

**A PHILOLOGICAL AND ZOOLOGICAL
DESCRIPTION OF THE BIRD NAMES GIVEN BY
YĀQŪT AL-ḤAMĀWĪ AND ZAKARĪĀ AL-QAZWĪNĪ IN
THEIR DESCRIPTION OF THE ISLAND OF TĪNNĪS –
PART 3.**

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This is the following up of my previous articles in Arabic Biology and Medicine: A PHILOLOGICAL DESCRIPTION OF THE BIRD NAMES GIVEN BY YĀQŪT AL-ḤAMĀWĪ AND ZAKARĪĀ AL-QAZWĪNĪ IN THEIR DESCRIPTION OF THE ISLAND OF TĪNNĪS¹. This series of articles is treating 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 ‘Abdullāh al-Ḥamāwī (1179-1229)² in his *Mu‘ğam al-Buldān* and by Zakariā’ b. Muḥammad b. Maḥmūd al-Qazwīnī (1203-1283)³ in his *Cosmography*, *Kitāb ‘Ağā’ib*

¹ Provençal, P. A Philological Description Of The Bird Names Given By Yāqūt Al-Ḥamāwī And Zakariā’ Al-Qazwīnī In Their Description Of The Island Of Tinnis, *Arabic Biology and Medicine*, May 2015, No. 3. vol. 1 p. 1-45, P. A Philological Description Of The Bird Names Given By Yāqūt Al-Ḥamāwī And Zakariā’ Al-Qazwīnī In Their Description Of The Island Of Tinnis,-part 2, *Arabic Biology and Medicine*, May 2015, No. 3. vol. 2 p. 1-27.

² al-Qazwīnī, zakariā’ b. muḥammad b. maḥmūd; *kitāb ‘ağā’ib al-maḥlūqāt wa ġarā’ib al-mawġūdāt - el cazwīnī’s kosmographie*. ed. f. wüstenfeld. genehmigter neudruck des ausgabe von 1848-49 des verlagelages der dieterichschen buchhandlung. martin sändig 1967: wiesbaden.

³ Yāqūt al-Ḥamāwī, *Jacuts Geographischer Wörterbuch*, herausgeben von Ferdinand, Wüstenfeld, Leipzig 1866-70. ReprInt by Asādi Library, Teheran.

al-Maḥlūqāt wa Ġarā'ib al-Mawġūdāt. As the amount of material involved in this study is extensive, the treating will take place using several articles.

In the treating of these bird names I will in this article treat the names, for which the identity is still rather easy to work out but which require more philological and zoological treating compared with those treated in my two previous articles. As in the previous articles, the treated species will taxonomically be spread out in order to provide a better overview of the knowledge found in the Arabic texts on zoology. As explained in my previous article, 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 eleven species here. The remaining being treated in subsequent articles. For a general treating of list of bird names and an overview of the sources used see my previous article⁴.

THE BIRD NAMES:

الأخضر	Al-ahḍar	(No. 27)⁵
	<i>Carduelis chloris</i>	Greenfinch

Philological comments

According to Malouf⁶ the present day name of this bird

⁴ Provençal, A Philological Description.

⁵ The numbers refer to the number of the item in the list of bird names as noted by Yāqūt Al-Ḥamāwī, see Provençal, A Philological Description p. 14-16.

⁶ Malouf, A., 1932, *An Arabic zoological dictionary* al-Muktataf Press, Cairo, p. 118.

in Syria is *ḥuḍayrī* خُضَيْرِي, and it is called *ḥuḍayr* خُضَيْر in Egypt. Malouf writes that the classical Arabic name of this species is *Aḥḍar*, but he uses the bird list treated here as Classical authority⁷. François Viré writes that its name in north-west Africa is *Ibn al-Aḥḍar* (ابن الأخضر), *ḥīḍar* (خيزر) and *ḥiḍḍār* (خِضِير)⁸. Goodman et al write that the names of the Greenfinch in Egypt are: *‘uṣfūr ḥuḍayrī*, *aḥḍar*, *ḥuḍayr*, *ḥuḍayrī* where they write the first name with Arabic letters⁹ عصفور خضير.

Another bird whose name is based on the root ḥ / ḍ / r (خ ض ر) is the Little Green Bee-Eater *Merops orientalis*, but as this bird in all probability is mentioned in his list as No. 30¹⁰, the identity of the *Aḥḍar* as the Greenfinch is retained here.

Biological comments

The Greenfinch is a local breeding resident North Sinai, in the area around the central Suez Canal and around Ismailia and the southern delta . It has colonised the delta recently in the 1980-ies, and it is a fairly common visitor in winter in the

⁷ Malouf *Ibid*.

⁸ Viré, F. In Etchécopar, R.D., F. Hüe. 1964. *Les Oiseaux du Nord de l'Afrique de la Mer rouge aux Canaries*. Paris, N. Boubée et C^le.

⁹ 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. 466.

¹⁰ Provençal, P. A Philological Description Of The Bird Names Given By Yāqūt Al-ḥamāwī And Zakariā' Al-Qazwīnī in Their Description Of The Island Of Tinnis,-part 2, *Arabic Biology and Medicine*, November 2015, No. 2. vol. 3 p. 13-15.

northern parts of the Country¹¹.

Concerning the Arabic speaking world the Greenfinch is breeding at the present time in north-west Africa, on the eastern Mediterranean Coast and furthermore in Turkey and Iran.

¹¹ Goodman, *The Birds* p. 466-467, cf. also 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. 366.

الأزرق	Al-azraq	(No. 29)
	<i>Sylvia curruca</i>	Whitethroat
	<i>Sylvia communis</i>	Lesser Whitethroat
	<i>Sylvia hortensis</i>	Orphean Warbler

In Egypt the name *zurayqah fīrānī* زُرَيْقَةَ فِيرَانِي is, according to Malouf, used in for the Whitethroat *Sylvia communis* and the Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia curruca*¹². These names are confirmed by Goodman et al. who also include the Orphean Warbler *Sylvia hortensis* as a bird being designated by the name *zurayqah*¹³. This name alludes to the blue-grey hue of these warblers¹⁴. The reason for identifying the *azraq* with these small warblers and not the name No. 13 which is written *az-zurrayq* is that the name *al-azraq* is placed among the names of other small birds i.e. the Wheatears (No. 19), the male Blackcap (No. 20), the thrushes (No. 24), the female Blackcap (No. 25), the Graceful Warbler (No. 26), the Greenfinch (No. 27), the Little Green Bee-Eater (No. 30), the Robin (No. 31), the House Sparrow (No. 38), the Serin (No. 39)¹⁵.

The name *Zurraq* applies to certain Raptors i.e. the Black-Shouldered Kite *Elanus caerulus* which is called by this

¹² Malouf, *An Arabic Zoological*, p. 242-243.

¹³ Goodman, *The Birds* p. 422 and p. 424-426.

¹⁴ Peterson, R., G. Mountfort, P. A. D: Hollom 1989. *Europas Fugle*. Translated to Danish by D. Boertmann and J. Fjeldså. Copenhagen, C.E.G. Gads Forlag, plate 63.

¹⁵ Cf. the commentaries to bird name No. 13 In this list, which is identified as the Jay *Garrulus glandarius* (Provençal, *A PHILOLOGICAL DESCRIPTION – part 2*, p. 6-8)

name in Egypt at the present time¹⁶ and in Classical Arabic the male Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis*¹⁷.

Biological comments

The warblers mentioned here are passage migrants in Egypt, the Orphean Warbler being scarce though¹⁸. Concerning the Arabic speaking world the Orphean Warbler is breeding in many parts of the Middle East and North Africa. This applies to the Whitethroat and the Lesser Whitethroat too, but they are not as widely distributed¹⁹.

ديك الكرم	Dīk al-Karm	(No.48)
	<i>Porphyrio porphyrio madagascarensis</i>	Purple Gallinule

Philological comments

The names of the Purple Gallinule in modern Egyptian dialects are the following according to Goodman et al. 1989: فرخة سلطانية *Farḥah Sulṭāniyyah*, *Dağāğah Sulṭāniyyah*, *digīma*, *dīk* (this name is originating from the Nile Delta), *Dīk al-Ghāb*, *Dīk Burḍī* (this name is originating from the north coast between Alexandria and Matruh), *Dīk Sulṭānī*, *Sulṭānī*²⁰. The name *Dīk Sulṭānī* is confirmed by Malouf (1932) as an Egyptian name for this bird²¹. Dr ‘Abbās aš-Šanāwī called it

¹⁶ Viré, *Les Oiseaux*, p. 588; Goodman, *The Birds* p. 169.

¹⁷ Viré, F. 1977. Essai de détermination des oiseaux-de-vol mentionnés dans les principaux manuscrits arabes médiévaux sur la fauconnerie. *Arabica*, tome XXIV, p. 140.

¹⁸ Goodman, *The Birds* p. 422.

¹⁹ 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. 203-204.

²⁰ Goodman, *The Birds* p. 222.

²¹ Malouf, *An Arabic Zoological*, p. 111.

Dīk al-Ghāb ديك الغاب and *Zanzān* زنزان²².

As the name *Dīk* ديك (with different attributes or epithets) obviously is a common Egyptian name for the Purple Gallinule and as the word *karm* كرم means vine or grapes in Arabic, the identification of the *Dīk al-Karm* with the Purple Gallinule is rendered probable as this bird has a colouring resembling much ripe blue grapes²³.

Biological comments.

The purple Gallinule is a breeding resident in most Egyptian wetlands. It is fairly common the Nile Delta being the most important breeding site in the Western Palearctic especially Lake Manzallah and Lake Burullus²⁴ (Goodman et al. 1989 p. 222).

الصدرة	aş-şuradah <i>Lanius excubitor</i>	(No. 58) Great Grey Shrike
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Philological comments

Both Goodman et al. (1989) and Malouf (1932) state that the name Şurad applies to the Shrike. Goodman et al. apply it as a general name in Egypt for Shrikes²⁵. The name Şurad is used in the Arabic name list of *The Birds of Oman*²⁶ p. 287). Malouf substantiates his identification with descriptions from

²² Personal Information from Dr. ‘Abbās aš-šanāwī, the director of the Popular History Museum in Port Said In 1993.

²³ Personal observation on specimens belonging to the Natural History Museum, Denmark, cf. too Hollom, *Birds of the Middle East*, p. 81 and plate 12.

²⁴ Goodman, *The Birds*, p. 222.

²⁵ Goodman, *Ibid.* p. 441, Malouf, *An Arabic Zoological*, p. 235.

²⁶ Callagher, M. 1985: *Birds of Oman* Quartet Books Limited, p. 287; here is used the Arabic version طيور عمان.

the Classical lexicographical works. He Writes:

وهو (أَيُّ الصُّرَدِ) أنواع كثيرة يوافق وصفها ما جاء عن الصرد والنهس في كتب اللغة قال ابن سيده: "الصرد طائر أبقع ضخم الرأس يكون في الشجر . والنهس، الصرد وهو يصيد العصافر و يديم تحريك ذنبه" و في حياة الحيوان : "الصرد كرطب قال الشيخ أبو عمر ابن الصلاح (...) وكنيته أبو كثير وهو طائر فوق العصفور يصيد العصافر والجمع صردان قاله النضر بن شميل و هو أبقع ضخم الرأس يكون في الشجرة نصفه أبيض و نصفه أسود ضخم المنقار له برثن عظيم يعني أصابعه عظيمة لا يرى إلا في سعفة أو شجرة لا يقدر عليه احد وهو شرس النفس شديد النفرة غذاؤه من اللحم وله صفير مختلف يصفر لكل طائر يريد صيده بلغته فيدعوه إلى التقرب منه فإذا اجتمعوا إليه شدّ على بعضهم وله منقار شديد فإذا نقر واحدا قده من ساعته وأكله ولا يزال هذا دأبه و مأواه الأشجار ورؤوس القلاع وأعلى الحصون

“ *There are [of the shrikes] many species whose descriptions are consistent with what has been written in the Arabic encyclopedias on the birds named şurad and nuhas. İbn Sidah wrote:*

“*The shrike [şurad] is a bird whose plumage is of pied colour with a stout head. It is found in the trees. The nuhas is the shrike as it hunts small birds. It moves its tail permanently,*”

And in the *Ḥayāt al-Ḥayawān [of ad-Damīrī]:*

“*[The şurad] is [vowelised along the same pattern] as the (word) ruṭab. (...) (It is also called) Abū Kaṭīr. It is a bird, which is superior to the passerines [and similar small birds] as it hunts them. Its plural is [pronounced] Şirdān. Al-Naḍr ibn Shumayl²⁷*

²⁷ Died In Baṣrah 818 (see SomogyI, J.1928. Index des sources de la Ḥayāt al Ḥayawān de d-Damīrī, *Journal Asiatique*, juillet - septembre 1928, No. 9).

mentioned about this bird that it is of pied colour with a big and heavy head. It lives in trees. Half of the coloration of this bird is white and the other half is black. It is endowed with a thick beak and big claws i.e. its toes are vigorous. This bird is always seen [sitting] on palm fronds and on trees. Not one [among the passerines] can withstand this bird, as it has a mischievous character and is very distasteful [in its natural dispositions]. Its food consists of meat. The Shrike is able to whistle in different ways as it whistles to every bird which it wants to hunt in this bird's own language and calls it to draw near. When the birds [upon hearing this] gather around it the Shrike attacks some of them. As the Shrike has a strong bill, when it strikes one [of the birds] it tears it apart at once and devours it and never leaves this habit. The dwelling places of the Shrike are trees, tops of isolated rocks and tops of fortresses¹²⁸.

This is a very accurate description of the appearance and the habits of the Grey Shrikes i.e. The Great Grey Shrike *Lanius excubitor* and the Lesser Grey Shrike *Lanius minor*. As however the Lesser Grey Shrike in all probability is mentioned in the present list as No. 125, the identification of the صرودة with the Great Grey Shrike is retained here.

The Great Grey Shrike is a bird the size of a Blackbird *Turdus merula*. It is a bird of raptorial habits as an extensive part of its food consists of vertebrates of which the Great Grey

²⁸ Al-Damīrī, Kamāl ad-Dīn (1861) *Kitāb Ḥayāt al-Ḥayawān al-Kubrā*, ed. Muḥammad Shāhīn and ed. Dār al-Fīkr, Bayrūt, Lebanon. The text of al-Damīrī is copied directly from the *Kitāb Ḥayāt al-Ḥayawān* as Malouf does not quote it in its entirety. Author's translation.

Shrike chiefly hunts rodents, but it also hunts birds²⁹ The description of the coloration of this bird is precise, as the Grey Shrikes have light grey backs and white or grey-white underparts. These birds have black wings which have marked and extensive white patches and black tails with white edges and a distinctive black head marking in the form of a broad black stripe covering the eyes³⁰. However, the Lesser Grey Shrike *Lanius minor* has a rather variable mauve-pink toning of the underparts³¹. Furthermore the race *L. excubitor elegans*, which is distributed from the south of Tunisia to the southern Palestine is a very pale race where the grey colour is very light³².

The feet and toes of the Grey Shrikes are strong, but not exceptionally big (personal observations on specimens belonging to the collections of the Museum of Natural History, Aarhus, Denmark), however they are strong and vigorous enough to enable the bird to use them actively when catching preys. Birds are almost always grasped with the feet, and like real Raptors the Great Grey Shrike sometimes carry its preys by its feet³³. The Shrikes usually dismember their vertebrate preys

²⁹ Cramp, S. C. M. Perrins et al. (eds.) 1977 - 1993, *Handbook of the Birds of Europe, the Middle East and North Africa. The Birds of the Western Palearctic*. Oxford University Press. pp. 504-509).

³⁰ Cramp and Perrins *Ibid.* plate 22 and plate 27 and personal observations on specimens belonging to the collections of the Museum of Natural History, Aarhus, Denmark, cf. also the figures of Shrikes In Hayman 1989, *Oiseaux*, Arthaud, Paris, p. 65.

³¹ Cramp and Perrins *Ibid.* p. 482.

³² Hollom, *Birds of the Middle East*, p. 223 and plate 35.

³³ Cramp and Perrins , *Handbook* p. 482.

before eating them, either by holding them with one foot or by impaling them on a thorn or other suitable item³⁴. They may dismember and eat their preys at once or impale them in a cache as storage for later consumption.

Shrikes are very good imitators of the songs of other birds. This practice which is called mimicry is especially common with the Red-backed Shrike *Lanius collurio*, where it has been said that its song is: " like a mirror of the bird song of the region"³⁵. However the trait mentioned of the Shrike being able to lure avian preys by imitating their songs belongs in all probability to the realm of legend.

Due to its raptorial habits the Great Grey Shrike usually perch itself on a suitable place high above the ground³⁶.

For further information on the Grey Shrikes in classical Arabic cf. the very detailed description given by Lane (1879 (1956)) under the entry *Şurad*³⁷ and compare with Cramp and Perrins, *Handbook*, subfamily *Laniinae*.

Biological comments.

In Egypt the Great Grey Shrike is a breeding resident in many parts of Egypt. It is fairly common with the breeding population concentrated in the Nile delta and valley, in the Suez canal area, in the Sinai and in the Eastern Desert, particularly near the Red Sea. In winter the local population is

³⁴ Cramp and Perrins , *Handbook* p. 442.

³⁵ Bondesen, P. 1986, *Fuglesangen I Europa*, Rhodos, Copenhagen, No. 33.

³⁶ Cramp and Perrins , *Handbook*, p. 504, see also Génsbøl, B. 1991, *Nordens Fugle*, second ed. Gad, Copenhagen, p. 427.

³⁷ Lane, E. W. 1956. *Arabic - English Lexicon*. New York, (William and Norgate. London 1879), Frederic Ungar Publishing Co.

further increased by migrants from the north³⁸. During ornithological studies in Egyptian wetlands, the Great Grey Shrike was observed around the Lake Manzalah area which in recent times seems to support a breeding population³⁹.

القبرة	Al-qubbarah	(No. 60)
	<i>Alaudidae</i> spp.	Lark

The name *qubbarah* together with the name *qunburah* are common generic names for the Larks in Arabic⁴⁰.

Biological comments

During my visit to Lake Manzalah in 1992 I personally observed two Crested Larks *Galerida cristata* on the road from Port Said to Damietta. At least 21 species of Larks are breeding in the Middle East and North Africa⁴¹.

البح الأحمر	Al-bahḥ al-ḥumr	(No. 89 and 90)
	<i>Tadorna ferruginea</i>	Ruddy Shelduck

Philological comments

According to Goodman et al. (1989) the Ruddy Shelduck is called *bahḥ* in the district around al Minyah on the Nile⁴². Al-Ibšīhī writes in his *Al- Mustatraf fī kull fann mustatraf*:

بح - طائر لطيف يأوي أطراف الماء وهو خلقة شريفة لم يوجد غالبا الا اثنين فقط .

" Bahḥ - a lovely bird which lives by the water banks. It has a beautiful appearance.

³⁸ Goodman, *The Birds*, pp. 444-446.

³⁹ MeInInger & Atta, *Ornithological Studies*, p. 362.

⁴⁰ Goodman, *The Birds*, p. 350, Malouf, *An Arabic Zoological*, p. 146-147.

⁴¹ Hollom, *Birds of the Middle East*, p. 150-161.

⁴² Goodman, *The Birds*, p. 157.

This bird is chiefly seen in pairs"⁴³.

This is a very short description typical of the descriptions of the Kitāb al-Mustaṭraf. But it brings essentials of the features of the Ruddy Shelduck. It is a water bird as stated. It is chiefly seen in pairs or in family groups⁴⁴ (Peterson et al. 1989). The sympathetic description of the bird's outward appearance is due to the fact the Ruddy Shelduck is a decorative bird which is much used as a park-bird or ornamental bird in gardens and zoos. This species is often seen in the wild outside its natural geographical range as a result of escaped captive birds.

The identification of the *baḥḥ* with the Ruddy Shelduck is further made probable if the next bird name in the list *الحمير* is read not as an independent name, but as a colour adjective used as an epithet to the name *البيح* as the Ruddy Shelduck, as alluded by its English name, has an overall body plumage of a chestnut - orange colour with black and white wings with a green gloss on the primaries. The swimming or resting bird can look very much like a big wholly orange-coloured duck (personal observations).

The Ruddy Shelduck was very rarely depicted in

⁴³ Al-Ibšīhī al-Maḥallī, Šihāb ad-dīne Muḥammad Ibn Aḥmad Ibn Abī Faṭḥ. (ed. 1952), *Al-Mustaṭraf fī kull Fann Mustazraf*. Maktabat wa Maṭba'at Muṣṭafā Al-bābī Al Ḥalabī wa 'Awlādihi bi-Miṣr, vol. 2, p. 114, author's translation.

⁴⁴ Peterson et al. *Europas Fugle.*, p. 56 and plates 14, 16 and 18 and personal observations on live specimens.

Ancient Egypt⁴⁵. However in the mastaba of the government official Mehu from the Dynasty VI (2460 - 2200 B.C.⁴⁶ there are several fine depiction of Ruddy Shelducks⁴⁷.

Biological comments

The Ruddy Shelduck is breeding in north-west Africa and in Turkey and parts of Iran and Iraq⁴⁸. In Egypt it is a rare visitor in winter and on passage⁴⁹.

الملاعقي	al-malā'iqī <i>Platalea leucorodia</i>	(No. 92) Spoonbill
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Philological comments

The spoonbill is known by the names *abū mil'aqah* أبو ملعقة⁵⁰. Malouf uses this bird lists by Yāqūt and Qazwīnī treated here as an authority to state that the Classical Arabic name of the Spoonbill is الملاعقي. This name like the English name spoonbill and the French name *Spatule* comes from the form of the bill, cf. Delin and Svensson where the bill is well illustrated⁵¹. The great modern dictionary *Wörterbuch der Klassischen Arabischen Sprache* gives the identification: "A kind of bird; spoonbill"⁵² for the word ملاعقي.

In art from Ancient Egypt the Spoonbill is quite often

⁴⁵ Houlihan, P. F. 1986, *The Birds of Ancient Egypt*. Aris and Phillips. Warminster: England, p. 66.

⁴⁶ Andreu, G. 1992. *L'Egypte au temps des pyramides, troisième millenaire avant J.-C.* Hachette, Paris, p. 20.

⁴⁷ Houlihan, *The Birds*, p. 66.

⁴⁸ Hollom, *Birds of the Middle East*, p. 41.

⁴⁹ Goodman, *The Birds*, p. 157.

⁵⁰ Malouf, *An Arabic Zoological*, p. 233, Goodman, *The Birds*, p. 149.

⁵¹ Cf. Delin, H., L. Svensson 1990. *Photographic guide to the Birds of Britain and Europe*. Hamlyn Publishing Group Limited, London, p. 35.

⁵² *Wörterbuch der klassischen arabischen Sprache* 1970. Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft.

seen⁵³. An exceptionally good rendering is given in the tomb of Khnumhotep III from the 12th Dynasty (1991 - 1785 B.C.)⁵⁴.

Biological comments

The Spoonbill is breeding in many areas around the coast of the Red Sea and in some other small areas in the Middle East⁵⁵. It is a rare breeding resident in Egypt on the Red Sea coast and a not too common passage and winter visitor in the Nile Delta and valley. It migrates through Egypt but the birds prefer to stay on the Red Sea coast or to fly further up the Nile, so that the Nile Delta and its lakes are without Spoonbills in mid-winter. On Lake Manzalah between 250 and 300 Spoonbills were noted on 14 September 1944⁵⁶ (Goodman et al. 1989 pp. 149-150). During the Ornithological Studies in Egyptian Wetlands 1989/90 a total of 210 Spoonbills were seen in the Lake Manzalah area⁵⁷.

العقّاق	al-‘aq‘aq <i>Pica pica</i>	(No. 118) Magpie
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Philological comments

AD-Damīrī writes:

العقّاق: وصوته عقّاق وهو طائر على قدر
الحمامة وهو على شكل الغراب و جناحاه أكبر من
جناحي الحمامة وهو ذو لونين أبيض و أسود
طويل الذنب

"(The Magpie)... The voice of (this bird)
sounds like ‘aq‘aq [i.e. the name is an

⁵³ Houlihan, *The Birds*, No. 17 p. 33-34.

⁵⁴ Andreu, *L’Egypte*, p. 7, Houlihan, obod. p. 33.

⁵⁵ Hollom, *Birds of the Middle East*, p. 37.

⁵⁶ Goodman, *The Birds*, p. 149-150.

⁵⁷ Meininger & Atta, *Ornithological Studies*, p. 304-305.

onomatopoetic of the cry of this species]; it is a bird of the size of a Pigeon. It has the shape of a *Corvidae*-bird, but its wings are bigger than those of a Pigeon. It has two colours, white and black, and it has a long tail"⁵⁸.

This description is diagnostical of the Magpie⁵⁹. The voice is described accurately, as the call that is most commonly heard from a Magpie is a loud, staccato, harsh and guttural outburst, described by Delin and Svensson as the "well known harsh-laughing call"⁶⁰, sounding in fact very much like the pronunciation of the Arabic name of this bird (personal observations on Magpies). As the Magpie belongs to the same family as the Crows and Ravens the observation found in ad-Damīrī regarding the shape of this bird is correct.

The Magpie is well known in Arabic zoography and most of the well known traits of this bird are found⁶¹. At the present time the name 'aq'aq is the common name for the Magpie in Iraq⁶² (Malouf 1932 p. 155).

Biological comments

The Magpie is not counted as an Egyptian bird⁶³. It is however breeding in north-west Africa and in large portions of the Middle-East, but not in the Syro-palestinian region. There is too an isolated population in the southern *Ḥiğāz* of the

⁵⁸ Al-Damīrī, *Kitāb*, article 'aq'aq, Author's translation.

⁵⁹ Personal observations on live specimens, see also Delin and Svensson, *Photographic guide* p. 202-203 and Goodwin, D. 1986. *Crows of the World*. Trustees of the British Museum (Natural History): London, p. 156.

⁶⁰ Delin and Svensson, *Photographic guide* p. 202,

⁶¹ Cf. Lane, *Arabic - English Lexicon*

⁶² Malouf, *An Arabic Zoological*, p. 155.

⁶³ Goodman, *The Birds*, p. 489.

endemic race *asirensis*⁶⁴ (Hollom et al. 1988 p. 225).

البازي	Al-bāzī	(No. 124)
	<i>Accipiter gentilis</i>	Goshawk

Philological comments

According to Malouf, F. Viré, and Goodman et al. the names *bāz* and *bāzī* are the names of the Goshawk in Classical Arabic⁶⁵. In falconry literature this name was used for the female bird, which is the size of a Buzzard *Buteo buteo* and the one by far preferred in falconry⁶⁶.

Biological comments

Despite that the Goshawk was regarded as the most noble of the falconry Raptors⁶⁷ this bird is not found in Arabic speaking countries, with the exception of Morocco⁶⁸. The fact that al-Ġāhiz calls this bird a stranger in opposition to the Sacer Falcon which he calls Arabic shows that the geographic status of the Goshawk must have been similar in medieval times⁶⁹. This must be attributed to the fact that the Goshawk is a bird which is dependent of forest vegetation⁷⁰.

The Goshawk is a rare winter visitor in Northern Egypt⁷¹. As the area around Lake Manzalah was the much less

⁶⁴ Hollom, *Birds of the Middle East*, p. 225.

⁶⁵ Malouf, *An Arabic Zoological*, p. 2, Viré, F. 1977. Essai de détermination des oiseaux-de-vol mentionnés dans les principaux manuscrits arabes médiévaux sur la fauconnerie. *Arabica*, tome XXIV, p. 139, Goodman, *The Birds*, p. 186.

⁶⁶ Viré, *Ibid.*

⁶⁷ Viré, *Ibid.*

⁶⁸ Hollom, *Birds of the Middle East*, p. 55.

⁶⁹ Viré, Essai de détermination, p. 140.

⁷⁰ Génsbøl, B. 1987. *Rovfuglene I Europa, Nordafrika og Mellemøsten*, Gad. Copenhagen, p. 141.

⁷¹ Goodman, *The Birds*, p. 186.

inhabited in medieval times (cf. the map drawn by Ibn Ḥawqal in his *Ṣūrat al-Arḍ*)⁷² and as the area around the southern shores of Lake Manzalah was wooded (personal information from Dr ‘Abbās aš-šanawī, the director of the historical museum in Port Said) this area must earlier have been attractive for the Goshawks visiting Egypt.

الصُرْدِي	aṣ-ṣuradī <i>Lanius minor</i>	(No. 125) Lesser Grey Shrike
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Philological comments

The name ṣuradī صُرْدِي for the Lesser Grey Shrike is given by Malouf⁷³, but his own source is the book: *Rambles of a Naturalist* by Ğ.H. Gurney. This name with this identification is further provided by F.Viré and by Goodman et al.⁷⁴.

Biological comments

In Egypt the Lesser Grey Shrike is a fairly common migrant visitor in autumn and an uncommon visitor in spring⁷⁵.

الصقْر	al-ṣaqr <i>Falco cherrug</i>	(No. 126) Saker Falcon
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Philological comments

As may be seen from this bird's English name, the word *ṣaqr* in Arabic denotes the Saker Falcon⁷⁶, which was widely

⁷² Ibn Ḥawqal 1964. *Configuration de la Terre (Ṣūrat al-Arḍ)* Introduction et traduction avec Index par J. H. Kramers et G. Wiet. Édition G.P. Maisonneuve et Larose: Paris.

⁷³ Malouf, *An Arabic Zoological*, p. 227.

⁷⁴ Viré, F. In Etchépar, 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. 593, Goodman, *The Birds*, p. 444.

⁷⁵ Goodman, *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ Malouf, *An Arabic Zoological*, p. 103, Viré, *Essai de détermination*, p.

used in Falconry⁷⁷. On the other hand the word *ṣaqr* is used in Arabic as a generic word for all birds of the order *Falconiformes*⁷⁸. Furthermore the word *ṣaqr* is used to denote a variety of different diurnal Raptors which cannot be counted as Eagles or Vultures⁷⁹.

Biological comments

The Saker Falcon is primarily a species whose habitat consists of the steppes and tree-steppes of the Palaearctic region. Most birds of this species are migrants whose main winterquarters lie in the Mediterranean and the Middle-East⁸⁰.

The Saker is a scarce winter visitor and passage migrant in Egypt⁸¹. As the Saker Falcon outside its breeding season is often seen near swamps, coastal bays and other places where abundant bird life may be found⁸² it is therefore probable that a place like the lakes of the Nile Delta has good attraction on migrants and winter visitors.

الباشق	al-bāšiq	(No. 130)
	<i>Accipiter nisus</i>	Sparrowhawk

Philological comments

The name *bāšiq* is the common Arabic name for the

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⁷⁷ Cf. Ibn Manglī, M. 1984. *De la chasse*. Traité traduit de l'arabe et présenté par François Viré. Sindbad: Paris. pp.134-139.

⁷⁸ Malouf, *An Arabic Zoological*, p. 102, Viré, *Essai de détermination*, p. 144.

⁷⁹ Cf. Malouf, *Ibid*, and the name material In Goodman, *The Birds*, pp. 168-199.

⁸⁰ Génsbøl, *Rovfuglene*, p. 228-229.

⁸¹ Goodman, *The Birds*, p. 209.

⁸² Génsbøl, *Rovfuglene*, p. 229

Sparrowhawk⁸³. In the books of falconry only the female was called *bāšiq*⁸⁴.

Biological comments

The Sparrowhawk is now breeding in Anatolia, Northern Iran and north-west Africa. It is a winter visitor in many places in the Middle East and North Africa. It is rather common as passage migrant in Egypt, and much scarcer as winter visitor⁸⁵ (Goodman et al. 1989 p. 186 - 187).

⁸³ Malouf, *An Arabic Zoological*, p. 2, Viré, *Essai de détermination*, p. 141, Goodman, *The Birds*, p. 186.

⁸⁴ Viré, *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ Goodman, *The Birds*, p. 186-187.