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Volksroman under the Mamluks: The Case of Tamīm ad-Dārī Popular Sira

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***Volksroman* under the Mamluks: The Case of the Tamīm ad-Dārī Popular Sira**

by Yehoshua Frenkel (Haifa/Bonn)

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Prologue

The present paper evolved from a historical-legal research project. While searching for information about properties in Hebron (al-Ḥalīl), which the offspring of the *ṣaḥābī* Tamīm al-Dārī claimed, I stumbled upon a popular story. In this story Tamīm is portrayed as a hero who has been kidnapped by ġinns and endured ordeals and adventures on remote islands. The aim of this paper is to shed light on the text and its reception by the Mamluk society. *Inter alia*, I will describe the audiences, and will try to elucidate the supposed connections between Tamīm the historical character and Tamīm the literary hero.

Since there is slight positive evidence to indicate that this text is “Mamluk,” one may ask why my talk is about a “*sīra ša‘biyya*”¹ in the Mamluk environment? What makes it “Mamluk”? What is Mamluk in the story? My answer is based primarily upon circumstantial evidence, and I will return to it at the closing section of this paper.

¹ Heath, *A Critical Review*, 19.

1. Introduction

Popular story telling was not unusual in Mamluk society.² Chronicles and biographies from their realm report on popular performances: musicians, theatre and storytellers.³ The latter narrated tales about invisible forces, miraculous salvations and mirabilia (*'ağā'ib*). Amongst the heroes of these stories are well-known sultans and caliphs. A paramount example is the *Sīrat Baybars* that used to be performed in public.⁴ Another one is *Sīrat Iskandar*, which was copied during the Mamluk period.⁵

In his account of the Umayyad history the Damascene historian Ibn Kaṭīr summarizes the story of al-Baṭṭāl and warns his readers: “regarding the popular stories that the common people tell about al-Baṭṭāl, using the pseudo-biography of Dalhama, Baṭṭāl, the emir ‘Abd al-Wahhāb and the judge ‘Uqba; it is all lies and imaginative innovations (...) these stories circulate only among the uneducated who accept as true also the forged folk romance of ‘Anṭara al-‘Absī, the biography [of the Prophet] composed by [Abū l-Ḥasan] al-Bakrī, the story of [Aḥmad] ad-Danaf and other stories.”⁶ The story of “the kidnapped Tamīm” fits this social milieu well.

Tamīm ad-Dārī, as a literary persona, is a cultural hero. He is first mentioned in the *tafsīr* of Muqātil b. Sulaymān (d. 150/767). In his exegeses of the Qur’anic verse: “O ye who believe! Let there be a testimony between you when death approaches any of you” (Q: 5.106), Muqātil says that this verse (*āya*) “was revealed (*nazalat*)” following a historical event. Buzayl b. Abī Māriya, a client of al-‘Āsī b. Wā’il as-Sahmī, travelled across the sea to the land of the Ethiopian king (Negus of Abyssinia / Nejšahī / al-Najashī). He was accompanied by two Christians: Tamīm b. al-Aws ad-Dārī from the Banū Laḥm tribe and ‘Adī b. Baddā’. While sailing from Arabia to the African shores of the Red Sea, Buzayl died on board. On his deathbed, Buzayl wrote a will and put it among the merchandise, which he handed to Tamīm and his companion, requesting them to give the goods to his household. Tamīm and ‘Adī handed over the cargo but refrained from giving a silver vessel ornamented with gold engraving to Buzayl’s family. When the fraud was uncovered, the Prophet instructed the Muslims to act in line with the *āya*.

The next dated piece of evidence is an account by the Baghdadi historian Aḥmad b. Abī Ṭāhir Ṭayfūr (204-280/819-893). He reports on a visit to Damascus paid by al-Ma’mūn (fl. 197-218/813-833). During his stay in Syria’s capital (in 218/833), the caliph met some local delegations. One of them came from the town of al-Ḥalīl (Hebron). Its members, headed by Sa’īd b. Zayyād, were offspring of Tamīm ad-Dārī. They asked al-Ma’mūn to confirm their legal status and to authenticate the properties, which they claimed the prophet Muhammad had allocated to Tamīm. Sa’īd b. Zayyād is named as the source of the following story:

² This genre has attracted the attention of modern folklorists, historians and narratologists. See Heath, *sīra šha’biyya*; Doufikar-Aerts, *Alexander Magnus Arabicus*, 233-235, 267.

³ Ibn Furāt, *Ta’rīḥ Ibn al-Furāt*, 9a:26, 41.

⁴ ‘Azzām, *Mağālis as-sultān*, 118-119; It is probable that Ibn Iyās’s remarks: “*wa-aḥbāru l-maliki z-zāhiri baybars kaṭīratun fī ‘iddati muğalladātin wa-l-ğālibu fihā mawḏū’un laysa lahū ḥaqīqatun*” refer to a popular *Sīrat Baybars*. Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i‘ az-zuhūr*, 1/1: 341 (ll. 6-7); Paret, *sīrat Baybars*; Herzog, *Geschichte und Imaginaire*, 385.

⁵ Doufikar-Aerts, *Alexander Magnus Arabicus*, 196, 200; Wust, *A Catalogue of the Arabic manuscripts*, 332 (ms. 444 Ibrahim b. Mufarrij al-ṣuri’s narration).

⁶ Ibn Kaṭīr, *al-Bidāya wa-n-nihāya*, 13: 115-116 (AH 122/740); Shoshan, *Popular Culture*, 23 ff.

“[When] I went into al-Ma’mūn’s presence at Damascus, the caliph said to me: Show me the document which the Messenger of Allah wrote out for your family. Sa’īd related: So I showed it to him and al-Ma’mūn said: I should very much like to know what this covering over this seal is. Sa’īd added: Abū Ishāq al-Mu‘tašim [Ma’mūn’s brother and the future caliph] said to him: Untie this knot so that you may know what it is. But al-Ma’mūn then said: I do not doubt that the Prophet tied this knot himself, and I am not the person who is going to unloose a knot tied by the Messenger of Allah. Then [al-Ma’mūn] said to [his nephew] al-Wathīq: Take it and lay it on your eye; perhaps Allah will heal you. Sa’īd related: al-Ma’mūn began to lay it on his eye and to weep”.⁷

In the *ḥadīth* collections Tamīm plays the role of the originator of a unique story. He has informed the Prophet about his adventures and ordeals in a remote island. Then Muḥammad told the story to his community:

“The Prophet said: By Allah, I have not made you assemble for exhortation or for a caution, but I have assembled you here for Tamīm ad-Dārī, a Christian, who has come, sworn alliance and accepted Islam, told me something, which agrees with what I was telling you about the false Messiah (*ad-dağğāl*).⁸ Tamīm told me that once he had sailed in a ship with thirty men of the Banū Laḥm and Banū Ğudām tribes. For nearly a month the waves tossed them in the ocean. In the end the waves brought them to the shores of an island where the sun was setting. They sat in a landing boat and disembarked.

On that island they encountered a very hairy beast; her fur was so bulky and thick that they could not distinguish her face from her rear. They said: Woe to you, who are you? The beast said: I am the she-spy (*al-ğassāsa*). They asked her: What is al-Ğassāsa? And she said: Oh, people, go to this person who is in the monastery as he is very eager to know about you. Tamīm added: When the bulky she-beast called our attention to a person we were afraid that she was a she-Satan (*šayṭāna*). Hence we hurriedly went on till we entered that monastery. There we found a well-built person, “previously we had never seen anyone like him.” He was strongly bound, his hands were tied to his neck and iron shackles fettered his legs from the ankles up to the knees.

We said: Woe upon thee, who are you? And he said: You will soon be able to know who I am, but first tell me who are you. We said: We are Arabs. We sailed in a boat. The sea became stormy and the waves carried us from one place to another. After a month the sea-waves brought us to the shores of this island, where you dwell. We sat in the ship’s side-boat and landed on this island where we encountered a hairy she-beast. She has such thick hair that it is impossible to distinguish between her face and rear. We said: Woe be unto thee, who are you? She said: I am al-Ğassāsa. So we asked her: What is al-Ğassāsa? And she answered: Go to this person who is in the monastery for he is eagerly waiting to know your story. So fleeing her, we hastened towards you. We did not trust her words that you are the Devil.

⁷ Tayfūr, *Kitāb Baghdād*, 147-148; Keller, *Sechster Band des Kitab Bağdad*, 271, 123 (trans.); aṭ-Ṭabarī, *Ta’rīḥ ar-rusūl wa-l-mulūk*, 8:652; 3:1142 (AH 218); Bosworth, *The History of al-Tabari*, 32:234; Ibn al-Aṭīr, *al-Kāmil fī t-ta’rīḥ*, 6:9 (AH 218). The transmission of this anecdote by such a late historian can indicate that Mamluk-period audiences might be familiar with it.

⁸ Most probably the Arabic term was acquired from the Syriac “*meshiḥa daggala*.” See Mathew 24.24 “indeed false Messiahs and false prophets will arise”; Lazarus-Yafeh, *Some Religious Aspects of Islam*, 51. In al-Maqrīzi’s days, it was commonly believed among Muslims that Jesus would kill the Antichrist. Taylor, *Some Aspects of Islamic Eschatology*, 68.

The chained creature asked them: Tell me about the date-palms in Baisan (Bīsān). We responded: About what features of these trees are you seeking information? He said: I ask you whether these trees bear fruit or not? We said: Yes. Thereupon he said: It is most probable that soon the trees will not bear fruit. The chained man then said: Inform me about the Sea of Galilee? We responded: About what features of it? So he asked: Is there water in this sea? They said: It is large and [contains a] great quantity of water. Thereupon he said: It is most probable that soon the sea will become dry. He again said: Inform me about the spring of Zoar of Lot, which is in a village in southern Syria.⁹ They said: About which aspect of it do you want to know? The chained person said: Is there water in the spring and does it irrigate the plantations? We answered him: Yes, it is flowing and the local inhabitants use the water to irrigate the plantations. The creature said: Inform me about the Prophet of the common folk, those who do not know the Book (*ummiyyūn*);¹⁰ what has he done? We said: He has departed from Mecca and settled in Yathrib (Medina). He said: Did the Arabs fight against him? We said: Yes. He said: How did he deal with them? We informed him that he had overcome those Arabs in his vicinity and they submitted to him. Thereupon he said to us: Has it actually happened? We said: Yes. Thereupon he said: If it is so, it is better for them to obey him.¹¹

[The false Messiah continued]: “I am going to tell you about myself. I am the Messiah, it is about [the time that] I will soon be permitted to get out, and I shall proceed and travel to the ends of Earth. I will not spare a single place and for forty nights torture its inhabitants, except Mecca and Medina as these two sacred locations have been blocked from me. Whenever I make an attempt to enter either of these two places, an angel with a drawn sword in his hand will confront me and bar me from entering. On every passage leading to Mecca and Medina there will be a guardian angel.”¹²

Tamīm is also named in several Abbasid *mirabilia*. Abū Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Malik b. Hišām (213/828) quotes in his account of the ancient Arab tribe of ‘Ād, which is mentioned in the Qur’ān (Q: 89.6-8), a tradition supposedly transmitted from Wahb b. Munnabih.¹³ Wahb is the authoritative source of the following tradition: “During the reign of ‘Umar b. al-Ḥaṭṭāb, Tamīm ad-Dārī saw the town of Iram.”

Abū ‘Uṭmān ‘Amr b. Baḥr b. Maḥbūb al-Ġāḥiẓ (160-255/776-868) tells the story of Ḥālīd b. Yazīd, the client of the Muhallabis. According to al-Ġāḥiẓ’s narrative, Ḥālīd stated: “I reached the end of the earth and the stage of sailing in the ocean. It is not for you to see Dū l-Qarnayn (The Double Horned One; Alexander the Great of Macedonia in many exegeses). Give up the methods of Ibn Šarya, because he knows only the plain aspects of historical

⁹ Le Strange, *Palestine under the Muslims*, 290-291.

¹⁰ A reference to Qur’ān 2.78; 3.20, 75. The Qur’ān describes the Messenger of Allah as the *ummī* prophet 7.157-158. Traditionally Muslim commentators explain *ummī* as unlettered. Watt, *Bell’s Introduction to the Qur’ān*, 33-34; Gilliot, *Le Coran*, 171.

¹¹ Some Mamluk authors associate this story with the verse “And when the word is fulfilled concerning them, We shall bring forth a beast of the earth to speak unto them because mankind had not faith in Our revelations” (Q: 27.82; trans. Pickthall), alleging that this is the beast mentioned by Tamīm. Ibn al-Wardī, *Ḥarīdat al-‘aġā’ib*, 302.

¹² Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 2942 (*kitāb al-ḥadīth* traditions 119-122). This *ḥadīth* was translated by Saritoprak, *The Legends of al-Dajjal*, 295-96.

¹³ Ibn Hišām, *k. at-Tiġān fī mulūk Ḥimyar*, 48.

stories. Were Tamīm ad-Dārī to encounter me, he would acquire from me the description of the barrier”¹⁴ [which is mentioned in the Qur’ān, Q: 18.82-103].

Stories regarding ġinns¹⁵ and abduction were not strange to Muslim societies.¹⁶ Ibn Sa‘d transmits a report on a meeting between Tamīm ad-Dārī and ġinns in a ravine in Syria. The ġinns informed him that the Prophet had appeared in Arabia. Following this news Tamīm traveled and met with Muḥammad. The *ḥadīth* of Ḥurāfa (or Ḥurfa) that Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal incorporated in his *Musnad* also tells about ġinns and abduction. In his dictionary, Lane explains the word *ḥurāfa* as “a story that is deemed pretty.” The plural form *aḥārīf* is equivalent to *asāḥīr*. Ḥurafāt, another plural form, are facetious night-stories. Al-Mas‘ūdī employs “*alf ḥurāfa*” to designate a collection of marvelous amusing legends. This seems to be the prototype of “The One Thousand and One Nights”.

2. Cultural Reception during the Mamluk Period

Tamīm ad-Dārī continued to play a role in historical and legal texts as well as in popular romances of the Mamluk period. In this paper I will concentrate on the last genre and will not dwell upon the two first genres.

Describing an island of the Indian Ocean, the geographer Muḥammad Šams ad-Dīn ad-Dimašqī (654-727/1256-1327) says: “The island of the Anti-Christ: The transmitters of traditions claim that the ad-Dağğāl is chained there. It is narrated that the ġinn kidnapped Tamīm ad-Dārī and brought him to this island. There they treated him and asked him about the indications of the last day and the emergence of the Anti-Christ. The story is well-known”.¹⁷

The ‘ifrīt is a chthonic class of ġinns and are believed to be particularly powerful and cunning. Describing the festive departure of the *maḥmal* caravan from Cairo, Mamluk authors tell of a group of people whom the crowd named “‘*afarīt*.”¹⁸ “They were dressed in reversed leather, the coat outwards, or covered by straw. On their heads they carried feathers of ostriches. Masks with artificial hair and teeth covered their faces. It was an amusing vision.”¹⁹ Ibn Tağrī Birdī reports on a huge ship named ‘*ifrīt al-baḥr*.

The Mamluk period witnessed merchants and travelers who would receive stories about hazards in remote lands and long years of detachment favorably. The chronicles from that era and area transmit various stories that make it clear that urban and rural audiences alike used to listen to popular stories. Here are several examples:

Ibn Zāfir al-‘Asqalānī is said to be familiar with a person that crossed every year from Damascus to Mecca within three days. This man said that al-Ḥiḍr helped him to do so.²⁰

Ibn Abī l-Ḥiğga narrated that while he lived in Mecca, a Persian told him that he was married for forty years. Since no child was borne to him he took a concubine who after nine months gave birth to a maimed son. As the handless and feetless boy reached maturity, he provided

¹⁴ Al-Ġāhiz, *al-Bukhala*, 49 (ll. 2-4).

¹⁵ Ġinns are mentioned in the Qur’ān and their existence was completely accepted by the Muslim population of the Mamluk Sultanate. s.v. Macdonald, *Djinn*.

¹⁶ ‘Azzām, *Mağālis as-sultān al-ġūrī*, 79.

¹⁷ Ad-Dimashqī, *Nuḥbat ad-dahr*, 149 (ll. 16-17).

¹⁸ “An ‘ifrīt of the jinns” is mentioned in King Solomon story in the Qur’ān. s.v. Chalhod, ‘*ifrīt*.

¹⁹ Meloy, *Celebrating the Mahmal*, 419; and see Bauer, ‘*ifrīt*.

²⁰ Ibn al-Ġazāī, *Ta’rīḥ Ibn al-Ġazarī*, 165.

him with a maid. The boy slept with her and in a single night he ejaculated 12 times. Nine months later the maid gave birth to 12 boys. He provided each one of them with a wet nurse. They grew up and he stationed each one in his castle.” The story ends with an ego-remark: “I came to here till death will come.”²¹

A sweets seller told Ibn Abī l-Ḥiğğā that he used to sell his products to pilgrims (*hāğğ*). Once, one of them lost his way. He saw light on a hill. When approaching the fire, he encountered angels in the shape of blacksmiths, who were preparing fetters. Upon his inquiry, they told him that they hurl the chains of men upon women and those of women on men. So he asked them: Have you prepared a chain for me? Yes!” came the response, “your shackle has been thrown on the daughter of Ḥusayn the blind man from Baghdad.” He traveled to the city and enquired about the blind man and his daughter. Seeing their miserable conditions, he stabbed the girl. Believing that she had died, he left the place, traveled to Basra and sailed to India. After twelve years the man returned to Baghdad. According to the narrator it was a common tradition among the traveling merchants to meet with local girls prior to marrying them. So he went with a lawyer to a ḥān, selected a girl and married her. In the summer he saw her as she was changing her dress and discovered wounds on her body. She told him that a stranger had attacked her at a young age. Years passed, and only after she gave birth to several children, the man told her his biography.²²

The spread of the stories was not limited to the lower classes, and their reception cannot be explained by times of unrest or instability. Several Mamluk chroniclers transmit a memorandum from Damascus that reported an amazing event, which happened in one of the province’s villages (in 695/1296):

“Many people from Damascus narrated a story that spread quickly through the city and everyone was engaged by it during the first ten days of Muḥarram. Its source was the judge of the district of Ğubbat ‘Asal (the honey ditches), a district in the province of Damascus, who related that in one of the hamlets, an ox has spoken. It all started when a boy led the ox to the water trough. When the animal finished drinking, he said: “Praise the Almighty God.” This has astonished the boy, who told his master, the ox’s owner about it. This person refused to believe the story and the next morning joined the boy and the ox to the trough. As the ox finished swallowing, he indeed praised God. On the third day, a group of farmers came to the site and they too heard the ox blessing God. The ox said: The Lord inflicted on the nation of Islam seven years of drought, yet due to the intercession of the Prophet, He changed it to fertility. Then the ox mentioned that the Prophet instructed him to transmit this information. The animal asked the Prophet what the evidence that he is reporting the truth would be, and the Prophet answered: “Immediately after informing them you will die.” The reporter added, and then the ox advanced and ascended to a higher ground, fell and died. Hoping to gain blessing, the people cut the ox’s coat, wrapped him with shrouds and buried him”.²³

²¹ Ibid., 223.

²² Ibn al-Ġazarī, *Ta’rīkh Ibn al-Ġazarī*, 225.

²³ An-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab*, 31:295-96 (quoting Ibn al-Ġazarī, *Ḥawādīṭ az-zamān*). See *Ta’rīkh Ibn al-Ġazarī* 1: 279-80; Ibn al-Furāt, *Ta’rīḥ*, 8:203; al-Maqrīzī, *as-Sulūk*, 1:811 (quotes an official account that reached Cairo’s citadel); Ibn Taghri Birdī, *an-Nujūm az-zāhira*, 8:59 (ah695; quotes a report extracted from the Syrian historian Quṭub ad-Dīn Yunīnī. Ibn Tagrī Birdī appends a remark to the piece of information transmitted by him: “This is a strange story, yet our chronicler is a trustworthy source and he has mentioned that the story circulated widely in Damascus.”); Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i’ az-zuhūr*, 1:380-81 (quoting al-Suyūfī); Wiet, *Le Trait  des famines de Maqr z *, 40.

Tamīm ad-Dārī is the hero of a *volksbuch*. This popular story is preserved in c. 30 manuscripts, most of them undated. An early version in Aljamiado was written in the Kingdom of Aragon in the 16th century. Describing a manuscript that includes *Geschichte des Tamīm al-Dari*,²⁴ Ahlwardt notes: “So erklärt sich die dabei angegebene Zeit der Abschrift [ist] 917 Muharram (1511)”.²⁵

It seems at the moment impossible to diagram a stemma of the manuscripts. Certainly it is impossible to identify an ur-text or to fix an exact date of its first appearance. However, the short remarks in Mamluk sources about kidnapped Tamīm, makes it possible to deduce that the story was not unfamiliar to the Mamluk audience. This method of dating is in line with the agreed means of periodization of popular stories, where no date of the story is possible to detect.

The structure of Tamīm’s story is plain.²⁶ The frame is that of a pseudo-*ḥadīth*. Following a short *isnād*,²⁷ not mentioned in all the manuscripts,²⁸ the narrator describes the court of the Prophet and the regulations he prescribed regarding the duties of ablution. The closing section deals with legal questions regarding the annulment of a contracted marriage. In these sections Tamīm’s unnamed woman is credited with the prime role.

She is not happy with Tamīm’s virile performances and summons the *ḡinn*.²⁹ On the other hand, this very woman plays the role of the ideal Muslim wife. She is portrayed as a loyal woman that patiently waits for her husband to return. She devotedly follows the instructions of the caliph and marries only after receiving his consent.³⁰

In between, the story narrates the incidents experienced by Tamīm amongst the *ḡinns* and in remote lands.³¹ The plot is rich in details. The *‘ifrīt* carries him fast and high, which enables him to have a bird’s-eye view of the universe. His gaze encompasses unlimited distances and totalizes space and time, paramount features of utopian stories. Throughout his voyages he encounters *ḡinns* of two kinds: infidels and believers.³²

Back on Earth Tamīm wanders along the shores of remote islands and faces severe dangers while sailing, two topics that were very popular in medieval marvel and utopia stories. The island is the setting of discovery; seafaring is the track of dangers and hazards. His experiences in these two environments resemble the prospects of the believer in the hereafter. On one side he faces the tortures of Hell. On the other side is Paradise. During his adventure

²⁴ Berlin Arab no. 8788; edited in the appendix to this paper.

²⁵ *Arabischen Handschriften* vol. 19/7 673b. Bellino, *Tamīm Al-Dari*, 197-225 studied several manuscripts at the Stadtbibliothek zu Berlin (p. 208) but she doesn’t mention this particular one.

²⁶ Chauvin, *Bibliographie des ouvrages arabes*, 50-54.

²⁷ Bellino, *Tamīm Al-Dari*, 209-210.

²⁸ Ahlwardt, *Verzeichnis der arabischen Handschriften*, Band 08/Buch 19 (die Poesie -Schluß mss. 8952-9361), (Berlin, 1896) 53a ms. 9069 mq 431, 53b ms. 9070,2 pet f. 111, 54a ms. 9070,4 we 743 f. 65 „from Ibn ‘Abbās“, 53b ms. 9070,1 pm 67 f. 137 „from ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb.“

²⁹ On the summoning of spirits see Abu-Lughod, *Writing women’s worlds*, 38: “Well, there was a ravine and I would go over and sit there all day. I sat next to it saying, ‘Possess me, spirits, possess me.’ I wanted the spirits to possess me, I wanted to go crazy.”

³⁰ In most texts unnamed. In Berlin ms. Arab 8788 she is named Ġamra bt. Āmir al-Ānṣariyya.

³¹ This episode resembles a story in the One Thousand and One Nights. A bride was kidnapped by an *‘ifrīt* while her procession travelled to the house of her groom. The *‘ifrīt* used to cohabit with her every tenth night. Halfants, *Le Conte du Portefaix*, 208, 209.

³² On the motive of “voyages merveilleux” see Bellino, *Tamīm Al-Dari*, 215.

Tamīm also talks with a person dressed in green (*ḥaḍarī*; is he al-Ḥidr/St. George/Elias?), who provides him with sound advice.³³

Yet, the text also contains a hidden stratum, in which the plot transmits a subversive message. In the case of a crisis, the woman is the one who finds the right solution. It is due to her that the story ends with a happy end. Since the narrator is occupied by performing an amusing and moralistic fiction, he is not troubled by questions of truth or reality; these are matters that engage historians.

While reading the text I was troubled by the question why Tamīm was selected to perform the major role in this legendary story. I assume that a precise answer is beyond our reach. Yet, circumstantial evidence may provide some clues. Ibn an-Nadīm al-Warrāq mentions in his catalogue a work named: “*k. at-Tamīmī wa-t-tamīmiyya alladī ta ‘āhadū.*” This indicates that a certain Tamīm was the hero of an Abbasid adventures stories.³⁴

Moreover in the *ḥadīṭ* transmitted above Tamīm’s vessel landed on a remote and mysterious island where he met with the hairy female creature that is said to spy for the Dağğāl. In this genre Tamīm is depicted as a pious *ṣaḥābī*, a man involved in travels, sailing and maritime stories. Tamīm’s adventures in the *qiṣṣa* described here are akin. He was kidnapped by a hairy creature, transferred to a remote island, encountered mysterious beings and remarried with his wife. Moreover, she was on the brink of marrying a man from the ‘Udra clan, the same tribe that is mentioned in the *ḥadīṭ ḥurāfa*.

3. Summary

From these pieces of information I deduce that the character of Tamīm went through a process of actualization. The narrators transported him from the leaves of chronicle and *ḥadīṭ* collections to play the role of a popular hero in a romance that aimed not only to amuse the audiences, but also to provide them with social and religious guidelines. Tamīm was selected to serve as the ideal type and so was his wife.

Qiṣṣat Tamīm al-Dārī is a *volkbuch*, which was framed in a pseudo-*ḥadīṭ* form and transmitted orally and in writing. It was received by the Mamluk audiences because the narrative responded to their social and emotional needs. The story amused them and provided them with ideals to be followed. It informed them about remote lands and transmitted values and norms. Yet, the popular story did not eliminate the presence of the loyal wife and even gave her the opportunity to express subversive positions. In this manner the listeners and readers learned about gender practices and values.

Also at least one version of the romance was copied at the last years of the sultanate;³⁵ it does not mention sultans, coins or institutions that are identified with the sultanate of Egypt and Syria. Indeed, nothing in the narrative makes it “a Mamluk story” and its definition as such rests upon hypothetical evaluation and several concrete facts. The partial obliteration of

³³ Al-Ḥidr or al-Ḥaḍir (the green man) is commonly associated with the Qurā’nic story (Q: 18.60-82). Ibn al-Anbārī, *az-Zāhir*, 2: 163-164; and cf. Ibn Ḥağar al-‘Asqalānī, *az-Zahr al-naḍir*, 100, 171, 177-78; s.v. Wensinck, *Khaḍir*.

³⁴ Is it possible to connect it to the platonic love (*al-ḥubb al-‘udrī/al-ğazal al-‘udrī*)? EI², X:774-7776 (by Renate Jacobi); and Al Harthi, *I Never touched Her*.

³⁵ The colophon of Berlin Ms. Arab 8788 says that it was copied by ‘Ali b. Aḥmad al-Ṣāliḥi on 25 Muḥarram 917 (24 April 1511), that is to say during the last decade of the sultanate. It is an eastern handwriting compared to most manuscripts that were written in western (*mağribī*) handwriting.

dividing lines between the ruling elite and the popular classes is clearly visible in the chronicles.³⁶ Tamīm is nicknamed “the kidnapped” only in Mamluk sources, not previously; the plot resembles to a considerable degree episodes in the *Thousand and One Nights*, a popular epic that was copied in the realm of the Mamluks. The years of this regime witnessed growing literacy among city dwellers and the diffusion of colloquial communication that infiltrated the high language of scholars.

³⁶ Documented very recently by Behrens-Abouseif, *Craftsmen, upstarts and Sufis*, 375-395.

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The Abduction of Tamīm al-Dārī and his miraculous Return

A Mamluk Period popular story¹

The appended text was presented first at a seminar in the “Annemarie Schimmel Kolleg for the History and Society during the Mamluk Era, 1250-1517” (Universität Bonn, October 2012).²

The *qiṣṣa* constitutes a chapter (the heading is missing) in a booklet entitled “*kitāb taḍkirat al-tawwābīn*.”³ It is written in an eastern handwriting, which has the features of Middle Arabic.⁴ At this stage I refrain from comparing the Berlin manuscript with other versions and manuscripts of the *qiṣṣa*.⁵ A fuller description of the manuscript will be provided in the future.

¹ Wilhelm Ahlwardt, *Verzeichnis der arabischen Handschriften* (Berlin, 1895), Buch 19/Band 7: 672-673 (Ms. Arab. 8788).

² The hospitality of Professor Dr. Stephan Conermann and his team created a wonderful working environment. I would like to thank them for facilitating my research. Critical remarks and suggestion by the participants in the seminar considerably improved the result. Mistakes result from my own shortcomings

³ Subtitle: “*ḡama ‘a l-imāmu l-‘ālimu l-allāmatu n-nawawiyyu a ‘āda llāhu ‘alā l-muslimīna min barakātihī*” that was copied in 25 Muḥarram 917 (24 April 1511).

⁴ Li Guo, *Commerce, culture, and community in a Red Sea port in the thirteenth century: the Arabic documents from Quseir* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 116 ff. 122 ff.; B. Halflants, *Le Conte du Portefaix et des Trois Jeunes Femmes dans le manuscrit de Galland (XIVe-XVe siècles)* (Louvain la Neuve, 2007), 17 ff.

⁵ See my forthcoming study (December 2012).

“قصة تميم الداري: اختطافه بيد الجنّ وعودته”، *مجلة الكرمل* (جامعة حيفا، سينشر قاربًا)

قصة تميم الداري [مخطوطة برلين 8788]

[بدون عنوان] <66ء س. 10> قال ابن عباس <66ب> رضي الله عنهما (!) قال بنا (؟) عمر ابن الخطاب رضي الله عنه ثم استند بظهره المبارك إلى المحراب وشرع يحدثنا بحديث سمعه من رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم وإذا وقفت بباب المسجد⁶ امرأة لا بيان منها شي ووقفت وسلمت فرددنا عليها السلام وقالت أياكم عمر ابن الخطاب رضي الله عنه قلنا هو ذلك الجالس في محرابه وعليه المرقعة⁷ الصوف فدخلت إليه فسلمت عليه فرد عليها فقالت له اعلم يا أمير المؤمنين أنني امرأة من سلالة <67ء> الأنصار وزوجي كان اسمه تميم الداري ابن حبيب الأنصاري وأنه غاب عني منذ⁸ سبع سنين وأن امرأة فقيره وأريد أن أتزوج فقال لها عمر اصبري هذه السنة وأنا أنفق عليك من بيت مال المسلمين قال فصبرت تلك السنة وعمر ينفق عليها حتى أنقضت سنة أخرى فقال لها امضي واقضي عدة الأموات⁹ فمضت وقضت عدة الأموات فمضت وغابت عنه أربع شهور وعشرة أيام ثم أتت إليه وقالت له زوجني يا أمير المؤمنين فقال لها اجلسي <67ب> فجلست فقال عمر معشر المهاجرين والأنصار من يتزوج بهذه المرأة وأنا للمضأذن له المهر من مال بيت المسلمين فنهض إليه شاب من الأنصار وقال له أنا يا أمير المؤمنين فقال له اجلس فجلس فخطب الإمام خطبة النكاح ثم زوج بعضهم لبعض ثم انصرفوا من عنده فلما كان العشا صلى الغلام ومضى إلى منزله فقامت المرأة إلى صحن الدار لتصلح أمرها وإذا بشخص أسود هائل المنظر منبوش الشعر وهو جالس في صحن الدار فلما رآته قالت أعوذ بالله من <68ء> الشيطان¹⁰ الرجيم فقال لها لا تخافي أنا زوجك تميم الداري ابن حبيب الأنصاري فقالت أعوذ بالله منك إن تكن أنت تميم فقال لها والله أنا تميم الداري قالت له إن كنت تميم الداري فما اسمي فقال لها اسمك غمره بنت عامر إخوتك قتلوا بين يدي رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم فقالت له والله صدقت.

⁶ ويقارن بمخطوطة برلين 9070 ص. 111ء: قال ابن عباس رضي الله عنه صلى بنا عمر بن الخطاب رضي الله عنه في بعض الأيام ثم استند بظهره إلى محرابه وشرع يحدثنا بما فتح الله تعالى عليه من الفتوحات وإذا نحن بامرأة قد وقفت بباب المسجد
⁷ مرقعة =

“A patchwork dress”. See Yedida Kalfon Stillman and Norman A. Stillman, *Arab Dress: a Short History from the Dawn of Islam to Modern Times* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 90.

⁸ منذ

⁹ وينظر في سورة البقرة 2: 234.

¹⁰ الشيطان

قال فسمع الزوج الجديد كلامهما فقال من الذي يكلم زوجتي فقال تميم تكذب الزوجه زوجتي {11} أنا فقال الزوج الجديد <68ب> ما هي إلا زوجتي أنا فقالت المرأة لا تقتتلان ما منكم إلا من هو صاحب حق فينام كل واحد منكم في ناحيه من الدار إلى أن يصبح الصباح فلما أصبح الصباح قاموا وآتوا إلى عمر ابن الخطاب رضي الله {12} فسلموا عليه فرد سلامهم فاحكت المرأة حكايتها فالتفت عمر ابن الخطاب رضي الله عنه إلى تميم الدار {13} وقال هكذا يغيب الرجل عن زوجته وأولاده منذ {14} سبع سنين وأربعة أشهر وعشرة أيام فقال له رضي عنه يا أمير المؤمنين لم <69ء> أكن مع الأنس وإنما كنت عند الجان تحت الأرض السبعه السفلى

فقال عمر رضي الله عنه احكي لنا يا تميم ما جرى عليك قال فأراد تميم أن يحكي ما جرى له وإذا بالإمام علي رضي الله عنه قد دخل من باب المسجد فقام إليه واعتنقه وأجلسه إلى جانبه ثم التفت الإمام علي إلى تميم الداري وقال له ما أنت تميم الدار {15} قال نعم قال الإمام أنت لك غائب عن أهلك سبع سبع سنين وأربع أشهر وعشرة أيام قال نعم يا أمير المؤمنين فقال عمر رضي الله عنه من أخبرك <69ب> بذلك يا أمير المؤمنين قال أخبرني بذلك ابن عمي رسول الله [صلى الله] عليه وسلم قبل وفاته فقال عمر رضي رضي {!} الله عنه احكي لنا يا تميم ما جرى لك

فقال تميم يا أمير المؤمنين هذه زوجتي كنت معها ذات ليلة فكان بيني ما يكون بين الرجال والنساء فقامت إلى صحن الدار لاغتسل وكانت ليلة معتمه شاتيه ذات رعد وبرق ففزعت فقلت لها يا بنت عمي وانسيني بالكلام فقالت كالمأزحه معي يا عماد الدار خذوه {16} فوالله ما استتمت كلامها اظهر لي عفريت من الجان فاخترطني <70ء> فاخترطني ونزل بي إلى تحت الأرض فدخلني إلى منزله خادما

فتميت عنده سنين ونصف فكنت عنده في أسوأ حال وكنت أكل أنحس المأكول وألبس أنحس الملابس وكنت لا أسمع حس أذان ولا صلاة وهم قوم كفار فبينما أنا ذت يوم جالس وإذا أنا بحس تهليل وتكبير فقلت يا قوم ما الخبر قال هولاي قوم مسلمين في كل سنة يأتونا ويغزونا ثم هم هجموا على القوم الذي أنا عندهم وقتلوا وأسروا وأسروني في الجملة ثم أعرضونا على الملك فلما راني <70ب> الملك قال لي كيف وقعت عند هولاي فاحكيت له جميع مل جرى لي فقال لي ما تعلم أولادي القرآن قلت نعم فأتا بي بأولاده فعلمتهم القرآن

11 زوجتي
12 عنه
13 الداري
14 منذ
15 الداري
16 خذوه

في سنة وكانوا إذا قرأوا أية الكرسي يدوبوا {17} كما يذوب الرصاص فبينما أنا ذات يوم جالس إذ غلبتني عيني ونمت فرأيت في النوم كأنني بين أهلي وأولادي فبكيت ثم استفتت وأنا باكي فقال لي الملك على ذا تبكي فقلت له أريد أهلي قال اتدري كم بينك وبين أهلك قلت لا والله قال بينك وبين أهلك مسيرة ثلاثين وسبعين <71ء> سنة لم سمعت ذلك بكيت فقال لي لا تبكى فأنت الليلة تيات عند أهلك ففرحت بذلك

ثم أنه أهدني وأتاني إلى بربه قفرا فيها صخره عظيمه فأزالها عن مكانها فإذا هي شجرة سجن الملك فأخرج منا عفريتاً عظيماً أسود بشع المنظر فقال له كم مره عفوت عنك قال كثير قال ليبيحك أتريد أن اعتكك قال نعم قال له قال أحمل هذا الأنسي إلى بلده فقا السمع والطاعة قال في كم توصله قال ثلاث ليالي ثم أنه فك عنه قيوده وركبني على كتفه <71ب> وعصب عيناي وقال لي يا تميم هذا عفريت كافر وأنا خائف عليك من شره ولكن أعلمك ثلاث كلمات قلت وما هم قال الأولى قل يا حي يا قوم يا من أرسل الفيم يا من سجدت له الجبال والوحوس وال طير أجعل لي من أمري فرجا ومخرجا أنك على كل شيء قدير ثم قال اجعل بالك أن تنسى هذه الكلمات فمتى ما نسيتهم أرماك في البر أو في البحر ثم قال لي اجعل لي بالك من هذه الكلمات فإذا زللت إلى أهلك أقري الصحابه مني السلام <72ء> ثم أنه ودعني

وطار بي العفريت إلى اسمعني تسبيح الأملاك في مجاري قباب الأفلاك ثم أني نزلت العصابه عن (عه) عيني فرأيت النجوم في السما كأنها الجبال الشوامخ فمن هول ما رأيت نسيت الكلمات فقلت لا إله إلا الله محمد رسول الله فلم أدري إلا وسهم قد جاني فاحترق العفريت من تحتي فنزلت أهوي إلى الأرض في مدة سبعة أيام فلما كان اليوم الثامن نزلت في البحر المالح كأنني طير لا ريش له وادا أنا بطائر لم يرى أحسن منه فصب في فمي ما أحلامن العسل وأبرد من الثلج وأزكا {18} <72ب> رايحه من المسك الأذفر

قلت من أنت أيها الطائر الـ <ي من الله علي بك قال أنا طائر إسحق {19} نبي الله جعلني في هذا المكان أنقذ {20} الغرقا وأرشد الضال فقلت له كيف الطريق فقال اسر أمامك فسرت أياما وليالٍ وإذا أنا بشي أسود يلوح من بعيد فأتيت إليه وإذا به صومعة راهب فوقفت تحتها وناديت يا راهب فأشرف علي شيخ كبير شعر حاجبيه غطا عيناه فلما رأني قال لي من أي أمة أنت فقلت له من أمة محمد صلى الله عليه وسلم فقال صلى الله عليه وسلم فقلت له من أين تعرف محمد صلى الله عليه <73ء> وسلم قال أننا نجده في التوراة فقلت له يا راهب كم لك في هذا المكان ومن أين عداوك قال من ها الوادي فمضيت إلى ذلك الوادي وإذا من جميع ما

17 يذوبوا
18 أزكى
19 إسحاق
20 أنقذ

خلق الله من الفواكه والتمار {21} و عيون تجري فأكلت من ذلك التمار وشربت من ذلك الما وأتيت إليه فقلت له مأكولك فمن أين ملبوسك قال كل سنة يأتي مركب من هذا البحر فيلقوا لي برنسا اكتسي به من السنة إلى السنة ثم أرما لي برنسا

وقال لهم خذوا {22} معكم هذا الانسي إلى بلده فأخذوني {23} معهم في المركب فسار بريح طيبه مذ ثلاثة أيام فلما كان في اليوم <73ب> الرابع وإذا بهم يودعوا بعضهم بعضا فقلت يا قوم ما الخبر قالوا ما ندري ما بين أيدينا فنظرت وإذا بجبل أسود في البحر فقلت ما هذا الجبل فقالوا هذا جبل المغناطيس ما مر به مركب قط وسلم ثم جأته موجه كأنها جبل فحملت المركب بمن فيه وضربته في ذلك الجبل ففدا ألواحا وغرق كل من فيه إلا أنا فأنتي تعلتت {24} بلوح من ألواح فجعلت الأمواج ترفعني وتحطني إلى أن ألقنتني إلى جزيره كثيرة الأشجار والأثمار والأطيار والأنهار فقامت فمشيت بين تلك الأشجار <74ء> وإذا أنا بدابه لم أرى {25} أحسن منه بضو[ء] يلوح من يعيد من بعيد فقصدته وإذا [دا] به يخرج من باب مغاره فدخلت فيه وإذا بمعادن كثيره مثل زبرجد وعقيان وبلور وجميع ألوان المعادن فأخذت {26} منها حجر وإذا بثعبان قد مسك على ساقى فألقيت ذلك الحجر من يدي فحل عني ذلك الثعبان {27} فمضيت وإذا أنا بعجوز جالسه على الطريق وعليه من أنواع الحلى والحلل فسلمت عليها فلم ترد علي السلام فمضيت عنها وإذا أنا بدابه لم أر أحسم منها رأسها رأس أسد ووجهها كوجه الأدميين وبدنها كبदन الفرس ويديها كيد البقر البقر فوقفت أتفكر فيها وفي <74ب> حسن خلقتها فالتفتت (!) إلي وقالت مما تتعجب فقلت لها منك من تكوني أيتها الدابه قالت أنا الدابه التي ذكرني الله تعالى في القرآن أخرج في آخر الزمان وأكلك الناس فقلت لها كيف الطريق قالت سر أمامك فسرت وإذا أنا بقصر لم أرى {28} أحسن منه مكتوب على بابه لا إله إلا الله آدم صفي الله لا الله إلا الله إبراهيم خليل الله لا الله إلا الله عيسى روح الله لا الله إلا الله محمد رسول الله

فلما قرأتهم انفتح الباب فدخلت فيه دائره ومقاصير فدخلت إلى أول مقصوره فرأيت فيها مائده عليها من كل <75ء> مأكول فاخر فجلست وأكلت حتى اكتفيت وقمت [و]دخلت إلى مقصوره أخرى وإذا فيها شباب وكهول ومشائخ روس {29} بلال أبدان وأبدان بلا روس {30} ودماهم تشخب فخرجت من عندهم وإذا بفار-

21 تمار ؟؟
22 خذو
23 أخذوني
24 تعلقت
25 أر
26 فأخذت
27 الثعبان
28 أر
29 رؤوس

سين لم أرى {31} أعظم منهما فقالا لي أنت المفقود من أهله قلت نعم فكيف الطريق قال سر أمامك فخرجت وسرت وإذا بطائر لم أرى {32} أحسن فوقفت أتفكر فيه وفي حسنه وإذا به انتفض {33} وصار أدميا وقال لي لا تبرح يا انسي حتى أتيتك فقلت نعم ثم مضى غني ساعه وأقبل ومعه قوس وبنادق فسلمهم لي وقال <75ب> لي يا انسي انني أريد أن أغنيك فإذا رأيتني وقد-مت أرميني ببندقية فانني أعيش فقلت نعم ثم مضى بي إلى باب مغار ودخل فيه فدخلت خلفه وإذا نحن بشاب نائم على سرير من المرمر مصفح بالذهب [حمر وعند رأسه حيه بيضا وعند رجليه حيه سودا وفي أصبعه خاتم عليه كتابه مثل ديبب النمل

فدنا ذلك العفريت من الخاتم ليأخذه {34} وإذا بالحيه قد قامت إليه ونفخت عليه فمات فرميته ببنده فعاش وقال لي يا انسي بقت الثالثة ثم تقدم ليأخذ {35} الخاتم وإذا بالحية قد نفخت <76ء> عليه فمات فقامت لأرميه وإذا بالحيه قد نطقت بلشان فصيح وقالت والله لو لا أنك من أمة محمد صلى الله عليه وسلم لكنك الحقتك به فقلت لها كيف يكون الطريق فقالت سر أمامك فخرجت وسرت أمامي وإذا أنا بقصر أرى {36} أحسن فوقفت أتفرج في حسنه وإذا بمائة جارية نهد أبكار كأنهم الأقمار وبينهم جاريه كأنها البدر فقالت لي ما فعل العفريت قلت قد هلك فقالت بشرك الله بالخير فقلت لها من جابك إلى هذا المكان قالت هو اختطفني من ليلة عرسي أنا وهولاي البنات فقلت لها <76ب> كيف الطريق فقالت سر أمامك

فسرت أمامي وإذا أنا برجل أعور من عينه اليمنى ومتكي مقيد فلما رأني قال من أي أمة أنت فقلت أنا من أمة محمد صلى الله عليه وسلم قال وهل بعث محمد قلت وتوفي صلى الله عليه وسلم قال وهل ظهر في أمته الزنا قلت نعم قال والربا قلت نعم قال وشهادة الزور قلت نعم قال ذلك من دلائل ظهوري ثم جلس فنزل إليه ملك من السما بيده حربيه من نار فضربه بهت وقال له اخسي يا ملعون فما هو اوان ظهورك فنام كما كان

ثم سرت <77ء> وإذا أنا برجل يستقي من بئر ويسكب في حوض والحوض مبخوش وإذا الماء [ء] يرجع إلى البئر فلما فقلت له لو سددت الحوض فقال سر ولا تسأل عن ما لا يعينك فسرت وإذا أنا برجل حامل خشبه وقد تعب منها فقلت له حط عنك واسترح فقال لي سر ولا تسأل عم لا يعينك فسرت وإذا أنا بالكلبه حبله وجراها تتبح في بطنها من داخل فتعجبت منها وسرت وإذا أنا برجل صبيح الوجه حوله سباع باركه وعنده شجرة رمان فأتيت إليه وسلمت عليه فرد علي السلام <77ب> وقال لي والله لقد رأيت عجائبا يا تميم فقلت كيف

30 رؤوس

31 أر

32 أر

33 انتفض أو انتفض

34 ليأخذه

35 ليأخذ

36 أر

الطريف **فا** فقال سر أمامك فسرت فإذا أنا برجل جالس في محراب من البلور الأبيض وعلى رأسه عمامة خضرا وثيابه خضر ووجهه كالبدر فسلمت عليه فرد علي السلام وقال سر أمامك فسرت أمامي وإذا أنا برجل قائما في محرابه وهو يصلي فصبرت حتى فرغ من صلاته وقال لي اجلس يا تميم

فجلست فقال لي والله لقد رأيت عجبا رأيت شيئا ما رآه أحد غيرك فقلت له والله ثم جعل يؤنسنني بالكلام وقال لي أبشرك فأنت الليلة عند أهلئك فبينما هو <78ء> يحدثني وإذا نحن بسحابه سود مظلمه وهي جائره علينا فقال لها إلى أين يا مباركه قالت إلى قوم أكلوا رزق الله وعبدوا غيره فقال لها سيرى فسارت ثم جأت {37} سحابه أخرى بيضا كافوريه فقال لها إلى أين يا مباركه سائره قالت إلى قوم بأرض الحجاز أن تحملي هذا الرجل أهله فقالت نعم ثم قال قم يا تميم فاركب متن هذه السحابه فقلت لا أركب حتى تخبرني عن ما رأيت في طريقى وعنك أيضا فما رأيت أعظم منزله عند الله منك

فقال يا تميم أما الراهب فإنه من حوارى عيسى ابن ابا لمريم وأما <78ب> العجوز فهي الدنيا وأما المائده التي أكلت منها فهي من الجنه وأما الدابه فهي التي تخرج آخر الزمان وتكلم الناس وأما القصر الذي فيه الجدار بناه عفريتة عصا على سليمان ايم داود وأما الرجل النائم وفي أصبعه خاتم فهو سليمان ابن لداوود عليه السلام وأما الرجال المذبحين فهم شهدا بدر وأما الفارسين فهم جبرائل وميكايل وأما الرجل العور للحملي فهو الدجال وأما [1] للرجل الحامل الخشبه فهو حاما الأمانه وأما الرجل الذي يستقي من البيره وهو الذي يأخذ {38} ما ليس <79ء> بحق وأما الكلبه الحبله هو آخر الزمان يبقي الرجل ساكت والولد يتكلم وأما الرجل عنده السباع فهو دانثال عليه الصلاة والسلام وأما الرجل الذي عمامته خضرا فهو أخي إلياس عليه الصلاة والسلام وأما أنا فأنا الخضر

ثم أنه ودعني وقال لي إذا وصلت فأقري الصحابة خيرا ثم ركبني وسار فما أحسست بروحي إلا وأنا على سطح دارى وها حديثي يا أمير المؤمنين ثم أمره برد زوجته فأخذها ومضى وبها إلى داره وهذا ما كان من قصة تميم الداري على التمام والكمال.

³⁷ جاءت
³⁸ يأخذ