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In the Studio of the Nights

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In the Studio of the *Nights*

ULRICH MARZOLPH

Abstract

Most of the 'complete' manuscripts of the *Thousand and One Nights* in Arabic preserved today were compiled in the 18th and 19th centuries. Since the original manuscripts the compilers of the new manuscripts had at hand were fragmentary, they exploited a wide range of sources to come up with complete manuscripts. The sources the compilers used for their compilations were most probably works from the Mamluk and Ottoman periods that were more readily available than copies of the works dating from the classical period of Arabic literature. The particular work studied in the present essay is the chronicle *Kitāb laṭāʾif akhbār al-uwal* ('Subtle Stories from the Forefathers'), compiled by Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Muʿṭī al-Isḥāqī (died 1623). A detailed analysis of the corresponding tales between this work and the *Nights* reveals the fact that the compilers of the *Nights* copied a limited numbers of tales directly from Isḥāqī's chronicle, thus supplying a glimpse into the 'studio' of the compilers of the *Nights*.

The growth of the *Thousand and One Nights* into the fully-fledged compilation we know today is characterized by a whole series of peculiar events. Right from the start, Galland's (1646–1715) liberty in adapting to his translation tales that had never been part of the original collection in Arabic before that date, and the subsequent production of Arabic versions for the tales of Aladdin and Ali Baba, were wilful acts of mystification. Moreover, since 'complete' manuscripts of the *Nights* appear to have been rarely available even before Galland's time, Arabic scribes contributed in their own right to shaping the *Nights* as a work of many different faces. Considered together, the history of the *Nights* adds up to depicting a work that, even though it has a relatively stable core corpus of tales,[1] was to a large extent created by the enthusiastic western reception of Galland's adaptation and the ensuing search for the work's 'complete' manuscripts in the 18th and 19th centuries. Besides the 15th-century manuscript that served as the basis for Galland's adaptation, we today know less than a dozen manuscripts that have most probably been compiled before the end of the 17th century; that is, before Galland's work and the impact that resulted from its reception.[2] None of these early manuscripts is complete, and even the totality of fragments does not allow a clear and unambiguous reconstruction of a standard set of narratives that might have been included in the

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'complete' Arabic manuscripts before the beginning of the 18th century. Already these introductory remarks indicate an important aspect that has ruled the content of the *Nights* before and after Galland: beyond the fixed core corpus, the *Nights* is a work with a changing repertoire of tales, a true 'shape-shifter'. Instead of containing a fixed set of narratives, it essentially offers a clearly defined narrative frame, in which Shahrazad tells the tales to King Shahriyar, that is able to integrate narratives of the most diverse origins. Consequently, over the centuries the work has integrated a large variety of narratives including just about each and every genre, such as epics, tales of magic, religious legends, animal tales, and jokes and anecdotes.

Most of the complete manuscripts of the *Nights* known today—manuscripts that actually, as the original name suggests, fill a thousand and one nights of storytelling—were produced to satisfy the European demand in the 18th and 19th centuries.[3] It is well known that the compilers of the manuscripts of the *Nights* even before that date exploited a wide range of sources to complete the fragmentary manuscripts they had at hand. Within the range of works with which previous research has dealt, we find early works such as the 'mirror for princes' *al-Tibr al-masbūk fī naṣīḥat al-mulūk* ('Smelted Ore: On the Counsel of Kings') compiled by the famous al-Ghazzālī (died 505/1111),[4] as well as later works such as 17th-century author al-Itlīdī's *Iʿlām al-nās fīmā waqaʿa li l-Barāmika maʿa Banī ʿAbbās* ('Information of the People Concerning what Happened to the Barmakids with the Abbasids').[5] In practical terms, the compilers must have taken their material from works that were physically accessible to them. Considering the characteristics of manuscript tradition, according to which old manuscripts would fall out of use while new manuscripts would take their place, the compilers most probably had less direct access to the works of the classical era of Arabic literature than to contemporary compilations. Besides quotations from older works, these contemporary works also contained new material that is not known from earlier sources, or is at least not preserved today. Meanwhile, it is equally likely that in ideological terms the compilers felt that culture had moved on. They might have thought that going back to the old works would risk implying a disregard of cultural progress. After all, the more recent works available to the compilers had on the one hand grown out of the older ones, while on the other consciously adapting the traditional material for contemporary society.[6] It is a particularly interesting work of 17th-century Arabic literature that I would like to discuss in the present essay, a work that, although long known, has never been studied in detail. This is the chronicle *Kitāb laṭāʾif akhbār al-uwal* ('Subtle Stories from the Forefathers') compiled by a certain Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Muʿṭī al-Isḥāqī (died 1623).[7]

The first western scholar to notice a corresponding tale between the *Nights* and Isḥāqī's historical work was apparently Edward William Lane (1801–1876). Lane lived in Egypt when new 'complete' versions of the *Nights* were still being compiled. In his detailed footnote to *The Story of Abu l-Hasan the Wag, or The Sleeper Awakened*, published in 1839 in the second volume of his *Arabian Nights' Entertainments*, Lane says that he 'found the chief portion of this tale related as a historical anecdote' in the work of Isḥāqī.[8] This 'chief portion' tells the tale of a man who is made to believe that he actually is the caliph, and in the course of action the tale offers numerous opportunities for comic turns of event. The story of 'The Sleeper Awakened' is not contained in the Arabic standard versions of the *Nights*, a fact that Lane was well aware of. Besides Galland's adapted translation, Lane knew and translated the tale from Habicht's Breslau edition (1824–1843), in fact the only printed Arabic version of the *Nights* containing the tale. But because 'it exists in one copy, and is one of the best tales in Galland's version', Lane

has 'gladly given it a place in [his] collection'. In a recent discussion of the tale's sources and analogues, I have come to the conclusion that Galland's version is actually indebted to a 17th-century manuscript of the *Nights* compiled in Ottoman Turkish that already in his days was preserved in the Royal Library in Paris.[9] But that is a different story to which I will refer later on. Relying on Lane and Habicht, both John Payne (1842–1917) and Richard Burton (1821–1890) also included the tale in their translations. Both translators do not, however, add any substantial information regarding Isḥāqī's chronicle, and Burton's only new remark 'that amongst frolicsome Eastern despots the adventure might often have happened'[10] bespeaks the usual erratic manner of his commentaries. Meanwhile, Lane's nephew Edward Stanley Lane-Poole (1854–1931), who published his uncle's version of the *Nights* 'from a copy annotated by the translator' in 1859, pointed out another corresponding tale between the *Nights* and Isḥāqī.[11] This is the internationally documented story (tale-type 1645)[12] of 'The Dream of the Treasure on the Bridge', a tale in which the dreamer learns about the treasure hidden in his own garden from another person's dream whom he happens to meet in a far-away city. The oldest documented version of this tale is contained in the *Kitāb al-faraj baʿd al-shidda* ('Relief after Hardship') compiled by al-Muḥassin al-Tanūkhī (died 384/994), as quoted in Ibn Ḥijja al-Ḥamawī's (died 837/1434) anthology *Thamarāt al-awrāq* ('Fruits of the [Dispersed] Leaves').[13] But even though Lane-Poole added another piece to the puzzle, he failed to notice Isḥāqī's wide-reaching importance for the compilation of the *Nights*. It was for French orientalist scholar René Basset to comment on the connections between the *Nights* and al-Isḥāqī more substantially.

Among Basset's numerous small treatises in the field of ethnology, folklore and comparative literature, we find a short essay published in 1889 in the *Revue des traditions populaires* entitled 'Le rêve du trésor sur le pont'.[14] In this essay, Basset's main intention is to discuss the version of the story of 'The Dream of the Treasure on the Bridge' as found in Isḥāqī's chronicle. Already by the end of the 19th century, other versions of the tale had repeatedly been the subject of scholarly studies; and in a short essay published in 1888 in the same journal, Belgian scholar and bibliographer of orientalist studies Victor Chauvin had identified its Arabic origins.[15] Chauvin, whose *Bibliographie des ouvrages arabes* until today remains an invaluable source for the history of themes and motifs of the *Nights*, however, had not decoded the rudimentary reference to 'El-Is-hákee' given by Lane. In addition to now supplying the exact reference, Basset noticed that the version quoted by Isḥāqī, in content as well as wording, does not differ significantly from the tale's text in the standard editions of the *Nights* Būlāq (1835) and Calcutta II (1839–1842). In reading Isḥāqī's work, it moreover came to Basset's attention that the *Kitāb Laṭāʾif akhbār al-uwal* contains other tales that are also found in the *Nights*. He quotes four of these stories by name: the story of 'Jaʿfar the Barmecide and the Old Bedouin';[16] the story of 'Abu l-Hasan, or the Sleeper Awakened'; the story of 'The Noble-mindedness of the Barmecide Jaʿfar against the Bean-seller';[17] and the story of 'Ibrāhīm al-Mahdī'.[18] The concluding 'etc.' of Basset's list leaves one to guess that he also noticed other analogues between Isḥāqī's work and the *Nights*.

The only visible result from the explicitly announced sequel to Basset's short study of Isḥāqī is the translation of 'Le Dormeur éveillé' Basset later published with an introductory commentary.[19] It is interesting to see that the stories listed by Basset from Isḥāqī, although not directly following one another, appear in a chronological sequence. Moreover, they stand within a range of 15 pages in the first half of Isḥāqī's work before the story of 'The Dream of the Treasure on the Bridge'. Although Basset in his later

compilation, *Mille et un contes, récits et legendes arabes* (1924–1926), quoted passages from the latter half of Isḥāqī's work, he too missed the chance to unravel the wide-reaching importance of the *Kitāb Laṭāʾif akhbār al-uwal* for the compilations of the *Nights*. This is to be demonstrated in the following.

To prevent a terminological misunderstanding, and at the risk of repeating commonly accepted knowledge, we should recall that the *Nights* according to the present state of research is not and most probably never was a homogeneous work with a fixed and unchangeable content going beyond the nucleus of early tales. The work begins with a stable constitutive core that is contained in the oldest known manuscript. This manuscript served as the basis for Galland's French adaptation and was edited by Muhsin Mahdi in 1984.[20] Studies on individual manuscripts and editions of the *Nights*, particularly those of German scholar Heinz Grotzfeld,[21] have clearly established the fact that each manuscript and each edition, and consequently even each translation of the *Nights*, potentially represents a distinct version that is, among others, distinguished by its content and its specific arrangement of tales. As has already been mentioned, the compilers of the manuscripts of the *Nights* exploited a wide range of sources to complete the fragmentary manuscripts they had at hand. Isḥāqī's chronicle now brings us right into the 'studio' of these compilers.

The full title of Isḥāqī's book is *Kitāb laṭāʾif akhbār al-uwal fī man taṣarrafa fī Miṣr min arbāb al-duwal* ('Subtle Stories from the Forefathers: On the Noble Men Who Ruled in Egypt').[22] After some detailed introductory remarks concerning the pre-Islamic period, the author discusses in chronological order the rule of the 'Righteous Caliphs' (interestingly also including al-Ḥasan, son of the fourth caliph ʿAlī) and the dynasties of the Umayyads and the Abbasids. The following chapters deal with a number of Egyptian rulers, then the Tulunids, the Ikhshidids, the Fatimids, the Ayyubids, the Mamluks, the Circassians, and finally the Ottomans, during whose time the author compiled his book. The author's quoted sources, altogether some 50 books, include the standard works of historiographical and biographical literature, besides commentaries of the Qurān (*tafsīr*) and works of belles-lettres (*adab*). In the area of *adab*, Isḥāqī rarely refers to works of the pre-Mongol period such as al-Zamakhsharī's (died 538/1144) *Rabīʿ al-abrār*[23] or al-Ṭurṭūshī's (died 520/1126) mirror for princes *Sirāj al-mulūk*,[24] instead preferring to quote from numerous works of the post-Mongol period, such as *Sukkardān al-sulṭān* of Ibn Abī Ḥajala (died 776/1375),[25] *Ḥayāt al-ḥayawān* of al-Damīrī (died ca. 808/1403),[26] *Fākihat al-khulafāʾ* of Ibn ʿArabshāh (died 854/1450),[27] or *al-Nasīḥa bimā abdathu l-qarīḥa* of Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Salām al-Manūfī (died 931/1527).[28]

As a typical product of Egyptian Arabic compilation literature of the Ottoman period, Isḥāqī's work is occasionally mentioned in recent surveys on regional Arabic literatures, but clearly it has never been studied seriously.[29] This disregard probably results to some extent from the fact that western orientalist research continues to regard the compilations of the period lying in between the classical and modern eras of Arabic literature as repetitive, uninspired, and largely unoriginal; in brief, as lacking in literary achievement. As a case in point, suffice it to refer to the considerable number of judgemental evaluations western orientalist scholars have addressed at the *adab* encyclopaedia *al-Mustaṭraf* compiled by Isḥāqī's compatriot al-Ibshīhī at the beginning of the 15th century.[30] These evaluations range from according the work 'little individuality' (René Basset) via blaming the author for compiling his material without 'trying to think himself' (Maurice Gaudefroyes-Demombynes) because of his 'limited intellectual capacity'

(Hartmut Fähndrich), to seeing the *Mustaṭraf* as a 'rather clumsy work' with a 'rather haphazard arrangement' (Jean-Claude Vadet).

Assessing the 'chronicles of Ottoman Egypt', Nelly Hanna has rightly mentioned the fact that the 'language and style of some of these works made them more easily accessible to [a] wider audience'.[31] In particular, 'many of the people who were involved in reading or listening to historical writing appreciated histories with a certain amount of entertainment, or which combined the facts that were narrated with some amusing stories'.[32] Discussing Isḥāqī's chronicle as a case in point, Hanna stresses the work's entertaining character. Besides historical information, it would inform about curiosities of all sorts, including 'medical recipes for various ills and ailments, such as eating chicken to increase sperm', and:

> magical formula that could be used against evil persons; the diverse uses of cobwebs, such as making a wound coagulate and cleaning silver; advice on how to decrease the power of a domineering woman, notably by feeding her the tongue of a gazelle dried in the shade.[33]

The work also contains 'a number of amusing sexual or pornographic stories' such as the one in which a man is unwittingly 'fooled into having relations with a person of the same sex'.[34] Hanna generally assesses Isḥāqī's chronicle as 'mediocre in terms of historical achievement'. In her own view, even the narrative passages are given in a somewhat 'clumsy' way. In this manner, she risks subscribing to a biased colonial attitude that was largely prevalent in western research since the middle of the 19th century. The notion of decadence and stagnation this attitude imputed to the historical development of the Islamic world resulted in regarding the anthologies of the Mamluk and Ottoman periods, such as Isḥāqī's chronicle, as repetitive and inferior.[35] They were therefore not regarded as deserving a similarly serious study as that awarded to the excerpts from the originals the later anthologies would contain. Rather than appreciating the anthologies of the Mamluk and Ottoman periods as 'the result of the dynamic literary culture of the period',[36] their chief value was seen in the (partial) preservation of older texts whose complete original versions do not exist anymore. Only fairly recent approaches acknowledge the value of late pre-modern and early modern anthologies as 'reinterpreting the canon […] in ways that appealed to contemporary developments in literary taste and sensibilities'.[37]

Overlapping with the traditional stance of Arab intellectuals towards popular narratives, the orientalist attitude stands in stark contrast to the attitude of scholars of disciplines such as European medieval studies or comparative folk narrative research. These disciplines have since long recognized and given due consideration to the significance of post-classical compilation literature. After all, these compilations both preserved previous knowledge and passed it on to future generations.[38] Moreover, they served to encode and solidify the codex of desirable knowledge and to root this codex firmly within contemporary learned as well as popular tradition. Another reason for the disregard of Isḥāqī's work—and many others of a similar kind—may or may not be the fact that the work to a large extent presents history by way of anecdotes. Historically relevant information is intertwined with stories, and the historical facts often serve as a simple pretext to tell short entertaining stories and anecdotes of an amusing character. Occasionally, the author himself appears to become aware of his associative indulgence in entertaining contexts, so that he returns to the more serious discussion with the formula *rajaʿnā ilā mā naḥnu bi-ṣadadihi* ('let us return to the subject of our discussion'),

altogether quoted some 15 times.[39] Moreover, many of the short anecdotes Isḥāqī quotes are of a kind that the 19th-century German scholar, Gustav Flügel, in his evaluation of the 17th-century compilation *Nuzhat al-udabāʾ* has characterized as 'most annoying frivolities […] which in their naiveté are so coarse, unsupportable and shameful that the Janissaries could not possibly have found a richer treasure trove for their tastes'.[40] Given this judgement, favourite themes and topics quoted by Isḥāqī include, as would be expected, those of a scatological and sexual nature, in particular those referring to sexual practices beyond the traditionally accepted heterosexual norm. From today's perspective, one can nonetheless safely establish that the stories in their explicit delectation of sensual pleasures are not more provocative than, say, those of Italian Renaissance literature as quoted, for example, in Girolamo Morlini's early 16th-century *Novellae*. Moreover, the 'obscene' anecdotes are not at all particularly characteristic of the Arabic literature of the Mamluk and Ottoman periods, since many of them are already encountered in the entertaining literature of the pre-Mongol period.[41]

For the present context, it is important to note that Daniel Beaumont, in his discussion of the textual editions of the *Nights* published in the 19th century, has called attention to the fact that Isḥāqī wrote his book only a few decades before Galland acquired the manuscript held to be the oldest extant manuscript of the *Nights*. Beaumont, however, misinterprets the relevance of his finding, since he concludes that the author of the *Kitāb laṭāʾif akhbār al-uwal* had access to the *Nights* 'in a version very much like the one we know'.[42] Quite to the contrary, I argue that Isḥāqī's work was a quarry for the compilers of the *Nights*. Rather than Isḥāqī quoting from a version of the *Nights* existing prior to his chronicle, some of the tales given by Isḥāqī were directly copied into the versions of the *Nights* produced after him. The evidence of a total of 12 corresponding tales between Isḥāqī's chronicle and the *Nights*, the corresponding sequence of several tales in both Isḥāqī and the *Nights*, and the corresponding wording of the related texts leads to the conclusion that Isḥāqī's work must have been one of the contemporary works that the compilers of the *Nights* used in order to fill their incomplete manuscripts with additional tales.

Thus, for the first time in studying the sources of the *Nights*, we come extremely close to what might be termed the 'studio atmosphere' of the compilers. The analogies Basset noted between the *Nights* and Isḥāqī's work are all listed in the latter under the time of the early Abbasid caliphs. Hārūn al-Rashīd, the exemplary figure of the just sovereign in the *Nights*, occurs only in two of the stories. The first of these two stories is the one about Jaʿfar and the Bedouin, in which the ridiculed Bedouin redeems a mocking prescription with a loud fart;[43] this story is well known from numerous pre-Mongol sources. The second story relating to the time of Hārūn al-Rashīd is that of Abū l-Ḥasan or 'The Sleeper Awakened', already mentioned.[44] Attributed to the reign of Hārūn's son al-Amīn is the 'Story of the Noble-mindedness of the Barmecide Jaʿfar against the Bean-seller'.[45] The 'Story of Ibrāhīm al-Mahdī', well known from older historiographical literature, here takes place during the rule of al-Maʾmūn.[46] Toward the end of the long chapter on al-Maʾmūn there is also the 'Story of the Rich Man who Became Poor and Then Rich Again' (also known as 'The Dream of the Treasure on the Bridge') that formed the starting point for Basset's essay.[47] Two short anecdotes (or, in one case, a few lines of poetry), not listed by Basset, are quoted by Isḥāqī in the chapters dealing with the 'righteous' caliph Abū Bakr and the Umayyad caliph Hishām, respectively. These are 'The Lovers in the School'[48] and 'Hishām b. ʿAbd al-Malik and the Young Bedouin'.[49]

The context in which the 'Story of the Rich Man who Became Poor and Then Rich Again' is quoted in Isḥāqī's work is characteristic for the associative character of his compilation: the tale comes after a story in which a talented interpreter of dreams recognizes and interprets the dream forgotten by the monarch, a story that treats the motif of the 'dream'.[50] It is followed by another internationally known story (tale-type 1645 B) that again combines both the motif of 'treasure' as well as 'dream': here the dreamer has a vision of finding a treasure; in order to be able to find the place again when he would return later to collect the treasure, and not having a suitable object at hand, he marks it with his own excrement. Needless to say that upon awakening, he finds only the latter.[51] The following short anecdotes then quoted by Isḥāqī indulge in scatological matters: they deal with dramatic farting, the breaking of wind in inappropriate situations and other examples of flatulence, until the author calls himself to order by half-heartedly quoting the formula 'now let us return to the subject of our discussion'.

If one looks at the order of the quoted stories in the standard editions of the *Nights*, one comes to the point that Basset overlooked: four of the corresponding stories in the *Nights* are already contained in Isḥāqī in the same order; and while Isḥāqī quotes them at a certain distance from each other, in Zotenberg's Egyptian Recension they follow each other in direct succession. The 'Story of the Caliph al-Mutawakkil and the Slave Girl Maḥbūba' is quoted by Isḥāqī with reference to al-Jāḥiẓ under the caliphate of Abbasid caliph al-Mutawakkil,[52] and the 'Story of Wardān the Butcher with the Woman and the Bear'[53] as well as the 'Story of the Princess and the Ape'[54] are quoted with reference to an anonymous tradition (*ḥukiya*, *qīla*) during the caliphate of the Fatimids. Another tale quoted by Isḥāqī that has an analogous version in the *Nights* is the combination of two relatively short anecdotes about the Qāḍī Abū Yūsuf, an eighth-century character who was renowned for his cleverness. Even though Isḥāqī mentions the same protagonist, he quotes the stories in the chapter on Ottoman rule. In the first anecdote, Abū Yūsuf identifies what Hārūn al-Rashīd thinks is human semen in the bed of his wife Zubayda as that of a bat living hidden under the ceiling; in the second, known already from al-Jāḥiẓ's *al-Bayān wa-l-tabyīn*, Abū Yūsuf is asked to determine which of two desserts is the more delicious: he asks to be given a chance to taste the first dessert; and when that is finished, he requests to taste the second one too, since 'he will not pass judgement on somebody who is absent'.[55]

The story of 'The Dream of the Treasure on the Bridge', together with the three tales following in the *Nights*—that is, the stories 'The Caliph al-Mutawakkil and the Slave Girl Maḥbūba', 'Wardān the Butcher with the Woman and the Bear', and 'The Princess and the Ape'—forms a block of four tales that the compilers of the *Nights* copied directly from Isḥāqī's work. With the present state of the argument, only the identical order of the stories speaks for this assumption. One might still argue to the contrary that the order of the tales in both works could agree by chance, since the same stories would potentially also be found in other, different and yet unidentified, sources. A further corroboration of the degree of dependence of the *Nights* on Isḥāqī may, however, be reached through a close textual comparison of the passages concerned.

Elsewhere, I have done this close comparison for the story of the 'Dream of the Treasure on the Bridge'.[56] The comparison between the versions of this story in the *Kitāb laṭā'if akhbār al-uwal* and in the printed editions of the *Nights* shows just less than 30 textual deviations in a text comprising roughly 200 words. These deviations hardly represent decisive changes of the text, since they are not profound in terms of form or content. Consequently, they should not serve as an argument that some other text

served as the basis for the compilers of the *Nights*. Notably, all of the divergences can be explained fairly convincingly. First, the manuscript of Isḥāqī's chronicle used by the compilers of the *Nights* may not have corresponded exactly to the manuscript or manuscripts that served as the basis for the modern printed editions of Isḥāqī. In any case, the text was integrated into the *Nights* long before the *Kitāb laṭāʾif akhbār al-uwal* went to press, as the first printed edition seems to have appeared only in 1251/1835. Second, the editors of the *Kitāb laṭāʾif akhbār al-uwal* could have carried out small alterations in the manuscript they published, so that the text in the *Nights* might reproduce a wording closer to the original manuscript wording. The latter assumption is less likely, however, since the wording in Isḥāqī is occasionally grammatically incorrect, or the meaning needs an emendation. Therefore, we must assume that the changes in these instances are corrections made by the compilers of the *Nights*. Also speaking for this assumption is the fact that the text of the *Nights* provides occasional expansions that point to the conscious effort to correct mistakes of the copied text and to expand it in order to fashion a more logical or more fluent version.

The fact that the compilers of the *Nights* copied directly from Isḥāqī—or, for that matter, from any other supposed source text—can only be proven with certainty if contemporary statements or documents to this respect were to be discovered. In the absence of such first-hand data, however, the argument put forth here, which is based on circumstantial evidence, brings us as close to the working practice of the compilers of the *Nights* as we are likely to get. A detailed comparison of the wording of the other stories common to both *Kitāb laṭāʾif akhbār al-uwal* and the *Nights* brings a similar result as the one conducted for the story of the 'Dream of the Treasure on the Bridge'. The divergences between the various versions can to a large degree be explained by grammatical corrections, linguistic refinements or stylistic improvements by the redactors who adopted the stories from the *Kitāb laṭāʾif akhbār al-uwal* to the *Nights*. What is more, the 'Story of Jaʿfar the Barmakid and the old Bedouin' offers additional arguments, since the words of this tale in Isḥāqī and the *Nights*—and only in these two versions—agree to such an extent that they form a separate group distinct from most of the other versions documented in previous Arabic tradition.[57] While in the early versions of this story, the 'jester' refers to al-Faḍl b. al-Rabīʿ, vizier under Hārūn and his son al-Amīn, the crystallization process of the exemplary figure of ruler Hārūn al-Rashīd has in Isḥāqī's day already advanced to such an extent that the vizier Jaʿfar al-Barmakī is named as the exemplary companion of Hārūn. This conscious adaptation serves as a further argument that the compilers of *Nights* copied from Isḥāqī's work without any intermediary.

The main importance of Isḥāqī's chronicle lies in serving as a direct source for the compilers of the *Nights*. Meanwhile, many of the tales under consideration here also constitute fascinating objects of study because of their historical depth. In other words, Isḥāqī's versions of the tales constitute the result of a historical process during which the tales were shaped, gradually gaining the form he quotes. While his versions are thus the result of a continuous process, the final step of the tales' inclusion in the *Nights* is less a further step of development, but rather a verbatim quotation with only minor adaptations. I have already mentioned the story of the 'Dream of the Treasure on the Bridge', whose oldest versions is known from Tanūkhī.[58] Tanūkhī's version is preserved by way of its quotation in Ibn Ḥijja al-Ḥamawī's widely read 15th-century anthology,[59] from where Isḥāqī and, following him, the compilers of the *Nights* copied it. Meanwhile, over the centuries there had also been other competing versions of the tale, such as the one included in a handbook for pilgrims compiled in the 14th century

that served to explain the magnanimity of a certain ʿAffān b. Sulaymān, a wealthy man in 10th-century Cairo.[60] Tanūkhī's version also appears to be the source for the tale's earliest European adaptation that is encountered in the German *Karlmeinet*, a 14th-century compilation treating the early history of Charlemagne.[61] In this manner, many of the tales under consideration here are part of a national, or sometimes even an international, web of tradition whose single constituents lived on in tradition from where they were taken up and reiterated by written tradition at irregular intervals.

A particularly interesting case of point in this respect is constituted by the two explicitly sexual ('pornographic') tales the compilers of the *Nights* copied from Isḥāqī; that is, the 'Story of Wardān the Butcher with the Woman and the Bear' and the 'Story of the Princess and the Ape'. Notably, both tales are quoted by Isḥāqī as deriving from anonymous tradition, as indicated by the verbs *ḥukiya* ('it is told') or *qīla* ('it is said') by which they are introduced. Since Isḥāqī could have known at least one of the tales from written tradition, the reference to an anonymous tradition sounds like a defensive statement that at the same time authenticates the narrative while relieving the author of revealing his sources. The second of the two tales, the 'Story of the Princess and the Ape', has not been documented in any other version, and so it might well, as the author indicates, derive from a contemporary oral tradition. Even so, Rachid Bazzi has convincingly demonstrated in an extensive discussion that the tale binds in well with other stories of sexual intercourse between human women and male apes or, for that matter, other male creatures the storytellers regarded as equally brute, such as a demon or a black man.[62] One should mention in passing that the like kind of bestiality in Arabic tales is not restricted to human women but is also practised by human men. There is, for instance, the tale of the shipwrecked man who actually engendered offspring by copulating with a female monkey as told in Buzurg b. Shahriyār's 10th-century collection of sailors' yarns, *ʿAjāʾib al-Hind* ('The Wonders of India').[63] By way of its inclusion in the Sindbadesque Persian romance *Salim-e Javāheri* ('The Jeweller Salīm') this idea lived on in Persian popular tradition, from which it was recorded as late as the second half of the 20th century.[64]

The second explicitly sexual tale under consideration here, the 'Story of Wardān', has been discussed in great detail by Claude Bremond in his 'notes complémentaires' to André Miquel's book *Les Arabes et l'ours*.[65] The 'Story of Wardān' is first encountered —although in another wording and with a different emphasis—in the chronicle of Ibn al-Dawādārī, a work compiled at the beginning of the 14th century.[66] Ibn al-Dawādārī quotes his version from a book entitled *Ḥall al-rumūz fī ʿilm al-kunūz* ('The Disclosure of Mysteries in the Discovery of Treasures'), a work of the otherwise unknown author Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Razzāq b. ʿAbd al-Aʿlā al-Qayrawānī, of which no copy is known to exist today. The story is told as taking place during the reign of the Fatimid caliph al-Ḥākim who reigned from 996 to 1021, thus purporting to depict events that took place some three centuries before. Ibn al-Dawādārī's version betrays a distinct focus on magic and the supernatural: the woman whom Wardān watches having intercourse with a bear is portrayed as a sorceress who, by pronouncing a magic spell, can make the water in the kettle flow over, thus threatening to drown Wardān; moreover, there is an element of destiny in that the treasure guarded by the bear can only be appropriated by the protagonist Wardān as its predestined owner. The focus on magic is lost in another old version, not discussed by Bremond, that is quoted in the treatise on sexual manners *Rujūʿ al-shaykh ilà ṣabāhu* ('Old Man Becomes Young Again').[67] The compilation of this book is conventionally attributed to the 16th-century Ottoman author,

Ibn Kamāl Bāshā (died 940/1533). Given its context, Ibn Kamāl Bāshā's version focuses on sexuality. Instead of courteously circumscribing the sexual activities between the woman and the bear, the author uses the vulgar term for sexual intercourse several times, and it is only in his version that the bear's member is explicitly stated to be 'as large as a donkey's penis, or maybe even larger'. Since Isḥāqī explicitly quotes from Ibn Kamāl Bāshā elsewhere in his chronicle,[68] it seems likely that his largely identical, although 'domesticated', version is taken from the same book.

Out of the stories found in both the *Nights* and Isḥāqī, the story of 'Abu l-Ḥasan, or the Sleeper Awakened' offers a case that, although highly interesting, falls outside the norm discussed here. All of the other stories under consideration here were adopted in the manuscripts that served as the basis of the Būlāq and Calcutta II editions. In contrast, the only printed version of the story of 'The Sleeper Awakened' is found in the Breslau edition.[69] Interestingly, this story is at the same time the only one of Isḥāqī's stories that is already given in Galland's adaptation, even though until today we do not know exactly on which source text Galland relied. The story has been integrated into the *Nights* after Isḥāqī and before Galland in the so-called Maillet manuscript. This manuscript was most likely prepared in the second half of the 17th century, and was acquired by the French consul in Egypt, Benoit de Maillet, at the latest towards the beginning of the 18th century. As estimated by Herman Zotenberg, the Maillet manuscript was already part of the Royal Library in Paris around 1738. On the basis of its special characteristics, Zotenberg did not want to attribute the Maillet manuscript to any of the known redactions of the *Nights*. On the question of whether Galland had this manuscript at his disposal or not, Zotenberg stood firm that Galland's text shows no special affinity with the Maillet manuscript in terms of wording. However, Galland could have known the 'Story of the Sleeper Awakened' from another manuscript of the *Nights* preserved in the Royal Library—an Ottoman Turkish translation of the *Nights*. As this Turkish manuscript bears the date 1046/1636, it was prepared shortly after Isḥāqī's death. The discussion of Galland's possible sources for his version of the 'Story of the Sleeper Awakened' becomes yet more complex when one considers that Galland himself also knew the *Kitāb laṭāʾif akhbār al-uwal*, because it is cited in Barthélemy d'Herbelot's *Bibliothèque orientale*, published in 1694, a work in whose preparation Galland had cooperated.[70] As already noted by Lane, the version of this story in Isḥāqī is simpler than the one in the *Nights*, since it ends with the explanation of the dreamer's experience and does not contain the second part given by Galland. This second part is an anecdote, originally a separate text mentioning the poet Abū Dulāma (died c. 161/777) as its protagonist. Already in the 14th century, the anecdote, now with an anonymous protagonist, was used as a set-piece in the collection of stories known as *al-Ḥikāyāt al-ʿajība*, where it constitutes a humorous appendix to a version of the internationally documented tale of Doctor Know-All (tale-type 1641).[71]

To conclude the present discussion of Isḥāqī's chronicle and its implications for the study of the sources of the *Nights*, I would like to mention a general desideratum. In his 2008 publication *Les Mille et une Nuits: Histoire du texte et Classification des contes*, Aboubakr Chraïbi has for the first time classified the totality of tales in the *Nights*— according to the Būlāq edition—in terms of genre. In addition, for each tale he has listed the documented analogous versions in classical and post-classical Arabic literature. This classification and documentation is a major achievement preparing the way for an adequate assessment of both the historical depth and the complexity of the *Nights*. Only the detailed comparison of each and every version of each and every tale will eventually

enable us to understand the intricate process underlying the compilation—or maybe one should better say, the creation—of the 'complete' versions of the *Nights*. The role of Isḥāqī's *Kitāb laṭāʾif akhbār al-uwal* in this respect is significant, even though the effect of the related process is neither very large nor unique. Meanwhile, in addition to the general fascination readers will find with the tales of the *Nights* in terms of structure and content, the awareness of Isḥāqī's role offers additional intellectual pleasure to appreciating the *Nights* as a literary work that has contributed so widely to world culture.

Notes

1. Chraïbi, *Mille et Une Nuits*, 89–116.
2. Marzolph, 'Re-locating.'
3. Grotzfeld, 'Manuscript Tradition'; and Grotzfeld, 'Dreihundert Jahre.' Here and in the following, when speaking of the manuscripts of the *Nights* compiled contemporarily with or after Galland, we cite the versions known in international scholarship as 'Zotenberg's Egyptian Recension'.
4. Yamanaka, 'Alexander.'
5. See Marzolph and Van Leeuwen, *Arabian Nights Encyclopedia*, vol. 2, 606–607.
6. For recent discussions about Arabic literature of the post-classical period, see Bauer, 'Literarische Anthologien'; Bauer, 'Mamluk Literature'; Bauer, 'In Search'; Allen and Richards, *Arabic Literature*; and Lowry and Stewart, *Essays*.
7. Isḥāqī, *Laṭāʾif*; see Marzolph, 'Das *Kitāb*.'
8. Lane, *Thousand and One Nights*, vol. 2, 335, note 1.
9. Marzolph, 'Abū 'l-Ḥasan.'
10. Burton, *Arabian Nights*, vol. 11 (= Suppl. 1), 2, note 2.
11. Lane, *Thousand and One Nights*, vol. 2, 461, note 39.
12. For the concept of 'tale-type' and the corresponding tale-type numbers, see Aarne and Thompson, *Types*; and Uther, *Types*.
13. Tanūkhī, *Faraj*, vol. 2, 268–269, no. 212; Ḥamawī, *Thamarāt*, 310–311; and see Marzolph, 'Traum vom Schatz.'
14. Basset, 'Le Rêve.'
15. Chauvin, 'Le Rêve.'
16. See Chraïbi, *Mille et Une Nuits*, 156, no. 165.
17. Ibid., 146, no. 087.
18. Ibid., 157, no. 219.
19. Basset, 'Notes.'
20. Mahdi, *Thousand and One Nights*.
21. Grotzfeld, 'Neglected Conclusions'; Grotzfeld, 'Textverarbeitung'; Grotzfeld, 'Proto-ZÄR-Handschriften'; and Grotzfeld, 'Les Traditions manuscrites.'
22. Isḥāqī, *Laṭāʾif*.
23. Ibid., 67/6. References to Isḥāqī, *Laṭāʾif*, include page/line.
24. Ibid., 119/-7 and 124/8.
25. Ibid., 128/-7.
26. Ibid., 245/13, 258/-7, 260/3, 273/15 and 333/12.
27. Ibid., 119/-1.
28. Ibid., 271/-11.
29. Busse, 'Arabische Historiographie,' 289; Winter, 'Historiography,' 174; Hanna, 'Chronicles,' 247; and Hanna, *In Praise of Books*, 113 and 115–116.
30. The following quotations are taken from Marzolph, 'Medieval Knowledge,' 413–414.
31. Hanna, 'Chronicles,' 247.
32. Ibid.
33. Hanna, *In Praise of Books*, 116.
34. Ibid.
35. See the references in note 6.
36. Bauer, 'Mamluk Literature,' 122.

37. Lowry and Stewart, *Essays*, 7.
38. Schenda, 'Kolportageliteratur'; Schenda, 'Kuriositätenliteratur'; and Alsheimer, 'Kompilationsliteratur.'
39. Isḥāqī, *Laṭāʾif*, 25/-3, 55/-3, 117/-3, 182/-2, 187/13, 210/10, 242/1, 246/-8, 252/3, 263/-4 (*ʿudnā …*), 275/-2, 286/-3, 337/1 and 348/2.
40. Flügel, 'Handschriften,' 534–538, at 535; cf. Marzolph, *Arabia ridens*, vol. 1, 67–71; and Marzolph, 'Nuzhat al-udabā'.'
41. See, for instance, Isḥāqī, *Laṭāʾif*, 25/-2 = Marzolph, *Arabia ridens*, vol. 2, no. 322; 44/14 = no. 352; 78/-10 = no. 920; 79/3 = no. 616; 79/4 = 151; and 129/18 = no. 77.
42. Beaumont, *Slave of Desire*, 19.
43. Isḥāqī, *Laṭāʾif*, 149/4; Marzolph, *Arabia ridens*, vol. 2, no. 52; Chauvin, *Bibliographie*, vol. 5, 281, no. 165; and Marzolph and Van Leeuwen, *Arabian Nights Encyclopedia*, vol. 1, 236, no. 129.
44. Isḥāqī, *Laṭāʾif*, 149/-2; Chauvin, *Bibliographie*, vol. 5, 272–275, no. 155; Marzolph and van Leeuwen, *Arabian Nights Encyclopedia*, vol. 1, 392–393, no. 263; Frenzel, 'Bauer wird König'; Aarne and Thompson, *Types*, type 1531; and Uther, *Types*, type 1531.
45. Isḥāqī, *Laṭāʾif*, 160/4; Chauvin, *Bibliographie*, vol. 5, 164–165, no. 87; and Marzolph and van Leeuwen, *Arabian Nights Encyclopedia*, vol. 1, 235–236, no. 77.
46. Isḥāqī, *Laṭāʾif*, 170/9; Chauvin, *Bibliographie*, vol. 6, 54, no. 219; and Marzolph and van Leeuwen, *Arabian Nights Encyclopedia*, vol. 1, 229, no. 69.
47. Isḥāqī, *Laṭāʾif*, 180/-6; Chauvin, *Bibliographie*, vol. 6, 94–95, no. 258; and Marzolph and van Leeuwen, *Arabian Nights Encyclopedia*, vol. 1, 353–354, no. 99.
48. Isḥāqī, *Laṭāʾif*, 70/-7; Chauvin, *Bibliographie*, vol. 5, 108, no. 39; and Marzolph and van Leeuwen, *Arabian Nights Encyclopedia*, vol. 1, 276, no. 109.
49. Isḥāqī, *Laṭāʾif*, 104/3; Chauvin, *Bibliographie*, vol. 5, 288, no. 172; and Marzolph and van Leeuwen, *Arabian Nights Encyclopedia*, vol. 1, 222, no. 68.
50. Isḥāqī, *Laṭāʾif*, 177/4.
51. Ibid., 182/7; Marzolph, 'Schatz'; Aarne and Thompson, *Types*, type 1645 B; and Uther, *Types*, type 1645 B.
52. Isḥāqī, *Laṭāʾif* 196/-7; Chauvin, *Bibliographie*, vol. 5, 105, no. 35; and Marzolph and van Leeuwen, *Arabian Nights Encyclopedia*, vol. 1, 312, no. 100.
53. Isḥāqī, *Laṭāʾif*, 256/13; Chauvin, *Bibliographie*, vol. 5, 177–178, no. 101; and Marzolph and van Leeuwen, *Arabian Nights Encyclopedia*, vol. 1, 442–443, no. 101.
54. Isḥāqī, *Laṭāʾif*, 258/-1; Chauvin, *Bibliographie*, vol. 5, 178, no. 102; and Marzolph and van Leeuwen, *Arabian Nights Encyclopedia*, vol. 1, 262–263, no. 102.
55. Isḥāqī, *Laṭāʾif*, 157/-6; Chauvin, *Bibliographie*, vol. 7, 115, no. 384; Marzolph and van Leeuwen, *Arabian Nights Encyclopedia*, vol. 1, 78, no. 119; and Marzolph, *Arabia ridens*, vol. 2, no. 70.
56. Marzolph, 'Das *Kitāb*.'
57. Marzolph, *Arabia ridens*, vol. 2, no. 52.
58. Tanūkhī, *Faraj*, vol. 2, 268–269, no. 212.
59. Ḥamawī, *Thamarāt*, 310–311.
60. Muwaffaq al-Dīn, *Murshid*, 656–657.
61. Marzolph, 'Traum vom Schatz.'
62. Bazzī, 'La Princesse.'
63. Sauvaget, 'Merveilles,' 231–233, no. 40; and Buzurg b. Shahriyār, *Wonders of India*, 40–41, no. XL.
64. Marzolph, 'Social Values,' 82, 87–88 and 91–92.
65. Bremond, 'Deux notes.'
66. Dawādārī, *Kanz*, vol. 6, 302–308.
67. I owe this reference to Heinz Grotzfeld, who kindly also supplied the text of the manuscript Berlin, Staatsbibliothek Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Ahlwardt no. 6380 (Pet. 375, 2), fol. 100b/14–101b/-5.
68. Isḥāqī, *Laṭāʾif*, 260/-6.
69. Habicht and Fleischer, *Tausend und Eine Nacht*, vol. 4 (1828), 134–189. For details of the following discussion, see Marzolph, 'Abū ʾl-Ḥasan.'
70. Herbelot, *Bibliothèque*, 524, s. v. Lathaif.

71.   Marzolph and van Leeuwen, *Arabian Nights Encyclopedia*, vol. 1, 392–393; Aarne and Thompson, *Types*, type 1556; Uther, *Types*, type 1556; and Marzolph, 'Pension.'

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