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Title: Female Transmission of Hadith in the Mamluk Period : an annotated edition and study of Ibn Hajar's Mu`jam Ash-Shaykhah Maryam

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Summary and Conclusions

This study examined the life of one individual Ḥadīth female transmitter, Ash-Shaykhah Maryam Al-Adhra'īyyah (719/1319-805/1402), based on Ibn Ḥajar's *Mu'jam Ash-Shaykhah Maryam* that he had compiled for her. We have seen how the *Mu'jams* are important sources for the history of scholarly and cultural networks and give the details by which an entire cultural environment can be reconstructed.

The study consisted of an introduction and two parts. **Part I** focused on the study of the *Mu'jam* and other related issues. In **Part II**, an annotated edition of the *Mu'jam* was provided.

The edition of the *Mu'jam Ash-Shaykhah Maryam* (**Part II**) was based on the unique manuscript available, viz. at Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyyah (Reference number: 1421 Ḥadīth). In the Arabic text, I have inserted the punctuation for reasons of clarity. I also numbered the biographies in order to facilitate references. I also traced all the Ḥadīths quoted in the *Mu'jam* from famous Ḥadīth collections.

The study (**Part I**) explored the social background of female participation in Ḥadīth transmission in the light of Ash-Shaykhah Maryam Al-Adhra'īyyah's life. The study of the *Mu'jam* increased our knowledge about women's participation in Ḥadīth transmission.

Chapter One of Part 1 dealt with the manuscript, the methodology applied in editing it, and a biography of its copyist. The manuscript under study was copied by Yūsuf ibn Shāhīn, Ibn Ḥajar's grandson. At a certain point of time it came to the possession of Muḥammad Murtaḍā al-Ḥusaynī al-Zabīdī who added some marginal notes to it. The manuscript remains in excellent condition and it was written in one hand which rules out the possibility that some parts were added later.

Chapter Two of Part 1 established Ibn Ḥajar's authorship and the sources used, as well as the method followed in composing it. The term *takhrīj* found on the title page of the *Mu'jam Ash-Shaykhah Maryam* has to be understood in the sense that Ash-Shaykhah Maryam made available to Ibn Ḥajar the *samā'āt* (the protocols of reading sessions which were added to a text), and the *ijāzahs* (the certificates which she possessed and cherished and which conferred upon her the right to transmit a text or to teach). From the raw materials, Ibn Ḥajar, in turn, sorted out the names of Ash-Shaykhah Maryam's teachers, and extracted one ḥadīth or more that she heard from each teacher which he listed after the teacher's biography. It is unlikely that Ibn Ḥajar could have gathered the data he required for the *Mu'jam* on almost 319 persons solely from his teacher's knowledge, without consulting other persons or other biographical sources. In fact, Ibn Ḥajar did use certain sources to complete the picture of certain teachers. The *Mu'jam* grew out of the need to establish continuity in Ḥadīth transmission. It was composed to ensure that the knowledge of the Traditions of the Prophet was handed down accurately and faithfully from generation to generation.

Chapter Three of Part 1 placed the *Mu'jam* among Ibn Ḥajar's writings and contemporary similar works. It also gave a sketch of Ibn Ḥajar's biography, his role as an author, and his care for women's biographies. It is worthy to draw attention to Ibn Ḥajar's interest in including female's biographies in his works. In his *al-Iṣābah fī Tamayyūz al-Ṣaḥabah*, Ibn Ḥajar devoted the fourth volume to the biographies of female Companions. Also in his *Taqrīb al-Tahdhīb*, Ibn Ḥajar covered 300 entries of female Companions,

female Followers and other female transmitters in the six major collections. In his *Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb*, Ibn Ḥajar devoted a special place for female transmitters, women known by their *kunyah*, *laqab*, and those known by *mubhamāt* (obscure names). Ibn Ḥajar's *ad-Durar al-Kāminah* is also abundant with female biographies which reflect female participation in the cultural and religious spheres in Egypt and Syria during the Mamluk period.

Chapter Four of Part 1 explored the literary world of the *Mu'jam*, and gave an overview of the development of the genre of the individual bibliography like the *fahrasah*, the *mashyakhah*, the *mu'jam*, etcetera. With the emergence of Islamic tradition (Ḥadīth), several genres of Islamic literature have developed. In the early stages, both *isnād* and text were written down but disseminated orally. However, with the expansion of Islam and the enormous diversification of the different disciplines of learning, it was impossible to maintain oral transmission as the only vehicle for passing on knowledge. At a later stage, historical and Tradition texts were written in all sorts of personal notebooks of transmitters, and later, in more organized collections that were intended for a larger audience. Though, in the end, books became accepted as the ordinary medium, the individual and personal approach nevertheless remained intact. Biographical literature emerged as one of the consequences of this individual and personal approach. The "science of men", or *ilm al-rijāl* (also including women) developed into a critical method for the assessment of scholarly authority. Many biographical works were devoted to describing networks of scholarship and chains of transmission.

Chapter Five of Part 1 outlined the role of women in Ḥadīth transmission, especially during the Mamluk period. This was preceded by introductory remarks on women's authority as Ḥadīth transmitters, i.e. what the Ḥadīth scholars said about reports transmitted by women, and an overview of women's education in the Mamluk period. The early scholars of Ḥadīth did not stipulate that a Ḥadīth's being reported by a man is a condition of its acceptability, or its being reported by a woman is a condition for its rejection. While specifying the characteristics of those whose transmission is accepted and those whose transmission is rejected, the great expert in Ḥadīth, Ibn aṣ-Ṣalāḥ (d. 643/1245), did not distinguish between a Ḥadīth reported by a male and another reported by a female.

Previous contributions concluded that women played a very active role in the transmission of the Prophetic traditions (Ḥadīth) throughout much of Islamic history. Recent studies show that women of the Companion generation participated actively in this domain of religious knowledge. However, there was a decline of women in the historical record from the mid-second to the mid-fourth centuries. In the second half of the fourth century, women re-emerged in the sources on Ḥadīth learning and transmission. From this period until well into the Mamluk era, women acquired exemplary reputations as Ḥadīth transmitters.

Based on the findings of **Chapter Six of Part 1** "The Life and Career of Ash-Shaykhah Maryam al-Adhra'iyyah", knowledge of the details of Ash-Shaykhah Maryam's life is relatively limited. Ash-Shaykhah Maryam has shown no lack of competence to be a scholar and educator of some of the best minds of her times, and in turn, her contemporary male scholars have recognized her authority in transmitting the words of the Prophet. It is noteworthy that Ash-Shaykhah Maryam's reputation was based, to a great extent, on the scholars she studied with. Ash-Shaykhah Maryam had

interaction with both male and female teachers and students, which shows co-education activity during her youth and seniority. Ash-Shaykhah Maryam was an authority for compilations of Ḥadīth, and she emerged in the historical records as a sought-after teacher of Ḥadīth. From the list of compilations she was given certification to transmit, it is clear that she excelled in the field of Ḥadīth, not in other disciplines such as fiqh or Qur'ān exegeses. This holds true for most women of the Mamluk period.

Ash-Shaykhah Maryam clearly acquired a good reputation as a *muḥaddithah*. However, it is not possible to reconstruct her career beyond the details given in this study. Her reputation should be well understood in the wider picture of the rising participation of women in Ḥadīth transmission, which occurred first in the region of Khurasan in the fourth and fifth centuries, and over the course of the next three centuries spread westward towards Baghdad, Damascus, and then Cairo, following the triumphant march of Sunnī traditionalism under dynasties such as the Sāmānids, Ghaznavids, Seljuks, Ayyubids, and Mamluks.

Based on Ash-Shaykhah Maryam's career, the general picture that emerges is one of a woman who was active in receiving and transmitting religious knowledge, especially the transmission of Ḥadīth. Her activities reflect intellectual developments in the important network of scholars of which she was a part. Women during the Mamluk period, in general, played important and prominent roles in their society and some of their activities have been documented in medieval biographical dictionaries. Women are described in the *Mu'jam* as freely studying with both men and women. After getting permission to instruct others, they clearly worked hard to match their male counterparts in the teaching career. By now, it is clear that Ash-Shaykhah Maryam's portrait does not reveal the stereotyped preoccupation with seclusion or gender segregation.

Based on the Ḥadīths extracted from the various collections that Ash-Shaykhah Maryam was authorized to transmit and their shorter *isnāds*, I can argue that the *Mu'jam* provides a unique testimony to the importance of acquiring higher *isnāds* in transmission. This supports the phenomenon of the transmission authority from the very old to the very young, as Ash-Shaykhah Maryam's teachers awarded her *ijazāhs* in their final years of teaching. Likewise, Ash-Shaykhah Maryam appears frequently in biographies of students during their advanced ages.

Further research is needed, especially on individual female scholars, as one can assert that there is a possibility for supporting the argument that Ḥadīth literature has been developed, preserved, propagated, and taught by both men and women of scholarly repute.

Other female scholars who excelled in other areas of Islamic studies, such as law and commentaries on the Qur'ān, are worthy of due attention. Women scholars from specific regions and time periods can be the subject of future research. Further research is needed to know more about Ash-Shaykhah Maryam's teachers for whom no details are provided in biographical dictionaries.