

CONTENTS

- Albert Arazi [Narratif et lyrisme dans la poésie arabe ancienne : le *rahīl* et l'amour chez Ka'b b. Zuhayr](#)
- Samuel A. Stafford [Constructing Muhammad's legitimacy: Arabic literary biography and the Jewish pedigree of the companion 'Abd Allāh b. Salām \(d. 43/633\)](#)
- W. Sasson Chahanovich [Kissing at the Ka'ba: *ghazal* poetry and early Islamic conceptualizations of the sacred and the sensual](#)
- Omar Abed Rabbo [Was the Fāṭimī caliph al-Āmir bi-Aḥkām Allāh buried in 'Asqalān? Following the recent discovery of his epitaph](#)

REVIEWS

- Rachel Milstein Houari Touati, ed. *De la figuration humaine au portrait dans l'art islamique*
- Roy Vilozny Ansari Hassan. *L'imamat et l'occultation selon l'imamisme: Étude bibliographique et histoire des textes*

**WAS THE FĀṬIMĪ CALIPH AL-ĀMIR BI-AḤKĀM ALLĀH BURIED IN 'ASQALĀN?
FOLLOWING THE RECENT DISCOVERY OF HIS EPITAPH**

Omar Abed Rabo
The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

Abstract It is well-known that the Fāṭimīs buried their dead in turbat al-za'farān in Cairo which was constructed in 362/973 by the Caliph al-Mu'izz li-Dīn Allāh. However, the tombstone of the Fāṭimī Caliph al-Āmir bi-Aḥkām Allāh was found in Rockefeller Museum. This article tries to solve the mystery of the existence of the tombstone at the Rockefeller Museum and provides some answers regarding the existence of the inscription in Jerusalem as well as the year that this inscription was prepared during al-Āmir bi-Aḥkām Allāh's lifetime. The article discusses the inscription line by line and analyzes the names and titles contained in this inscription, placing them in their historical context in order to clear the mystery of the existence of al-Āmir inscription in Jerusalem and its date.

Keywords Inscription, Fāṭimī, al-Āmir bi-Aḥkām Allāh, 'Asqalān, al-Ma'mūn al-Baṭā'iḥī

**NARRATIF ET LYRISME DANS LA POÉSIE ARABE ANCIENNE :
LE RAḤĪL ET L'AMOUR CHEZ KA'Ḥ B. ZUHAYR**

Albert Arazi

The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

Abstract Ka'Ḥ b. Zuhayr est un des poètes les plus individualistes de son époque : l'écrasante majorité de ses poèmes dans la recension d'al-Sukkarī sont des bipartis ; ils comprennent uniquement une ouverture et un *raḥīl*, deux sections où le moi prédomine. Dans l'ouverture, le *nasīb* traditionnel, volontiers pleureur est réduit à la portion congrue. Le poète semble lui préférer un texte « musclé » qui fait de sa partenaire une pimbêche et un objet de risée dépourvue de toute intelligence. Tout aussi fréquemment, il préfère au texte élégiaque du *nasīb*, une ouverture plus joyeuse qui raconte ses querelles avec son épouse. Le *raḥīl* semble avoir inspiré Ka'Ḥ qui en fait une section d'un lyrisme tout d'optimisme ; l'infiniment petit, l'homme, triomphe des étendues infinies semées de périls. Il y développe une poétique de l'émerveillement. La seconde partie de cette étude exploite les procédés de la narratologie sémiotique pour étudier la poésie d'amour de Ka'Ḥ et montrer qu'une génération avant Sā'ida b. Ju'ayya et Abū Dhu'ayb, Ka'Ḥ avait jeté les fondements du *ghazal* dévoyé, et plus précisément du *tashbīb*.

Keywords *nasīb*, gender, *raḥīl*, le mal d'aimer, *mutayyamīn*, *tashbīb*

KISSING AT THE KA'BA:

GHAZAL POETRY AND EARLY ISLAMIC CONCEPTUALIZATIONS OF THE SACRED AND THE SENSUAL

W. Sasson Chahanovich

Harvard University

Abstract In this essay I argue that the polarizing classification of *ghazal* poetry into “chaste” (*‘udhrī*) vs. “licentious” (*‘umarī*) types is a hyper-moralizing position that is not observed in the earliest historical record of Islamic-era *shī‘r*. Unconsummated love, as advocated in later Sunnī religious literature, is implicitly understood as pure and ideal, whereas physical and titillating adventures are construed as aberrant and outré. Nineteenth-century European cultural mores critically helped to advance this reductive dichotomy. Thus, a preference has prevailed in academic research that has totally marginalized the more erotic *ghazal* tradition. This is clearly observed in the poetry of ‘Umar b. Abī Rabī‘a, the titular progenitor of the supposedly salacious genre. By examining the early Islamic poetic record as reflected in ‘Umar’s works, as well as Islamic historiographic texts and traditional religious sources, I demonstrate that early Arabic love poetry was neither preferentially chaste nor was erotic *ghazal* deemed by its earliest audiences as violating religious taboos. ‘Umar’s trope of courting and kissing in and around the Ka‘ba precinct is the smoking gun. His accounts of both real and imagined courtship in the Meccan sanctuary help us resituate classical Arabic literary articulations of desire and reclaim an early stage of Islamic life removed from later orthodox strictures.

Keywords ‘Umar b. Abī Rabī‘a, *ghazal*, Ka‘ba, Mecca, *ḥajj* (Pilgrimage), Taboos, Eroticism

**CONSTRUCTING MUḤAMMAD’S LEGITIMACY:
ARABIC LITERARY BIOGRAPHY AND THE JEWISH PEDIGREE OF THE COMPANION ‘ABD ALLĀH B.
SALĀM (D. 43/633)**

Samuel A. Stafford
University of Virginia

Abstract ‘Abd Allāh b. Salām is regarded in Islamic tradition as the first and foremost Jewish convert to Islam during the Prophet’s career in Medina, the preeminent authority on Jewish scriptures in seventh-century Arabia, and an eminent Companion. This study examines Ibn Salām’s legendary image by analyzing how his Jewish background and pedigree is constructed and embellished in the Arabic biographical literature of classical Islam. I argue that the portrayals of Ibn Salām’s Jewish background, including his ancestry, scholarly background, and expertise in Jewish scriptures, were fashioned to legitimize MuḤammad’s status as a prophet. The embellishment of Ibn Salām’s Jewish background and pedigree in the biographical sources is intended to highlight the authority and significance of his conversion to Islam. The study concludes that Ibn Salām’s Jewish background and purported status as Medina’s preeminent Rabbi and scholar of Jewish scriptures are literary tropes that were deployed by his biographers to legitimize MuḤammad and support the doctrine that biblical scriptures anticipate his mission.

Keywords Ibn Salām, MuḤammad, Jews of Medina, Torah, biography, conversion to Islam