circles: Strategies for Building a Closure in One Thousand and One Nights
- 13:00 - 13:15** ⚙️ **Enass Khansa**
Rupture and Temporary Endings
- 13:15 - 13:30** ⚙️ **Lale Behzadi**
Inevitable End? al-Amīn's death narrated by al-Ṭabarī
- 13:45 - 14:30** ⚙️ **Discussion, Wrap-up**

Panel VII “Knowledge Transfer” (Chair: Sebastian Günther)

- 15:30 - 15:45**  **Colinda Lindermann**
Tamma or tatimma? Endings in Arabic Lexicography
- 15:45 - 16:00**  **Muhammed Aslam**
Post-Scripts and Ending of Literatures in the Texts of Jurisprudence
- 16:00 - 16:15**  **Regula Forster**
Alchemy’s End
- 16:15 - 16:30**  **Jeremy Kurzyniec**
Endings in Arabic Sexological Works (kutub al-bāh):
From a Whimper to a Bang
- 16:45 - 17:30**  **Discussion, Wrap-up**

18:30

How Do We Proceed?

Conceptual Brainstorming (Chair: Johannes Thomann)

Final Remarks – Next Steps – إلى اللقاء



ABSTRACTS

A. NOVEL

1. The Discourse of Umm Saad and Its Discontents:

What Happened to All the Women?

Shereen Abouelnaga, Cairo University

The experience of reading a Palestinian literary text is very likely to throw the reader in severe disappointment if it does not end in a victorious tone. On the other hand, reality itself is so chaotic that no sophisticated text can endorse it totally. To overcome this false binary and defy the habit of imposing such false paradigms on the world, this article reads the endings of several narratives written by Palestinian women as the foundation of new beginnings and as means of revelation. This mode of reading enables the reader to turn a fragmented reality/text into a totality that does not neglect the complex web of socio-political relations where gender is the weakest element, especially in the eminent presence of nationalism.

Ghassan Kanafani's *Umm Saad* (1969) has consolidated this strong bond between nationalism and motherhood (as a form of gender). One keeps wondering whether Saad has ever returned and made his mother proud. In 1990, we get a glimpse of what Umm Saad has completely neglected –although she was a refugee living in a camp– through the ending of Sahar Khalifa's *Bab El Saha* (forthcoming in English as *Passage to the Plaza*). The miserable life in the camp –especially for women– unfolds blatantly in Samia Issa's *Halib Al Teen* (*Fig Milk*) (2010). While the author thought that the best way out is to let Saddika die, she re-appears as Hawwa in Huzamah Habayeb's *Mokhmal* (*Velvet*) (2016) in a Jordanian refugee camp. But again, Hawwa was killed on the hands of her son and brother. With such incessant interruptions of women's life because of reasons that have nothing to do with the struggle or resistance, Lianna Badr had to launch her self-critique in 2016 through Nasheed in *Al Khayma Al-Baydaa* (*The White Tent*); unfortunately, she ended up locked at Qalandiya checkpoint, and locked the reader with her. In her choice of the title Tafseel Thanawi (*A Minor Detail*) (2017) Adaniya Shibli was trying to highlight what Umm Saad has overlooked.

I argue that the authors of these narratives do not write from the standpoint of the outcome of the events, and so they do not distort or obliterate the real experience of struggle. In addition, the endings illuminate and centre stage the necessity of re-thinking and re-visiting the status of women within the nationalistic discourse and struggle. That is, the endings form a discursive signification paradigm that allows to engage into an intra-dialogue. This mode of reading salvages the reader from adopting the consciously false and it re-locates Umm Saad in a wider context of struggle.



٢. جدلية البداية والنهاية في رواية «عودة الطائر إلى البحر» لحليم بركات

عماد غنّوم، الجامعة اللبنانية، بيروت

تبدأ رواية «عودة الطائر إلى البحر» التي تتناول حرب حزيران 1967 من نهايتها، أي في اليوم الأول بعد انتهاء الحرب، ثم يعود الكاتب حليم بركات ليسرد أحداث روايته بدءاً من اليوم الأول للحرب وحتى نهايتها، في رجعة كبيرة إلى الزمن الروائي صفر، والكاتب يستخدم هذه التقنية الروائية لهدف معين يتجلى للباحث من خلال الدرس والتحليل.

يهدف هذا البحث إلى تحليل التقنيات الروائية السردية التي استخدمها بركات لأهداف خاصة تُبرز أفكاره وفلسفته. وتضافر مع هذه التقنيات السردية مجموعة من الأفكار التي بثها الكاتب على لسان بطل روايته رمزي الصفدي الأستاذ الجامعي الذي يمارس التدريس في الجامعة الأميركية في بيروت، وعلى لسان صديقه الأميركية مامبلا.

وسيسعى البحث إلى ربط هذه الأفكار مع التقنيات الروائية، للكشف عن الرسائل الخفية والمضمرة التي بثها الكاتب في الرواية، لا سيما تلك المتعلقة بختام الرواية ورسالتها الأخيرة، التي تقع على عاتق القارئ مهمة تفسيرها وتأويلها، فنهاية هذه الرواية مهمة بالقدر الذي جعل الكتاب يبدأ بها، ليشير إلى أهميتها، لكن الكاتب لم يشأ ارتداء ثوب الوعظ والإرشاد، بل ترك لعقل القارئ مهمة السير على دروب تفكيك الخاتمة، للانطلاق نحو الخط الجديد الذي يريد توجيهه إليه.

3. Resisting Closure, Defying the System:

Two Dystopian Novels from Egypt

Katarína Bešková, Slovak Academy of Sciences, Bratislava

During the past decade, Egyptian literary scene witnessed a rise of dystopian novels. Even though the emergence of this genre stems mostly from the overall socio-political conditions and the general atmosphere of oppression in the country, this phenomenon has often been interpreted in terms of the disappointing results of the January 25 Revolution. Since dystopias generally paint a bleak picture of the society, they are often believed to reflect a rather pessimistic view of their authors. However, according to R. Baccolini and T. Moylan's theory of critical dystopias, a utopian impulse and hope for better tomorrows can be preserved in dystopias through an open ending. While knowledge of history together with access to personal and collective memories and gaining control over means of language all play a crucial role in dystopian resistance against the hegemonic order and its narratives, it is the absence of a closure that opens the possibility for the opposition to succeed. The aim of the paper is to analyse two contemporary critical dystopias from Egypt, namely Basma Abdel Aziz's *al-Taboor* (the Queue) and Ahmad Najji's *Istikhdam al-Hayat* (Using Life) with regard to Baccolini and Moylan's theory and to show how absence of a closure in these literary works can actually help defy the oppressive system. As an open ending invites readers to finish the story on their own, consequently it can even call them to action. That being the case, the paper argues that these critical dystopias are in their very heart not as pessimistic and defeatist as the first impression might suggest.

B. PHILOSOPHY, THEOLOGY, EDUCATION

1. Textual Endings as Educational Beginnings:

An Inquiry into the Epistles of the Brethren of Purity

Sebastian Günther, University of Göttingen

“Show this epistle to your brethren and friends, and make them desirous of knowledge.” These words are from the concluding passage of Epistle 7, “On the Scientific Arts,” of the *Rasāʾil Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ*. This immense literary corpus of encyclopaedic erudition was produced by a circle of high-ranking 9th and 10th-century scholars from the Iraqi port city of Basra. The *Epistles’* wide range of religious and non-religious subject, the questions as to their authors and addressees, as well as specific inquiries into their language and literary devices have fascinated readers and researchers from medieval times to the present. The *Epistles* have not been studied adequately, however, with the focus on their role in Islamic educational thought.

This paper addresses this issue by specifically looking at the pedagogical dimension of the conclusions the Brethren offer not only to end certain of their perhaps most programmatic epistles – i.e. the above-mentioned Epistle 7, Epistle 8 (“On the Practical Crafts”) and Epistle 22 (“Animals vs. Man”). It also studies the endings of individual chapters in these particular treatises. Guiding this approach are questions such as: What differentiates each ending from the body of its respective text? What functions do they have beyond merely summarizing content? And are there indications that preceding literary and scientific traditions, Islamic or non-Islamic, may have influenced form, language and style of these finales? Thus we hope to advance some insights into the *Epistles’* role in the development of classical Arabic writing generally and their educational significance more specifically.

2. “Conclusions” in Selected Works by Mulla Sadra

Vahid Behmardi, Lebanese American University, Beirut

Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm al-Shīrāzī, better known as Mulla Sadra or *Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī* (d. 1050/1640), is considered to be one of the most prominent among “philosophers” in Persia during the Safavid reign. In line with the Avicennian tradition, and also that of Suhrawardi – *Shaykh al-Ishrāq* – Mulla Sadra used to conclude several of his works with an ending - *khātima* - or an advice – *waṣīyya* - addressed to his readers. Those conclusions, or “endings”, are not mere closing statements, but rather a rollicking finale of a written symphony that bear great importance as to whom the author addresses his work, his expectations, and the ultimate purpose of composing the work, and usually written in an emotional mode. Mulla Sadra ended some of his works, which he composed in Arabic, with very significant concluding “chapters” that reflect, in addition to the above-mentioned objectives, his perception of his own society, and also of his readers in particular.



The paper will present an analysis of the endings of several major works by Mulla Sadra, including *al-Mashā'ir*, *al-'Arshiyya* and *Kasr aṣṣnām al-Jāhiliyya fī-l-radd 'alā al-ṣūfiyya*. It will also compare between the endings in Mulla Sadra's works and those in some of the works of his teacher, Muḥammad *Bāqir Mir Dāmād*; both belonging to the so-called School of Transcendental Wisdom – *al-ḥikma al-muta'aliyya* – in Safavid Persia. This comparison demonstrates the nature of “endings” in works that were composed by two contemporary “philosophers” who belonged to the same “School” and society.

3. Christian Arabic Apologetical Works:

Copyists and Author's Endings

Rocio Daga Portillo, Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich

Theodore Abū Qurra (d. ca. 830) and Sāwīrus b. al-Muqaffa' (d. ca. 987) wrote in different times and milieux. Abū Qurra wrote in the Syro-Palestinian milieu and Sāwīrus in the Coptic-Egyptian one. However, both are considered to be the first Christian theologians who wrote Christian theology in Arabic. Not to say, their writings have a different style and apologetical tone. This is still more obvious observing the Ending of the works. We analyse the works of both authors comparing their Endings in order to reach conclusions to whom they addressed and the reasons for the different apologetical tone. The copyists' Ending will be examined as well.

Works such as *The Treatise of the Veneration of Icons*, *The Existence of the Creator* and *The True Religion* of Abū Qurra will be studied. Sāwīrus' work *The Lamp of Understanding* and *The Precious Pearl* will be discussed.

C. STRUCTURING THE END

1. Change the Paper, Add the End, Keep the Colophon for Later:

Multiple Material and Textual Endings in a Manuscript from Egypt

Ursula Bsees, Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich

This paper presents the ways in which passages have been structured, closed and taken up again anew in an Arabic paper roll from Egypt. The manuscript, which refers to an earlier version with the date 647/1249–50, is now lost and only a photocopy of it exists. Its text consists of several parts that are loosely connected to a historical and genealogical narrative (the self-designation *nasab wa-tārīkh* is the closest the manuscript has to a title). Very basically, the manuscript traces a family genealogy, starting from Sa'd b. 'Ubāda and continuing through twenty generations after him in Egypt and Syria. Tribal migration and feuds and genealogical legitimation play an important role, later joined by a spiritual element, thereby explaining tribal *Anṣārīs'* legitimate position via spiritual blessings and powers. The text probably existed as an originally oral narrative that was written down at some point. It was given an introduction and a poem by Ḥassān b. Thābit, which gives the impression of a “professional,” scholarly text that features all elements needed for a proper literary

manuscript. Here we could pin down the first ending, purely according to the broad structure of the text. The main narrative itself has been through different stages. First the shift in focus from genealogy towards accounts of spiritual blessings points to a later redaction and subsequent addition of the passage. Then also, l.351 has a sentence in wording reminiscent of a colophon, but there is no visible break in the text, which continues normally, meaning there used to be the end of a previous version before more material was added. Finally, the colophon states the year 647/1249–50, though the manuscript's last passage mentions at least four identifiable historical figures way after that date, therefore what we see is an early colophon that was re-used for a new version of the text after later parts were added. At the very end of the roll, another hand has added a short paragraph that ends in the middle of a sentence. Clearly, the manuscript was seen as a collection of knowledge, in which an end was only reached temporarily until new texts required adaptations.

٢. طَيُّ بساط الحديث: الخاتمة في الموسوعات الأدبية والبُسط المملوكية

لينا جمال، الجامعة الأميركية في بيروت

تقوم الدراسات الحديثة بتتبع تطوّر الخاتمة في الأدبين اليونانيّ والرومانيّ من خلال الأعمال الفنيّة، فالحضارة الماديّة تعكس نوعاً بصريّاً من الختام، وتتماشى أو تتقابل مع الخواتيم الأدبية في العصر نفسه. وفي عصر المماليك، ازدهر من التأليف الموسوعات الأدبية ومن الصناعات الحرفيّة حياكة البسط. وبين البساط والختام علاقةً فيلولوجيّة، فطَيُّ بساط الحديث هو الفراغ منه، وطَيُّ بساط العمر انقضاؤه، وطَيُّ بساط الشراب انتهاء مجلسه... فهل يسمَح البساط المملوكيّ «بالنظر» إلى خواتيم أبرز الموسوعات الأدبية التي عرفها ذلك العصر؟ وهل يتجلّى فيه حضور الكاتب/المبدع ظهوراً واختباءً؟ وانسجاماً وتناقضاً؟ وكيف يحرص البساط على تفاعل القارئ/الناظر واستمالة حكمه؟ وهل يكون في نقوشه وزخارفه عودٌ على بدء أم يترك الباب موارباً؟ إنّ محاولة الإجابة عن هذه الأسئلة تمرّ من خلال تحليل خاتمة كتاب صبح الأعشى في صناعة الإنشا للقلقشنديّ (821/1418)، وذلك بالتوازي مع دراسة تاريخيّة فنيّة لصناعة البسط في ذلك العصر. فإلى جانب ضخامة الحجم التي كانت جزءاً من الذائقة الجماعيّة على ما يبدو، يحمل البساط المملوكيّ بعض تجلّيات الكتاب، وأبرزها خاتمته حيث يعمد الكاتب إلى تكرار مواقف محدّدة كان قد ذكرها في المقدمة وأكد عليها ضمن بعض الأبواب. وكذلك زخرفة البساط المملوكيّ محكومةً بثيمة التشعب عن المركز من خلال «التشظّي»، فظهرت أجزاء من النقش الوسطيّ على امتداد البساط وصولاً إلى الحواف (أو الختام). ولعلّها كانت طريقة الحائك – ومثله الكاتب – في إظهار انسجامٍ داخليّ رغم ضخامة العمل المنجز، أو في إحكام قبضته على مساحةٍ كبيرةٍ يظنّ البعض ضبطها صعباً.

3. The Art of the *Khātima* in the Works of *Abū Maṣṣūr al-Tha'ālībī*

Bilal Orfali, American University of Beirut

Writing a *muqaddima* (introduction) of a literary work is a difficult task. However, the author is guided by a set of conventions since the *muqaddima* has developed, from the 3rd/9th century onwards, into an independent literary form. The *khātima* (ending) is even a more difficult task since the author is left on his own in it. This paper will explore how the prolific litterateur, philologist, critic, and historian of literature, Abū Maṣṣūr al-Tha'ālībī (d. 429/1039) planned, framed, and guided his books to their end, or did the opposite, that is to leave them open-ended. The paper will explore how al-Tha'ālībī often reworked his books or wrote sequels and how, sometimes, he left the ending to be completed by his friends.

D. POETRY

1. As Barren as Mother Eve:

Why Some Poems End Better than Others,
According to Classical Arabic Critics

Kevin Blankinship, Brigham Young University, Provo UT

“If the beginning of a poem is its key, the end must be its lock.” This dictum by Ibn Rashīq al-Qayrawānī in *Al-‘Umda* summarizes a broader attitude among classical Arabic critics about poetic closure: that it must impart, in the words of Barbara Herrnstein Smith, a sense of “the settled finality of self-evident truth.” Although critics who discuss poetic endings generally focus on the successes, some talk about bad endings too, such as the examples provided by Ibn Rashīq, the long list given by Ibn ‘Abd Rabbih in the “*al-Zumurruda al-thāniya*” (The second emerald) of his *al-‘Iqd al-farīd*, or the tally of al-Mutanabbī’s “*Qubḥ al-maqāṭi’*” (ugly endings) in al-Tha‘ālibī’s *Abū l-Ṭayyib al-Mutanabbī wa-mā lahu wa-mā ‘alayh*. However, these critics almost never explain why they think bad endings are bad, in contrast to the reasons they give for why good endings are good. This discrepancy obscures a key part of classical Arabic “practical criticism” and the aesthetic sensibilities that underlie it.

This paper is a first attempt to sort out why classical Arabic critics felt the way they did about bad endings, or at least, why they liked some endings better than others. To get at the answer, the paper surveys statements made in books about rhetorical figures (*badī‘*), handbooks on poetic craft (*ṣinā‘at al-shi‘r*), literary anthologies like al-Maqqarī’s *Nafḥ al-ṭīb*, and works of practical criticism like al-Qāḍī al-Jurjānī’s *Wasāṭa bayn al-Mutanabbī wa-khuṣūmih*. Initial results show a preference for poems whose closing lines resemble closures in the Quran, based on a statement by Ibn Abī al-Ṭba‘ that the endings of quranic suras are models of command, counsel, and praise. Furthermore, critics prefer endings that, like the classical Greek standard of harmony, balance, and proportion, avoid *takalluf* or *taṣannu‘*, that is, forced and artificial-sounding language. They also look for poems that announce their endings very clearly so as not to be like prose, which, in the minds of some critics, can go on and on. Finally, they ask that poets take the occasion for their poems into account, so as not to say things that audiences—especially patrons—would not like to hear. This goes along with an overall sensitivity to the poet’s message, which should be clearcut and integral to the poem as a whole.

2. And the She-Camel Reaches the King's Court:

On Abū Tammām's Endings

Alfred el-Khoury, University of Bamberg, Orient-Institut Beirut

Habīb b. Aws (d. 232/846), better known as Abū Tammām the Ṭayyite, was notorious for the ugliness [*"bashā'a"* as in some sources] of his *ibtidā'āt*, that is, the openings of his *qaṣīdas*. His contemporary audience as well as later poetry experts of the 3rd/9th and 4th/10th centuries were puzzled by his openings, bemoaned their complexity, their being laden with syntactic oddities, *gharīb* vocabulary, and repugnant ambiguity. The ending sections of the Ṭayyite's *qaṣīdas* seem, on the other "end," not to have drawn the same interest. Yet in the ending much is being played: it is the space for metapoetic reflections, authorial irruptions, and the performance of the exchange. The ending section is also the "end," the closure of a composition and of its performance, the moment when silence falls down. This presentation will look at the ending in Abū Tammām's *qaṣīdas*—mainly panegyrics—through addressing the following questions: How is the ending structured and which patterns are at work? What warrants—syntactic, semantic, and thematic—make us aware that we stepped into the end-zone of a *qaṣīda*? Could we talk about an ending-effect and how is such an effect achieved and experienced? How does the *qaṣīda*'s last section relate to its other sections and how does it fit into the standard accounts of a *qaṣīda*'s schema?

3. The Critique of Closure in Classical Arabic Self-Elegy

Boutheina Khaldi, American University of Sharjah

The closure (*khātima, maqṭa'*) in classical Arabic ode (*qaṣīda*) has received exiguous attention from literary critics in comparison with its opening (*istihlāl, maṭla', muqaddima*). The paper sets out to examine the closure in self-elegy. The traditional elegy arrives at its resolution by a linear narrative. The speaker begins by lamenting the dead, praising the person's attributes and accomplishments and ends with the speaker offering solace and consolation to other mourners. By studying the closure of Mālik Ibn al-Rayb al-Tamīmī's and 'Abda al-Ṭayyib's self-elegies, I argue that self-elegy does not follow the tripartite structure of the elegy wholeheartedly. Both Ibn al-Rayb and al-Ṭayyib broke with the linear narrative by discarding the conventions of consolation and closure.

E. NARRATIVES I

1. Closed Open Endings: Subtale and Follow Up in *Kalīla wa-Dimna*

Beatrice Gründler, Freie Universität Berlin

Kalīla wa-Dimna (hereafter KD), like other Arabic fictional works with an Indian or Persian prior phase, is rich in subtales. In KD, the way these build up the narrative is particularly sophisticated. The telling of tales occurs in dialogues between characters, in which a narrative serves as a piece of argument to comment on past or recommend future actions of the character whom a tale is told. Each subtale serves a distinct purpose and is marked at beginning and end by specific formulae. In the layout of many manuscripts, the subtales are moreover often flagged by layout symbols or subtitles within the running text (such as the word *ḥikāya* in London BL 4044) or marginal titles, and they receive the lion's share of the illustrations. While each subtale comes with a narrative conclusion, it is part of an ongoing argument; it either triggers a counter tale from the recipient, or the recipient follows up with action. Such action may conform with the gist of a narrated tale or go against it. The action may further be ethically commendable or not, and it may benefit or harm the character. A closed subtale is thus an opening for a host of possibilities, which are reconfigured anew at each instance. Endings are thus performed on two levels. The embedded tale has an internal narrative conclusion. In the main narrative, the gist of the tale is rephrased to bring it back to, and make it bear upon, the ongoing discussion, in fact, the chapter of "Lion and Ox" (Lo) consists mostly of discussions, corroborated with intercalated tales, with a minimum of third person narrative.

In the present paper I will analyse the argumentative trajectory of the debates that make up "Lion and Ox," the most sophisticated chapter in KD and the one with the highest number of subtales. This includes tracking how each subtale is ended and responded or reacted to, and the ways in which each process of ending continues the argument in a sort of concatenation of micro-endings.

KD's modular structure invited subsequent copyist-redactors to improve the argument with further subtales, notably in so-called "cross-copied" manuscripts. Furthermore, spurious tales reuse plot lines of tales from within the core chapters and interpret these in new ways, for instance, in the spurious chapter of the "Two Kingfishers and the Whimbrel" (hereafter Kw; occasionally a duck replaces the whimbrel), which features in a small number of manuscripts. The retooled endings can be compared with those in the core chapters. One interesting case is the redactor of Paris arabe 3471, an astute cross-copyist, who compounded selections from other manuscripts to a kind of internal proliferation and who did a superb job, retooling pieces from elsewhere in KD. His version allows to investigate whether the reused subtales in Kw are fitted to different goals, i.e., and to assess how freely this redactor treated his models.

2. Ending Things in the Beginning: Or Why and How Premodern Frame Narratives in Arabic do not Really End

Johannes Stephan, Freie Universität Berlin

The endings of famous framing narratives in the Arabic tradition, such as the Arabian Nights, do not seem to matter as much as they do for the modern reader. In my paper, I investigate the ambivalent nature of endings in premodern frame narrative traditions of an Indo-Persian origin such as the *Arabian Nights* (AN), *Kalīla and Dimna* (KD), and *King Jalī'ad* and *His Vizier Shīmās* (JS), and formulate the following two hypotheses to better explain the apparent unimportance of endings. For this aspect, it is, first of all, crucial to differentiate the polysemantics of endings, (according to Don Fowler, among others), and suggest distinguishing the concept of textual ending from narrative closure. Whereas the first is a concept to depict textual or (formal) narrative ends, the second is more of a qualitative nature, responding to the question how an author or a narrator concludes a story (as a sequence of events). It is, thus, quite obvious in the above-mentioned distinction that ending rather addresses the “outer” textual level and closure the “inner” story level. My paper will, however, show that the twofold distinction is not at all as clear-cut, as it seems at first sight, and that both levels need be put in relation to each other. I will therefore suggest a refined typology that differentiates between three, which I shall call, closure-ending dynamics: first, closure within a historical framework that embeds fictive narrative material (KD), second, closure through narrative voice determining the end of stories (AN), and, third, closure as the re-establishment of order within the story world (JS). Based on this typology, I shall then argue that closure often manifests itself in the beginning of framing narratives and therefore does not require any stable ending. Finally, I will reflect upon the implication of the ending-closure question to grasp the socio-aesthetic difference between these three types of framing narratives.

3. Ending Without Closure in the *Shāhnāmah* and *Kalīla wa-Dimna*

Theodore Beers, Freie Universität Berlin

One of the more enigmatic sayings commonly heard in Persian is *Shāhnāmah ākhirash khwush ast*, or, “*The Shāhnāmah* has a nice ending.” For anyone familiar with Firdawsī’s epic poem, this statement would lead to an obvious question: How can the ending be considered positive? The last king, Yazdigird III, is killed; the Arab-Muslim conquest of Iran proceeds apace; and, as the poet laments, the crown and the throne are replaced with the turban and the pulpit. This is the foundational catastrophe of Iranian paleonationalism. There has been some debate around the proper interpretation of *Shāhnāmah ākhirash khwush ast*. The phrase even became the title of a book by Muḥammad Ibrāhīm Bāstānī Pārīzī. Rather than to investigate the origin and meaning of this apparently ironic saying about the “happy” ending of the *Shāhnāmah*, however, I have long wanted to pose a different challenge: the book has almost no ending to speak of! Or, at least, it provides little in the way of dénouement, or closure, in the sense developed in the work of classicist Don P. Fowler. This is particularly clear in comparison to the *Shāhnāmah*’s litany of prefatory chapters—which were only expanded in some later versions of the text. How was it that a more substantive ending was not seen as necessary for a fifty-thousand-line poem?

A comparable phenomenon occurs in a rather different context, with the Arabic *Kalīla wa-Dimna* attributed to Ibn al-Muqaffa’. This is, of course, a work of prose literature, and it consists of a series of animal fables set within multiple, nested frame tales. Each chapter—and, in many cases, an individual story within a chapter—has its own setup and resolution. Upon reaching the end of the book, however, one may be surprised to find that the general conclusion is meager. (This varies, though not dramatically, among different versions of the work across the manuscript tradition). Instead, there tends to be an extra paragraph or two at the close of the final chapter, in which the philosopher-narrator announces to his king that he has recounted all of the fables, and he is then rewarded for his service. There is, again, a contrast between the ending, which gives the impression of an afterthought, and the collection of prefatory and introductory material, which has grown over time to be an integral part of the book.

In this paper, I would like to discuss briefly the examples of the *Shāhnāmah* and *Kalīla wa-Dimna*, to explore a broader phenomenon in classic works of premodern Near Eastern literature: endings that seem incommensurate with the scale and accomplishment of works as a whole, to a degree that may puzzle a reader today. What changes in reading or performance practices, or in expectations regarding the structure of a narrative text, can be identified as contributing to this sense of incongruity?





F. NARRATIVES II

1. Deconstructive Narratives, Decreasing Doublets, Deceptive Cadences, and the Design of Circles: Strategies for Building a Closure in One Thousand and One Nights

Johannes Thomann, University of Zurich

The narrative strategy of a story in a story as a means of deconstructing the hero's conflict by presenting him a condensed replica of his own story, and by that coming to a conclusion, is rare in European literature. A singular example is the famous parable "Before the Law" in the penultimate chapter of Franz Kafka's novel *The Trial*, a narrative device called *mise en abyme*, in analogy to heraldry, where it means a coat of arms that contains itself as an element in a smaller size (Dällenbach 1977/1989). In the last two narrative cycles of *One Thousand and One Nights*, *the Cycle of Shad Bakht* and *the Cycle of Baybars*, it is used to end the series of narratives by deconstructing the situation of the listeners, and to let him draw the right conclusion (Thomann 2017, 2020, and 2020).

In 2007 Adrian Kelly published an inspiring article in which he declared "decreasing doublets" as a common feature in Greek epic poetry. At the end of *Illiad* Patroclus' funeral extends over several books, while afterwards Hector's funeral comprises only a little over a hundred verses. It resembles an accelerando in the finale of a piece of music. In *One Thousand and One Nights* decreasing doublets are clearly visible in the oldest preserved version of the final part. *The Shad Bakht Cycle* contains 32 stories, the following Baybars Cycle contains 16 stories, and the last cycle consists of only two stories.

What Victor Šklovskij had called a "negative ending" (ложные узнавания literally "wrong evidence") has become a common topic in studies on ancient literature (Grewing 2013). It resembles a deceptive cadence in music, a cadence that seems to move to the final chord in the tonic. Instead, a dissonance follows, the cadence is repeated, and the piece ends with the tonic. The listener expects the end, but is initially deceived. The more his desire for the end is strengthened, the more he is satisfied when it comes. It is found in the two most famous stories in *One Thousand and One Nights*, *Ali Baba and Aladdin*. *Ali Baba's* slave *Morgiana* kills the 37 thieves who had come to him and is emancipated from her master. But the leader of the gang makes another attempt to assassinate *Ali Baba*. *Morgiana* can kill him again and is married to the son of *Ali Baba*. *Aladdin's* story seems to end with the death of the evil magician. However, the magician's brother tries to take revenge, but is also killed. In both cases the repetitions are much shorter than their models.

The most sophisticated strategy for making the end of a story predictable and natural is to compose the entire narrative from two parts with symmetrical elements and one element that marks the climax between the two. In 2007 Mary Douglas published her

highly influential book on ring composition, where she proposed seven conventions for recognizing it: 1. A prologue that states the theme; 2. Split into two halves; 3. Parallel sections in the two halves with the structure *abc | cba*; 4. Indicators to mark individual sections; 5. Central loading as a turning point of the ring with the structure *abc | d | cba*; 6. Rings within rings; 7. Closure at two levels, by word repetitions and the thematic correspondence. The classic example of a ring composition in Arabic literature is *al-'Iqd al-farīd* (The unique necklace) by Ibn 'Abd Rabbih (d. 328/940), which is organized in 25 books on literary genres with the names of jewels as titles, thus forming a symmetrical necklace with a connecting middle piece. It will be shown that the original version of *One Thousand and One Nights* was organized as a ring composition too. Indeed, it meets all of Douglas' seven conventions. Two examples suffice here. As for (3): the first two and the last two stories are each twin stories with the common topic of dangerous encounters of ordinary people with creatures of another sphere of life: in the two at the beginning with a *jinnī*, in the two at the end with a concubine of the Caliph.

In the *Porter and the Three Ladies of Baghdad* and the corresponding *Baybars Cycle* the main characters are autonomously acting women, who appear as superior to men. The first takes place in the historical capital *Baghdad*, the second in the actual capital *Cairo*. In the *Three Apples and in the Shad Bakht Cycle*, the common topic is the loss of trust based on false evidence, in the first case of a man towards his spouse, and in the second case of a king towards his Vizier. As for (5): The Story of 'Umar ibn al-Nu'mān, a full-blown heroic epic which originally was in the middle of *One Thousand and One Nights*, is by far the longest story of the collection. It marks a turning point, because after Scheherazade was done with it, the king intervenes actively for the first time and demands from Scheherazade now tell now about talking animals, and a long series of animal fables follows. The artistic composition of the author from the Mamluk period was completely destroyed in the later Egyptian version and has therefore escaped the attention of scholars to this day.

2. Rupture and Temporary Endings

Enass Khansa, American University of Beirut

Risālat al-Zawābi' wa-l-tawābi' or Epistle of Attendant Jinn and Whirling Demons, opens with Ibn Shuhayd al-Andalusī's (d. 426/1035) protagonist, writing an elegy for a lover he lost. Only a few lines come out, before "the gates of inspiration close down" on him (*urtija al-qawl*), allowing for a temporary ending. At that moment, a *jinni* appears and completes the poem. The elegy, thus, dissects itself into two parts—the first composed by a human, the second by a *jinn*; the first is written, the second oral; and most urgently, the first claims poetic memory, the second, rupture. The interruption recurs, and through the processes of suture, or new beginnings, that follow, the narrative enables a series of trips to the valley of 'Abqar. Curiously, through recurrent temporary endings, the work refuses to conclude, giving an illusion of endless progressive potentiality.



The paper will show how the episodic suspension of the creative flow (*urtija al-qawl*) has been addressed in several medieval works under the purview of *khuṭab* and poetic inspiration. By exploring the epistemic claims this phenomenon suggests, I wish to ask what new perspectives on Arabo-Islamic narrative styles we may unveil through attention to ruptures and temporary endings.

3. Inevitable End? al-Amīn's death narrated by al-Ṭabarī

Lale Behzadi, University of Bamberg

While it seems as if “the only real ending is death,” the end of a human life, especially when it is an end brought about by other human beings, can have an enormous effect on the remembering of events that have supposedly been leading to this outcome as well as on the perception of the aftermath. The so-called “War of brothers” is a well-known passage in al-Ṭabarī's (d. 310/923) *Annales* and relates the conflict between the half-brothers al-Ma'mūn and al-Amīn regarding the succession of their father, the caliph Hārūn al-Rashīd (d. 193/809), resulting in the assassination of then-caliph al-Amīn in Baghdad in the year 198/813 by al-Ma'mūn's troops. While the reader of this account already knows the outcome, it will be of interest to look closely at the various narrative elements, strategies, and dynamics to describe and analyze the last moments—and decisions—of al-Amīn's life. Furthermore, it would be worth looking again at the impact of this violent death on spatial constellations, notions of time, emotional concepts, and rhetorical instruments – in other words: how does the composition of this “Chronicle of a Death Foretold” shape our understanding of finality and of everything that came before and happened after.



G. KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER

1. *Tamma* or *tatimma*? Endings in Arabic Lexicography

Colinda Lindermann, Freie Universität Berlin

A work of lexicography has a seemingly simple structure: its arrangement is determined by alphabetical order or topical subdivision; its chapters and sections group the letters or topics and its subsections are the lemmata that make up the actual content. Within the lemmata, the structure is one of keyword and description. The work opens with an introduction and moves on to the first letter or first topic. But where and how and why does it end?

Can we transfer Fowler's five senses of literary "closure" (Fowler 1989: 78; cf. Behzadi 2015: 219) to a work of lexicography? Especially the fourth sense, "the degree to which the questions posed in the work are answered, tensions released, conflicts resolved," assumes a "plot", an arc of suspense even, a structure that consciously guides the reader toward an intended ending. Is such a thing conceivable in lexicography? Identifying the end with the last part (however large or small) of a book assumes a linear reading of the text (Behzadi 2015: 215)—an assumption that immediately takes us to the most exciting aspects of premodern Arabic dictionaries: readership and use. Structure and content prompt questions about the usability of lexicological treatises, often raised and criticised by authors themselves—perhaps most famously in the muqaddima of *Lisān al-ʿarab* (Ibn Manẓūr 1374/1955: 7–9).

Most works of lexicography offer an introduction in which the author's objectives are set out, enabling the reader to test them in the body of the text. A concluding remark is seldom made: the work simply ends—or stops—at the last lemma. On a formal level, closure—of the individual entry, and thus, by extension, of the entire text—is often attained by a verse quotation (*shāhid*) confirming the correctness of the lemma's content. *Ibn Manẓūr* closes the last lemma, *yā*, with a verse quotation from *Dhū l-Rumma*, highlighting the significance of his choice: "Al-Jawharī [the author of the *Ṣiḥāḥ*] quoted this verse of *Dhū l-Rumma* and concluded (*khatama*) his book with it, and it is obvious that he intended that to be a good omen, so we have also concluded our book with it" (*Ibn Manẓūr* 1410/1990: 494). This remark shows that closure is perceived as a beginning, too: sealing off the book means letting it go to spark off its use and reception. Marking the end with a short ḥamdala and taṣliyya, as the *Qāmūs* does, is a more common way to end a work of lexicography. In a treatise on speech errors, the 10th/16th-century Ibn al-Ḥanbalī precedes this formal closure with an advertisement of two other books he has written on the subject (Ibn al-Ḥanbalī 1407/1978: 359).

The question “Where does it end?” may be even more relevant in lexicological treatises which do not follow (full) alphabetical order but rather provide samples of a certain language phenomenon, placing themselves in a tradition that requires supplementing and updating, such as the 11th/17th-century loanword dictionaries of *al-Khafājī* and *al-Muḥibbī*. Do such works claim comprehensiveness, or do they intend openness? Can a “sudden stop” of the text reflect the conscious desire to let others supplement it, to invite commentary (cf. Ahmed 2013)? These are questions that I would like to examine in a talk with close reference to the Arabic lexicographical sources and a focus on topical (*mubawwab*) works from the premodern period.

2. Post-Scripts and Ending of Literatures in the Texts of Jurisprudence

Muhammed Aslam, Jamia Markaz (Kerala)

Among the copious volume of classical works in Arabic literature, a considerable proportion devotes to the challenge of a good closure, which leaves a couple of serious questions for the reader. Even though the deeper apprehension emanates from the cross-reading of any literary work doesn't underestimate the particular work, the solemn tension over the finality of texts are verily questioned, providing a new beginning phase for readers. Apart from the classical works in Arabic literature which raise the rigorous concern of, how to end the works, texts dealing with jurisprudence show a different means of ending. As they leave no particular room for the controversy over the methodology of closure, most of the works follow a similar way of giving conclusions. However, they are not ultimately evicted from the discourses of the *dilemmas* of a fine ending. Like the *Matn* (principle texts of works) is given narratives, meta-narratives and commentaries amidst or beneath each text in works of jurisprudence, post-scripts also occupy a premium position, although they do not reflect the assumptions of the author. As the after-effect of more comprehensive scholarly readings and interpretations, this post-script would enhance to post-super-scriptum, post-post scriptum, post-post-post-scriptum and so on. Works of eighteenth and nineteenth-century scholars of South India contains a voluminous account of similar additional scripts. Post-script narrative of Keralite scholar, Sheikh Ismail for '*Jam' ul Javami*', the prominent reference in "*Foundations of legal theory*" authored by Imam Mahalli is a leading one among these kinds. The proposed paper will analyse, how the post-scripts of Jurisprudence texts produce the question of ending the texts. Applying the methodology of textual analysis, the paper will sum up, how the authors of theology texts dealt with, in concluding the texts, as jurisprudence puts several constraints in giving, profound description for the principles and rulings of the religion.



3. Alchemy's end

Regula Forster, University of Tübingen

Arabic literature dealing with alchemy is virtually endless and spans a time from the 2nd/8th to the 14th/20th centuries. Alchemists have used many literary forms, including treatises, commentaries, poems, dialogues, and allegorical tales. While most alchemical works end without the slightest indication why that is the case, simply adding a scribal colophon, some texts offer explanations: a commentary will end, once the end of the commented text has been reached, a dialogue will end when one partner travels back to his home country or if he dies. Many alchemical works also add pious formulae, especially asking God's forgiveness for having revealed alchemy's secrets. The topos that alchemy should be kept secret is often reiterated at the end of alchemical works. Authors explain, that while they have said everything that they were allowed to or felt safe to write down (and that the reader should now be able to prepare pure gold), students could still consult books by older authorities that would help them reaching their goals. In this paper, I will present an overview of possible alchemical endings and then focus on Ibn Arfa' Ra's, a 7th/12th century Moroccan alchemist. Ibn Arfa' Ra's is best known for his *Dīwān Shudhūr al-dhahab*, a collection of more than forty alchemical poems. Further, he authored an auto-commentary on *Shudhūr al-dhahab* and some smaller prose works on alchemy (the magical works attributed to him are spurious). This paper will discuss the endings of his works, most prominently of his commentary, *Ḥall mushkilāt al-Shudhūr*, where he discusses his own stance vis-à-vis other authors, the aims of his commentary, and some of the major topoi of alchemy, therewith presenting something like a synthesis of his alchemical work.



4. Endings in Arabic Sexological Works (*kutub al-bāh*):

From a Whimper to a Bang

Jeremy Kurzyniec, Yale University

Arabic sexological works (*kutub al-bāh*) tend to end on a whimper rather than a bang, at least according to a cursory reading. Thanks the ancient medical tradition of segregating symptomology and therapeutics, with therapeutics always following, *kutub al-bāh* frequently conclude with a long list of medicinal remedies. Qusṭā ibn Lūqā's (d. 300/912) *Kitāb Fī-l-bāh wa-mā yuḥtāju ilayhi min tadbīr al-badan fī isti'mālihi* (*Book on Sex, and the Bodily Regimen Required to Engage in it*), for instance, closes with a twelve-page *maqāla* of aphrodisiac recipes, which "strengthen erection," "enlarge the penis" and otherwise promote male sexual performance. *Alas*, his final recipe is no grander or more dazzling than any of the preceding ones, leaving the reader with a definite sense of ending on a whimper, in *medias res*. Later writers of *kutub al-bāh*, however, learn to employ this traditional arrangement of concluding with drug recipes to new and controversial effect, turning an apparent whimper into a bang, or at least a secret gasp. Jalāl al-Dīn al-Shayzarī (d. 589/1193), for example, patronized by Ṣalāh al-Dīn, uses his final chapter of recipes in *al-Ṭdāh fī asrār al-nikāh* (*Clarification of the Secrets of Sexual Intercourse*) to sneak in various magical remedies with exotic ingredients like "rabbit brain" and "the penis of an ox." Needless to say, physicians generally frown upon such remedies and exclude them from the more prominent sections of their books. In a similar vein, 'Alī Ibn Naṣr al-Kātib, whose still-unpublished *Jawāmi' al-ladhdha* (*Encyclopedia of Pleasure*, later 4th/10th century) ranks as the longest and most interesting all *kutub al-bāh*, concludes his massive, encyclopedic work with a catchall chapter of bawdy verse, anecdotes, and magical remedies. Although the chapter gives the superficial appearance of being a whimper, or perhaps a snooze, its final anecdote, about the dirty-talking wife of a Medinan judge, proves to be a calculated and ingenious justification for the entire work – a definite bang disguised as a whimper. This paper will trace the tradition of ending with drug recipes from Antiquity through to the late ancient medical compendia and the first wave of Arabic sexological works in the 3rd/9th and 4th/10th centuries, showing how sexological authors increasingly tire of ending on a dull note, *in medias res*, and so invent new ways of concluding.

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Lina Jammal holds a Ph.D. degree in Arabic and Near Eastern Languages from the American University of Beirut (2020). Her focus is on dreams and dream interpretation in pre-modern Arabic-Islamic culture. She studies dreams in historical, literary, and religious contexts. She is also interested in preparing critical editions of Arabic dream manuals based on manuscripts. Other research interests include exploring visual culture through literary sources and working on interdisciplinary projects. Among her publications: *Innī ra'aytu fī-l-manām*. Abu Dhabi: Library of Arabic Literature Young Readers Series (in press); "Aḥlām al-mutaṣawwifa wa-atharuhā 'alā 'ilm al-ta'bīr al-islāmī," in *Mysticism and Ethics* (in press); "Bayna al-manām wa-l-riḥla," in *Suroud 2* (2019); "Maqāmāt al-Hamadhānī: Masraḥ bilā khashaba," "in *Al-Machreq 91*, 1 (2017).



Boutheina Khaldi

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Boutheina Khaldi is a professor of Arabic and comparative literature at the American University of Sharjah. She has published a monograph in English: *Egypt Awakening in the Early Twentieth Century: Mayy Ziyādah's Intellectual Circles* (Palgrave, 2012), a monograph in Arabic: *al-Muḍmar fī-l-tarassul al-niswī al-'arabī (The Implicit in Arab Women's Epistolary Writing: longlisted for Sheikh Zayed Book Award for Young Authors, 2015)*, a novel titled *Ikhtibāl*, and co-edited three books: *al-Adab al-'arabī al-ḥadīth: Mukhtārāt*, *al-Wafī fī turāth al-'arab al-thaqāfī*, and *Turāth al-'arab al-ma'rifī*), in addition to a number of peer-reviewed articles.

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Enass Khansa is Assistant Professor in the Department of Arabic and Near Eastern Languages at the American University of Beirut. Enass joined the board of The Library of Arabic Literature at NYU-Abu Dhabi, as an editor (2020-2025), and The Arab-German Young Academy (AGYA), as a fellow (2019-2024). She is the co-founder and co-editor of *Weaving Words – Medieval Literature for Young Readers Series*.

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Alfred el-Khoury is a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Arabic Studies at the Otto-Friedrich-Universität Bamberg. He did his previous studies at the Lebanese University (BA, 2013) and the American University of Beirut (MA, 2015). His research focuses mainly on Arabic poetry, both modern and premodern, with particular interest in questions of innovation, canonisation, meaning and context. Other research topics include literary theory and its applicability across literary and critical traditions, Arabic surrealism and avant-gardist trends in Arabic literature. El-Khoury taught Arabic literature at the American University of Beirut, the Otto-Friedrich-Universität Bamberg and the Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg. He is currently doctoral fellow at the Orient-Institut, Beirut.

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Jeremy Kurzyniec is working on his doctoral dissertation at Yale University, which focuses on the Graeco-Arabic medical background of *kutub al-bāh*, especially ‘Alī ibn Naṣr al-Kātib’s *Jawāmi‘ al-ladhdha*. His previous degrees are in Classics and Byzantine Studies.

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Colinda Lindermann (M.A. Classics, Leiden University 2005; M.A. Arabic Studies, Freie Universität Berlin 2016) is a Ph.D. candidate in the research group *Arabic Philology and Textual Practices in the Early Modern Period (1500-1800)* at Freie Universität Berlin, directed by Prof. Dr. Islam Dayeh. Her research focuses on Arabic dictionaries and treatises on language deviation in the early modern period. She currently works as a research associate in the DFG-project *Orient-Digital* at the Berlin State Library, which is aimed at developing a union catalogue of oriental manuscripts.



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Bilal Orfali, Ph.D. (2009), Yale University, is Sheikh Zayed Chair for Arabic and Islamic Studies at the American University of Beirut. He previously held the M.S. Sofia Chair in Arabic Studies at the Ohio State University. He specializes in Arabic literature, Sufism, and *Qur'ānic* Studies. He co-edits *al-Abhath* Journal and Brill's series *Texts and Studies on the Qur'an and Handbooks on Islamic Mysticism*. He is member of the editorial board of the *Library of Arabic Literature* at NYUAD, member of the advisory committee for the Abu Dhabi Center of Arabic Language, and serves on the advisory boards of many international Journals. He is the author and editor of more than twenty books on Arabic Studies. His recent publications include: *Approaches to the Study of Pre-modern Arabic Anthologies* (Brill, 2021), *Light Upon Light* (Brill, 2019), *Insatiable Appetite: Food as Cultural Signifier in the Middle East and Beyond* (Brill, 2019), *The Anthologist's Art* (Brill, 2016), *The Book of Noble Character* (Brill, 2015), *The Comfort of the Mystics* (Brill, 2013), *Sufism, Black and White* (Brill, 2012), *In the Shadow of Arabic* (Brill, 2011).



Rocio Daga Portillo

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Rocio Daga Portillo received her Ph.D. from Granada University (Spain) in 1990 with a thesis on *al-Aḥkām al-kubrā* by Ibn Sahl al-Qurtubī. She studied at Granada University (Spain) and at the American University Cairo (Egypt). She then completed a Post-doc at Princeton University in 1991-1993. She was appointed teaching assistant at the Department of Islamic Studies, Freie University of Berlin in 1994-1998 and then at the Department of Religious Sciences, Ludwig-Maximilian University Munich in 2007. Since 2016, she is Research Associate (*Wissenschaftliche Mitarbeiterin*) at the Department of Near Eastern Studies, Ludwig-Maximilian University Munich and Research Fellow in the project Arabic Papyrology Database at the same Department.

She wrote more than twenty articles on Christian Arabic, Fiqh and History of al-Andalus. She published a study and translation of the Treatise on Icons by *Abū Qurra* into Spanish.

Johannes Stephan

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Johannes Stephan is a scholar of Arabic literature with a special interest in developing the field of narrative theory. He studied Arabic and Islamic Studies in Halle, Damascus, and Bern where he earned his Ph.D. and also taught a broad range of subjects. Currently, he holds a Post-doc in the ERC project *Kalīla and Dimna* – AnonymClassic at the Freie Universität Berlin, scrutinizing the early Arabic reception (8th-13th century) of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* and elaborating on the concepts of narrative framing and fictionality. He is the editor of the Book of Travels by *Ḥannā Diyāb*, the Storyteller of the Arabian Nights, published with the Library of Arabic Literature. His monograph *Vergegenwärtigendes Erzählen* will appear in the series *Arabische Literatur und Rhetorik – Elfthundert bis Achtzehnhundert* with Ergon.

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Johannes Thomann holds a Ph.D. from Zurich University, where he is a guest researcher (2020-ongoing) after being a research associate from 1992 until 2020. Among his most recent publications: Thomann, J. (2020). “*Oh Leader of Women in the World, oh Shahrazad!*” The Ending of the *One Thousand and One Nights* in the Earliest Turkish Translation and its Relationship to the Arabic Versions.” In: *One Thousand and One Nights in Comparative Perspective*. De Gruyter, 137-168 and Thomann, J. (2020). “Reshaping the Frame Story of the Thousand and One Nights: The Coherence of Prologue and Epilogue in the Earliest Existing Arabic MSS.” In: *The Thousand and One Nights*. Brill, 22-38.



