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A Philological And Zoological Description Of The Bird Names Given By Yāqūt Al-Ḥamawī And Zakariā Al Qazwīnī In Their Description Of The Island Of Tinnīs

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The aim of this article is to comment philologically and biologically the list of 134/135 bird names included in the descriptions of the island of Tinnīs in Lake Manzalah in the Delta of the Nile which are given by Yāqūt ibn Abdullah al-ḥamawī (1179-1229)[1] in his *Mu'ğam al-Buldān* and by Zakariā b. Murḥammad b. Maḥmūd al-Qazwīnī (1203-1283)[2] in his Cosmography, *Kitāb fī 'Ağā'ib al-Maḫlūqāt wa Ġarā'ib al-Mawğūdāt*. As the amount of material invovlved in this study is extensive, the treating will take place using several articles.

In these two geographical works, the island of Tinnīs, which is located in the Nile Delta was given a rather detailed description. This island is situated in Lake Manzalah in the Nile Delta.

The natural history of Lake Manzalah

Lake Manzalah is the greatest of the coastal lagoons

[1]. al-Qazwīnī, Zakariā' b. Muḥammad b. Maḥmūd; *Kitāb 'Ajā'ib al-maḫlūqāt wa ġarā'ib al-mawğūdāt - El Cazwini's Kosmographie.* Ed. F. Wūstenfeld. Genehmigter Neudruck des Ausgabe von 1848-49 des Verlages der Dieterichschen Buchhandlung. Martin Sändig 1967: Wiesbaden.
[2]. Yāqūt al-Ḥamāwı, *Jacuts Geographisher Wörterbuch,* herausgeben von Ferdinand, Wµstenfeld, Leipzig 1866-70. Reprint by Asādi Library, Teheran.

which follow the coast line of the Delta of the Nile. These coastal lagoons are lake Maryut, Idku, Burullus and Manzalah. These lakes have brackish water. They are shallow, their average depth being about 1 m. The shores of these lakes and the low islands which are situated in them give shelter to swamp-habitats which are still biologically healthy[3]. This I witnessed personally during my stay at Lake Manzalah in April 1993. The surface area of Lake Manzalah was officially 1200[4] km^2, but this number had in all probability to be reduced to its half due to the heavy draining made by the Egyptian authorities in their efforts to acquire new arable land[5]. In the 12th century the surface area of the lake was, as far as I could see according to maps which were shown to me at the Historical Museum in Port Said, between 2000 km^2 and 3000 km^2.

At the present time the Delta of the Nile runs from a little north of Cairo to the coast and it follows the coast from Rašīd (Rosetta) to Dimyāṭ (Damietta), but the Delta has had a much greater area in historical times. In the first century A.D. the Delta of the Nile contained seven river arms. In the twelfth century A.D. this number was reduced to six, and at the present time it is reduced to two river arms (Goodman et al. 1989 p. 33, cf. also Ṣūrat al-Arḍ (Configuration

[3]. Goodman, S. M. and P. L. Meininger, S. M. Baha el Din, J. J. Hobbs, W. C. Mullié 1989: *The Birds of Egypt.* Oxford University Press. Oxford, New York, p. 34.
[4]. Goodman et al. *The Birds,* p. 34.
[5] Personal information given by the director of the Egyptian Wildlife Service dr. Gamīl ‘Aṭṭā’ in 1993.

de la Terre) by Ibn Ḥawqal[6].

Historical time in Egypt begins approximately about 3200 B.C. and the oldest historical records mention the Delta as "bird tanks of pleasure"[7]. The Delta of the Nile was populated and taken to agricultural use much later than the Nile Valley, and it was not before 1100 B.C. that the population of the delta began to exceed the population of the Nile Valley, but the real shift of productivity and regional power was undertaken in the Hellenistic and Roman period. Many new towns were built in the delta by Greek and Roman enterprise[8] with the city of Alexandria as the most famous.

At the present time the Nile Delta has an area of approximately 22.000 km^2 and the greatest part is used intensively in agriculture but it is clear from the very detailed historical records of the presence of a population of hippopotamus in the Nile Delta[9], that at least until the 14th century A.D. some great parts of the Delta were not cultivated especially in the north-eastern region. There was in addition some wooded areas around the southern shores of Lake Manzalah in medieval time[10].

Survey of the history of Lake Manzalah and the island of Tinnīs

The name of the island of Tinnīs is composed of the

[6]. Ibn Ḥawqal 1964. *Configuration de laTerre (Ṣūrat al-Arḍ)* Introduction et traduction avec index par J. H. Kramers et G. Wiet. Édition G.P. Maisonneuve et Larose: Paris.
[7]. Goodman et al. *The Birds*, p. 33.
[8]. Goodman et al. *The Birds*, p. 34.
[9]. Provençal, P., Nouvel essai sur les observations zoologiques de ‘Abd al-Laṭıf al-Baġdādı, *Arabica* 1995, vol. 42, pp. 315-333.
[10] Personal information received in 1993 from dr. ‘Abbās a¸s-¸sanāwī, the General Director of the Historical Museum in Port Said

Coptic definite article t and the Greek word for island νησος. It was also called at a certain time Dāt-al-’Aḫṣāṣ (ذات الأخصاص), but in the end it was only called Tinnīs[11]. Tinnīs was founded as a naval base by Ibn Ṭulūn in 269 a.h. = 882-883 A.D. for his navy. Ibn Ṭulūn was formally a governor of the Caliph al-Mu’tamid in Baghdād, but in practice he succeeded in attaining political independence. For the use of the navy and the civil population a number of cisterns were made. The cisterns were filled with water when the Nile rose, and they were able to keep water for up to 6 months[12]. Tinnīs became a rich city in this way with an especially renowned textile industry. It was one of the few places in the Arab world were the glossy fabric abū qalamūn was manufactured. This should especially have taken place in Dimiāṭ and Tinnīs[13]. The name abū qalamūn also became the name of birds with a strongly glossy plumage, and according to some of the Arabic descriptions it may be identified with the Black Stork *Ciconia nigra*[14].

Tinnīs thus became, together with Alexandria and Dimiāṭ, an important commercial port for Egypt, especially as this country went into a period of renewed economic prosperity upon being liberated from fiscal burdens to the ’Abbasid court (Hitti 1985 p. 453) . The reason it was chosen as a naval base was, as far as I can see, that being located in a coastal lagoon with an average depth of 1 - 1,5 m, this port

[11]. Personal information from dr. ‘Abbās aʼs-ʼsanāwī, cf. also Yāqūt al-Ḥamāwı, *Jacuts Geographisher Wörterbuch.*
[12]. Pers. inf. from dr.‘Abbās aʼs-ʼsanāwī.
[13]. Dozy, R. 1927. *Supplement aux dictionnaires arabes.* Deuxième édition. É. J. Brill, Maisonneuve frères. Paris, Leiden.
[14]. Dozy ibid. and bird No. 100 in the list treated here

was completely inaccessible for sea- going ships if the pilots did not know the channels and fairways. It is obvious that such a good and well protected harbour had to become an important export harbour for Egyptian products. The city of Tinnīs flourished to the year 624 a.h. / 1227 A.D. when the Ayyūbid ruler of Egypt al-Kāmil (ruled 1218-1238 A.D. (Hitti 1985 p. 653)) ordered it emptied of the civil population, and a little later he dismantled it as a naval base[15]. The dismantling was presumably a result of the military engagements with crusaders who took Dimiāṭ in November 1219 and were first utterly repelled in august 1221[16]. The poet Ibn ʻUnayn (1154-1233) celebrated this victory in a long qaṣīdah which may be read in A.J. Arberry's *Arabic Poetry - a primer for students*[17].

At the present time Tinnīs is completely abandoned. When I visited this island on the 8th of April 1993 the only recent traces of human activities (except for the archaeological activities) were a little cattle and some simple huts on the island, but I was unable to see if these were signs of a more permanent settling. A great part of the island is covered by the site of the old city, which covers an area of several hectares. The site is covered by a 4 m high earth layer and appears as a flat earth mound without vegetation. The archaeological activities were organised and supervised by the Historical Museum in Port Said. This site is of unparalleled archaeological importance as it is one of

[15]. personal information from dr. ʻAbbās a¸s-¸sanāwī.
[16]. Hitti, P. K. 1970. *History of the Arabs,* MacMillan Education Ltd. : London, p. 653-654.
[17]. Arberry, A.J. 1965. *Arabic Poetry - a primer for students,* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, poem No. 22 pp. 122-125 and p. 174.

the few, or perhaps the only medieval Islamic city which does not have a modern city lying above it.

The medieval description of Lake Manzalah and the island of Tinnīs

Yāqūt al ḥamawī writes:

"...and concerning its description (i.e. of the island of Tinnīs) it is an island (located) in the middle of a lake [buḥayrah] (i.e. Lake Manzalah in the north-eastern part of the Nile Delta) which is separated from the great sea. The sea encircles the lake on all sides as between it and the great sea lies another (piece of) land of elongated shape being an island between (these) two stretches of water [baḥrayni]. The beginning of this (stretch of) land is (situated) near Faram**ā** (Pelusium, an ancient site lying about 30 km to the south east of the actual city of Port Said when following the coast) and Ṭīnah. At this place, there is a mouth by which the water from the great sea enters the lake of Tinnīs at a site (which is) called Qurbāj. There, boats ferry from the land of Faramā to the elongated land which we (already) mentioned passes between the great sea and the lake of Tinnīs. One may travel about three day on this land till (a place) near Dimiāṭ is reached, and (at this place, another) mouth also lies, which takes (water) from the great sea into the lake of Tinnīs. Near this place is situated an outlet of the Nile which flows [yulqī ilā] into the lake of Tinnīs. When the rising of the Nile is at its fullest height [زيادة تكامل النيل] its fresh (water) overcomes the sea water and (the water of) the lake becomes fresh. At this moment the people of Tinnīs store the water (of the lake) in their cisterns and reservoirs to (be used in the course of the coming) year. The people of

Faramā however have subterranean canals which transport water to them when the lake gets empty (of salt water) and appears towards land.- This is a map of the island (...) One of the historians who wrote about Tinnīs has said (i.e. written): " At Tinnīs there is a season in which there are of bird species (a diversity) not found in any other place. There are some more than hundred and thirty species, and they are (the following): as-salwā etc. It is said that the Pelican belongs to the bird of the river Oxus [al-Jayḥūn] and that the bird, which are like this bird, are from the Oxus and the rivers of 'Irāq, the Eufrat and the Tigris. (It is said too) that the Graceful Warbler [al-buṣbuṣ] rides on the back these (greater) birds which it may encounter. Many bird come to Tinnīs whose names are unknown. (In the waters of) Tinnīs there are 79 species of fishes and these are: Al-Būrī etc..."[18].

Al- Qazwīnī writes:
" The island of Tinnīs is an island situated near the land between al Faramā and Dimiāṭ in the middle of a lake which is separated from the great sea. Between (this lake) and the great sea (lies) an elongated land being an island between the two seas (i.e. the Mediterranean and the lake). The first (part) of this land is (located) near Faramā.

At this place there is a mouth by which the water of the great sea enters the lake of Tinnīs, at a place called Qurbāj. (This land) passes between the great sea and the lake of Tinnīs. One may travel on this land three days till one comes to (a place) near Dimiāṭ. There lies another mouth, which takes in water from the great

[18]. Yāqūt al-Ḥamāwī, *Jacuts Geographisher Wörterbuch*, vol. 1 pp. 884-885.

sea to the lake of Tinnīs, and near this mouth lies a mouth of the Nile as it flows out in the lake of Tinnīs. The lake itself amounts to a length of one day's journey and a width of half a day. Its water is salt for most of the year because the sea water enters it during the northern gales, but when the Nile flows low at the beginning of winter and (of the season of) the western stormy winds the lake gets empty and so too the shores of the sea to an extent of about 48 km (barıdayni)[19]. When this happens the Nile rises to its fullest rise and the freshness (of its water) overcomes the water of the lake and (the lake) becomes fresh. At this moment the people of Tinnīs store the water (of the lake) in their cisterns and reservoirs to use as drinking water in the year to come. This is a map of the Island (...).

It is said that at Tinnīs no insect pests are found because the soil (of the island) is very briny (...) and at Tinnīs there is a season were there are more birds than found in any other place. These are some hundred and thirty species (as-salwā etc...). In (the waters around) Tinnīs 79 species of fishes are known: Al-Būrı etc....[20].

The environment of Lake Manzalah

At the present time Lake Manzalah is a natural eutrophic and sadly severely eutrophied and polluted lake[21]. It used to have a natural inflow of freshwater

[19]. Cf. Hinz, W. 1970. *Islamische Masse und Gewichte umgerechnet ins metrische System,* E.J: Brill. Leiden/Köln, p. 55.
[20]. Al-Qazwīnī, *Kitāb 'Ajā'ib al-maḫlūqāt,* pp. 117-120.
[21]. F. Ayache, Æ J. R. Thompson et al. 2009, Environmental characteristics, landscape history and pressures on three coastal lagoons in the Southern Mediterranean Region: Merja Zerga (Morocco), Ghar El Melh (Tunisia) and Lake Manzala (Egypt), *Hydrobiologia* 622:15–43.

by Dimiāṭ (Damietta) were one of the two delta arms of the Nile flows out and it used to have several channels leading out to the Mediterranean as natural breaches in the tongue of land which separates Lake Manzalah from the Mediterranean. The area on this tongue is widely used to aquaculture ponds with Mullets *Mugilidae* as culture fish. Now there are only two passages to the Mediterranean Sea, one located near Port Said and the other 25 km northeast of Damietta. The overall area of the lake has been halved form 1700 km^2 in the beginning of the 20th century to less than 700km^2 in 2003. The depth of the lake lies between 0.5 -1 m in 50% of its area, and it is shallower than 0.5 m in further 25% of its area. The lake is about 50 km long and 30 km wide where it is widest[22].

As may be understood from the medieval descriptions the lake was substantially wider in medieval times, where it was a brackish coastal lagoon wit a surface area exceeding 2000 km^2. The alternation within the salinity of water was recorded in modern times, but as may be read from the medieval record, it was much more extensive in medieval times, as water from the lake was stored in great cisterns for drinking and other use[23].

Lake Burullus has been declared as a RAMSAR area together with lake Bardawil on the Mediterranean coast of the Sinai, but no legislation existed in 1993 to put this declaration into effect[24]. Lake Manzalah does stand up to the RAMSAR criteria too, but the attempts

[22]. F. Ayache et al., *Hydrobiologia*.
[23] Provençal personal observations on the archeological site of Tinnıs Island in 1993.
[24] Dr. Gamīl ‘Aṭṭā’, personal information April 1993.

to declare it as such an area have been given up on account of the economical interests involved in the draining of this stretch of water. Nevertheless, the Egyptian Wildlife Service succeeded in having the Egyptian authorities to declare the North-Eastern part of Lake Manzalah, including the historically very important Tinnīs island, as a reserve for both the wildlife and the historical sites using among other things ecotourism as an economical argument in doing so. It will however still be possible to undertake archaeological excavations within the boundaries of the reserve[25].

Lake Manzalah is, like all the delta lakes in Egypt, an area of outmost interest for both passage migrants and winter visitors. Birds are most abundant in January - early March (pers. inf. from dr. Gamīl ’Aṭṭā). During the three days in April 1993 which I spent in this area the following birds were observed (if nothing else is written, the number of birds is undetermined):

On the 7th of April 1993 the following species were observed during a automobile drive on the tongue of land separating Lake Manzalah from the Mediterranean. We drove the whole way from Port Said to Damietta (*Dimiāṭ*) and back again.

By a separated and very shallow stretch of wetland near Port Said the following species were observed. The water was filled with waders, these were:

Ringed Plovers *Charadrius hiaticula* and *Charadrius*

[25] Personal information from dr. Gamīl ‘Aṭṭā’.

dubius in flocks.

Kentish plovers *Charadrius alexandrinus* in flocks

Spur-winged Plover *Hoplopterus spinosus* in couples

Redshanks *Tringa totanus* and Greenshanks *Tringa nebularia* in flocks foraging in water.

Little Stint *Calidris minutta* in flocks.

Little Tern *Sterna albifrons* ; a little flock fishing.

White-winged Black Tern *Chlidonias leucopterus*.

Black-headed Gull *Larus ridibundus*

A single Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus*

Pied Kingfisher *Ceryle rudis*

Egyptian Barn-Swallow *Hirundo rustica savignii*

At other places along the tongue of land the following birds were observed:

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*.

Great White Egret *Egretta alba*.

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*. The Little Egret was the most common species among the Herons and Egrets by Lake Manzalah.

All these Herons and Egrets were fishing on the more isolated water places on the land tongue. Gamīl ’ṭṭā and I furthermore saw a flock of Little Egrets which flew up from their hiding place in the reed swamp as we were standing still and looked on the surroundings. They were at least 100 m from our standing place, and we would not have had any chance of seeing them if they had stayed where they were hiding. Gamīl ’Aṭṭā told me that all herons on the shores of the lake were very much afraid of hunters.

Spur-winged Plovers *Hoplopterus spinosus.*

Slender-billed Gulls *Larus genei* flocks lying on the open water.

Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus*

Black-shouldered Kite *Elanus caerulus*

Domestic Pigeon *Columba livia*

Palm Dove *Streptopelia senegalensis*

Pied Kingfisher *Ceryle rudis* these were common. We also observed their nesting holes.

Crested Lark *Galerida cristata*

White Wagtail *Motacilla alba*

Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava*

The 8th of April 1993 on the Island of Tinnīs the following birds were observed:

Little Bittern *Ixobrychus minutus*

Redshank *Tringa totanus*

Greenshank *Tringa nebularia*

Snipe *Gallinago gallinago*

Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus*

Spur-winged Plover *Hoplopterus spinosus*

Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus*

Teal *Anas crecca*, two females were observed.

Kestrel *Falco tinnunculus*

Buzzard *Buteo buteo*

Marsh Harrier *Circus aeruginosus* one female + one couple circling.

Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*, a single specimen sitting in the reeds near a little pond on the island.

Pied Kingfisher *Ceryle rudis.*

Graceful Warbler *Prinia gracilis*. Common; some of the nests of this species were observed too in the low vegetation on the island.

Clamorous Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus stentoreus.* Some birds singing on top of the reeds.

Egyptian Swallow *Hirundo rustica savignii*

Red-rumped Swallow *Hirundo daurica*

Common Wheatear *Oenanthe oenanthe*

Isabelline Wheatear *Oenanthe isabellina*

Black-eared Wheatear *Oenanthe hispanica*. The black-throated morph.

The list of bird names - philological aspects and importance

The list written by Yāqūt al ḥamawī in his *Mu'ğam al-Buldān* comprises 134 bird names and the list written by Zakariā al Qazwīnī in his *Kitāb 'ağā'ib al-maḫlūqāt wa ġarā'ib al-mawjūdāt* comprises 135 names. In the following a synoptic presentation of the two lists is given:

Yāqūt's list of the birds of the island of Tinnīs[26]:

1	2	3	4	5
السلوى	القبح المملوح	النصطفير	الزرزور	الباز الرومي
6	7	8	9	10
الصفري	الدبسي	البلبل	السقاء	القمري
11	12	13	14	15
الفاختة	النواح	الزريق	النوني	الزاغ

[26]. Yāqūt al-Ḥamāwı, *Jacuts Geographisher Wörterbuch,* vol. 1 p. 885.

16	17	18	19	20
الهدهد	الحسيني	الجرادي	الأبلق	لراهب
21	22	23	24	25
الشخاف	البزين	السلسلة	دردراي	الشماص
26	27	28	29	30
البصيص	الأخضر	الأبهق	الأزرق	الخضير
31	32	33	34	35
أبو الحناء	أبو كلب	أبو دينار	وارية الليل	وارية النهار
36	37	38	39	40
برقع علي أم	برقع حبيب أم	الدوري	الزنجي	الشامي
41	42	43	44	45
شقراق	صدر النحاس	البلسطين	السنة الخضراء	السنة السوداء
46	47	48	49	50
الأطروش	الخرطوم	ديك الكرم	الضريس	الرقشة الحمراء
51	52	53	54	55
الرقشة الزرقاء	كاسر الجوز	كاسر الوز	ابن السمان	ابن المرعة
56	57	58	59	60
اليونسة	الوروار	الصردة	الحصيبة الحمراء	القبرة
61	62	63	64	65
المطوق	السقسفة	السلار	المرغ	السكسكة
66	67	68	69	70
الأرجوحة	الخوخة	فرد قفص	الأورث	السلونية
71	72	73	74	75
السهكة البيضاء	اللبس	العروس	الوطواط	العصفور
76	77	78	79	80
الروب	اللفات	الجرين	القليلة	العسر
81	82	83	84	85
الأحمر	الأزرق	البشرير	البون	البرك
86	87	88	89	90
البرمسي	الحصاري	الزجاجي	البح	الحمر
91	92	93	94	95
الرومي	الملاعقي	البط الصيني	الغرياق	الأقرح
96	97	98	99	100

البلوي	السطرف	البشروش	وز الفرط	أبو قلمون
101	102	103	104	105
أبو قبر	أبو منجل	النجع	الكركي	الغطاس
106	107	108	109	110
البلجويد	البطميس	البجوية	الرقادة	الكروان البحري
111	112	113	114	115
الكروان الحرجي	القرلى	الخروطة	الحلف	الأرميل
116	117	118	119	120
القلقوس	اللدد	العقعق	البوم	الورشان
121	122	123	124	125
القطا	الدراج	الحجل	البادي	الصردي
126	127	128	129	130
الصقر	الهام	الغراب	الأبهق	الباشق
131	132	133	134	
الشاهين	العقاب	الحداء	الرخمة	

Al-Qazwīnī's list of the birds of the island of Tinnīs[27]:

1	2	3	4	5
السلوى	القبح المملوح	النصطفير	الزرزور	الباز الرومي
6	7	8	9	10
الصفري	الدبسي	البلبل	السقاء	القمري
11	12	13	14	15
الفاختة	النواح	الزريق	الهوني	الزاغ
16	17	18	19	20
الهدهد	الحسيني	الجرادي	الأبلق	الراهب
21	22	23	24	25
الحساف	البرين	السلسلة	درداي	الشماس
26	27	28	29	30
البصبص	الأخضر	الأبهق	الأزرق	الخضير
31	32	33	34	35
أبو حناء	أبو كلب	أبو دينار	وارية الليل	برقع أم علي
36	37	38	39	40
أبو الحناء	الدوري	الزنجي	وارية النهار	الشامي
41	42	43	44	45
شقراق	صدر النحاس	البلطين	الخضراء السئة	السوداء السئة

[27]. Al-Qazwīnī, *Kitāb ʻAğā'ib al-maḫlūqāt*, part 2, pp. 118-118.

50	49	48	47	46
الحمراء الرقشة	الضريس	ديك الكرم	الخرطوم	الأطروش
55	54	53	52	51
النويسة	ابن المرعة	ابن السمان	كاسر الجوز	الزرقة الرقشاء
60	59	58	57	56
القبرة	الحصبة الحمراء	الصردة	الوروار	السن
65	64	63	62	61
السكسكة	المرغ	السلار	السقسفة	المطوق
70	69	68	67	66
السلونية	الأورث	فرد قفص	الخوخة	الأرجوجة
75	74	73	72	71
العصفور	الوطواط	العروس	اللبس	السهكة البيضاء
81	80	78	77	76
العسر	القليلة	الجرين	اللقاب	الزوب
86	85	84	83	82
البرك	البون	االشرير	الأزرق	الأحمر
91	90	89	88	87
الرومي	الحمر	البح	الزجاجي	الحصاري
96	95	94	93	92
البلبو	الأقرح	العراق	البط الصيني	الملاعقي
101	100	99	98	97
أبو قير	أبو قلمون	وزن الفرط	البشروش	الشطرف
106	105	104	103	102
اللجوبة	الغطاس	الكركي	البجع	أبو منجل
111	110	109	108	107
أبو مسكة	الكروان البحري	الرقادة	البجوبة	البطميس
116	115	114	113	112
الأرميل	الحلف	الخروطة	القرلى	الكروان الحرجي
121	120	119	118	117
البوم	العقعق	الأزد	الفلفوس	القطا
126	125	124	123	122
الصردي	البازي	الحجل	الدراج	الورشان
131	130	129	128	127

الصقر	الهام	الغراب	الأبهق	الباشق
132	133	134	135	
الشاهين	العقاب	الحدأ	الرخمة	

As Yāqūt al ḥamawī is the oldest of the two authors (1179-1229 whereas al-Qazwīnī lived 1203-1283) the text of Yāqūt is in all probability the oldest of the two and for this reason his version has been used as the chief recension in this study. The author of the original source has yet to be found. The two lists have obviously both been taken from the same source as they correspond both in the listed names and in the order of the names in the two lists. The differences that occur may all be explained as the results of the unavoidable variations that will occur in hand-written texts. These differences consist chiefly of differences in diacritical signs, but one must also account for the following features:

1. There are 134 names in the list writen by Yāqūt al ḥamawī whereas there are 135 in the list written by Zakariā b. Muḥammad b. Maḥmūd al-Qazwīnī. This is due to an additional name between the names No. 110 and 111 found only in the list of al Qazwīnī: أبو مسكه.

2. There are some differences in the order of the listed names. Thus the names follow each other in the same order without any differences from No. 1 to No. 34 (both included) but name No. 35 by Yāqūt has the place of No. 39 by al-Qazwīnī. The names No. 36 - 39 by Yāqūt are found in the same order in the list of al Qazwīnī; thus the order is as following:

Yāqūt al ḥamawī : 34 - 35 - 36 - 37 - 38 - 39 - 40.
Al Qazwīnī : 34 - 36 - 37 - 38 - 39 - 35 - 40.

3. From No. 40 to No. 52 (both included) the orders of names are the same by the two authors. Then name No. 53 by Yāqūt al ḥamawī is not found in the list of Zakariyā al-Qazwīnī. The following names until No. 56 by Yāqūt follow in the same orders in the two versions and is followed by a name which is only found in al-Qazwīnī : **السن**The orders thus become:
Yāqūt al ḥamawī : 52 - 53 - 54 - 55 - 56 - 57
Al Qazwīnī : 52 - 54 - 55 - 56 - السن

The text as it appears to us in its present state does not list the bird names randomly, but on the contrary *clear literary and biological patterns are found.* The literary patterns are the following:

1. Names showing common features are placed together, thus No. 31, 32 and 33, No. 100, 101 and 102 by Yāqūt: ابو الحناء ، ابو كلب ، ابو دينار ، ابو قلمون ، ابو منجل ، ابو قير all six having the character of a *kunyah.*

2. Names No 34, 35, 36, 37, 44, 45, 51, 52, 53, 54 and 110, 111 by Yāqūt, were two kinds of *Wāriyyah,* two kinds of *Barqa'* two kinds of *Sittah,* two kinds of *Riqšah* and two kinds of *Karawān* are placed together.

The biological patterns are of great interest, as they show an attempt of systematisation:

The birds from name No. 1 to name No. 80 are, as far as can be judged from the present state of the identifications, all birds of small size ranging from small warblers to pigeons.

The birds from No. 81 to No. 117 No. are birds connected to water or wetland environment.

The birds from no. 118 to No. 134/135 are conspicuous birds of interest for the Arabic civilisation i.e. raptors, larger gallinaceous used as game birds and the like.

There are however breaks in these patterns. For instance No. 5 al-Bāz al-Rūmī where a great Raptor has been placed among the small birds. These anomalies are here seen as the inevitable alterations on a text handed down in the form of manuscripts. The pattern is so clear, that despite the danger from an epistemological point of view of proving by using an assumption, this systematization has been used as one of the clues in the identification work.

One of the important questions regarding the interpretation of this list is the understanding of the word *mawsim* مَوْسِم . Does it mean season or market. The word carries both meanings in Arabic. Eisenstein understands it as market (Eisenstein 1990 p. 73). This understanding is enhanced by the fact that al kinds of water fowl and other birds are caught and sold on the bird markets at the present time in the towns surrounding the Delta lakes[28].

[28] Cf. Roder, F. E., P.L. Meininger, U.G. Sørensen 1994, Some notes on market sales of birds and bird hunting in Egypt, 1989 - 90, in: Meininger, P. L. & Atta G. A. M. (eds). *Ornithological Studies in Egyptian Wetlands 1989/90.* FORE-report 94-O1, Wivo-report 40, Vlissingen/Zeist, pp. 273-280

The understanding of *mawsim* as meaning a season is enhanced by the fact, that winter is the season were most birds are found on the delta lakes, as they serve as very important passage and wintering grounds for migrants from the West Palearctic area.

The main reason to understand the word *mawsim* as season is the fact, that the list does not comprise names of truly domestic birds. There are no hen *dağāğ*, no cock *dīk*, no domestic duck *baṭṭ*, no domestic goose *'iwazz*, no parrots *babaġā'*, no pigeons *ḥamām* and no peacock *ṭāwus*, all of these being birds which one might expect were being sold on an important bird market. The words *dīk*, *baṭṭ* and *wizz* do occur in the list, but these names are generally used to denote wild species too and then usually as the first name in a binomial naming where the second name indicates the species, which is the case here. The *baṭṭ aṣ-Ṣīn* which is present in the list is indicated by the classical authors to be a domestic species, but it is here understood as being feral (see infra).

Methods used in the identification work of the bird name material

Usually the name of the bird was first searched in interdisciplinary works giving a zoological identification of the name, i.e. the books of Malouf[29], Goodman et al.[30], Bruun et al.[31] (1990) and Peter

[29] Malouf, A.,1932, *An Arabic zoological dictionary* al-Muktataf Press, Cairo.
[30] Goodman, et al. *The Birds.*
[31] Bruun, B. and S. Baha el Din 1990.*Common Birds of Egypt.* Dar el Kutub - The American University in Cairo Press .

Forskål[32]. If a name was found in this way, it was searched for in the works classical Arab authors and if found, the classical description was analyzed to see if it confirmed the identification. If the name was found in the interdisciplinary literature but not in the classical texts, the identifications given by this modern literature have been accepted. If the name was not found in the interdisciplinary literature but found in the classical literature an independent identification (certain or approximate) has been given based on the descriptions of the classical texts. If the name was not found any place the name remains without comments.

It has been assumed that the names indicate birds which were well known to the Arabic speaking people; i.e.people living in surroundings or environments where the birds occurred knew them by the names in the bird list. This does not in any way imply, that the birds did not have other names. On the contrary, just by looking on the state of bird names in present day Arabic speaking countries, it is found that a given species may have several names, and that the different sexes and ages in a given species may have different names. There may be wide difference in dialectal names within a limited area. On the other hand several different species, sometimes only remotely related, may be called by the same name. This rises the problem of classical contra vernacular names. According to my investigation *there are no real divisions between classical Arabic animal names and dialectal names except when talking about well*

[32] Forskål, P. 1775. *Descriptiones Animalium,* post mortem auctoris edidit Carsten Niebuhr, Möller, Copenhagen.

known animals. That is to say, that in our present time where scientific zoological literature begins to be translated on a larger scale, there occurs a real lexicographic problem in the use and general acceptance of Arabic species names. One of the solutions may be to go back in the classical literature and try to determine the species identity behind the names, which even then were often mere writing down of contemporary dialectal names; e.g. Malouf (1932) sometimes uses the present list of bird names from the island of Tinnīs as literary sanction to give a "classical" i.e. faṣīḥ فَصِيح name.

In most cases no completely corresponding name was found in the literature. However bird names that clearly were derived from names found in the literature have been readily accepted in the identification. Words of the same triconsonantic root have been more or less accepted in the same way. In some cases however some linguistic reasons for the identifications have been given.

From a biological angle it has been assumed on the grounds given in the beginning of last paragraph, that the birds in the list were at least regularly seen on Lake Manzalah. That is vagrant birds and real rarities were dismissed as possible identifications. Nevertheless by reason of the vast span of time between the writing of this name list and the present day, a large tolerance has been permitted concerning geographical distances between the northern Nile delta and the present day geographical status of the birds. It is for instance very possible that the Egyptian avifauna in the 9th to 12th centuries included present day subsaharan species. It is even possible that it included

endemic species to North-Eastern Africa that are extinct at the present day, even though the written records do not point out in any conclusive way that this was the case. Bird species that are found at the present day in the Syro-Palestinian region or in other places in North Africa are accepted readily as possible identifications unless there are reasons not to do so. Birds which at the present day are found further away are accepted too as possible identification, but in those cases the reason why is explained.

The birds listed in this medieval "check-list" have been presumed to be found in the whole area around Lake Manzalah and not only on the island of Tinnīs proper.

Philologically in analysing the classical descriptions of birds the following linguistic problems have to be considered:

Colour adjectives:
The colour adjectives in Arabic present a problem, as they have changed semantically from the pre-classical Arabic to the present day, where they follow closely the European methods of describing colours, i.e. the present day classical Arabic colour adjectives all have more or less equivalents in European languages. It seems from the descriptions of the birds in Classical texts that the semantic position of the colour adjectives lay between the modern use and the ancient use, i.e. both type of uses have been accepted concerning the Classical descriptions of the birds, but the traditional or "modern" use has nevertheless been put in the first place.

One special problem is represented by the colour adjective *aḫḍar* أَخْضَر which usually is understood as "green". This adjective seems to be able to indicate in animals colours of a grey and brown-grey hue. Thus the crane is said to be *aḫḍar* by An-Nuwayrī and likewise the partridge *Alectoris spp.* Both birds have the same grey hue in their feather covering (personal observations in 1994 on live specimens of *Grus grus* , *Anthropoides virgo* and *Alectoris chukar* and *Alectoris rufa* belonging to the collections of the *Menagerie du Jardin des Plantes* in Paris; the same observation was made on two specimens of *Grus grus* and two specimens of *Alectoris rufa* belonging to the collections of *The Natural history Museum* of Aarhus, Denmark). Al-Qalqašandī writes that it is one of the colours of the domestic pigeon, even though it never has had green colours. Nevertheless, if we are to believe W. Fischer[33] in his study of the colour and form adjectives in the old Arabian poetry, all these features may be explained as the adjective *aḫḍar* in the pre-classical Arabic meant dark hues going from green to blue to grey[34].

Evaluation of the Classical authors

The full list of classical authors used here is given in the bibliography. Nevertheless a personal evaluation of the documentary value of the most used authors is given here. This evaluation may be regarded as a contribution to the history of Classical Arabic

[33] Fischer, W., 1965, *Farb- und Formbezeichnungen in der Sprache der Altarabischen Dichtung,* Otto Harrassowitz, Wiesbaden، pp. 306 - 314.
[34] Fischer ibid. p. 237.

literature. The authors are treated chronologically. As these authors already have been treated by Manfred Ullmann (1972) in *Die Natur - und Geheimwissenschaften im Islam*, and more extensively by Herbert Eisenstein (1990) in *Einfūhrung in die arabische Zoographie;* this evaluation concentrates on the evaluation of the exact biological contents of the writings of these authors.

Al-Ğāḥiẓ الـجَاحِظ (776-868):
His well known book *Kitāb alḤayawān* (completed in 847)[35] provides much valuable information. His way of writing is that of a compiler, and much of his book has the appearance of a collection of reports with their sanads or chain of tradents. He nevertheless treats his material independently and discriminatively, providing ample comments, making critiques of his sources and giving frequently precise information about animals, sometimes even using experiences in order to evaluate the veracity of informations. He is of the M'tazilite school and thus he favours a rationalistic approach to problems. This is clearly shown by his preference for factual reports from Bedouins on animal matters if they contradict information stemming from classical authors. He uses a wide range of sources, and he is not afraid of contradicting even an authority like Aristotle if the eye-witness reports of the Bedouins and/or Ancient Arabic poetry tell him different facts than the Greek philosophers on matters of nature and animals. Recently, much research has been made on the *Kitāb*

35 Ullmann, M., 1972, *Die Natur-und Geheimwissenschaften im Islam,* in the serie *Handbuch der Orientalistik,* E. J. Brill, Leiden, p. 20

al-Ḥayawān by Aarab[36], Provençal[37] and Ben Saad[38]. On the other hand his way of compiling this adab-work with its well-known lack of systematisation gives some difficulties in the practical use of his work.

Ibn Qutaybah ابن قتيبة (828-889):
His chapter about animals in his great adab-work ‘Uyūn al-Aẖbār is compilatory. In the chapter about the Swift and the Starling the author interchanges the two names, so that a short but precise description of

36 Aarab, A., 1999, *Etude analytique et comparative de la zoologie médiévale, cas du Kitâb al-Hayawân de Jâhiz (776-868)*.Thèse d’Etat présentéé à l’Université Abd-el Malek Essaadi, Faculté de science de Tétouan.
Ahmed Aarab, P. Provençal and M. Idaomar, *Eco-ethological data according to Jâhiz through his work Kitāb al-Ḥayawān (The Book of Animals)*, Arabica, 2000 vol. 47, pp. 278-286. Ahmed Aarab, P. Provençal and Mohamed Idaomar, 2001, The mode of action of venom according to Jāḥiz through his work Kitāb al-Ḥayawān (The Book of Animals), Arabic Science and Philosophy vol. 11, pp. 79-89. Aarab, A., Provençal, P., Idaomar, M., « La méthodologie scientifique en matière zoologique de Jâhiz dans la rédaction de son œuvre Kitâb al-Hayawân », Anaquel de Estudios Arabes (2003) : 5-19.
35. Provençal, P. 1995, *Enquête lexicographique sur les noms d'animaux en arabe /A lexicographic survey of arabic animal names*. Ph. D. thesis, University of Copenhagen.
Provençal, P., A. Aarab (2014) *The Zoology of the classical islamic culture*, Arabic Science and Medicine, Vol. 2 Nb.1. pp. 1-19.
37. Provençal, P. 1995, *Enquête lexicographique sur les noms d'animaux en arabe /A lexicographic survey of arabic animal names*. Ph. D. thesis, University of Copenhagen.
Provençal, P., A. Aarab, (2014) *The Zoology of the classical islamic culture*, Arabic Science and Medicine, Vol. 2 Nb.1. pp. 1-19.
38 Ben Saad, M. 2010 *La Connaissance du Monde Vivant chez le savant al-Djâḥiẓ (776-868) : Les Sciences de la Vie, et le regard d''al-Djâḥiẓ dans l''Histoire des Sciences arabes*, Thèse pour l’Université Denis Diderot - Paris VII.
Ben Saad, M., Katouzian-Safadi, M., Provençal, P., « *Réflexions sur un critère de classification des animaux chez al- Djâhiz (776-868) : le mode de reproduction chez les reptiles et les oiseaux* » *al-Mukhatabat* (2013) No 7 pp. 69-86.

the Swift is attributed to the Starling[39]. As the difference between these to birds is conspicuous, and as both birds are widely distributed in the Middle East[40], the author obviously made no observations himself but relied on the knowledge of others. This means that he had three main sources: The Greek authors from antiquity, the Bedouins and al-Ǧāḥiẓ.

Al-Qazwīnī القزويني (1203-1283):
His chapter about birds in his cosmography contains much useful information. Nevertheless his writing is rather compilatory, and he may be rather indiscriminate in the things he tells. Some of his notices on birds are nevertheless very precise.

An-Nuwayrı النويري (1279-1332):
Although he explicitly states that his great work of Adab is only intended to give the class of leading secretaries and dignitaries in the administration of the state the knowledge necessary for this class of people to be at ease in social intercourse, and that he merely compiles the works of others[41], he nevertheless is rather precise in the description of the animals well known to him. His treating of birds forms a large part of the chapters on animals and his remarks concerning the taxonomy of the birds are interesting and precise. He likes to use factual descriptions gathered by

39 Cf. Kopf, L., F.S. Bodenheimer,1949, *The natural history section from a 9th century "Book of Useful Knowledge" ʻuyūn al-Aḫbār of Ibn Qutayba.* Academie Internationale d'Histoire des Sciences - E.J. Brill: Paris, Leiden, p. 68.
40 Cf. Hollom, P. A. D., R. F. Porter, S. Christensen, I. Willis, 1988, *Birds of the Middle East and North Africa*. T & D Poyser: Calton, p. 231 and pp. 139.
41 *Encyclopaedia of Islam 2. edition.* (1960-) E.J. Brill: Leiden, Luzac & Co. London, art. An-Nuwayrı.

observations and has a good sense of biological data in his descriptions of animals. He is discriminate in his edition of the material and although legends have found their way to his chapter about animals, they nevertheless are much fewer than in Ad-Damīrī (see infra).

Ad-Damīrī الدميري (1344-1405):
He wrote one of the most famous books of zoology in the classical Arabic literature, the
Ḥayāt Al Ḥayawān(āt) which was completed in the month of Rajab 773 which corresponds to January/February 1372 (cf. Somogyi 1928). The alphabetical arrangement of his material makes his work very easy to consult, but the information gathered there are all compilations[42], which means that the quality of the information this author gives depends on the merits of his sources. *The quality of the zoological information according to my own evaluation* goes from mere mirabilias to very precise and useful information. Ad-Damīrī apparently does not make many personal judgements on biological matters, while he on the contrary makes them regarding matters of *Šarı‘ah* and *Ḥadīṯ* (cf. his article about the *waral*); e.g. in the article on the Grebe, *al Ġaṭās* الغطاس ad-Damīrī makes a mistake and identifies the Grebes with the Pied Kingfisher, *al-qirillā* القرلّى. This means that he did not try (at least in this instance) to verify his literarily acquired knowledge by direct observations as both types of birds are common, easy to observe and very different indeed in shape, habits and appearance.

42 Eisenstein, H., 1990, *Einfūhrung in die arabische Zoographie.* Dietrich Reimer Verlag, Berlin, p. 132.

Al-Qalqašandī القلقشندي (1355-1418)
Al-Qalqašandī wrote a great adab work called Ṣubḥu-al-A'šā (completed in 1412 (Cf. Encyclopaedia of Islam 2. ed. art. al-, Al-Qalqašandī)) in which he devotes a chapter to the description of animals in a context of the sport of hunting. His descriptions of birds are very precise, and one cannot help thinking that he was a man well acquainted with nature and wildlife. His chapter on animals are written as a guide for hunters and the author knew his subject-matter well. Here are found very fine descriptions of the most common birds in the Middle-East with a precision of details which neither al-Qazwīnī nor ad-Damīrī ever approaches. Together with the writing of 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī, an-Nuwayrī and al-Marwazī they form real zoological literature, where the writings of 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baġdādī are very much based on personal observations and therefore are publications of original research[43].

Al-Ibšīhī الإبشيهي(died after 1446)[44]
In the chapter about animals in his adab work *Al-Mustaḍraf fī kull fann mustaẓraf* (ed. 1952 pp. 108 - 145), the author describes the animals rather shortly. His writing is pure compilation and the materials are for the most part found in other adab-works. Nevertheless (some) of his lemmata are only found here, and their descriptions are valuable. Regarding the rest, the value is rather poor according to my own

[43] Provençal, P., 1992, *Observations Zoologiques de 'Abd al-Laṭif al-Baġdādī, Centaurus*, vol. 35, pp. 28-45. Provençal, P. 1995, *Nouvel essai.*
[44] Eisenstein, *Einfūhrung*, p. 44.

evaluation.

THE BIRD NAMES:

In the treating of these bird names we will begin with the names, for which the identity is clear or easy to work out. As explained above, some bird names are still in use and the species in questions are well described in the classical literature. In order to avoid making the text of this article too long, we will only treat ten species here. The remaining being treated in subsequent articles.

السلوى
(No. 1)/As-salwā / **Quail** /***Coturnix coturnix***

Philological comments
This species is generally known in Arabic, both classical and modern, by this name[45]; coll. سَلْوىً Nomen unitatis سَلْوَة and there are several local names[46]. The Quail is known by this name in other Semitic languages. In the Old Testament, Numeri 11, 31-32, where a flock of arriving migrating birds is described the bird is called śᵉlāw plural śalwīm corresponding to the Syriac salway . The other name used in Arabic for the Quail namely sumānā سُمَانَى is of Persian origin[47].

45 Cf. Malouf, *An Arabic Zoological*, p. 198, Goodman, et al. *The Birds*, p. 214.
46 Malouf, *An Arabic Zoological*, p. 198.
47 Cf. Malouf, ibid., p. 199 and comments on name No. 54 in the present list.

Biological comments

The Quail in present Egypt is a common autumn and spring migrant. The bird is known from ancient Egypt where it was caught and consumed. The quail both was and is a breeding resident of Egypt. That it was breeding in ancient Egypt can be established by the fact that a fledgling of the common quail was used as a hieroglyphic sign already in the early dynastic period[48]. At the present time the status of the quail is somewhat uncertain in Egypt, as three nests found near Bahig in May 1967 are the only recent records of nesting birds in Egypt, but a main difficulty in assessing the actual status of quails is due to the impossibility to discriminate between migrants and nesting birds when their calls are heard in spring[49].

Quails arrive in great flocks in Egypt in the autumn. These flocks are usually exhausted by their flight across the Mediterranean, and are easily caught. The event described in Numeri must be understood in this context. Quails are highly esteemed as food in present day in Egypt and have in all probability been so in the whole history of this country[50]. At the present time the annual catch of quails lies presumably between 55.000 and 75.000 for the Sinai alone[51].

It is therefore very probable, that Quail has been a major hunting prey since the beginning of dynastic time in Egypt. At the present time quails are breeding summer visitors in Asia Minor, the Syro-Palestine

[48] Houlihan, P. F. 1986, *The Birds of Ancient Egypt.* Aris and Phillips. Warminster: England, pp. 74-76.
[49] Goodman et al. *The Birds*, p. 215.
[50] Houlihan, *The Birds of Ancient Egypt*, p. 78.
[51] Goodman et al. *The Birds*, p. 90.

region and north-west Africa and passage migrants in the whole of North Africa and the Middle East with concentration in North Africa and in Egypt in particular[52] (Hollom et al. 1988 p. 77).

الزرزور

Az-zarzūr (No. 4)/ **Starling/ *Sturnus vulgaris***

Philological comments

This species is generally known by this name in Arabic[53] (Sing. زَرْزُور plur. زَرَازِير), although it may locally be used on other small passerines[54].

Ibn Qutaybah (828-889) mentions the starling by this name together with the swift in the zoological section of his work *'Uy.n Al aḫbār* but the bird he describes precisely and correctly under the name of *zarzūr* is the swift *Apodidae sp.*, i.e. the author has interchanged the names and the identity of the birds.

The bird which al-Qazwīnī (1203-1283) describes as the *zarzūr* in the bird chapter of his *Kitāb 'Aǧā'ib al-maḫlūqāt wa ġarā'ib al-mawǧūdāt* is not readily identifiable with the starling.

An-Nuwayrī[55] (1279-1332) writes the following concerning the Starling:

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[52] Hollom et. al., *Birds of the Middle East*, p.77.

[53] Wehr, H., 1976, *Arabic -English Lexicon.* J. Milton Cowan, New York. Kazimirski, A. B. 1860. *Dictionnaire Arabe - Français,* Paris, Maisonneuve et C[ie], Goodman et al., *The Birds,* p. 456.

[54] Cf. Goodman et al. *The Birds*, p. 457-8 & 470.

[55] An-Nuwayrı (ed.1923-55): *Nihāyat al-Arab Fī Funūn al-'Adab*. Photomechanical reprint of the ed. of Dār al-Kutub al Mißriyyah. Ministry of Culture and National Guidance, Egypt. Book 9 pp. 224-383 and book 10 pp. 1-354.

و أما **الزرزور** ـ فيقال:إنه ضرب من الغراب يسمى **الغداف** و يقال انه **الزاغ** . وهو يقبل التعليم ، ولا يُرى الا في ايام الربيع .ولونه أرقطُ لكن السواد أغلب .وقد يوجد في لونه الأبيض، وهو قليل جدّا.

"And concerning the *Zarzūr* it is said that it is a kind of *"Corvidae ",* which is called the *"Ġudāf"* , but other people say that it is the crow (*zāġ*) (see No. 15 in this list). (This bird) is able to learn. It is not seen except in springtime. Its colour is spotted, but black is predominant, still some white is found in the colouring of the bird but very little."

This is a very good description of the Starling. For the description of the colours see Delin and Svensson[56], the remark of an-Nuwayrī regarding the spotted colouring is due to the fact that starlings are winter visitors in Egypt[57]. The fact that a Starling is regarded as being a kind of crow is due to the general appearance of the bird[58] and to the fact that this bird is able to learn to speak like the *Corvidae.*

Biological comments:
The Starling is an irregular winter visitor. In some winters large flocks are found, while in others, they are virtually absent from the Egyptian territory. In the Middle East the Starling is a summer visitor in Asia Minor and western Iran.

الصفري
Aṣ-ṣufrī (No. 6)/ **Golden Oriole/ *Oriolus oriolus***

[56] Delin, H., L. Svensson 1990. *Photographic guide to the birds of Britain and Europe.* Hamlyn Publishing Group Limited, London, pp. 200-201.
[57] Cf. also Bruun and Baha el-Din, *Common Birds*, plate 14.
[58] Delin, H., L. Svensson, *Photographic guide*, pp. 200-201 and pp. 202-207.

Philological comments

At the present time this species is known by the names: ṣuffāriyyah and ṣufrāyah[59] = صُفْرَاية ، صُفَّارِيَّة and: ṣuffayr, abū ṣuffayr, ṣufāriyah ‘Uṣfūr at-tūt[60] = عُصْفُور التُوت ، صُفَارِية ، ابو ، صُفَّيْر صُفَّيْر.

Malouf writes under the entry Oriole *Oriolus oriolus* : “A yellow bird, which is called aṣ-ṣufāriyah by the people of Syria (i.e. the damascene region) and as-ṣuffayr by the Egyptians”[61].

Even if the name found in the lists is not exactly the same as the modern ones mentioned, it remains clear that all these are variations of each other. The root صفر has the general meaning of the colour yellow.

Biological comments

The Golden Oriole is a rather common passage visitor in autumn and spring. This bird occurs in the whole of Egypt[62]. The bird breeds in parts of Europe and Asia[63], in most of Asia Minor and the southern coast of the Black Sea, in Parts of north-west Africa. This bird is recorded as a passage visitor in the whole of the Middle East and North Africa.

In pharaonic time the golden oriole was depicted on wall paintings in tombs. The bird was mostly depicted as being hunted or chased from the fruit crops in trees.

[59] Reig, D. 1983: *Dictionnaire arabe-français, français-arabe, as-Sabil.* Collection Saturne, Librairie Larousse, Paris.
[60] Goodman et al. *The Birds*, p. 441.
[61] Malouf, *An Arabic zoological*, p. 175.
[62] Goodman et al. *The Birds*, p. 441.
[63] Houlihan, *The Birds of Ancient Egypt*, pp. 129-131

Some were perhaps also eaten[64] (Houlihan 1986).

الدبسي

Ad-dubsı(No.7)/**Palm Dove/*Streptopelia senegalensis***

Philological comments

This name is a common name for the Palm Dove in Arabic[65].

Nomen unitatis: dubsiyyah دُبْسِيَّة plural: dabāsī[66] دَبَاسِي.

This name is of the root *d/b/s* and alludes to the red brown colouring of the bird.

Ad-Damīrī writes:

والأدبس من الطير و الخيل اللذي في لونه غبرة بين السواد وال حمرة وهذا النوع قسم من الحمام البري

"The (colour) dubs among birds and horses (refers to the individuals) having in their colour the brown or dust coloured lying between black and red. This species is a kind of wild pigeon..."[67]. The Palm Dove has a red-brown colouring as main field feature[68].

Biological comments

The Palm Dove is an abundant breeding resident in the whole of the Nile Delta and Valley, and it breeds in many oases and human settlements in the western

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[64] Houlihan ibid.

[65] Malouf, *An Arabic zoological*, p. 86, Goodman et al. *The Birds*, p. 315, Viré, F. in Etchécopar, R.D., F. Hūe. 1964. *Les Oiseaux du Nord de l'Afrique de la Mer rouge aux Canaries.* Paris, N. Boubée et C[ie], p. 109.

[66] Malouf, *An Arabic zoological*, p. 86,

[67] Cf. An-Nuwayrı (ed.1923-55): *Nihāyat al-'Arab*, see the article: dubsī.

[68] Personal observations on live wild specimens in Cairo and other places in Egypt, cf. also Goodwin, D. 1967. *Pigeons and Doves of the World*. Trustees of the British Museum (Natural History), London, p. 144 and Hollom et al. Hollom et. al., 1988, *Birds of the Middle East*, p. 126 and plate 18.

and eastern desert and in the Sinai[69]. The bird is completely urbanised in Cairo[70], and behaves there the same way as the urbanised Collared Doves Streptopelia decaocto do in Europe[71].

Concerning the Arabic speaking world the Palm Dove is living in numerous places in the Middle East and North Africa[72].

Houlihan writes that the ancient Egyptians to his opinion kept two kinds of doves in captivity, and that one of these was perhaps the Palm Dove[73] referring to depiction of doves lacking the characteristic collar spots on the neck. This is somewhat denied by Boessneck, who rather sees them as young first year birds which have not yet evolved the conspicuous patterns on the adult plumage[74].

البلبل

Al-bulbul(No.8)/**Common Bulbul/**
Pycnonotus barbatus

Philological comments
Sing. بُلْبُل plur. بَلَابِل.
The name *Bulbul* is of Persian origin[75], Steingass

[69] Goodman et al. *The Birds*, pp. 316-317, and Provençal personal observation of the presence of Palm Doves in the newly built town of Na'āma Bay, Southern Sinai, march 1994.
[70] Provençal, personal observation in Egypt in 1993.
[71] Provençal pers. obs. on Collared Doves in Denmark and in Paris, France.
[72] Hollom et. al., *Birds of the Middle East*, p.126.
[73] Houlihan, *The Birds of Ancient Egypt*, pp. 129-131
[74]. Boessneck, J. 1988. *Die Tierwelt des Alten Ägypten*. Verlag C.H. Beck, Mūnchen, p. 104.
[75]. Kazimirski, *Dictionnaire*; Steingass, F. 1982 (first published 1884). *Arabic - English dictionary*. New Delhi, Cosmo Publications.

1884).
The name *Bulbul* applies in Arabic to the native middle eastern species of the gender *Pycnonotus* (Malouf 1932 p. 170-171, Provençal 1995 Acta Orientalia). The Common Bulbul is the only species of Bulbuls living in Egypt proper and is rather common there.

An-Nuwayrı describes the Common Bulbul in his *Nihāyah*

وهو طائر أَغبر الرأس لطيف القدّ ، مأواه الشجر(...)

(The *Bulbul*) is a bird with a dark head (*aġbar ar-ra's*), of small size and its habitat is the trees"[76]. This is a precise description of the Common Bulbul *Pycnonotus barbatus*, i.e. the species native to Egypt.

Biological comments
The Common Bulbul is found in north-west Africa i.e. Morocco, Algeria and the northern parts of Tunisia and in Egypt (Hollom et al.1988 p. 170). It is a common breeding resident in many parts of Egypt i.e. In the whole of the Nile Delta and Valley, in Wādī Naṭrūn, the Fayyūm, the Suez canal area and in many places in the Sinai (Goodman et al. 1989 pp. 379-381)

The Common Bulbul was not found in Egypt proper in the last century, but it has extended its breeding range during this century. It may still be locally scarce in some places (Goodman et al. 1989 ibid.)

القمري
Al-qumrı (No. 10)/**Turtle Dove/ *Streptopelia turtur***

[76]. An-Nuwayrı, *Nihāyah*, section 10. p. 252.

Philological comments

Malouf writes, that this is the Egyptian name for the turtle dove[77]. This is confirmed by F. Viré[78], the Encyclopaedia of Islam[79] and Goodman et al.[80].

Malouf further writes, that this name is used in Egypt as a "gender name" for all turtle dove like birds. This is confirmed by Goodman et al.[81], where this name is used for *Streptopelia roseogrisea, S. decaocto, S. turtur and S. senegalensis.*

Malouf writes that the nomen unitatis is *qumriyya* قُمرية . The plural is *qamārī* قماري according to ad-Damīrī.

The name *qumrī* is a nisbah form of the root *q/m/r* and alludes to the white, grey bluish colour on the chest and underparts of this bird. Cf. an-Nuwayrī art. *qumrī* where this etymology is stated. An-Nuwayrī explains *aqmar* as being synonymous to *abyaḍ*. Nevertheless *aqmar* may also mean light grey or bluish grey, i.e. *aqmar* is used as an adjective for the light on a cloudy day or for the colour of a cloudy sky, when the sun is veiled by the clouds[82]. This colour of a veiled cloudy sky is similar to the colour on the underparts of the Turtle Dove, cf. Delin and Svensson[83] where this colour is well illustrated. The

[77] Malouf, *An Arabic zoological,* p. 87.
[78] Viré, F. in Etchécopar, R.D., F. Hūe. 1964. *Les Oiseaux du Nord de l'Afrique de la Mer rouge aux Canaries.* Paris, N. Boubée et C^ie p. 603 and 198.
[79] .*Encyclopaedia of Islam 2. edition.* art. *ḥamām* (1960-2007) E.J. Brill: Leiden, Luzac & Co. London.
[80] Goodman et al. *The Birds*, p. 314.
[81] Ibid. pp. 311 - 315.
[82] Fischer, *Farb- und Formbezeichnungen*, p. 267.
[83] Delin, H., L. Svensson, *Photographic guide*, pp. 156-159.

turtle dove is the *only Streptopelia sp.in Egypt which has this colouring.*

> The biblical Hebrew name of this bird is *tōr* which is an onomatopoetic of the calling of the bird corresponding to the Latin name *turtur*[84]. In *Canticus Canticorum* 3; 12-14, the voice of the *tōr* "in our land" is put in opposition to the *yōnāt^{h}ım* "of the clefts in the rock, of the cover on the rocky mountain slopes", i.e. the Turtle Dove is opposed to the Rock Dove *Columba livia* , whose habitat is: "typically, pure form occur in rocky upland and around sea cliffs(...) nests in crevices or caves among rocks"[85].

The ancient Egyptian name for the Turtle Dove was *mnwt*[86]. This name was perhaps used as a "gender name" for other *Streptopelia* species as well[87].

Biological comments

The Turtle Dove is a common migrant breeder, breeding in the whole of the Nile Delta and Valley, together with the western desert oasis and north -east Sinai and the area around Suez[88]. The turtle dove was recorded as being "common in marshes and reed-beds in the Lake Manzalah area, including extensive salt

[84] Gesenius, W. 1962. *Handwörterbuch µber das Alte Testamente.* Bearbeidet von Dr. Frants Buhl, Unveränderter Neudruck der 1915 erschienenen 17. Auflage. Springer-Verlag: Berlin / Göttingen / Heidelberg.
[85] Hollom et. al., *Birds of the Middle East,* p.121.
[86] Boessneck, J. 1988. *Die Tierwelt,* p. 105.
[87] Cf. Houlihan, *The Birds of Ancient Egypt,* p. 105.
[88] Goodman et al. *The Birds,* p. 313 and map p. 314.

marshes with no vegetation higher than 0.5 m."[89].

Concerning the Arab world the Turtle Dove is now a breeding summer visitor in numerous parts of the Middle East and North Africa, and is found widely in the whole region as a passage migrant[90].

The turtle dove was a common bird in ancient Egypt, well known and widely used for consumption (Houlihan 1986 pp. 103-106). The first pictorial representation of turtle doves in Ancient Egypt, which can be positively identified, is a colourless relief on the mastaba of Ti in Saqqara depicting a procession of different domestic fowls (Houlihan 1986 fig. 101) from the time of the fifth dynasty (2510-2460 BC.). This indicates that the Turtle Dove was well known from the earlier periods on.

الهدهد

Al-Hudhud (No. 16)/**Hoopoe/ *Upupa epops***

Philological comments

This bird is generally known by the name *hudhud* in Arabic. One of the oldest texts in Arabic literature where the Hoopoe is mentioned by this name is the Qur'ān: sūrah 27, v. 20. The name *hudhud* is thus classical Arabic, but this species is known by several

[89]. Meininger, P.L. & Atta G.A.M. (eds). 1994. *Ornithological Studies in Egyptian Wetlands 1989/90.* FORE-report 94-O1, Wivo-report 40, Vlissingen/Zeist, p. 335.

[90] Hollom et. al., *Birds of the Middle East,* p.125.

other dialectal names[91]. The name *hudhud* is an onomatopoetic of the voice of the bird.

Biological comments

The Hoopoe is a common and urbanised bird in Egypt (personal observation in Cairo in April 1993). It is a common breeding resident in most of Egypt and is found more or less throughout the whole country during migrations[92].

In Ancient Egypt the Hoopoe was often depicted. The oldest representation goes as far back as the fourth dynasty (2575-2465 B.C.). The Hoopoe seems to have been a popular bird and was probably often kept as a pet (Houlihan 1986 p. 119-120 and p. 187).

الحسيني

Al-Ḥusaynī (No. 17)/**Bluethroat/ *Luscinia suecica***

Philological comments

This identification is given by Goodman et al.[93] and is confirmed by Bruun and Baha ad-Din[94]. However, Malouf does not know this name. The name *ḥusaynī* seems to be special to Egypt. This list of bird names is, as far as I have seen, the only place in the classical Arabic literature where this name is mentioned.

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[91] Cf. Goodman et al. *The Birds*, p. 347 for the Egyptian names.
[92] Goodman, ibid. pp. 347-349.
[93] Goodman et al. *The Birds*, p. 385.
[94] Bruun, B. and S. Baha el Din 1990.*Common Birds of Egypt*, p. 38.

Biological comments

The Bluethroat is a common passage and winter visitor in Egypt[95].

The Bluethroat is found widely in the whole of the Middle East and North Africa as a passage migrant. It winters in the whole of North Africa and the Middle East, but is widely scattered in the Middle East. The Bluethroat is found mostly in swampy areas. In winter it likes reed beds and places with dense vegetation in connection to wet areas[96].

الكركي

Al-kurkī (No. 104)/**Common Crane/ *Grus grus*,**

Philological comments

The name *Kurkī* is the Common Arabic name for the Crane and has been so for all periods of this language[97]. For a clarification of the zoological descriptions of Cranes in the Classical Arabic culture cf. Provençal and Sørensen (1998)[98] and Provençal (2000)[99].

Biological comments

[95] Goodman et al. *The Birds*, p. 385.
[96] Hollom et. al., *Birds of the Middle East,* p.175.
[97] *Wörterbuch der klassischen arabischen Sprache* 1970. Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft.
[98] Provençal, P., U. G. Sørensen, 1998, Medieval record of the Siberian White Crane *Grus leucogeranus* in Egypt, *Ibis*, pp. 333 - 335.
[99] Provençal, P. 2000, The Birds named *Kurkī* and *Ġirnīq* in Classical Arabic and their philological description and zoological identification - a case study in the processing of Ancient Scientific knowledge in Classical Arabic Literature, *Acta Orientalia*, vol. 61, pp. 7-22.

Cranes are frequently illustrated in works of art from Ancient Egypt. There were depicted three species, Common Crane *Grus grus*, Demoiselle Crane *Anthropoides virgo*[100] and Siberian Ehite Crane *Leucogeranus leucogeranus*[101]. The two former species still pass through Egypt on migration to and from African wintering-areas[102], the Demoiselle Crane being scarcer. Even in Ancient Egypt the Demoiselle Crane was depicted as being much scarcer than the Common Crane[103]. The Siberian White Crane *Leucogeranus leucogeranus* occurred at least one in Egypt in medieval time, as reported by an-Nuwayrī[104].

القِرِلـَّى

Al-qirillā (No. 112)/**Pied Kingfisher/ *Ceryle rudis***

Philological comments

The name of the Pied Kingfisher in Classical Arabic is *Qirillā* قِرِلـَّى[105]. The name is of the same origin as the scientific genus name of this species and is derived from the Greek *keryllos*[106].

Biological comments

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[100] Houlihan, *The Birds of Ancient Egypt*, pp. 83-88.
[101] Provençal and Sørensen, Medieval record.
[102] Goodman et al. *The Birds*, p. 224-227.
[103] Houlihan, *The Birds of Ancient Egypt*, p. 88.
[104] Provençal and Sørensen, Medieval record.
[105] Malouf, *An Arabic zoological*, p. 87، where the zoological identity is well shown
[106] Malouf, ibid., Compare the Classical descriptions cited by Malouf (1932) with Delin, H., L. Svensson, *Photographic guide*, pp. 170-171.

The Pied Kingfisher is a common breeding resident in Egypt. When I visited Lake Manzalah 7. - 8. April 1993, I saw this species very frequently. The bird is breeding well in this area and it is especially common on the Tinnīs island where a big nesting colony is found on the earth-walls of the excavation of the ancient city of Tinnīs. But nest colonies are found on other places in the great earth mound which covers the site of the old city of Tinnīs (personal observations).