

ADAB IN TRANSITION

Creative Compilation in Nineteenth Century Print Tradition*

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Probably the most decisive event for cultural production in the Arab Middle East in the nineteenth century was the introduction of printing to the Arab world.¹ Though during the few years of Napoleon's presence (1798–1801) Egypt housed one of the first printing presses in the Arab world, the actual history of printing houses in the Arab Middle East starts with the establishment of the Government Press by Muḥammad 'Alī in 1821.² By the middle of the nineteenth century the Government Press had issued not only a large number of official and scientific publications, but also narrative works such as the *Arabian Nights* (*Alf layla wa-layla*) (1251/1835)³ and the collection of fables *Kalīla wa-Dimna* (1249/1833).⁴ The great demand for fictional works published for the entertainment of the ruling elite and for export⁵ made it a natural development that other

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¹ *EP*, s. v. Maṭba'a; Reinhard Schulze, "Mass Culture and Islamic Cultural Production in [the] 19th Century Middle East," in Georg Stauth, Sami Zubaida (eds.), *Mass Culture, Popular Culture, and Social Life in the Middle East* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, Boulder, Colorado: Westview 1987), 189–222.

² For a short survey of the history of printing in the Middle East, see Gerhard Endress, "Die Anfänge der arabischen Typographie und die Ablösung der Handschrift durch den Buchdruck," in Wolf Dietrich Fischer, *Grundriß der arabischen Philologie*, vol. 1: Sprachwissenschaft (Wiesbaden: Reichert 1982), 291–96.

³ Muhsin Mahdi, *The Thousand and One Nights (Alf Layla wa-Layla) From the Earliest Known Sources*, vol. 3, Leiden, New York, Köln 1994, 97–101.

⁴ See Victor Chauvin, *Bibliographie des ouvrages arabes ou relatifs aux arabes publiés dans l'Europe chrétienne de 1810 à 1885*, vol. 2, Liège, Leipzig 1897, 13, no. 17 A, referring to a copy preserved in Cambridge.

⁵ See Mahdi (as in note 3), 240, note 45, referring to Abū-l-Futūḥ Raḍwān, *Tārīḥ maṭba'at Būlāq*, Cairo 1953, 259–60, 283, 461.

printing houses opened for business, and that sooner or later literature of an ever more popular kind would be produced and distributed.

Early specimens of printed literature are little more than manuscripts reproduced in print, as is obvious from looking at their lay-outs. A modern title page was yet to develop, eventually listing the names of both book and author, which according to manuscript custom were given in the crowded introductory passages after the Basmalah and the Ḥamdalah.⁶ Beside a certain conservative style in graphic presentation, printed books were also guarantees of continuity in terms of content, since they primarily reproduced traditional material. The ultimately best-selling work of compilatory *adab*-literature, al-*Ibšīhī's adab*-encyclopedia *al-Mustaṭraf fi kull fann mustaṭraf*, has been printed (in Būlāq or Cairo) up to twenty times since 1850 (and up to about 1950) — even though it was compiled from traditional sources in the fifteenth century and actually transports a large number of narratives and concepts formulated centuries earlier.⁷ Moreover, it does not come as a surprise that compilation as a major traditional practice of composition also appeared in printed books. That is to say: Even when *new* books were composed in the nineteenth century using *new* modes of production, the long established intellectual methodologies of compilation continued to be employed in the individual production of a literary work. On the other hand, it is important to point out that compilation is not necessarily (and probably never has been) tantamount to a lack of creativity. In order to illustrate this, the following presentation proposes to discuss the fate of a single (popular) booklet produced in Cairo in the second half of the nineteenth century.

The term compilation has been defined for Western literatures since the sixteenth century. In a narrow sense it denotes publications reproducing passages (“clippings”) from earlier works in a different arrangement in order to serve as a source of information and entertainment by the sheer amount of data offered.⁸ Evaluated from the point of view of the Western

⁶ Peter Freimark, *Das Vorwort als literarische Form in der arabischen Literatur*, Münster 1967.

⁷ See the list drawn up by Timo Paajanen, *Scribal Treatment of the Literary and Vernacular Proverbs of al-Mustaṭraf in 15th-17th Century Manuscripts. With special reference to diglossic variation*, Helsinki 1995 (*Studia Orientalia* 77), 22; Ulrich Marzolph, “Medieval Knowledge in Modern Reading. A 15th Century Arabic Encyclopedia of *omni re scibili*”, in *Pre-modern Encyclopedic Texts*, Proceedings of the COMERS-meeting Groningen July 1-4, 1996. Leiden (in print).

⁸ For general surveys of the phenomenon in the European context, see Rainer Alsheimer, “Kompilationsliteratur”, in *Enzyklopädie des Märchens*, vol. 8, Berlin, New York 1996, 111-14; Rudolf Schenda, “Kolportageliteratur”, *ibid.*, 76-85; *id.*, “Kuriösitätenliteratur”, *ibid.*, 647-60.

obsession for intellectual individuality (which itself is a relatively modern phenomenon), compilation, due to its essentially repetitive character, is void of any creative merit. Yet concepts of literary criticism cannot easily be transferred from the cultural background in which they originated to a different culture. The implications discussed for the indigenous evaluation of plagiarism (Arabic *sariqa*) in poetry⁹ in a modified sense also hold true for the concept of compilation: *adab*-literature by its very definition consists in the organization of useful and entertaining bits of information, which have acquired a normative quality by the collective judgment of traditional societal values.¹⁰ Since there is only a limited, albeit large, amount of material available fulfilling these criteria, the atomized constituents of many works of *adab*-literature, notably later ones, overlap to a large degree. The technique of compilers of *adab*-literature of drawing largely from a common stock of available arguments and narratives was legitimized not only by the characteristic definition of the literary genre, but also by common practice. Individuality was not judged in terms of the material produced or reproduced, but rather in terms of how the material was presented. The raw data were regarded as common property while the creative achievement of an author consisted primarily in its arrangement. The latter argument serves as the basis for regarding compilation as a highly creative technique, since it does not result from an automated or mechanical reproduction of previous items, but rather implies an often intricate theoretical concept serving both as the basis of arrangement and as a purpose that the presentation would follow. Neither concept nor purpose are easy to analyze, and often remain veiled behind the overwhelming amount of data commanded by individual authors.

In addition, the situation is further complicated by the fact that compilation almost never means either identical or exclusive reproduction of previously documented material. Leaving aside for the moment the technique of reproducing available material in regards to meaning (such as denoted by the term *al-riwāya bi-l-ma'nā* employed by scholars of *ḥadīth*), any compilatory work contains material not known to exist anywhere else. This material might derive from two sources juxtaposed for their creative impact: On the one hand, new material might constitute a witness or remnant of existing works (or, for that matter, oral tradition),

⁹ Gustave Edmund von Grunebaum, "The Concept of Plagiarism in Arabic Theory", in *Journal of the Near Eastern Society* 3 (1944) 234-53; Wolfhart Heinrichs, "An Evaluation of *sariqa*", in *Quaderni di Studi Arabi* 5-6 (1987-88) 357-68.

¹⁰ Seeger A. Bonebakker, "Arabic Literature and the Term *adab*", in *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 5 (1984) 389-421; Charles Pellat, "Adab", in *Encyclopædia Iranica*, vol. 1, London, New York 1985, 439-44; Fedwa Malti-Douglas, *Structures of Avarice, The Bukhalāf in Medieval Arabic Literature*, Leiden 1985, 47-16.

available at the time of compilation but extinct today; on the other hand, it might derive from the compiler's individual creative act (and, if it managed to succeed in being accepted, it might be passed on to become part of traditional collective knowledge in its own right).

The specimen of nineteenth century *adab*-compilation discussed in the following pages is an edition of the *Nawādir Ğuḥā*, a chapbook originating in classical times, but gaining new dimensions with the advent of printing in the Arab world. As for the trickster character of Ğuḥā, who is documented in Arabic literature at least since the ninth century, it is not known for certain whether or not he actually was popular in the early nineteenth century oral tradition of the Arab world. On the other hand, we can fairly well assess his position in written sources and thus evaluate the impact that the introduction of printing had on his further development. To say the least, with the first printed editions of tales on Ğuḥā early in the second half of the nineteenth century, Ğuḥā emerged different from what he had been before. The creative process of this transition which results from the combined effort of different kinds of compilation is indicative of a number of aspects concerning cultural production in the nineteenth century Arab world. Before elaborating upon this argument in detail, it might be useful to outline the field and further preface the present approach to the subject with a number of introductory remarks.

First, it is important to keep in mind that Ğuḥā, as he is known and perceived toward the end of the twentieth century, is a popular jocular character whose image developed over a period of more than a thousand years. It was a long way from the first mention of Ğuḥā in the poetry of ʿUmar b. Abī Rabīʿa, who died around the year 93/712,¹¹ to the vigorous component of oral tradition in the Arab world he represents today.¹² Ğuḥā never failed, like so many other potential heroes or focusees of jocular narrative who initially were his contemporaries, but later waned and today remain known only to a few specialists. Instead Ğuḥā became

¹¹ On ʿUmar b. Abī Rabīʿa see Fuat Sezgin, *Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums*, vol. 2, Leiden 1975, 415–17. The line of poetry is quoted by al-Ābī, *Naṣr al-durr*, vol. 5, Cairo 1978, 307; Ibn Bāba, *Raʿs-māl al-nadīm*, ed. Muḥammad Šāliḥ Ġamāl Badawī, Diss. Edinburgh 1395/1975, 280; al-Suyūfī, *Tuhfat al-muġālis wa-nuzhat al-maġālis*, Cairo 1326/1908, 348.

¹² Ulrich Marzolph, “Zur Überlieferung der Nasreddin Hoca-Schwänke außerhalb des türkischen Sprachraumes”, in *Türkische Sprachen und Kulturen*, Materialien der 1. Deutschen Turkologen-Konferenz, ed. Inge Baldauf, Klaus Kreiser, Semih Tezcan, Wiesbaden 1991, 275–85; *id.*, Naṣr al-dīn K̲h̲ōḍjah. In: *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, vol. 7, fascicule 129–130, Leiden 1992, 1018–1020; *id.*, *Nasreddin Hodscha. 666 wahre Geschichten*, Munich 1996, especially chapters 2 and 6; *id.*, “Focusees of Jocular Fiction in Classical Arabic Literature”, in *Fiction in Non-fictional Classical Arabic Literature*, Proceedings of a Symposium in Halle (Saale), May 15–17, 1997, Wiesbaden (in print).

more dynamic century by century, occupying an ever growing area of jocular tradition. His present condition, thus, is not a static position, but rather the currently visible result of a complex process, a development stretching over a long period of time, including various influential factors in a number of decisive stages. Furthermore, it is not a given state, since no position whatsoever can be taken for granted, and the least solid positions are those fluctuating between the layers of living oral tradition.

Second, it should be noted that the genre of jocular tales in Arabic literature well into the early decades of the twentieth century remains determined by conservative trends dating from the pre-modern era.¹³ Jocular literature in the nineteenth century does not qualify as modern in regard to style, contents and points of view. Yet the changing mode of production after the introduction of printing techniques, both lithographic and movable type, resulted in a specific pattern of compilation that in accordance with the quoted terminology may be called modern.

And third, it might be pointed out that folk narrative research, as the field of folklore studies to which the present approach is indebted, has undergone various shifts in perspective in the course of the twentieth century. While originally focusing on contents and questions of origin of narrative texts, folklore as of late has adopted a highly differentiated attitude in regard to the process of transmission of narrative materials as well as to their existence in a complex web of interrelated contextual factors.¹⁴ Probably one of the most important steps in the development of folk narrative research in the twentieth century was the growing awareness of a continuous correlation between oral and written tradition. Oral tradition at the same time both draws from written sources as well as inspires further written production. Seen from the opposite perspective, written tradition exploits the oral while it also serves as a mine of material for reproduction in the oral. Written tradition appears to be the more durable partner of the reciprocally dependent twins, while oral tradition is the more spontaneous one.

Keeping in mind these introductory remarks, I would now like to turn to the specific case of Ġuḥā and the transition he underwent in the course of the nineteenth century. Already in the nineteenth century Western

¹³ Enno Littmann, *Arabische Märchen und Schwänke aus Ägypten*, Mainz 1955; Latif Khayyat, "The Style and Contents of Arabic Folk Material in Chapbooks in the New York Public Library", in *Fabula* 28 (1987) 59-71; Ulrich Marzolph, "Still the Same Old Jokes: The Continuity of Jocular Tradition in Early Twentieth Century Egyptian Chapbooks," in Cathy Preston, Michael J. Preston (eds.), *The Other Print Tradition*, New York, London, 1995, 161-79.

¹⁴ See the survey by Dan Ben-Amos, "Kontext", in: *Enzyklopädie des Märchens*, vol. 8, Berlin, New York 1996, 217-37.

orientalists such as René Basset¹⁵ or Martin Hartmann¹⁶ had become aware of the largely identical nature of the Arabic Ġuḥā and the Turkish jester Nasreddin Hoca. While Hartmann was interested in presenting a general sketch of Arabic jocular literature, Basset, in addition to outlining the factual history of Ġuḥā in Arabic literature, was inventive as to theory. According to Basset, the nineteenth century Arabic tradition consisted of originally Arabic tales, which by way of their translation into Turkish had contributed to the constitution of Nasreddin Hoca, whose tales were then circulated in retranslated Arabic garb. Today we are able to perceive that Basset overestimated the degree to which Turkish materials derive from Arabic origins; however, Basset's thoughts were stimulating for the awareness of common traits in narrative materials originating from different regions; and he was perfectly right in supposing that a number of factors had contributed to the formation of Ġuḥā as he found him toward the end of the nineteenth century. Both nineteenth century scholars, Basset as well as Hartmann, appear to have taken the existence of Ġuḥā for granted, quoting his representation in classical and post-classical literature with the same degree of authenticity as in nineteenth century printed booklets. For them, the Ġuḥā of manuscript compilations constituted the immediate precursor of the character as he later appeared, and the nineteenth century printed booklets were largely taken as a natural stage of development, unquestioned in their relationship to developments that (though yet unknown) might have taken place in previous manuscript production.

As for Arab scholarship on Ġuḥā, today 'Abd al-Sattār Aḥmad Farrāğ's pioneer study on what he termed the *Aḥbār Ġuḥā* still constitutes the major source for historical research in the development of Ġuḥā's narrative repertoire.¹⁷ Farrāğ, originally published around 1957, examined the sources of Ġuḥā tales, taking as a starting point a "small booklet published about 75 years ago, entitled *Nawādir Ġuḥā*", supposedly referring to a printed edition of 1299/1881 mentioned later in his study. The main part of his analysis focuses on the sources of Ġuḥā tales, considering an accumulated repertoire of more than 400 tales. Unfortunately, Farrāğ does not mention the exact relationship between his commentaries and the

¹⁵ René Basset, "Recherches sur Si Djoh'a et les anecdotes qui lui sont attribuées," in Auguste Mouliéras, *Les Fourberies de Si Djeh'a. Contes kabyles. Traduction française*, Paris 1892, 1-79. The Arabic printed editions used by Basset are discussed pp. 8-10. By an immense stroke of luck, Basset's original copies are now in the possession of the present author.

¹⁶ Martin Hartmann, "Schwänke und Schnurren im islamischen Orient", in *Zeitschrift des Vereins für Volkskunde* 5 (1895), 40-67, especially 46 ff.

¹⁷ 'Abdassattār Aḥmad Farrāğ, *Aḥbār Ġuḥā*, Cairo 1957, ³1980.

different editions of *Ġuḥā* tales he exploited, but from external evidence it may be assumed that a large number of tales is obviously analyzed according to Ḥikmat Šarīf aṭ-Ṭarābulṣī's Arab translation of the Turkish Nasreddin-stories as compiled by Veled Çelebi İzbudak from 1907 onward. Farrāġ in his introductory remarks concludes that all stories in later tradition that surpass the limit of 125 stories in the first printed Turkish edition of 1937 must have been adapted from other sources. Such a statement obviously is vague enough to allow for various approaches.

The actual question of when and where printed editions of the *Nawādir Ġuḥā* were published in the nineteenth century has never been scrutinized in detail. While Farrāġ does not clarify whether he actually saw and used the 1299 edition he refers to, Basset had published an annotated survey commenting on an undated Būlāq edition and a Beirut edition dated 1890. Ilyās Sarkīs in his bibliographical dictionary of early Arabic printed books supplies the most reliable data, mentioning two editions:¹⁸ one of 1278/1861 printed at the Maṭba'at kāstīllīya, i.e., the printing house established by the Florentine Mose Castelli, who resided in Cairo from 1832;¹⁹ and a lithographic one of 1299. In addition, Sarkīs states that the *Nawādir Ġuḥā* were printed numerous times in Cairo and Beirut, by which statement he implicitly qualifies them as a kind of popular literature transgressing the means of minute bibliographical documentation, or probably not even deserving it. Copies of these early editions are extremely rare in Western libraries, but fortunately one copy of the 1278 edition was traced in the Tübingen university library. The British Museum in London,²⁰ the École des langues orientales in Paris,²¹ and the Forschungs- und Landesbibliothek Gotha²² possess copies of an edition printed two years later, also by Castelli, which in content and layout is almost identical to its precursor. Yet the actual *editio princeps* of the *Nawādir Ġuḥā* still has to be found, since at least one earlier edition is known. It is mentioned by Wilhelm Pertsch in his catalogue of Arabic manuscripts in the Gotha library,²³ and was published 1274/1857 in lithographic print. Unfortuna-

¹⁸ Yūsuf Ilyās Sarkīs, *Mu'ğam al-maṭbū'āt al-'arabīya wa-l-mu'arraba*, Cairo 1346/1928, col. 1859 f.

¹⁹ Olga Pinto, "Mose Castelli, tipografo italiano al Cairo," in *Francesco Gabrieli. Studi orientalistici offerti nel sessantesimo compleanno*, Rome 1964, 217–23.

²⁰ Alexander George Ellis, *Catalogue of the Arabic Books in the British Museum*, London 1901, vol. 2, p. 426, shelfmark 14582.c.26.

²¹ E. Lambrecht, *Catalogue de la Bibliothèque de l'École des langues orientales vivantes*, vol. 1, Paris 1897, no. 1629; *ibid.* no. 1630 a lithograph edition Cairo 1305/1888.

²² Shelfmark Poes. 4°.56/4.

²³ Wilhelm Pertsch, *Die orientalischen Handschriften der Herzoglichen Bibliothek zu Gotha*, vol. 3,4, Gotha 1883, 459, no. 2747. Meanwhile, the present author has located

tely, the booklet, originally belonging to the Gotha library holdings, is not present in the stacks, while its fate remains unclear: If luck prevails, it might still be preserved as an item of the so-called "Beutekunst", the items transferred to Soviet holdings after World War II, which so far have only been partly restored; yet it might also have been lost either at that time or before.

Even though a lithographed edition existed previously, the year 1278 will probably remain the date of the first edition of the *Nawādir Ġuḥā* printed in movable type. Undoubtedly, as pointed out by previous research, the booklet is an adaptation of similar Turkish collections that had been published starting 1253/1837. Since about ten editions of the Turkish booklet had been published prior to 1860, it is difficult to determine exactly which one was taken as a point of reference. This, however, does not represent a major shortcoming, since the translation and adaptation practised in the Arabic booklet constitutes, to say the least, a peculiar way of creative compilation. This may be demonstrated by comparing the 1278 edition to the Ottoman Turkish versions of 1253/1837, the Turkish *editio princeps*, and 1266/1849, the edition annotated by the folklorist Albert Wesselski:²⁴

While all of the early Turkish editions contain an average of about 125 to 130 tales, the Arabic edition comprises 233 tales, i.e., almost twice as many. About 100 items, i.e., only about 40% of the Arabic tales, correspond to tales in the Turkish edition. Considering this fact, it is obvious that the Arabic editor must have taken about 60% of the additional material from other sources. While I have not yet been successful in identifying all sources, about 50% of the additional items correspond to tales which can be documented in classical and post-classical Arabic literature.²⁵ Before evaluating this fact, a short reminder of the indigenous Arabic manuscript tradition on Ġuḥā such as it had developed until the nineteenth century might be useful.

another copy of the 1274 lithographed edition in the central library of Columbia University, New York (shelfmark 893.7 N 186-M I). The text of this edition is written by 'Alī Rizā and is dated Ġumādā I 22, 1274. The booklet contains 228 anecdotes in 79 pp. The Columbia University copy according to a French dedication was presented to J. Cotheal by a certain Lotfy Efendi in 1858. It may be worthwhile to mention that Columbia University library also holds a small collection of Nasreddiniana acquired from the library of the German scholar Enno Littmann (as mentioned in the Brill sales catalogue no. 307: *The Library of Enno Littmann*. Leiden 1959, item 3433).

²⁴ Albert Wesselski, *Der Hodscha Nasreddin*, Weimar 1911.

²⁵ For references, see the index in vol. 2 in Ulrich Marzolph, *Arabia ridens, Die humoristische Kurzprosa der frühen Abbasidenzeit im internationalen Traditionsgeflecht*, vol. 1-2, Frankfurt am Main 1992.

The *Kitāb Nawādir Ğuḥā* mentioned in the tenth century by the Baghdad bookseller Ibn al-Nadīm could draw on a repertoire of more than 60 tales on Ğuḥā. This can be reconstructed from the quotations included by such authors as Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī (died 414/1023), al-Ābī (died 421/1030) and Abū Maṣṣūr al-Taʿālibī (died 429/1038). The repertoire was continuously developed and in the seventeenth century compilation *Iršād man nahā ilā nawādir Ğuḥā* by Yūsuf ibn al-Wakīl al-Maylāwī comprises more than 70 tales. At all times authors appear to have regarded it as legitimate to attribute to Ğuḥā anecdotes that originally were related to other characters, some of them known by name, others anonymous. In this way, by the beginning of the nineteenth century, altogether about 130 tales at some time or other in Arabic literature had been attributed to Ğuḥā. Considering this, it is quite surprising to see that the editor of the 1278 edition relied upon the indigenous tradition of Arabic Ğuḥā tales only to a minor degree. Only about 10 out of a total of about 70 tales adapted from Arabic literature constitute tales originally related to the Arabic Ğuḥā. It is interesting to see that almost all of those are found in al-Ābī's *Naṭr al-durr*, some of them even in the same order.

But even though the *Nawādir Ğuḥā* only to a minor degree contain genuine Ğuḥā tales, the few present are implemented in such a way as to combine narrative repertoires from varying origins in order to mold a new, or rather *the* new Ğuḥā. The particular technique of compilation employed is what qualifies the nineteenth century printed editions as modern. The process by which the aim is achieved might best be compared to a zipper or a braiding technique. The compiler took blocks of varying sizes from at least two essentially different narrative traditions, starting with tales which had been part of the narrative tradition on Ğuḥā for centuries, intertwined with two small blocks of tales of Ottoman Turkish origin. Next come blocks of 5 to 15 anecdotes from Arabic literature, now attributed to Ğuḥā, alternating with blocks of 5 to 10 tales adapted from the Ottoman edition. Starting with item 94, there is a large block of more than 70 tales translated from the Turkish edition in the same order as in the original. This is followed by an almost equally large block of about 65 tales either corresponding to tales in classical Arabic literature or adapted from as yet unidentified sources (which might be an unidentified Turkish edition of tales on Nasreddin, Turkish manuscripts, Arabic or even any Western literature).

The compiler's technique is quite ingenious, since by creatively combining different efforts he succeeds in credulously inflating the narrative repertoire on Ğuḥā to a capacity encompassing almost any humorous narrative whatsoever. First, in the cautious opening passage, the reader is "hooked" to expect tales on Ğuḥā, as a character well known

from indigenous written and (supposedly also) oral tradition. The expectation is aroused and furthered by three specific details: (a) the title of the collection explicitly names the protagonist “Ġuḥā al-Rūmī”, i.e., the Byzantine (meaning: Ottoman) Ġuḥā; (b) the first sentence after the obligatory invocation of God printed inside an ornamental heading continues in the tradition of manuscript compilation with an *ammā ba‘du*-passage reading “*fa-hāḍihi ba‘du nawādir wuridat ‘an al-ḥwāḡa Naṣraddīn al-mulaqqab bi-Ġuḥā ‘alayh al-raḥma*”; here, the two jocular protagonists are equated by qualifying the (originally independent Arabic) name of Ġuḥā as a *laqab*/nickname of (the Turkish protagonist) Nasreddin; and (c) a small number of Ġuḥā tales from his traditional standard repertoire in Arabic literature are quoted. Once “hooked”, the reader is then made to identify tales attributed to the Turkish Nasreddin as Ġuḥā tales. The shift of identity involved is further promoted by the fact that a number of the introductory anecdotes in the Turkish collection actually derive from Arabic sources — this was probably the reason why Basset had (erroneously) believed most if not all tales in the Turkish collection to be adapted from the Arabic. The acceptance of extraneous (Turkish) narrative materials is further eased by the repeated intermingling with indigenous (Arabic) tales. This process of familiarization goes on until the reader does not question the origin of the tales and readily swallows a huge mass of foreign tales. Having done so, he is rewarded by an almost equally large number of tales familiar to him, since adapted from indigenous sources, or at least more familiar than the Turkish ones.

The result achieved by such a technique was the genesis, or rather the conscious and systematic creation, of a completely new narrative repertoire, molded by compiling, adapting and shifting narrative materials to a hitherto unprecedented degree. Moreover, the new printing techniques allowing the production and distribution of large quantities of books that would be bought, read, re-read and retold resulted in their turn in stabilizing the new repertoire created. This is a second factor qualifying the nineteenth century booklets as modern.

In addition to analyzing what happened to Ġuḥā in nineteenth century print tradition and how the mentioned results were achieved, one wonders why this was done and who did it? As for the first part of the question, it might be presumed that the enlargement of the narrative repertoire served the purpose of improving sales conditions and maximizing profit: Nasreddin tales originating from the Turkish would sell better in the Arabic language if linked to a local hero rooted in the literary and oral tradition of the Arab world. In addition, obviously a larger repertoire would yield more profit than either one of an originally limited size, whether the one attributed to the Turkish Nasreddin or that related to the

Arabic Ġuḥā. As for the second part of the question, it is interesting to note that the first printed editions were not published by an Egyptian or by a publisher originating from another Arab country, but by a foreigner residing in the country. Whether it was Mose Castelli himself or some scribe, whether native or foreign, who did so on his account, cannot be ascertained. Anyhow, the important point appears to be that Castelli as a foreign publisher did not over-identify with any indigenous tradition that previously existed there, and thus he was able both to exploit and infiltrate the Arabic tradition less scrupulously than any native publisher could have done, especially had the latter been well versed in the literary tradition of his own culture (which, alas, not many Egyptian publishers at that time were). This interpretation explains, on the one hand, why the printed edition contains a clever mixture of tales of various origins, and on the other, why indigenous Ġuḥā tales, of whom Castelli (or his scribes) obviously possessed only a limited knowledge, were included only to a minor degree.

The commercial component of Castelli's compilation links the *Nawādir Ġuḥā* to the internationally most admired work of Arabic literature, the *Arabian Nights*.²⁶ The overwhelming success of Antoine Galland's French adaptation of the *Alf layla wa-layla* had created an extraneously and thus artificially intensified demand for complete manuscripts of the *Nights*, since the manuscript used by Galland, even though constituting the oldest copy preserved, was fragmentary. The Western craving for perfection could not accept the fact that "complete" copies of the *Arabian Nights* might be non-existent, whether they had never been or were lost. Hence, "complete" copies were created from the second half of the eighteenth century onward in a conscious act of compilation to satisfy the growing demand of Western customers. Since no "complete" older manuscripts were available, authors had to exploit other sources, utilizing oral as well as written sources. Reconstructing the atmosphere in nineteenth century Cairo, it becomes obvious that publishers employed scribes well versed in narrative texts in order to "complete" the fragmentary corpus of the *Arabian Nights* by compiling from a number of sources, thus in their turn generating the puzzling variety in later manuscript tradition (which served as a basis for the first printed editions). Here again, the question of authenticity is primarily involved as an argument of compulsiveness on the part of European researchers. The indigenous community continued to practise and acknowledge the advantage of compilatory devices in a

²⁶ Ulrich Marzolph, "Re-locating the Arabian Nights", in *Orientalia Lovanensia Analecta*, Proceedings of the Eighteenth Congress of the Union Européenne des Arabisants et Islamisants, Leuven, 3-10 September 1996 (in print).

very natural way in order to satisfy consumers' demands. There is, however, a decisive dissimilarity between the acts of production involved in the creation of the *Arabian Nights* and the repertoire on Ğuĥā: While the former were created on demand, the latter were compiled if not in order to create demand, then at least in order to intensify whatever demand might have existed.

It would be a worthwhile task to research the impact of the newly created repertoire, since next to nothing is known about Ğuĥā in nineteenth century oral tradition. If oral tradition is mirrored in the last major manuscript collection preserved, the *Ĥikāyāt 'an Ğuĥā*,²⁷ then oral tradition certainly was different from the way Ğuĥā is represented in nineteenth century printed collections. The vulgar and vigorous hero of the manuscript tradition in Arabic too, much as in Turkish, Persian, and other languages of the Islamic world, was sanitized step by step in order to give way to a domesticated fantasy. The outlook for Ğuĥā in the Arab tradition is different from other regions. After lingering on for some time in booklets adapted from the Turkish, he appears to have made a comeback in early twentieth century Egyptian chapbook production. With the publication of Ĥikmat Šarīf al-Ṭarābulī's translation, however, Ğuĥā's fate in Arabic printed tradition was fixed for the remainder of the twentieth century. Ĥikmat Šarīf presented an adapted Arabic version of the Turkish compilation by Veled Çelebi İzbudak, nicknamed "Bahā'ī", originally published in 1323/1907 and reprinted numerous times.²⁸ Ĥikmat Šarīf's book in turn, published innumerable times as *Nawādir Ğuĥā al-kubrā*, dominates the field of printed collections of Ğuĥā tales until the very present and thus is responsible for another major creative impact on the constitution of popular literature originating from the traditional stock of Arabic *adab* literature. But that is a different story.

²⁷ Preserved in a manuscript now in the John Rylands library in Manchester. I owe this reference to Joseph Sadan, who is about to prepare an annotated edition of this manuscript.

²⁸ A. Esat Bozyiğit, *Nasreddin Hoca Bibliyografyası Üzerine Bir Deneme*, Ankara 1987, nos. 128-144.

ISRAEL
ORIENTAL
STUDIES

XIX

COMPILATION AND CREATION
IN *ADAB* AND *LUGA*

Studies in Memory of Naphtali Kinberg (1948–1997)

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