

**The Social Status of Female Slaves at the Abbasid Court
(132-329 A.H./ 750-940 A.D.)**

Submitted by

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to the University of Exeter as a thesis for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in Arab and Islamic Studies

May 2019

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Abstract

The subject of the position of women has developed considerably over the last few years, expanding on their roles, movements and activities in the medieval and classical periods. Researchers have studied the lives, roles and talents of *jawāri*, especially in motherhood, singing and poetry; however, little scholarship has been conducted concerning their agency in terms of social status, privilege and prestige. This thesis investigates the social status of Abbasid *jawāri* through historical analysis in order to examine how the characteristics of enslaved women, such as their origin, education and beauty, could affect their ability to obtain greater social mobility in the Abbasid social hierarchy. The research adopts feminist theories by Gerda Lerner and Fatima Mernissi of patriarchy and gender to determine the effect of male dominance on enslaved women's opportunities for social mobility and the acquisition of improved rank and social standing.

By studying historiographical and literary sources in addition to biographical collections, the present thesis presents two subjects of examination in order to evaluate the influence and power of enslaved women regarding their social status. The first is the rivalry between elite and enslaved women in various affairs, including marriage and maternity, sexual desirability and behaviour, the right to education and the nature of schooling, and finally, privilege and wealth. The second compares the significance of the function, privilege and position of male and female slaves. These comparisons comprise our core research question on the status of women, identifying vital roles that played a part in the social mobility of women and their enslavement, rank and status at the Abbasid court and household.

Acknowledgments

First, I must thank my supervisor, Professor Ian Netton, for his support and helpful advice throughout my Master's and PhD research. I would never have been able to finish my dissertation without his guidance. His insight and suggestions have helped me stay on track and work at a smooth pace.

I would like to thank several individuals for their interest and support, which gave me the motivation to realize this achievement. First, my principal debt is to Professor Faisal Alkandari, who was a great influence on my higher education. Without his advice and encouragement in 2008, I would not be where I am today. Secondly, I would like to express my deep appreciation to my editor, Lora Maroney, who read and edited my research with utmost care.

Deepest thanks to my husband, Mohammad Alfailakawi, for his unconditional love and support in carrying out this research, and for his encouragement during my 6 years abroad while gaining my Master's and PhD. To my two beloved daughters, Danah and Layan, you are my genuine motivation to seek my dreams and beyond. I also wish to thank my parents, Ibraheem Alkandari and Amani Albatni, my brother Ahmad and my dearest sisters, Budoor and Lulwah, who encouraged me and prayed for me over my years of study.

Finally, I would like to thank and heartily dedicate this thesis to my grandfather, Jassim Albatni, who taught me the significance of being a literate, modest, prudent and kind-hearted person.

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Chapter One

Introduction

The phenomenon of slavery was widespread in the ancient cultures of Rome, Persia, Greece, India and Arabia. However, the roles of female slaves in the Islamic world are often confusing and can be easily misunderstood by modern scholars and readers. Many think only of the sexual component of their existence; however, slave women often held a great deal of social, political and cultural influence, particularly in the early and classical Islamic eras. It is important to note that slave women often used their power to change their status, climbing to higher levels in the Islamic social hierarchy. They also intervened and participated in political life and government activities. In addition, slave women had significant impact on the Islamic state on many levels. For example, on the cultural and social front, these women shared the art, customs and traditions brought with them from their communities of origin, such as music, literature, cooking and fashion. Due to their educations, many female slaves also played a significant literary role, especially in relation to poetry. Other slave women were famous for their singing and dancing talents and became responsible for bringing new modes of entertainment to the region. This research presents a conceptualization of the study of social history using the lives, roles, positions, prestige and privileges of female slaves to analyse social class and mobility in the Abbasid era (132-329 A.H./ 750-940 A.D.).¹

On the subject of social structure, Tak Wing Chan writes that a social system consists of the behaviours, attitudes and relations of individuals. The positions and privileges of a high-ranking social group, such as the elite and nobility, are contingent on the qualities, respect and honour associated with their ascribed class, which is assigned through birth or ethnicity.² Similarly, André Béteille notes that an individual's class is connected to the principles of the institutions

¹ The era under study is defined as spanning from the reign of Caliph Abū al-'Abbās al-Saffāh (r. 132-136 A.H./ 750-756 A.D.) to the reign of Caliph Muḥammad al-Rāḍī (r. 322- 329 A.H./ 934-940 A.D.).

² Tak Wing Chan, *Social Status and Cultural Consumption* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 6.

of social organization, relayed through the hierarchal system.³ In this system, “caste, class, and power refer in different ways to the phenomenon of social stratification.”⁴ The extent to which power is distributed between classes depends on particular social and historical circumstances surrounding the various groups. Social classes are organized into categories and parties to structure a hierarchy in which the higher social strata gain greater privileges, influence and prestige and have an increased opportunity to rise to power.⁵

Anselm Strauss writes that social mobility provides a substantive topic for historical research, as it connects to various phenomena and historical incidents related to individual social class.⁶ David Bergel, in his work *Social Stratification*,⁷ writes of the nature of achieved position, adding:

Rank in an individual stratification system depends almost exclusively on either personal achievement or position. Since both are subject to changes, individual stratification is incessantly changing; social mobility is the rule and plays a much greater role than in the more static system of group stratification.⁸

This position was contingent on an individual’s race, birth, ethnicity, ability and skill, and thus could also apply to slaves. While an achieved position could change based on various aspects of an individual’s merit, such as their abilities and occupation in the group, this prestige could be acquired or lost⁹ depending on variations in the individual’s upward or downward social mobility.

When discussing social status, we refer to the superiority of an individual’s position and rank within the classification of the Muslim social hierarchy, which is dependent on honour, occupation, ability and gender, as well as gaining prestige and privilege and achieving various social, economic and cultural roles

³ André Béteille, *Caste, Class, and Power: Changing Patterns of Stratification in a Tanjore Village* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1965), 4.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 185.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 6, 186-187.

⁶ Anselm Strauss, *The Contexts of Social Mobility: Ideology and Theory* (Chicago: Aldine Publishing Co, 1971), 6-7.

⁷ David Bergel, *Social Stratification* (New York; London: McGraw-Hill, 1962).

⁸ *Ibid.*, 6.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 53, 200.

within the group or among society.¹⁰ The approach of the present research examines the channels of upward mobility for enslaved women, including origin, education, skills, occupation, marriage and maternity. Analysis of the above features leads to the major concern of this research: social mobility and development of the position of enslaved women at the Abbasid court and household. The present research seeks to determine the extent to which female slaves held higher or lower social status at the Abbasid court.

The historical conditions of social mobility show that women's agency is particularly relevant to this research, as such agency may be implicit in a female slave's social mobility. Keera Allendorf emphasised that "the measure of women's agency is an index composed of several items on women's ability to make decisions about their own mobility".¹¹ This could refer to education, economics or even entertainment choices.¹² However, according to Allendorf, the extent to which women obtain great power and acquire a higher level of agency is associated with their close proximity relationships within a group or society in general.¹³

James Wood demonstrated that, when analysing women's agency, it is important to focus on women's roles and mobility as well as their freedom in social participation, which includes political, economic and social engagements.¹⁴ For Naila Kabeer, there are two types of individual agency: passive and active forms. Passive agency, which can drive with a little choice and effort (such as women's given roles and responsibilities), contrasts with active agency, which occurs when patriarchy and gender disparities grant men greater social worth than women have.¹⁵

¹⁰ I first searched for the meaning of the words 'status', 'rank', 'position' and 'honour' in an Arabic dictionary. I built my definition of social status in the present thesis upon the perception created by the above terms. See 'Alī al-Jurjānī, *Kitāb al-Ta'rīfāt* (Al-Qāhirah: Dār Al-Faḍīlah, 1973), 92, 168; Aḥmad al-Fayyūmī, *Al-Miṣbāh al-Munīr* (Bayrūt, Lubnān: Maktabat Lubnān, 1987), 118, 123, 181, 221; Muḥammad al-Firūzābādī, *Al-Qāmūs al-Muḥīṭ*, 8th ed (Bayrūt: Al-Mu'assasah Al-'Arabīyah Li'l Ṭibā'ah, wa 'l-Nashr, 2005), 88, 936.

¹¹ Keera Allendorf, "Women's Agency and the Quality of Family Relationships in India," *Population Research and Policy Review* 31, no. 2 (2012): 192, 197, accessed March 24, 2019, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41409614>.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ *Ibid.*, 200.

¹⁴ James Wood, "Women's Agency in Social Change and Development: Self-Reliant Communities towards a Model for Policy Change," (2002), 1–39, accessed March 30, 2019, <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/54d2e17ee4b0a740b6238e47/t/560224cce4b0eaa138bdc353/1442981068245/Women's+Agency+in+Social+Change+and+Development.pdf>.

¹⁵ Naila Kabeer, "Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: A Critical Analysis of the Third Millennium Development Goal," *Gender & Development* 13 (2005): 3, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13552070512331332273>.

This research defines women's agency as that class group's ability to achieve available social mobility through the use of maternal, educational, economic and social capital. Such capital could allow the exertion of certain or considerable social powers, privileges and advantages. Thus, this thesis is a study of female slaves specifically as cases of women's agency and social mobility of the first and second Abbasid eras (132–329 A.H. / 750–940 A.D.).¹⁶

Clearly, in describing the social status of individuals, researchers were referring to the social position as a logical basis of gaining political power in society.¹⁷ However, the subject of this thesis is the history of women's status, addressing the impact of female slaves' positions and ranks in obtaining significant social position, roles and entitlements in the Abbasid era (132-329 A.H./ 750-940 A.D.). Our fundamental aim for this thesis is to present an essentially historical, rather than theoretical, study using *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence) and existing research. Furthermore, since the subject of this research is the female slave, the aspects of social position and upward social mobility are illustrated in the first chapter by examining the attitude of Islamic law towards slavery and manumission.¹⁸ Finally, the discussion draws on the social standing and rank of female slaves, depending on their social, economic, religious and educational roles, and will focus on different themes, such as law and history, and literature.

This introduction consists of three sections. The first part previews the research aims, objectives and the research questions. The second section discusses the methodology that will be used in the dissertation. The last section presents the research structure.

1.1 Questions, Aims and Objectives of the Research

In an attempt to shed new light on this important phenomenon in Islamic socio-historical study, the fundamental question of this thesis asks to what extent

¹⁶ In this dissertation, all the dates from the Islamic era are given first in *Hijrī* (A.H.) format and then as common era (A.D.) dates (A.H./A.D.). Dates of incidents from the pre-Islamic period will be provided in *Before Hijra* (B.H.) format.

¹⁷ John Harsanyi, *Essays on Ethics, social Behavior, and Scientific Explanation* (London: D.Reidel Publishing company, 1976), 211–213.

¹⁸ These sources are discussed in the methodology section and then in depth in the literature review section.

enslaved women achieved standing in the Muslim social hierarchy during the Abbasid eras (132-329 A.H./ 750-940 A.D.). The extent to which enslaved women influenced their lovers to alter their social status, standing and mobility is largely unknown. Significant questions to be considered are how enslaved women gained their manumission and how they received manumission as a special reward after performing useful deeds for society or for their masters, or was granting manumission as a favour from the masters to their female slaves a widespread phenomenon among Arab society? It is of note that few of the previous studies focused on the lives of female slaves, their rank or the social perception of them after their manumission. This research presents the challenges of female slaves as a model for analysing the rank of women in the Islamic classical period (132-329 A.H./ 750-940 A.D.). Therefore, questions have been raised to examine whether female slaves and freedwomen in Abbasid society found ways to challenge and change the status and position of women in general and female slaves in particular. If so, was it a consequence of having a specific position and status, such as belonging to influential figures or those who held financial authority in society, or was it a phenomenon that spread across Muslim society throughout the period?

For the question of the effect of the rapid development of Islamic law in regard to slavery and manumission law. It is worth considering whether the Muslim *fuqahā'* (Islamic jurists or scholars) affected social habits with regard to dealing with or emancipating female slaves as a result of their varying opinions in women, slavery and manumission, which may have created a number of customs or practices among individuals in society such as the phenomenon of slavery and manumission. Therefore, an initial discussion of the legal sources can provide a clearer notion of how female slaves were treated and reveal their status in society. Finally, the hope is that answering these questions will evolve new knowledge and data in the field.

One question asked by this thesis seeks to expose the characteristics and features of female slaves that were the fundamental factors in contributing to their upward social mobility, from the slave markets to the caliphs' court, assemblies and *ḥarīm* (women)¹⁹ household. A similar area of consideration is

¹⁹ See Chapter Five 144-145 for more discussion on the *ḥarīm*.

the origins, education and professions of slave women who obtained their emancipation or earned a higher role in the Muslim social hierarchy. Thus, this research will chart the path of social change for female slaves throughout the Abbasid periods in order to track and investigate their origins, as well as identify who succeeded in gaining manumission or higher status. Additionally, this examination of the chances of female upward mobility involves studying the relations between marriage, kinship and education. This is done in order to detect impediments to slaves' efforts to achieve a higher social rank and role during the Abbasid periods. This will help determine whether slave women, freedwomen and free noblewomen were in competition for mobility and power, and explore any differences in status to discover which type of woman was most likely to obtain superior influence.

Another research question central to this thesis is the extent to which the roles and status of female slaves helped them establish a rival position with royal women. To answer this question, we will compare royal noblewomen and female slaves, especially *qiyān* and *Ummahāt al-Awlād*, exploring the broader relations and differences between the social status and prestige of these women in the Abbasid household and at court. Finally, in order to present the central themes and groundwork for the subject of female slaves' social position, the research uses the concept of male dominance and gender to assess the possibility of equal opportunity of male and female slaves in obtaining upward social status and corresponding or conversely unequal position. These concepts were beneficial to studying female slaves who acquired noteworthy status in the Abbasid period.

The most significant aim of this research is to show how the practice of slavery, and the widespread phenomenon of owning female slaves in the Abbasid period served as the most important factor in changing slave women's social status. This remains true regardless of whether the cases of freedwomen or female slaves gaining full Muslim denizen²⁰ rights led to happy endings. This will be accomplished through a specific focus on enslaved women, including their lives, rights and obligations both in slavery and after manumission. The

²⁰ I borrowed this term from Matthew Gordon's work: "Abbasid Courtesans and the Question of Social Mobility," in *Concubines and Courtesans: Women and Slavery in Islamic History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 27-51; This term referring to a "second class citizen" and a lower rank status in the society.

study sheds light on how female slaves conceptualized themselves and their potential freedom in order to determine whether they preferred the idea of freedom or belonging to an influential figure, such as men with financial authority in society. However, the primary goal is to attempt a more coherent study of Islamic history and the development of the social rank of female slaves.

The study of female slaves and freedwomen in Islam is still developing field. Contemporary modern scholars are beginning to discuss the case of female standing and influence in Muslim society across history. Most scholars and historians have focused on female slaves' literary and educational roles, while a few have examined their social rank and status. However, no comprehensive study of note has examined the phenomenon of female slaves across the entire Abbasid era;²¹ rather, the existing literature comprises many discrete studies and researches on some of the sections of the present research subject. The majority of studies have focused on the early Abbasid era (132-232 A.H./750-847 A.D.) and narrowed their research to select examples of specific female slaves or concentrated only a one single genre primary source material.²²

In contrast, the present thesis follows a historical framework that covers the two hundred years of the Abbasid era in its entirety (132-329 A.H./ 750-940 A.D.). The fundamental reasons for studying this period are, first, the widespread growth of female slaves as wives, mothers or enslaved servants; as a result, our understanding of female slaves' status and roles will be more closely examined and fully expanded. In addition, this period included the reign of twenty Caliphs, all of whom engaged with a remarkable number of female slaves, including their mothers, the mother of a child, concubines, singers or others. Since the Abbasid eras cover several centuries, we propose to focus on the near 200 year span between the first and the second Abbasid eras (132–329 A.H/ 750–940 A.D.) using a range of historical, literary and biographical primary sources to establish a clear notion on how enslaved women developed their social status. Moreover, the present research contributes to an increased understanding of women's social status and roles by presenting how Muslims

²¹ Most of these studies examined only the first Abbasid era (132- 232 A.H. / 750-847 A.D.), while the present research covers the first and included the middle of the second Abbasid periods (132-329 A.H./750-940 A.D.).

²² This is discussed and analysed in the methodology (theory) and literature review sections. See page 24–37 and 57–72.

understood, debated and experienced the transition of female slaves from their original lower position to a higher rank in the social hierarchy. The subject of the research is to evaluate and analyse the social status of female slaves, as well as their relationships with men. This research seeks to examine the extent of the roles of enslaved women at court in order to determine how the nature of their relations with men affected their roles, status and privileges. The essential objective is not only to study the existence of female slave, but to focus on the cycle of a female slave's life: from birth to manumission and beyond.

A comprehensive study of the golden age of the Abbasid period is extremely important, as the Abbasids flourished in different areas such as economics, culture, religion and politics. Thanks to the broad and immense expansion of Islamic conquest, the existence of a massive number of male and female slaves cannot be underestimated or denied. Fundamentally, the early and middle Abbasid periods provide the best era of study for the present research, as they comprise numerous examples of female slaves of varying roles and professions. This era also includes a great transformation in the social class of female slaves through becoming mothers of the caliphs, which will be demonstrated and analysed later in the present thesis. Additionally, the attitudes toward female slaves as concubines and the mother of a child changed during the Abbasid era. Historical records show that only three of the Abbasid Caliphs' mothers were free noblewomen, while the rest of them were slaves.²³

While certain historians²⁴ have studied the lives, movements and roles of enslaved women, they have focused mostly on single genres of primary source material. In this research, we rely on several primary Arabic source genres, such as literary, historical and biographical collections. Thus, the range of primary sources evaluated underlines the findings of this research on Abbasid female slaves and their social mobility in Abbasid courts and households. The sources also allow for the application of a theoretical approach to female slaves as agents of social mobility in Abbasid courts and households. Thus, theories of

²³ For more discussion see Chapters Three and Four. See Ibn Ḥazm *al-Andalusī*, "*Risālah fī Faḍl Ummahāt al-Awlād*," in *Rasā'il Ibn Ḥazm al-Andalusī* (Bayrūt: Tawzī' al-Mu'assasah al-'Arabīyah lil-Dirāsāt wa-al-Nashr, 1987), vol 2, 120-121.

²⁴ Such as Al-Rasheed, Richardson, Abbott, Schlein, Caswell, Hidayatuallah and Urban.

patriarchy and of gender norms are seated, linked and examined with the questions of how and why female slaves gained or lost their social status in the Abbasid social hierarchy.

Some other researchers²⁵ have overlooked the primary motives for female slaves, accounting for their roles and influence (including the determining power of male and female relationships regarding female social rank and status). The ultimate objective of this thesis is to explore and highlight the effects of a patriarchal²⁶ system and gender²⁷ norms on the ranks of female slaves in the Abbasid social hierarchy. First, we compare the ranks of female slaves and free Arab noblewomen to illustrate their social status. Second, we present an analysis of male slave social mobility and positions to reveal the extent of social status and privilege among enslaved women.

The challenges of this study relate to its focus on one specific aspect of female slaves' lives: their social status. However, the social ranking of female slaves differed depending on their roles in society, and these societal aspects interconnected with other features such as their cultural role or economic position. The availability to this research of details on women in primary sources, especially female slaves, was also an obstacle. Certain researchers and sources omitted significant details about women in their work, which affected our ability to find information on the lives of female slaves.²⁸ To resolve this issue, we made use of various primary sources such as historical, literature and biographies, thus creating a pivotal image of enslaved women's social status in the Abbasid period.

The choice of a data collection method was challenging, as the research draws on a range of primary sources that represent the appropriate subset of

²⁵ For examples, Kennedy, Mernissi and Gordon.

²⁶ "Patriarchy" refers to the ideology based on the utter dominance of men over women's lives, behaviours and activities in a society. See Gerda Lerner, *The Creation of Patriarchy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 213, 239; Scott Kugle, *Homosexuality in Islam: Critical Reflection on Gay, Lesbian, and Transgender Muslims* (Oxford: A One World Publication, 2010), 6; Pinar Ilkkaracan, *Women and Sexuality in Muslim Societies* (Istanbul: Women for Women's Human Rights Publication, 2000), 23.

²⁷ "Gender" generally refers to differentiating and distinguishing between the nature of masculinity and femininity (in terms of identity, role or status) in all socio-cultural and historical norms. See Lerner, *Ibid.*, 238; Judy Tzu-Chun Wu, "Gender," in *Keywords for Asian American Studies*, ed. Cathy J. Schlund-Vials, Linda Trinh Võ and K. Scott Wong (New York: New York University Press, 2015), 105–6, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt15r3zv2.32>; Kim Hall, "Gender," in *Keywords for Disability Studies*, ed. Rachel Adams, Benjamin Reiss and David Serlin (New York: New York University Press, 2015), 89, accessed 28, February, 2019, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt15nmhws.31>.

²⁸ This issue will discuss in more details on Chapter Five.

women for our study and provide significant details and information on female slaves' lives. The selection criteria for our chosen sources were used to create a considerable database and a number of tables. This attempted to define and assess the available information on the lives of female slaves in order to determine whether certain details would be useful to our examination. Valid information was classified, applied and analysed as part of our qualitative historical analysis and discussion. However, it is important to note that the database and tables shown in the present thesis represent "only part of what [we] have collected"²⁹ from our selected sources. We aimed to create a new approach for examining the social status of enslaved women in the Abbasid era. This method, alongside our comparison of the different occupations, roles, movements and characteristics of enslaved women, provided a critical means of conducting the present research.

In addition, the complicated issue of Islam's developing laws on slavery arose as a challenge for the present study; therefore, the first chapter was limited to using and discussing Islamic jurisprudence sources, using a historical framework to examine female slaves' roles in the Abbasid period. The present thesis presents a socio-historical study in order to demonstrate the extent of female slaves' social status. The Third chapter present of this thesis is to discuss the development of Islamic law and how it could affect female slaves' positions, as well as influence changes in their rights and social status in Muslim societies. Found in both historical and literary sources, these legal developments are of great importance to this thesis.

Another challenge is that contemporary feminist and gender scholars have provided a considerable contribution to defining female slaves' political role, as well as the notion of *gender* in Islam. Clearly, some researchers tend to be biased to the political aspect more than the social impact; however, few studies have focused on the social status of women and female slaves, hence the need for this topic to be re-assessed and re-evaluated. Abbasid history includes a web of relations between individuals, male and female, involving "gender,

²⁹ David Ayalon's method of studying eunuchs was useful to our present research in terms of the selection of our chosen sources. See David Ayalon, *Eunuchs, Caliphs and Sultans: A Study in Power Relationships* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1999), 4.

cultural productions and social mobility, patronage and slavery”.³⁰ This research outlines a general portrait of female slaves’ social position during the Abbasid period, and discusses the prevailing cultural and social attitudes. The goal of this thesis is to explore the extent of enslaved women’s social status and their upward social mobility in the Abbasid period. This thesis also illustrates the social trends and values of the Abbasid era, examining them in detail to determine the extent of female slaves’ social status, privileges and influence in classical Muslim society.

1.2 Methodology

The theoretical framework of this research lays the groundwork for the basic methodology, which we will use to build our central themes and answer the research questions, thus achieving the objectives of this research. We used historical analysis and a comparative strategy in our research and collected data from selected primary sources, as will be presented in the thesis. We also applied the theories of patriarchy and gender as a lens to further develop our analysis and examination of the research subject. This section will first present our method, which is historical analysis and Arabic literature. It then discusses the methods and importance of data collection, data use and analysis. The last section explores the core of the applied theories with regard to the research subject of the present thesis. The aim is to examine the status of female slaves and reveal the principal criteria for their social mobility and rank in the Abbasid hierarchy.

Some researchers tended to focus on specific genre of primary sources from a single genre to study women's lives, roles and status.³¹ However, in this research, we study and use a broad range of primary sources from different genres, such as history, literature and biography. The originality and foundation,

³⁰ See Gordon, "Yearning and Disquiet: al-Jahiz and the *Risalat al-qiyam*," in *Al-Jahiz: A Muslim Humanist for our Time*, edited by Anrim Heinemann et al., (Beirut: Ergon Verlag Würzburg, 2009), 258.

³¹ See page 60-76 for the review of Kennedy, Mernissi, Roded, Gordon and other researchers’ works.

of this thesis follows the historical framework and method of Islamic historiography.³²

Another discussion and comparative analysis of the legal theories of the *fuqahā'* regarding the enslavement and manumission of women will be made in the Third chapter. It is logical to discuss the development of Islamic law with regard to slavery, manumission and Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*), as there are many different phases and rules from the early Islamic period through the Abbasid period and later regarding slaves' emancipation, rights and duties. The Abbasid period and later regarding slave emancipation, rights and duties. In chapter Three, evidence is provided from selected legal texts for three Sunni *madhāhib*: al-Mālikī, al-Hanafī and al-Shāfi'ī. For al-Mālikī, we studied the book of Anas b. Mālik,³³ while for al-Hanafī, we examined Abū Bakr al-Kāsānī's book,³⁴ and we drew upon Muḥammad al-Shāfi'ī's book to present al-Shāfi'ī *madhab*.³⁵ Our choice of *madhāhib* was restricted to these three Sunni legal schools, leaving out al-Hanbalī because al-Hanbalī "is present in a later period as [a] legal source".³⁶ However, the limitations to these texts represent a significant role in our representation because we are dependent on the prominent figures of the schools, as indicated by the selected examples of each school's views relating to the research subject.

One may ask to what extent the legal sources provide us with a notion of female slaves' social status. The social position of female slaves in the Abbasid era can be determined as the major *madhāhib* books contain sections on slavery, manumission, women and female slaves and their rights or duties. The *madhāhib* perspective can be examined using historiographical and literary sources on women's social lives, comparing the study of female slaves between *madhāhib* and historiographical and literary texts. The historiographical and literary sources reported similar findings on the individual practices of slavery and manumission in the Abbasid periods.

³² See Chase Robinson, *Islamic Historiography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 56–57. Another useful study is Tayeb El-Hibri, *Reinterpreting Islamic Historiography: Harun al-Rashid and the Narrative of the 'Abbasid Caliphate* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

³³ Mālik, *Muwaṭṭa' al-Imām Mālik* (Bayrūt: Dār Iḥyā' al-Turāth al-'Arabī, 1985).

³⁴ Al-Kāsānī, *Badā'i' al-ṣanā'i' fī tartīb al-sharā'i'* (Bayrūt: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyah, 2003).

³⁵ Al-Shāfi'ī, *Umm* (Al-Manṣūrah: Dār al-Wafā', 2001).

³⁶ See Kecia Ali, *Marriage and Slavery in Early Islam* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press), 17.

Literary texts (*Adab*) act as a primary source of medieval Arabic writings.³⁷ But *Adab* can also refer to “custom, ancestral custom, upbringing and education”.³⁸ The ultimate goal of studying *Adab* is to present the background of what happened in medieval Arab history regarding the customs and education of women in the Abbasid era. Tarif Khalidi states:

“In its earliest days *Adab* meant education. With time it came to mean a *special* kind of education, a moral and intellectual curriculum aimed at a particular urban class and reflecting the needs and aspirations of that class”.³⁹

Khalidi's statement provides us with an excellent notion to define relations between individual types of education, social class, power and influence in Arab society. In this research, we explore literary texts regarding the changes to female slave education levels and cultural roles; consequently, these changes provide an overview of the female slave class and their social lives.

The most significant examples of literary sources are ‘Alī al-Ṣfahānī’s (d. 356 A.H./967 A.D.) *Kitāb al-Aghānī* (The Book of Songs)⁴⁰ and ‘Amr al-Jāhīz’s (d. 225 A.H. /868 A.D.) *Risālat al-qiyān*, (The Epistle of Singing Slave Girls).⁴¹ These sources are essential to the present research.⁴² First, al-Ṣfahānī’s works of female slaves present a significant model ‘for contemporaries of posterity’.⁴³ Next, al-Jāhīz “was a great theorist of *Adab*”.⁴⁴ He presents female slave singers’ social rank and status⁴⁵ and “a history of the relations between the sexes in Arab society”.⁴⁶ Third, both al-Jāhīz and al-Ṣfahānī record love poems (*ghazal*) of female slaves. Social conditions, status and roles of slave women appear to be the reason behind these Arabic literary texts. More details on our primary sources, taken from a selection of literary, historical and biographical

³⁷ S.A. Bonebakker, “Adab: The concept of BELLES-LETTERS”, in *Abbasid Belles-Lettres*, ed. Julia Ashtiany et al., (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 16.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 17.

³⁹ Tarif Khalidi, *Arabic Historical Thought in the Classical Period* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 83.

⁴⁰ ‘Alī al-Ṣfahānī, *Kitāb al-Aghānī* (Bāyruṭ: Dar Ṣādir, 2002).

⁴¹ ‘Amr al-Jāhīz, “*Risālat al-qiyān*,” in *Rasā’il al-Jāhīz* (Bāyruṭ: Dār wa-Maktabat al-Hilāl lil-Ṭibā’ah wa-al-Nashr, 2004), vol 1, 471-521; *Idem.*, The epistle on singing-girls, translation and commentary by A.F.L. Beeston, ed. (Warminster: Aris and Phillips, 1980).

⁴² More discussion of these sources will take place in the literature review section.

⁴³ Bonebakker, “Adab: The concept of BELLES-LETTERS”, in *Abbasid Belles-Lettres*, 18.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 104; For excellent work and introduction of al-Jāhīz. See James Montgomery. *Al Jāhīz: In Praise of books* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013).

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 92.

⁴⁶ Bonebakker, “Adab: The concept of BELLES-LETTERS,” 92.

collections, will be discussed, reviewed and analysed in detail in the literature review section of the present thesis.⁴⁷

In the Fourth Chapter, the method of data extraction relies on selected "principal sources".⁴⁸ As the use of specific sources can lead to a greater understanding of our methodology, data collection and results,⁴⁹ our database combines historical, literary and biographical sources to shape the fourth chapter. Our rationale for including particular sources from different genres in this research and our database involves the wide variety in available primary sources on female slaves, both in general or specific discussion. The included primary sources were each selected based on the richness of their information pertaining to female slaves. Moreover, each type of source complemented another, for while primary sources did not give equal value to information about enslaved women, we selected details from each type of source to create a valid dataset for the present thesis.

For example, history books focus more on female slaves such as *Ummahāt al-Awlād* and caliphs' wives, neglecting the other female slaves. In contrast, the *adab* literature concentrates on enslaved singers and poets, while biographical collections offer integrated information on the varying social status of female slaves in general. Another example is information on the *qiyān*, singing slave girls. While it would be difficult to find information using the works of al-Mas'ūdī or al-Ṭabarī, al-Ḥafḥānī's *Kitāb al-Aghānī* offers clear information on the *qiyān*'s characteristic features, behaviours and activities.⁵⁰ Therefore, a combination of these primary historical, literary and biographical sources helps us formulate a social history and gather the required evidence on female slaves, including details of their lives and activities in the Abbasid period.⁵¹

The information on slave women taken from these selected sources will be classified in tables to identify the female slave's name, date of death, owner name, social status or profession, origin and children's names, as well as the

⁴⁷ See page 44-60.

⁴⁸ This phrase is taken from Majied Robinson, "Prosopographical Approaches to the Nasab Tradition: A Study of Marriage and Concubinage, 500–750 CE," (PhD diss., Edinburgh University, 2013), 39.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 58.

⁵⁰ Gordon, "Preliminary Remarks on Slaves," 76.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

volume and page number. Details from the above tables will be transferred and re-divided as a group rather than as individuals to create a database that analyses and sorts the data into classifications based upon the origins, place of birth, professions and social status. While the extracted data is based on specific sources, other important primary sources will be used to support the discussion in this thesis. Additionally, while the major sources are examined in this research, this study is not comprehensive of the entire Abbasid period. Rather, it reflects the available information on female slaves in these specific sources on the selected study era.

The statistical approach is used to highlight and identify the number of female slaves, in order to shed light on the disparity between the figures for various slave women in the Abbasid periods. This approach will clarify the results and allow for convenient extraction of data regarding the births, deaths, masters, careers and nicknames (agnomina) of female slaves, thus leading to further analysis. While detailed statistics for the number, names or prices of some female slaves may be incomplete depending⁵² on what was provided in the Arabic primary sources, our hope is that the available data is sufficient to suggest an overview of female slaves' status and origins. The final comparison will be made using the present database, which comprises 283 female slaves of different positions, social backgrounds and origins.⁵³ We used a specific method for our selection of the designated sources. The earliest primary sources begin with the creation of the world, followed by the pre-Islamic period and the early Islamic period; certain tables begin with later volumes and sections. The availability of the names of specific female slaves in several volumes has a major impact on the tables' representation.

This thesis argues that not all female slave were concubines, as evidenced by the fact that each of them had a separate, individual social status.⁵⁴ Regardless of a female slaves' first duty to be available to her master's sexual demands, concubinage was not always the profession or career for female slaves. In

⁵² There are a number of female slaves with unknown name, origin, master or price.

⁵³ In our database, I have omitted duplicate female names that were mentioned several times across multiple sources. However, the reader can review the main data tables (Table 4.1-4.10) for each source.

⁵⁴ While it is true that Islamic law was clear in giving owners the full legal right to have sexual relations with their female slaves, each female slave had a specific career and status in the social hierarchy. For a discussion of female slaves' rights and duties in Islamic law, see Chapter Three.

addition, not every *Umm al-Walad* (a woman who gives birth to her master's child) was a concubine; some were servants, singers or members of other professions. Al-Mukhtār b. Buṭlān's (d. 458 A.H./1066 A.D.) "*Risālah shirā al-raqīq wa-taqlīb al-'abīd*"⁵⁵ specifically refers to the various purposes for purchasing slaves. Some slaves specialized in serving, others in cooking, fighting, reproducing, singing, fulfilling desires, nursing and so on.⁵⁶ Due to the variation in professions of slaves during the Abbasid period, the slave markets were thus divided into different sections based on the slaves' occupation, skills, education, origins, beauty and ethnicity.⁵⁷ This provided buyers an easy method for finding female slaves that matched their desires, such as *qiyān*, poets, nurses, domestic servants for cooking and others. While this did include concubines for children and sexual pleasure, not all enslaved women were concubines. As slave owners had reason to purchase slaves for specific vocations, we reject the broad stereotype of every female slave as a concubine. Matthew Gordon, in his review of Fuad Caswell's book, *The Slave Girls of Baghdad: The Qiyān in the Early Abbasid Era*,⁵⁸ refers to Abbasid female slaves as courtesans. In his recent work "Abbasid Courtesans and the Question of Social Mobility," Gordon says that female slave singers is distinctly courtesans.⁵⁹ Gordon stress that:

"[*qiyān*] careers entailed the provision to a mostly male cohort of companionship; sexual intimacy, though perhaps as often in the promise than the deed; witty and informed repartee, both verbal and written; a variety of entertainment, including chess and backgammon; and, above all, engaging verse and music performance, instrumental and vocal alike. It is appropriate to refer to the women as *courtesans*.⁶⁰

The English definition and usage of the term courtesan does not necessarily

⁵⁵ Al-Mukhtār b. Buṭlān, "*Risālah shirā al-raqīq wa-taqlīb al-'abīd*," in *Nawādir al-makḥṭūṭāt* (al-Qāhirah: Maktabat al-Khānjī, 1972).

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 248, 386.

⁵⁷ Pernilla Myrne has raised an excellent point by stressing that "The setting of the sale [of *jawārī*] was thus an indicator of the slaves' status". Pernilla Myrne, "A Jariya's Prospects in Abbasid Baghdad" in *Concubines and Courtesans: Women and Slavery in Islamic History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 58-59.

⁵⁸ Gordon, Review of *The Slave Girls of Baghdad: the Qiyān in the early Abbasid era*, by Fuad Caswell," in *Women's History Review*, 23, no. 1 (2014): 146-148, <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/09612025.2013.797777>; See Fuad, Caswell. *The Slave Girls of Baghdad: The Qiyān in the Early Abbasid Era* (London: Tauris Academic Studies, 2011).

⁵⁹ Gordon, *Ibid*; Idem, "Abbasid Courtesans and the Question of Social Mobility," 5,28.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

refer to prostitutes, and can indicate women of the court or courtiers, especially in singing or other social areas.⁶¹ The present thesis does not refer to *qiyān* or other female slaves as courtesans, as this word in Arabic also includes *mumisāt* (sing. *mumisah*) women who engage in the act of prostitution.⁶² Instead, we choose to use the term concubines, as any sexual activity with their masters was legal and their presence and activities at male gatherings was due to the desires and demands of their masters or owners. As their acts did not include prostitution, we cannot call them courtesans. In addition, Adam Mez states that most female singers in Bagdad in 306 A.H./916 A.D. were female slaves, but a few of them were free women.⁶³ Significant examples include ‘Ubaydah al-Ṭunbūrīyah, a freedwoman and a singer,⁶⁴ and ‘Ulayyah, daughter and sister of the Abbasid caliphs and another notable singer.⁶⁵ Thus, it would also be inappropriate for the present thesis to generalize all female singers as concubines when their number also included free noblewomen and common women. The present research classifies singing girls as a separate group from concubines.

For our methodology, a statistical approach was applied to the collection of female slave information in the Abbasid period. In the case of many female slaves who successfully increased their social mobility, the research tables record only their ultimate social status and omit their previous conditions. A significant example is al-Khayzarān; she was a concubine, then an *Umm al-Walad*, and after that became a caliph’s wife and a freedwoman. She experienced upward mobility two times, and in this case her social status was classified using her final status as a caliph’s wife and a freedwoman. Similarly, in the case of a *qīna* (singer), who became an *Umm al-Walad*, she is recorded as an *Umm al-Walad*. It is essential to stress that some female slave combined two or more professions or social statuses; for instance, ‘Arīb was both a *qīna* and *shā’irah* (poet).⁶⁶ In this case, both statuses will count separately in our

⁶¹ See Beverly Bossler, "Shifting Identities: Courtesans and Literati in Song China," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 62, no. 1 (June 2002): 5-37, accessed 13 November 2017, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4126583>; M. Sumathy, "Social Status of Courtesans in Early Medieval Kerala," *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress* 39, no. 1 (1978): 260-269, accessed: 13 November 2017, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/44139359>.

⁶² Al-Fīrūzābādī, *Al-qāmūs al-muḥīṭ*, vol 1, 580.

⁶³ Adam Mez, *Al-Ḥaḍārah al-Islāmīyah fī ‘l-qarn al-rābi’ al-hijrī*, trans. Muḥammad Abū Rīdah (Bayrūt: Dār al-Kitāb al-‘Arabī, 1999), vol 1, 298.

⁶⁴ Al-Isfahānī, *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, vol 22, 144-146.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, vol 10, 129-131.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, vol 21, 21, 57; *Idem.*, *al-Imā’ al-shawā’ir*, 135 - 148; Al-Ṣafādī, *Kitāb al-wāfi bi-‘l-wafayāt*, vol 19, 364; Ibn al-Sā‘ī, *Nisā’ al-khulafā’*, 73; Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil fī ‘l-Tārīkh*, ol 6, 360.

database as they represent different, simultaneous professions. The second issue arising from our method of creating a database is that some female slaves' origins are recorded differently from one primary source to another. For instance, in 'Alī al-Mas'ūdī's *Murūj al-Dhahab*, presents Fityān, the *Umm al-Walad* of Caliph al-Mutawakkil and the mother of his son al-Mu'tamad, as muwalladah from Kūfah. In contrast, *Kitāb al-wāfī bi-l-wafayāt* by Khalīl al-Şafadī argues that she is Byzantine. In such circumstances, both origins will be counted separately in our database, reflecting the usage of al-Mas'ūdī and al-Şafadī.⁶⁷ On the other hand, a certain number of female slaves have unknown name, origin, master or price; these appear blank in our tables and count in the data extraction as unknown.

Majjed Robinson writes that:

“The database is in a sense an ‘edition’ of work—one that is not absolute in its rightness or wrongness, but an interpretation that must be reworked and adapted as a circumstances change.”⁶⁸

Thus, although the database collected from our selected sources is modest, it is still valid and reasonable for answering the research's fundamental question: to what extent did female slaves' origins and profession impact their rank and social status and assist their mobility in the Abbasid social hierarchy. This thesis also will reveal the extent to which female slaves earned noble titles and *agnomina* in order to enhance their identity and social status in terms of mobility. Finally, we emphasize that the present research uses qualitative rather than quantitative data in its analysis in order to understand and examine the extent of the possibility for female slaves to gain higher social status through their origins and professions.

Another element of our research methodology involves using a theoretical approach to women's agency regarding social mobility among female slaves in the Abbasid era. We apply the theory of feminism to Islam as a part of the thesis framework to answer the research questions. The concepts of patriarchy

⁶⁷ 'Alī al-Mas'ūdī, *Murūj al-Dhahab wa Ma'ādin al-Jawhar* (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr. 1989), vol 4, 70, 97, 159; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-a'yān wa-anbā' abnā' al-zamān*, vol 1, 350; Khalīl al-Şafadī, *Kitāb al-wāfī bi-l-wafayāt* (Bayrūt: Dār lhyā' al- Turāth al-'Arabī, 2000), vol 6, 181.

⁶⁸ Robinson, “Prosopographical Approaches to the Nasab Tradition,”45.

and gender norms as they relate to Islamic societies have been outlined by a number of scholars. We will apply these selected theories to the subject of social mobility to create a foundation and central theme for examining the social status of female slaves. This approach will investigate the social status of female slaves in the Abbasid era, including their impressions and the value of obtaining significant rank, privileges and entitlement in patriarchal Muslim society, as well as the impact on the feminist movement. The basic methodology of examining a variety of sources helped us create useful comparisons between women of different status, such as elite and enslaved women, and between male and female slaves, regarding the extent of their social mobility in the Abbasid hierarchy and at court.

Writing about feminism and Islam requires an enormous framework, as modern scholars have mostly studied female roles and movements from the beginning of the nineteenth century. They discuss Muslim women's roles in various political, social and religious affairs.⁶⁹ A wider approach and viewpoint of the existing research pertains to feminist theory and Muslim women. Therefore, I propose to review and analyse scholarly literature and hypotheses and to discuss the most relevant feminist theories on female slaves' roles in the Abbasid periods.

Nabia Abbott was among the first historians to write about feminism in the pre-Islamic period and in early Islam. Abbott's 1941 article "Pre-Islamic Arab Queens"⁷⁰ illustrated the status and position of Arab women and their great political influence as powerful, independent figures in pre-Islamic society. In "Women and the State on the Eve of Islam", Abbott writes of women's position in society. She researched female power and its existence in public and private life in the early Islamic period. Abbott's task was to show the reader the engagement and the roles of women in warfare and peacetime. It appears from Abbott's article that women greatly increased their participation in leading

⁶⁹ For an excellent study of Islamic feminism, see Mehrdad Darvishpour, "Islamic Feminism: Compromise or Challenge to Feminism," *Middle East Forum* (2003): 55-58, accessed January 26, 2016, <http://www.portmir.org.uk/assets/women/islamic-feminism--a-compromise-or-challenge-to-feminism--davishpour.pdf>.

⁷⁰ Nabia, Abbott, "Pre-Islamic Arab Queens," *The American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures* 58, no. 1 (1941): 1-22, http://www.jstor.org/stable/529209?origin=JSTOR-pdf&seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents.

tribes.⁷¹ The significant status of female roles, whether in the pre-Islamic period or early Islam, has implications for the mobility of female slaves and may have resulted in their seeking more power and privilege in later Islamic periods.⁷²

In her book entitled *Two Queens of Baghdad: Mother and Wife of Harun Al-Rashid*,⁷³ Abbott provides a historical comparative examination of “royal womanhood”⁷⁴ in the first Abbasid era. She presents the story of a free noblewoman, Zubaydah (d. 173 A.H./789 A.D.), Hārūn al-Rashīd’s wife, and describes her goal of striving to amaze Muslim society with her activities and generosity in the court and public life. In contrast, Abbott also discussed the examples of female slaves, *Ummahāt al-Awlād* and freedwomen, such as al-Khayzarān (d. 169 A.H./785 A.D.), the wife of Caliph al-Mahdī and mother of two future Caliphs (al-Hādī and Hārūn al-Rashīd), as she sought to obtain political authority in the Abbasid court.

Although Abbott's writings on al-Khayzarān were extremely important to demonstrate the changing roles of women in political affairs, Ruth Roded argued that Abbott's works "are not connected to serious matters of state and reflect the corruption of ruling circles".⁷⁵ With this in mind, the results of Abbott's work are thus ignored in an effort to highlight the advantages of and connections between politics, economics, religion and the social lives of ambitious women. Abbott instead focused on the seclusion⁷⁶ of men with female slaves and its impact on society in the Abbasid era. Although Abbott's research are significant, the present research covers the roles of female slaves in a variety of affairs, tied to their relations with free women and men, to draw a clear connection to the means by which they achieved their distinctive and significant social role and rank.

⁷¹ Abbott, "Pre-Islamic Arab Queens," 163-165, 270.

⁷² In another work, *Aishah: The Beloved of Mohammed* (New York: Arno Press, 1983), Abbott presents Aishah as a significant example of the capability of women to participate in political practices.

⁷³ Abbott, *Two Queens of Baghdad: Mother and Wife of Harun Al-Rashid* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1946).

⁷⁴ I borrowed this phrase from William Thomson, "Review of *Two Queens of Baghdad: Mother and Wife of Harun Al-Rashid*," *The American Historical Review* 52, no. 3 (1947): 496–99, http://www.jstor.org/stable/1859888?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents.

⁷⁵ Ruth Roded, *Women in Islamic Biographical Collections: From Ibn Sa'd to Who's Who* (London: Lynne Rienner, 1994), 117.

⁷⁶ The act of seclusion typically refers to an act of exclusion, setting limitations on women in social, economic and public engagement and activities. This is discussed in the Fifth Chapter of this research. See David Cohen, "Seclusion, Separation, and the Status of Women in Classical Athens," *Greece & Rome* 36, no. 1 (1989): 3, accessed March 24, 2019, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/643180>; Nikki Keddie, "The Past and Present of Women in the Muslim World," *Journal of World History* 1, no. 1 (1990): 79, 87, 94, accessed March 24, 2019, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/20078457>.

In a significant work, Gerda Lerner's *The Creation of Patriarchy* explains the phenomenon of patriarchy's power over women in Mesopotamian society from 3100 B.C. to 600 B.C., examining their practices, traditions and laws in a historical approach. Lerner's aim is to present the historical origins of the dominance of men over women. She defined her attempt to study the patriarchal system as drawing a picture from history to express the core relationship between men and women.⁷⁷

Lerner writes that female enslavement and the patriarchal system began as a whispered phenomenon through the gradual enslavement of women as a group. This ancient concept of male superiority could have originated from the physical structure and strength of the male body, which allowed men to partake in difficult and arduous work and also to physically intimidate. Traditionally, men became hunters, protectors and food providers, thus their position was often seen as more honourable than that of women.⁷⁸ This concept of "man's natural superiority" was founded in primitive times, and carried forward into later historical eras and civilizations.⁷⁹ As patriarchal practices became an obvious social institution in most societies, the social, economic, political and judicial positions of women were thus surrounded by that of men.⁸⁰ Beginning with the practices of ancient societies and continuing through various phases of history, women have been subordinate to men regardless of socioeconomic status.⁸¹

Lerner asserts that the domestic subordination of women created the concept of their "enslaveable"⁸² manner, which formed the basis for women's lower status, including that of slave.⁸³ The implication of male dominance functionalized a "social contract"⁸⁴ for women's position in society, with careers commensurate with motherhood, childbearing and child-rearing, and entirely dependent on men.⁸⁵ In this patriarchal society, women's opinions and decisions were not important, as their services were secondary to their male kinsmen.⁸⁶ While

⁷⁷ Lerner, *The Creation of Patriarchy*, 7.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 17.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 7.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 30.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 99.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 99, 100

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 75.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 26, 38, 111.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 80, 89.

women such as the wives of high-ranking men could gain considerable power and position, this influence, prestige and rank was derived from a woman's male partner, thus her role and activities were entirely dependent on her subordination to men.⁸⁷

Both free and enslaved women lived under male dominance and the patriarchal system, relying on the protection of a husband, father, brother or master.⁸⁸ All women had responsibilities and duties to their male patrons, and shared an obligation to the authority of men as well as being an object of sex, reproduction or domesticity.⁸⁹ Being available and related to men led to the subordination of women, including their behaviours, in Mesopotamian society.⁹⁰

In this class-based society, the patriarchal practice of men's rank differed from that of women.⁹¹ According to Lerner, historical records show that men quickly leapt up to powerful ranks and positions, especially in political affairs; male slaves even had the remarkable opportunity to record their assignments or important functions for posterity. In contrast, women were often excluded from historical records and suffered gender discrimination.⁹² Lerner argues that distinctions between men and women were largely associated with the cultural background, which used individual customs and behaviours to create a patriarchal system that dictated the subordination of women to men.⁹³ Thus, gender is culturally constructed, associated with an individual's conduct and customs, and should, therefore, permit the possibility of modification and change.⁹⁴

Lerner's theory includes several points that are significant to the framework of our present research. First, the concept of male dominance and social hierarchy and the existence of a class-based system had a notable effect on the creation of slavery, with the added consequence of the subjugation and oppression of women by men.⁹⁵ Second, women were subordinate to men from the earliest legislation as practiced from ancient society onward. The system of patriarchy

⁸⁷ Lerner, *The Creation of Patriarchy*, 46, 66, 69, 74, 144, 218.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 96.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 215.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 102, 108.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 8.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 4-5.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 6.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 10.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 9.

was determined by various customs that imposed force on women's class, privileges, economic status, behaviour and movement.⁹⁶

In this society, men were head of the family and were entitled to full legal ownership over the women, which controlled their movement and lives.⁹⁷ Lerner's theory of the Mesopotamian society argues that while women could gain an active role, especially in religious affairs, their power was limited by male authority in all aspects of their lives.⁹⁸ This concept of gendered positions in society, specifically of "female inferiority and male dominance",⁹⁹ will be examined in this research within the scope of Abbasid society. One of the aims of this research is to present the importance of masculinity and gender as symbols of an individual's social status in Abbasid society.

Another important comprehensive study is Fatima Mernissi's *The Forgotten Queens of Islam*,¹⁰⁰ which presented primary historical sources to highlight the standings of (and the roles played by) free and enslaved women in Abbasid era. She examines the concept of female power and discusses whether women could be rulers, such as religious or military leaders, in the Islamic state. The benefit of Mernissi's study is a clear line drawn through the different definitions of 'free women'; this term is often associated with women who practised political authority, while in a *ḥarīm* setting 'free woman' could mean a legitimate wife of noble or aristocratic origin. Mernissi argues that political power is associated with gendered idea of male dominance and cannot be separated from it; thus, there was always attention by researchers drawn to 'feminist' movements and practice of political authorities in the Islamic period. Therefore, the notion of gender can be a primary result of women's activities and seeking of power.

In the third chapter of her book, Mernissi discusses her theory of the *jawārī* revolution, which she describes as the first slave revolt in Islamic history.¹⁰¹ She explains that it was not possible to assert basic rights, and that this was the first

⁹⁶ Lerner, *The Creation of Patriarchy*, 9.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 211.

¹⁰⁰ Fatima Mernissi, *The Forgotten Queens of Islam*, trans. Mary Jo Lakeland (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993).

¹⁰¹ Mernissi stresses that the existence of female slaves and their power over the Caliphs came earlier than the *zanj* revolution (255 A.H./869 A.D). As Mernissi mentions many women's names and roles, I am choosing specific examples related to my research period; Ibid., 38.

example of female slaves' influence over the Muslim Caliphs.¹⁰² However, a *jārīyah* (female slave) was defined as an owned woman who could be bought and sold from her master in the slave market. This demonstrates that one pivotal notion of freedom in Mernissi's mind can be identified as gaining aristocratic sovereignty, not manumission from slavery. For instance, Mernissi presents the ambition of female slaves in reaching and practising dominance of political power in the role of al-Khayzarān, who was among the first female slaves to participate in political roles in the Abbasid state, both when she was a concubine of al-Mahdī, *Umm al-Walad* (al-Hādī and al-Rashīd) and also as a freedwoman. Moreover, this chapter mentions another specific example namely Shaghab (d. 321 A.H./933 A.D.),¹⁰³ who had a clear religious, political and social role, and who gained the title of *sayyidah* (lady). Mernissi adds that Shaghab's title confirms the role and standing of female slaves in the Abbasid period, as in early Islam this concept of *sayyidah* was associated entirely with free noblewomen.¹⁰⁴ Similarly, *qahramānah*, Thamal, Umm Musa (d. 317 A.H./928 A.D.) was the first woman to hold a judicial profession in Islamic history, as she chaired the *dīwān al-maḏālim* (grievances court).¹⁰⁵

These examples demonstrate that female slaves challenged elite women in order to gain noble titles as evidence of their new social rank. There were a variety of positions on the scale between free noblewomen and female slaves as the roles of enslaved women became accentuated.¹⁰⁶ During the Abbasid period, free Arab noblewomen were restricted by the customs of morality and society, while enslaved women were free from them.¹⁰⁷ *Jawārī* are slaves, and therefore they have different rights and duties in contrast to free noblewomen. However, a female slave's purpose "was to provide entertainment and companionship, including sexual relations, to elite male society".¹⁰⁸ Meanwhile, the ineludible imperatives of social prestige placed heavy restrictions on women of high status.

¹⁰² Mernissi, *The Forgotten Queens*, 38.37, 38. Either Yazīd b. 'Abd al-Malik, al-Mahdī or Hārūn al-Rashīd.

¹⁰³ She was a concubine, *Umm al-Walad* of al-Mu'taḏid bi-Allāh (d. A.H. 289/902 A.D.) and the mother of the Abbasid Caliph al-Muqtadir (d. 320 A.H./932 A.D.).

¹⁰⁴ Mernissi, *The Forgotten Queens of Islam*, 42.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 89.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁸ Gordon, "The Place of Competition: The Careers of 'Arīb al-Ma'muniya and 'Ulayya bint al-Mahdī, Sisters in Song," in *Abbasid Studies: Occasional Papers of the School of 'Abbasid Studies* (Cambridge: Leuven, 2004), 62.

Mernissi argued that a *jārīyah* was surrounded by competitive peers in terms of talent, profession, sexual appeal or being her master's favourite and closest consort; therefore, a *jārīyah* could increase her status with noteworthy education or intelligence when youthfulness and beauty were not sufficient.¹⁰⁹ According to Mernissi, "intelligence" meant, first, to be skilful in collecting information; second, it meant to be aware of how to use, sift and classify it. It also involved realizing the methods of manipulation through words, terms, poetry and the citing of Quranic verses. Finally, intelligent women had knowledge of basic science, history and poetry.¹¹⁰ These details permit the present thesis to examine some of the key tools of the feminist movement regarding gaining greater rank in Abbasid society.

One might argue that the role of slave women within the existing power structures had to be restricted, as Muslim society saw political authority as a male right; this could have resulted in the observed behaviour of Muslims towards female mobility. Mernissi takes great pains to relate the details of the roles of women in Muslim society. Often the results of her work argue that no women gained real political power or position, whether they were noblewomen, freedwomen or slaves, as all were considered 'women' and thus had to be obedient and conform to male authority.¹¹¹ Although this may be true, it is important to realise that the existence of certain female practises in different political affairs can indicate a sign of female struggle and movement toward dominance over males to gain a realistic political role.

Similarly, other scholars considered feminist and gender roles with regard to the changing of female slaves' positions. Julia Bray, primarily focused on historical and literary sources when studying gender and women's roles and positions. In her chapter "Men, Women and Slaves in Abbasid Society"¹¹² writes:

¹⁰⁹ Gordon, "The Place of Competition," 69.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 70.

¹¹¹ The best career for women to have was in a house, because home life involved sex and reproduction. *Ibid.*, 97.

¹¹² Julia Bray, "Men, Women and Slaves in Abbasid Society," in *Gender in the Early Medieval World: East and West, 300-900*, ed. Leslie Brubaker and Julia M. H. Smith, 121-46 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

“... the roles of Abbasid women were relational not absolute. Despite their legal disabilities, they might participate in more than one sort of power. Like those of slaves, the roles of women, both active and passive, were part of the evolving deep structure of urban society. In particular, women, as either property owners or chattels – or sometimes both at the same time – were involved in the investment and deployment of wealth”.¹¹³

Bray states that the model of female power in contemporary life is a consequence of our understanding of Arabic classical historical and romantic literature.¹¹⁴ With this in mind, it is little wonder that close to a majority of the primary works were written and developed by men. As a result, males’ conception of women might reflect their own ambition and aspirations for how women’s power should appear.¹¹⁵

While the above study provides valuable insight on the image women, Nadia El Cheikh’s chapter, “Gender and Politics in the Harem of al-Muqtadir (d. 321 A.H./933A.D.),”¹¹⁶ presents the relation between women and political participation in medieval Islam. Her work goes into historical discussions of the administrative and political influence of Shaghab. Shaghab sought her own interests as the Caliph’s mother, and her financial goal was to obtain a significant role in the Abbasid state. First, she used her charity to formulate a greater image of female slave, particularly *Umm al-Walad*, mother and then freedwoman. Moreover, Shaghab utilized her influence to approach religious affairs such as supporting and encouraging pilgrimages.¹¹⁷ She seized the opportunity to further her own interest in exercising power over diverse issues in the political, religious and social spheres.¹¹⁸

El Cheikh supports Learner and Mernissi’s argument that women’s power and roles are surrounded by male domination. She asserts that feminist movements seeking political power appeared as a response to “male roles and notions of

¹¹³ Bray, “Men, Women and Slaves in Abbasid Society,” 146.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Nadia El Cheikh, “Gender and politics in the harem of al-Muqtadir,” in *Gender in the Early Medieval World: East and West, 300-900*, edited by Leslie Brubaker and Julia M. H. Smith, 174-161 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 156.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 156, 160.

masculinity”.¹¹⁹ To some extent, women successfully practised and were experienced in public affairs such as in the previous example of Shaghab. Therefore, they “were never far from the court and were well placed to come to for whenever the opportunity allowed for it”.¹²⁰

It should be noted that El Cheikh clearly used different primary sources to support her argument, especially on women's political participation in the rule of al-Muqtadir. However, this thesis differs from El Cheikh's work by performing another sort of examination (such as researching a variety of sources and using qualitative measurement), focusing on enslaved women's social roles and status as well as their social mobility during the Abbasid era.

In her book, *Al-Qiyān wa 'l-adab fī 'l-'Aṣr al-'Abbāsī al-Awwal*,¹²¹ Laylā al-Ṭabbūbī presents an excellent study on the lives of *qiyān* (female singers) in the first Abbasid period (132–232 A.H./750-847 A.D.).¹²² There are three assumptions underlying al-Ṭabbūbī's work. First, she argues that the position of free noblewomen concerning their social and literary lives was different from that of female slaves. Further, the study states that slave women played an enormous role in developing and improving Arabic songs, poetry and prose. For instance, *qiyān* participated as singers and poets, and appeared as inspirations for male poets of the Abbasid era as mistresses, concubines or singers. Finally, al-Ṭabbūbī dealt specifically with the issue of ‘problematic gender’ and she states that, although the Abbasid era was a period of transition and development of cultural, political and social affairs, Muslim society could still be described as male patriarchal community.

Al-Ṭabbūbī's book provides essential perspectives for the present study. It includes a major explanation and clarification of Arabic literature and verse. It studies and discusses prose, songs, panegyric and romantic love poems, singing councils, correspondence and dialogue between male and female slaves, and presents the purpose features of the literature around women. The consideration of this work helps to evaluate and illustrate the *qiyān* role and

¹¹⁹ El Cheikh, “Gender and politics in the harem of al-Muqtadir,” 156,160.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Laylā al-Ṭabbūbī, *Al-Qiyān wa 'l-adab fī 'l-'Aṣr al-'Abbāsī al-Awwal* (Bayrūt: Mu'assasat al-Intishār al-'Arabī, 2010).

¹²² This is a literature study more than historical research.

influence of *qiyān* in the first Abbasid period (132 A.H./750 A.D.). However, an examination of the primary and secondary sources from the first and the second Abbasid periods (132-329 A.H./ 750-940 A.D.) is likely to provide further means of studying female slaves' social, cultural and religious status.

Both Amal al-Kurdī, in her book *Dawr al-Nisā' fī 'l-Khilāfah al-'Abbāsiyyah*,¹²³ and Nāhiḍah Ḥasan, in her article "*Sulṭat al-Jawārī 'l-'Aṣr al-'Abbāsī (334 A.H.-158)*,"¹²⁴ present a cultural historical study of the roles of women in Islamic culture in general and specifically the effects of enslaved women on the Abbasid court. These two works attempt to present the successful progression of female slaves in gaining more influence by being Caliphs' wives, mothers or concubines. Al-Kurdī depicts a limited information model of the *jawārī* roles; in particular she concentrates on their political position. Along with the political impact, Ḥasan's article discusses the social effects and cultural contribution of female slaves in the Abbasid era.

Indeed, al-Kurdī and Ḥasan note the same kinds of information with respect to female slaves, with both pointing out that the authority of female slaves in all affairs had negative influences in weakening the Abbasid Caliphs. First, the growing number of *qiyān* and *jawārī* in the Abbasid courts created a preoccupation among the elites in entertainment councils, thus raising female slaves to a higher class in which the elites formulated and determined their ranks. Secondly, the intellectual functions of slave women were impacted and overshadowed by declining interest and the emergence of the role of free noblewomen in the Abbasid era. There are abundant historical and literary sources to show the status of elite women female slaves in the Abbasid period. The present research attempts to examine and create a comparative study of the relationship between free noblewomen and female slaves' social status in the Abbasid eras.

The most significant historian and scholar is Matthew Gordon, who approaches the subject from the angle of social affairs. He demonstrates extensive

¹²³ Amal al-Kurdī, *Dawr al-Nisā' fī 'l-Khilāfah al-'Abbāsiyyah* (Ammān, al-Urdun: al-Yāzūrī, 2014).

¹²⁴ Nāhiḍah Ḥasan, "*Sulṭat al-Jawārī fī 'l-'Aṣr al-'Abbāsī (334 A.H.- 158)*," *Wasit Journal for Humanities* (2007): 112-122, accessed January 15, 2014. <http://www.iasj.net/iasj?func=search&query=au:%22م.د.%20ناهضة%20مطر%20حسن%20%22&uiLanguage=ar>.

knowledge of female slaves' roles, positions and movement in the Abbasid era. Gordon's works comprise an important source for this thesis. First, in his article "The Place of Competition: The Careers of Arīb al-Ma'muniya and 'Ulayya bint al-Mahdi, Sisters in Song," Gordon analysed women's social status in the Abbasid court through a comparative study of two female examples: the elite woman 'Ulayyah bint al-Mahdī (d. 210 A.H./825 A.D.) and a female slave called 'Arīb (d. 277 A.H./890 A.D.). From this text, there are two components underlying its feminist theory. Primarily, the relationships between the free noblewomen and female slaves in regard to their social, economic and educational roles, and the relations between these women and men. Gordon's views on the relationship between enslaved and free women focus on 'careers competition', such as singing, among female slaves or between slaves and elite women in the Abbasid courts. Secondly, Gordon's work presents the attitude of jurisprudence toward female social roles, chastity and virtue. As he shows, the biography of 'Ulayyah as a singer and free noblewoman presents "her piety and adherence to ritual obligations,"¹²⁵ whereas *qiyān* is viewed in direct contrast to 'Ulayyah."¹²⁶

Another work of Gordon's is "'Arīb, al-Ma'muniya: A Third/Ninth Century 'Abbasid Courtesan".¹²⁷ This work defined the relationship between elite enslaved women and their men in the early Abbasid era by considering the life, lineage and offspring of 'Arīb, a female slave, from her life in slavery until her manumission. There are two interesting points about Gordon's study of the role of female slaves. The first is his argument that enslaved women could only gain a weak and restricted social rank and position because they were women and therefore a "commodity."¹²⁸ This can be associated with the works of previous scholars such as Learner, Mernissi and El Cheikh. The second idea, however, is that 'Arīb, while a female slave, used her beauty, sexuality, education and skill as a singer to gain prestige, fortune and higher social status.¹²⁹ Of import is that "'Arīb herself is quoted as saying that she had sex with eight of the

¹²⁵ Gordon, "The Place of Competition," 74, 76.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 78-70; this case will be examined and discussed in more details in chapter Five of the present thesis.

¹²⁷ *Idem.*, "'Arīb al-Ma'muniya: A Third/Ninth Century 'Abbasid Courtesan," in *Views from the Edge: Essays in Honor of Richard W. Bulliet*, edited by Nequín Yavari, Lawrence G. Potter, Jean-Marc Ran Oppenheim (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004).

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 88. "Commodity" meaning that, as slaves, they could be bought and sold.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 90.

'Abbasid Caliphs'.¹³⁰ It is tempting then to conclude that female slaves were especially successful in establishing a distinct position and relationship in the Abbasid court.¹³¹ Like Mernissi, Gordon argues that *qiyān* had the most potential to achieve a higher social rank in the elite courts, but they were also surrounded by competition from their peers.¹³²

Gordon's most significant recent work on female slaves is "Abbasid Courtesans and the Question of Social Mobility." This text discusses the upward social mobility of female slave singers in the first Abbasid period, and relies primarily on the information from al-Iṣfahānī's book, *Kitāb al-Aghānī*.¹³³ Gordon's text examines female movement by choosing the example of courtesans' positions as a "rarefied group"¹³⁴ in the early Abbasid period. It explores the *qiyān*'s careers, lives and talents, as well as their emotional relationships with men. Gordon's latest statement on enslaved women's social mobility presents a new observation of feminism and female slave movement in the Abbasid era: that the *muwalladah* (pl. *muwalladāt*),¹³⁵ had the best chance of gaining a higher status. A *muwalladah* was a "native-borne girl,"¹³⁶ who had the advantage of speaking a native Arabic language to help define and develop her skill with singing and poetry.¹³⁷ Gordon's study can be taken as a leading example of our discussion in the Fourth chapter, which examines the origin of female slaves and the effect on their chances for upward social mobility. Additional information on female slaves, particularly *muwalladāt*, is available in the Abbasid periods and must be examined to fully understand their social mobility and roles. Gordon's research on female slaves adds a considerable element to the concept of social mobility. An important question is the extent to which a *muwalladah* had a higher chance than her colleagues of modifying her social position.

¹³⁰ Gordon, "Arib al-Ma'muniya: A Third/Ninth Century 'Abbasid Courtesan," 90.

¹³¹ Ibid, 1, 93.

¹³² Ibid., 5.

¹³³ Idem., "Abbasid Courtesans and the Question of Social Mobility," 27- 43.

¹³⁴ Idem., "Arib al-Mamuniya: A Third/Ninth Century Abbasid Courtesan," 2.

¹³⁵ This term means a foreign female slave born in the Muslim home. Al-Ṭabarī, *The History of al-Ṭabarī* (New York: Sunny Press, 2007), vol 1, 486; Richard F. Burton, *Arabian Nights, in 16 volumes* (New York: Cosimo, Inc., 2008), vol 4, 291; Ibid., 7.

¹³⁶ Gordon, "Abbasid Courtesans and the Question of Social Mobility," 34.

¹³⁷ Ibid., 34-35.

Similarly, Deborah Schlein's "The Talent and the Intellect: The Qayna's Application of Skill in the Umayyad and 'Abbasid Royal Court,"¹³⁸ immensely influenced the study of female talents relating to mobility in society. Schlein's study clarifies the role of female slaves and their use of personal abilities, powers and skills alongside beauty and sexuality to attain a prestigious rank in the Caliphs' households. One example is Ḥabbābah, the singing girl, and her impact upon Caliph Yazīd b. Abd al-Malik (d.105 A.H./ 724 A.D.), whose extreme grief over her death, we are told, drove him to die 40 days later. This shows that a *qiyān* could attain honour and dignity alongside tremendous social status, in this case as the beloved of Yazīd II. This exceptional incident leads us to inquire why Sallāmah did not gain her manumission. Did she make any attempt to demand her freedom? The answer might be associated with the research questions for the present study, specifically the ideal of freedom held by female slaves, and whether they dreamed of manumission or preferred to belong to influential figures.

Another significant notion from Schlein's thesis is the consideration of *fitnah* (discord or strife); the existence of *jawārī* caused free women to lose their independence, authority and social standing with respect to Muslim men. As a result of males' preference for the companionship of female slaves, free women were almost invisible, in contrast to the dominance of slave women in the Abbasid court. Al-Khayzurān is the ideal example to illustrate our argument that there were various differences between the rights and duties of freedwomen and noble women. This could also explain any jealousy between them: which of those women had a greater chance for mobility and a higher social position? Schlein wrote that a female slave's beauty and sexual appeal may have played an active part in social mobility during the Umayyad and Abbasid periods; their literature, skills and intellect helped the *jārīyah* gain prestigious standing in the courts.¹³⁹ In the end, however, while Schlein's work is important, there are still gaps in our understanding of the female slave's social rank and status, gaps that need to be determined regarding them between the first and second Abbasid eras. Therefore, an aim of the present thesis is to study female slaves' social lives and standing before and after emancipation. The notion on the

¹³⁸ Deborah Schlein, "The Talent and The Intellect: The Qayna's Application of Skill in the Umayyad and 'Abbasid Royal Court," (Master's thesis, Atlanta: Emory University, 2013).

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 83.

charms, talents and education of female slaves will be discussed in the Fourth chapter along with the basic elements of *jawārī* social hierarchy, with evidence collected from historical, biographical and literary sources.

These previous studies provide useful knowledge regarding the lives of enslaved females. However, “while answers have been given to some questions, a great many more have been raised, awaiting future study”.¹⁴⁰ Ultimately, the research on the role of female slaves has focused primarily on their political movement and position; thus, perhaps the highest significance of this study is to shed an in-depth light on other areas, such as social position and mobility. The argument of the fundamental advantage of gaining noble roles, position and titles, that could improve a person’s identity and social rank will be examined in the Fourth chapter on female slaves’ social rank.

To clarify the extent of secondary literature on the issue of female slaves, the sources only partly address the issue of social mobility, if at all focus on the issue of social mobility at all. Among historians, only Gordon, who studied *qiyān* (singing slave women) and their careers in "Abbasid Courtesans and the Question of Social Mobility," provided an example of female slaves' social mobility. He stressed that *qiyān* of the early Abbasid era were successful in increasing their status through their profession because of their companionship with famous and significant male figures, cohorts and courts.

Gordon's representation of *qiyān* reflects our thesis in two ways. First, Gordon's primary objective was to examine the *qiyān* of the first Abbasid period (132–287 A.H./ 750–900 A.D.), although our research examines a broader period between the first and second Abbasid era (132–329A.H./ 750–940A.D.) to present a more comprehensive study of women's agency and their attempts at social mobility. Second, Gordon focused on the *Kitāb al-Aghānī* by 'Alī al-Ḥafḥānī as one of the richest primary literary sources to examine the singers, especially enslaved women.¹⁴¹ For this thesis, the criteria for choosing primary sources from history, literature and biographies examine the availability of

¹⁴⁰ I borrow this sentence from Remke Kruk, *The Warrior Women of Islam: Female Empowerment in Arabic Popular Literature* (London: I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd, 2014), 223.

¹⁴¹ Although Gordon studied this book in depth, he also used other historical books, such as al-Mas'ūdī's and al-Ya'qūbī's texts, to support his research.

female slaves from different careers, their ability to gain social mobility and the extent of their social mobility between the first and second Abbasid eras.

Lerner's theory of the patriarchy, social norms and the nature of gender norms, wherein men remain the most powerful leaders across all aspects of life, will be used to achieve the goal of this thesis. Mernissi's views on male dominance and the power of patriarchal Abbasid society over women, which considered women to have a limited role in the Abbasid period, are questioned. Manumission and the changing social status of enslaved females will be examined as a feminist movement in the Abbasid period. By examining Lerner and Mernissi's concepts of hegemonic masculinity and gender in the methodology of the present study, we can furnish a better understanding of the research subject. It is necessary to consider the implications of emancipation through a study of jurisprudential, biographical, chronographic, prosopographical and literary sources, including prose and poetry. These will be advantageous for understanding the attitude of Abbasid society toward the role and status of women.

1.3 Structure of the Research

This dissertation begins with an introduction that presents the research objectives and aims, the research questions, the methodology and the research structure. The second chapter presents a literature review for both primary and secondary sources. Four substantive chapters and a conclusion follow the literature review, including several tables and a database.

Chapter Three presents a historical background and the transformation of the chronological development of Islamic law with regard to slavery and manumission. Next, it highlights and analyses Qur'anic verses and the hadith on slavery and manumission, including a study of *asbāb al-nuzūl* (reasons of revelation) on relevant and selected verses, to understand the purpose and importance of the new privileges in Arabic and Islamic society. This section relies on two Arabic interpretations: al-Ṭabarī (d. 311 A.H. /923 A.D.)¹⁴² and al-

¹⁴² Muḥammad al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr Al-Ṭabarī: Jāmi' Al-bayān 'an Ta'wīl Al-Qu'rān* (Bayrūt: Mu'assasat Al-Risālah, 1994).

Wāḥidī (d. 468 A.H./1075 A.D.),¹⁴³ along with the collection of *asbāb al-nuzūl*.¹⁴⁴ The chapter uses *al-Muṣannaf*,¹⁴⁵ *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*¹⁴⁶ and *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*¹⁴⁷ for *hadith* literature, as they are excellent primary sources for *hadith* collections. Significantly, *al-Muṣannaf*, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* and *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* faced criticism among some contemporaries. However, scholars consider these books authoritative; therefore, it is preferable to concentrate on these three books to study the *hadith*, and there is no need to examine the other *hadith* books. Moreover, the discussion section of the third chapter includes the definitions and legal opinions of the selected famous jurists who, in the Sunni *madhāhib*—al-Mālikī, al-Hanafī and al-Shāfi‘ī—provided examples of laws concerning female slaves. For example, presenting the female slave cycle of how they become slaves, their lives in slavery and the methods for manumission. Finally, this chapter presents examples of the legal *madhāhib* on female slaves and their status and rights in marriages, divorce and manumission. The final section will explore the development of the legal status of the *Umm al-Walad* and her privileges under Islamic law.

Chapter Four analyses the social rank of female slaves using historical and literary sources. This chapter analyses qualitative data using a prosopographical method¹⁴⁸ to outline female slaves’ origins, place of birth, price of sale and date of death, as well as details regarding their masters, careers and titles.¹⁴⁹ Furthermore, this chapter will discuss the various forms and aspects of female slaves’ lives at the slave market or auction. Our

¹⁴³ ‘Alī al-Wāḥidī, *Asbāb Al-nuzūl* (Dār Al-Kutub Al-‘Ilmiyah: Bayrūt, 1991); I choose this source as al-Wāḥidī’s work is “probably the earliest extant work,” along with the collection of *asbāb al-nuzūl*; see Andrew Rippin, “The Exegetical Genre *Asbāb Al-nuzūl*: A Bibliographical and Terminological Survey,” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 48, no. 1 (1985): 15.

¹⁴⁴ All the Qur’anic verses in this dissertation were translated into English by Abdullah Yusuf Ali, *The Meaning of the Holy Quran* (Beltsville: Amana Publications, 1991); I referred to Ali’s translation as it is the most disseminated, and is an excellent and fluent translation to read. See also el-Said Badawi, and Muhammad Abdel Haleem, *Arabic-English Dictionary of Qur’anic Usage*.

¹⁴⁵ ‘Abd al-Razzāq al-Ṣana‘ānī, *al-Muṣannaf* (Karātshī: al-Majlis al-‘Ilmī, 1970). *al-Muṣannaf* “contain[s] numerous anecdotes and opinions traced back to the Companions of the Prophet and successive generations”. Ali, *Marriage and Slavery*, 155. The text combines abundant information and knowledge about Yemeni, Mecca, Kufa and Basra; see Patricia Crone, *Law: The Origins of the Islamic Patronate* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 26.

¹⁴⁶ Muḥammad al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī: The Translation of the Meanings of Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī: Arabic-English*, trans. Muḥammad Muhsin Khan (Riyadh: Darussalam, 1997).

¹⁴⁷ Muslim Ibn al-Ḥajjāj, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim: English Translation of Ṣaḥīḥ Musli*, trans., Nasiruddin al-Khattab, ed., Huda Khattab and Abu Khaliy (Riyadh: Darussalam, 2007).

¹⁴⁸ For an excellent explanation of how to use the prosopographical method in historical research, as well as how to extract and analyse data from individual biographies, see K. S. B. Keats-Rohan, *Prosopography Approaches and Applications: A Handbook* (Oxford: University of Oxford, 2007), 499-501; Robinson, “Prosopographical Approaches to the Nasab Tradition,” 13-17.

¹⁴⁹ This research does not comprise strictly quantitative data, but rather creates a new method by collecting data from selected historical, *adab* and biographical sources on the lives of female slaves.

examination and analysis of female slaves' origins, skills, prices, careers and titles will be used to investigate the research question regarding the extent and scope of the social mobility, rank and position of enslaved women in the Abbasid era. This chapter argues the extent to which specific classes and types of female slaves could have access to greater opportunities for social mobility versus their counterparts.

Chapter Five focuses and demonstrates the position of enslaved women and their impact at the Abbasid court and chalyphal household. It examines how female slaves used their power to improve their social mobility, role and relationships, as well as the effects of their talents and mobility on free noblewomen in Abbasid society. This chapter will examine and compare the social status of female slaves and free noblewomen across different areas, such as motherhood, sexual activities, education, wealth, desire and participation in state, public and social affairs. The fundamental aim of this chapter explores the extent of female slaves to compete with free noblewomen for social position and prestige in the Abbasid court hierarchy. This chapter will discuss female slaves' opportunities through marriage and maternity, sexual desirability and behaviour, education, occupation and wealth. This chapter also focuses on particular case studies for each class. The first category is free noblewomen, including wives, daughters or sisters of the caliphs; the second comprises the *Ummahāt al-Awlād* and *qiyān*. Both provide excellent models for examining the relations between female slaves and free noblewomen during the second Abbasid period in order to compare their roles and status in society. Finally, the theory of patriarchy and male dominance will be examined to determine the extent of women's position and rank.

Chapter Six examines the presence of male slaves in the Abbasid era. The chapter provides several definitions and interpretations of common terms and concepts regarding male slaves. It then explores the issue of homosexuality and relations between men by studying both Islamic law and actual practice during the Abbasid era. This chapter intends to discuss the number and origins of male slaves and to examine the extent of their function and occupation as well as the effect on their social mobility and privileges in comparison to female slaves. We use this examination of the influence of gender norms and the

concept of men's superiority over women to contrast the extent of female slaves' social status with that of their enslaved male counterparts in the Abbasid household. The primary intent of this chapter is not a military historical study, but rather a socio-historical evaluation of enslaved men's status, position, movement and social mobility in contrast with female slaves in the Abbasid era.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

The extant primary and secondary sources are important to this research for general and methodological reasons. First, from these sources the researcher can find information relating to slaves' race, sex, class, occupation, age and beliefs. While the research involves more than historiographical information, these sources allow historians to illustrate clear social matters. In addition, these sources describe the ideology and behaviour of people; it can be significant to learn what scholars thought and what actually happened. The study of primary and secondary sources can support this research by presenting new facts and materials, providing powerful tools to understanding the hypothesis of this thesis. This research examines a specific subset of these sources, such as books interpreting the Qur'an and Sunnah, law, and history text, biographical, prosopographical, chronographic sources, literary texts comprising *Adab* and poetry and Arabic linguistic lexicons.

2.1 Primary Sources

It is important to analyse Qur'anic verses on slavery and manumission since the Qur'an is the primary source of all Islamic law. In this research, the collection of Qur'anic verses follows a specific process. First, an explanation of the interpretations is provided to ensure the accurate meaning of the words and verses. Next, attempts to assess the *asbāb al-nuzūl* of the verse and to legislate it are presented, as there are specific reasons why certain issues need to be addressed, such as marrying and freeing slaves. This approach strives to analyse slaves' statuses before and after the rise of Islam and to explain what new rights Islam endorsed for slaves in early Islamic society. Based on the Qur'an, the author of this thesis can indicate the terms and the conditions for manumission and Islamic law. This will support the thesis in its effort to track enslavement and manumission in relation to what the Qur'an demands, what scholars have legitimised, and what was practised in later periods.

The study of the Qur'an is also important for methodological reasons. First, it contains the core elements of Muslim rules, including the different systems of community affairs through dogma, worship and social norms. Secondly, it organizes the relationship between the individual (servant) and the Lord (master); also, it regulates the relationships among members of the community. It is also significant to study the historical context of each verse in order to discover the factual core.¹⁵⁰ Abdul Kabir Solihu writes that the researcher can understand the Qur'an by studying its historical changes.¹⁵¹ He stresses that the importance of "some Qur'anic ideas pertaining to 'time', 'change' and 'development', each of which plays an important role in our understanding".¹⁵² For instance, studying the verses may help to understand the organized legal connection between patrons and slaves, and may shed light on the rights and duties of both. Moreover, this study aims to identify the principles of manumission and ascertain how it was exercised. This perspective will establish and define the parameters of enslavement in the early Islamic era, given that the Qur'an consists of the principles of ethical and social Muslim behaviours.

It is also significant to consider the hadith as a second source of Muslim law, as it is associated with the Qur'anic texts.¹⁵³ Significant verse exegesis are explained and elucidated in the hadith books; therefore, it is important to study the hadith literature to illustrate the verses' contexts.¹⁵⁴ More specifically, the hadith can be counted as an influential source for this research as it includes slavery debates on various affairs, such as owning slaves, moderating the purchase of slaves, discouraging manumission, and dealing with slaves who request freedom. This underlines the rules and the basic social lives of female slaves in early Muslim society. This thesis will address the hadith literature¹⁵⁵ using three books, *al-Muṣannaf*, *Sahīh al-Bukhārī* and *Sahīh Muslim*. All these source books are considered the second most important sources after the Qur'an in terms of authority, and both propose to offer sound hadith.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁰ "Qur'an," In *The Islamic World: Past and Present*, ed. John L. Esposito, Oxford Islamic Studies Online, accessed 08 June 2015. <http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/article/opr/t243/e275>.

¹⁵¹ Abdul Kabir Solihu, "Understanding the Qur'ān in the Light of Historical Change," *Islamic Studies* 42, no. 3 (2003): 393-413, accessed 08 June 2015. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20837285>.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, 397.

¹⁵³ John Burton, *An Introduction to the Hadīth* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1994), 30.

¹⁵⁴ As will be seen in the next chapter.

¹⁵⁵ Regardless of the Muslim classification of hadith and its verdicts of *ṣaḡim* (unsound), *ṣaḡīḡ* (sound or authentic), *ḡasan* (good), *ḡa'īf*, (weak) or *mawḡū'* (fabricated, forged).

¹⁵⁶ Amin Bakri, *Adab Al-ḡadīth Al-Nabawī* (Qāhīrah: Dār Al-Shurūq, 1975), 42, 123.

This research will explore the Prophet Muḥammad's hadiths related to marriage, captives and slaves, as well the methods for dealing with them, thereby revealing the frontiers and boundaries of enslavement. In addition, research in this area can provide views of manumission legislation, the rules for buying and selling slaves and how the process was moderated during and after the time of the Prophet. This analysis may lead to distinguishing the differences and similarities between marriage with free women versus female slaves, providing a means to clarify Muslim provisions and actual practice. Ultimately, this study aims to present the nature of servitude and social mobility within Muslim society by testing and measuring the changes in slaves' rights and social statuses over time.

One work that is significant for this thesis is *Kitāb al-Kharāj*, by Ya'qūb Abū Yūsuf (d. 182 A.H./798 A.D.).¹⁵⁷ This book offers the first financial record of the Abbasid state, comprising resources, expense funds and taxation reforms.¹⁵⁸ This source also presents the economical and cultural aspects of life, politics and the social conditions of the time, as well as the people's class, entertainment courts and individual wealth. Abū Yūsuf was a chief judge (*qāḍī al-quḍāh*) of his era¹⁵⁹, thus his knowledge is beneficial to the present study. For instance, a judge is aware of the various issues from the council of grievances, which can help to verify and distinguish lawsuits involving the rights of women in general or the abuse of female slaves specifically in the Abbasids courts. Moreover, in the financial section of this book dealing with expense funds, Abū Yūsuf offered excellent information regarding prostitution, concubines and Caliphs and the amount of state capital spent on female slaves, as well as their top prices and values. Likewise, the book details the case of slave women, their status and lives as a form of state funds or spoils of war.

¹⁵⁷ He was a student of Abū Ḥanīfah, and wrote this book because Hārūn al-Rashīd asked him. Abū Yūsuf served as a judge in the era of three Abbasid Caliphs: al-Mahdī, al-Hādī and al-Rashīd. See Ya'qūb Abū Yūsuf, *Kitāb al-Kharāj* (Bayrūt: Dār al-Ma'rīfah, 1979).

¹⁵⁸ For more discussion see Ahmed El Shamsy, *The Canonization of Islamic Law: A Social and Intellectual History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013); Norman Calder, *Studies in early Muslim Jurisprudence* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 105-160. Behnam Sadeghi, *The legal of law making in Islam Women and Prayer in the legal tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 178.

¹⁵⁹ Wael Hallaq, *The origin and evolution of Islamic law* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 80.

In addition to the endless sharp divisions in the primary sources related to this study, the bulk of the information in this thesis will be derived from the historiography of early Islamic history. The most significant source was written by al-Ṭabarī (d. 310 A.H - 923 A.D.) and is known as *Tārīkh al-Rusul wa 'l-Mulūk* (History of the Prophets and Kings); it is often referred to as *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*.¹⁶⁰ In this book, al-Ṭabarī presents his chronicle by tracing the history of creation, beginning with Adam and Eve and moving on to the Prophets and the Apostles. Furthermore, his work presents a history of Islamic society. He uses an ordinal approach in his telling of events, arranging incidents by year and mentioning all the news and events that took place, from the first year of Muslim immigration (7 B.H. / 615 A.D.) to the year 302 A.H. / 915 A.D. Al-Ṭabarī's work reveals several pieces of information of slaves and their patrons that support this thesis. By tracking these historical facts, we can determine the extent of ownership of female slaves in the Abbasid era, particularly the case of the *Umm al-Walad* who became the mother of a caliph. Our study of these incidents will help us create a clear picture of the social role and rank of female slaves in the Abbasid period.

Al-Mas'ūdī (d. 346 A.H / 957 A.D.) is similar to al-Ṭabarī, in his book *Murūj al-Dhahab wa-Ma'ādin al-Jawhar* (The Meadows of Gold and Mines of Gems),¹⁶¹ in that he follows the historical chronicle approach, giving information from the time of Adam and Eve to the Abbasid era (362 A.H / 973 A.D.). He describes unique facts on medieval history and includes various pieces of historical evidence from hadith, tales and poetry to illuminate these facts. "Unlike most of his contemporaries al-Mas'ūdī tried to visit the places and countries about which he wrote, and this points to the most original feature of *the Meadows of Gold* – the placing of historical events in geographical context".¹⁶² This may highlight any divergence or convergence of the status of slaves in different political settings. Al-Mas'ūdī is most concerned with the history of the Arabs of Mecca and their culture from the pre-Islamic era through the time of the Prophet Muḥammad and the caliphs (*al-Khulafā' al-Rāshidīn*), up until the Abbasid epoch. The present research will consider Arabic social hierarchy and slaves'

¹⁶⁰ Muḥammad al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī* (al-Riyād: Bayt al-Afkār al-Duwalīyah, 2009).

¹⁶¹ Al-Mas'ūdī, *Murūj al-Dhahab wa Ma'ādin al-Jawhar*.

¹⁶² Idem., *The meadow of Gold, the Abbasids*. Translated and edited by Paul Lunde and Caroline Stone (London: Kegan Paul international Limited, 1989), 12.

conditions with regard to the gradual change in their social status, focusing on the stature of female slaves. Accordingly, this information may assist this research in tracing female slaves' social mobility and the motivations of the institution of slavery, including causes and examples of females.

In the *Kitāb al-Awrāq*,¹⁶³ by Muḥammad al-Ṣūlī (d. 335 A.H./ 946 A.D.), the author offers biographies and narratives of males and females in the different ranks of the Abbasid era. He presents an important example of female slaves and *Umm al-Walad* examples and their position, talent and status. Al-Ṣūlī's book provides significant information in two ways. First, it seems cautious in classifying an individual's genealogy. Thus, it is accurate to mention the caliphs' mothers, sisters and daughters. Second, *Kitāb al-Awrāq* is interested in male and female poets¹⁶⁴ and their verses. These will help to demonstrate the female position, descriptions and their relations in Abbasid era. Alternatively, similar to al-Ṣūlī's work, al-Muḥassin al-Tanūkhī (d. 384 A.H./994 A.D.) in *Nishwār al-Muḥāḍarah wa-aKhbār al-Mudhākarah* (Relief after Distress),¹⁶⁵ presents the relation between caliphs and their female slaves in the themes of poetry and judiciary affairs in Abbasid era.¹⁶⁶ Furthermore, the study of al-Tanūkhī's book is beneficial because it provides us with information about social practices and lives. For example, the case of the caliphs' and elites' desire to own female slaves and interest in songs and poets presents important information about caliphs' amusement activities, such as music, dance, chess and dice. More importantly, al-Tanūkhī's work included eight incidents of passion and love between masters and their slave girls¹⁶⁷; these stories can help us to recognize the relationship between slave owners and their concubines and to understand the importance of the status of female slaves in the Abbasid court.

Abū Bakr al-Baghdādī (d. 463 A.H./1071 A.D.), in his book *Tarikh Baghdād madīnat al-Salam*,¹⁶⁸ concentrates on the role of men in the Abbasid period; his aim was to shed light on the Caliphs, judges, *fuqahā'*, poets and other famous

¹⁶³ Muḥammad al-Ṣūlī, *Kitāb al-Awrāq: Ash'ar Awlād al-Khulafā' wa-Akhhāruhum and Akhbār al-Rādī Billāh wa-al-Muttaqī lillāh, aw, Tārīkh al-Dawlah al-Abbāsīyah min sanat 322 ilā sanat 333 Hijrīyah* (Cairo: Maṭba'at al-Ṣawī, 1936).

¹⁶⁴ Al-Ṣūlī presents information of male poets more than female.

¹⁶⁵ Al-Muḥassin al-Tanūkhī, *Nishwār al-Muḥāḍarah wa-aKhbār al-Mudhākarah* (Bayrūt: Dār Ṣādir, 1987).

¹⁶⁶ As al-Tanūkhī was a judge in Baghdād.

¹⁶⁷ Shahin Aram, "The Slave-Girls Who Enslaved the Free-Born: Slave-Girls and Their Masters in Islamic Literature," (M.A diss., James Madison University, 2014).

¹⁶⁸ Abū Bakr al-Baghdādī, *Tarikh Baghdād madīnat al-Salam* (Bayrūt: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī, 2001).

figures in society, including their social, cultural and political standing. Given this, some interesting examples and information are presented in Chapter Sixteen: “*Hārūn al-Nisā*” focuses on women and female slaves. Of interest is that al-Baghdādī mentions twenty-seven female names in this chapter, but only two of them are slave women (al-Khayzarān and Jabraḥ al-Sawdā’). Al-Baghdādī neglects to mention other remarkable examples of elite women or female slaves, who may be considered integral parts of the community in that period. One example is ‘Ulayyah, the sister of Hārūn al-Rashīd, known for her talent with poetry; another is ‘Arīb, a female singer who held an important position in the Caliph’s court. The information on women is limited. However, there is a reason this source is important for the present research. Al-Baghdādī’s work is beneficial to the present research by allowing men’s biographies and narratives to highlight women’s relationships with men, particularly the standing and rank of female slaves in the Abbasid courts.¹⁶⁹

Another noteworthy primary source is *al-Kāmil fī ‘l-Tārīkh* (The Complete History),¹⁷⁰ by ‘Alī Ibn al-Athīr (d. 640 A.H / 1234 A.D.). It is one of the most significant books on Islamic historical source and is more comprehensive than previous historical texts on the topic. Ibn al-Athīr’s goal was to tell of ‘missing’ events that were not mentioned by historians or that had been deleted from official accounts over time. His approach was to locate various incidents and determine the months and years in which they occurred, and to provide the names and dates of death of famous scholars, dignitaries and other virtuous figures. The most important item from this source is its description of the general state of bondage and servitude during this time, as well as the level of detail provided on invasion operations in Persia and Byzantium, along with Arab history through the year 628 A.H./ 1231 A.D. By examining Ibn al-Athīr’s work, we collected the names and the number of female slaves, dividing them into a table to determine their professions and origins. Ibn al-Athīr’s accounts can be used to draw convincing examples of female enslavement and the granting of their freedom, supporting our research on social mobility through the Abbasid period.

¹⁶⁹ A good example is the biography of Hārūn al-Rashīd and the mention of his mother, al-Khayzarān, and his *Umm-al-Walad*. See *Ibid.*, vol 16, 9.

¹⁷⁰ ‘Alī b. al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil fī ‘l-Tārīkh* (al-Qāhirah: Matḅa’ah al-azhariyah al-misriyah, 1984).

Al-Mukhtār b. Buṭlān provided vital information for the present study. His work "*Risālah shirā al-raqīq wa-taqlīb al-'abīd*,"¹⁷¹ is a short handbook on the purchase and physical examination of slaves",¹⁷² presenting significant information on the inspection and purchase of female slaves and distinguishing between enslaved women's origin and their position. Ibn Buṭlān created a new conceptualization of slaves, arguing that the slave market comprised a series of classes, each depending on the slave's origin, skills, beauty and other personal characteristics. He also attempted to demonstrate the phenomenon of deception among slave traders, who used fraudulent and counterfeit practices to falsify the personal qualities of their slaves' physical attributes, including skin colour, beauty and body shape.¹⁷³ Ibn Buṭlān's work states that this phenomenon was widely linked to the extreme demand for owning specific types of slaves, and was likely a result of slave traders attempting to increase their profits. This information is crucial for understanding the institution of the slave market in the classical periods of Islam. As a result, we will be better able to consider the practices of slavery and ownership and develop a greater understanding of the causes and the factors and features related to the demand for female slaves.

On Medieval Arabic dictionaries play an important role in this research. The fundamental reason for choosing to study Arabic dictionaries is the need to be informed of various concepts for differentiating between the semantic and literal meanings of terms; it is often necessary to identify their etymology as well. For instance, the terms *'amā*, *jāriyah*, *Umm al-Walad* and *milk al-yamīn*, in theory, represent conventionally similar meanings: 'slave woman'. However, in practice, their actual meanings differ due to specific exegeses and developments in the words' linguistic paths that led to the creation of new terms. Therefore, studying Arabic linguistic lexicons can help to distinguish the different meaning in English of Arabic terms and clarify the chronological development of these words. It can

¹⁷¹ Al-Mukhtār b. Buṭlān, "*Risālah shirā al-raqīq wa-taqlīb al-'abīd*," in *Nawādir al-makhṭūṭāt* (Al-Qāhirah: Maktabat al-Khānjī, 1972), 373.

¹⁷² Gordon, "Preliminary Remarks on Slaves," 78.

¹⁷³ For a concise biography of Ibn Buṭlān, see Schacht and Max Meyerhof, *The medico-philosophical controversy between Ibn Butlan of Baghdad and Ibn Ridwan of Cairo: a contribution to the history of Greek learning among the Arabs = Khams rasā'il li-Ibn Buṭlān al-Baghdādī wa-li-Ibn Riḍwān al-Miṣrī* (Cairo: Egypton University, 1937), 51-66; Lewis, *Race and Slavery*, 48-49; Jane Gardner and Thomas Wiedemann, *Representing the Body of the Slave* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 65.

determine their original meanings and find out where, when and why these changes occurred. Therefore, the use of antonyms, synonyms of Arabic linguistic lexicons will be important in this thesis.

Studying the origin and roots of Arabic words is important to this research for methodological reasons. First, the Arabic language contains words with more than one meaning; therefore, illustrating the basic meaning of these words demonstrates the different concepts related to this thesis. Moreover, it is important to distinguish between the coinage of new terms and phrases compared to original meanings of words; it will be significant to associate the etymology of the Arabic terms with the development of the law and individuals' behaviour throughout Islamic history. This knowledge guides us to ways in which the meaning of a word has changed, and to the circumstances that caused the change or invention of a new term.

The next section will illustrate the Arabic concept of various terms related to the present research. It will primarily follow the *Arabic-English Dictionary of Qur'an Usage* by Badawi and Abd Haleem, comparing usage and vocabulary according to the different Arabic literary lexicons. Finally, this section addresses and explains the basic meaning, the Qur'anic explanation and the etymological root of Arabic words. It may be helpful for the reader to recognize the multiple definitions and origins of each term, and to understand how different uses of a term might cause confusion. Each paragraph will therefore include a clear comparative example.

The term "slavery" is present in various Arabic vocabularies. Linguistically and according to the Arabic literary lexicon, *'ubūdiyyah* (slavery) is related to the root 'a-b-d (pl. *'abīd*), and implies the meaning of "enslave" and "bondman".¹⁷⁴ In contrast, the Qur'anic verses provide another meaning of this word (*'abd*); verses 38:17 and 38:30 explain it as meaning "a servant of God". Thus, slavery can be considered as case of worship.¹⁷⁵ Slavery can therefore refer both to free men and to slaves, given the different practical meanings of each concept.

¹⁷⁴ Al-Fīrūzābādī, *Al-Qāmūs al-Muḥīṭ*, 296; Muḥammad al-Rāzī, *Mukhtār al-Ṣaḥāḥ*, vol 8 (Bayrūt: Maktabat Lubnān, 1986), 172; Murtaḍā Al-Zabīdī, *Tāj al-'Arūs Min Jawāhir Al-qāmūs*, vol 8 (Kuwait: Maṭba'at Ḥukūmat Al-Kuwait, 1998), 327.

¹⁷⁵ Badawi and Abdel Haleem, *Arabic-English Dictionary of Qur'anic Usage*, 593-594; Maḥmūd al-Ṭanāḥī, *Min Asrār Al-lughah Fī 'l-kitāb wa-'l-Sunnah*, vol 1 (Makkah: Al-Maktabah Al-Makkīyah, 2008), 109-115.

On the other hand, the word *mamlūk* is similar to the word ‘*abd*, as it refers to an owned person who is controlled by a master, i.e. a slave.¹⁷⁶ Gordon distinguishes between ‘*abd mamlūk*, a purchased slave, and ‘*abd qin*, a slave born in the master’s household.¹⁷⁷ The word *riqq* is another synonym of “slavery”. Its root is r-q-q, and it can refer to “parchment”, “to thin out” or “to be weak”.¹⁷⁸ Al-Rāzī and al-Zabīdī noted that “slaves” in Arabic can also be called *rāqīq* because they are toiling, striving and making great efforts to serve and obey their masters.¹⁷⁹

Another important concept related to this research is manumission (*‘Itq*),¹⁸⁰ as it refers to many Arabic words. The word *tahrīr* means “to let a slave be liberated or emancipated”,¹⁸¹ and its root is ḥ-r-r.¹⁸² Badawi and Abdel Haleem mention that the Qur’an presents another word that can mean “freeing the slave”: the word *fakk*, such as in verse 90:13.¹⁸³ Jonathan Brockopp writes that “when the Qur’an speaks of emancipation, it does not use the classical *‘itq* but the terms *tahrir* and *fakk*, words which might easily refer to captives, not to slaves”.¹⁸⁴ Later, the word “freedom” had been used as an ethical term indicating a noble individual, and may also mean freedom from everything except Allah (God); lawfully, however, it refers to the contradiction of slavery.¹⁸⁵

Patricia Crone related the case of individual freedom (*ḥurr*) in modern Arabia to the status of a person as *aṣīlī*; this means to be noble is to have *aṣl* origin, or Arab ethnicity, personal independence and political autonomy.¹⁸⁶ On the other

¹⁷⁶ Badawi and Abdel Haleem, *Ibid.*, 894; Rufā’ī al-Yasū’ī, *Qāmūs Al-mutarādifāt Wa-‘l-Mutajānisāt: Li-‘āmmah al-Udabā’ wa-‘l-tilāmīdh al-Sufūf al-‘Ulyā*, vol 1 (Bayrūt: Al-Maṭba‘ah Al-Kāthūlikīyah: 1957), 173; Al-Zabīdī, *Tāj Al-‘Arūs Min Jawāhir al-Qāmūs*, vol 8, 327.

¹⁷⁷ Also, the word *ghulam* (pl. *ghilmān*) can refer to a slave, child, boy, or youth. Murray Gordon, *Slavery in the Arab World* (New York: New Amsterdam, 1989), 36.

¹⁷⁸ Badawi and Abdel Haleem, *Arabic-English Dictionary of Qur’anic Usage*, 377; It also occurs once in the Qur’an in verse 52:2; Al-Yasū’ī, *Qāmūs al-Mutarādifāt Wa-‘l-Mutajānisāt*, vol 1, 887.

¹⁷⁹ Al-Rāzī, *Al-Ṣiḥāh*, vol 8, 106; Al-Zabīdī, *Tāj Al-‘Arūs*, vol 8, 356.

¹⁸⁰ *‘Itq* can also refer to dignity, honour and hospitality. Also, it is mentioned in the Qur’an (verses 22:29 and 3:96) as meaning “ancient” and “heritage”; Badawi and Abdel Haleem, *Arabic-English Dictionary of Qur’anic Usage*, 597; Al-Fīrūzābādī, *Al-Qāmūs al-Muḥīṭ*, 906; Al-Zabīdī, *Tāj al-‘Arūs Min Jawāhir Al-qāmūs*, vol 26, 115.

¹⁸¹ Al-Fīrūzābādī, *Ibid.*, 906; Al-Zabīdī, *Ibid.*, vol 10, 583-588; Al-Yasū’ī, *Qāmūs Al-Mutarādifāt wa-‘l-Mutajānisāt*, 40.

¹⁸² This root is mentioned fifteen times in the Qur’an: Badawi and Abdel Haleem, *Ibid.*, 198-199.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, 720.

¹⁸⁴ Jonathan Brockopp and ‘Abd Allāh Ibn ‘Abd Al-Ḥakam, "Slave Law and Practice," in *Early Mālikī Law: Ibn ‘Abd Al-Hakam and His Major Compendium of Jurisprudence* (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 128.

¹⁸⁵ Irene Schneider, "Freedom and Slavery in Early Islamic Time (1ST/7TH AND 2ND/8TH Centuries)," *Al-Qantara*, 0211.3589 (2007): 353-82, accessed 13 Feb 2014, 355. <http://alqantara.revistas.csic.es/index.php/alqantara/article/download/41/35>.

¹⁸⁶ Crone, *Roman, Provincial, and Islamic Law*, 44.

hand, Mernissi explains that the word *ḥurrah* defines the woman as a legitimate wife related to the aristocratic and noble family and female slaves, while *jāriyah* means a female slave whose owner or master can sell in the slave markets.¹⁸⁷ The prevailing view in the early and the classical period of Islam was that the Arab ideal of the concept of freedom was related to the nobility, masters, gentlefolk and wealth.

It is important to stress that words carry a specific sense and meaning at particular times. Many Arabic words need to be presented and identified because they are crucial for the rest of this research, for instance, in the case of female slaves. The common usage for female slave is *‘amā* (pl. *imā*).¹⁸⁸ Similarly, the word *sarīyah* (pl. *sarāyā* or *sarārī*) is associated with the female slave in theory, but in practice and literary usages, its meaning is “concubine”.¹⁸⁹ Moreover, the word *fatayāt* is another term used in the Qur’an. It refers to youths, and it is referred to twice in the context of a sexual situation.¹⁹⁰ Another important term is *jāriyah*, as its contemporary¹⁹¹ meaning is “female slave”. The word is mentioned explicitly in the Qur’an verses 69:11 and 88: 12; however in both verses it means “sailing vessel”.¹⁹² Therefore, it can be argued that there was a chronological development of this term, as in almost all of the historical sources presented the word *jāriyah* refers to a female slave. Thus, the *‘amā* and sailing vessel are connected. A similar feature is assumed between the *‘amā* and the sailing vessel regarding their continued movement.¹⁹³ Since female slave remained with her master and worked for him without cessation¹⁹⁴ therefore this term may have crystalized by being used to refer to female slaves. The use of context can modify the meaning of a word; therefore, the aspects of the term *‘amā* changed throughout the classical Islamic period.¹⁹⁵

The Islamic and Arabic lexicons have various words for enslaved men, and the

¹⁸⁷ Mernissi, *The Forgotten Queens of Islam*, 17.

¹⁸⁸ Al-Fīrūzābādī, *Al-Qāmūs al-Muḥīṭ*, 1260; ‘Alī al-Hināī. *Al-Muntakhab Min Gharīb Kalām Al-‘Arab*, vol 1 (Mecca: Umm Al Qora U, 1989), 413.

¹⁸⁹ Its root is s-r-r, and relates to pleasure and sexuality: Badawi and Abdel Haleem, *Arabic-English Dictionary of Qur’anic Usage*, 431; Al-Rāzī, *Mukhtār, Al-Ṣiḥāḥ*, vol 8, 124; Al-Zabīdī, *Tāj Al-‘arūs Min Jawāhir Al-qāmūs*, vol 38, 240.

¹⁹⁰ Brockopp, "Slave Law and Practice," 129.

¹⁹¹ “Contemporary” here is referring to the Umayyad period (132 A.H. /750 A.D.).

¹⁹² Badawi and Abdel Haleem, *Arabic-English Dictionary of Qur’anic Usage*, 161.

¹⁹³ Al-Fayyūmī, *Al-Miṣbāḥ al-Munīr*, 38; Badawi and Abdel Haleem, *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁵ Since there is no mention in all the primary historical sources of the word *jāriyah* in the pre-Islamic era and in the early Islamic period, we propose that this term originated in the Umayyad era.

semantics differ depending on the era and usage of each individual term. Thus, each word can refer to a different, specific type of slave based on their physical appearance or activities. For instance, the two terms *‘abd* and *mamlūk* were commonly used to refer to enslaved man in general.¹⁹⁶ However, the word *ghulām* (pl. *ghilmān*) was first associated with any male slave, but was changed to specifically represent young or adolescent male slaves.¹⁹⁷ Later in the Abbasid period, the word *ghulām* became associated with male military slaves regardless of age.¹⁹⁸ The term *khanīth* (effeminate) is found in the word *mukhanath* (pl. *mukhanathūn*), which refers to a man adopting a female persona in his appearance, dress, actions and behaviours, and also when engaging in sexual acts.¹⁹⁹ The existence of *mukhanathūn* was due to the presence of the *ghilmān* cohort becoming intimate partners for men.²⁰⁰

Male homosexuality was clearly known from the early Islamic period.²⁰¹ In the Umayyad period, famous male singers, especially from Madīnah, were more likely to be *mukhanathūn*.²⁰² Historical evidence of homosexuality in the Abbasid court is also evident, as male entertainers became a visible phenomenon through the middle era. For example, the caliph al-Amīn was entranced by *ghilmān*, and he authorized them as leaders of his court.²⁰³ Male desire and the practice of homosexuality allowed *ghilmān* to hold a significant position in the Abbasid court, and “seem[ed] to have produced a strongly homosexual sub-culture”.²⁰⁴ The question is the extent to which the impact and social status of young male slaves (*ghilmān*) provided a challenge to female slaves (*jawārī*) in the Abbasid period.²⁰⁵

¹⁹⁶ See page 51 for references on the Arabic literary lexicon.

¹⁹⁷ The term *ghulām* will be applied in the section of homosexuality to refer to young and adolescent enslaved males. Al-Zabīdī, *Tāj al-‘Arūs*, vol 33, 176; Hugh Kennedy, *The Prophet and the Age of the Caliphates: The Islamic Near East from the Sixth to the Eleventh Century* (London: Longman, 1986), 206-207.

¹⁹⁸ We will discuss the military profession and organization of slaves later in Chapter Six. See Kennedy, *Ibid*; Roy Mottahedeh, *Loyalty and Leadership* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 2001), 88. See also "Ghulam," in *The Oxford Dictionary of Islam*, edited by John L. Esposito; *Oxford Islamic Studies Online*, 6-7, accessed 19 April 2017, <http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/article/opr/t125/e722>.

¹⁹⁹ Al-Zabīdī, *Tāj al-‘Arūs*, vol 5, 241; Everett Rowson, "Gender Irregularity as Entertainment: Institutionalized Transvestism at the Caliphal Court in Medieval Baghdad," in *Gender and difference in the Middle Ages*, eds., Sharon Farmer and Carol Braun Pasternack (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 46.

²⁰⁰ The position of Islam and scholars' opinions of homosexuality and the act of sodomy will be discussed later in this chapter.

²⁰¹ Rowson, "Gender Irregularity as Entertainment," 46, 47, 63.

²⁰² *Ibid*; *Idem.*, "The Effeminate of Early Medina," 671.

²⁰³ Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil fī ‘l-Tārīkh*, vol 5, 410.

²⁰⁴ Kennedy, *The Prophet and the Age of the Caliphates*, 208.

²⁰⁵ This will discuss in the Sixth chapter of the present thesis.

Another use of the term *ghulām* in the Arabic lexicon and Abbasid historical incidents relates to a type of female slave called *ghulāmiyah* (pl. *ghulāmiyāt*). *Ghulāmiyāt* refers to female slaves who wore male clothing.²⁰⁶ The first and most famous historical reference to the employment of *ghulāmiyāt* comes from the biography of Caliph al-Amīn. His mother, Zubaydah, replaced the eunuchs in his court with *ghulāmiyāt* after noticing that his homosexuality and passion for young boys and eunuchs had resulted in his abandonment of women.²⁰⁷ Although the term *ghulāmiyah* is found in most historical sources, our database in Chapter Four did not mention any *ghulāmiyah* by name or list the profession as a slave's primary career.²⁰⁸ This suggests *ghulāmiyāt* were not a widespread phenomenon at the Abbasid court; rather, they were employed by specific strata, such as elite men, and were associated with men's sexual desires and appetites.²⁰⁹ Since the lust of men influenced their female slaves' apparel, we propose that the *ghulāmiyāt* comprised *jawārī* from different professions and functions, such as *qiyān*, poets, concubines or servants. Thus, the phrase *ghulāmiyāt* did not represent a specific class of female slaves, but referred to the particular act of wearing male clothing and looking like men.

Khādim (pl. *khudām*) is another term used to refer to a male servant. David Ayalon writes that the usage of *khādim* developed to include the concept of *khaṣī* (pl. *khiṣyān*), meaning eunuch, or castrated man.²¹⁰ Ayalon argues that eunuchs can be traced back to the late Umayyad period,²¹¹ and some historical primary sources employed both *khādim* and *khaṣī* when referring both to individuals and groups of enslaved men.²¹² While previous periods distinguished between the words *khaṣī* and *khādim*, the term *khādim* was later finalized to mean a single castrated man in the Abbasid era.²¹³

Mez states that after 300 A.H./ 913 A.D., eunuchs gained various honourable

²⁰⁶ Al-Zabīdī, *Tāj al-Arūs*, vol 33, 176; Rowson, "Gender Irregularity as Entertainment," 4, 47.

²⁰⁷ Al-Mas'ūdī, *Murūj al-dhahab*, vol 4, 253; Kennedy, *The Court of the Caliphs*, 188-189; Rowson, *Ibid.*, 47.

²⁰⁸ See section 4.2.

²⁰⁹ Rowson, "Gender Irregularity as Entertainment," 47, 50-51.

²¹⁰ Ayalon, *Eunuchs, Caliphs and Sultans*, 6; *Idem.*, "On the Term 'Khādim'," 290; See Al-Zabīdī, *Tāj al-Arūs Min Jawāhir Al-qāmūs*, vol 37, 552.

²¹¹ Ayalon, *Eunuchs, Caliphs and Sultans*, 68.

²¹² See 'Amr al-Jāhīz, "*Risālah Mufāharat al-jawārī wa 'l-ghilmān*," in *Rasā'il al-Jāhīz* (Bayrūt: Dār wa-Maktabat al-Hilāl lil-Ṭibā'ah wa-al-Nashr, 2004), vol 2, 471-521; See Al-Mas'ūdī, *Murūj al-Dhahab*; Al-Ya'qūbī, *Tārīkh al-Ya'qūbī*; Al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh Madīnat al-Salām*. See also Ayalon, *Ibid.*, 292-303.

²¹³ Ayalon, *Ibid.*, 7, 68, 292-303.

and respectable titles, such as *khādim* (servant), *ustādh* (professor), *shaykh* (leader), or *mu'allim* (teacher). Before this period they were known simply as *khaṣī*.²¹⁴ Hugh Kennedy agrees with Mez and stating that in the ninth century (after 300 A.H./ 913 A.D.), all *khudām* were also *khiṣyān*.²¹⁵ In contrast, Abdallah Cheikh Moussa, argues that *khādim* referred to the act of servicing (*khidmah*), thus giving it the meaning of servant. He states that there were various terms used to distinguish between servants, with complete male physical anatomy, and eunuchs, who had lost their sexual ability and desire.²¹⁶ As a result, the customary definition of *khādim* in the traditional Arabic lexicon is "manservant." However, the era of study in the present research is the Abbasid period, which uses Ayalon's historical analysis of the synonymous nature of *khādim* and *khaṣī*. As such, both terms will be applied in this research to refer to eunuchs. Significantly, the Arabic concepts of various terms related to the present research are investigated. Words are linked linguistically to the Arabic literary lexicon, as there is a need to recognize the coinage of new words and phrases and to identify the transformation of the Arabic terms related to this thesis.

Another primary sources in this study include: "*Risālat al-qiyān*," by al-Jāhīz; and *Kitāb al-Aghānī* (The Book of Songs), by al-Iṣfahānī. Both of these sources, written by remarkable scholars of Abbasid and Islamic literature, present female slaves' lives, roles and careers. Moreover, they stress the power of the significant, widespread phenomenon of *jawārī* and *qiyān* and their importance as singers or poets of the entertainment court.

In general, al-Jāhīz's work supports the present thesis by presenting noteworthy details of the social history of female slaves in the Abbasid era.²¹⁷ It provides important information on the influence of female slave singers on men and the development of songs in Abbasid society. Al-Jāhīz's work drew a clear, straightforward picture of female slave behaviours and the sexual element of

²¹⁴ Mez, *Al-Ḥaḍārah al-Islāmīyah*, vol 2, 161

²¹⁵ Kennedy, "The Harem," *The Court of the Caliphs: The Rise and Fall of Islam's Greatest Dynasty* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 2004), 180.

²¹⁶ Abdallah Cheikh Moussa, "Gahiz Et Les Eunuques Ou La Confusion Du Même Et De L'Autre," *Arabica*, 29, no. 2, (1982): 214, accessed 11.6.2017, <http://booksandjournals.brillonline.com/content/journals/10.1163/157005882x00220>. See Ayalon, "On the Term "Khādim," in *the Sense of " Eunuch in the Early Muslim Sources*. *Arabica* 32, no. 3 (1985), 296, 299. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4056896>.

²¹⁷ Gordon, "Abbasid Courtesans and the Question of Social Mobility," 35.

qiyān. However, Gordon argues that "*Risālat al-qiyān*," presents a negative notion of female slaves and *qiyān*.²¹⁸ He stresses that the image of *qiyān* in work presents them as aiding the destruction of the integrity of Abbasid society, as these female slaves' motives depended on men's physical and emotional temptations which facilitated the transition of their social rank.²¹⁹ Although al-Jāhīz "uses a satirical approach in most of his work,"²²⁰ his writings nevertheless present the impact of *jawānī* in terms of Abbasid social and moral norms. *Jawānī* contributed remarkably to the establishment of the feminist movement of female power and social mobility in Abbasid society and earlier.

Al-Iṣfahānī's primary aim in analysis and study was to shed comprehensive light on changes in the role of female slaves in the Abbasid social hierarchy. His book focuses on women, specifically female slaves, and their entertainment methods, songs and poetry, as well as biographical information about female slaves, Caliphs, poets, singers and viziers. It also determines the lineage of individuals and the period of their existence. Thus, al-Iṣfahānī's work can be described as an encyclopaedia of Arabic poetry and songs that also includes the description of Caliphs and ministers of entertainment. Furthermore, Mernissi stresses that *Kitāb al-Aghānī* "is not a history classical book,"²²¹ but rather, "it is an attempt to analyze and present the developing and the prosperity of singing and music in the Arab civilization".²²² Given the examples of singers and poets comprising a remarkable number of female slaves, it is therefore of note that women had a role in the development of Muslim art.²²³ Both al-Jāhīz and al-Iṣfahānī's works will be studied in depth, and can be considered primary sources of female slaves' social history, literature and biographies.²²⁴

On the other hand, Arabic biographical texts included a great advantage to the present research in different affairs. In this way, biographies can present individuals' social, educational, political and economic positions. Brian Roberts notes that biographical research has the important merit of aiding the task of

²¹⁸ Gordon, "Yearning and Disquiet: al-Jahiz and the *Risalat al-qiyān*," 260,268.

²¹⁹ Ibid.

²²⁰ Reem Alrudainy, "The Role of Women in the Būyid and Saljūq Periods of the Abbasid Caliphate (339-447/950-1055 & 447-547/1055-1152): The Case of Iraq," (PhD diss., Exeter: Exeter University, 2014), 20.

²²¹ Mernissi, *The Forgotten Queens of Islam*, 39.

²²² Ibid.

²²³ Ibid., 39-40.

²²⁴ See Gordon, "Arīb al-Ma'muniya," 26.

understanding the social shifts, by including how new experiences are interpreted by individuals with families, small group and institutions.²²⁵ In particular, biographical collections present knowledge of historical characters, relations, and events, and can be correlated with oral history, annals, chronology, family names, stories and personal facts.²²⁶ They can assist to researchers distinguishing between and to compare and contrast names, eras, achievements and social changes. Consequently, the researcher can assess the extent of a person's impact and influence based on their surrounding circumstances.

The examination of Arabic biographies is essential to this research.²²⁷ Biographies are valuable sources of information on slaves, giving the names of female slaves, their owners, information about the dates of their marriages and deaths, from whom the slaves were descended and their original countries. This can lead to determining the exact numbers of female slaves, and may identify the extent of social mobility relative to the pre-Islamic and Islamic eras central to this research. This approach will support efforts to turn raw data from collected records into something more useful by drawing conclusions and attempting to understand the facts. Some of the biographies examined in this study include *Wafayāt al-A'yān wa-Anbā' Abnā' al-Zamān*²²⁸ by 'Abbās b. Khallikān; and *Kitāb al-Wāfī bi-'l-Wafayāt*²²⁹ by Khalīl al-Ṣafadī.

One noteworthy later work which deals with the Abbasid era and female slaves is *Nisā' al-Khulafā': al-Musammā Jihāt al-A'imma al-Khulafā' min al-Ḥarā'ir wa 'l-Imā'*,²³⁰ by 'Alī Ibn al-Sā'ī (d. 674 A.H./1276 A.D.). This source can be classified as a "historical biography,"²³¹ presenting considerable information on elite women in the early, middle and late Abbasid eras.²³² This work is a remarkable accomplishment for female slave scholarship,²³³ thanks to Ibn al-

²²⁵ Brian Roberts, *Biographical Research* (Buckingham: Open UP, 2001), 2-5.

²²⁶ *Ibid.*, 2.

²²⁷ For more information on how to study using biographies, see Barbara Merrill and Linden West, *Using Biographical Methods in Social Research* (Los Angeles: SAGE, 2009).

²²⁸ 'Abbās b. Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-A'yān Wa-anbā' Abnā' al-Zamān* (Qāhira: Maktabat Al-Nahḍah Al-Miṣrīyah, 1964).

²²⁹ Al-Ṣafadī, *Kitāb al-Wāfī bi-'l-Wafayāt*.

²³⁰ 'Alī Ibn al-Sā'ī, *Nisā' al-Khulafā': al-Musammā Jihāt al-A'imma al-Khulafā' min al-Ḥarā'ir wa 'l-Imā'* (Bayrūt: Manshūrāt al-Jama, 2011).

²³¹ 'Alī Ibn al-Sā'ī, *Consorts of the Caliphs: Women and the Court of Baghdad*, ed., Shawkat Toorawa and Julia Bray (New York: New York University Press, 2015), xxi.

²³² Until the Buyid period (334-447 A.H./945-1055 A.D.).

²³³ Ibn al-Sā'ī, *Consorts of the Caliphs*, xxv.

Sāṭ's "seriousness and sympathy, the multiplicity of roles with the dynasty that he identifies for consorts, and his systematic, and challenging, idealization of the woman over the slave."²³⁴ The material in Ibn al-Sāṭ's book is beneficial to this research, feminist and Arabic studies, as it offers information on a variety of female social ranks in the Abbasid milieu. For instance, it contains useful knowledge on the Caliphs' mothers, wives, daughters, *Ummahāt al-Awlād* and concubines, whether they were free elite women or slaves.

To consider the merit of Ibn al-Sāṭ's book, first, it includes the names of twenty-one enslaved women associated with the present thesis. Secondly, *Nisā' al-Khulafā'* not only comprises biographies, but in some cases includes poems related to the conditions and the current situations of these women with their owners or their beloveds. Examples include the biographies of 'Arīb al-Ma'mūnīyah, 'Inān, and Maḥbūbah, who belonged to Caliph al-Mutawakkil and other female slaves.²³⁵ On the other hand, the main shortcoming of Ibn al-Sāṭ's work "consists of brief life sketches, with no narrative interconnection, of concubines and wives of the Abbasid caliphs".²³⁶ However, this gap can be filled by studying and referring to other primary historical and literary sources of this era.

Twentieth century historians and scholars of the Islamic era attempted to follow Ibn al-Sāṭ's approach regarding women in Islam; they gathered biographies and information about women and their roles at specific points in the Islamic period. A notable example is the work of 'Abd al-Ḥamīd Dīwān, *Mawsū'at ashhar al-Nisā' fī al-Tārīkh al-'Arabī: Mundhu Fajr al-Islām Ḥattā 'Aṣr al-Mamālik*.²³⁷ This book presents knowledge and details of women's lives and their relations with men throughout the early Islamic period until the Mamlūk era (648-923 A.H./1250–1517 A.D.). However, Dīwān sought a different aim from Ibn al-Sāṭ. He clearly presents a combination of female roles across various social, political and economic areas, whereas Ibn al-Sāṭ concentrated specifically on female slaves and the social relations of free women with men. Comparably, *Al-Nisā' al-Ḥākimāt min al-Jawārī wa-l-Malikāt*, by Yaḥyá al-

²³⁴ Ibn al-Sāṭ, *Consorts of the Caliphs*, xxv.

²³⁵ *Ibid.*, xxiii-xxiv.

²³⁶ *Ibid.*, xviii.

²³⁷ 'Abd al-Ḥamīd Dīwān, *Mawsū'at Ashhar al-Nisā' fī 'l-tārīkh al-'Arabī: Mundhu Fajr al-Islām Ḥattā 'Aṣr al-Mamālik* (Bayrūt: Kitābunā lil-Nashr, 2008).

Jubūrī,²³⁸ refined Ibn al-Sāʿī's method by classifying his subjects into free noblewomen and concubines. Al-Jubūrī's case study centers on the political role of these women from the pre-Islamic period until the Ayyubid dynasty (570-648 A.H./1174–1250 A.D.). Finally, in *Nisāʾ al-Khulafāʾ*,²³⁹ al-Ṣāwī offers an analogous title to Ibn al-Sāʿī's work in which he borrows the same methodology of presenting sketches and biographies of women's lives and social relations. As might be suggested, al-Ṣāwī's book covers a larger time period and could be considered an introductory secondary source for readers interested in women's roles in Islam. The main difference with these previous contemporary works is that their materials are associated with different narratives, while Ibn al-Sāʿī's are not. Ibn al-Sāʿī's *Nisāʾ al-Khulafāʾ* acts as a primary foundation and support for feminist study of the Islamic era.

2.2 Secondary Sources

Previously (pages 24-40) we discussed various feminist theories of the concept of patriarchy as employed in our core hypothesis on the social status of enslaved women. This section will discuss a secondary source—a body of research on women's roles, functions, and status in the Abbasid state and court.

The first literary text to which we will draw attention is *al-Marʾah fī ʾl-Shiʿr al-Jāhili*,²⁴⁰ by Aḥmad al-Hūfī, which provides considerable knowledge on the subject of women in the pre-Islamic era and in Islam by examining poetry. Al-Hūfī attempts to draw a clear comparative argument regarding women's social statuses before and after Islam, as well as people from other ancient societies and religions, such as Jews, Christians, Persians and Romans, to indicate the causes, differences and similarities regarding women's social changes. First, he considers women in terms of the family, as wives, mothers, daughters and sisters. Afterward, he addresses their functions, cultures and participation in warfare, as well as the issue of female slaves and concubines.

²³⁸ Yaḥyá al-Jubūrī, *Al-Nisāʾ al-Ḥākimāt min al-Jawārī wa ʾl-Malikāt* (ʿAmmān: Dār Majdalāwī, 2011).

²³⁹ Ṣāwī al-Ṣāwī, *Nisāʾ al-Khulafāʾ* (al-Jīzah: Maktabat al-Nāfidhah, 2013).

²⁴⁰ Aḥmad al-Hūfī, *Al-Marʾah fī ʾl-Shiʿr al-Jāhili* (al-Qāhirah: Dār al-Fikr al-ʿArabī, 1963).

There are many reasons why al-Hūfī's work sets a precedent for this present research. Most importantly, his interpretations of Arabic poems may assist in distinguishing the various degrees between free noble women and freedwomen in the pre-Islamic period and early Islamic eras. Al-Hūfī prefers to study the images and portrayal of women in poetry; he then compares the poems to what has been mentioned in other sources about nomadic lifestyles. This perspective can help our research in separating facts from fiction; just as poetry alone may not explain the whole truth, thus the meaning of the poems cannot be studied without reference to historical sources, as imagination and exaggeration can affect an author's interpretation. Al-Hūfī studies the public life of Arabs in terms of customs, traditions and morals, including details concerning the interests of female slaves. His work provides a glimpse of female slaves' lives, their treatment in peacetime and war and the status of *Umm al-Walad* as it existed in the pre-Islamic and Islamic periods.

In his thesis, "Slave Girls under the Early 'Abbāsīd: A Study of the Role of Slave-Women and Courtesans in Social and Literary Life in the First Two Centuries of the 'Abbāsīd Caliphate, based on Original Sources,"²⁴¹ Nasser Al-Rasheed presents a noteworthy study on the lives and activities of *jawārī*, especially in the context of cultural and social affairs. His research discusses several points. First, Al-Rasheed focuses on the position of slaves, including their treatment in the pre-Islamic era and under Islam. Next, he presents the provenance of female slaves at the slave market, including their career, physical assessment, character and distinguishing features.

Al-Rasheed provides considerable information regarding the subject of singing girls, although his primary objective was to show that they held a non-serious role in cultural assemblies. He emphasizes these women were followers and mere figures of entertainment, claiming they added nothing to the musical and poetic arts as compared to men.²⁴² He argues that, in contrast, male singers provided great contributions to Abbasid poetry through their abilities in composing or criticizing poetry, and by leading the poetic assembly.²⁴³ Al-

²⁴¹ Nasser Al-Rasheed, "Slave Girls under the Early 'Abbāsīd, A Study of the Role of Slave-Women and Courtesans in Social and Literary Life in the First Two Centuries of the 'Abbāsīd Caliphate, based on Original Sources," (PhD diss., St. Andrews University, Scotland, 1971).

²⁴² Ibid., 196, 222.

²⁴³ Ibid., 239-240.

Rasheed was focused on the cultural contribution of *jawārī*, however the present thesis focuses on enslaved female singers' and poets' social rank and social mobility in the Abbasid court. This will be discussed and analyzed in the fourth chapter. Moreover, on the issue of female slaves and motherhood, al-Rasheed offered only a brief, summarized outline of the position of an *Umm al-Walad*. He wrote only that she could be emancipated after bearing children to her master and he was completely neglectful of describing her role and influence at the Abbasid court. Thus, our research, especially in the third chapter, differs from Al-Rasheed's work by concentrating on the status of *Umm al-Walad* as one of the exemplars of enslaved women's potentially considerable social rank in the Abbasid era.

Al-Rasheed's study is now relatively dated, but is often cited. His notion of the inferior contribution of enslaved women to society had clear consequences, as historians have since discounted the importance of women's positions, limiting portrayals of female participation in certain social and cultural affairs. This connects strongly to the hypotheses and theories of Lerner and Mernissi regarding patriarchy and male superiority. Our research aims to study the extent of enslaved women's social status and mobility in the Abbasid era, and to examine certain aspects of the theory of male dominance and gender norms. Our examination of social status could assist in understanding the motivation behind disregarding the genuine involvement of women in society.²⁴⁴

Kennedy's works on medieval Islamic history have provided a significant resource for this research. His book, *The Prophet and the Age of the Caliphates: The Islamic Near East from the Sixth to the Eleventh Century*,²⁴⁵ presents a comprehensive study of the life of Muslims from the prophet until the Abbasid era, including an understanding of the formation, development and practical grounding of Muslim politics and regulation. His *The Armies of the Caliphs: Military and Society in the Early Islamic State*,²⁴⁶ a historical-political study, asserts the importance of military armies and their roles and efforts in Abbasid societal and state affairs. Kennedy examined these events, as well as

²⁴⁴ In the preceding paragraphs we have emphasized the differences between Al-Rasheed's work and the purpose of this thesis.

²⁴⁵ Kennedy, *The Prophet and the Age of the Caliphates*.

²⁴⁶ Idem., *The Armies of the Caliphs: Military and Society in the Early Islamic State* (London: Routledge, 2001).

the social and economic affairs of the Islamic state,²⁴⁷ in order to gather information on the profession and status of men in the Abbasid era. These details proved beneficial to our discussion in the fourth chapter of this research, which discusses the extent of male slaves' social status and rank.

Kennedy also authored a study entitled *The Court of the Caliphs: The Rise and Fall of Islam's Greatest Dynasty*,²⁴⁸ which consists of anecdotes of men and women, both free and enslaved, and provides rich tales of political machination. Kennedy aims to depict the political, social and cultural lives of the caliphs and courtiers in the Abbasid era. Like his previous work, this book primarily includes information on male power and influence, focusing on the caliphs and Abbasid court life in the eighth and ninth centuries.²⁴⁹ However, in the seventh chapter, "The [*ḥarīm*]", Kennedy stirs considerable debate by depicting women's roles and lives in the Abbasid household. He studies the motivation behind references to women in the vast literature of the Abbasid caliphate, concluding a likely rivalry in the *ḥarīm* between free noblewomen and *jawārī*.

Much of Kennedy's work is significant to our present study.²⁵⁰ His method of studying the political, economic and social lives of the Abbasid era provides an inspiration for this research on the social status of female slaves in the Abbasid era. However, this research differs from the work of Kennedy in several points. First, this thesis uses the method of qualitative data analysis to examine the extent to which female slaves' origin, place of birth, education, charms and profession influence the realization of upward mobility and higher social rank at the Abbasid court and household. This method involves explaining the shifts in enslaved women's social status by presenting new facts, describing enslaved women's relationships with men, particularly with their patrons, and describing how female slaves behaved throughout the Abbasid period. The results support our hypothesis and helps us understand a new element in the social status of women in the Abbasid era. Additionally, through examining the relationship and

²⁴⁷ See the review by Fred M. Donner, "The Prophet and the Age of the Caliphates: The Islamic Near East from the Sixth to the Eleventh Century," *Speculum* 65, no. 1 (Jan., 1990): 182-184, <http://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/abs/10.2307/2864513>.

²⁴⁸ Kennedy, *The Court of the Caliphs: The Rise and Fall of Islam's Greatest Dynasty* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 2004).

²⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, xxii.

²⁵⁰ It is important to note that, from our point of view, Kennedy's work concentrates on historical sources, such as those by al-Ṭabarī, al-Mas'ūdī and others, more than other genres of primary sources.

rivalry between free women and enslaved women, it is possible to build a narrative on the relationship between men and women in the Abbasid court which changes and evolves over time. This manifests in the present research, especially the third and fourth chapters, in terms of the extent to which male slaves had the opportunity to acquire specific occupations and higher social roles and status. This will also be discussed and analyzed in comparison to opportunities for female slaves. The aim of this study is to analyze and illustrate the social structures determining enslaved women's status, rank and privileges in the Abbasid social hierarchy.

Feryal Sulaimani, in her thesis *The Changing Positions of Women in Arabia under Islam During the Early Seventh Century*,²⁵¹ discusses the status of women in Arabia before Islam. Sulaimani presents the influences of the new faith of Islam on Arabic women and their social lives with regard to specific questions. First, did Islam assure and protect women's social rights and statuses? Did the social status of wealthy noble women change after their conversion to Islam? What was a woman's role under this different social and political situation? How did Muslim society deal with women accepting their new rights and duties?

Sulaimani takes great pains to relate the details of free noble women in the early Islamic era; therefore, this text is a useful secondary source for our thesis, as we are looking to discuss, compare and contrast the distinctions between the social mobility of female slaves, freedwomen and free noble women. She also argues that taking women as captives and treating free women as slaves in pre-Islamic periods was a common method to humiliate one's enemies. This issue is a key factor for the present research on the theory of social status. Through Sulaimani's thesis, we can attempt to explain the measures taken by free noble women to retain the honour of the family in the Abbasid era.

On Abd Allāh 'Alwān's study *Nizām al-riqq fī 'l-Islām*,²⁵² analyses numerous aspects related to slavery in Islam. First, it provides an historical background of the ancient practice of slavery in late antiquity and discusses the laws of Islam

²⁵¹ Feryal Sulaimani, *The Changing Positions of Women in Arabia under Islam During the Early Seventh Century* (Unpublished PhD diss., Manchester: University of Salford, 1986).

²⁵² 'Abd Allāh 'Alwān, *Nizām al-riqq fī 'l-Islām* (al-Qāhirah: Dār al-Salām, 1993).

as they relate to slavery and manumission. He also investigates why Islam does not prohibit enslavement. Finally, he addresses the case of women and concubines and their position in Muslim society. Alwān's study is important to this thesis for methodological reasons. Initially, he considers the legal approach that clerics used to encourage Muslims to free slaves, showing the method for abolition of enslavement and correlating it with Muslim practice. Through these arguments, Alwān reveals suggestions about real-world practices and the reality of the slaves' statuses in the early Islamic period. In addition, Alwān emphatically disagrees with the practice of taking concubines as wives, which he debates via a well-reasoned argument. He discusses the practice of taking women captive during wartime and making them into slaves, and submits evidence from the Qur'an and Sunnah to present both legal and unlawful rights and duties of concubines and *Umm al-Walād*. With this perspective in mind, this research study addresses the effect of taking concubines as a means to provide preferable social positions for female slaves, and assesses the historical theories, practices and realities related to their place in Muslim society.

Alwān's work provides inspiration for the present thesis despite its prejudice against practices of slavery in ancient nations such as Rome, Greece and Persia. For instance, Alwān clearly endeavours to provide a negative judgment on the severe treatment of Roman slaves and gladiators, both forgetting and denying that these practices existed for a long time in Arab and Muslim societies; Islamic law contains legislation in favour of slaves, calling for them to be treated kindly and promoting the notion of manumission. However, some examples of this phenomenon can be found among Muslims who continue the abuse and oppression of slaves.²⁵³

Aysha Hidayatuallah's work "Māriyah the Copt: Gender, Sex and Heritage in the Legacy of Muḥammad's [*Umm al-Walad*],"²⁵⁴ is another important text for the present study. This article discusses the issue of Māriyah (Muḥammad's Coptic

²⁵³ Eventually, Alwān argues, as Abraham Lincoln did, in favour of emancipating the slaves. Alwān's opinion is that Lincoln's efforts were not successful because some freed slaves preferred to remain with their masters rather than to live independently. The argument that Alwān makes disregards the phenomenon of slaves' allegiance (*walā'*) to their masters, a notion that clearly existed in Muslim history. However, this area requires further research and study before we can reach definite conclusions.

²⁵⁴ Aysha Hidayatuallah, "Mariyya the Copt: Gender, Sex and Heritage in the Legacy of Muḥammad's [*Umm al-Walad*]," *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations CICM Islam & Christian-Muslim Relations* 21, no. 3 (2010): 221-43.

slave) and her social reality. Hidayatuallah explains one consequence of the phenomenon of *milk al-yamīn* (slaves under a man's ownership), *Umm al-Walad*. Moreover, Hidayatuallah presented a biography of Māriyah and related stories about her life, though it should be noted that Hidayatuallah concentrated on biography collections as primary sources for her arguments. Our research focuses on the position of freedwomen, *Umm al-Walad* (enslaved women who bore children for their masters) and other female slaves through an examination based on biographical, literary and historical studies.

The goal of Hidayatuallah's article is to clarify Māriyah's status as *Umm al-Walad* and her relationship with the Prophet. For instance, was she a real wife to him, like his other free wives, or she was merely a freed slave (*mawālī*)? Determining Māriyah's rights and duties as a wife can help the present study by clarifying and demonstrating what changed in her social status to differentiate her from a female slave and *Umm al-Walad*. The situation of Māriyah roughly corresponds to the later social implications of this phenomenon, such as the position of female slaves and freedwomen in the Abbasid and Abbasid eras.

The view expressed by Hidayatuallah in this article reflects the notion that the Prophet strongly supported Māriyah because of his desire to possess her beauty, which was unusual compared to the other women of the Arabian Peninsula. This may indicate that the use of slave women to capture the hearts of their masters with their beauty was common in ancient times, and may have continued as a phenomenon in later eras such as the Umayyad and Abbasid periods. Additionally, Hidayatuallah discusses jealousy and the circumstances of revelation of the Qur'anic verses (66:1-8). The most significant and interesting portion of this text is an incident of tension between Māriyah and the other wives of the Prophet, or the *ḥarā'ir* (free women), showing that Māriyah was a formidable rival of the Arabic noble women.

To assess this phenomenon, two points can be suggested from Hidayatuallah's article. First, the jealousy of the *ḥarā'ir* toward Māriyah could indicate that *Umm al-Walad* may have had equal or similar social status and rights to the free wives, either through sex or other preferential social treatment. Second, although Māriyah's case reflects an excellent example of the phenomenon of

social mobility for female slaves and mothers in the early Islamic era, it may not reflect the comprehensive social reality that was practiced by most Muslims, as this practice may have changed over time. However, there are likely other examples beyond Māriyah's case, as the number of female slaves changed between the time of the Prophet and the Abbasid period. This phenomenon deserves attention in the present thesis. The intent here is not to suggest that Hidayatuallah did not cover the ideas properly, but rather to argue that this topic requires further study and analysis. The aim in the present thesis is to reveal the various positions on the scale between free and slave women, particularly *Umm al-Walad*, and to identify the struggles of freedwomen in this social aspect. Thus, there is an opportunity to understand women's approaches to modifying their social mobility and their social strata through their relations with men and other females. This study addresses the effects of these slaves' social mobility on the Islamic community.

Another significant law text deserving review is "Freedom and Slavery in Early Islamic Times (1st/7th and 2nd/8th centuries)," by Irene Schneider.²⁵⁵ This work discusses the ideas of freedom and slavery in Islam by looking at the pre-literary and literary periods of Islamic law. This article begins by noting the relevant concept of slavery in Islam with respect to late antiquity societies such as Rome, Greece and the pagan Arabs and Persians. Schneider's ultimate goal is to shed light on the basic idea of manumission in Islam by considering that, although Islam did not abolish or eliminate slavery, it could still be considered a reformist society because it limited enslavement. Schneider's argument brings up a variety of queries. First, how is freedom treated as a basic principle or idea in Islam? Second, what are the boundaries between freedom and slavery? Finally, how does manumission exist, both in theory and in practice?

The methodology used in this article can be useful to the researcher as it first analyses early Islamic law texts, then compares other ancient societies' laws to distinguish between what is Islamic and what is not. This provides valid examples of the tendency for Muslims to depend on pre-Islamic texts, and demonstrates how much this dependence affected Islamic law in the case of

²⁵⁵ Schneider, "Freedom and Slavery in Early Islamic".

slavery. Furthermore, this article highlights parallels and contradictions between the practice of slavery and manumission in Islam and earlier societies.

Schneider concentrated on narrative anecdotes and opinions from Muslim jurisprudence, and she depended mostly on secondary sources²⁵⁶ which reflect a theoretical position more than a practical one. While she provides background about the notion of enslavement and manumission from the first and second sources of Islam (the Qur'an and hadith) she does so only through a general analysis of the practices of the early Islamic era. Therefore, it is possible that Schneider's debate does not cover an ideal view of slavery from the era of the Prophet and the caliphs according to Islam, as it is important to shed light on the different judgments and practices toward manumission in the early Islamic period. It must be emphasised here that our present thesis will attempt to focus on these two primary sources (the Qur'an and hadith) alongside various Muslim doctrines to discover the overall attitude of the extent of slavery in early Islamic society.

An important work that explains the view of Islamic law is *Marriage and Slavery in Early Islam* by Kecia Ali. This study provides a scientific and modern approach to the critical analysis and interpretation of Islamic jurisprudence. Furthermore, Ali analysed and compared the various views of Muslim scholars in the ninth century, ascertaining their opinions on marriage, divorce and slavery. Ali also attempted to measure the extent of legal and social practices through textual sources and legal *fatāwā* in medieval Islamic society.²⁵⁷

Ali addresses the issue of marriage and illustrates the relationship between spouses. She compares this relationship to the notion of slavery and the master's power over the female slaves under his dominion (*milk*). One similarity between spouses and a master and his female slaves is that the man can dominate a woman when he marries her and after giving her a dowry, so she comes to belong to him. Once this has happened, he can exercise his full influence on her. Likewise, in the case of a female slave, the master may buy

²⁵⁶ Schneider did cite some primary sources in her work, but her dependency on secondary sources was obvious.

²⁵⁷ Ali studied the three Sunni legal schools (al-Mālikī, al-Hanafī and al-Shāfi'ī) and compared them with Muslim social life practices. See Ali, *Marriage and Slavery*, 17.

her and then take possession of and control her in whatever way he chooses: legally, sexually or in other social affairs.²⁵⁸

Ali's book discusses an important reality centred on domestic servitude, namely the paradigm that slaves were employed from pre-Islamic societies until the modern era of Islam. As she describes, the phenomenon should not be restricted to the concepts of emancipation or manumission, but rather should concentrate on slave women's significant role, participation and impact on Islamic society. Female slaves had both marginal and major effects on society, especially on their master and their marriage when they bore children.

Although Ali's strategy and argument is beneficial to the present research, her illustrations of women, marriage, slavery and gender in the pre-Islamic period are general and brief. The reader of this book requires more information to understand the changes that occurred between these practices before and after Islam, and to demonstrate a better perception about their similarities and differences. To understand this, we need to go beyond the pre-Islamic era practice to analyse the formation of Islamic theory and practice regarding slavery and manumission law. Despite this, Ali's work remains a fascinating resource for the current thesis. It adds valuable information about the correlation between genders in Islam on marriage, divorce and slavery, particularly in the case of men's domination of, power over and sex with women in early Islamic societies.

Another article that influences this thesis is "*Umm al-Walad*" by Joseph Schacht.²⁵⁹ This work presents an important comparison of the status and rights of female slaves in the pre-Islamic period and during Islam. The study shows how pagans permitted masters to consider their slave women concubines, granting them the right of full sexual activity with the women; additionally, all children born of these unions inherited their slave status from their mothers.

The article explains that Arab pagans' practices toward slave girls continued into the first stage of the Islamic period, although we need to study and examine

²⁵⁸ See Ali, *Marriage and Slavery in Early Islam*, 8,10, 27,28

²⁵⁹ Joseph Schacht, "Umm Al-Walad," *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2012, accessed 8 January 2014, http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/umm-al-walad-COM_1290.

the interpretation of relevant verses of the Qur'an in order to attain the appropriate facts. The article appears to reveal a limited case of adultery through permitting the master to use his female slaves for sex. However, the author does not mention that this lawful sexual intercourse was strictly controlled in the Qur'an by several verses. For example, one verse (4:25) presents a rule for a master engaging in sex with his female slave by insisting he marry her with the leave of her guardians. He must give her a dowry and provide her with protection. The intention of the present research is to use the Qur'anic interpretation as a primary source to show the basic rules of Muslims regarding slave women.

Schacht traces the significance of female slaves' status as *Umm al-Walad* from the time when the Prophet married Māriyah al-Qibṭīyah until the time of the caliph 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb (d. 23 A.H./ 644 A.D.) in order to determine whether these women could be freed or sold. He then compares the fate of *Umm al-Walad* with the scholars' *fatāwā*. Again, the article's analysis does not cover all the facts and circumstances that led to the legislation of *Umm al-Walad*; this idea is controversial and requires further analysis. In our current research, we attempt to clarify why and how Ibn al-Khaṭṭāb issued this ruling to investigate whether it was a consequence of the spread of the phenomenon of *Umm al-Walad*, or if it was a result of people following the Prophet's example with Māriyah.

Bernard Lewis's book *Race and Slavery in the Middle East: An Historical Enquiry*²⁶⁰ is another beneficial source for the study. This work drew upon many aspects of slavery in affairs such as law, doctrine, practice and myth. Lewis illustrates the similarities and differences of slavery between Roman, Greek, Arab and Muslim societies. The book notes the essential impacts and changes that Islam and the Qur'an made in pagans' social lives with regard to slavery. Consequently, this explanation of the Islamic changes clarified for the reader the Muslim ideal of slavery, where a human is born free but is a slave to Allah.

²⁶⁰ Bernard Lewis, *Race and Slavery in the Middle East: An Historical Enquiry* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990).

Lewis's work demonstrates a fundamental concept in the case of racial slavery in the Middle East. He emphasises that racism was practised among Muslim slave societies, and that it provided a major motivation for enslaving others, especially in the pre-Islamic and early Islamic periods. Lewis cites Arabic poems and stories to support his argument on racial slavery. From our perspective, this is the best indication of the significance of Lewis's study. Arguably the most important factor influencing the present research study's theory of social mobility is examining slaves' races and origins to show how these aspects affected the social mobility of female slaves in Arabic and Muslim society. How were non-Arabs, non-Muslim slaves and half-non-Arab (*hajīn*) people, and female slaves in particular, treated? What were their statuses in the social hierarchy? Using this, we can draw attention to their experiences, strata and rights after manumission.

In her broad biographical and historical work,²⁶¹ Roded studied the biographical genre while depending on *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*,²⁶² by Muḥammad Ibn Sa'd (d. 230 A.H./844 A.D.), for the social history of Muslim women. First, she characterizes women who were considered early converts to Islam, then the next generation with the Four Righteous Caliphs (11-40 A.H./632-660 A.D.), and ends with contemporary, modern historical roles of Muslim women and their political effects. Roded's biographical study has a significant impact on this research. First, her study presents a new approach to Muslim biographical collections by analysing and verifying quantitative data of Muslim women and associating it with historical incidents using the book of classes (*ṭabaqāt*) by Ibn Sa'd.

Because Roded evaluated an Arabic biographies on this matter, her book was beneficial for the present thesis, providing statistics and tables of Arabic biographies that contain women's names and the number of times specific women were mentioned. While Roded concentrated on the genre of biographies, we examine biographical, literary and historical primary sources to present a more coherent view of female roles and status during the Abbasid period.

²⁶¹ See Roded, *Women in Islamic Biographical Collections*.

²⁶² Muḥammad b. Sa'd, *Al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā* (Al-Qāhirah: Maktabat Al-Khanjī, 2001).

In spite of the few examples concerning slave women overall, the majority of the biographies of women in Ibn Sa'd's book and the bulk of attention in Roded's work concentrate on famous women and those who have a kinship to the Prophet or his companions.²⁶³ Therefore, it is possible that other biographical collections, prosopographical and chronographic sources could contain fundamental information about female slaves as well. Roded's book brings us a new perspective in our understanding of how to study existing biographies of women; the aim of this research is to present new facts and materials about female slaves and their reality, roles, status and social mobility.²⁶⁴

Another text used to support this thesis is *al-Saby fī Ṣadr al-Islām*²⁶⁵ by Shādī Mudallal. He discusses the phenomenon of captivity in ancient societies such as Persia, Rome, Arabia and Greece. He also looks at Muslims in the medieval period and reveals the impact of Islamic conquests on captive men, women and children, from the time of the Prophet Muḥammad until the Umayyad state (132 A.H / 750 A.D.). Mudallal discusses captivity using three sources: the Qur'an, the hadith and state legislation and scholars' opinions. He discusses various issues related to captivity in Islam, including the enslavement, sale and purchase of slaves, sexual intercourse with female prisoners. Finally, he addresses the consequences that led to slave women's social conditions under Islam. For example, the status of *hajīn*²⁶⁶ had a clear impact and valuable influence on different affairs of state, such as political, religious and administrative practices.

Mudallal also shows the developments that resulted from the influx of enslaved people and demonstrates how the state took advantage of this huge number of captives. The information provided in Mudallal's study might assist the present research by distinguishing the varying social strata for slaves, as different slaves' occupations could affect their social rank. For instance, royal and elite slaves enjoyed higher prestige, elevated status and more rights than the state

²⁶³ Roded presents that the biographies dictionary presents information of elite women or a slaves of powerful figures in the society; Roded, *Women in Islamic Biographical Collections*, 8.

²⁶⁴ For very useful review see Schick, Irvin C, "Reviewed Work: Women in Islamic Biographical Collections: From Ibn Sa'd to Who's Who by Ruth Roded," *Turkish Studies Association Bulletin* 21 (1), Indiana University Press (1997); 25–29, accessed January 25, 2016, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43384590>.

²⁶⁵ Shādī Mudallal, *Al-Saby fī Ṣadr al-Islām* (Nābulus: Jāmi'at al-Najāḥ al-Waṭaniyah, 2010).

²⁶⁶ *Hajīn* is a person whose mother is a foreign slave.

slaves who worked in agriculture. Thus, the nature of servitude within Islamic society was uneven and requires further study to fully understand female slaves' social mobility.

In his book entitled *The Slave Girls of Baghdad: The Qiyān in the Early Abbasid Era*,²⁶⁷ Caswell studies the position of female slave singers in the first Abbasid era by examining their cultural and educational status, their role in developing songs and poems and their relations with free noblewomen. Caswell concentrated on the major impact of *qiyān* (female singers) compared to male slaves, free men and their female counterparts in Abbasid culture, as every member had their own part and different special function.²⁶⁸

Important to mention, however, is that most of Caswell's book depends on prosopography, about which Mustafah Dhada argues, "it leaves the rest of the book structurally weak,"²⁶⁹ as prosopography can cause the information and materials to become more scattered and amorphous when the goal is to achieve accurate results.²⁷⁰ Therefore, to avoid the risk of "treating prosopographies as data banks,"²⁷¹ the present research shall follow Chase Robinson's definition and method of Islamic historiography.²⁷² Hence, the information on female slaves will be carefully collected from the Caliphs' prosopographies, biographies and chronographic sources, then reviewed and compared against the slaves' relationships with the elites.

Gordon suggests that Caswell's book or a selection of some chapters "would serve in teaching students with no background in either Arabic or Medieval Arabic/Islamic culture."²⁷³ Emphatically and with respect to Gordon's view, disagreement can be made in this point. The knowledge in this book can also serve certain specialist historians, such as researchers of the Abbasid era, feminism, women, literature or Islamic medieval history.²⁷⁴ It provides accurate

²⁶⁷ Caswell, *The Slave Girls of Baghdad: The Qiyān in the Early Abbasid*.

²⁶⁸ Mustafah Dhada, "Review of *The Slave Girls of Baghdad: The Qiyān in the Early Abbasid Era*, by Fuad Caswell," *Al-Masāq: Journal of the Medieval Mediterranean* 26, no. 2 (2014): 221-223, <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/09503110.2014.915115>.

²⁶⁹ Ibid; also see Gordon, "Review of *The Slave Girls of Baghdad*," 148.

²⁷⁰ Gordon, Ibid.

²⁷¹ Robinson, *Islamic Historiography*, 71.

²⁷² See back page number 18; Dhada, "Review of *The Slave Girls of Baghdad*," 22.

²⁷³ Gordon, "Review of *The Slave Girls of Baghdad*," 148.

²⁷⁴ I do not mean to imply that other interested individuals cannot read and take advantage of this book; rather, my aim is to show the importance of this book in my specific situation.

information on *Adab* and includes many difficult terms, prose and poetry. Therefore, it is difficult for individuals without background knowledge to gain benefits from this book. Arabic native or non-native speakers may also face awkwardness or difficulty in understanding the aims and the rhetoric of the Arabic poetry and prose. The present research endeavours to avoid these impediments by using and consulting an Arabic linguistic dictionary.

In *The early Islamic Mawālī: A Window on The Processes of Identity Construction and Social Change*,²⁷⁵ by Elizabeth Urban, the author discusses the development of *mawālī* (non-Arab Muslims/clients) and how they formed a large group in the early Islamic period. She examines the role of genealogy in the formation of the layers of social hierarchy and affiliation. What concerns this thesis is Urban's fourth chapter, "The counterparts of the *mawālī*: Slave mothers and their children". It sheds light on the concept of *Umm al-Walad* and argues that these women were a major factor in changing individuals' social statuses. Urban differentiates between the roles played by male *mawālī*, who had a clear impact on state politics, and the female slaves, who influenced the social attitudes of Islamic societies.

Urban's goal is to demonstrate how *Umm al-Walad* influenced political and social realms through motherhood. However, the available information shows that Urban sees slave women from the early period of Islamic history as fragile, weak figures. She stresses that their presence was not noticeable compared to freed women, as their mission was to bear children and provide sexual entertainment for their masters. While this research already disagrees with the idea in principle, Urban does not make a convincing point as she appears to be confused about the truthful condition of female slaves. In some paragraphs, she emphatically describes their roles as powerless, whilst in others she notes that their social status allowed them to intervene in political power. Thus, the present research will measure Urban's information about the relationship between the social and political status of slave girls, then seek to clarify to what extent they employed their social status to get closer to the caliphs to reach high positions in the Islamic period.

²⁷⁵ Elizabeth Urban, "The Early Islamic Mawālī: A Window on the Processes of Identity Construction and Social Change," (PhD diss, The university of Chicago, 2012).

In her book, *The Warrior Women of Islam: Female Empowerment in Arabic Popular Literature*,²⁷⁶ Remke Kruk presents the depiction of women in Arabian tales and examines the reasons for its form and existence. Kruk states that Islamic history implies a significant number of powerful female figures, as well as rules surrounding mothers, wives and slaves. It is more likely that the majority of these women's characters were portrayed misleadingly, and that few of them have been dominant in their status and role in Islamic society. The problem, however, is that the predominant notion in Muslim Arabic society states, "marriage and more specifically, motherhood are thus particularly feminine elements in [female's] career...".²⁷⁷ Ultimately, Kruk's argument is that the narratives of history were written "by men for male audiences".²⁷⁸ Hence, the depiction of women as offerings for male desire and lust likely stems from the male imagination. She also includes stories of warrior women in Islam.²⁷⁹ Similar to Mernissi's and Schlein's viewpoints, Kruk presents the notion that young women would strive to gain higher status in the social hierarchy by using their beauty, and that "usually this is the beginning of a love affair leading to marriage"²⁸⁰ or a formal relationship. This will be illustrated by the stories and information of female slaves in the Abbasid era in the upcoming chapters.²⁸¹

Following the review of previous literature on the slavery and manumission of freedwomen and female slaves, this thesis will conduct an analysis of the social status of female slaves. In this research, we aimed not only to study the roles and positions of enslaved women but also to examine the extent of their social status based on a number of factors. These factors include their origins, education and professions, as found in the database collected from our selected primary sources, which represent a selection of historical, literary and biographical sources. The foundation of this research lies in studying various professions of female slaves, including singers, poets, servants, stewardesses (*qahramānāt*) and the mothers of the children (*Ummahāt al-Awlād*), in order to provide a comprehensive picture of their social lives in the Abbasid era. This

²⁷⁶ Remke Kruk, *The Warrior Women of Islam: Female Empowerment in Arabic Popular Literature* (London: I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd, 2014).

²⁷⁷ Ibid., 3, 25.

²⁷⁸ Ibid., 225.

²⁷⁹ Ibid., 226.

²⁸⁰ Ibid., 26-27.

²⁸¹ For more discussion of the present research methodology see back page 18-40.

thesis will present a comparative study between the status of enslaved and elite women in terms of motherhood, education and privilege, and compare the status and careers of male and female slaves at court to reveal the extent of their power and impact as active figures in the Abbasid state.

While some researchers (e.g. Mernissi, Kennedy, Roded, Scheider, Hidayatuallah and Kruk) have contributed to the study of women's movements, activities and roles in Islam through different eras, their studies also reveal that questions about female social mobility still far outnumber available answers. The originality of the present thesis is the identification of a cohesive social group representing Abbasid enslaved women as an example of women's agency and social mobility.

In light of our research methodology, the use of qualitative data gathered from our selected sources for tables and a database will help our understanding and analysis of *jawārī* social status and mobility. In the fourth chapter, we make the most use of this methodology. Moreover, we use theories of patriarchy and gender as a theoretical basis for new historical knowledge about women's agency and their social mobility in Abbasid courts and households.

In the following chapter, we present the historical background for the chronological development of Islamic law with regard to slavery and manumission. We then discuss the selected examples of legal texts and opinions representing examples from the three Sunni jurists, al-Kāsānī, Mālik and al-Shāfi'ī, on slavery law. We consequently demonstrate the usefulness of their texts in a discussion of the *madhāhib* opinions regarding female slaves' marriages, legal separation from their husbands, manumission in *tadbīr*²⁸² and *mukātabah*²⁸³ and the legal status of *Umm al-Walad*.

²⁸² Emancipation by *tadbīr* is the act whereby an "owner informed his slave, 'when I die, you shall be free'". See Murray Gordon, *Slavery in the Arab World* (New York: New Amsterdam, 1989), 41. See also Mālik, *Muwaṭṭa'*, 810; al-Shāfi'ī, *Umm*, vol 6, 313; al-Kāsānī, *Badā'i'*, vol 10, 373.

²⁸³ Manumission by *mukātabah* occurred when a master stipulated to a slave to pay an amount of money or to perform a service for a number of days, months or years to gain freedom. See al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī*, vol 5, 423. See also al-Ṣan'ānī, *al-Muṣannaf*, vol 7, 248–57; Al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, vol 3, 252.

Chapter Three

Historical background of the chronological development of Islamic law with regard to slavery and manumission

Introduction

Slavery has been a legal institution since antiquity, and it was widely extended during the Islamic era. This chapter aims to identify how Islam moderated slavery, and will present several *fuqahā'* attitudes toward slaves' manumission. Ultimately, this chapter will support one of the foundations of this thesis: to interpret the transformation and development of Muslim law. Another goal of the chapter is to present a comparative study of the development of Islamic law throughout the pre-Islamic era (before 1 A.H./before 622 A.D.) and the early Islamic period, until the Abbasid period (132-329 A.H./ 750-940 A.D.). Moreover, in this chapter, we discuss and evaluate the development of Islamic law from the Qur'an and the Sunnah by presenting the legal texts, particularly those of selected jurists of the three Sunni *madhāhib*, *al-Mālikī*, *al-Hanafī* and *al-Shāfi'ī*,²⁸⁴ regarding slavery and manumission, comparing how the three opinions relate to one another. As Ali demonstrates, there is substantial evidence for studying the correlation between the legal texts and theories of Muslim jurists with individual social practices in society.²⁸⁵ Regarding the historical purpose of the present research, we will not focus in depth on the legal theories of *fuqahā'*, but rather will attempt to create a comparative study of their attitudes by illustrating the differences and similarities in their perspectives on slavery and manumission in general, and particularly on the rights and status of enslaved females and freedwomen.

This chapter presents a historical background and discussion of the institution of slavery and manumission from the pre-Islamic period to the era of Islam, divided into four sections. The chapter will discuss the evolution of the

²⁸⁴ Concerning the reason for excluding the *Hanbali madhhab*, see page 18.

²⁸⁵ Moreover, Ali writes that these "texts were the outcome of social processes. They were affected by the material conditions of their production". Ali, *Marriage and Slavery in Early Islam*, 21.

arbitration and judicial systems in Arabic society. It then explains the Pagan practices of enslavement and emancipation in order to underline the relations between the Arab people and Islamic law, as well as the historical roots and process of arbitration and its effect on slavery and manumission law. The Second section analyses the development of slavery and manumission law by studying the Qur'anic verses and the Prophet's hadith in the early Islamic period, while the following section presents a discussion of the legal opinions of the *madhāhib*. The next section examines the lives of female slaves through the cycle of slavery and after manumission. The aspect of female slaves in marriage and *nikah*, as well as the legal separation from their husbands. Finally, the last section explores the status of *Umm al-Walad* (the mother of the child) as a significant example of the development of Islamic law, and to show the social mobility of female slaves. Their rights will also be discussed and analysed.

3.1 The evolution of the arbitration and judicial systems in Arabic society

Joseph Schacht provides and presents a comprehensive background on the case of pre-Islamic Arabs' organisation of their judicial system by demonstrating that political authority did not simply appear, but that an arbitrator (*ḥakam*) "was chosen for his personal qualities, his knowledge, his own wisdom, his integrity, his reputation".²⁸⁶ The *ḥakam* held "authority responsible for the settling of disputes"²⁸⁷ between individuals. A remarkable example of the case of *ḥakam* in the pre-Islamic period is when one of the leaders of Quraysh²⁸⁸ asked Muḥammad to solve a tribal dispute regarding the reinsertion of the black stone (*al-Ḥajar al-Aswad*) of the *Ka'bah*.²⁸⁹ This demonstrates that arbitration was practised among Pagan Arabs in many different situations; pre-Islamic Arabs had their own law to organize their relations and resolve their disputes. Majid Khadduri agrees with the previous point and presents that in *Jāhiliyya*: "The

²⁸⁶ Joseph Schacht, *An Introduction to Islamic Law* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964), 7, 9; In the pre-Islamic era, the "the parties were free to appoint as *ḥakam* any person whom they agreed"; See Majid Khadduri and Hernert Lienesny, *Law in the Middle East* (Washington: The Middle East Institute, 1955), 29; See N.J. Coulson. *A History of Islamic law* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh Press, 1964), 10.

²⁸⁷ E. Tyan, "*Ḥakam*," *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, ed. P. Bearman, T. H. Bianquis, C. E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel and W. P. Heinrichs, Brill Online, 2015. University of Exeter, accessed 27 October 2015. http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/hakam-COM_0252.

²⁸⁸ Abū Umayyah b. al-Mughīrah; Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, vol 2, 290.

²⁸⁹ For more information about the renovation of the Ka'bah, see Al-abarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, vol 2, 289-290 and Mahdi Zahraa and Nora A. Hak, "Taḥkīm (Arbitration) in Islamic Law within the Context of Family Disputes," *Brill*. Vol 20, No. 1 (2006): 5, accessed October 28, 2015. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27650536>.

absence of an organized political authority in Arab society, both Bedouin and sedentary, implied the absence of an organized judicial system”²⁹⁰ But the existed of arbitrator was important to judge between two parties.²⁹¹

In contrast, on the formation of Islamic era, the Prophet was the *ḥakam* of religious principles for the Islamic community.²⁹² Tyan points out that “this state of affairs survived in Arab society after the coming of Islam, for the [Qur’an] maintained, in principle, the system of private justice”.²⁹³ It is important to stress that although the primary source of Muslim law is the Qur’an, the Prophet’s Sunnah and hadith came to be the second primary sources. It is clear that the Prophet “made no attempt to elaborate anything like a code of law” and he attempted settle any emergent disputation affairs.²⁹⁴ However, “the Prophet attached great importance to being appointed by the believers as a *ḥakam* in their disputes”.²⁹⁵

Attention has been drawn from Khadduri’s proposal that the issue of an arbitrator between individuals through the procedure of negotiation and discussion was the fundamental reason for crystallizing and developing the Sunnah of the Prophet to be a second primary source.²⁹⁶ Mohammad Kamali, in his book *Shari’ah Law: An Introduction*,²⁹⁷ supported Khadduri’s notion, arguing that “The Prophet himself consistently referred to the Qur’an as a source of authority, and only in his latter years in Madinah did he refer to his own teachings and example (Sunnah) as a guide to conduct”.²⁹⁸ Now, Muslims follow the Sunnah or hadith of Muḥammad to present and display the principles of Muslim law, and this was present in the later eras after the Prophet’s death.

In the next generation, during the era of the Rightly Guided Caliphs (11-140 A.H. / 633-661 A.D.), choosing the caliph after the Prophet’s death began with

²⁹⁰ Khadduri, *Law in the Middle East*, 29.

²⁹¹ Ibid.

²⁹² Schacht, *An Introduction*, 10. See Idem., *Pre-Islamic Background and Early Development of Jurisprudence* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967) and Hallaq, *The Formation of Islamic Law* (Aldershot: Burlington; Ashgate: Variorum, 2004), xvi.

²⁹³ Tyan, “*Ḥakam*,” 5.

²⁹⁴ Alhaji Ajjola, *The Islamic Conception of Law* (New Delhi: Adam Publishers & Distributors, 2008), 33.

²⁹⁵ “In Medina by a considerable political and military power, gave him a much greater authority than could be claimed by an arbitrator; he became a “ Prophet-Law giver”. Khadduri, *Law in the Middle East*, 30,31.

²⁹⁶ Ibid.

²⁹⁷ Mohammad Kamali, *Shari’ah Law: An Introduction* (Oxford: One world Publications. 2005).

²⁹⁸ Ibid., 5.

the case of *taḥkīm* (arbitration), resulting in the selection of Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq (d. 13 A.H. / 634 A.D.) as the first Muslim caliph.²⁹⁹ The people began to choose arbitrators from their tribe to serve as caliphs and exercise political, judicial, economic and social authority,³⁰⁰ and the caliphs became the reference or judge in following the Sunnah.³⁰¹ In view of this fact, the administrative and legislative activities of the Islamic government in this era were connected and cannot be isolated from each other.³⁰²

The era of the Rightly Guided Caliphs followed the Prophet's law. Caliphs were busy strengthening and protecting the Islamic religion after the death of the Prophet (d. 11 A.H. / 632 A.D.), as well as showing concern about Islamic conquests.³⁰³ While it is true that the Qur'an and Sunnah are the ideal basis for the early Muslim activity, *ijtihād* and *ijmā'* were also necessary.³⁰⁴ Fazlur Rahman stresses this point: "most of the content of Sunnah during the early generations of Islam is either a continuation of the pre-Islamic Arab practices or the result of the Sunnah through activity of early Muslims themselves".³⁰⁵ Notably, new circumstances appeared without any legitimate rules in the Qur'an or Sunnah during the companions' period. Different periods and states of affairs could be interchangeable and could affect the verdicts, as new circumstances continued to emerge.

Rahman emphasizes "the individual free thought (*ra'y*)³⁰⁶ had given way to more systematic reasoning on the already existing Sunnah on the Quran."³⁰⁷ This could explain how the *ijmā'*³⁰⁸ of the caliphs and the companions offered assurance for the Muslim community to rectify opinions in a variety of cases in the early period. For example, al-Ya'qūbī presents a famous narrative about

²⁹⁹ Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq was chosen by Muslims after the Prophet's death to be their new leader in the *Saqīfat Banī Sā'idah*. Therefore, this incident can be accounted as *ijmā'*. See al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, vol 3, 218-223.

³⁰⁰ Schacht, *An Introduction*, 15. An excellent example of Muslims following the case of *taḥkīm* was "the famous *taḥkīm* to which, in 37 A.H./657 A.D. in their struggle for power, 'Alī and Mu'āwiyā consented to submit", using 'Amr b. al-ʿĀṣ and Abū Mūsā al-Ash'arī to resolve their disputes. See Mahdi, "Taḥkīm (Arbitration)", 7, and al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, vol 5, 51.

³⁰¹ Khadduri, *Law in the Middle East*, 30. A good example will be discussed later in this chapter regarding the case of *Umm al-Walad* and the law of manumission.

³⁰² Schacht, *An Introduction*.15.

³⁰³ Al-Anṣārī, *Al-'Ubūdiyyah: al-Riḡq wa-'l-Mar'ah*, 64.

³⁰⁴ Fazlur Rahman, *Islamic Methodology in History*, 2nd ed (Karachi: Islamic Research Institute, 1984), 12.

³⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 6.

³⁰⁶ *Ra'y* of the Prophet and the caliphs.

³⁰⁷ Rahman, *Islamic Methodology in History*, 15.

³⁰⁸ For more discussion of *ijtihād* and *ijmā'*: see Hallaq, "Prophetic authority and the modification of legal reasoning," in *The origin and evolution of Islamic law*, 102-121.

'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb (d. 23 A.H. / 644 A.D.), in which he returns captives to their tribes because he is afraid to take Arabs as war captives or prisoner-taking would become a habit among Arabs.³⁰⁹ This may be why he made some changes to the *Jāhilīyya* habit, the foundation of Islam and the Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq era. Consequently, the caliph as a Muslim leader could apply his own personal verdict or opinion in a different circumstances and situation.³¹⁰ Therefore, "the law has thus been developed on the principle of equity and good conscience with due regard to the state of society and circumstances of the people".³¹¹ An example of *Umm al-Walad* will follow as a case of the effects of the development of Islamic law and social mobility.³¹²

The status of *qāḍī* (judge) existed during the reign of the Caliph Ibn al-Khaṭṭāb,³¹³ and was developed in the Umayyad, and particularly the Abbasid, periods. The *qāḍī* took the first step toward presentation of the Islamic law.³¹⁴ The judge "was the delegate of local governor and had the particular task of settling disputes; administrative efficiency could no longer tolerate the old system of ad hoc arbitrator".³¹⁵ Therefore, the *qāḍī* gained the ability of judgement in order to determine according to his individual opinion (*r'ay*).³¹⁶ Ajjola writes "By the end of Umayyad period, the [*qāḍīs*] had advanced far from their original position as official arbitrators. They had become an integral and important part of the administrative machine, no longer controlled but themselves controlling the customary law and by their decisions adapting it to meet the changing circumstances of society".³¹⁷ On the other hand, Khadduri clarifies that the system of Muslim arbitration was associated with the Islamic *qāḍī*, commissioned by the governor and authorized by Muslim caliphs to gain

³⁰⁹ Al-Ya'qūbī, *Tārīkh al-Ya'qūbī*, vol 2, 27. For an excellent study of judges in the Ibn al-Khaṭṭāb era, see Muhammad Guraya, "Judicial Principles as Enunciated by Caliph 'Umar I", Islamic Research Institute, International Islamic University, Islamabad, vol 11, no. 3, (1972): 159-185, accessed 28 October, 2005, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20833069>.

³¹⁰ Ajjola, *The Islamic Conception of Law*, 11.

³¹¹ Ibid.

³¹² See section 3.3.4. The legal status of *Umm al-Walad*.

³¹³ Remarkable examples of the judges' presence in Ibn al-Khaṭṭāb era, specifically in 24 A.H. (644 A.D.), are: Shurayḥ (d. 78 A.H./697 A.D.), the judge of Kūfa; Ka'b al-Azdī (d. 36 A.H./ 656 A.D.), the judge of Baṣrah. Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, vol 4, 241. See Bożena Strzvezewska, *Tārīkh Al-Tashrī' Al-Islāmī* (Bayrūt: Dār al-Āfāq al-Jadīdah, 1983), 42.

³¹⁴ Ajjola, *The Islamic Conception of Law*, 11; Also see Mathieu Tillier, "Courts of law, historical," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, THREE, Edited by: Kate Fleet, Gudrun Krämer, Denis Matringe, John Nawas, Everett Rowson, (May 2018), accessed 18 June 2018, http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_ei3_COM_25583.

³¹⁵ Ajjola, Ibid., 124

³¹⁶ Ibid., 125.

³¹⁷ Ibid., 127.

complete influence over the administrative, legislative and judicial issues of his province.³¹⁸ Thereafter, the early Abbasids were successful in developing Islamic law, and succeeded in giving the *qāḍī* the authority to participate in the making of sacred laws.³¹⁹ Later, “the judgment should be given according to the opinion of the law school (*madhhab*)³²⁰ to which the judge belongs”.³²¹ The *madhāhib* were finalized in the Abbasid era, which led to the crystalizing and development of Muslim law and legislature, based on the opinions and attitudes of different schools and jurists.

All in all, it is worth emphasizing that the original practice of *qāḍī* was related to and associated with the pre-Islamic phenomena of *ḥakam*,³²² and developed during different Islamic periods. The system of Islamic law evolved through the emerging status of *qāḍī*, who mandated formal and legal status and authority to resolve the social, economic and political Muslim affairs. The next section will discuss the development of Islamic law regarding slavery and manumission to show how the development of general Islamic law could have a parallel or interaction with the case of slavery and manumission in the early and classical Islamic periods.

3.2 The transformation and development of slavery and manumission law from *Jāhiliyya* to the early Islamic period

The transformation of Arabic customs created a new legal system. The new regulations depended primarily on the Qur’an and the Sunnah of the Prophet, relying secondly on jurists’ opinions. This has its advantages in particular to re-codify and formulate slavery and manumission legislations in Islam. This section will follow the development of Islamic law regarding slavery and manumission

³¹⁸ Khadduri, *Law in the Middle East*, 37.

³¹⁹ Ibid., 4; The status of *qāḍī al-quḍāh* existed in the era of Hārūn al-Rashīd; see the literature review of *Kitāb al-kharāj* by Abū Yūsuf, 19. Moreover, Coulson stresses that “the task of the Umayyads had been to establish a practical system of legal administration, not a science of jurisprudence.” Thus, Islamic law developed expeditiously during the Abbasid period. Coulson, *A History of Islamic Law*, 35, 37, 38.

³²⁰ *Madhāhib* existed and formed from Umayyad but were flourished from the Abbasid era. See Coulson, Ibid.

³²¹ Schacht, “*Maḥkama*,” *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, ed., P, Bearman, Th, Bianquis, C.E, Bosworth, E, van Donzel and W.P, Heinrichs, (2012), accessed October 28 2015, http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/mahkama-COM_0625; See Strzvezewska, *Tārīkh al-Tashrī‘ Al-Islāmī*, 162.

³²² For more discussion and excellent study of *ḥakam* and the development of *qāḍī*’s status, position and specialization in Islam, see Hallaq, *The origin and evolution of Islamic law*, 35-56.

from the *Jāhiliyya* period until the early classical period (12 BH-132 A.H. / 611-750 A.D.). And it will present the cycle life of slaves from birth, enslaved until their manumission and after emancipation.

3.2.1 Pagan practices of enslavement and emancipation

Practices of slavery and manumission were ubiquitous in ancient societies. These existed in the pre-Islamic period and continued into the Islamic era. Historians and scholars have focused overwhelmingly on marriage, kinship, gender, lineage and ownership and to what extent these factors persisted from the pre-Islamic period or developed under Islam.³²³ It is worth mentioning that historical documents offer little information about the *Jāhiliyya* era. However, most information about slavery in the Arab world during the pre-Islamic era and the Islamic period agree that there were specific ways in which individuals became slaves. First, slaves could be captured in an invasion, with the defeated party enslaved by the victors.³²⁴ In the pre-Islamic era, Arabs possessed enemy captives in order to enslave or to keep them for ransom.³²⁵ Second, as slaves could also be purchased, poverty was a reason for parents to sell a freeborn child into slavery for the rest of his life.³²⁶ Slavery by debt³²⁷ involved a free person turning to enslavement if he could not pay his financial obligations.³²⁸ Finally, slavery occurred through inheritance when a child was born to slave parents.

In the pre-Islamic period, a free individual members of society was identified as a *ṣarīḥ* (a pure free person born from free Arab parents),³²⁹ while “the child of an Arab man and a foreign woman (*aʿjamīyah*) [was] a *hajīn* (ignoble)”,(hybrid).³³⁰ In the pre-Islamic era, a child born to a foreign slave

³²³ Ali, *Marriage and Slavery in Early Islam*, 9.

³²⁴ One example is the incident of the invasion of Qays b. Zuhayr upon banī Yarbū'. See 'Izz Al-Dīn Ibn al-Athīr, *Al-Kāmil Fi'l-Tārīkh*, 1st ed., vol 1 (Báyrūt: Dar Ṣādir, 1987), 450.

³²⁵ Crone, *Roman, Provincial and Islamic law*, 58.

³²⁶ Poverty here can mean from famine, debt accumulation or taxation, usury or mortgage. Lewis, *Race and Slavery*, 9.

³²⁷ 'Abd al-Salām al-Tirmānī, *Al-Riqq Māḍīhi wa Ḥāḍiruh* (Kuwait: al-Majlis al-Waṭanī lil-Thaqāfah wa 'l-Funūn wa-al-Ādāb, 1979), 40-42

³²⁸ Ibid.

³²⁹ Gianluca Parolin, *Citizenship in the Arab World: Kin, Religion and Nation-State* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University press, 2009), 33.

³³⁰ Ibid; Robinson states that “... the concubine and the *hajīn* were unremarkable parts of both Islamic history and the wealthier urban Muslim family”. Robinson, “Prosopographical Approaches to the Nasab Tradition,” 154.

woman became a slave until acknowledged by his father. In *Kinship & Marriage in Early Arabia*, Smith, Goldziher and Cook studied the framework of Arab tribes by examining kinship and marriage customs.³³¹ They assert that that a tribe member's recognition and consanguinity were inherited from their mother's kinship and social status rather than from their father's.³³² Robinson's findings on consanguinity and concubines also reveal that "having children by concubines"³³³ was common and accepted in most Arabic tribes, including the Quraysh and Umayyad tribes.³³⁴ It can be demonstrated that bondage cannot demand licit participation in kinship and social cohort, given consideration of the slave's utter subjugation to his owner.³³⁵ However, the practise of slavery was counted as a legal institution for Muslims as Islam did not prohibit slavery, but rather formed and recognized the rights of slaves through practices such as the encouragement of manumission.

The act of manumitting slaves was exercised by Arab Pagans. There is some evidence that slaves were manumitted in the *Jāhiliyya* period, and there were no rules for manumitting slaves. However, one example can be found in the pre-Islamic era, while another example comes from the foundation of Islam but can be considered a Pagan practise. In the pre-Islamic era, one way Pagans helped slaves gain their freedom was through manumission after doing something valuable for the master or his tribe.³³⁶ For instance, 'Antarah b. Shaddād (d. 22 B.H./600 A.D.) was originally intended to remain a slave, however he gained his manumission after defending his tribe against outsider attack.³³⁷ On the foundation of Islam, another remarkable example was Hind bint 'Utbah (d. 35 A.H. / 656 A.D.), who promised the slave Waḥshī b. Ḥarb³³⁸ that if he killed the Prophet's uncle Ḥamzah b. 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib (d. 2 A.H./624 A.D.), who had murdered her father, brother and uncle, she would give him his

³³¹ Ignác Goldziher, Robertson Smith, and Stanley Cook, *Kinship & Marriage in Early Arabia* (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1903).

³³² Ibid., 29.

³³³ Robinson, "Prosopographical Approaches to the Nasab Tradition," 33.

³³⁴ Ibid.

³³⁵ Parolin, *Citizenship in the Arab World: Kin, Religion and Nation-State*, 35.

³³⁶ Khalil 'Athamina, "How Did Islam Contribute to Change the Legal Status of Women, the Case of the Female Slaves," *Al-Qantara*, 3589th ser. 0211 (2007): 383-408, accessed 8 Feb 2014, 386, <http://al-qantara.revistas.csic.es/index.php/al-qantara/article/view/42/36>; It is clearly that this habit is practicing among Muslim. For example when the prophet manumit the slaves of *ṭā'if* after their supports in conquered the *ṭā'if* (8.A.H./ 630 A.D.); Al-Tirmānīnī, *Al-Riqq Māḍīhi wa-Hāḍīruh*, 29.

³³⁷ Ibn al-Athīr, *Al-Kāmil Fi'l-Tārīkh*, vol 1, 461; al-Tirmānīnī, Ibid., 29.

³³⁸ He was the slave of Jubayr b. Maṭ'ūm, and he died in the era of 'Uthmān b. 'Affān. See Ibn Sa'd, *Al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*, vol 6, 143.

freedom.³³⁹ The cases of 'Antarah and Waḥshī show that manumission was practised in the pre-Islamic period by Pagan Arabs. In addition, in the pre-Islamic era, Pagans also practised manumission through adoption, which is rooted in the Greco-Roman traditions.³⁴⁰ Zayd b. Hārithah (d. 8 A.H. / 629 A.D.) was purchased by Khadījah bint Khuwaylid (d. 20 B.H. / 620 A.D.) to give to the Prophet, who later manumitted him through adoption.³⁴¹

Given the above examples, manumission clearly existed and was practised. Indeed, the practice of slavery in the pre-Islamic era seems not very different from the practice in later eras, but it did differ in terms of the rules and principles of slavery and the nature of the social hierarchy.³⁴² Notably, giving slaves new rights was not practised in the pre-Islamic era, e.g. the right of freedom for the new-borns to mothers who are slaves.³⁴³ These details significantly show that the pagan and Islam periods both involved the possibility of upward social mobility. However, the Islamic approach to slavery and manumission was "reformist and not revolutionary".³⁴⁴ Thus, Islamic law was motivated to modify the conditions of slavery and to encourage the emancipation of individuals, but it did not abolish the institution of slavery.³⁴⁵

3.2.2 Early Islamic attitudes to slavery and manumission

The era of the Prophet (1-11 A.H. / 622-632 A.D.) was the first formative period³⁴⁶ of Islamic law, and strongly influenced its later development. Many of the verses in the Qur'an and hadiths present the case of manumission and slavery. The principal point is that the Prophet Muḥammad's acceptance of slavery was an ordinary action, because slavery was an institution from

³³⁹ Ibn Sa'd, *Al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*, vol 2, 11-12.

³⁴⁰ See Crone, *Roman, Provincial, and Islamic Law*, 67-68.

³⁴¹ Ibn Sa'd, *Al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*, vol 1, 386; See Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī, *al-Iṣābah Fī Tamyīz Al-Ṣaḥābah*, vol 1 (Bayrūt: Dār Al-Jīl, 1992); Crone, *Ibid*, 86-68; See David S. Powers, *Zayd* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014); For a broad background of late antiquity and Islam, see Aziz al-Azmeh, *The Emergence Of Islam In The Late Antiquity, Allah and his People* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014); Garth Fowden, *Before and After Muhammad: The First Millennium Refocused* (New Jersey; Princeton University Press, 2013).

³⁴² The Arab social hierarchy was divided into the Arab *al-ṣuraḥā'* (free men) and *al-ḥulafā'* (*mawālī* and slaves). See Fāḍil al-Anṣārī, *Al-'Ubūdiyyah: Al-Riḡq Wa-'l-Mar'ah Bayna Al-Islām Al-Rasūlī wa-'l-Islām Al-Tārīkhī* (Dimashq: Al-Aḥālī Lil-Ṭibā'ah Wa-al-Nashr wa-al-Tawzī', 2001), 41.

³⁴³ This is discussed later in this chapter.

³⁴⁴ Gordon, *Slavery in the Arab World*, 19.

³⁴⁵ *Ibid*.

³⁴⁶ "The term "formative" is applied generally on Islamic historiography to refer roughly to the first century and a half of Islamic history". Lena Salaymeh, *The Beginnings of Islamic Law: Late Antique Islamic Legal Traditions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 138.

antiquity. Therefore, some of the Pagan practises were maintained, formulated and restructured with the rules of the new religion, Islam. While some methods of enslavement remained the same, such as being captured in war or inheriting slave status from parents, Islam did prohibit methods such as enslavement by debt.³⁴⁷ Thus, Islamic law is a combination of *Jāhili* principles and practises and the new religion's legislation and laws.³⁴⁸

The prophet Muḥammad sought to establish rules governing slavery in order to improve the relations between slaves and masters, and to encourage Muslims to manumit their slaves.³⁴⁹ A similar view was propagated by Lewis, who argued that the Qur'an modified the ancient enslavement system by encouraging Muslims to free and manumit their slaves.³⁵⁰ Curiously, no verse in the Qur'an invites or encourages the enslavement of people. However, the Qur'an clarifies the principles of enslavement and manumission, organizing the relation between the master and his slaves by presenting and modifying the rights and duties of slaves. The ultimate goal of this section is to present and discuss the Qur'an, the Prophet's hadith and early Islamic law regarding bondage and emancipation.

The legal implications of Muslim warfare law granted the leader who conquered a new territory the right to capture and enslave the people under two conditions: if they were unbelievers, and if they were to be enslaved as spoils of warfare.³⁵¹ The Qur'an refers to this situation in various verses.³⁵² One of these verses is 47:4, which says:

Therefore, when ye meet the unbelievers (in fight), smite at their necks; At length, when ye have thoroughly subdued them, bind a bond firmly (on them): thereafter (is the time for) either generosity or ransom until the war lays down its burdens.

³⁴⁷ See Robinson, "Prosopographical Approaches to the Nasab Tradition," 158; Schneider, "Freedom and Slavery in Early Islamic Time; al-Tirmānī, *Al-Riqq māḍīhi wa-ḥāḍiruh*, 40-42.

³⁴⁸ Robinson, *Ibid.*, 157-158.

³⁴⁹ Gordon, *Slavery in the Arab World*, 19.

³⁵⁰ Lewis, *Race and Slavery in the Middle East*, 4.

³⁵¹ Mernissi, *The Forgotten Queens of Islam*, 80.

³⁵² This research includes some relevant and selected verses from the Qur'an but not all; For Qur'anic verses translation source see page 17.

The other is verse 8:67.³⁵³

It is not fitting for a Prophet that he should have Prisoners of war until he hath thoroughly subdued the land. Ye look for the temporal goods of this world; but Allah looketh to the Hereafter: and Allah is exalted in might, wise.

These verses apply to enemy countries (*dar al-ḥarb*) and explicitly demand of Muslims that when warfare has ended, they should set the captives free as a favour or by ransom (*fidyah*).³⁵⁴ The Qur'anic verses show that the Islamic testaments include an induction of kindness and tolerance for captives. Therefore, this Islam is of a different character than the *Jāhiliyya* period, where it demonstrated a kind of pride in the process of capturing enemies.

Other Qur'an verses reveal occasions in which Muslims are asked to treat their slaves well.³⁵⁵ For example, verse 4:36:

Serve Allah, and join not any partners with Him; And do good- to parents, kinsfolk, orphans, those in need, neighbours who are near, neighbours who are strangers, the companion by your side, the wayfarer (ye meet), And what your right hands possess: for Allah loveth not the arrogant, the vainglorious.

Another change presents the differences between the pre-Islamic custom³⁵⁶ and Islamic demand for supporting slaves, in the case of equality between slaves and free men as patrons in dignity and respect regarding the favour of Allah, such as in wealth and marriage.³⁵⁷ This is explained in the Qur'an in verse 30:28:

He does propound to you a similitude from your own (experience): do ye have partners Among those whom your right hands possess, to share as equals in the wealth we have bestowed on you? Do ye Fear Each other? Thus do we explain the signs in detail to a people that understand.

³⁵³ This incident took place after the battle of *Badr* (2 A.H. / 624 A.D.). The Prophet consulted his companions about the faith of prisoners of the war, and in the end he agreed to take a ransom and freed them. Al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī*, vol 4, 64; al-Wāhidī, *Asbāb al-nuzūl*, 242-244.

³⁵⁴ Al-Ṭabarī, *Ibid.*, vol 7, 31.

³⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, vol 2, 460.

³⁵⁶ Slaves in the *Jāhiliyya* period were in the lower status of the Arab hierarchy and did not have any rights or duties; See al-Anṣārī, *Al-'Ubūdīyah: Al-riqq*, 41.

³⁵⁷ Al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī*, vol 3, 537; vol 6, 102.

And in verse 16:71:

Allah has bestowed his gifts of sustenance more freely on some of you than on others: those more favoured are not going to throw back their gifts to those whom their right hands possess, so as to be equal in that respect. Will they then deny the favours of Allah?

As this research concerns the case of women and female slaves specifically, it is important to look at the view of the Qur'an on this matter. The Qur'an provides a good example, as verse 2:221 states:

Do not marry unbelieving women, until they believe: A slave woman who believes is better than an unbelieving woman, even though she allures you.

According to al-Ṭabarī, Muslim scholars disagree on the explanation of this verse, especially regarding its prohibition on marrying unbelievers.³⁵⁸ However, al-Ṣan'ānī presents examples of permitting marriage to women from the people of the Book (*ahl al-Kitāb*).³⁵⁹ Similarly, al-Ṭabarī states that this verse did not conclude *ahl al-Kitāb* female slaves.³⁶⁰ While, al-Wāḥidī clarifies this verse's exegesis by dividing it into two sections. The first part of the verse is:

Do not marry unbelieving women (idolaters), until they believe.

This section was revealed about Abū al-Murshid al-Ghanawī when he asked for the Prophet's permission to marry an unbelieving Qurayshi woman.³⁶¹ In contrast, the second section of the verse is:

A slave woman who believes is better than an unbelieving woman, even though she allures you.

³⁵⁸ "Unbelievers" can include Pagans, Jews, Christians and people of other religions, or it can confine this rule to certain categories; *Ibid.*, vol 1, 559.

³⁵⁹ Al-Ṣan'ānī, *al-Muṣannaf*, vol 7, 176-196.

³⁶⁰ Al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī*, vol 1, 595-596.

³⁶¹ Her name was Anqā', and she was an unbeliever from the Quraysh tribe; Al-Wāḥidī, *Asbāb al-nuzūl*, 24.

This part of the verse is related to the incident of ‘Abd Allāh b. Rawāḥah al-Anṣārī, who punched a black female slave; he then went to the Prophet to inquire about what he did. The Prophet told him that she was a believer and deserved better treatment; therefore, Ibn Rawāḥah set her free and then married her.³⁶² According to *asbāb al-nuzūl* in the verse above, it is possible to assume that it could be lawful to marry unbelieving women, whether she was Pagan or another religion. It could, in fact, be logical and natural. Social conditions might provide a reason behind this, as in verse 2:221, where the Qur’an encourages people to marry the believers rather than the unbelievers. It is clear that from the two incidents of al-Ghanawī and Ibn Rawāḥah al-Anṣārī that believers were seen as better citizens; this idea is important to our research, as the following chapter will study the case of female slaves’ and freedwomen’s rights. It would thus seem that Islam made a significant change in female slaves’ social destiny from the *Jāhiliyya* period, permitting Muslim men to marry them, but the priority went to Muslim female slaves in particular.

In another situation in the Qur’an, female slaves are frequently mentioned. For instance, in verse 4:25:

If any of you have not the means wherewith to wed free believing women, they may wed believing girls from among those whom your right hands possess: And Allah hath full knowledge about your faith. Ye are one from another: wed them with the leave of their owners, and give them their dowers, according to what is reasonable: they should be chaste, not lustful, nor taking paramours: when they are taken in wedlock, if they fall into shame, their punishment is half that for free women. This (permission) is for those among you who fear sin; but it is better for you that ye practice self-restraint. And Allah is oft-forgiving, most Merciful.

Al-Ṣan‘ānī and al-Ṭabarī interpreted this verse to mean that Allah permitted Muslims to marry four free women (*ḥarā’ir*), whereas the word *muḥṣanāh* refers to free female believers.³⁶³ This verse shows that if a Muslim individual could

³⁶² Al-Wāḥidī, *Asbāb al-nuzūl*, 24.

³⁶³ See al-Ṣan‘ānī, *Al-muḥṣannaf*, vol 7, 263-269; Al-Ṭabarī suggests that there is a difference in scholars’ opinions on the case of “wedding believing girls”. One scholar assumes that this sentence prohibits intercourse with all unbelieving female slaves, while another states that this only forbids it with the unbelieving Pagan slaves. Al-Ṭabarī supports the first opinion, that it bans Muslims from wedding female slave unbelievers until they become someone their “right hands possess”. In this case, if the woman and her husband are captives to one person, therefore, she is to remain her husband’s wife, and the captor is

not marry a *muḥṣanāh*, he was permitted to wed or take one of his female slaves who did not have a husband; however, the female slaves were not permitted to marry Muslims until they divorced, became a widow or their menstrual period had passed.³⁶⁴ Furthermore, the last section of this verse³⁶⁵ explains that Muslims could marry enslaved women after receiving their master's permission and paying portions to them and they have to set free.³⁶⁶

In attempting to assess the exegesis of this verse and to examine the Islamic changes, this verse revealed the incident of the Battle of Awṭās after the battle of Ḥunayn (8 A.H. / 630 A.D.). Abū Saʿīd al-Khudarī claims that, after this battle, the companions of the Prophet took female captives, but the Muslims were to abstain from sexual intercourse because these women were married to unbelievers. However, this verse clearly makes this case lawful, as the captives now were slaves whom their “right hands possessed”; thus, it was permitted for the Muslim captors to have intercourse with the female slaves after their menstrual period finished.³⁶⁷ This may demonstrate that Islam distinguished between lawful affairs and *zinā* (adultery).

Another verse that may elucidate the case of female slaves' rights is verse 23:5; 6:

Who abstain from sex, except with those joined to them in the marriage bond, or (the captives) whom their right hands possess, for (in their case) they are free from blame.

The Qur'an is asking Muslims in this verse to maintain their chastity by marrying wives or restricting committing only legal sexual acts with their slaves. The verse demonstrates that Islam allows Muslims legal sexuality with their wives or their female slaves. To a certain extent, the evidence in verse 24:33³⁶⁸ indicates a significant contributing factor for permitting female slaves to marry and of not forcing them into prostitution.³⁶⁹ Ultimately, it can be suggested that the Qur'an

not permitted to have sexual relations with her. Al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī*, vol 2, 433-439;

³⁶⁴ See al-Ṣanʿānī, *Al-muṣannaf*, vol 7, 263-269; Al-Ṭabarī, *Ibid*.

³⁶⁵ “Wed them with the leave of their owners and give them their dowers”.

³⁶⁶ Al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī*, vol 2, 440.

³⁶⁷ Al-Ṣanʿānī, *al-muṣannaf*, 221- 231; Al-Wāḥidī, *Asbāb Al-nuzūl*, 152 and Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, 8:3432

³⁶⁸ “But force not your maids to prostitution when they desire chastity, in order that ye may make a gain in the goods of this life. But if anyone compels them, yet, after such compulsion, is Allah, Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful (to them)”.

³⁶⁹ Al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī*, vol 5, 424. The verse is related to the incident of Abd Allah b. Ubayy, who

defines new rules of conduct under the *kaffārah* (expiation) for the erroneous actions or *iḥsān* to gain God's rewards (*ajr*).

The Qur'an provides clear texts on encouraging believers to free slaves. One verse is 4:92:

Never should a believer kill a believer; if one (so) kills a believer, it is ordained that he should free a believing slave, and pay compensation to the deceased's family, unless they remit it freely. If the deceased belonged to a people at war with you, and he was a believer, the freeing of a believing slave (is enough). If he belonged to a people with whom ye have a treaty of mutual Alliance, compensation should be paid to his family, and a believing slave be freed. For those who find this beyond their means, (is prescribed) a fast for two months running: by way of repentance to Allah. For Allah hath all knowledge and all wisdom.

The previous verse motivates Muslims to set slaves free, describing *tahrīr raqabah*,³⁷⁰ The Prophet's hadiths also clearly support the Qur'anic verse. On one occasion it mentions:

It was narrated from Abū Hurayrah that the Prophet said, "Whoever frees a Muslim slave, Allah will save all the parts of his body from the (Hell) Fire as he has manumitted the body-parts of the slave."³⁷¹

An additional quote from the Qur'an that can be associated with encouraging the freeing of slaves is verse 58:3:

But those who divorce their wives by *zihār*, then wish to go back on the words they uttered, (It is ordained that such a one) should free a slave before they touch each other: this are ye admonished to perform: and Allah is well-acquainted with (all) that ye do.

used his female slaves for whoredom. See al-Wāḥidī, *Asbāb Al-nuzūl*, 335, 336.

³⁷⁰ Al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī*, vol 5, 525; al-Wāḥidī, *Ibid.*, 152; Badawi and Abdel Haleem, *Arabic-English Dictionary of Qur'anic Usage*, 198-199.

³⁷¹ Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, vol 4, The Book of Manumission, chapter 5: The Virtue of Manumitting Slaves, Hadith Number: 1509, 211; Al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, vol 3, The Book of Manumission (of Slaves), chapter 1, Hadith Number: 2517, 402.

The acting of *zihār*³⁷² is forbidden, prohibited by Allah, yet it appears that Muslims could choose to free a slave as a *kafāra* (expiation) from this sin.³⁷³

Another method to manumit slaves is *mukātabah*. This subject was presented in verse 24:33:

And if any of your slaves ask for a deed in writing (to enable them to earn their freedom for a certain sum), give them such a deed, if ye know any good in them: yea, give them something yourselves out of the means which Allah has given to you...

The Qur'an demands that Muslims emancipate slaves under terms of a suitable contract agreement (*mukātabah*).³⁷⁴ Rahman emphasizes that this verse "if ye know any good in them" "are not a restriction on freeing of slaves" and the intention of this verse is to present that the slave must be qualified in order to fulfil the condition of his freedom.³⁷⁵ Meanwhile, al-Ṣan'ānī states that a slave's owner was not required to accept the slave's offer of *mukātabah*.³⁷⁶ However, the reason of revelation for this verse is relevant here. The slave Ṣubāḥ's master (Huwaytib b. 'Abd al-'Uzza) refused to manumit him in accordance with *mukātabah*; therefore, this verse came to demand Muslims accept a slave's offering of freedom. Huwaytib then directly manumitted Ṣubāḥ for 100 Dinars and awarded him 20 Dinars.³⁷⁷

More evidence of the practice of *mukātabah* is shown in the case of Barīra (d. 60-64 A.H./ 690-684 A.D.), a slave who was already did *mukātabah*; she had to pay five *Uqīyah*³⁷⁸ of gold in five yearly instalments to her master for

³⁷² "[Zihār] involves a husband swearing that his wife is to him as the back (*zahr*, from the same root as *zihār*) of his mother, with "back" serving as a euphemism for sexual organ." Ali, "Money, Sex, and Power: The Contractual Nature of Marriage in Islamic Jurisprudence of the Formative Period," (PhD diss., Duke University, 2002), 250, 251.

³⁷³ Al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī*, vol 7, 23; Al-Wāḥidī, *Asbāb Al-nuzūl*, 421; See al-Ṣan'ānī, *Al-Muṣannaf*, vol 6, 421- 422; See Ali, "Money, Sex, and Power," 250, 251, 258,266, 274, 275.

³⁷⁴ There are two scholarly opinions on this occasion. The first believes it is the obligation of the master to accept the *mukātabah* contract and manumit the slave if he requests it, whereas other says that it is not compulsory for the master to accept it. Al-Ṭabarī's opinion is that it is mandatory for the master to satisfy and manumit his slaves: "give them such a deed: is a clear rule form god and compulsory to do it". Al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī*, vol 5, 423. See al-Ṣan'ānī, *Al-Muṣannaf*, vol 7, 248-257.

³⁷⁵ Rahman, *Islamic Methodology in History*, 187.

³⁷⁶ Brockopp, *Early Mālikī Law*, 176.

³⁷⁷ Al-Wāḥidī, *Asbāb al-nuzūl*, 334-335.

³⁷⁸ *Uqīyah* refer to the unit of weight and the scale of gold and one *Uqīyah* is valued at 30 Dirhams, and five *Uqīyah* is equal to 2000 Dinars. Aḥmad al-Maqrīzī, "al-Nuqūd al-Islāmīyah," in *Rasā'il al-Maqrīzī* (Qāhirah: Dār al-Fakr al-Ḥadīth, 1998), 158.

manumission.³⁷⁹ Therefore, *mukātabah* manumission can be offered in return for an obligation to remain with the master for a specific period, or emancipation in return for payment or service for specific days, months or years. Crone states that this was a Greek practice, a stipulation with few differences in the nature of practise to suit the social reality.³⁸⁰ Inevitably, the cultural friction between the ancient societies was a key reason why Arabs adapted some customs from Rome or Greece. It is likely that the Prophet took the valuable custom of supporting slaves, revealed in his recommendations in the case of *mukātabah* between the master and his slave.³⁸¹

In considering the above, it is perhaps significant to discuss previous scholars' attitudes toward the relation between ancient and Islamic law.³⁸² In the twentieth century, Ignác Goldziher, with his work *Islam Theology and Law*,³⁸³ was among the first scholars to present theories of foreign influence on Islamic law. His notion was that Muḥammad adapted the religious views of Jews, Christians and other societies of antiquity.³⁸⁴ Hence, he suggested that these civilisations and religious ideas came to Muḥammad through commercial contact and travels.³⁸⁵ As a result, he stressed the claim that Islam did not introduce these new laws.

Schacht supports Goldziher's view of Islamic law being adopted from foreign societies. He writes that pre-Islamic practices were reflections of ancient societies' customs, and suggested that these existed from the time of the first century *Hijra*.³⁸⁶ Schacht argues: "The legal institution of ancient South Arabia, which belonged to a different civilization, hardly seems to have influenced those of (the northern Arabs)".³⁸⁷ Schacht states, however, that pagan Arabs

³⁷⁹ Al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, vol 3, The Book of Manumission (of Slaves), Chapter 10: The Selling and Conferring on Others of the *walā'* of a Manumitted Slave, Hadith Number: 2536, 410; Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, vol 4, The Book of Manumission, Chapter 2: *Al-Walā'* (Right of Inheritance) Belongs to the One Who Manumits the Slave, Hadith: [3776] 5 - (1504), 201.

³⁸⁰ Crone, *Roman, Provincial, and Islamic Law*, 67-70.

³⁸¹ Abū Hurayrah writes, "The Prophet said, "Whoever manumits his portion of a common slave should manumit the slave completely by paying the rest of his price from his money if he has enough money; otherwise the price of the slave is to be estimated and the slave is to be helped to work without hardship till he pays the rest of his price." Al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, vol 3, The Book of Manumission (of Slaves), Chapter 5: Whoever Manumits his Portion of a Common Slave, Hadith Number 252, 404-405.

³⁸² Lewis. *Race and Slavery in the Middle East*, 5

³⁸³ Ignác Goldziher, *Introduction to Islamic Theology and Law*, translation by Voriesugen uber den Islam (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1981).

³⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 213.

³⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁸⁶ Schacht, *An Introduction*, 8.

³⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 9. Later, this view was discussed by Crone in her argument that Islamic law was borrowed from

borrowed certain Roman and Latin administrative and military terms and expressions, if not their laws.³⁸⁸ This could indicate that Schacht sees Muslim law as unaffected by other ancient legal systems. He also points out that Islamic law contains both sacred practices and the reality of Arabs' actual practices, so that Islamic law was developed by private specialists according to the various political times and places and economic and social situations.³⁸⁹ However, the framework of Muslim rule that began in the Umayyad period is seen as responsible for the creation of the administration of justice and jurisprudence.³⁹⁰ Similarly, Crone made an important attempt to demonstrate the theory of the Roman influence on Muslim law and the situation of clientage. Crone states that ancient Roman society provided the basis for the formation of Sharia, especially in the era of Umayyad dynasty (41-740 A.H. / 661-650 A.D.) in Syria and Egypt.³⁹¹

Conversely, Wael Hallaq states that Crone's view is open to further criticism and he stress that there may be similarities of law and traditions between Islam and other societies of antiquity; still, however, they cannot be defined as having been 'borrowed'.³⁹² He asserts that Crone's view of the relationship and influence of Rome on the North Asian Arabs, and the idea that they were isolated from the western Arabs, is in doubt, because it "operates on the assumption that geographical units and ethic and cultural groups were really separated one from other".³⁹³ Instead, it is more accurate to assume that pre-Islamic Arabia was one region; we should not introduce separation between regions and areas.³⁹⁴

In his book *al-Mufaṣṣal fī Tārīkh al-'Arab qalb al-Islām*, Jawād 'Alī presents an excellent and pivotal debate on Arabic laws in the pre-Islamic period. He writes that in the *Jāhiliyya* period, common public laws did not involve all Arabs in their provisions; instead, the Pagan Arabs established a different private set of laws

ancient societies.

³⁸⁸ Schacht, *An Introduction*, 9.

³⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 2-4.

³⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 3.

³⁹¹ Therefore, historians call this phase the classical *Sharī'ah*; See Crone, *Roman, Provincial, and Islamic Law*, 1-16.

³⁹² Hallaq, "Review: The Use and the Abuse of Evidence: The Question of Provincial and Roman Influence on Early Islamic Law," *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, vol 110, no. 1 (1990): 79-91, 90; and Idem, *The origin and evolution of Islamic law*. 33.

³⁹³ *Ibid.*, 83.

³⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

for each tribe, village or alliance according to varying social and political circumstances and needs.³⁹⁵ Therefore, the absence of pre-Islamic written laws does not mean that Arabs had no individual regulations and legislation; rather, their laws were derived from their customs, religion and leaders.³⁹⁶ A similar view is held by Ali, who discusses the parallel practises of slavery and manumission between Islam and other late antiquity societies such as Greece and Rome.³⁹⁷ She argues that the expansion of Islam might have affected and overlapped with Muslim customs.³⁹⁸ However, it is controversial to claim the impact of these influences on the development of Islamic law, as it is difficult to display borrowing adaption.³⁹⁹

The discussion so far does demonstrate that the development of general Islamic law was affected by the laws of slavery and manumission. For instance, using the Qur'anic verses and the Prophet's hadith as primary sources, both modify the basis of Islamic law. Most manumission laws depended on specific incidents where the Prophet was the *ḥakam*, or judge.⁴⁰⁰ Therefore, there are remarkable parallels to and effects of Pagan Arabic customs and mores on the development of Islamic law through cases of arbitration. The next section will present a significant example of the later development of Islamic Sunni jurists' opinions and their interaction with and impact on the development of Arabic and Muslim law with regard to slavery and emancipation.

3.3 The Legal opinions of the three Sunni jurists: al-Kāsānī, Mālik and al-Shāfi'ī on law concerning female slaves

As mentioned before, the Islamic laws of slavery and manumission developed and continued to evolve through the *ijtihād* and *ijmā'* of Muslim jurists, and the opinions and attitudes of *madhāhib*.⁴⁰¹ In this research, we present the similarities and differences of jurists' views regarding female slaves. In this section, we discuss the views of three Sunni jurists, al-Kāsānī, Mālik and al-

³⁹⁵ 'Alī Jawād, *Al-Mufaṣṣal fī Tārīḥ al-'Arab qabl al-Islām* (Bağdād: Maktaba' al-Nahḍa', 1993), 483-740.

³⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 478.

³⁹⁷ For more noteworthy historical text in *Greek and Roman Slavery*, see Thomas Wiedemann, *Greek and Roman Slavery* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1981) and Matthew Perry, *Gender, Manumission, and the Roman Freedwoman* (Cambridge University: Cambridge, 2014).

³⁹⁸ Ali, *Marriage and Slavery in Early Islam*, 9.

³⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰⁰ For more details in this issue see back page number 78-84.

⁴⁰¹ See back pages number 97-102

Shāfi'ī, with regard to the female slave's cycle of life during slavery and after manumission. This section is divided into four sections: firstly, it will discuss the case of marriage and *nikāḥ*, and secondly, female slaves' legal separation from their husbands. Next, manumission of female slaves through *tadbīr* and *mukātabah* will be discussed, as well as the affairs of sale and *walā'*. Finally the attitudes toward *Umm al-Walad* and their status will be considered.

3.3.1 Female slaves' marriages and *nikāḥ*

The previous section presented Qur'anic law and the Prophet's precepts on slavery, bondage and emancipation. The case of men marrying female slaves alongside their free wives was a widespread practise in ancient society and in Islam. A similar opinion was held by al-Kāsānī, Mālik and al-Shāfi'ī regarding the acceptance of men's *nikāḥ* (marriage) to female slaves. In considering the case of marriage, it is important to draw attention to the differences between *milk al-nikāḥ* and *milk al-yamīn*. *Milk al-nikāḥ* were "free women, to whom sexual access was lawful only with marriage,"⁴⁰² whereas *milk al-yamīn* refers to "un-married slave women [who] were sexually lawful to their male masters".⁴⁰³

According to the previous discussion of the interpretations of the Qur'anic verses 2:221 and 4:25, Islam allowed men to marry female Muslim slaves or enslaved women from *ahl al-Kitāb* (the People of the Book, i.e., Jews and Christians), and forbade them to marry idolaters except in specific conditions, such as if the man could not afford to marry a free Muslim woman or he wished to protect himself from *zinā*. The three Sunni jurists had similar attitudes towards this case. Mālik explained that it was preferable for Muslim men to marry believing women, but if a Muslim man was unable to do so, he could marry an unbelieving free woman. As a last resort, Muslim men could marry unbelieving female slaves with the condition that the slaves had to be from the *ahl al-Kitāb*.⁴⁰⁴ For al-Kāsānī, Muslims were forbidden to marry idolaters, whether free or enslaved,⁴⁰⁵ while al-Shāfi'ī argued that the case of *nikāḥ* (*waṭ'*)

⁴⁰² Ali, *Marriage and Slavery in Early Islam*, 166.

⁴⁰³ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁴ Mālik, *Muwaṭṭa'*, 540.

⁴⁰⁵ Al-Kāsānī, *Badā'i'*, vol 3, 458–59.

to an unbelieving woman from the *ahl al-Kitāb* was lawful if she was set free. If she was a Muslim slave, it was permitted only if the man could not afford to marry a free woman or if he was afraid of committing adultery.⁴⁰⁶ Marriage to an unbelieving enslaved female was forbidden⁴⁰⁷ until she converted to Islam. However, al-Shāfi‘ī clarified that there were some cases where the unbelieving slave women could be permitted to marry Muslim men.⁴⁰⁸ First, if she was a young girl and one of her parents converted to Islam.⁴⁰⁹ According to al-Shāfi‘ī, in this case the girl would follow her parents’ religion, and thus her *waṭ’* could be authorized.⁴¹⁰ Secondly, the *waṭ’* of a young female slave could be allowed if she was enslaved without a parent; al-Shāfi‘ī stated that since she was underage, therefore she came under Islamic protection, and thus the man could force her to become Muslim.⁴¹¹

The historical development of the law can inform us about the social context and practice of slavery. Changes to the laws suggest that during the early periods the laws were liberal and progressive in permitting legal relations between men and their female slaves. In later periods, however, the *madhāhib* were stricter in formulating certain conditions in order to regulate these relations. According to the interpretation of verse 4:25 by al-Ṣan‘ānī and al-Ṭabarī, Muslim men have the right to marry *muḥṣanāt* women, and if they believe that cannot then they are permitted to marry female slave.⁴¹² Regardless, the three Sunni jurists showed agreement that it was an obligation of the man to not have any sexual relations with his female slaves until the end of one menstruation period or after she gave birth.⁴¹³

Al-Kāsānī argued that verse 2:221 is an acknowledgement of Muslim female slaves’ *nikaḥ* and a disapproval of marrying slaves from *ahl al-Kitāb*.⁴¹⁴ However, al-Kāsānī clarified that there are two opinions of the previous case. The first is that *nikāh* to enslaved women from People of the Book was allowed,

⁴⁰⁶ Al-Shāfi‘ī, *Umm*, vol 6, 406–9.

⁴⁰⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁸ Ibid., vol 5, 260.

⁴⁰⁹ Ibid.

⁴¹⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹¹ Ibid.

⁴¹² See al-Ṣan‘ānī, *al-Muṣannaf*, vol 7, 263-269 and al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī*, vol 2, 433-439.

⁴¹³ Al-Shāfi‘ī, *Umm*, vol 5, 671-672 and vol 6, 250-257; Brockopp, *Early Mālikī Law*, 156; al-Kāsānī, *Badā’i’ al-ṣanā’i’*, vol 3, 456, 46.

⁴¹⁴ Al-Kāsānī, *Ibid.*, vol 3, 460-461.

but it was considered *makrūh* (detestable or abominable).⁴¹⁵ If a female slave belonged to an unbelieving master, this could affect the case of her children, in that the child would be enslaved like his mother and of the religion of his father, and this affair would be illegal in Islam.⁴¹⁶ The second opinion is totally accepting of this type of marriage, relying on two Qur'anic verses, 4:3 and 5:5, which showed that there are no obligations for *nikah*, unrestricted by issues of freedom or religion (Muslim or *ahl al-Kitāb*).⁴¹⁷

Al-Shāfi'ī presented verse 5:5, stating that this verse talks about free Muslim men and not enslaved men.⁴¹⁸ The former group, free men, were allowed to marry female slaves in addition to their free wives in certain circumstances: for example, if they did not have the ability to pay the dowry for free women, or if they were afraid they might commit adultery or fornication. Conversely, given that slaves did not hold wealth or capital, they were not able to marry free women as they could not pay the marriage dowry.⁴¹⁹ Mālik expanded on this point of view, saying that the act of marrying a female slave after marriage to a free woman was *makrūh*, but it could be lawful in circumstances where a man's free wife accepted it, and if the man endeavoured to avoid adultery.⁴²⁰ On the other hand, al-Kāsānī presents a different opinion, forbidding free or slave men who had already married a free woman to marry a female slave.⁴²¹ Al-Kāsānī drew attention to the fact that the ban on the above condition was not related to the combination of enslaved and free women; rather, it was associated with the notions of honour and pride of free people, which could be insulting to the free woman.⁴²² In the case of marrying both free and slave women under the same contract, the marriage of free female was authorized, whereas the slave marriage was invalid.⁴²³

Although Islam gives men the right to own an uncountable number of female slaves and permits them to have sexual relations with those slaves, al-Kāsānī, Mālik and al-Shāfi'ī provided clear terms for this to be legitimate. One condition

⁴¹⁵ Al-Kāsānī, *Ibid.*, vol 3, 460-461.

⁴¹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴¹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴¹⁸ Al-Shāfi'ī, *Umm*, vol 6, 27, 390-391.

⁴¹⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴²⁰ Mālik, *Muwatta'*, 536.

⁴²¹ Al-Kāsānī, *Badā'i' al-ṣanā'i'*, vol 3, 448-449.

⁴²² *Ibid.*

⁴²³ *Ibid.*, 450.

that al-Shāfi‘ī and al-Kāsānī declared is the case of having sisters as slaves, or a daughter and her mother.⁴²⁴ Here it was forbidden for a Muslim man to have any sexual relations with the above categories together; instead, he had to choose one of them.⁴²⁵ This circumstance is comparable to the legal situation whereby a man marrying a free woman could not also marry her mother or sister. Similarly, a law mentioned by Mālik stated that Muslim men were prohibited from having sexual relations with a female slave who belonged to his father or son.⁴²⁶ Mālik based his opinion on the incident of ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb, who granted his son a female slave and told him to not have any sexual relations with her because he had already done so.⁴²⁷

Another condition of lawful relations with female slaves is the case of *istibrā’* and *‘iddah*, or the performance of a woman’s waiting period after her husband’s death or divorce before marrying another man or having sexual relations with her master. Mālik discussed two positions of the *‘āma*: after a woman’s divorce or her husband’s death. Firstly, if the husband was a free man, she had to wait two monthly periods; secondly, if her husband was a slave, then her *‘iddah* was three months’ periods.⁴²⁸ Al-Kāsānī considered a female slave’s *‘iddah* to be two months, unless she was an *Umm al-Walad*; in this case it must be three menstrual periods. Al-Shāfi‘ī added that a female slave’s *‘iddah* should be considered as half that of free women.⁴²⁹ For example, if a free woman’s *‘iddah* was three months, then a female slave’s must be one month and a half. In contrast, the waiting period for *Umm al-Walad* was different, as al-Shāfi‘ī said that her *‘iddah* must be one month, but if pregnant, she had to wait until giving birth with an additional waiting period of one menses.⁴³⁰

Al-Shāfi‘ī stressed that in *dar al-harb* (wartime), Islam forbade Muslim men to have *nikaḥ* or any sexual relations with a *sabiyya* (captive woman) if she was married and her husband was enslaved with her. In peacetime, however, female slaves became lawful to marry if their husbands were not with them or if they were unmarried. Shāfi‘ī based his opinion on the incident of a battle

⁴²⁴ Al-Kāsānī, *Badā’ī’ al-ṣanā’ī’*, vol 3, 440-443; Al-Shāfi‘ī, *Umm*, vol 6, 672-673.

⁴²⁵ Ibid., 440-443; Al-Shāfi‘ī, *Umm*, vol 6, 672-673.

⁴²⁶ Mālik, *Muwatta’*, 139-140; al-Ṣan‘ānī, *al-muṣannaf*, vol 6, 280-282.

⁴²⁷ Mālik, *Ibid.*

⁴²⁸ Ibid., 581-593.

⁴²⁹ Al-Shāfi‘ī, *Umm*, vol 6, 550-551.

⁴³⁰ Ibid., 554-557.

against the Hawāzin tribe,⁴³¹ where the Prophet Muḥammad enslaved a large number of men and women regardless of whether married female slaves were with their husbands or not.⁴³² However, in the battle of Awṭās (8 A.H. /630 A.D.), the Prophet stressed that Muslims must not have any sexual relations with their female captives until they finished the *istibrā'* (two menstrual periods), and if they were pregnant to wait until they delivered.⁴³³ It can be concluded that this treatment of female slaves supports Ali's statement, "The slave woman's sexuality is not actually under the owner's control,"⁴³⁴ since he needed to wait for a period of one to three menses.

Marriage for female slaves under Islam required acceptance by the slave-owners and payment of a dowry.⁴³⁵ Al-Kāsānī and al-Shāfi'ī stated that a female slave's owner had the full capacity of deciding the dowry of his slaves, and that the dowry was for him and not for the female slave or her father,⁴³⁶ as she was enslaved and belonged to her master.⁴³⁷ Therefore, the father of a female slave could not do the same, as in Islam as it is *makrūh* to marry daughters without their agreement or acceptance, or without *mahr*.⁴³⁸ However, Ali writes that the early Sunni *madhāhib*, al-Mālikī, al-Ḥanafī and al-Shāfi'ī, were interested in and focused on the dowry utility when authorizing sexual relations and validating women's ownership and possession.⁴³⁹ She argues that "through dowry, as a slave comes to be owned through purchase; repudiation frees her just as manumission frees the slave".⁴⁴⁰

3.3.2 Females slaves' legal separation from their husbands

Mālik, al-Kāsānī and al-Shāfi'ī agreed that a freedwoman could make the decision to end her marriage after her manumission.⁴⁴¹ The jurists considered that a marriage contract could be invalidated and that a freedwoman held the

⁴³¹ The battle of Awṭās (8 A.H. /630 A.D.).

⁴³² In the case that her husband was with her and after escaped, then her master is allow to *nikaḥ* or *waḥ'* the female slave, but as al-Shāfi'ī presents it is considered *makrūh*; al-Shāfi'ī, *Umm*, vol 5, 663-664 and vol 6, 392-393.

⁴³³ *Ibid.*, 250-251.

⁴³⁴ Ali, *Marriage and Slavery in Early Islam*, 46.

⁴³⁵ See our previous interpretation of the Qur'anic verse 4:25.

⁴³⁶ Al-Shāfi'ī, *Umm*, vol 6, 180; al-Kāsānī. *Badā'i' al-ṣanā'i'*, vol 3, 377-378.

⁴³⁷ Al-Shāfi'ī, *Ibid*; al-Kāsānī, *Ibid*, 331-332.

⁴³⁸ *Ibid*; Mālik, *Muwaṭṭa'*, 526.

⁴³⁹ Ali, *Marriage and Slavery in Early Islam*, 49.

⁴⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 51.

⁴⁴¹ Al-Shāfi'ī, *Umm*, vol 6, 314–19; Mālik, *Muwaṭṭa'*, 526–70; Al-Kāsānī, *Badā'i'*, vol 3, 599.

right to determine between staying with her husband and leaving him.⁴⁴² A marriage between an enslaved man and a freedwoman could remain legal with the woman's approval.⁴⁴³ One excellent example that the above three schools rely on is the case of Barīra, a female slave who gained her manumission when the Prophet gave her the choice to separate from her slave husband or to stay with him.⁴⁴⁴ It is arguably no surprise to find that Islam offered women the choice of annulment after obtaining freedom, because their social condition changed from slave to freedwoman, and therefore they obtained the right of *khul'* (the right of free women to seek divorce from their husbands). However, the difference is that a free woman had to pay an amount of money to her husband, whereas in the case of freedwomen they were free from this duty. Some jurists and scholars agreed to relate the case of divorce to the case of manumission,⁴⁴⁵ while others argued that marriage was not a transaction, but rather a social link between man and woman, wife and husband.⁴⁴⁶ In all cases, a woman had to wait until her period of *istibrā'* and *'iddah* had passed.

Furthermore, although the three jurists were in general agreement, al-Shāfi'ī stated that if a slave woman was freed after already having married a free man, then she had to ask to return to him, whereas if the husband was a slave, she could decide whether to stay with him. In the both cases, her marriage contract remained valid.⁴⁴⁷ Al-Kāsānī wrote that the reason for giving freedwoman the option of continuing her marriage or not was related to unbalanced social status. After manumission, a female slave would have new privileges as a free woman, while her husband who remained a slave⁴⁴⁸ had limited "privileges and liabilities"⁴⁴⁹ compared to a free citizen. When discussing female slave marriage and *nikāḥ*, it is worthwhile to clarify her children's social status under Islam. The general opinions of al-Kāsānī, Mālik and al-Shāfi'ī were that the children inherited their mother's social condition if the father was a slave, while if he was a free man then the children could take his freedom.⁴⁵⁰ In all cases the female

⁴⁴² Al-Shāfi'ī, *Ibid*; Mālik, *Ibid*; Al-Kāsānī, *Ibid*.

⁴⁴³ Ali, *Marriage and Slavery in Early Islam*, 169.

⁴⁴⁴ Al-Shāfi'ī, *Umm*, vol 6, 314-319; Al-Kāsānī, *Badā'i' al-ṣanā'i'*, vol 3, 600. Mālik, *Muwaṭṭa'*, 269-270.

⁴⁴⁵ Ali, *Marriage and Slavery in Early Islam*, 50-51.

⁴⁴⁶ *Ibid*.

⁴⁴⁷ Al-Shāfi'ī, *Umm*, vol 5, 468; vol 6, 314-19.

⁴⁴⁸ Al-Kāsānī, *Badā'i' al-ṣanā'i'*, vol 3, 600.

⁴⁴⁹ Ali, *Marriage and Slavery in Early Islam*, 176.

⁴⁵⁰ Al-Shāfi'ī, *Umm*, vol 5, 177-178. See Mālik, *Muwaṭṭa'*, 810 and al-Kāsānī, *Badā'i' al-ṣanā'i'*, vol 3, 382.

slave's status affected her children's future social rank, but the male slave did not share this feature.⁴⁵¹

3.3.3 Female slaves' manumission through *tadbīr* and *mukātabah*

The previous discussion on manumission methods during the early Islamic period revealed that the emancipation of slaves was encouraged by the law, with verdicts mostly dependent on the Qur'an and the Prophet's hadith. The three Sunni jurists permitted manumission in various ways, such as freeing captives by paying ransom as seen in verse 47:7, and freeing slaves by *taḥrīr raqabah*,⁴⁵² such as in verse 4:92. Verse 58:3 shows that Islam allows believers to set slaves free as expiation of the act of *zihār*. Al-Kāsānī, Mālik and al-Shāfi'ī agreed that *zihār's kafārah* is to manumit slaves.⁴⁵³ Mālik and al-Shāfi'ī believed that it was permissible for Muslims to manumit only Muslim slaves, not unbelieving slaves,⁴⁵⁴ while al-Kāsānī allowed for freeing slaves regardless of religion.⁴⁵⁵ The Ḥanafīs argues that *zihār* was not valid between the master and his *mukātiba*,⁴⁵⁶ *mudabbira*⁴⁵⁷ or *Umm al-Walad*⁴⁵⁸ because these categories could not be counted as legal or valid marriages, where the law required a marriage contract.⁴⁵⁹ This section discusses al-Kāsānī, Mālik and al-Shāfi'ī attitudes toward two types of female slave manumission, firstly by *mukātabah*⁴⁶⁰ and second by *tadbīr*, as they are the most common forms of female slave manumission discussed by the *madhāhib*.

According to al-Kāsānī, Mālik and al-Shāfi'ī, *mukātabah* was a contract between the master and the slave that allowed manumission after paying the master a stipulated amount of money or working for him for specific or selected

⁴⁵¹ The validity of this condition applies on the female slave before her pregnancy: for example, after signing a contract with her master to become free, then becoming pregnant, her child would inherit her status of freedom.

⁴⁵² For more discussion see Mohammed Ennaji, *Slavery, the State, and Islam* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 23-33.

⁴⁵³ Al-Shāfi'ī, *Umm*, vol 6, 669-707; Mālik, *Muwaṭṭa'*, 559-563.

⁴⁵⁴ Al-Shāfi'ī, *Ibid*; Mālik, *Ibid*.

⁴⁵⁵ Al-Kāsānī, *Badā'i' al-ṣanā'i'*, vol 5, 5-14.

⁴⁵⁶ *Mukātiba* is a female slave who writes a contract with her master for manumission upon payment of a specific amount of money or after working to him for a particular period time; For more discussion on *zihār*, see Ali, "Money, Sex, and Power: The Contractual Nature of Marriage in Islamic Jurisprudence of the Formative Period," (Ph.D., thesis, Duke University, 2002), 250, 251, 258, 266, 274, 275.

⁴⁵⁷ *Mudabbira* is a female slave whose master promises to manumit her after his death.

⁴⁵⁸ *Umm al-Walad* is a female slave who bore a child to her master.

⁴⁵⁹ Al-Kāsānī, *Badā'i' al-ṣanā'i'*, vol 5, 10.

⁴⁶⁰ Crone's definition: "*kitāba* is a manumission conditional upon payment of a specified sum (or service) in regular installments over a specific period." See Crone, *Roman, Provincial and Islamic law*, 69.

period of time.⁴⁶¹ Although the emancipation of male and female slaves in Islam was encouraged, and there is agreement between the three Sunni jurists in this regard, Mālik noted that manumission could not be lawful if the slave was indebted or underage (*ghayr bāligh*); therefore, he or she could not be set free until becoming an adult or paying off debt,⁴⁶² while others remained enslaved with no recourse.

Al-Shāfi'ī and al-Kāsānī encouraged the manumission of female slaves in *kitābah* as an act of *ṣadaqah* (charity).⁴⁶³ They stated that if the master performed the *mukātabah* with his or her slave and died, then the contract remained valid and continued until the slave completed his debt or period of work.⁴⁶⁴ In the situation of abolishing this contract, al-Shāfi'ī's attitude is that this relates to the slave's wish not the master's; therefore, the owner could not cancel it and it was dependent on the slave's desire and ability to make payment.⁴⁶⁵ Al-Kāsānī wrote that the master was able to accept the slave's request of *mukātabah* if they knew the integrity and righteousness of the slave.⁴⁶⁶ Similarly, Mālik considered that a *mukātabah* contract between slave and master "could not be broken by the master through selling the slave or placing unreasonable condition in the contract,"⁴⁶⁷ unless the slave was not able to make the payment of the *mukātabah* and had to revert to enslavement.⁴⁶⁸ However, Mālik and al-Shāfi'ī considered that "the matter is not required to grant a contract of emancipation", while al-Kāsānī was unsure about it.⁴⁶⁹

Agreement has been reached from al-Kāsānī, Mālik and al-Shāfi'ī regarding *mukātabah*, stating that if the female slave made the contract but became pregnant and died before completing it, then her children would remain slaves and not be freed.⁴⁷⁰ The payment of this new contract amount would be her

⁴⁶¹ Al-Kāsānī, *Badā'i' al-ṣanā'i'*, vol 5, 419-410; Gordon, *Slavery in the Arab World*, 41; Brockopp, *Early Mālikī Law*, 164.

⁴⁶² Mālik, *Muwatta'*, 776.

⁴⁶³ Al-Shāfi'ī, *Umm*, vol 6, 346 and al-Kāsānī, *Badā'i' al-ṣanā'i'*, vol 10, 370-372.

⁴⁶⁴ Al-Shāfi'ī, *Ibid.*, 351.

⁴⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶⁶ Al-Kāsānī, *Badā'i' al-ṣanā'i'*, vol 10, 419.

⁴⁶⁷ Brockopp, *Early Mālikī Law*, 164.

⁴⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 182.

⁴⁶⁹ Al-Kāsānī, *Badā'i' al-ṣanā'i'*, vol 10, 176.

⁴⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, vol 5, 285.

children or her family members' debts.⁴⁷¹ Mālik stated that if the slave woman made a *kitābah* with her master but he died before she could pay the amount or fulfil the condition of the contract, then she must remain a slave until she completed it.⁴⁷² He clarified that the master could practise *nikaḥ* along with *mukātabah*, and the slave could become *Umm al-Walad* if she wished.⁴⁷³ In this case, she and her child could not be sold.⁴⁷⁴ Al-Kāsānī presented his agreement with the above opinions and adds another condition; for the *mukātabah* to be legitimized, the contract must be drawn with a declared payment, such as working for two or three months or years or paying a specific amount of money,⁴⁷⁵ as "manumission on condition of service for lifetime of the manumitter"⁴⁷⁶ was forbidden among all Sunni *madhāhib*.⁴⁷⁷

The other type of emancipation is *tadbīr*, which was the act of suspending manumission for slaves until the master's death.⁴⁷⁸ Al-Kāsānī and al-Shāfi'ī argued that the *tadbīr* was related to the master's will, but it could not be valid without the slave's agreement.⁴⁷⁹ For instance, if the master said to his slave, 'you can be set free after my death if you agree', if the slave wished to be manumitted then he would, while if he refused then he would remain in slavery.⁴⁸⁰ This slave agreement is similar to the *mukātabah* contract; these types of manumission depended primarily on the slave's desire first, then the owner's approval.

Al-Kāsānī and Mālik allowed *tadbīr* in the case of an owner and his female slave, or a slave woman who belonged to another individual, as long as the person could say, "If I buy you, you will be free after my death". In this case, if he bought her, she became *mudabbira*.⁴⁸¹ Al-Shāfi'ī provided this for his own

⁴⁷¹ Brockopp, *Early Mālikī Law*, 183.

⁴⁷² Mālik, *Muwaṭṭa'*, 567

⁴⁷³ Ibid., 789.

⁴⁷⁴ Brockopp, *Early Mālikī Law*, 164.

⁴⁷⁵ Al-Kāsānī, *Badā'i' al-ṣanā'i'*, vol 5, 432-436. For more discussion of this affair, Crone presents the contract conditions such as specific numbers of year or months of service to the master, or paying stipulation money, or celibacy, sharing of freedmen's state, enslavement freedmen's children; See Crone, *Roman, Provincial and Islamic Law*, 68-75

⁴⁷⁶ See Crone, Ibid., 75.

⁴⁷⁷ See Ibid.

⁴⁷⁸ Mālik, *Muwaṭṭa'*, 810.

⁴⁷⁹ Al-Shāfi'ī, *Umm*, vol 6, 313; Al-Kāsānī, *Badā'i' al-ṣanā'i'*, vol 10, 373.

⁴⁸⁰ Al-Shāfi'ī, Ibid.; Al-Kāsānī, Ibid.

⁴⁸¹ Al-Kāsānī, Ibid., vol 5, 451.275. A *mudabbira* is a female slave who accepts her owner's contract of freedom upon his death.

Andalusian female slave after his death.⁴⁸² Moreover, al-Kāsānī and Mālik clarified that if the *mudabbira* became gave birth and then died before her master did, then her children would inherit her status and be freed upon the master's death.⁴⁸³ Likewise, al-Shāfi'ī stated that the children followed their mother's status; therefore, if she was *mudabbira*, they were *mudabbirīn*; if she was *mukātatiba*, they were *mukātibīn* with her.⁴⁸⁴

Mālik and al-Shāfi'ī added another significant point: that the contract of *tadbīr* was changeable depending on the agreement of both the owner and the slave. For instance, if the master and the slave approved *tadbīr*, agreeing to manumit the slave after the master's death, but afterward they decided to replace it with the *mukātabah*, in this case both cases were valid, as the *mukātabah* could not cancel out the agreement of *tadbīr*.⁴⁸⁵ Thus, it can be noted that if the master died and the slave did not successfully complete the *mukātabah*, there would be no complication; he would be manumitted directly, as the contract of *tadbīr* was still valid.⁴⁸⁶ Likewise, al-Kāsānī permitted the transfer from *tadbīr* to *mukātabah*, and the al-Kāsānī insisted that Muslims accelerate their slaves' freedom.⁴⁸⁷ However, there is a consensus among the three jurists that although the promise of *tadbīr* was a lawful way for a female slave to gain her freedom, her status as a *milk al-yamīn* required her to give her master the right to have sexual relations with her.⁴⁸⁸

Manumission by *tadbīr* can be understood as the *waṣīyah* (commandment)⁴⁸⁹ to manumit a slave. This *waṣīyah* is discussed by Mālik, stipulating that the freedom of the female slave was for herself and not her children; therefore, they had to remain slaves.⁴⁹⁰ This could be changed by one condition: if the master changed his female slave's *tadbīr* by associating her children within his commandment.⁴⁹¹ Similarly al-Shāfi'ī stated that the *waṣīyah* could be changeable upon the master's will,⁴⁹² meaning *tadbīr* could also be recalled.⁴⁹³

⁴⁸² Al-Shāfi'ī, *Umm*, vol 5, 263–64.

⁴⁸³ Mālik, *Muwatta'*, 810; Al-Kāsānī, *Badā'i'*, vol 5, 226–62, 472; Brockopp, *Early Mālikī Law*, 183.

⁴⁸⁴ Al-Shāfi'ī, *Umm*, vol 6, 329, 351; See also al-Ṣan'ānī, *al-Muṣannaḥ*, vol 9, 144.

⁴⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 316; Brockopp, Brockopp, *Early Mālikī Law*, 199.

⁴⁸⁶ It the same issue if the *kitābah* was first then *tadbīr*. Al-Shāfi'ī, *Ibid.*, vol 6, 321.

⁴⁸⁷ Al-Kāsānī, *Badā'i' al-ṣanā'i'*, vol 5, 390.

⁴⁸⁸ Mālik, *Muwatta'*, 814-815; Al-Kāsānī, *Badā'i' al-ṣanā'i'*, vol 5, 282-383; Al-Shāfi'ī, *Umm*, vol 9, 330.

⁴⁸⁹ Mālik, *Ibid.*, 812.

⁴⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹² Al-Shāfi'ī, *Umm*, vol 6, 202-203.

In the case where the *mudabbira* was pregnant and she delivered before her owner's death, then her children would be slaves (*mamlūkīn*); however, if she delivered after her master's death, they inherited her status as a free individual.⁴⁹⁴

On the *waṣīyah* of *tadbīr*, al-Shāfi'ī stated that if the *waṣīyah* contained two or three terms, manumission could not be valid until establishing all the conditions.⁴⁹⁵ For instance, the master may say, 'if I die from my present sickness, therefore you (the slave) will be free'.⁴⁹⁶ In this case, the *tadbīr* included two terms: death and illness. Thus, if the master recovered from his illness and did not die, the slave could be emancipated.⁴⁹⁷ Similar divergence of the legitimacy of *tadbīr*'s commandment can be found in al-Kāsānī's view. If the master said to his female slave that she could be manumitted after 'one to ten years', then the *tadbīr* would be invalid and have to be rescinded, as in this case the commencement of the *tadbīr* command or term is unknown and his death may not happen within that time. However, al-Kāsānī noted that if the master said 'you can be manumitted after one hundred years', therefore the *tadbīr* was valid, as the period was long enough for his death to occur.⁴⁹⁸

In light of the discussion of owning slaves as well as the *tadbīr* and *mukātabah* contracts, the question of lawfully selling female slaves was raised. In the case of buying or selling female slaves, the three Sunni jurists identified the owner who resells her or gives her away as a gift; she was his *milk al-yamīn* (right hand's possession). However, Mālik stressed that if the buyer had the intention before he purchased her to sell her again, then the sale would be legal but *makrūh* (detestable) if he had any sexual relations with her.⁴⁹⁹ Comparatively, if a female slave was *mukātiba*, the jurists held different attitudes on selling her. On the one hand, al-Shāfi'ī forbade selling a *mukātiba* slave, arguing that it would not be lawful to sell her unless she failed to pay the amount of the *mukātabah*.⁵⁰⁰ On the other hand, Mālik allowed the sale of a *mukātiba* on the

⁴⁹³ Gordon, *Slavery in the Arab World*, 41.

⁴⁹⁴ Al-Shāfi'ī, *Umm*, vol 6, 202-203; See al-Ṣan'ānī, *Al-Muṣannaf*, vol 9, 144.

⁴⁹⁵ Al-Shāfi'ī, *Ibid.*, 323.

⁴⁹⁶ This is my own work of translation from Arabic to English. For the original sentence. See *Ibid.*

⁴⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹⁸ Al-Kāsānī, *Badā'i' al-ṣanā'i'*, vol 5, 375.

⁴⁹⁹ Mālik, *Muwaṭṭa'*, 812.

⁵⁰⁰ Al-Shāfi'ī, *Umm*, vol 9, 408–9.

condition that the buyer's intention must be to manumit the slave.⁵⁰¹ Finally, as with Mālik, al-Kāsānī permitted the *mukātiba* to be bought and sold if she was incapable of fulfilling the amount of the *mukātabah*. However, al-Kāsānī believed that the master's resolution in this case was *mubāḥ* (neutral: neither forbidden nor recommended) since the slave had agreed to be sold.⁵⁰²

One can argue that Barīra made a *mukātabah* with her owner, and that when she came to 'Ā'ishah bint Abī Bakr (d. 58 A.H. / 678 A.D.), the Prophet's wife, and asked her to buy and manumit her, 'Ā'ishah did so.⁵⁰³ This circumstance shows the case of selling the *mukātabah*, since the Prophet allowed his wife to buy and manumit Barīra.⁵⁰⁴ Al-Shāfi'ī clarified that in this situation Barīra was incapable of paying her *mukātabah* debt,⁵⁰⁵ and he supported his opinion by presenting two evidences of this inability. First that she had to pay five *Uqīyah* of gold to her master,⁵⁰⁶ and second, that she had accepted being sold.⁵⁰⁷ These demonstrate that it was lawful to sell the *mukātabah* in the case of the master's agreement, as shown by the slave's concluding or performing the *mukātabah* condition. However, the three jurists' opinions on *tadbīr* differ. Al-Kāsānī seriously forbade this act; similarly, Mālik prohibited the *mudabbira* to be sold or given away as a gift, but in contrast, al-Shāfi'ī deemed it permissible.⁵⁰⁸

As has been discussed in section one regarding the issue of selling the *mukātiba*, Barīra provides an excellent example of Sunni *madhāhib* views on slave *walā'* (clientage). Barīra's former master asked her new buyer ('Ā'ishah) to sell her on the condition that Barīra's *walā'* remain with him.⁵⁰⁹ The Prophet's hadith⁵¹⁰ was clear that this is not acceptable, as this right belonged to the manumitter and it was forbidden to sell it or give it away.⁵¹¹ However, a dramatic

⁵⁰¹ Mālik, *Muwatta'*, 797–98. See also Brockopp, *Early Mālikī Law*, 184.

⁵⁰² Al-Kāsānī, *Badā'i'*, vol 5, 458–59.

⁵⁰³ Al-Shāfi'ī, *Umm*, vol 5 269-270.

⁵⁰⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁰⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁰⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁰⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁰⁸ Ibid., vol 9, 305-310; Al-Kāsānī, *Badā'i' al-ṣanā'i'*, vol 5, 386,391; Mālik, *Muwatta'*, 814.

⁵⁰⁹ Al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, vol 3, "The Selling and Conferring on Others of the *Walā'* of a Manumitted Slave, Hadith Number: 2536," in *The Book of Manumission (of Slaves)*, 410; Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, vol 4, "*Al-Walā'* (Right of Inheritance) Belongs to the One Who Manumits the Slave, Hadith Number: [3776] 5- (1504)," in *The Book of Manumission*, 201; Al-Ṣan'ānī, *Al-Muṣannaf*, vol 9, 7-9.

⁵¹⁰ "Do not let that stop you, for the right of inheritance belongs to the one who manumits (the slave)"; Ibid.

⁵¹¹ Ibid.

change in the concept of *walā'* occurred during the Umayyad and the early Abbasid periods: essentially, it could be sold, bought and granted.⁵¹² Mālik agreed that *walā'* went to the manumitter, but he stated that it could be transferred to another individual if the slave sought the master's permission.⁵¹³ This is in contrast with al-Shāfi'ī, who insisted that the freedman or freedwoman's obligation was to his or her emancipator, and it could not be bought or sold.⁵¹⁴ Al-Kāsānī supported this opinion, writing that *walā'* goes to the manumitter and cannot be traded by sale, donation or will (commandment).⁵¹⁵

Finally, it is fundamental to note that the practise of *tasyīb*⁵¹⁶ of slaves was established in the pre-Islamic era and continued throughout Islam, where it took a new shape through manumitting slaves without *walā'* or conditions.⁵¹⁷ Mitter's opinion is similar to Core's; however, he argues that in the pre-Islamic period and early Islam the *tasyīb* could be identified as the process of manumitting a slave without stipulation in return for continuing to serve his previous master.⁵¹⁸ This act in Islam can be classified as a case of charity *faḍl* (favour) because it was unaccompanied by terms and could be employed with the master's desire and satisfaction.

3.3.4 The legal status of *Umm al-Walad*

It is important to differentiate between the concepts of *Umm al-Banīn* and *Umm al-Walad* in Arab society. *Umm al-Banīn* refers to a free woman who legally married and bore children for her husbands. *Umm al-Walad* refers to a female slave who is the mother of a child fathered by her master. A significant example of the development of the Arab and Islamic legal system regarding the case of slavery and manumission is the case of *Umm al-Walad*. Some scholars present

⁵¹² Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, vol 4, "The Prohibition Of Selling Or Giving Away The *Walā'*, Hadith Number: 1506," in *The Book Of Manumission*, 208.

⁵¹³ Mālik, *Muwatta'*, 556, 782; See also al-Ṣan'ānī, *al-Muṣannaf*, vol 9, 6.

⁵¹⁴ Al-Shāfi'ī, *Umm*, vol 5, 253, 268, 272, 281–90.

⁵¹⁵ Al-Kāsānī, *Badā'i'*, vol 5, 467, 509.

⁵¹⁶ Crone clarified that this act can mean to inform the slave "to 'go where he wanted' or 'put himself where he wished'"; See Crone, *Roman, Provincial and Islamic Law*, 68.

⁵¹⁷ Ibid.

⁵¹⁸ He also asserts that the law of *tasyīb* was developed throughout the Islamic period and was practised as normal until 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb era, when it was changed and modified according to *madhāhib* or jurists' opinions; Mitter, "Unconditional Manumission of Slaves in Early Islamic Law: Analysis," 59, 64, 68.

and suggest that the case of *Umm al-Walad* was practised of some antiquity societies such as in Rome. Crone states that “ the slave girl who had bore her master children was also freed without *patronate* by Justinian on her master’s death”.⁵¹⁹ During the pre-Islamic period, primary sources suggest that female slaves existed in Arab society primarily through warfare, as captives who were transformed into slaves.⁵²⁰ These captives could gain their freedom by paying a redemption or ransom.⁵²¹ In the case of female slaves, a commander of the captors had the right to divide them among his warriors as spoils of war.⁵²² However, it appears that when a female slave became the warrior’s own property, then he had the right to use her as a concubine, or sell her in the slave market.

In the *Jāhiliyya*, it was known that the Pagans did not marry their female slaves, but that they bore children to their masters known as *Umm al-Walad*. Ali states that there is a significant link between marriage and slavery in Islamic law, that both are seen as form of ownership and *milk al-yamīn*, which legitimized sex.⁵²³ Ali’s view suggests that Islam presents a connection between the marriage of a female slave and her manumission. To understand this idea, we must first observe the Qur’an’s recommendation. Verse 4:25 encourage Muslims to manumit and marry their slaves and give them a dowry.⁵²⁴ Moreover, the Prophet’s hadith tells Muslims to manumit and to marry their female slaves. One piece of evidence is the narrative of Abū Mūsá al-Ash’arī:

The Prophet, said, "who has a slave-girl and teaches her good manners and educates her and then manumits and marries her, will get a double reward; and any slave who observes Allah's Right and his master's right will get a double reward."⁵²⁵

⁵¹⁹ See Crone, *Roman, Provincial and Islamic Law*, 87.

⁵²⁰ For example, after the battle of Khaybar (7 A.H. / 629 A.D). See Ibn Al-Athīr, *Al-Kāmil Fi ’l-tārikh*, vol 2, 99; Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārikh Ṭabarī*, vol 3, 421; Al-Ya’qūbī. *Tārikh al-Ya’qūbī*, vol 1, 374.

⁵²¹ Ibn Al-Athīr, *Ibid*; Al-Ṭabarī, *Ibid*; Al-Ya’qūbī, *Ibid*.

⁵²² Ibn Al-Athīr, *Ibid*; Al-Ṭabarī, *Ibid*; Al-Ya’qūbī, *Ibid*.

⁵²³ In the case of slavery, only when the owner was male and owned females. Ali, *Marriage and Slavery in Early Islam*, 7-8.

⁵²⁴ See verse 4:25: "Wed them with the permission of their own folk, (*Auliya* - guardians or masters) and give them their *Mahr* according to what is reasonable; they (the above said captive and slave-girls), should be chaste, not adulterous, nor taking boyfriends. And after they have been taken in wedlock, if they commit illegal sexual intercourse, their punishment is half that for free (unmarried) women".

⁵²⁵ Al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* vol 3, The Book of Manumission (of Slaves), chapter 14, Hadith Number: 2544, 2547, 415-416; vol 7, chapter 17, Hadith Number: 5083, 28.

This view was practised by the Prophet himself, when he manumitted Ṣafīyah bint Ḥayyī (d.50 A.H. /670 A.D.) and regarded her manumission as her *mahr* (dowry).⁵²⁶ A further example is the case of Māriyah al-Qibṭiyah (d.16 A.H. / 636 A.D), an *Umm al-Walad* who was a Coptic female slave; the Prophet manumitted and married her, and she bore him Ibrāhīm.⁵²⁷ Considering these examples, it should not be surprising that there is a connection between the concepts of slavery and marriage. Islamic law presented these connections, which revealed explicit legislation to give the female slave her right to take a dowry in the case of her master's legal sexual practice in the form of marriage. This may have caused a contradiction in the development of Arab law and custom by permitting the practise of interracial marriage, as it was practised by the Prophet.

Schacht suggests that in Islam "there was no distinction in theory between the slave-girl and the concubine taken in war"; as the Qur'an permits men to take female slaves as concubines, there is no difference between the two groups.⁵²⁸ In contrast, Ali argues that a Muslim man might have sexual relations with his female slave; however, he cannot marry her as long as she is enslaved, as in the case of the Prophet and Ṣafīyah.⁵²⁹ First, as was discussed earlier, verse 4:25 shows the Qur'an declaring that it is legal for Muslims to marry their female slaves by giving them a dowry. Therefore, the cases of Ṣafīyah and Māriyah cannot be evidence that it is required to manumit a female slave in order to marry her. Secondly, if manumitting female slaves before marrying them was required, why did Muslims during and after the Prophet's life not take this custom as a principle? This decision instead depended on the person himself (the female slave's patron), such as whether he chose to manumit her or to give her another item, such as money for a dowry.

The attitude toward *Umm al-Walad* began to change from the 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb era (13-23 A.H. / 635-644 A.D.) onward. The reign of Ibn al-Khaṭṭāb was an interlude in the fate of female slaves as mother of her master's child. This can be seen clearly in Ibn al-Khaṭṭāb's hadith: "if a slave girl gives birth to a

⁵²⁶ See Al-Ṣan'ānī, *Al-muṣannaf*, 269-271; Al-Bukhārī, *Ibid.*, vol 7, The Book of an Nikah, chapter 14: Whoever Regarded the Manumission of a Slave-Girl as her *mahr*, Hadith Number: 5086, 30.

⁵²⁷ Ibn Sa'd, *Al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*, vol 10, 201.

⁵²⁸ Schacht, "Umm Al-Walad".

⁵²⁹ Ali, *Marriage and Slavery in Early Islam*, 167.

child from her master, he must not sell her, disinherit her or give her away. He enjoys her, and when he dies, she becomes free.”⁵³⁰ This example presents a new idea regarding the destiny of *Umm al-Walad*. A new legislation in Muslim Sharia by ‘Umar produced a new key to the phenomenon of social mobility for female slaves, as neither the Qur’an nor the Prophet had mentioned this rule.⁵³¹ In all likelihood, Ibn al-Khaṭṭāb modified an ancient habit of Arabs in *Jāhiliyya* and the era of the Prophet.⁵³² It is perhaps ‘Umar’s intention to command the freeing of *Umm al-Walad*, as the number of female slaves and the mothers of the slave owner’s children flowed into the Muslim community. Therefore, he developed a new law commensurate with the conditions of the state, such as in the case of female slaves’ children, which may have affected their separation. The order of the second caliph in the case of the mother of a child was intended to grant religious legitimacy to this Muslim social arrangement. It also protected the social system and rules in later periods,⁵³³ such as the case of Sunnah of the companions or the caliph. It has been mentioned that a similar practise was found in ancient Roman custom. Gardner notes that the newborns of female slaves belonged to their master or owner, but if a slave woman was freed, her children would be considered freeborn.⁵³⁴ The owner had the full capacity to manumit his female slaves and their children, but under the condition of a marriage, the child could take their father’s social status.⁵³⁵ Lerner discusses similar practices among the northern tribes and individuals, particularly in Mesopotamian societies. Hammurabi’s laws present a parallel decree against the unlawful sale of a mother who has given birth to sons, effective during and after her master’s life, but her status could remain that of a slave.⁵³⁶ To a parallel extent, both Mesopotamian societies and Islamic law present that *Umm al-Walad* should gain distinguished status and could be manumitted after her master’s death. An incident that may provide perspective on the fates of female

⁵³⁰ This is my own translation of the hadith. It was narrated by Mālik from Nāfi’ from ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Umar Ayyumā, that ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb said: “*Ayyumā ‘amā walidah waladat min sayyidihā Finnahu lā yabūhā wa-lā yahubbuhā wa-lā yūrathuhā, wa-huwa yatamattu’ bihā, Fa-idhā māta fa-hiya ḥurrah.*”; Asbahī, Mālik, “Itq Ummahāt Al-awlād Wa-jāmi’ Al-qaḍā’ Fī ‘l-‘attāqah,” in al- *Muwaṭṭa’*, 2nd ed., vol 2 (Beirut: Dār Al-Gharb Al-Islāmī, 1997), 776; See al-Ṣan’ānī, *Al-muṣannaf*, vol 6, 287, 291-294.

⁵³¹ Hallaq suggests that Ibn al-Khaṭṭāb ’s reign was arguably the most momentous of all, it predetermined the success of the Islamic state enterprise that laid the foundations for all the civilization that was to come”; Hallaq, *The origin and evolution of Islamic law*, 29.

⁵³² Rahman, *Islamic Methodology in History*, 182.

⁵³³ Athamina, “How Did Islam Contribute,” 386, 387.

⁵³⁴ Gardner, *Women in Roman Law & Society*, 139.

⁵³⁵ Ibid., 137; Shumway, “Freedom and Slavery in Roman Law,” 643. Moreover, Brockopp writes that under Byzantine law, “if the man had no wife, his concubine and children were free upon his death, unless he bequeathed them to his heirs”.

⁵³⁶ Lerner, *The Creation of Patriarchy*, 113.

captive slaves is the story of 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib (d.40 A.H. / 660 A.D.) and his argument with Ibn al-Khaṭṭāb towards the captured daughters of Yazdajird (d. 31 A.H. / 652 A.D.). 'Ali said not to treat them as common captives; they were different because they were daughters of a king.⁵³⁷ This anecdote⁵³⁸ often enforces the concept that there was a different status for common female slaves and noble female slaves. This issue will be discussed in the following chapters in terms of the social mobility of female slaves.

The position of *Umm al-Walad* was crystalized in the Umayyad period. Buthaynah Bin Ḥusayn states that the Umayyad caliphs concentrated on procreation, not recognizing children from their freed noble wives or their female slaves.⁵³⁹ Moreover, she stresses that female slaves' sons were also not acceptable and that they were isolated from the crown or from political leadership.⁵⁴⁰ For example, Maslamah b. 'Abd al-Malik (120 A.D. / 738 A.D.) was the son of a female slave, yet he became a remarkable political leader.⁵⁴¹ However, primary sources do not mention any incident that included the case of manumitting the Umayyad's *Umm al-Walad*.⁵⁴² The extraordinary change in attitude toward the mother of a child might date from the era of Yazīd b. al-Walīd (126 A.H. / 744 A.D.), the first Umayyad caliph whose mother was a slave.⁵⁴³ Furthermore, the last two caliphs, Ibrāhīm b. al-Walīd (d. 132 A.H. / 749 A.D) and Marwān b. Muḥammad (d. 132 A.H. / 750 A.D.), were children of foreign slave mothers.⁵⁴⁴ The three previous examples of the Umayyads could be considered key to creating the later era in which the position of the *Umm al-Walad* and her status was prominent. In other words, the 'embryo'⁵⁴⁵ of the *Umm al-Walad* transformed her status, and this movement emerged by the end of Umayyad period. Crucially, later only three Caliphs of the Abbasid period

⁵³⁷ 'Ali bought Yazdajird's daughters. He gave one of them to his son al-Ḥasan, the second to Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr, and the third to 'Abd Allāh b. 'Umar. See Maḥmūd al-Zamakhsharī, *Rabī' Al-abrār Wa-nuṣūṣ Al-akhbār* (Baghdad: Wizārat Al-Awqāf Wa-al-Shu'ūn Al-Dīniyah, 1982), vol 3, 18-19.

⁵³⁸ While some researchers argue that the source of this anecdote is relatively late and therefore its accuracy cannot be confirmed, it is still interesting and worth mentioning nonetheless.

⁵³⁹ Buthaynah Bin Ḥusayn, *Nisā' Al-khulafā' Al-Umawīyīn (qirā'ah Jadīdah)* (Bayrūt: Manshūrāt Al-Jamal, 2014), 86-107.

⁵⁴⁰ Ibid., 104.

⁵⁴¹ Ibid.

⁵⁴² Ibid., 85.

⁵⁴³ His mother was a Persian princess, Shahfrand, the daughter of Firūz; see Ismā'īl b. Kathīr, *Al-Bidāyah wa'l-nihāyah*, vol 10 (Bayrūt: Maktabat Al-Ma'ārif, 2004), 1472.

⁵⁴⁴ Bin Ḥusayn, *Nisā' Al-khulafā'*, 108.

⁵⁴⁵ I borrowed this phrase from Hallaq, *The Origin and Evolution of Islamic Law*, 78.

were born of free noblewomen, while the others were children of foreign female slaves.⁵⁴⁶ This provides the case study for the present thesis.

In the classical period, the three Sunni jurists, al-Kāsānī, Mālik and al-Shāfi‘ī did not make any major modifications to the status or the rights of *Umm al-Walad*. Rather, these jurists confirmed previous laws on the freeing of the mother of the child after her master’s death and prohibited her sale.⁵⁴⁷ Al-Kāsānī and al-Shāfi‘ī drew attention to female slaves and the status of *Umm al-Walad*. They argued that a female slave could not be *Umm al-Walad* if her *nakeḥ* (the man she got pregnant from) was a slave; the condition for gaining this status was that sexual intercourse must be with a free man.⁵⁴⁸ This is associated with the previously discussed rights of freedwomen and their choice to be remain with or leave their slave husbands, as a slave had fewer privileges and a lower status than a free citizen. Therefore, it made sense to determine the position of *Umm al-Walad* by the freedom or enslavement of her *nakeḥ*. Ultimately, the mother of a child status “acquires certain irrevocable legal rights”.⁵⁴⁹

Conclusion

The foundation of slavery began in ancient society. Slavery and manumission were practised by Arabs from the *Jāhiliyya* period, and remained throughout Muslim society as legal institution with varying principles and rules. However, the symmetry of certain practises between Muslim law and ancient laws can at best be described as parallels, given the differences and incompatibilities in the application of these laws. It seems likely that the Islamic rules developed during the Prophet’s era depended on the Qur’an and the Prophet’s hadiths. They

⁵⁴⁶ However, Robinson presents a significant point that the fundamental reason for the spread of the phenomena of concubinage and *Umm al-Walad* among free men was related to the capacity of female slaves to bear children to their masters without complication of marriage and the burden of paying dowry. See Robinson, “Prosopographical Approaches to the Nasab Tradition,” 151.

⁵⁴⁷ Al-Kāsānī, *Badā’i’ al-ṣanā’i’*, vol 3, 395-396 and vol 5, 396-397; Mālik, *Muwatta’*, 776 and al-Shāfi‘ī, *Umm*, vol 6, 330.

⁵⁴⁸ Al-Kāsānī, *Ibid.*, vol 5, 396, 397 and al-Shāfi‘ī, *Ibid.*, 330.

⁵⁴⁹ Lewis, *Race and Slavery in the Middle East*, 8; For further discussion of *Umm al-Walad*’s condition, see the recent study of Younus Mirza, “Remembering Umm al-Walad: Ibn Kathir’s Treatise on the Salve of the Concubine,” in *Concubines and Courtesans: Women and Slavery in Islamic History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 297-315.

meant to improve the relations between the owner and his slaves, specifically in terms of the slaves' rights and duties, while also encouraging the owners to manumit their slaves. Later, from the Caliphs the Umayyad and Abbasid, the statuses of the *ḥakam* and *qāḍī* were created, establishing major changes in the system of Islamic law. This implies that they associated and interacted with the development of general Islamic law and Islamic slavery and manumission laws. Consequently, the changes to the general Islamic law, such as the *ḥakam*'s opinion and judgment, brought new modifications to slavery and manumission legislation. Islam did not forbid slavery, but rather managed and organised it, encouraging Muslims to free slaves and maintaining the relation between them.

The development of the law and the presence of the Islamic *madhāhib* created new and various opinions toward slaves and freed persons. This was enough to show a clear effect of jurists' attitudes on the verdicts of Muslim social life according to their *madhāhib*. There are convergent and divergent views between the al-Kāsānī, Mālik and al-Shāfi'ī opinions regarding the female slave life cycle. They appear to agree on the issue of marriage and *nikaḥ* of female slaves in terms of her religion, and likewise the authorization of a female slave's separation from her husband. Moreover, they acknowledged the status of *Umm al-Walad* and forbade her from being sold or bought. The attitude toward methods of emancipation such as *mukātabah* and *tadbīr* are generally agreed upon among the three Sunni jurists. In contrast, they are in disagreement about the case of selling *mudabbira* and *mukātiba*, and the freedmen's *walā'*. It can be concluded that the Qur'anic text focuses on the improvement of slaves' relationships and status through the Muslim encouragement of charity to earn God's reward, while the early and the classical Islamic periods presented a massive modification focused on slaves manumission.⁵⁵⁰

The discussion in this chapter acts as a foundation for the rest of the present thesis. The three *madhāhib* were developing during the selected period of this research, revisiting the question of divergence and convergence between the legal scholars' and female slaves' social practices and realities in the Abbasid courts. This comparison could offer a new attitude toward the social status and rank of slave woman, freedwoman and *Umm al-Walad*. The main theme of this

⁵⁵⁰ Brockopp, *Early Maliki Law*, 161.

discussion will be examined further in later chapters and sections. The case of female slaves' social mobility and methods for manumission will be examined throughout the whole thesis. Furthermore, We will observe the rights and duties of *jawāri* when analysing the issue of enslaved women's marriages and *nikaḥ* as well as the impact these events had on their social status. We also will consider the status of *Umm al-Walad* and other female slaves. In the following chapters, we discuss female slaves' social status and mobility according to historical, literary and biographical texts.

Chapter Four

The slave markets and female slaves' social status

Introduction

The previous chapter explored the debate in the legal system on the practice of slavery since antiquity and revealed the development in the attitudes of Islamic law toward enslavement and manumission depending on the Qur'an and the Sunnah. The chapter then explored the laws of the Sunni jurists al-Kāsānī, Mālik and al-Shāfi'ī concerning female slaves. The rights and methods of manumission for female slaves depended on the nature and practice of individuals, and were motivated and developed based on the scholars' opinions. The previous chapter explored and analysed the legal status of the *Umm al-Walad* and her privileges as a primary model of the development of Islamic law, as well as the effect on the social mobility of enslaved individuals.

As this research presents the historical background of slavery and manumission practised in Islam, the current chapter will examine the presence of enslaved women regarding their number, origins and significance of their professions and titles using a prosopography and statistical approach. This chapter will also provide a historical and literary discussion and analysis in order to identify the extent of women's social status and position and to determine the primary factors and elements affecting their social ascent in the Abbasid social hierarchy.

4.1 The question of slave markets, and slaves' number and origins

The ownership of a large number of slaves, both female and male, was common practice in the Islamic classical period. While the bulk of knowledge concentrates on the female slaves of caliphs and elites, there is little research focusing on the slaves owned by common people (the *'amma*). History in general tends to concentrate on the aristocracy, so the elites, nobility and royalty make up the dominant strata in biographies and primary sources. Khalil

'Athamina stresses that this detail comes as no surprise, as slavery was practiced among the upper class and nobility as a sign of prestige and status in society.⁵⁵¹ Ḥusayn al-Faqīh, however, argues that the phenomena of owning *jawārī* and *qiyān* in the early Abbasid period was not restricted to the caliphs or wealthy figures in society, but extended to the common people as well.⁵⁵² Almost every household had slave women as a result of the increasing economy and the large number of slaves captured in war.⁵⁵³

We have reason to support al-Faqīh's view. *Kitāb al-Kharāj* by Abū Yūsuf indicates a high number of fugitive slaves (*ibāq*),⁵⁵⁴ both female and male, in Abbasid state custody. The evidence presents a specific system for identifying these slaves and delivering them to their masters or reselling them in the slave market.⁵⁵⁵ This method permitted the governors to register records of the names, masters, tribes, origins, genders and the month and year of slaves who fled.⁵⁵⁶ In certain circumstances, this system of counting and classifying the *ibāq* could inform us about examining their numbers, and indicates that the common people has been owned a considerable number of slaves.

Muḥammad al-Mubarrad's *Kitāb al-Kāmil fī 'l-lughah wa'l-ada'*⁵⁵⁷ cites significant information supporting the high number of female slaves in Islamic state. Al-Mubarrad referred to this verse by al-'Abbās al-Riyāshī,⁵⁵⁸ a famous Abbasid poet (d. 257 A.H./871 A.D.):

O Lord, the children of concubines number many among us;
Lord, let me enter a region where I shall not find a half-breed⁵⁵⁹

"إن أولاد السراري كثُرُوا يا ربِّ فينا..... رَبِّي أَدْخَلَنِي بِلاداً لا أرى فيها هَجِيناً"

⁵⁵¹ 'Athamina, "How Did Islam Contribute," 388.

⁵⁵² Ḥusayn al-Faqīh, "Al-dawr al-ijtimā'ī wa'l al-thaqāfī lil-'imā' wa'l-qiyā fī 'l-'aṣr al-'Abbāsī al-awwal (132-232/649-846)," *Kan, Junior Historian Series*, no. 19 (2013), 166-168, <http://www.kanhistorique.org/Archive/2013/Issue19/Alqian>.

⁵⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁵⁴ Slaves who escaped from their masters; See Al-Zabīdī, *Tāj al-'arūs*, vol 25, 5.

⁵⁵⁵ Abū Yūsuf, *Kitāb al-Kharāj*, 184.

⁵⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁵⁷ Muḥammad al-Mubarrad, *Kitāb al-Kāmil fī 'l-lughah wa'al-adab* (Riyad: Wizārat al-Awqāf, 1998).

⁵⁵⁸ It is significant to mention that al-Riyāshī was al-Mubarrad's teacher. For more information about al-Riyāshī, see Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-a'yān* 3, 27-28; Shams al-Dīn al-Dhahabī, *Siyar al-'ālam al-nubalā'* (Bayrūt: Mu'assasat al-Risālah, 1982), 372-272.

⁵⁵⁹ My translation; the original Arabic text is included for clarification; Al-Mubarrad, *Kitāb al-Kāmil fī 'l-lughah wa'al-adab*, 174.

Al-Riyāshī's verse indicates a notable number of concubines in his era by presuming that their children were so common that that he prayed to Allah (God) to find a region without *hajīn* (half-breed or concubine's children). One can infer from al-Riyāshī's text that *jawāri* were owned by many different members of Abbasid society. It can be assumed that slave ownership was not limited to the nobility; this shows it is more likely that commoners, the *'amma* in Abbasid society participated in the phenomenon of owning male and female slaves. While not all men took concubines, the owners of slave women did come from different social strata.

It is clear, however, that the existing knowledge and primary biographies focus more on famous, wealthy elites and their retinue than on common people; therefore, information on the lives and ownership of commoners may not be represented in the bulk of Arabic primary sources.⁵⁶⁰ Our data, presented in Tables 4.1 to 4.9, show that female slaves of different profession and position were owned, including by caliphs, elites and wealthy and famous figures in Abbasid society. Leila Ahmed stresses that elite men had great merit in possessing great numbers of enslaved females.⁵⁶¹ This fact meant that they had the wealth and social prestige to afford not only to purchase female slaves but also to provide private construction and households for the *ḥarīm* (both freewomen and female slaves).⁵⁶² Moreover, the *ḥarīm*'s residence included several rooms and apartments and was separately furnished for elite men's wives and *Ummahāt al-Awlād* as well as for other enslaved females.⁵⁶³ Importantly, wealth was a substantial motivation for noble men, more so than commoners, to own a high number of enslaved women.⁵⁶⁴ The main practice, including 'the acceptance of concubinage amongst Islamic elites',⁵⁶⁵ is a key factor of our study. We chose female slaves, in particular, as they are the focus of attention in the primary sources as well as of researchers and scholars.⁵⁶⁶

⁵⁶⁰ A great extent of the information on female slaves owned by common people is still unknown.

⁵⁶¹ Leila Ahmed, *Women and Gender in Islam: Historical Roots of a Modern Debate* (New Haven; Yale University Press, 1993), 117.

⁵⁶² Ibid.

⁵⁶³ Ibid

⁵⁶⁴ Ibid

⁵⁶⁵ Robinson, "Prosopographical Approaches to the Nasab Tradition," 133.

⁵⁶⁶ This will be discussed later in this chapter.

Arabic historical and literary incidents provide significant evidence for Abbasid caliphs owning a high number of slave women. Caliph al-Mutawakkil (d. 247 A.H./861 A.D.) is said to have had owned over four thousand *jawārī*, or concubines.⁵⁶⁷ Athamina states that al-Mutawakkil's practices may indicate an expansion of the number of *jawārī* in his region.⁵⁶⁸ Likewise, early evidence from the Hārūn al-Rashīd region highlights the custom of possessing concubines. Al-Ṭabarī reported that al-Rashīd owned nineteen *Umm al-Walad*,⁵⁶⁹ as well as a number of female servants, singers and poets among his slaves.⁵⁷⁰ Similarly, al-Ya'qūbī writes that al-Rashīd was among the first caliphs to take a large number of *qiyān* in his possession; as a result, the caliphs after him followed.⁵⁷¹ The prevalence of female slaves indicates that elite figures in Abbasid society may have been obsessed with owning a large number of *jawārī*. As a result, these female slaves can be understood as figures with an impact on Abbasid society.⁵⁷² Kristina Richardson argues that two positions for Abbasid *jawārī*, *Ummahāt al-Awlād* and *qiyān*, are the most commonly found in the historical records, while portrayals of other enslaved women "languished in obscurity".⁵⁷³ This chapter examines and attempts to provide a comprehensive picture of the social status and rank of different positions of female slaves in the Abbasid era.

Significantly, the superiority of owning *jawārī* had to do with the slave markets and traders' (*nakhāson*) profits.⁵⁷⁴ A slave trader (singular. *nakhās*) always endeavoured to gain the best economic advantage; therefore, the slave market⁵⁷⁵ distinguished between the prices of educated and illiterate female slaves.⁵⁷⁶ Al-Rasheed notes that *jawārī* were trained to seek higher positions

⁵⁶⁷ Al-Mas'ūdī, *Murūj al-Dhahab*, vol 4, 100; Athamina, "How Did Islam Contribute," 389.

⁵⁶⁸ Ibid., 388.

⁵⁶⁹ A female slave who bore a child from her master; for more details on *Umm al-Walad* see Chapter Three, section 3.3.4. See also Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh Ṭabarī* 8, 361.

⁵⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁵⁷¹ Al-Ya'qūbī, *Mushākalat al-nās li-zamānihim (The Adaptation of Men to Their Time)*, ed., William Millward (Beirut: New Book Publishing House, 1962), 36, 37.

⁵⁷² Al-Rasheed, "Slave Girls under the Early 'Abbāsīd," 102.

⁵⁷³ Kristina Richardson, "Singing Slave Girls (Qiyān) of the 'Abbasid Court in the Ninth and Tenth Centuries," in *Children in Slavery thought the Ages*, ed. Gwyn Campbell, Suzanne Miers and Joseph Miller (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2009), 115.

⁵⁷⁴ Athamina, "How Did Islam Contribute," 403.

⁵⁷⁵ Karkh was one of the largest slave markets in the Abbasid era. See al-Ya'qūbī, *Kitāb al-Buldān* (Laydin: Maṭba' Brīl, 1980), 17, 18. For more information on Islamic slave markets and suppliers, see al-Iṣṭakhrī, *Al-Masālik wa-al-mamālik*, 45; Mez, *Al-Ḥaḍārah al-Islāmīyah*, vol 1, 45, 55, 70, 186, 205, 223, 282, 305, 316, 318.

⁵⁷⁶ Gordon writes that "the production of trained slave women and a reliance on concubinage, an institution in wide use across early Islamic/Near Eastern society." See Gordon, "Abbasid Courtesans," 3; Idem., "Arib al-Ma'muniya," 89; Athamina, "How Did Islam Contribute," 402; Richardoson, "Singing slave girls," 110.

and extensive fame.⁵⁷⁷ Mernissi agreed with al-Rasheed, stating that if a *jārīyah* wanted to gain the highest status and reach the caliph's court, she had to be clever and well educated because beauty and youthfulness were not enough.⁵⁷⁸ Female slaves' "beauty and performance ability" were both necessary at Abbasid court gatherings.⁵⁷⁹ Schlein writes that essentially, high intellect and talents in singing, poetry and religious affairs assisted female slaves in gaining mobility in Abbasid society, while their beauty, sex appeal and sexual temptation and desire acted as a second influence on their social status.⁵⁸⁰ However, above all the slave trade depended upon price haggling,⁵⁸¹ and competition among the traders was indispensable to the education of their female slaves. Slave women became significant merchandise; thus, their education and knowledge were attractive requirements for the buyer.

Al-Jāhīz, in his work *Risālat al-qiyān*, drew attention to the phenomenon of obsession and infatuation with owning literate slave girls.⁵⁸² This indicates that *jawārī's* prices were high due to the people's desire for ownership.⁵⁸³ The lives of royalty and the nature of their *majālis* as cultural gatherings⁵⁸⁴ required singers and poets, both male and female. This supports the possibility that talented slave girls were more desirable than their illiterate peers. The number of *jawārī* in Abbasid society raised the importance of competition: first, between the slave merchants by educating their female slaves, as a literate slave was most desirable; and second, between the female slaves themselves, when showing their skills and talents to notable buyers.⁵⁸⁵

4.1.1 Female slaves' origins

Arabic biographies and historical sources identify female slaves according to their ethnic origins.⁵⁸⁶ Al-Jāhīz mentioned a number of classification of *jawārī* to

⁵⁷⁷ Al-Rasheed, "Slave Girls under the Early 'Abbāsids," 157.

⁵⁷⁸ Mernissi, *The Forgotten Queens of Islam*, 67.

⁵⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 11.

⁵⁸⁰ Schlein, "The Talent and The Intellect," 76.

⁵⁸¹ Al-Jāhīz, "*Risālat al-qiyān*," 3, 73.

⁵⁸² *Ibid.*, 77

⁵⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸⁴ Gordon, "Abbasid Courtesans and the Question," 11. These *majālis* held various purposes, including songs, poetry or religious debates. See also Jamāl Sarḥān, *Al-musāmarah wa-l-munādamah 'inda al-'Arab ḥattā al-qam al-rābi' al-hijrī* (master's thesis, Bayrut: Dār al-Waḥdah, 1981), 6.

⁵⁸⁵ By "notable buyers" I refer to great social, political or wealthy figures.

⁵⁸⁶ 'Athamina, "How Did Islam Contribute," 391.

their colours and origins: "In [Baṣrah], Indian slave-girls are favoured. In the Yemen and al-Aghwār, Ethiopian slave-girls are favoured, while the [Byzantine] are popular in al-Shām".⁵⁸⁷ It is clear from al-Jāḥiẓ that some origins were considered superior to others depending on the region and slave-owner's preference for possessing female slaves of a specific race. Fundamentally, cultural and social changes affected the desire to possess female slaves of certain origins. During the Umayyad period the caliph 'Abd al-Malik b. Marwān indicated that Berber⁵⁸⁸ slave girls had the best figure for sexual gratification; that Persian slave girls were the perfect choice for bearing children; and the ideal servant is a female slave from Byzantium.⁵⁸⁹ Likewise, Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī noted in his work *Al-Baṣā'ir wa'l-dhakhā'ir* that the Sind women were preferred over other origins because of their long hair, low dowry and the ideal body, making them the greatest for pleasure.⁵⁹⁰

From his eleventh-century epistle entitled "*Risālat shirā al-raqīq wa-taqlīb al-'abīd*",⁵⁹¹ Ibn Buṭlān a famous Christian physician from Baghdād, wrote that Berber women combined pleasure, serving and reproducing, while those most trustworthy, loyal, obedient and effective at serving came from Byzantium.⁵⁹² Other popular origins for bearing children were Persian, Yemeni and Sindi slave girls; for nursing, Andalusia; for singing, Madīnah and Makkah; and for keeping track of capital, Indian and Nubian slaves were superior.⁵⁹³ The best origin for a concubine was Qandahār, as they were known for pleasure.⁵⁹⁴

Ibn Buṭlān's description also included suggestions for undesirable female slaves; many avoided owning slaves from Ṭa'īf, as most of them were infertile.⁵⁹⁵ Similarly, African female woman were unfavourable for either pleasure or reproduction due to their ascribed poor behaviour; rather they were

⁵⁸⁷ Al-Jāḥiẓ, "*Risālat al-qiḡān*," 2, 163-164. I borrowed the English translation from Al-Rasheed, "Slave Girls under the Early 'Abbāsids," 106.

⁵⁸⁸ The word Berber refers to members from the north of Africa, now known as Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya and other countries. See al-Qazwīnī, *Āthār al-bilād wa-akhbār al-'ibād*, 17; Ibn Buṭlān, "*Risālah shirā al-raqīq*," 373.

⁵⁸⁹ Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil fī 'l-Tārīkh*, 4, 295.

⁵⁹⁰ Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī, *al-Baṣā'ir wa'l-dhakhā'ir* (Bayrūt: Dār Ṣādir, 1984), vol 5, 156.

⁵⁹¹ Ibn Buṭlān, "*Risālah shirā al-raqīq*," vol 1, 333-390.

⁵⁹² Ibid., 352, 372-378. See Al-Rasheed's thesis for English translation of some passages in Ibn Buṭlān *risālah*. Al-Rasheed, "Slave Girls under the Early 'Abbāsids," 108-109.

⁵⁹³ Ibn Buṭlān, Ibid., 352, 372-378.

⁵⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁹⁵ Ibid.

beneficial for dancing.⁵⁹⁶ Slaves of Daylam origin were undesirable because of their distasteful morals, but they had exceptional patience.⁵⁹⁷ Slaves from Ḥabashah were disadvantageous for singing and dancing but suitable for keeping and guarding households.⁵⁹⁸ Turkish slave women were reputed to lack loyalty and allegiance, but they made good *Ummahāt al-Awlād*.⁵⁹⁹

Our available database presented in Table 4.12 shows that the most female slaves were native *muwalladāt*, with a total number of 38 recorded slave women. The second most common origin was Byzantium, with 9 female slaves.⁶⁰⁰ ‘Ubayd Allāh b. Khurradādhbih writes that “the large and massive number of *jawārī* were from the Byzantium and Andalusī origin”.⁶⁰¹ Al-Rasheed notes that slaves of Byzantine⁶⁰² origin were overwhelmingly desirable in the Abbasid era on account of their white skin and the fact that they received a higher education than slaves of other races.⁶⁰³ The areas producing the lowest number of female slaves were Qandahār, Yemen, Sogdia, Khawārizm Sicily and Rayy.

Gordon writes that the question of a *jārīyah*’s origin was crucial when attempting to gain higher social mobility,⁶⁰⁴ and linguistic ability was important to a slave girl’s success. The *muwalladāt*, being native speakers, could attain a rapid education more easily than non-native Arabic speaking slaves,⁶⁰⁵ which gave them an advantage and proven superiority over their peers.⁶⁰⁶ Thus, the high desirability of *muwalladāt* was due to the fact that they were native Arabic speakers and were well educated in order to be customized and specialized for a specific profession by their owners. The data in Table 4.16 shows that 18 of the *qiyān* were *muwalladāt*. Much similarity number is found in Table 4.17, which also shows 16 of 37 *shā’irāt* (poets) of *muwalladāt* origin. In Table 4.13, *muwalladāt* from Madīnah comprise the highest number, while Yamāmah and Baṣrah represent the middle number. However, female slaves from Kūfah and

⁵⁹⁶ Ibn Buṭlān, “*Risālah shirā al-raqīq*,” 352, 372-378.

⁵⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰⁰ Although there are 218 women of unknown origin, the available number with known origin present the best data for our discussion.

⁶⁰¹ ‘Ubayd Allāh b. Khurradādhbi, *Kitāb al-masālik wa’l-mamālik* (Laydin: Maṭba‘ Brīl, 1889).

⁶⁰² In his thesis, Al-Rahseed refers to slaves from Byzantium as “Greek slave girls”. See Al-Rasheed, “Slave Girls under the Early ‘Abbāsids,” 90.

⁶⁰³ Ibid.

⁶⁰⁴ Gordon, “Abbasid Courtesans and the Question of Social Mobility,” 7-10.

⁶⁰⁵ Ibid; Richardson, “Singing slave girls,” 110.

⁶⁰⁶ Richardson, Ibid.

Ḥijāz have the lowest number.⁶⁰⁷ It is not surprising to find Madīnah *muwalladāt* were the most popular category. Shihāb al-Dīn al-Nuwayrī's work reveals that Madīnah *muwalladāt* were in demand from the early Islamic period, and flourished through the Umayyad and Abbasid periods.⁶⁰⁸ For example, a famous singer from Madīnah, known as 'Azzah al-Maylā',⁶⁰⁹ and Jamīlah both belonged to Banī Sulaym in the same region.⁶¹⁰ Similarly, Ḥabbābah and Salāmah, *qiyān* of Caliph Yazīd b. 'Abd al-Malik, were both Madīnah *muwalladāt*.⁶¹¹

Another significant reason for the popularity of Madīnah *muwalladāt* is that this region was considered the cradle of Arabic singers and song. Both al-Iṣfahānī and al-Nuwayrī present considerable examples of male Madīnah singers, whom the female slaves took their professions from. In the Umayyad period, Sā'ib b. Khāthir (d. 63 A.H./ 683 A.D.) was the singer who created rhythm and the first to use it.⁶¹² Comparable Abbasid era singers from Madīnah were Mālik b. Abī al-Samḥ, Yūnis al-Kātib, 'Ubayd Allāh b. Munabbih, Makhāriq, Yazīd Ḥawrā' and Mi'bid al-Yaqṭīni.⁶¹³ Ibn Buṭlān indicated that nine-year-old girls from Berber received an education for three years in Madīnah,⁶¹⁴ followed by another three years in Makkah,⁶¹⁵ and at age fifteen would be sent to Iraq to retrain and exercise their skills.⁶¹⁶ Evidently, Madīnah was a significant place of origin for

⁶⁰⁷ There were 8 *muwalladāt* with an unknown place of birth.

⁶⁰⁸ Shihāb al-Dīn al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāya' al-arab fī funūn al-adab* (Bayrut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyah, 2004), vol 5, 65-111.

⁶⁰⁹ (d. late first/seventh or early second/eighth century. See Suzanne Meyers Sawa, "'Azza al-Maylā'," in Encyclopaedia of Islam, THREE, Edited by: Kate Fleet, Gudrun Krämer, Denis Matringe, John Nawas, Everett Rowson," (May 2018), accessed 8 June 2018, http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_ei3_COM_23983.

⁶¹⁰ Al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāya' al-arab fī funūn al-adab*, vol 5, 39, 52.

⁶¹¹ *Ibid.*, 58.

⁶¹² Other examples of famous Madīnah singers in the Umayyad era include: Mi'bid b. Wahab, Muḥammad b. 'Ā'ishah and 'Abd Allāh b. Muḥriz. See *Ibid.*, vol 4, 224-260; 5, 39; Al-Iṣfahānī, *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, vol 8, 228-230.

⁶¹³ See Al-Nuwayrī, *Ibid.*, 269, 273, 275, 295; 5, 16; Al-Iṣfahānī, *Ibid.*, vol 1, 46-61, 145, vol 2, 132, vol 3, 176, vol 4, 277, vol 5, 68, vol 14, 75, vol 18, 244.

⁶¹⁴ Although Christopher Rose noted that Madīnah was a place of "feminine qualities expected of socially refined women," in our present research we identify Madīnah as the ideal place for the education and refinement of female slaves. Christopher Rose, "Owned by the Right Hand: The theory and Practise of slavery in Islamic Society," (M.A. thesis, Austin: University of Texas, 2000), accessed February 15, 2016, https://www.academia.edu/354364/Owned_by_the_Right_Hand_The_Theory_and_Practice_of_Slavery_in_Islamic_Societies, 38.

⁶¹⁵ Although Ibn Buṭlān mentioned Makkah as a remarkable place to educate female slaves, there is no indication of female slaves or *muwalladāt* from Makkah in our database. It is significant to note that the first singer in Islam who transferred the Persian singing style to Arabic singing was from Makkah, known as Sa'īd b. Misjah. Another example is 'Abd Allāh b. Wahb, who was a teacher for famed singers such as Jāmi' and Ibrāhīm al-Mawṣilī. Thus, it could be suggested that this region was a great place to educate female slaves. See al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāya' al-arab*, vol 4, 224, 372, 373.

⁶¹⁶ See *Ibid.*, 38; Ibn Buṭlān, "*Risālah shirā al-raqīq*," 374.

jawārī muwalladāt. Therefore, Madīnah *muwalladāt* were important to Arabic culture and earned their attentive dialogue.⁶¹⁷

Two female slaves have been classified as Ḥijāz *muwalladāt*, although there was no direct mention of specific Ḥijāz areas⁶¹⁸ (see 4.12). In regard to Ḥijāzi, Yamāmah *muwalladāt* comprised 7 out of 38 *muwalladāt* in our table, thus this area of Ḥijāz appears to be a popular place for educating slaves. Regarding Iraqī *muwalladāt*, there is no information in our database in Table 4.13 on the importance of Baghdād's *muwalladāt* or their educational level and experience, while Kūfah had 3 *muwalladāt*.⁶¹⁹ In *Murūj al-Dhahab*, al-Mas'ūdī writes that Khālid b. Ṣafwān described female slaves as encouraging Caliph al-Saffāḥ to take advantage of owning and marrying his slave girls.⁶²⁰ Ṣafwān described *muwalladāt* from Baṣrah and Kūfah as combining beauty and the ability of persuasion and wonderful, sweet words.⁶²¹ Baṣrah slaves were also desirable for their beauty and the demand for their yellow skin (*ṣufr*).⁶²²

Place of birth was important to the foundation, profession and social status of *muwalladāt* and *jawārī* in general. However, certain primary sources show that some of these female slaves were sent to different regions to learn new skills, for example singing or poetry. Significantly, in *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, al-Iṣfahānī writes that Shakkalah, the *Umm al-Walad* of caliph al-Mahdī, was sent to Ṭā'if to acquire the best education.⁶²³ However, there is no mention of any Ṭā'if *muwalladāt* in our data, possibly related to Ibn Buṭlān's note of their lower fertility in comparison to their peers.⁶²⁴

The above shows that there were great educational opportunities in various regions. Thus, it is likely that both *muwalladāt* from those famous literary

⁶¹⁷ Al-Mas'ūdī, *Murūj al-Dhahab*, vol 3, 218..

⁶¹⁸ The Ḥijāzi region "refers generally to the region along the Red Sea coast." Therefore, it contains Madīnah, Makkah, Yamāmah, Ṭā'if and other areas. See Shari Lowin, "Hijaz," in *Encyclopedia of Jews in the Islamic World*, accessed 14 October 2016, http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopedia-of-jews-in-the-islamic-world/hijaz-SIM_0009820.

⁶¹⁹ Al-Iṣfahānī mentioned that Kūfaian male singers did exist, such as Muḥammad al-Raff and Muḥammad b. al-Ash'ath. While there were a good number of *jawārī* and *qīyan* such as *Dār* Zurayq b. Manīḥ and *Dār* Abū al-Aṣbagh, only 3 Kūfaian *muwalladāt* were found in our database. See al-Iṣfahānī, *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, vol 13, 229.

⁶²⁰ Al-Mas'ūdī, *Murūj al-Dhahab*, vol 3, 218.

⁶²¹ Ibid.

⁶²² Athamina, "How Did Islam Contribute," 9.

⁶²³ Al-Iṣfahānī, *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, vol 10, 79.

⁶²⁴ Ibn Buṭlān, "*Risālah shirā al-raqīq*," 373.

regions and female slaves of other origins who came to study there were more desirable and in demand than others. This could help explain why some *jawārī* garnered higher prices in the slave markets with regard to their origins (see Table 4.21).

4.1.2 Female slaves' prices

There was a remarkable disparity in the prices of female slaves in the Abbasid slave market. We examined 23 slave women whose prices were mentioned in the primary *adab*, biographical and historical sources (see Table 4.11). The table shows the superiority of *qiyān* by showing their prices could reach 15 *qīna*. Servant-class slave women had the lowest average price and concubines and poets cost a comparable amount (see Table 4.11 and 4.19).

A study of *qiyān* indicates that they were the most in demand of the *jawārī* in the slave markets. Richardson considers singing slave girls to be elite figures in Abbasid society, and argues that they were not restricted to specific labour or sexuality and carried higher prices in contrast with other female slaves.⁶²⁵ The price differences between female slaves varied according to the nature of their profession, but the remarkable point is that almost all of these *qiyān* were also *muwalladāt* (see Table 4.19). It is not surprising that *muwalladāt* in general held a higher price in the slave household, as according to our previous discussion on the origins of female slaves, the *muwalladāt* were the most demanded figures due to their education and native Arabic dialect. Although the *qiyān* were already at the top of the slave market, those who were *muwalladāt* would have been distinguished further according to their place of birth. These figures correspond to our available primary sources. Madīnah and Baṣrah *muwalladāt* gained even higher prices, but *muwalladāt* from Yamāmah and those of unknown origin still present a valid number in our findings (see Table 4.21).

It has been recorded that the normal price for a slave around the middle of the second century was 200 Dirhams,⁶²⁶ with the prices of female slaves rising in increments in the slave markets. Shāriyah, a Basrah *muwalladah*, holds both

⁶²⁵ Richardson, "Singing slave girls," 108.

⁶²⁶ Mez, *Al-Ḥaḍārah al-Islāmīyah*, vol 1, 297.

the lowest and the highest price in Table 4.11. She was purchased twice: first for the lower price of 300 Dinars, and second, the higher price of 55,000 Dinars⁶²⁷ (see Table 4.11). The lower price occurred when she was a novice singer with little experience, as demonstrated by the biography of Shāriyah in *Kitāb al-Aghānī*. When her owner, an unknown woman from Banī Hāshim, offered her to Ibrāhīm al-Mawṣilī (d. 188 A.H./804 A.D.), he estimated her price at 300 Dinars. In fact, he hesitated to purchase her at all because of her lack of knowledge in singing.⁶²⁸ After her purchase by Ibrāhīm b. al-Mahdī (d. 224 A.D./838 A.D.), who educated her and improved her talent, al-Mawṣilī estimated that Shāriyah's price had increased to 3,000 Dinar.⁶²⁹ Later, Caliph al-Mu'tamid offered to purchase her from Ibrāhīm b. al-Mahdī for 70,000 Dinars (see Table 4.11). The prices reached by Shāriyah have a clear connection:⁶³⁰ as Mez noted, the more famous a female slave, the higher her price.⁶³¹ Consequently, the more educated, skilful and professional a *qīna* became, the more her price would be raised. This is evident from Shāriyah's final price, as she had become a prominent *qīna*.

One significant incident, which appears to affect the previous notion of the superiority of *qiyān* and the connection between their skills and higher price, occurred when Caliph al-Rashīd offered 100,000 Dinars to 'Udūl b. al-Khayyāṭ⁶³² for his *jārīyah*⁶³³ (see Table 4.11). This amount of money is extremely high when compared with other *jawārī* prices, yet available sources do not show this slave's profession or origin. However, it is often assumed that she was a concubine, as al-Ṭabarī wrote that the caliph al-Rashīd first admired and was impressed with her beauty, and then with her intelligence.⁶³⁴ The intention is not to argue that she could not have been a *qīna*, but that other criteria such as beauty were often involved in estimating the prices of female slaves regardless of their profession.⁶³⁵ Ibrāhīm al-Iṣṭakhrī writes that white

⁶²⁷ Al-Iṣṭakhrī, *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, vol 16, 5-9.

⁶²⁸ Ibid.

⁶²⁹ Ibid.

⁶³⁰ Ibrāhīm b. al-Mahdī refused to sell Shāriyah, but after his death she was sold to al-Mu'tamid for 55,000 Dinar. Ibid., 8.

⁶³¹ Mez, *Al-Ḥaḍārah al-Islāmīyah*, vol1, 298.

⁶³² Al-Ṭabarī presents his name as 'Awn. Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, vol 9, 126; Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil fī 'l-Tārīkh*, vol 6, 79.

⁶³³ Ibn al-Athīr, Ibid.

⁶³⁴ Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, vol 9, 126.

⁶³⁵ Both perspectives contain valid points, however the tendency of al-Ṭabarī to be mentioned by her beauty before her intelligence gives the sense that she was a concubine, as this was a common reason to purchase slave women.

female slaves were often purchased for their beauty without any skill at a high price that could reach 1000 Dinars or more.⁶³⁶ However, *Kitāb al-Aghānī* indicates that Iṣḥāq al-Mawṣilī said that most members of Abbasid society did not teach the white beautiful female slaves to sing; rather, they were teaching singing to yellow- and black-skinned slave girls.⁶³⁷ In fact, the first man who attempted to teach singing to a beautiful female slave was his father, Ibrāhīm al-Mawṣilī.⁶³⁸ It is likely that in the early Abbasid period, beautiful female slaves were taken as concubines more than for other ranks, and the previous example of the highest prices also involved a concubine. Thus, an owner's standards for the desirability of their female slaves could change depending on the individual's prevailing social attitudes and behaviours.

Al-Ṭabbūbī writes that as a consequence of the high number of *jawārī* in the Abbasid period, their prices decreased, and thus every house had at least one or two female slaves.⁶³⁹ In contrast, however, this research argues that it would be irrational to assume that the widespread availability of female slaves lowered their prices. The records in our database display fluctuations in slave prices (see Table 4.11), a result of the fact that *jawārī* prices in the slave market depended on current political and economic circumstances or haggling between the buyer and seller. Haggling occurred regardless of a slave's talent, origin or profession, the identity of the purchaser or seller or the political and economic circumstances. The slave trade, like any other type of commerce, can be affected by the state's political and economic stability and variability. In the year 321 A.H./933 A.D., for example, caliph al-Qāhir (d. 322 A.H./934 A.D.) prohibited singing and music in Baṣrah and ordered traders to sell *jawārī* and *qiyān* at the lowest prices.⁶⁴⁰ According to Ibn al-Athīr, this act was al-Qāhir's attempt to benefit from lower prices, as he was famous for his love of songs and fondness for owning female slaves.⁶⁴¹ It is clear that the price of slave girls was expensive even for the caliphs, and that slave prices dwindled or were influenced according to orders from the government or the economic and political condition.

⁶³⁶ Al-Iṣṭakhrī, *Al-Masālik wa-al-mamālik*, 45; Mez, *Al-Ḥaḍārah al-Islāmīyah*, vol 1, 298.

⁶³⁷ Al-Iṣḥānī, *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, vol 5, 112-113.

⁶³⁸ The first *qīna* was known as Amān, See *Ibid*.

⁶³⁹ Al-Ṭabbūbī, *Al-qiyān wa 'l-adab fī 'l-ʿaṣr al-ʿAbbāsī*, 29.

⁶⁴⁰ Ibn al-Athīr, *Al-Kāmil fī 'l-Tārīkh*, vol 7, 92.

⁶⁴¹ *Ibid*.

Because of their skills, female slaves were not just commodities to be bought and sold; they were also used in political affairs to improve political and social relations between internal or external members or forces. The data collected in Table 4.11 refers to the price of some female slaves as a gift, as they were mentioned in the available sources as having been granted between individuals. Indeed, the custom of sending slaves as gifts to internal or external members of society was a common practice in the *Jāhiliyya* and early Islamic periods. For instance, al-Muqawqis, the Qibṭī governor sent four female slaves as a gift to the prophet Muḥammad; one of them was Māriyah, who became the Prophet's wife and the mother of his son Ibrāhīm.⁶⁴² This policy points to a specific political and diplomatic procedure, called rapprochement, between rulers. A similar tradition was present in the Muslim classical period. Abbasid historical sources offer remarkable information about slave girls given as grand gifts. Ibn al-Athīr writes that caliph al-Rashīd gave Marwān b. Abī Ḥafṣah ten Roman slaves after the latter praised him in a poem.⁶⁴³ Likewise, al-Mas'ūdī mentioned that al-Mutawakkil was gifted two hundred male and female slaves by 'Abd Allāh b. Ṭāhir, including the famous Maḥbubah, a *qīna* and *shā'irah*.⁶⁴⁴

Our findings in Table 4.11 show a certain number of female slaves who were dedicated as gifts between individuals in the Abbasid period, including four (Faḍl al-Shā'irah, Maḥbubah, 'Amā al-'Azīz and Farīdah al-Ṣughrā) who were given to the Abbasid caliphs. Two of these female slaves were *muwalladāt*⁶⁴⁵ from Baṣrah and Yamāmah, and had the similar professions of poet and singer. The others were of unknown origin, one being a concubine and the other a singer. As far as we can understand from the available data, the recipients were usually the caliphs, while the givers were prominent and famous figures in society. For instance, al-Rabī' b. Yūnus (d. 170 A.H./786 A.D.) was the *ḥājib* (chamberlain) and keeper of Caliph al-Manṣūr, who then became chief of the ministry.⁶⁴⁶ 'Abd Allāh b. Ṭāhir was known as a considerable scholar, poet and

⁶⁴² For more examples see Aḥmad Ibn al-Zubayr, *Book of gifts and rarities (Kitāb al-hadāya wa al-tuḥaf): Selections compiled in the fifteenth century from an eleventh-century manuscript on gifts and treasures*, trans., Ghāda al-Hijjāwī al-Qaddūmī (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1996), 63-64, 69,

⁶⁴³ Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil fī 'l-Tārīkh* vol 5, 356.

⁶⁴⁴ Al-Mas'ūdī, *Murūj al-Dhahab* 4, 100. Al-Iṣfahānī claims that the number was 400 female slaves; See al-Iṣfahānī, *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, vol 22, 142.

⁶⁴⁵ Maḥbubah and Faḍl al-Shā'irah were gifted to the caliph al-Mutawakkil.

⁶⁴⁶ Al-Ṣafadī, *Kitāb Al-Wāfī bi-'l-Wafayāt*, vol 14, 58.

singer.⁶⁴⁷ Iṣḥāq al-Mawṣilī (d. 236 A.H./850 A.D.) was one of the poetic literati and anecdotally known as a greatest singer, one of the founders of songs and music in the Abbasid era.⁶⁴⁸ Muḥammad b. al-Faraj was the brother of ‘Umar b. al-Faraj al-Rukhji, a vizier of al-Mutawakkil.⁶⁴⁹ These examples explain the great value of female slaves as a gift in the system of maintaining close relations among royalty and the elite in the Abbasid period, regardless of the slaves’ prices, careers or origins. Despite the lack of available data on slaves who have been gifted to others, we can see that female slaves of *muwalladāt* origin and those who were well-educated were most desired as gifts between individuals.⁶⁵⁰

4.2 The significance of female slaves’ professions and titles

Regardless of the ethnic origin of female slaves carried out diverse functions and professions in the Abbasid household,⁶⁵¹ including *qiyān*, *Ummahāt al-Awlād*⁶⁵² and servants of higher-status female slaves and concubines.⁶⁵³ Lerner’s theory of patriarchy argues that the sexual activities of female slaves, as an occupational feature, could be considered a functional requirement of their class assignment; thus men had to control women’s sexuality.⁶⁵⁴ The patriarchal system and male supremacy authorized and extended the conceptual paradigm of absolute male dominance over women through kinship or possession.⁶⁵⁵ According to Ali, the use of *jawārī* for sexual purposes was an “elite-only practice,” as a substantial number of enslaved women were used as domestic servants or for trading purposes.⁶⁵⁶ However, Richardson writes that the information on slave girls in the caliphs’ and elite courts primarily presents them

⁶⁴⁷ Al-Iṣfahānī, *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, vol 9, 31.

⁶⁴⁸ Ibid., 5, 173-285.

⁶⁴⁹ Ibid. 19, 215; Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil fī ‘l-Tārīkh* vol 6, 98.

⁶⁵⁰ For further discussion of female slaves as a gift exchange see the recent study of Jocelyn Sharlet, “Educated Slave Women and Gift Exchange in Abbasid Culture,” in *Concubines and Courtesans: Women and Slavery in Islamic History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 278-292.

⁶⁵¹ El Cheikh, “The Qahramana in the Abbasid Court: Position and Functions,” *Studia Islamica* 79 (2003): 41-44,

https://www.academia.edu/8169864/The_Qahramana_in_the_Abbasid_Court_Position_and_Functions.

⁶⁵² For further discussion of the case of the *Umm al-Walad*, see Chapter Three of this dissertation.

⁶⁵³ Ibid., 43; Richardson, “Singing Slave Girls,” 107.

⁶⁵⁴ Lerner, *The Creation of Patriarchy*, 20, 22, 42, 46, 89.

⁶⁵⁵ Ibid., 89.

⁶⁵⁶ Ali, *Sexual Ethics & Islam*, 41.

as entertainment tools for their masters' personal and sexual use.⁶⁵⁷ Al-Jāḥiẓ, in his "*Risālat al-qiyān*," presented the responsibilities of household female slaves, stating that some could even enter private *majālis*, while others dealt with the common people.⁶⁵⁸ Ultimately, however, al-Jāḥiẓ emphasized that a *qīna*'s primary and essential career was to seduce men using her songs and poems. Gordon also refers extensively to the *qiyān* as "courtesans,"⁶⁵⁹ due to their closeness to male gatherings, their sexual availability and the ingenuity of their performance in various forms of entertainment such as singing, poetry and playing chess and backgammon.⁶⁶⁰ The present research, however, when discussing *jawārī* makes an effort to distinguish between concubines, *qiyān* and other types of female slaves' professions.⁶⁶¹ We therefore suggest that, while female slaves' social status could vary between concubine, domestic servant or other profession such as singer or poet, their positions depended primarily on their owner's desires, and secondly on the direct impact of their talents.

In particular, three professions of *jawārī* were distinctive in our database: *Ummahāt al-Awlād*, *qiyān* and *qahramānat* (stewards). These three functions reflect the portrayal of female slaves in the Abbasid period. As far as we can understand, the professions of female slaves affected their status in the Abbasid social hierarchy. Thus, the social rankings presented in Table 4.12 include concubine, *qīna*, *shā'irah*, servant, wife, *Umm al-Walad*, nursemaid, *kātibah* and *qahramānah*. Nursemaids represented the lowest number of *jawārī*, regardless of origin, as recorded in our database. In contrast, the highest figures are *qiyān*, with a total of 102. Similarly, there were 68 *Ummahāt al-Awlād*, with *qahramānat*, servants, concubines and *shā'irat* presenting a good certain number, and wives, *kātibah* (see table 4.14).

In the caliph's court, the status of *qiyān* was contingent on the caliph's admiration and keen personal interest, together with the female slaves' skilfulness.⁶⁶² During the Abbasid era, *qiyān* were at the top of the list of careers for female slaves, and the position required a specific standard of skills and

⁶⁵⁷ Richardson, "Singing slave girls," 106.

⁶⁵⁸ Al-Jāḥiẓ, "*Risālat al-qiyān*," vol 3, 71.

⁶⁵⁹ Gordon, "Abbasid Courtesans and the Question of Social Mobility," 1.

⁶⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶⁶¹ See page 22-24.

⁶⁶² Schlein, "The Talent and the Intellect," 76.

talents.⁶⁶³ Moreover, these *qiyān* had their own “internal hierarchy”.⁶⁶⁴ For example, Tuhfah and Bid’ah,⁶⁶⁵ ‘Arīb’s vassals or private *jawārī*, were singers at a lower social level than ‘Arīb, and they served her at the same time.⁶⁶⁶ Richardson considers the *qiyān* to be aristocracy, based on the fact that they “were not strictly consigned to labor or concubinage”.⁶⁶⁷ This is significant in that the *qīna* were considered elite, or at least practiced some of the elite’s privileges, such as having their own retinue.

The significance of this data is to show the different attitudes toward social mobility between the professions of female slaves. The collected data from Tables 4.1 to 4.9 show that few *qiyān* obtained the status of *Umm al-Walad*, but that a large number became the wives of free men. Consequently, for the purpose of this chapter a *qīna*’s primary objective was to gain manumission, the peak standard of social mobility, which would earn them a remarkable leap of status in the social hierarchy.⁶⁶⁸ This provides an essential argument for the *qiyān*’s desire and demand for freedom.

Al-Jāhīz contributed to the common view of *qiyān* by describing them as tools of debauchery and immorality in the community regardless of their origins.⁶⁶⁹ He explained that a *qīna* would find her victim, i.e. “a potential buyer”, then trap him and try to gain sympathy by stating that she had once been a free woman in order to convince him to buy her and not argue against her high price.⁶⁷⁰ Gordon presents an example of this with the story of ‘Arīb, a *qīna*,⁶⁷¹ in order to create an overall portrait of female slaves and their social status in the Abbasid era.⁶⁷² According to al-Ḥafḥānī, ‘Arīb claimed that she was the daughter of

⁶⁶³ In the Abbasid period, “Iraq, the city of Baṣrah became the center for studying vocal arts.” See ‘Athamina, “How Did Islam Contribute,” 399-400; Schlein, “The Talent and the Intellect,” 75.

⁶⁶⁴ I borrowed this phrase from Athamina, *Ibid.*, 399-400.

⁶⁶⁵ Al-Ḥafḥānī, *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, vol 21, 61-66; *Idem.*, *Kitāb al-qiyān*, 114; Ibn al-Sā‘ī, “Consorts of the Caliphs,” 71; Al-Ṣafadī, *al-Wāfi bi-l-Wafayāt*, vol 10, 61.

⁶⁶⁶ ‘Athamina called them *jawārī al-qiyān*. However, I prefer to use the term *jawārī al-khāṣṣah*, as this term in Arabic is more specific and clarifies that they are personal, private property belonging to one individual. See ‘Athamina, “How Did Islam Contribute,” 404.

⁶⁶⁷ Richardson, “Singing slave girls,” 108.

⁶⁶⁸ Islamic law was clear that owners must free their slave girls before marrying them.

⁶⁶⁹ Al-Jāhīz, “*Risālat al-qiyān*,” 80-82. See also Gordon, “Abbasid Courtesans and the Question of Social Mobility,” 6.

⁶⁷⁰ Al-Jāhīz, *Ibid.*, 82.

⁶⁷¹ Although ‘Arīb was manumitted in the era of al-Mu‘taṣim, she has been counted as both *qīna* and *shā‘irah* based on our selected primary sources. However, in the chapter we note her social mobility in becoming a freedwoman. See Gordon, “‘Arīb al-Ma‘muniya: A Third/Ninth Century ‘Abbasid courtesan,” 86.

⁶⁷² *Ibid.*

Ja'far b. Yahyá (d. 187 A.H./803 A.D.), a free man from the Barmakids,⁶⁷³ and that her mother (known as Fāṭimah) was his concubine.⁶⁷⁴ After the fall and the calamity of the Barmakids, 'Arīb was stolen and sold in the slave market.⁶⁷⁵ It can be assumed that 'Arīb's intention was to reach for freedom, because according to the three Muslim *madhāhib*, the children of a free Muslim man and his female slave were born free.⁶⁷⁶ Thus, 'Arīb could benefit from this situation to gain an official manumission and be counted as a free woman. Gordon argues that 'Arīb's declaration could be seen as doubtful and questionable, and described it as a typical fictional narrative about female slaves in the Abbasid period.⁶⁷⁷ Gordon's reason for doubting her testimony is the belief that female slaves were typically untruthful, and that it was a common practice to claim an aristocratic and honourable origin.

Indeed, there is significant cause to believe that 'Arīb's intention was only to change her social status from slave to freedwoman. According to al-Isfahānī, there are two incidents of 'Arīb fleeing from her master, 'Abd Allāh b. al-Marākibī. The first presents her escape and asylum with one of her Bagdadi friends, but this failed after the nephew of al-Marākibī heard her singing and reported her location.⁶⁷⁸ The second story tells of 'Arīb's flight from al-Marākibī to her beloved, Muḥammad b. Ḥāmid.⁶⁷⁹ However, this attempt also ended in failure, as 'Arīb turned herself in after the arrest and flagellation of Ibn Ḥāmid.⁶⁸⁰ Interestingly, in both these incidents 'Arīb insisted that she was a free woman,⁶⁸¹ though the truth of this claim may be questionable. Al-Jāḥiẓ states that this declaration was a stratagem to convince a buyer to purchase her despite her expensive price.⁶⁸²

⁶⁷³ "The Barmakids, an Iranian family of Buddhist origins, dominated the second/eighth century 'Abbasid administration." Gordon, "Arib al-Ma'muniya: A Third/Ninth Century 'Abbasid courtesan," 87; Idem., "Abbasid Courtesans and the Question of Social Mobility," 34.

⁶⁷⁴ Al-Isfahānī, *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, vol 21, 47.

⁶⁷⁵ Ibid

⁶⁷⁶ For more on the legal status of *Umm al-Walad* see Chapter Three, section 3.3.3; Gordon, "Arib al-Ma'muniya," 87.

⁶⁷⁷ Ibid., 87.

⁶⁷⁸ Al-Isfahānī, *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, vol 21, 44-52.

⁶⁷⁹ Ibid., 52-53.

⁶⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁶⁸¹ 'Arīb said: "O you, why would you kill me? I am not bound to you (in any manner)! I am a free woman (but, if you view me) as a slave, then sell me (on the spot!)" See al-Isfahānī, Ibid., vol 21, 53.

⁶⁸² Al-Jāḥiẓ, "*Risālat al-qiyān*," vol 3, 82.

However, 'Arīb's objective was not to be sold to a wealthy individual; rather, she wanted to attain a higher social rank, gain her freedom and become a freedwoman. Thus, her endeavour was to stop her master's control over her. This is demonstrated later in the biography of her time at Caliph al-Ma'mūn's court, first by her pattern of secretly fleeing to meet her beloved Ibn Ḥāmid,⁶⁸³ and in another incident of her preventing al-Ma'mūn from accompanying her.⁶⁸⁴ These situations present a clear, sensible excuse for 'Arīb to deceive buyers about her origin and status and to act as a free woman without the control and restriction of her owner.

Similar to 'Arīb are two other examples of female slaves who declared themselves of free origin. First, Shāriyah claimed that she was the daughter of a free man from Quraish,⁶⁸⁵ who renounced her and her slave mother.⁶⁸⁶ Meanwhile, sources argue that she was a free woman who was stolen and enslaved, bought by unknown Hāshimī woman who educated her, then finally purchased by Ibrāhīm al-Mawsilī.⁶⁸⁷ The second example is Faḍl al-Shā'irah (known as Faḍl al-'Abadīyah), who claimed that she was a free woman born of a slave mother, sold by her brother from a different mother.⁶⁸⁸ However, Shāriyah and Faḍl tried to gain upward mobility by demanding their freedom and declaring that they were free women enslaved by fate. In this circumstance, al-Jāhiz's statement about the subterfuge of slave girls could be confirmed through Shāriyah⁶⁸⁹ and Faḍl, as both belonged to famous figures and gained more celebrity and higher positions than their peers.⁶⁹⁰

Amidst the abundance of information about female slaves, these three female slaves ('Arīb, Shāriyah and Faḍl) refused to accept their state of enslavement and claimed that they were free women. Only one of them, 'Arīb, continued to demand her freedom until she gained it at a later period. For the other two female slaves, there is no record of their attempts to continue or recommence

⁶⁸³ See the incident, al-Jāhiz, "*Risālat al-qiyān*," vol 3, 21, 63.

⁶⁸⁴ Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, vol 21, 62.

⁶⁸⁵ From the clan of Banī Nājiyah or Banī Zuhra; see al-Isfahānī, *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, vol 16, 6-7.

⁶⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, vol 5, 9; Gordon, "Abbasid Courtesans and the Question of Social Mobility," 3.

⁶⁸⁷ See al-Isfahānī, *Ibid.*, vol 16, 6-7.

⁶⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 19, 215-216.

⁶⁸⁹ There is evidence that Ibrāhīm b. al-Mahdī married Shāriyah and freed her. However, a contradicting incident claims that Shāriyah was sold to the caliph al-Mu'tasem after Ibrāhīm b. al-Mahdī's death. See *Ibid.*, 16, 7-8.

⁶⁹⁰ Al-Rasheed, "Slave Girls under the Early 'Abbāsids," 157.

their claims to freedom. This could show that there was little opportunity for female slaves to achieve social mobility through claiming a free origin. It can be assumed that it does not matter whether a female slave was of free origin without evidence from her father or parents, or at least a family member to act as witness for her freedom. The easier method for *jawārī* to achieve mobility was to become *Umm al-Walad*⁶⁹¹ or to marry to free man.⁶⁹²

In considering the issue of freedom, our database contains four female slaves who were successfully granted manumission. First was Fawz, the concubine of Muḥammad b. Maṣṣūr who was *mudabbirah* of al-‘Abbās b. al-Aḥnaf,⁶⁹³ and Badhl, the servant and the *mudabbirah* of Ja‘far b. Mūsá al-Hādī.⁶⁹⁴ Likewise both ‘Inān the poet⁶⁹⁵ and Ghuṣn, *Ummahāt al-Awlād* of Abū al-Aḥdab al-Nakhkhās,⁶⁹⁶ were freed after their owners’ deaths. Other ways to attain manumission have been noted in our research. Emancipation as an act of favour (*faḍl*) from the owner or wealthy or famous individuals occurred in the case of Iṣḥāq b. Ibrāhīm al-Mawṣilī, who freed his own *jārīyah* and Barbar.⁶⁹⁷ *Jawārī* used various methods to move from slavery to freedom.

Concubines achieved social mobility by becoming *Ummahāt al-Awlād*; they gained a more respectful social status, the right not to be sold and to be set free after their master’s death, and a guarantee of their children’s rights in society. Significantly, the position of *Umm al-Walad* could also lead to manumission as some owners married their *Ummahāt al-Awlād*. As has been discussed in the previous chapter, Islamic law required that owners had to manumit their female slaves before marrying them.⁶⁹⁸

Table 4.15 shows that the preferred race of origin for *Umm al-Walad* as shown in our data was Byzantine. Of crucial importance, however, is that none of Ibn

⁶⁹¹ See Chapter Three, 110 for the legal status of *Umm al-Walad*.

⁶⁹² The Qur’anic verse 23:5; 6 and the discussion of the three Sunni jurists opinions in Chapter Three clearly present the notion of that marriage between free men and female slaves cannot be valid without manumission; See Chapter Three, sections 3.3.1 and 3.3.3 of this thesis.

⁶⁹³ See al-Iṣfahānī, *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, vol 17, 52.

⁶⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 58.

⁶⁹⁵ Al-Iṣfahānī noted that ‘Inān was granted manumission after her master’s death; however, it is not clear whether she was *mudabbirah* or *Umm al-Walad*. See *Idem.*, *al-Imā’ al-shawā’ir* (Bayrūt: Dār al-Niḍāl, 1984), 32. For excellent discussion on ‘Inān, see Myrne, “A Jariya’s Prospects in Abbasid Baghdad,” 52-66.

⁶⁹⁶ See al-Iṣfahānī, *Ibid.*, 221.

⁶⁹⁷ See *Idem.*, *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, vol 5, 129, vol 20, 187-189.

⁶⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 5, 129.

al-Athīr, al-Mas‘ūdī, al-Jāhīz and Ibn Buṭlān wrote that Byzantium slave girls were ideal for this specific social status. Instead, they focus on other origins such as Berber, Persian, Yemeni and Sindi girls as chief options for reproduction purposes.⁶⁹⁹ One can note that owning female slaves of a particular origin might be associated with masculine desires and passions, resulting in a clear diversity of the *Ummahāt al-Awlād* from the Abbasid period. In table 4.12, the origins with the lowest numbers were Qandahār, Yemen, Sogdia, Khawārizm, Sicily, Turkey and Persia, each with just one female slave in the database.⁷⁰⁰ In addition, the *muwalladāt* who became *Ummahāt al-Awlād* represent a low number, in contrast with those who became *qiyān* or *shā‘irāt* (see Tables 4.15 and 4.16). Obviously, from the available data and the historical records on *Ummahāt al-Awlād*, it is difficult to generalise and to determine a specific origin for female slaves to gain the *Umm al-Walad* position.

Based on our data (Table 4.18), only 10 female slaves in our sample were fortunate enough to move from low social status (slave) to a higher position (wife), including from being enslaved to becoming freedwomen.⁷⁰¹ However, the highest chance for female slaves to achieve mobility or manumission was by transitioning in the system from one profession to another. If a concubine, *qīna* or servant became an *Umm al-Walad*, her chances increased of achieving mobility through marriage and becoming a freedwoman or gaining her freedom after her owner’s death. According to our database domestic slaves, singers and poets had a lower chance of achieving mobility through *Umm al-Walad* status, whereas the greatest number of *Ummahāt al-Awlād* were concubines.

From the above discussion we can see two possibilities for female slaves’ upward mobility. The chance of a female slave achieving manumission through marriage was uncertain, and so many enslaved women preferred to obtain the status of *Umm al-Walad* and belong to an influential figure in Abbasid society. The status of *Umm al-Walad* reflected a coveted level of mobility and rank and was more accessible to most female slaves than marriage. This resulted in the cautionary note made by Ibn Buṭlān to potential purchasers that the primary

⁶⁹⁹ It is important to note that these origins comprised a low number of female slaves in our database.

⁷⁰⁰ There are 218 female slaves with unknown origins.

⁷⁰¹ Just two of these freedwomen have recorded origins; as has been discussed in the previous Chapter, according to the three Sunni *madhāhib*, female slaves must be freed before marriage to a free man.

ambition of female slaves in general, but especially young girls, was to bear the children of their masters.⁷⁰² Our data shows that the majority of *Ummahāt al-Awlād* had previously been concubines, and that only a few were singers, poets or servants. Maternity helped *jawārī* achieve higher mobility through becoming *Ummahāt al-Awlād*, but most concubines seemed to prefer to remain in the *Umm al-Walad* strata, conferring the promise of manumission after their master's death, not being sold and save children's rights to be free members.⁷⁰³

Additionally, Table 4.14 shows a number of female slaves were *qahramānat* (single *qahramānah*), which refers to a steward or housekeeper.⁷⁰⁴ The profession of *qahramānah* was mostly practiced by men during the Abbasid period, and a male slave in this position was called a *qahrimān* (pl. *qaharimāh*).⁷⁰⁵ Al-Ṭabarī noted that in 191 A.H./807 A.D., the vizier 'Alī b. 'Īsā had a number of *qahārimāh* collect taxes for him in Kurāshān.⁷⁰⁶ However, the position of *qahramānah* was changed in the early and middle of the Abbasid period to include being responsible for the financial income and outcome of the caliph or the elite members of society.⁷⁰⁷ For instance, in the early Abbasid era, Khālīshah, a servant of al-Khayzarān, became a *qahramānah* by maintaining and managing al-Khayzarān's finances, as well as those of al-Mahdī before his succession.⁷⁰⁸ Primary tasks for *qahramānah* included writing messages or letters for the caliph,⁷⁰⁹ such as with Munyah al-Kātibah, the female slave of al-Mu'tamad,⁷¹⁰ or carrying the caliph's stamp or seal, as was the case of Faraj al-Naṣrānīyah.⁷¹¹

Consequently, *qahramānat* were granted entry to the offices of the common *majālis* (councils), and the requirements of the position were even expanded in

⁷⁰² Ibn Buṭlān was clear in his suggestion that the buyer must purchase a female slave after her period finished; this was to guarantee that she was not pregnant before her purchase; Ibn Buṭlān, "*Risālah shirā al-raḡīq*," 358.

⁷⁰³ In contrast with *qiyān*'s desire and ideal of freedom. See page 132,134.

⁷⁰⁴ Al-Zabīdī, *Tāj al-'arūs*, vol 33, 322. For more discussion on scholars' definition and translation of the term *qahramānah*, see El Cheikh, "The Qahramana in the Abbasid Court".

⁷⁰⁵ Al-Mas'ūdī, *Murūj al-Dhahab*, vol 4, 108.

⁷⁰⁶ Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, vol 8, 330.

⁷⁰⁷ Al-Tanūkhī, *Kitāb al-Faraj ba'da al-shiddah* (Bayrūt: Dār Ṣādir, 1975), vol 4, 370.

⁷⁰⁸ Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, vol 8, 72; *Ibid*; *Idem.*, *Nishwār al-muḥāḍarah wa-akhbār al-mudhakarrah*, vol 3, 171.

⁷⁰⁹ Al-Tanūkhī, *Kitāb al-Faraj ba'da al-shiddah*, vol 4, 370.

⁷¹⁰ Ibn al-Sā'ī, *Nisā' al-khulafā'*, 126.

⁷¹¹ Allowing Christian female slaves to hold such a profession could show the flexibility of Islamic law and Muslim Abbasid practices in allowing non-Muslim female slaves to gaining such a remarkable position. Al-Tanūkhī, *Kitāb al-Faraj ba'da al-shiddah*, vol 4, 370-371.

some cases to include certain *qāḍī*'s (judge) privileges.⁷¹² Thus, a *qahramānah* was able to issue “executive and managerial decisions”⁷¹³ at court. Thamal⁷¹⁴ (d. 318 A.H./925 A.D.) was the first *qahramānah* who acted as judge in the *dīwān al-mazālim* (court of grievances), and scholars were attainted in her assembly or council.⁷¹⁵ Thamal earned great status in the Muslim judicial authority, although she has been described as “a political actor rather than a specialist in law”⁷¹⁶ because her knowledge of law was limited and her rules and verdicts were restricted by the male judges in attendance.⁷¹⁷ Even so, this shows the extent of female slaves’ power regardless of gender, rank, education or social status.⁷¹⁸

Al-Tanūkhī writes that it was the caliphs’ weakness and women’s sway and predominance that led the *qahramānah* to reach such a high position in Abbasid court.⁷¹⁹ During the al-Muqtadir era (r. 295–320/908–32), Shaghab’s prestige and rank as *Umm al-Walad* and the mother of the caliph, invented the status of *qahramānah*. Umm Mūsá was Shaghab’s *qahramānah*, and her first task was to write letters or messages from the caliph al-Muqtadir and his wife to the vizier.⁷²⁰ However her profession and power later was increased, and she became responsible for the caliph’s court as well as the household’s apparel and funds.⁷²¹ Moreover, Umm Mūsá had great influence on the caliph and his wife, and she was the reason for the isolation of the vizier ‘Alī b. ‘Īsá.⁷²² Another one of Shaghab’s *qahramānah* was Zaydān, who was the keeper of the Abbasid court jewels⁷²³ and responsible for the custody of prisoners from the Abbasid elite, such as viziers.⁷²⁴ Those under Zaydān custody included famous examples such as ‘Alī b. ‘Īsá, al-Ḥasan b. Ḥammād, his son, and Yūsuf b. Abī al-Sāj.⁷²⁵ In addition, Ikhtiyār, al-Qāhir’s famous *qahramānah*, was the reason

⁷¹² Al-Tanūkhī, *Kitāb al-Faraj ba’da al-shiddah*, vol 4, 370.

⁷¹³ El Cheikh, “The Qahramana,” 41.

⁷¹⁴ Also known as Umm Mūsá.

⁷¹⁵ Ibn Ḥazm al-Andalusī, “*Rasā’il Ibn Ḥazm al-Andalusī*,” in *Risālah nuqaṭ al-‘arūs fī tawārīkh al-khulafā’* (Bayrūt: al-Mu’assasah al-‘Arabīyah lil-Dirāsāt wa-al-Nashr, 1980), vol 2, 81.

⁷¹⁶ Karen Bauer, “Debates on Women’s Status as Judges and Witnesses in Post-Formative Islamic Law,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 130, no. 1 (2010): 1-21. 19, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25766942>

⁷¹⁷ Bauer, “Debates on Women’s Status,” 9.

⁷¹⁸ This affair will discuss in more details later in Chapter Six.

⁷¹⁹ Al-Tanūkhī, *Kitāb al-Faraj ba’da al-shiddah*, vol 4, 370.

⁷²⁰ Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil fī ‘l-Tārīkh*, vol 6, 469; See al-Mas’ūdī, *Murūj al-Dhahab*, vol 4, 324

⁷²¹ Ibn al-Athīr, *Ibid.*, 491-492.

⁷²² *Ibid.*

⁷²³ Al-Tanūkhī, *Kitāb al-Faraj ba’da al-shiddah*, vol 4,370; El Cheikh, “The Qahramana,” 46.

⁷²⁴ Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil fī ‘l-Tārīkh*, vol 7, 13; Al-Tanūkhī, *Ibid.*, vol 5, 27.

⁷²⁵ Ibn al-Athīr, *Ibid.*, vol 6, 489, 493; vol 7, 13.

for the employment of vizier Muḥammad b. al-Qāsim,⁷²⁶ and Fārs al-Mukatfī's *qahramānah* had considerable influence on the isolation or appointment of ministers.⁷²⁷ These examples offer evidence to the strength of a *qahramānah*'s social position and her intervention in the state's internal political issues.

All of the above examples, including the sixth *qahramānah* included in our database (see Table 4.14), are without record of their origins. This suggests that female slaves who became *qahramānat* were successful in gaining power and social mobility without regards to their origins. They flourished through managing the court's expenses and trinkets and through their proximity to the caliphs and their *ḥarīm*, as these *ḥarīm* also earned a certain prestige, influence and higher social status.⁷²⁸ Through organization of the caliphs' letters⁷²⁹ and being keepers of their courts and household, the *qahramānat* gained extended influence⁷³⁰ on the Abbasid internal political and social lives.

Significantly, female slaves carried and were known by a number of names and titles. Some were known by their real names, and others became famous with titles that related to various conditions. Tables 4.1 to 4.9 show that female slaves could be titled according to her origin, place of birth or upbringing. Al-Turkīyah, a serving slave of Zubaydah,⁷³¹ was nicknamed according to her origin: Turkī. Similarly, Umm Ḥabīb's servant was called Qusṭanṭīniyah from Constantinopl,⁷³² and her name was used to identify and indicate her Byzantine origin.⁷³³ Other female slaves carried the name of their profession or social status, such as the case of Faḍl al-Shā'irah (d. 260 A.H./874 A.D.), al-Mutawakkil's female slave who was a famous *shā'irah* of her time.⁷³⁴ Likewise, the *qahramānah* al-Qāhir was known in some primary sources as steward of the caliph al-Qāhir rather than by her real name.⁷³⁵ 'Ubaydah al-Ṭunbūrīyah achieved fame as a *qīna*, and she titled herself al-Ṭunbūrīyah with regard to her

⁷²⁶ Al-Tanūkhī, *Kitāb al-Faraj ba'da al-shiddah*, vol 1, 247.

⁷²⁷ Ibid., vol 4, 370; Idem, *Nishwār al-muḥāḍarah wa-akhbār al-mudhākarah*, vol 3, 171.

⁷²⁸ At least in their household.

⁷²⁹ El Cheikh, "The Harem," in *Crisis and Continuity at the Abbasid Court*, edited by Maaïke van Berkel, Nadia Maria El Cheikh, Hugh Kennedy and Letizia Osti (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 176.

⁷³⁰ Ibid.

⁷³¹ See, al-Jāhīz, "*Risālat al-qiyān*," 3.

⁷³² Ibid.

⁷³³ More examples are available, such as: Salāmah al-Barbarīyah, *Umm al-Walad* of Muḥammad b. 'Alī, whose title was added to her first name as a reference to her Berber origin.

⁷³⁴ See al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Imā' al-shawā'ir*, 59; al-Ṣafadī, *Kitāb Al-wāfī bi'l-wafayāt*, vol 24, 56; Ibn al-Sā'ī, *Nisā' al-khulafā'*. 104; Al-Iṣfahānī, *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, vol 19, 215, 223.

⁷³⁵ See Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil fī 'l-Tārīkh*, vol 7, 84.

professional mastery of singing and playing *Ṭunbūr* (mandolins).⁷³⁶ A number of female slaves were identified using an amalgamation of their given names and their masters' forename or surnames.⁷³⁷ Examples include Sarīrah al-Rā'iqīyah, *qīna* of Muḥammad b. Rā'iq;⁷³⁸ Qalm al-Ṣāliḥīyah, *qīna* of Ṣāliḥ b. 'Abd al-Wahhāb;⁷³⁹ and 'Arīb al-Ma'mūnīyah, regarded by Caliph Al-Ma'mūn.⁷⁴⁰

Additionally, the majority of female slave names in our available data represent a depiction of their "beauty, desire, value"⁷⁴¹ or other specific characteristic. For example, Dhāt al-Khāl (the woman with a mole) was a title of Khunth al-Rashīd's *qīna*, who was called this because of the mole on her cheek.⁷⁴² Bid'ah's name is defined as fresh creativity, innovation or uttermost goal.⁷⁴³ Furthermore, in the case of both al-Khayzarān and 'Asālīj, these names described their slim, svelte bodies.⁷⁴⁴ Similarly, Jamīlah's name demonstrates her great beauty.⁷⁴⁵ However, in some cases, it has been found that some slave women were given a counterproductive title regarding their character. For example, Shaghab's former name was Na'īm; however, the Caliph al-Mu'tadid renamed her Shaghab,⁷⁴⁶ in reference to her pugnacity, sedition and and disputation nature.⁷⁴⁷ Likewise, Qabīḥah (ugly), was the title of al-Mutawakkil's *Umm al-Walad*,⁷⁴⁸ however, such a name can be seen as a reversed description of her great beauty.⁷⁴⁹

Caswell wrote that, when using primary sources, historians have identified female slaves to present their desirability or beauty while eliminating the customary names of free women.⁷⁵⁰ However, our database notes a number of Arabic traditional names among female slaves: Zubaydah,⁷⁵¹ 'Utabah, Mu'nisah,

⁷³⁶ See al-Iṣfahānī, *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, vol 22, 144, 145.

⁷³⁷ Caswell, *The slave girls of Baghdad*, 18.

⁷³⁸ See Ibn al-Sā'ī, *Nisā' al-khulafā'*, 159

⁷³⁹ See al-Iṣfahānī, *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, vol 13, 224.

⁷⁴⁰ See Ibid. 19, 364; Idem, *Al-Imā' al-shawā'ir*, 135-148; Ibn al-Sā'ī, *Nisā' al-khulafā'*, 73.

⁷⁴¹ Caswell, *The slave girls of Baghdad*, 18.

⁷⁴² Al-Iṣfahānī, *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, vol 16, 234, 237, 239.

⁷⁴³ Al-Zabīdī, *Tāj al-arūs*, vol 20, 308-309;

⁷⁴⁴ Ibid. vol 6, 103 11, 159-160.

⁷⁴⁵ Ibid. 28, 236.

⁷⁴⁶ Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, vol 10, 24.

⁷⁴⁷ Al-Zabīdī, *Tāj al-arūs*, vol 3, 148-150.

⁷⁴⁸ See al-Ya'qūbī, *Tārīkh-i Ya'qūbī*, vol 2, 463; Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil fi 'l-Tārīkh*, vol 6, 203; al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, vol 9, 176.

⁷⁴⁹ Ibn al-Athīr, Ibid., vol 6, 203.

⁷⁵⁰ Caswell, *The Slave Girls of Baghdad*, 18.

⁷⁵¹ See also the title of 'Amat al-Aziz, a free noblewoman (the wife of Caliph al-Rashīd and mother of al-Ma'mūn). Almost all primary sources identify her with this title; See al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, vol 8, 239, 359.

Zahrā' and Fāṭimah. This suggests it was common for female slaves to hold similar titles or names as free noblewomen, even though they were enslaved. Furthermore, there is one example of a female slave whose name is acknowledged to be related to her religion: Faraj al-Naṣrānīyah, known as the Christian.⁷⁵² Thus, female slaves' titles can derive from traditional Arabic names, or in reference to their beauty, profession, master's name and surname, origin and place of birth or religion.

Regarding the significance of female slaves' titles and nicknames, there is little evidence representing their social status in the Abbasid era. Still, upon reflection of their titles it is undeniable that many of these slave women successfully gained a powerful standing in society. For instance, Shaghab, as *Umm al-Walad* to Caliph Al-Mu'taḍid, was also known as *al-Sayyidah* (the lady).⁷⁵³ Mernissi notes that this title was originally associated with noblewomen in Arabic society, however, later it was applied to women who wielded political power regardless of their social status.⁷⁵⁴ Other examples are 'Ubaydah al-Ṭunbūrīyah, the *qīna*⁷⁵⁵ of Abū al-Samrā' al-Ghassānī, whose famous title was *al-Ustādhah* (professor), and *al-Ra'īsah* (chief) in regard of her of her knowledge and mastery in singing.⁷⁵⁶ Shaghab obtained an official noble title, whereas 'Ubaydah acquired an honorific and professional title; however, both reflect their high social status. Moreover, in later life, both of them were manumitted and became freedwomen.⁷⁵⁷ This would suggest that certain titles for female slaves represented their power, role in society and elevated social status.

The biography of Ḥamdūnah bint Ghaḍīḍ, *Umm al-Walad* of al-Rashīd, offers another example of the significance of female slaves' titles. Muḥammad b. Yūsuf b. al-Ṣabbāḥ (d. 239 A.H./852 A.D.), a man who worked for Ḥamdūnah,

⁷⁵² Al-Tanūkhī, *Kitāb al-Faraj ba'da al-shiddah*, vol 4, 370, 371.

⁷⁵³ This title was first granted to al-Khayzarān, then Shaghab. See 'Athamina, "How Did Islam Contribute," 205.

⁷⁵⁴ Mernissi, *The Forgotten Queen*, 19, 20. 'Athamina writes that the title of *al-Sayyidah* is "a term somewhat akin to the modern First Lady and apparently designed to bestow honor upon its owner, in keeping with the Arab custom of not addressing an honorable person by his first name." 'Athamina, *Ibid.*, 405; See Goldziher, *Muslim Studies*, vol 1, 267.

⁷⁵⁵ This was her previous social status, as she became a freedwoman with her marriage; see al-Iṣfahānī, *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, vol 22, 144-6.

⁷⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵⁷ Shaghab was manumitted after the death of her master, Caliph Al-Mu'taḍid, whereas al-Ṭunbūrīyah became a freedwoman with her marriage to 'Alī b. al-Faraj.

was known as Muḥammad al-Ghaḍīḍī.⁷⁵⁸ The customary tradition was that slaves held their owners' first or family names, and Caswell writes that female slaves often carried their owners' titles because of the absence of "proper genealogy".⁷⁵⁹ However, the example of al-Ghaḍīḍī,⁷⁶⁰ a male who carried a female slave's name, indicates the high social standing of Ḥamdūnah as enslaved woman and *Umm al-Walad*. We conclude that the diversity of female slaves' titles and names are associated more with their fame, charms and behaviour, while characterizing female slaves' impact on Abbasid social life.

Conclusion

This chapter has examined the social mobility and status of female slaves based on selected different genres of primary sources such as literature, biographical and historical sources, creating a database on *jawārī*'s origins, birthplace, social status, professions and prices. Owning a large number of female slaves was a widespread phenomenon in the Abbasid period, especially among the elite. The slave market and *nakhāson* have created a clear ranking in order to increase the slave economy, so slave traders adjusted the prices of *jawārī* depending on literacy, the nature of their profession and their origin.

However, there was a dramatic change in the caliphs' or elites' desires concerning the favoured characteristic features of slave women. In the early Islamic period, female slaves had to be yellow or black-skinned in order to be educated or to gain *qīna* or *shā'irah* status, while the stereotype of the beautiful female girl involved being illiterate and her social status was that of concubine or servant. The shift occurred in the Abbasid period, as female slaves of different origins and races became literate and represented various social rankings and professions. Fundamentally, however, female slaves from *muwalladāt* origin had the most success in both achieving special professions such as *qiyān* or *shā'irāt* or demanding the highest prices in slave households.

⁷⁵⁸ Al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh Madīnat al-Salām* vol 4, 620; Al-Zabīdī, *Tāj al-'arūs*, vol 34, 453; Muqbil al-Wādi'ī, *Tarājim rijāl al-Darāquṭnī fī Sunanihi: alladhīna lam yutarjam lahum fī 'l-taqrīb wa-lā fī rijāl al-ḥākīm* (Bayrūt: Mu'assasat al-Rayyān, 1999), 442.

⁷⁵⁹ Caswell, *The slave girls of Baghdad*, 18.

⁷⁶⁰ Al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh Madīnat al-Salām*, vol 4, 620; Al-Zabīdī, *Tāj al-'arūs*, vol 34, 453; Al-Wādi'ī, *Tarājim rijāl al-Darāquṭnī fī Sunanihi*, 442.

Our database presents that Madīnah *muwalladāt* flourished with the highest numbers in ownership. This relates to the historical background of the importance of the region of Madīnah and the education and fame of its local singers and instructors. Other *muwalladāt* origins also saw high numbers in our data and can be debated.

It is implicitly understood that the social status of female slaves involved a social hierarchy. One group's rank can be above another according to their origins, professions and personal ambitions. Origin and profession had a great influence on effecting and associating *jawārī* with mobility in Abbasid society. Female slaves also succeeded in changing their social status from enslavement to that of freedwomen through marriage, *tadbīr* or as a *faḍl*, although there is no mention of *mukātabah*, the contract of manumission.

The enviable social ranks among *jawārī* comprise three professions: *qiyān*, *Ummahāt al-Awlād* and *qahramānat*. Based on our available data and the discussion in this chapter, the greatest number of high-status *jawārī* were educated *qiyān*, who gained clear influence, impact and prestige⁷⁶¹ in the caliphs' and elites' courts. These women used their talents toward preferable treatment, wealth and ambitions to superior status.⁷⁶² Despite the intellect of singer girls, however, concubines were given a greater opportunity for mobility in Abbasid society, depending on the nature of their social status and their sexual availability, while other *jawārī*'s social status remained indecisive. Concubines found the status of *Umm al-Walad* as a noteworthy opportunity for upward mobility in the *jawārī* social sphere. Becoming *Umm al-Walad* meant achieving rapid social ascent and granted a female slave respectful status, as well as ensuring her children's rights and the promise of not being sold or even of earning her freedom after the owner's death. While the majority of *Ummahāt al-Awlād* in our database are of unknown or ambiguous origin, the data does indicate a certain number of Byzantine female slaves. In contrast, the historical primary records show various origins that could be suitable for *Umm al-Walad* status. However, this can present some disparity regarding female slaves' abundance and the demand for occupying *Umm al-Walad* status in contrast

⁷⁶¹ This will be discussed in the next Chapter.

⁷⁶² Schlein, "The Talent and the Intellect," 65.

with other origins. We can assume that reproduction represented the superior method for *jawārī* to gain upward mobility in the Abbasid social hierarchy.

On the other hand, singers often acquired mobility through marrying their owners and becoming freedwomen, yet only a few of them were *Ummahāt al-Awlād*. The others remained in their current status as *qiyān* and garnered influence over the masculine assembly. Similarly, the *qahramānat* did not obviously succeed in any formal social mobility, however they clearly reflected the basic principle of female slaves having power and roles in the Abbasid period. Eventually, regardless of the variety of female slaves' origin and social status, their titles and names are presented inferior extent of mobility. The variety of their names and titles identified their prominence, prettiness, manners and characters.

In conclusion, we have chosen specific primary sources from different genres in order to examine our hypothesis of the origins and the social status of female slaves, albeit with no comprehensive image of female slaves in the Abbasid period. This is impossible, given the limited information recorded about female slaves in Arabic primary sources. The findings of this chapter go even further, offering evidence for a set of criteria for the characteristics of female slaves: specific origins, educations, skills and professions that were important factors in a slave's eventual social mobility in the Abbasid social hierarchy. While our findings revealed certain features that affected the market demand for female slaves, the primary avenue for women's social mobility connects to the demands and desires of men. This chapter provides a theoretical model for enslaved women's upward social mobility and acquisition of legal status across the Abbasid period. From this a further question arises: to what extent female slaves' higher social status affected and competed with that of free women in Abbasid society. This will be discussed in the next chapter through comparisons between the status of free noblewomen, freedwomen and female slaves.

Chapter Five

The *ḥarīm*: The position of free noblewomen in contrast with enslaved women

Introduction

The previous chapter examined the number of female slaves in the Abbasid era (132-329 A.H./ 750-940 A.D.) from our representative selected sources as well as their origins, professions and their opportunities for upward mobility in the Abbasid social hierarchy. Despite the great extent to which slave women could use the elements of talent and beauty to impact their social mobility, the nature of their education and literacy were extremely important for achieving higher prices and status in the male-dominated household. Among the *jawārī*, the *qiyān* comprised the most educated category, as a great number of them were *muwalladāt*.

The findings from our database, as explained in the previous chapter, showed that *qiyān*, *Ummahāt al-Awlād*, servants, *qahramānat* and other types of female slaves each carried specific and varying social statuses and privileges, depending on the nature of their skills and careers or their owners' desires. It has been emphasised that each female slave had a particular incentive for possession and a certain profession to perform. As such, concubines became prominent figures of upward mobility upon achieving *Umm al-Walad* status, while other *jawārī* gained an uncertain and vacillating mobility. The elite men of Abbasid society were most responsible for providing *jawārī* with the chance to achieve upward mobility. Notably, men's desire to own female slaves of specific origins and professions allowed these *jawārī* to ascend and modify their social status and popularity in the Abbasid social hierarchy.

Given the demand for *jawārī* of different origins, careers and talents, as well as their high number in Abbasid households and at court, a further question can be raised about the enslaved woman who became *Ummahāt al-Awlād*, the

mothers of caliphs or a caliph's favourite *qīna*. The question is whether this might have created a sense of competition between female slaves and the free noblewomen who played important roles in Abbasid society during this period. In his extended study, Gordon affirms the existence of competition between noblewomen and *jawāri* in Muslim society.⁷⁶³ This competition can refer to different affairs, such as: the efforts of women to succeed in marriage or sexual reproduction; participation in public social affairs; closeness to the caliphs; and gaining privileges such as wealth.⁷⁶⁴ An examination of these different areas of competition will help to demonstrate the extent of social mobility achieved by enslaved women in the Abbasid period (132-329 A.H./ 750-940 A.D.), which acts as the heart of the present thesis.

Indeed, the core component of this research examines how female slaves achieved a certain degree of status in Abbasid society; the hypothesis under examination in this chapter is the presence of a rivalry between free noblewomen and female slaves. Thus, the nature of the relationships and characteristics between women and with men must be ascertained. The present chapter asks to what extent female slaves' increasing social status affected and competed with that of free women in Abbasid society.

Lerner's theory of the effects of male dominance argues that the higher roles and status of women and their related powers depended on their relations with men, and that women could only obtain minimal privileges and lower positions without men's permission.⁷⁶⁵ The patriarchy dominated and controlled women's physical and mental activities.⁷⁶⁶ For Mernissi, women's power and influence was permanently contingent on men's ascendancy and the norms of social morality,⁷⁶⁷ and that these considerations were connected to the limitation and restriction of women's social mobility.⁷⁶⁸ El Cheikh stressed the notion of male dominance, and emphasised that women's behaviours and ambition for power were a consequence of the masculine hegemony surrounding them.⁷⁶⁹ Bray

⁷⁶³Gordon, "The Place of Competition," 68; the issue of both noblewomen and enslaved women's talent and interests will be investigated in this chapter.

⁷⁶⁴ I borrowed the idea of identifying the objectives for women's competition from Gordon, *Ibid.*

⁷⁶⁵ Lerner, *The Creation of Patriarchy*, 75.

⁷⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 80.

⁷⁶⁷ Mernissi, *The Forgotten Queens*, 37, 38, 42, 89.

⁷⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶⁹ El Cheikh, "Gender and politics," 156-160.

made a similar observation, that men's authority and desires have been correlated with finalising women's activities and their capacity in different public and private affairs.⁷⁷⁰ The fact is, however, that the historical and literary sources have been largely written by men; therefore great influence has been noted of the masculine perspective on the information and records that portray women.⁷⁷¹ Our examination includes Learner and Mernissi notions of feminist theory and women's roles and stature. It will also question the influence of the patriarchal society and male dominance over women in order to present the extent of female slaves' social status, in contrast with noblewomen, in the Abbasid eras.

In her recent book, *Women, Islam, and Abbasid Identity*, El Cheikh writes that scholars of the Abbasid era present slavery as a primary factor in affecting the position of elite women through men's excessive desire to own female slaves.⁷⁷² Some *jawārī* succeeded in modifying their positions from concubine, singer, poetess or servant to "anti-wife"⁷⁷³ status, which could impact the status of royal women. From this perspective, certain *jawārī* professions and status have been selected for examination in this chapter. Of these, *Ummahāt al-Awlād* and *qiyān* provide the ideal examples for comparison with aristocratic women such as wives and sisters of the caliphs.

We have significant reasons for limiting our discussion to *Ummahāt al-Awlād* (mothers who bore their master's children) and *qiyān* (female slave singers). First, in regard to *Ummahāt al-Awlād*, the first chapter demonstrated that they occupied a legal position under Islam. The mother of a free man's child could easily confirm her rivalry with the wife, a free woman, as the increase in her privileges could be associated with the legal rights of free wives. The *Umm al-Walad's* promise of freedom permitted her to gain a suitably stable status: she could not be sold or given away and would receive manumission after the death of the father of her children, which could be a competitive advantage. Moreover, the rights of her children to gain various privileges, such as becoming the ruler

⁷⁷⁰ Bray, "Men, Women and Slaves," 146.

⁷⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷⁷² El Cheikh, *Women, Islam, and Abbasid Identity* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 2015), 12.

⁷⁷³ I borrowed this phrase from El Cheikh, Ibid. "Anti-wife can be referred to female slave who has been a consort of free man and enjoyed a parallel prerogative to the legitimate wife in both social status and sex." See Abdelwahab Bouhdiba, *Sexuality in Islam*, trans., Alan Sheridan (London: Saqi Books, 2012), 103-110.

of the state, was similar to that of free women's children. Thus, the greatest opportunity for enslaved women to compete with free women was through motherhood, as a higher position could be acquired through their children.⁷⁷⁴

The reason for choosing *qiyān* as a case study in this chapter is that the primary sources present the lengths of their ambitions to gain manumission. Our discussion and database suggest that the primary aim of the majority of *qiyān* was to be freed and to obtain similar status and advantages to free women. This was demonstrated through the cases of 'Arīb, Shāriyah and other female slave singers examined and presented in the previous chapter. Another reason for focusing on *qiyān* as competitors to royal women is that they had the potential to gain power in the Abbasid court. A number of *qiyān* belonging to the royal family had their own servants or even an entourage (*ḥāshiyah*) of female slaves, and amassed an enormous fortune. This demonstrated their high prestige and prominent social position, and thus the comparison with free noblewomen deserves examination. Consequently, both *Ummahāt al-Awlād* and *qiyān* had a more significant chance of competing with royal woman than other categories of *jawārī* for substantial social status and privilege.

Recently, contemporary historians and scholars have worked to present women's status, roles and visibility in Islam society. Soha Kader writes:

To understand the status and position of women in Arab history and society, it is necessary to focus the researcher on three main areas: the position of women within the Arab family, the participation of women in social production and reproduction, and the ideological definitions of women's roles in the Arab world.⁷⁷⁵

S. Jay Kleinberg argues that a study of women's lives in the private sphere can offer a clear image of the relationships, activities and constraints that led to their movement in society.⁷⁷⁶ Similarly, Richardson argues that the powers of sexuality and maternity are beneficial for exploring the potential social status of

⁷⁷⁴ Kader, "The Role of Women in the History of the Arab States," 91.

⁷⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁷⁶ S. Jay Kleinberg, *Retrieving Women's History: Changing Perception of the Role of Women in Politics and Society* (Oxford: Berg, 1988), 22.

female slaves.⁷⁷⁷ The present chapter aims to study the portrayal of women, both free and enslaved, including their relationships and social activities, in order to examine their rivalry when obtaining a higher social status. It seeks to gain insight into the fundamental question of this thesis: the extent to which female slaves could gain a higher social status in the Abbasid Muslim hierarchy. It seems appropriate to consider that the primary objective of this thesis is not simply to present the roles of women and their visibility and movement in Islam during the Abbasid era, but rather to study the social life cycle dependent on their social history, personalities, behaviours, relations and social mobility. It is essential to shed light on how primary sources, historians and feminist scholars have treated women as figures in society, and how their biographies have presented various aspects of their lives.

In discussing the image of women in scholarly sources, Ahmed argues that Abbasid women in Islam held no, or otherwise indescribably small, roles in society because of the reality of the isolation that dominated their lives.⁷⁷⁸ She claims that women were absent in warfare and in mosques, and that they did not contribute to social or cultural affairs.⁷⁷⁹ However, what is crucially important to recognize is that Ahmed's view is inaccurate and in contradiction to the primary sources on women's roles in Abbasid era (132-320 A.H./ 750-940 A.D.).

First, in regards to war, the presence of female companions (royal or slave) is mentioned in various Muslim sources.⁷⁸⁰ In the region of al-Manşūr, a good number of Abbasid noblewomen were companions to Muslim men in warfare.⁷⁸¹ Another example from the Abbasid period is Būrān bint al-Hasan (d. 271 A.H./858 A.D.), a noblewoman and the wife of Caliph al-Ma'mūn, who accompanied her husband on the battlefield against Byzantium.⁷⁸² These examples demonstrate the availability of women in warfare and the allowance of their participation and companionship in such affairs. Although women did not participate in active combat, in some primary sources women were present on

⁷⁷⁷ Richardson, "Singing Slave Girls," 116.

⁷⁷⁸ Ahmed, *Women and Gender in Islam*, 79.

⁷⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁸⁰ Abbott, *Two Queens of Baghdad*, 29.

⁷⁸¹ Ibid.

⁷⁸² Ibid., 236.

the battlefield as companions, water-bearers, and nurses,⁷⁸³ and they did fight in self-defence when there were not enough men. Thus, their presence in warfare was not limited to combat. Women's engagement in combat did occur due to the scarcity of manpower during the war or in self-defence, but in general, women's presence on the battlefield was to motivate the male warriors and to help as water-bearers or nurses.⁷⁸⁴

Secondly, the biographies of both free women and *jawārit* present these women's obvious contributions to culture, religion and public or private assemblies. There is clear information about and knowledge of these women's educational and cultural backgrounds and activities. Further discussion and evidence of a great number of educated, talented female slaves has been presented in the previous chapter. One noteworthy noblewoman is 'Ulayyah bint al-Mahdī, who will be discussed later in this chapter. Both enslaved and free woman could be poets or singers, educated without much regard to their limited surroundings. Thus, women are presented as having a pivotal role, and their seclusion did not affect their presence and engagement in society affairs.⁷⁸⁵

One can also argue that the bulk of sources omitted the extent of women's roles and valuable details about their lives from historical record.⁷⁸⁶ Mernissi's theory underlines the fact that primary sources present women as "mothers and daughters of powerful men. General history books, genealogies and chronicles identified women as active participants and fully involved partners in historical events".⁷⁸⁷ Likewise, Kruk writes about Muslim women's roles and empowerment in Arabic literature, emphasizing that the majority of history was written by men to a masculine audience. Thus, some information about women might be ambiguous or represent the male writer's own desires rather than reality.⁷⁸⁸ A recent study by Reem Alrudainy illustrates that scholarly sources from the medieval period neglected or reduced some of the roles of women, in

⁷⁸³ Maryam Alkandari, "Warfare and Women: The Early Islamic Period (12 B.H.-10 A.H. / 611-632 A.D.)," (MA diss., Exeter: University of Exeter, 2013), 34.

⁷⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁸⁵ Although there was a disparity between the limited privileges for noblewomen and female slaves, both presented a valid contribution to such affairs. This will be discussed later in this chapter.

⁷⁸⁶ Kleinberg, *Retrieving Women's History*, ix.

⁷⁸⁷ Mernissi, "Women in Muslim History: Traditional Perspectives and New Strategies," in S. Kleinberg, *Retrieving Women's History*, 338.

⁷⁸⁸ Kruk, *The Warrior Women*, 225-227.

contrast with men's roles, in their historical records.⁷⁸⁹ There has also been a clear trivialization of women's roles and functions by contemporary scholars and research.⁷⁹⁰

Some historians have reduced or eliminated the full extent of women's roles and activities, whether the women were inferior or superior, in Abbasid historical and biographical sources. Mernissi stated that biographies have associated free and enslaved women with famous men for whom the women were wives, daughters, sisters or slaves.⁷⁹¹ The inclusion of noble, elite and famous women in the literature is dependent on their relationship with royalty and celebrity. Evidence of this can be found in our database in the previous chapter. Almost all the information about female slaves in the Abbasid period shows them as belonging to caliphs, wealthy men, traders, teachers, famous singers or poets.⁷⁹² High-class denizen and the aristocracy attracted the interest of scholars and historians, while commoners were of less concern. This strategy can be applied to information about free royal women as well. Obviously, the images and sketches of both royal woman and *jawārī* are extremely different to that presented in primary sources.

A parallel method of historiography is associated with women in the early periods of Islam. Primary and contemporary scholars have focused on "great women" in the early Islamic period, such as the wives of prophets (*Ummahāt al-Mu'minīn*)⁷⁹³ and the wives, daughters or sisters of their companions (*ṣaḥābiyāt*), viewing them as modest models of Islam. Less focus can be found regarding other women.⁷⁹⁴ El Cheikh writes that "early Muslim female identity was, in fact, dependent upon the limits set by the exemplars' stories from the first/seventh century".⁷⁹⁵ Accordingly, this procedure for presenting and reflecting an image of women as dependent on their relations with famous figures has been utilized by historians of later periods, including the Abbasid era.

⁷⁸⁹ Alrudainy, "The Role of Women in the Būyid and Saljūq," 8.

⁷⁹⁰ Ibid., 39, 111, 162, 269.

⁷⁹¹ Mernissi, "Women in Muslim History," 338.

⁷⁹² Very few noteworthy incidents were found of enslaved woman belonging to commoners; our database in the previous Chapter (see Tables 4:10- 4:17) presented a significant number of unknown or missing information about female slaves' origins, owners' and children's names, professions and prices.

⁷⁹³ Kader, "The Role of Women," 81.

⁷⁹⁴ For excellent information on women in the early Islamic period, see Roded, *Women in Islamic Biographical Collections*.

⁷⁹⁵ El Cheikh, *Women, Islam, and Abbasid Identity*, 97.

It is clear from our discussion that primary sources do not always present direct information about women; rather, they can present concealed and indirect knowledge regarding women, centred on their relationships with famous men. The originality of this chapter broadly lies in questioning and examining the extent of the competition for high social status between free and enslaved women and the evaluation and assessment of Abbasid-era women's relationships with men, whether kin or owner, and their activities and privileges, will be the core focus of the discussion in this chapter.

In this chapter, we examine how women's agency could develop their social status, regardless of whether those women were free, freed and enslaved, through their relations with men and their obtainable privileges. The criteria for women's agency depended on different structures of economic, social and cultural classification within the society, determining the extent of enslaved women's agency in Abbasid courts and households.

This chapter continues with an analysis of the relationship between marriage and maternity in the Abbasid period, which provided a legal connection between men and women and has implications for the competition between women over social status. In addition, our discussion of female sexuality, desires and behaviours asks the question of how men considered and responded to free and enslaved women's sexual activities. This behaviour, as discussed earlier, can be a key factor in designating the relationships with and status of women in the hearts of men. Next, this chapter will examine women's education and their privileges, such as ownership of a certain fortune. To highlight the social status of female slaves in the Abbasid era, the question will be raised regarding the extent of their birthright and entitlements in contrast with royal free women.

5.1 Marriage and maternity

In Muslim society, all of a man's female relations, such as his mother, sisters, cousins or slaves, were known as the *ḥarīm* (seraglio,⁷⁹⁶ "pl. *haram*"⁷⁹⁷). Al-

⁷⁹⁶ Al-Mas'ūdī, *Murūj al-Dhahab*, vol 3, 323.

Tanūkhī explains that this concept of *ḥarīm* refers to the consorts who belonged to one specific man, those whom he had to protect and safeguard.⁷⁹⁸ Kennedy identifies the *ḥarīm* as the female members of the household, which only the patron or owner and his male relatives or entourage were permitted to visit.⁷⁹⁹ Likewise, Ahmed notes that “[*ḥarīm*], from the word *haram*, “sacred, forbidden,” refers to those apartments that were most particularly forbidden to other men—those in which his women resided”.⁸⁰⁰ Thus, a caliph’s consorts included wives, concubines, servants or other women who had a legal relationship with him. The Third chapter of this thesis stated that according to *sharī‘ah* law, a free Muslim man had the right to marry up to four free women through the *ḥarā‘ir* and *milk al-nikāḥ*, while his lawful right to ownership of female slaves, such as *milk al-yamīn*, was boundless.⁸⁰¹

During the early Islamic period, the Prophet himself fulfilled this act when he manumitted and married both Ṣafīyah and Māriyah. In some cases, Muslims consider the Prophet’s *Sunnah al-Fīliyyah* (habits and practices) as a second major source of the *sharī‘ah*, and it is indeed lawful in Islam as a social and legal custom. The question here becomes, “why did Muslims during and after the Prophet’s life not take this custom as a principle?”⁸⁰² The Prophet’s tradition could have been a significant influence on Muslim men’s behaviours to follow. The answer to the above question relates to the development of Islamic law and its effect on the status of *Ummahāt al-Awlād*. New legislation by the Caliph Ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, which prohibited selling an *Umm al-Walad* or giving her away and granted her the right to manumission upon the death of her children’s father, was beneficial to enslaved women. For the *Umm al-Walad*, whether after being granted her freedom or before, in all cases she received a recognized legal status and could be perpetually included in the man’s *ḥarīm* through the proximity of her children’s connections and lineage. This legal status of the *Umm al-Walad* in the Abbasid era might in some cases explain the caliphs’ tendency not to marry their *Ummahāt al-Awlād*.⁸⁰³ Either way, it is clear that the choice between marrying a *jawārī* or leaving them in slavery was the free

⁷⁹⁷ Kennedy, “The Harem,” 160.

⁷⁹⁸ Al-Tanūkhī, *Kitāb al-Faraj ba‘da al-shiddah*, vol 3, 105; Mernissi, *The Forgotten Queens*, 65.

⁷⁹⁹ Kennedy, “The Harem,” 160.

⁸⁰⁰ Ahmed, *Women and Gender*, 117.

⁸⁰¹ See Chapter Three, 110.

⁸⁰² See Chapter Three, 111-112.

⁸⁰³ Further discussion on the marriage of both free and enslaved women can be found later in this chapter.

individual's own decision, since Islamic law did not prohibit but rather authorized this practice.

Qur'anic verses 2:221 and 4:25 and three Sunni jurists were clear in permitted men to marry their female slaves under specific circumstances, such as the inability to afford a free woman's dowry or to safeguard himself from committing adultery. Nevertheless, the actual practices of men, such as the caliphs of the Abbasid era, were frequently contradicted with the Qur'an verses or *fuqahā'* opinions. It might be unsurprising that men's desires shifted away from taking enslaved women as their legal spouses.⁸⁰⁴ Although there is a connection between the developing legal status of the *Umm al-Walad* in Islam and the possibility of taking female slaves as legal wives, only a minority of men, including the caliphs, performed this action during the Abbasid period. It has been noted that the bulk of the Abbasid caliphs, as wealthy figures, had the capacity to afford marriage to free women, yet they preferred owning female slaves as we will see, especially *Ummahāt al-Awlād*. Our database in the previous chapter shows that only seven female slaves were raised to the status of wife, while the number of *Ummahāt al-Awlād* is more significant with a total of 68 (See table 4.14).

Most significantly, Ahmed writes that the rigid traditions in some specific social groups such as the nobility have dominated the social practice of marriage, as women were obligated to marry their kinsman or men of similar social status.⁸⁰⁵ Goldziher and Smith add that in the customs of Arab society, men were often married to relatives of their uncles and aunts.⁸⁰⁶ Kennedy adds that in most cases, a caliph's traditional marriage was aimed at family circumstances, such as to reinforce or enhance family relations.⁸⁰⁷ This was obvious in the life of Caliph al-Rashīd and his marriage to his noble cousins Umm 'Abd Allāh and al-'Abbāsah. His wife 'Azīzah was not a royal woman, but rather his cousin, the daughter of al-Khayzarān's brother.⁸⁰⁸ What is interesting is Kennedy's assertion that al-Rashīd did not have any children in his marriages with the abovementioned noble cousins, and both Umm 'Abd Allāh and 'Azīzah were

⁸⁰⁴ Over the early Islamic period. For more discussion see page 145,174.

⁸⁰⁵ Ahmed, *Women and Gender*, 20.

⁸⁰⁶ Goldziher and Smith, *Kinship & Marriage*, 187.

⁸⁰⁷ Kennedy, "The Harem," 167.

⁸⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

divorced single women before their marriage to al-Rashīd.⁸⁰⁹ Lerner's concept of male dominance underlined that female sexuality and the issue of honour was often associated with concepts of chastity and piety.⁸¹⁰ This especially applied to the status of noblewomen. This could suggest that the aim of al-Rashīd's marriages was to provide the women with protection by becoming wives of the caliph, and to give them an element of prestige and high strata.⁸¹¹

Marriages of convenience were common among elites and aristocrats, and often aimed at achieving political or economic objectives. As we discussed in the previous chapter, similar methods were practiced in the pre and early Islamic periods, such as the case of gifting and granting female slaves to maintain relationships between influential and famous individuals, both within and outside Abbasid society. A parallel system was practiced in marriages of the nobility, such as princes, viziers, leaders, traders or other famous figures. Lerner notes that "the point of such diplomatic marriages was to make secure alliances between local rulers and they implied mutual obligations."⁸¹² William Sumner writes in *Folkways: A Study of the Sociological Importance of Usages, Manners, Customs, Mores, and Morals* that a social system consists of a concept that grows and evolves in the form of customs, which then mature and entrench themselves in society and become social behaviours.⁸¹³ Thus, both marriages to family members and those to achieve specific interests became significant social norms for obtaining favourable relations between individuals.

Interestingly, primary sources reveal little information about the caliphs having aristocratic marriages after the death of al-Rashīd in 193 A.H./809 A.D.⁸¹⁴ Only one incident was recorded, when the Caliph al-Ma'mūn married a royal woman, Būrān, who was the daughter of his adviser, al-Ḥasan b. Sahl (d. 236 A.H./851 A.D.).⁸¹⁵ The nature of this marriage is presented as a measure of reciprocity and gratitude toward Būrān's father and his family, as they supported al-Ma'mūn during the civil war against his brother al-Amīn (d. 198 A.H./813

⁸⁰⁹ Kennedy, "The Harem," 167.

⁸¹⁰ Ibid., 80-81.

⁸¹¹ Ibid.

⁸¹² Lerner, *The creation of patriarchy*, 72.

⁸¹³ William Sumner, *Folkways: A Study of the Sociological Importance of Usages, Manners, Customs, Mores, and Morals* (New York: Ginn, 1906), 39-41.

⁸¹⁴ Kennedy, "The Harem," 167.

⁸¹⁵ Ibid., 169.

A.D.).⁸¹⁶ This marriage represented a clear political union between the caliph and Būrān's father, a political leader at the time. The limited information about the practice of marriage to royal women could demonstrate "a real change in dynastic structure"⁸¹⁷ of social practices by the Abbasid caliphs. It seems probable that this change was not related to a decrease in the caliphs' interest in royal women, but is rather associated with their political obligations and unconcern regarding the custom and habit of "royal intermarriage".⁸¹⁸ To a large extent, the fact that majority of the Abbasid caliphs were *hujanā'*, a consequence of being the children of foreign female slaves, could have provided the core motivation for the indifference to and disregard of the custom of aristocratic marriage.

Significantly, an *Umm al-Walad's* position and reproductive status allowed her to exploit kinship ties such as becoming the wife of her master, which performed the principal function in framing her future rank, roles and powers at the Abbasid court.⁸¹⁹ An *Umm al-Walad's* privilege and influence could derive from her children's power and status, while other enslaved women could not take full advantage of the kinship system. On the other hand, Gianluca Parolin writes that "slavery actually did not entail a true form of membership in the kin group, since the slave was considered the mere property of the master".⁸²⁰ This argument claims that bondage negates any legitimate form of kinship or participation in a social cohort due to a slave's utter subjugation to their owner.

Although men such as caliphs or princes successfully rejected the practice of marriage to their royal kin or for convenience, this custom continued to apply to royal women and princesses. It has been noted that daughters and sisters of the caliphs were often married through the system of elite intermarriage.⁸²¹ Clear examples included al-Rashīd's daughters, Ḥamdūnah and Fāṭimah, as well as the daughters of al-Ma'mūn, Umm Ḥabībah and Umm al-Faḍl.⁸²² All of these women had a marriage of convenience arranged for them to bring

⁸¹⁶ Kennedy, "The Harem," 169.

⁸¹⁷ Ibid.

⁸¹⁸ Ibid.

⁸¹⁹ See Robin Blackburn, "Slavery — Its Special Features and Social Role," in *Slavery and Other Forms of Unfree Labour*, ed., Léonie Archer (London: Routledge, 1988), 266.

⁸²⁰ Parolin, *Citizenship in the Arab World*, 35

⁸²¹ Ibid., 178.

⁸²² Al-Ṣfahānī, *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, vol 12, 203: Ibid.

political, internal or functional advantages. It could be suggested that this phenomena was enforced upon and thus associated with women, while men ultimately had independence in choosing their wives and consorts.

One can argue that owning *jawārī* could be more desirable for men than having a legal wife or marriage. The large number of female slaves, their sexual availability and legal position in bearing children to free men, as discussed in the previous chapter, might provide the fundamental reason why some men, especially among royalty, were satisfied with owning female slaves and *Ummahāt al-Awlād* instead of marrying free women. There is great correlation and sense of natural relationship between slavery, women, ownership and marriage. This is present in the relations between men and women in the early Islamic and classical society, especially with regard to sex.⁸²³

Ali argues that slavery was widespread in Islamic society, but that female enslavement can be compared to the institution of marriage to free women. First, marriage as a legal agreement required the payment of dowry; likewise, a buyer must pay a certain amount in order to possess a slave woman.⁸²⁴ In addition, the relationship between male dominance and lawful sexual intercourse is clearly interrelated between the categories of husband, wife and female slave.⁸²⁵ A man in marriage had power over his wife, and she had to perform her duty to provide legal sexual practices to her husband. Likewise, a female slave's sexual availability to her master was the master's essential right according to Islamic law.⁸²⁶ Moreover, the practices of manumitting a female slave and divorcing a wife were legal acts in Islamic society,⁸²⁷ and both had a parallel in freeing and releasing women from a man's dominance over them.⁸²⁸

While enslavement and marriage carry a clear resemblance to a certain extent, there was nevertheless a great distance between them. The practice of *milk al-nikāḥ* stated that a man could own or control a free woman through the connection of legal marriage contract, while *jawārī*, as *milk al-yamīn*, permitted

⁸²³ Ali, *Marriage and Slavery*, 8.

⁸²⁴ Ibid., 7.

⁸²⁵ Ibid.

⁸²⁶ See back Chapter Three, 91.

⁸²⁷ Ali, *Marriage and Slavery*, 7, 12, 164.

⁸²⁸ Ibid., 165.

masters to have lawful sex with slaves as his property. Since Muslim *sharī'ah* law allowed men to own a great number of female slaves and authorized sexual relations with them, owning female slaves was a legal alternative to marrying free women.

Al-Jāhīz observed that female slaves were more attractive and favourable to men than free women.⁸²⁹ The major reason was that men could examine or inspect a *jawāri*'s beauty or literacy skills before purchase, and choose the character and manner of beauty that might best please him.⁸³⁰ In contrast, when marrying a free noblewoman, the man had limited opportunity to interview or even meet her, and had to be satisfied with his female family members' opinions on her.⁸³¹ The opportunity for nominating and choosing an appropriate *jawāri* provided an advantage for appeasing the man's demands and desires. This practice of personally choosing a *jawāri* depending on the master's desires could then lead her to "enter into his inner circle of companions, even becoming one of his favored sexual partners and bearing him children".⁸³²

Thus, from al-Jāhīz's argument, one can suggest that the custom of preferring *jawāri* over wives from the nobility or other free denizens had an obvious effect. Men such as the Abbasid caliphs abandoned marriage to free women, as according to Islamic law a man could only marry a specific number of wives but own an unlimited number of female slaves. However, while al-Jāhīz's evidence is quite significant, the counter-example of the Caliph al-Rashīd's marriage to his cousin, the royal princess Zubaydah, should be considered. Some primary sources present a significant, mutually admiring relationship between them before their marriage.⁸³³ We can assume from this that it was possible for an elite man to nominate a royal woman as his future spouse, thus the assertion that *jawāri* were more desirable is a complicated one.

'Athamina illustrates that the Abbasid caliphs preferred to own female slaves

⁸²⁹ Al-Jāhīz "Risālat al-Nisā'," in *Rasā'il al-Jāhīz* (Bayrūt: Dār wa-Maktabat al-Hilāl lil-Tibā'ah wa-al-Nashr, 2004), vol 3, 75; Idem., "Emotions: Love and Women, and Singing Slave-Girls," in *The Life and Works of Jāhīz*, ed., Charles Pellat, trans. D.M. Hawake (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1969), 256-267.

⁸³⁰ Al-Jāhīz, *Ibid.*, vol 3, 75.

⁸³¹ *Ibid.*

⁸³² Richardson, "Singing Slave Girls," 106.

⁸³³ See Ṣāwī al-Ṣāwī, *Nisā' al-khulafā'* (Al-Jīzah: Maktabat al-Nāfidhah, 2012), 7-24.

over marrying free women.⁸³⁴ 'Athamina's reasons for this preference are first that a slave woman "could be obtained at a lower cost, provided better service to her [master], and did not incur numerous daily expenses".⁸³⁵ Secondly, they "were less particular about modesty and dignity during sexual relations than was the Arab woman, who was bound by a heavy burden of conservative tradition."⁸³⁶ One might then attribute the withdrawn nature of free women regarding men to their legal status. According to Islamic law in the case of marrying free women, the man was restricted in his marriage by social norms. He was also required to grant his wife the various legal privileges of a spouse, such as supplying her with her needs and requirements, and she would contribute to his capital. In contrast, female slaves did not have such legal privileges or rights.⁸³⁷ Thus, for men in certain situations, the expensive dowry of an *al-mahīrah* (pl. *al-mahā'ir*), or free royal consort,⁸³⁸ might be a reasonable reason to disregard marriage to free women.

However, the lives of the nobility, such as the caliphs, suggests two contrasting acts and viewpoints. The caliphs, as rulers, had sufficient capital to pay such an expensive dowry. Moreover, following our discussion in the previous chapter, it is clear that the prices of *jawārī* had reached a high level. The highest slave prices reached as much as 100,000 Dinars regardless of the slave's profession or origin.⁸³⁹ This reveals that the expense for both royal woman and female slaves, whether dowry or purchase price, created an expensive cost. Thus, the reason for the decrease in men's desire to marry free women in favour of owning female slaves might be contingent on the idea of masculine passion and pleasure, not cost.

Although, "women's status as wives and mothers could never be wholly degraded without degrading their husbands".⁸⁴⁰ It is crucial to understand that marrying a free woman provided a man control over his wife, but that his dominance could be restricted or limited. The wife's kinsmen, to a certain

⁸³⁴ 'Athamina, "How Did Islam Contribute," 397.

⁸³⁵ Ibid.

⁸³⁶ Ibid.

⁸³⁷ Ahmed, *Women and Gender in Islam*, 83.

⁸³⁸ Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, vol 8, 359.

⁸³⁹ See Chapter Four, 119, and Table 4.11.

⁸⁴⁰ Blackburn, "Slavery – its Special Features," 266.

extent, expressed commitment towards their daughter or sister.⁸⁴¹ It goes without saying that a woman's relatives were her defenders and guardians before and after her marriage.⁸⁴² By contrast, since enslaved women did not have legal relatives, the demand for men to own them is clear in this regard. It was thus preferable to own or marry female slaves without such kin that might intervene in her married life. Lerner and Mernissi's theory of male dominance over women's lives relates to our hypothesis of female subordination, as it was considered both natural and a compulsory social norm. As a result, the conceptual model of a man's ascendancy over women through guardianship, either as husband or kin, was part of the structure of Abbasid society.

We have noted that the caliphs' consorts comprised both royal women and slaves. It was stated in the introduction to this chapter that two categories of *jawārī* will be examined and compared with free royal women. The *Umm al-Walad* carried a legitimized status as the mother of her master's child, while *qiyān* were the most desirable category among the *jawārī* in the Abbasid caliphs' court. Disparity in men's preference of one category over the other had influence in creating a sense of competition and rivalry between these women,⁸⁴³ and raises the question of the extent of their social status at court.

The development and the diversity of Islamic law on the status of the *Umm al-Walad*⁸⁴⁴ generated a sense of jealousy and rivalry between *Umm al-Banīn*, free women who legally married and bore children for their husbands, and the *Umm al-Walad*, a female slave who becomes the mother of a child from her master. Hidayatullah presents that in the early Islamic period, Māriyah the Copt was a significant example of the social mobility of female slaves, as evidenced by her manumission and becoming the Prophet's wife.⁸⁴⁵ Historical records describe Māriyah's life as a freedwoman,⁸⁴⁶ where she gained similar rights and duties to the Prophet's free royal wives. As the wife of the prophet and his *Umm*

⁸⁴¹ Goldziher and Smith, *Kinship & Marriage*, 122.

⁸⁴² *Ibid.*, 123.

⁸⁴³ Maryam Alkandari, "Enslaved and Free Women in the Royal Court," in *Baghdad at the Centre of a World, 8th-13th Century: An Introductory Textbook*. Edited by Emily Selove. Tehran Press, 2019. (Forthcoming work by the author of this thesis).

⁸⁴⁴ For more discussion see Chapter Three, section 3.3.4.

⁸⁴⁵ Hidayatullah, "Mariyya the Copt," 225, 22; Also see excellent chapter of Elizabeth Urban, "Hagar and Mariya: Early Islamic models of slave motherhood," in *Concubines and Courtesans: Women and Slavery in Islamic History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 225-239.

⁸⁴⁶ *Ibid.*; See Ali, *Sexual Ethics & Islam*, 39.

al-Banīn, she bore him Ibrāhīm,⁸⁴⁷ thus displacing Khadījah bint Khuwaylid, the late wife of the prophet. The consequences of this situation are clear in the narratives of the jealousy of the *ḥarā'ir* (free women) toward Māriyah.

Much of the jealousy of the *ḥarā'ir* toward Māriyah was driven by her maternity.⁸⁴⁸ Giving birth was a clear source of the competition between *jawārī*, freedwomen and free royal women. Another significant argument by Hidayatullah is the effect and implication of Māriyah's beauty as a tool for attracting men's attention and "sexual desire".⁸⁴⁹ As Māriyah was of a different race, she "is described as beautiful, having curly hair and white skin".⁸⁵⁰ The impact of Māriyah's beauty and procreation is consistent with later cases of competition between female slaves, freedwomen and free noblewomen. This concept was discussed in the previous chapter, which argued that the criteria of a female's slave beauty and ability to bear children provided the most demand by men in owning female slaves in the Abbasid era.

Ibn Ḥusayn writes that jealousy and competition between free noblewomen and female slaves was present in the Umayyad period, as elite women tried to protect their place and status among the increasing number of female slaves and their growing impact in Abbasid households.⁸⁵¹ During this period, Fākhītah, wife of Mu'āwiyah b. Abī Sufyān, endeavoured to monitor Mu'āwiyah's relationships with his female slaves, and even attempted to prevent him from having sexual intercourse with them.⁸⁵² Similar practices occurred in the Abbasid period, such as when Arwā bint Manṣūr al-Himyarī (d. 146 A.H./736 A.D.), a noblewoman and wife of al-Manṣūr, prevented her husband from the act of polygamy or taking female slaves as concubines as a condition of her marriage.⁸⁵³

This refusal of Arwā presents two principal ideas. First, it reveals that jealousy

⁸⁴⁷ Hidayatullah, "Mariyya the Copt," 223.

⁸⁴⁸ Ibid., 223, 228, 231, 232. The jealousy of *ḥarā'ir* toward the prophet's wives was the reason for *Sūrat al-Taḥrīm* (66) reason of revelation (*asbāb al-nuzūl*).

⁸⁴⁹ Ibid., 222.

⁸⁵⁰ Arabs had different specifications; Ibid., 223, 227

⁸⁵¹ Bin Ḥusayn, *Nisā' Al-khulafā'*, 21-20

⁸⁵² Ibid.

⁸⁵³ "She had apparently, insisted on a pre-nuptial agreement that he would take neither wife nor concubine as long as she lived." Kennedy, "The Harem," 166; Al-Rasheed, "Slave Girls under the Early 'Abbāsīd," 308.

and competition occurred between free and enslaved women. Second, demanding such a condition clearly shows that free women had influence, voice and expression, rejecting inappropriate male behaviours for their convenience. Regardless of Arwā's personal motives surrounding her marriage condition, her act demonstrates that women in the Abbasid period had gained a certain of freedom by denying and dismissing a practice legally recognized by Islamic law and exercised frequently by men. Lerner and Mernissi's argument regarding an absolute patriarchal society is questionable here and requires further discussion.

Historical records show no information or references regarding disputes or antagonism between the royal consorts of the Abbasid caliphs. Rather, strained relations appear to have existed between noble wives and female slaves from different status and professions. This is illustrated by the story of Zubaydah, a royal wife. She suffered due to the preoccupation of her husband, Caliph al-Rashīd, with *jawārī* companions and their proximity to him.⁸⁵⁴ This led Zubaydah to request the assistance of 'Ulayyah, al-Rashīd's sister, to deliver a message through poetry and song, using al-Rashīd's female slaves to express her grief and admonition.⁸⁵⁵ The implications of this act present the extent of the *jawārī* influence on the interest of al-Rashīd, and indicates the jealousy of royal women toward female slaves.

Similar jealousy can be found between female slaves. Al-Khayzarān, an *Umm al-Walad*, showed hostility to her counterpart, Maknūnah, another of al-Mahdī's *Umm al-Walad* and the mother of 'Ulayyah. In return, al-Khayzarān stated that no one had been ruder to her than Maknūnah.⁸⁵⁶ The reasons for the rivalry between these two *jawārī* are obvious; jealousy existed between *Ummahāt al-Awlād* and *jawārī* in general. For example, although al-Khayzarān and Maknūnah were both al-Mahdī's *Ummahāt al-Awlād*, the talents and skills of enslaved women provided an essential source of competition between the women. Maknūnah was known for her singing talent and was trained from a young age, while al-Khayzarān's profession was that of concubine. Although al-

⁸⁵⁴ Al-Isfahānī, *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, vol 20, 191-192.

⁸⁵⁵ Ibid; Also See Myrne, "A Jariya's Prospects in Abbasid Baghdad," 59.

⁸⁵⁶ Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, vol 10, 129; Mernissi's translation is, "I never had such fear of another woman as I had of her." See Mernissi, *The Forgotten Queens of Islam*, 54.

Khayzarān is known today for her knowledge of *fiqh* and Qur'anic study, singing and poetry was the more desirable and beneficial talent for a slave in possession by men during the Abbasid period.

For *qiyān* in particular, Richardson writes that it was not necessary for a *qīna* to gain legitimate status, such as *Umm al-Walad*, in order to have power as a female slave; specific professions and talents could instead be performed to attain higher position.⁸⁵⁷ 'Arīb, for example, represents the case of a successful *qīna*, earning considerable prominence and status in the Abbasid court.⁸⁵⁸ 'Arīb was a famous *qīna* to eight Abbasid caliphs.⁸⁵⁹ While 'Arīb retained a great deal of fame and privilege, the discussion in the previous chapter emphasizes that 'Arīb's status as a renowned *qīna* was not sufficient for her, however, as her demand for manumission persisted throughout her life at court.⁸⁶⁰ This appears to show that 'Arīb was unsatisfied as a slave, or perhaps that her ambition to gain her full freedom was motivated by the status of freedwoman being more prestigious than being a *qīna*, *Umm-al-Walad* or other type of female slave. The list of women in Tables 4.13 and 4.17 reveal a number of enslaved women who became *Ummahāt al-Awlād*, then gained their manumission through marriage.

'Ubaydah al-Ṭunbūrīyah, a famous *qīna*, is another noteworthy example of maternity and marriage. Her biography reveals that men demanded the right to marry her regardless of her previous unlawful sexual relations with men.⁸⁶¹ She became the wife of 'Alī b. al-Faraj, and a dowager and freedwoman following his death.⁸⁶² 'Ubaydah remarried three times, and continued practicing her talent in singing as a singer and freedwoman.⁸⁶³ We can assume that female slaves, *Ummahāt al-Awlād* and freedwomen who had belonged to commoners had additional independence in their activities and behaviours than those who belonged to the caliph. Following "membership of the caliph's *haram*,"⁸⁶⁴ female

⁸⁵⁷ Richardson, "Singing Slave Girls," 115; also see Myrne, "A Jariya's Prospects in Abbasid Baghdad," 53.

⁸⁵⁸ Richardson, *Ibid.*

⁸⁵⁹ Al-Isfahānī, *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, vol 21, 57.

⁸⁶⁰ See our earlier discussion on female slaves' desires and demand for freedom in Chapter Four, 132-134.

⁸⁶¹ Al-Isfahānī, *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, vol 22, 144, 146.

⁸⁶² *Ibid.*

⁸⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

slaves from different professions were more restricted and the rules on their activities more stringent; moreover, their mistakes could not be forgiven.⁸⁶⁵

Overall, the dominance of aristocratic men under the patriarchy included all their *haram*, comprising royal and enslaved women, in attempting to keep women's activities and movement within particular bounds. The basic fact of the high number and availability of female slaves had consequences for their rivalry with royal women with regard to marriage and maternity. By obtaining the legal status of *Ummahāt al-Awlād* or freedwoman, *jawārī* could be strongly compete with free women. The next section will compare between royal women and enslaved women in term of sexual desirability and behavior.

5.2 Sexual desirability and behaviour

It is true that specific examples do not provide a comprehensive image of the status of female slaves or freedwomen in the Abbasid period, but they can reveal a theoretical model of these women's allowed mobility and attainment of legal status in the Muslim social hierarchy. As discussed in the previous chapter, female slaves utilized their beauty to attract men's desire, interest and sexual relations. Thus, "sexual interest is seen as a positive trait, because it derived from [the] 'sound nature' (*fitra*),"⁸⁶⁶ and *jawārī* were advantaged by their sexual availability and close proximity to men in gaining a closeness with them. There is no doubt that the criteria for men's passions regarding owning female slaves were changeable throughout the Abbasid period. The discussion in the Fourth chapter of slave markets and slaves' origins revealed that golden- and dark-skinned *jawārī* were desirable before and during the early Abbasid period, while beautiful white-skinned girls were later in demand for men's desirability. From their beauty, female slaves could reach a high price regardless of their origin or skilfulness.⁸⁶⁷ It is important, however, to stress that throughout the early Abbasid period and beyond, enslaved women had to be literate and well educated as well, and that beauty, skill and education were all necessary to

⁸⁶⁵ Al-Jāhīz, "*Risālat al-qiyān*," vol 3, 83.

⁸⁶⁶ Hidayatullah, "Mariyya the Copt," 228.

⁸⁶⁷ See Chapter Four, section 4.1.2.

gain higher position and fame.⁸⁶⁸

Enslaved women could have been more desirable for male owners because of their experience in sexual affairs, especially how to provide men with great pleasure. Slave traders had a significant effect on a *jawārī*'s behaviour, and they made sure to train their female slaves in methods that utilized sexual intercourse to attract men. Thus, the sexual stereotypes of female slaves as having a "voracious appetite for lovers"⁸⁶⁹ can be associated with their initial traineeship or instruction by their former owner. In his "*Risālat al-Nisā*,"⁸⁷⁰ al-Jāhiz was very careful to distinguish the reasons for men's passion in owning female slaves, and sought to dismiss their interest in free royal women.⁸⁷¹ He emphasized that the ease of communicating with and encountering slave women, such as *qiyān*, whether in private entertainment households or public assemblies, had an impact on these slaves' sexual temptation to men.⁸⁷²

By contrast, free women, who spent their lives in seclusion to a certain extent, had a lesser degree of knowledge of men's desires. Therefore, their sexual behaviour could sometimes be contrasted to the essence of the *jawārī* profession. In the assembly, the majority of audiences were men, with a lower number of women who had to be *qiyān*, *shā'irāt* or other type of slave in order to attend.⁸⁷³ The patriarchal system in the Muslim Abbasid society was a major factor for the social exclusion of royal women from the *majālis*, while advantaging female slaves by allowing them to be active in the *majālis* with men and elites.⁸⁷⁴ Consequently, the ability of elite women to interact and form acquaintances with men was obviously lesser.

Primary sources and secondary research indicate that *qiyān* had more sexual appeal than other *jawārī* had. The nature of their availability and active participation in male entertainment assemblies⁸⁷⁵ could provide the core of this belief. Although *qiyān* obtained the significant participation of "male belletrists,"

⁸⁶⁸ Hidayatullah, "Mariyya the Copt," 1891-92.

⁸⁶⁹ Schlein, "The Talent and the Intellect," 4.

⁸⁷⁰ Al-Jāhiz, "*Risālat al-Nisā*," 91-109.

⁸⁷¹ Ibid., 101-102.

⁸⁷² Ibid.

⁸⁷³ Gordon, "Abbasid Courtesans," 13.

⁸⁷⁴ Ibid., 14, 18.

⁸⁷⁵ 'Athamina, "How Did Islam Contribute," 401.

they nevertheless had strict strata and limited entitlements and privileges in contrast with free men in performances.⁸⁷⁶ Their availability was always restricted by their owners' desires and authority over their participation.

The comprehensive image of a *qīna* combines beauty, education, talent and sexual expertise. 'Arīb's life is a perfect example of a *qīna* with "sexual appeal and artistic ability".⁸⁷⁷ The biographies of 'Arīb confirm her statements of sexual intercourse with eight caliphs.⁸⁷⁸ It is important to stress that while the primary occupation of 'Arīb was as *qīna* and *shā'irah*, sexual intercourse was unavoidable as the duty of a female slave to her master.⁸⁷⁹ Both Lerner and Mernissi provided a discussion of the sexual obligation of *jawārī* to their male masters. Lerner emphasized that elite men's sexual ascendancy over their female slaves was a primary form of classism and female oppression.⁸⁸⁰ Mernissi adds that the primary career of *jawārī* was to provide entertainment and sexual services to their masters.⁸⁸¹ Fully recognised as a social reality, the principle duty of a female slave was to provide her master with his legal right to sex if he demanded it.

A successful *qīna*, who granted a purpose from her beauty and talent, could obtain a certain celebrity in society. The more that a female slave was owned by and amused the elites, the higher the position that she gained. This is in contrast with her peers, the other female slaves who only entertained commoners.⁸⁸² For example, the early information on 'Arīb describes her ownership by her former master al-Marākibī. 'Arīb was offered as a singer to both commoners and specific strata of high society, depending on her master's whims.⁸⁸³ Thus, she could not gain any remarkable status or privilege, nor was she yet known as a *qīna*. Nearly all the information from this time focused on her attempts to demand her freedom and efforts to flee from her master.⁸⁸⁴

⁸⁷⁶ Richardson, "Singing Slave Girls," 109.

⁸⁷⁷ Gordon, "Arib al-Ma'muniya," 90.

⁸⁷⁸ They are al-Ma'mūn, al-Mu'taṣim, al-Mutawakkil, al-Muntaṣir, al-Wāthiq, al-Mu'tazz, al-Mu'tamid and al-Mu'taḍid. Al-Ḥafḥānī, *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, vol 21, 57; *Ibid.*, 90.

⁸⁷⁹ Gordon, "The Place of Competition," 63.

⁸⁸⁰ Lerner, *The Creation of Patriarchy*, 89.

⁸⁸¹ Gordon, "The Place of Competition," 62.

⁸⁸² Richardson, "Singing Slave Girls," 111.

⁸⁸³ See al-Ḥafḥānī, *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, vol 22, 43-53.

⁸⁸⁴ See Chapter Four, 132-134.

By contrast, later information shows that ‘Arīb’s position was significantly modified during her time with the seven Abbasid caliphs after her ownership by Caliph al-Ma’mūn. ‘Arīb became a famous, prominent figure in the caliph’s court, and she gained a considerable social position in wealth and privileges.⁸⁸⁵ Notably, ‘Arīb became a celebrity *qīna* and was considered elite,⁸⁸⁶ both due to her merit and being “not strictly consigned to labor or concubinage.”⁸⁸⁷ Thus, sexual appeal was not the only way to achieve social mobility. Belonging to a figure famous for politics or wealth, as well as practicing a significant talent, provided an advantageous method for female slaves to achieve a higher social position. Female slaves’ skills and their owners’ identity were key factors in achieving social mobility and higher position for female slaves.

Gordon, in his work “The Place of Competition,” studied the competition between female slaves and royal women’s careers. He writes that the general notion of piety and chastity was connected with royal women, while the negative perspective was applied to female slaves like *qiyān*.⁸⁸⁸ ‘Ulayyah, the royal princess, and ‘Arīb, the *qīna*, both shared similar abilities and talents in singing and poetry; however, their reputations were distinctly different.⁸⁸⁹ The *tarjamah* (biography) of ‘Arīb presents her as a fiddler and a flirt, referring to her sexual relations with a number of “male lovers and patrons”.⁸⁹⁰ The surrounding image of royal women in Arab society, whether from the pre-Islamic period until the Abbasid era and perhaps after, on the other hand, reflects the ideal portrayal of piety and religiosity in society. ‘Ulayyah, as a royal princess, is most associated with religion (*dīn*), modesty (*ṣiyānah*) purity (*nazāhah*) and she is referred to as a great reader and reciter of the Qur’an.⁸⁹¹

This portrayal of ‘Ulayyah’s behaviour is questionable, however.⁸⁹² In certain records her acts are contrary to her religious image. For example, it has been noted that during her monthly period (*ghair ṭāhirah*) she had a legal obligation

⁸⁸⁵ This will be discussed in details in the next section.

⁸⁸⁶ Richardson, “Singing Slave Girls,” 108.

⁸⁸⁷ Ibid; “‘Arīb, like many of her peers, was concubine as well as singer when circumstances required”. Gordon, “The Place of Competition,” 65.

⁸⁸⁸ Gordon, Ibid., 63.

⁸⁸⁹ Ibid., 61.

⁸⁹⁰ Ibid., 63.

⁸⁹¹ Ibid., 74

⁸⁹² Ibid.

not to pray),⁸⁹³ she chose to sing or attend musical performances.⁸⁹⁴ Although 'Ulayyah was a noteworthy royal woman, singer and poetess, "she could never perform for public audience".⁸⁹⁵ To our knowledge, 'Ulayyah did not attend or practice in a public mens' assemblies; she did, however, hold private *majālis* of songs. Al-Iṣfahānī mentioned that the singing rivalry between 'Ulayyah and her brother Ibrāhīm b. al-Mahdī was observed in the era of Caliph al-Ma'mūn, and her singing was admired by most Abbasid caliphs, especially her brother al-Rashīd.⁸⁹⁶ Indeed, the acceptance of her brothers and the kinship of practicing her own talent in her own or her family's household was, to a certain extent, a declaration of approval despite her isolation. 'Ulayyah provided inspiration for the acceptance of free woman to show and practice their talents such as singing or poetry.

For this thesis, we demonstrate that 'Arīb's talent and profession was open for all audiences, whether the caliph's or her owner's, while 'Ulayyah's singing was restricted to the *ḥarīm*'s household, which comprised her own kin and entourage of slaves and servants. Thus, it could be suggested that the public or private nature of a place of entertainment or activity could be associated with the slave's talents. In this case, it is appropriate to not call 'Ulayyah's talent her "career," as it is obvious from the above incidents that it was a hobby, private practice with limited and minimal reach. By contrast, 'Arīb's nature and primary profession was singing, as it was essential for her to entertain her owner. Additionally, the theory of masculine force in limiting women's freedom shows the restrictive choices of noblewomen in their skills, movement and behaviour. The image of elite women is linked with the notion of piety as a custom and status restricted to the upper class, and therefore, 'Ulayyah should be treated as a royal princess rather than a professional singer.⁸⁹⁷ Lerner's theory of the

⁸⁹³For more information, see the prophet's hadiths on menstruating women, impurity and prayer: al-Bukhārī, "The Book of Menses," in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, vol 1, 206, 212, 214, 224; Muslim, "The Book of Menstruation," in *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, vol 1, 446, 447, 450, 515. "This prohibition relates to the perception that menstruating bodies are culturally identified as *kotor* (dirty or unclean) and thus are deemed incompatible with the purity required for spiritual worship. The cleanliness that is required for prayer refers not only to the absence of menstrual blood but also bodily hygiene in general, and applies to both men and women". See Linda Bannett, *Women, Islam and Modernity: Single Women, Sexuality and Reproductive Health in Contemporary Indonesia* (London: Routledge: 2007), 33-34.

⁸⁹⁴ See al-Iṣfahānī, *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, vol 10, 129; Kennedy, "The Harem," 178,179; Gordon, "The Place of Competition," 77.

⁸⁹⁵ Kennedy, *Ibid*.

⁸⁹⁶ Al-Iṣfahānī, *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, vol 10, 86,135.

⁸⁹⁷ It is important to note that some scholars such as Gordon, "The Place of Competition," 60-81 and Al-Rasheed, "Slave Girls under the Early 'Abbāsīd," 184, might disagree with our statement. This research

nature of the patriarchal system emphasizes that “Men in patriarchal societies who cannot protect the sexual purity of their wives, sisters, and children are truly impotent and dishonored”.⁸⁹⁸ This created a portrait of free noblewoman associated with a social norm of male guardians protecting their honour through domination over women’s behaviours and activities.

This discussion of a woman’s reputation can be used to show that, despite the portrayal of royal women being vividly contrastive to those of enslaved women, ‘Ulayyah’s life involved another questionable act: her interest in a male slave, known as Ṭall.⁸⁹⁹ Some primary sources recorded the incident; when Caliph al-Rashīd learned about ‘Ulayyah’s interest, he banned Ṭall from serving her and permanently forbade ‘Ulayyah to mention his name.⁹⁰⁰ This incident suggests that the nature of royal women’s seclusion in their household could have led them to turn their glimpses toward their male servants like Ṭall. The nature of these male slaves’ service and duty could allow them to become close to these secluded women. This incident can be seen as an example of the discriminatory judgment and prejudice from some historians against enslaved women’s reputations, and casts suspicion on the piety recorded in the biographies of aristocratic women.

The most interesting example of the distinction between historians’ treatment of noble women and enslaved girls involves ‘Ullayah’s recitation of *Sūrat al-Baqarah* (2:265) to the Caliph al-Rashīd. During her performance, she stopped and omitted the word “ṭall,” in deference of her brother’s prohibition of mentioning the slave Ṭall’s name. When al-Rashīd heard this, he greatly admired ‘Ullayah’s behaviour and granted the slave Ṭall back to her.⁹⁰¹ “In this case, her piety became the means to winning a worldly reward”.⁹⁰² Despite the fact that ‘Ulayyah, a royal princess, attempted to engage in unacceptable behaviour with Ṭall, by the end of this story she is once again associated first with a religious situation (the reading of the Qur’an) and second with presenting the proper obedience of an elite women to her guardian. The influence of male

does not deny that 'Ulayyah bint al-Mahdī was an empowered and talented singer; however, our aim is to understand and recognize the limits and restrictions on her talents and actions.

⁸⁹⁸ Lerner, *The Creation of Patriarchy*, 80.

⁸⁹⁹ Al-Isfahānī, *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, vol 10, 130.

⁹⁰⁰ Ibid; See Gordon, “The Place of Competition,” 77.

⁹⁰¹ Al-Isfahānī, Ibid.

⁹⁰² Gordon, “The Place of Competition,” 77.

dominance and the culture of patriarchy in the treatment of royal women and in presenting and recording such incidents is clear.

Meanwhile, historical sources present the position of female slaves much differently. The hostility of many scholars⁹⁰³ is an obvious feature in the portrayal of incidents about female slaves. Images of enslaved women show them with multi-lover relations, while that of royal women is the opposite.⁹⁰⁴ Despite the fact that Islam has a clear notion and specific laws regarding a *jawāri*'s sexual availability to her master, the nature of a *jawāri*'s activities and sexual availability provide significant cause for disadvantageous controversy. Significantly, al-Jāhīz numbers among the scholars who stress the deceptive and profligate behaviours of *jawāri*. His *Risālat al-qiyān*, discussed in the previous chapter, argues that female slaves in general, and *qiyān* in particular, represent negative figures of the Abbasid period.⁹⁰⁵

In tracing 'Arīb's life cycle, we noticed that early information about her was highly polemical. When 'Arīb was the *qīna* of al-Marākibī, her reputation was always associated with disobedience and obscenity.⁹⁰⁶ Her unlawful relationship with Ibn Ḥāmid and her attempts to flee from her master contributed to stigma and a negative portrayal in historical and literary records.⁹⁰⁷ It is important, however, to stress that the impetus of 'Arīb's behaviour in her early life might instead reflect her ambition to obtain her freedom.⁹⁰⁸ We can confirm that 'Arīb's efforts were disregarded, as she remained enslaved by eight Abbasid caliphs following ownership by her former master, al-Marākibī.⁹⁰⁹ 'Arīb's notoriety remained long after her lifetime in the caliphs' court, and her illicit relationship with her lover Ibn Ḥāmid resumed under ownership by Caliph al-Ma'mūn. The incident, as presented in 'Arīb's biography, is below:

The officer, Ibn [Ḥamdun], replies naively: [Arīb] what did you do there?' Her retort (in summary): 'Poor fool,

⁹⁰³ Pellat Charles, "Kayna," in *Encyclopedia of Islam*. Edited by: Bearman, Bianquis, Bosworth, Donzel and Heinrichs. Second Edition (2012), 8, accessed March 3, 2014, http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/kaynaSIM_4065?s.num=583&s.rows=100&s.start=5008.

⁹⁰⁴ Gordon, "The Place of Competition," 63.

⁹⁰⁵ Al-Jāhīz, "*Risālat al-qiyān*," vol 3, 63-87.

⁹⁰⁶ Al-Iṣfahānī, *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, vol 21, 43-53.

⁹⁰⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁰⁸ See Chapter Four 132-134.

⁹⁰⁹ Al-Iṣfahānī, *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, vol 21, 57.

you would ask [‘Arīb] what she was doing when she returns in this way to the caliph's tent? Perhaps you thought we prayed together? Or, perhaps, that I recited to him a section of the Qur'an and studied with him some- thing of the law (*fiqh*)? No, you idiot, we drank, played music, sang and screwed!’⁹¹⁰

This has been seen as clear evidence of ‘Arīb engaging in corruptive behaviour, although ‘Arīb’s declaration of her actions to the officer could also offer evidence to the extent of her independence. This incident displays ‘Arīb’s negative attitude and unlawful conduct, especially since she had become the caliph’s singer. The resulting depiction of female slaves’ behaviour and reputation is evident in al-Jāhīz’s work, “*Risālat al-qiyān*”. As we discussed earlier, al-Jāhīz tends to focus on the acts of enslaved women who belonged to the caliphs. These women hold most of the attention of individual scholars, and any erroneous behaviour are not forgotten. The actions of *jawārī* who belonged to commoners, on the other hand, are often condoned.⁹¹¹ Thus, the authenticity of this incident with ‘Arīb is suspicious. Many biographies of women from high-ranking families reflected visible characteristics of piety, while sources portrayed *jawārī*, confined by their lower class as enslaved individuals and their obligation to be sexually available to their masters, as noxious figures in society. In addition, while both elite and enslaved women had certain commitments and privileges in terms of sexual relations and behaviours according to their different social positions, they shared an absence of independence through being monitored and dominated by their male kinsmen or patrons.⁹¹² This confirms the adopted theories of Lerner and Mernissi regarding women’s obligation of submission to male authority in their movement and behaviours.

5.3. The right to education and the nature of schooling

The previous discussion presented clear, yet differing notions of free noble and enslaved women regarding maternity and sexual behaviour, but the comparison can be extended even further. The question of these women’s right to education

⁹¹⁰ Gordon, “The Place of Competition,” 78.

⁹¹¹ Al-Jāhīz, “*Risālat al-qiyān*,” vol 3, 83; A good example is ‘Ubaydah al-Ṭunbūrīyah and her multiple relations with men, see al-Iṣfahānī, *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, vol 22, 144-6.

⁹¹² Al-Iṣfahānī, *Ibid.*, 215.

and the nature of their schooling and attainment of various privileges can be discussed to highlight the extent of their comparative social status in the Abbasid court. 'Athamina wrote that in the Abbasid period, the basic criteria for knowledge and intelligence were "the Arabic language, the *Qur'an*, and the study of poetry".⁹¹³ These three "subjects of erudition"⁹¹⁴ and the types of education received by women have been documented considerably in the biographies used in our research.

First, regarding the Arabic language, the present thesis argues that the most desirable origin for female slaves was *muwalladāt*. As native Arabic speakers, these women had the advantage of an immediate understanding of and prompt response to education. In fact, *muwalladāt* comprised a noteworthy number in our database (see Tables 4.11, 4.12, 4.15 and 4.16). They pursued such significant professions as singers and poetesses, and achieved higher prices than female slaves from different origins. Like free royal women, Arab *muwalladāt* were considered eloquent speakers, as the Arabic language was acquired by heredity at birth. Thus, both royal women and *muwalladāt* could achieve high literacy skills.

Reciting the Qur'an was an indispensable skill for high-class free and *jawāri* of the Abbasid court. As such, royal women's lives were always associated with piety and religion. We judging from Zubaydah and 'Ulayyah activities that studying and reading the Qur'an was an obligation, or duty, for royal women in the Abbasid period. The daily reality of the seclusion of elite women and their "home schooling education"⁹¹⁵ did also have reflected the type of education and association with religion. The portrayal of Zubaydah provides a significant example of the pious noble woman. She is known for having been well-educated in Qur'an and Islamic law, and for owning hundreds of female slaves who also memorized the Quran.⁹¹⁶ 'Ulayyah, presented previously, is similar to Zubaydah, in that her religious image is embedded in her biography regardless of her talents for singing and poetry or unacceptable behaviour.

⁹¹³ 'Athamina, "How Did Islam Contribute," 402.

⁹¹⁴ I borrowed this phrase from 'Athamina, *Ibid.*

⁹¹⁵ AlRudainy, "The Role of Women," 173.

⁹¹⁶ Al-Ṣafadī, *Kitāb Al-Wāfi bi-'l-Wafayāt*, vol 14, 119.

In our discussion of the image of great women in primary sources, the wives, sisters or daughters of political and wealthy men have been presented as pious and religious figures in society.⁹¹⁷ We can assume that the act of religious education was an older, traditional habit among the royal and aristocratic families in the early Islamic period, and that it persisted into the Abbasid era. Ruth's work, *Women in Islamic Biographical Collections*, notes that the bulk of information and biographies on free women in Islam have presented them as scholars (*'ālimāt*), pious and working to memorize the Qur'an or Sunnah.⁹¹⁸ Certain number of free women who were well-educated in the Qur'an and hadith associated them with the law and acted as evidence of Muslim women's piety.⁹¹⁹ The reality is that high-class women were required by masculine social norms to follow a restricted attitude and education. Learner noted that "Women's status as wives and mothers could never be wholly degraded without degrading their husbands and sons".⁹²⁰ Thus, women's education was associated with their relationships to men, family and social status, and thus became a primary aspect of female piety. Through religious practices such as studying and reciting the Qur'an, royal women show a "socio-religious status".⁹²¹ This may have led them to greater autonomy and control of their reputation and status as pious, in contrast with enslaved women.

In comparison, the nature of female slaves' education was entirely different, as they had more opportunities to obtain various kinds of training. During the Abbasid period, there were specific, separate markets and slave households. One might be for *qiyān*, for example, another for poets; and there were special markets for beautiful concubines.⁹²² The needs of these slave markets and buyers, as well as the *nakhās* (slave trader)'s own desire to profit, provided significant reasons for the variety in enslaved women's education and skills.

From our previous discussion in this chapter, it has been observed that free royal women were not the only ones with great knowledge of Islamic religion, the Qur'an and *fiqh*; enslaved women had great knowledge of these subjects as

⁹¹⁷ See page 151-152 of this chapter for the discussion on the concept of great women in Islamic historiography.

⁹¹⁸ See Ruth, *Women in Islamic Biographical Collections*, 63-86.

⁹¹⁹ Megan Reid, *Law and Piety in Medieval Islam* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 20.

⁹²⁰ Blackburn, "Slavery – its Special Features," 266.

⁹²¹ I borrowed this phrase from Latif, "She was a Pious Devotee," 2.

⁹²² See Ibn Buṭlān, "*Risālah shirā al-raḡiq*," vol 1, 347-386.

well. Al-Khayzarān, for example, was previously the concubine of Caliph al-Mahdī, and did not hold any talent save her education and knowledge of *fiqh*.⁹²³ Despite this, she succeeded in becoming the caliph's favourite female slave, achieved upward mobility through the status of *Umm al-Walad* and eventually became the caliph's wife and a freedwoman. There were numerous other, more noticeable enslaved women in al-Mahdī's household, but al-Khayzarān was the only one of al-Mahdī's *jawārī* to gain such upward status in the court. For example, Shakkalah and Maknūnah were both noteworthy singers and became al-Mahdī's *Ummahāt al-Awlād*; however neither obtained her manumission. The caliph did not marry them, and they remained his *Ummahāt al-Awlād*.

The logic regarding the change in al-Khayzarān's status suggests that the nature of her education and knowledge of *fiqh*, as well as her pious and charitable practices, might have aided her social mobility.⁹²⁴ By contrast, other skilled slave women, such as *qiyān* or *shā'irāt*, were likely associated with negative notoriety due to their presence at musical gatherings or male-only assemblies. These factors can be taken together to show how al-Khayzarān attained maximum social mobility, from concubine to freedwoman. She was also linked with marriage and maternity, as the wife of a caliph and mother of two future caliphs. Religious education, matrimony, motherhood and manumission not only granted al-Khayzarān the highest social status, but also presented her with a prestige parallel to that of free royal women of the Abbasid court in primary sources.

A gradual change can be observed in the life of elite men's desires and the demand for a specific type of education for their female slaves. 'Athamina observed that poetry was a standard subject for women's education.⁹²⁵ As we discussed previously, research shows that literate female slaves were in demand during the Abbasid period. Both Caliph al-Rashīd and his son al-Amīn purchased *jawārī* after observing their talent in poetry or singing, despite the existence of congenital defects or non-aesthetic appeal.⁹²⁶ A similar case is that of the female slave Maḥbubah and Caliph al-Mutawakkil, who selected her from

⁹²³ Schlein, "The Talent and The Intellect: The *Qayna*'s Application of Skill," 17.

⁹²⁴ Ibid.

⁹²⁵ 'Athamina, "How Did Islam Contribute," 402.

⁹²⁶ Muḥammad al-Ibshīhī, *Al-Mustaṭraf fī kull fann mustaṭraf* (Dimashq: Wizārat al-Thaqāfah, al-Jumhūrīyah al-'Arabīyah al-Sūrīyah, 2004), vol 1, 83-85.

thousands of women based on her talent for poetry.⁹²⁷ According to our database in the fourth chapter, there were 102 *qiyān*, compared with thirty-seven *shā'irāt* (see Table 4.14). Several of these singers and poetesses were of *muwalladāt* origin, which could support our suggestion that a slave's origin was a significant factor in selecting her education, profession and upward social status in the Abbasid period.

The early Abbasid period could have involved the nature of competition between female slaves more than earlier eras, as the increase in singing and poetry performances demanded high interest in owning a large number of female slaves.⁹²⁸ The mid and late Abbasid periods saw a large number of *qiyān* and female poets, with most, if not all, displaying great talent and experience. Various anecdotes exist where *qiyān* acted as teachers to other slave women, such as 'Atika bint Shahda,⁹²⁹ Zarqa b. Ramin⁹³⁰ and 'Ubaydah al-Ṭunbūrīyah,⁹³¹ who were considered great singers, poetesses or instructors.⁹³² It is likely that becoming a teacher or leader was a normal process for many female slaves; they were accompanied by their own groups, and thus counted them as their students.⁹³³

Consequently, a clear competition can be noted at the caliphs' courts between female slave singers and poets, in order to obtain the closest proximity to the caliphs or other men. Al-Isfahānī writes that 'Arīb and Shāriyah in particular were in competition as noteworthy singers.⁹³⁴ Stories about their rivalry were determined when Abu al-Anbas (d. 275 A.H./888 A.D.),⁹³⁵ wrote to his father and said, Shāriyah was the preferable in singing from the death of the caliph al-Mu'tasim until the rule of al-Wāthiq.⁹³⁶ Likely, the reason for assuming the superiority of Shāriyah's skill over 'Arīb's was related to the fame of their male owners and teachers. Shāriyah's teacher was Ibrāhīm b. al-Mahdī, a great musician in the Abbasid era, while 'Arīb first owner was al-Marākibī, who had

⁹²⁷ Al-Mas'ūdī, *Murūj al-Dhahab*, vol 4, 103.

⁹²⁸ Al-Rasheed, "Slave Girls under the Early 'Abbāsīd," 206.

⁹²⁹ Al-Isfahānī, *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, vol 6, 185

⁹³⁰ Al-Tawḥīdī, *Al-Baṣā'ir w'l-dhakhā'ir*, vol 3, 45; Al-Rasheed, "Slave Girls under the Early 'Abbāsīd," 211.

⁹³¹ She gained the title of *al-Ustādhah*; see Chapter Four, 141.

⁹³² Al-Rasheed, "Slave Girls under the Early 'Abbāsīd," 211.

⁹³³ *Ibid.*, 214-215.

⁹³⁴ Al-Isfahānī writes that similar to 'Arīb and Shāriyah, Faḍl was in competition with Khansā'; Al-Isfahānī, *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, vol 16, 12; *Idem.*, *al-Imā' al-shawā'ir*, 117.

⁹³⁵ Famous poet from the Abbasid period.

⁹³⁶ Al-Isfahānī, *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, vol 16, 12; *Idem.*, *al-Imā' al-shawā'ir*, 117.

only minor knowledge in such affairs.⁹³⁷ Regardless of these competitions or conflicts, female slaves were presented as considerable partners at the caliphs' assemblies. For example, at Caliph al-Mutawakkil's court, both 'Arīb and Faḍl provided an integral source of entertainment, as shown by Faḍl's poetry and 'Arīb's performance in singing.⁹³⁸

Qiyān have been considered as separate from pious activities by scholars and primary sources, both because they were slaves and due to their profession involving singing and attending male assemblies. Without a doubt, however, the nature of a female slave's life cycle forced her into a specific education and profession. As slaves, these women did not have the right to determine their own professions. To a large extent, the education, talents and competitions of enslaved women are associated with and surrounded by Lerner and Mernissi's concept of men's desire, oppression and dominance. Male dominance, through the slave traders, previous owners and buyers, has a role in crystalizing and shaping the skills and profession of female slaves. *Jawārī*, as enslaved individuals, had no choice in determining their own path.

On the other hand, the skills of poetry and singing have also been associated with free royal women, as biographies contained a noteworthy number of sisters and daughters of the Abbasid caliphs or male celebrities who became superior poets and singers. Primary sources present the names of several elite female poets, such as Zahrā' al-Kilābīyah, Umm Ahmad al-A'rābiyah, Laylá bint Ṭarīf, Lubābah bint al-Mahdī and others.⁹³⁹ Būrān, a free royal woman and the wife of Caliph al-Ma'mūn, was also a poet; while we do not have much information about her talent, in Jalal al-Din Suyūṭī's *Nuzhat al-julasā' fī ash'ār al-nisā'* we see that she presented a poem of lament upon al-Ma'mūn's death.⁹⁴⁰ Even though these women represent that free women could learn or perform poems, the available information on them is quite scarce. This may be the result of personal selection on the part of primary scholars when choosing specific examples of women in that period, or the custom whereby royal women or free women of prominence or fame were generally associated with religious acts.

⁹³⁷ See *Ibid.*, 5; Gordon, "The Place of Competition," 69-70.

⁹³⁸ Al-Isfahānī, *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, vol 19, 215.

⁹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 114, 230; vol 12, 64, 71; vol 16, 12; Al-Ṣafadī, *Kitāb al-Wāfi bi-l-Wafayāt*, vol 16, 346; vol 5, 191; Jalal al-Din al-Suyūṭī, *Nuzhat al-julasā'* (al-Qāhirah: Maktabat al-Qur'ān, 1989), 25, 52, 76

⁹⁴⁰ Al-Suyūṭī, *Ibid.*, 32.

To a certain extent, free royal women had independence in studying and practicing literary arts such as poetry; however, their freedom to acquire education and skills was bound and restricted by the strict customs of royal life and the seclusion of noblewomen. Moreover, the nature of some royal women's poetry leads us to theorize that women of high social status were attracted to men in spite of their seclusion and the rigid social norms that restricted their movements and behaviours. Jalal al-Din al-Suyūṭī writes of royal princess Umm al-Kirām bint al-Mu'taṣim and her love of a man known as al-Sammār, stating that she wrote a number of poems about him.⁹⁴¹ 'Ulayyah, as discussed earlier in this chapter, also used her prominent talent for singing and poetry to show her admiration for Ṭall. 'Ulayyah's love for another male slave, Rashā', has also been recorded; Ṭughyān, a female slave of Zubaydah, reported 'Ulayyah's passion for Rasha' after 'Ullayah referred to him in a poem using the female nickname "Zaynab".⁹⁴²

Similarly, Khadījah bint al-Ma'mūn was a singer and poetess who wrote love poetry to her father's *ghulam*⁹⁴³ although the story surrounding Khadījah's poetry is somewhat suspicious. The story claims that Shāriyah, a *qīna*, sang Khadījah's poetry to Caliph al-Mutawakkil. He asked her about the creator of this poem, and when he learned that it was by Khadījah, he only said: "No one has to hear this poetry from you again."⁹⁴⁴ Primary sources do not mention any conversation between al-Mutawakkil and Khadījah. Lerner, in her theory of masculine superiority, writes that under the Arab system of patriarchy, it is essential for men to protect the sexual purity and chastity of their female kin, and those who are considered indolent or inactive in this duty are thus dishonored.⁹⁴⁵ Considering the custom of seclusion in order to protect elite women, al-Mutawakkil's reaction differs from the previous incident of al-Rashīd regarding his sister 'Ulayyah and her love of Ṭall, the slave. Unlike al-Mutawakkil, al-Rashīd was strict in prohibiting such behaviour from his sister the princess, claiming it unacceptable for a free royal woman. Like much of the

⁹⁴¹ Al-Jāhīz, "*Risālat al-Nisā'*," 25.

⁹⁴² Al-Isfahānī, *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, vol 10, 131, 132.

⁹⁴³ *Ibid.*, vol 16, 12-13.

⁹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 80.

information about elite royal women, however, some details might have been lost or omitted by scholars.

Given the strict custom of determining the behaviours and movements of women to protect the grace and honour of the family, it must be emphasized that male dominance was often performed to safeguard women's chastity and reputation. This was evident when men wrote poetry to elite women. Al-Iṣfahānī described the defamation of a woman who was named in poetry, which was unacceptable both to the family and as a social norm.⁹⁴⁶ The custom of most Arab men was not to marry any women whose name had been mentioned in another man's poetry.⁹⁴⁷ As most poetry was associated with love and passionate affairs, this was likely an attempt to protect women's chastity as well as to prevent women from engaging in such acts and behaviours. When 'Alī b. 'Uyaynah was in love with a free woman known as Fāṭimah bint 'Umar b. Ḥafṣ, he utilized the name Dunyā in his poems instead of that of his lover, out of a respect for her and to protect her reputation.⁹⁴⁸ In some instances, enslaved women gained a similar sense of protection. The famous poet Abū al-'Atāhiyah (d. 123 A.H./747 A.D.) recited love poetry to 'Utabah, al-Khayzarān's servant, which led to the irritation of al-Khayzarān and consequently the punishment of Abū al-'Atāhiyah.⁹⁴⁹ Thus, the notoriety of a female slave could depend on the acceptance or disapproval of her owner regarding her conduct or another individual's behaviour toward her.

Our examination of the lives of *Ummahat al-Awlad* presents a significant point regarding the talents and education of their children. The majority of the Abbasid caliphs were children of *Umm al-Walad*, and professed a great interest in literature and singing assemblies, as well as owning professional *jawārī*. A number of them were also singers or poets. Specifically, five Abbasid caliphs were famous singers (al-Wāthiq, al-Muntaṣir, al-Mu'tazz, al-Mu'tamid and al-Mu'taḍid),⁹⁵⁰ while other caliphs also had a tendency toward these skills. Caliph al-Mahdī's *Ummahat al-Awlad* provide significant examples of a mother's talents influencing her children's skills. First, Shakkalah, a *qīna*, transferred her

⁹⁴⁶ Al-Iṣfahānī, *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, vol 24, 133.

⁹⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁴⁸ Ibid., 24, 20, 39, 40, 45.

⁹⁴⁹ Ibid., vol 22, 180.

⁹⁵⁰ Al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-ʿarb*, vol 4, 190-193.

talent of singing to her son Ibrāhīm, who became a noteworthy singer in the Abbasid elite court.⁹⁵¹ Al-Iṣfahānī notes that Ibrāhīm always credited his gift of singing to his mother as tutor and inspiration.⁹⁵² Similarly, Maknūnah had a clear influence on her daughter 'Ulayyah. 'Ulayyah was accomplished and had a significant talent in both poetry and singing.⁹⁵³ Maternal affiliation and the mother's career could thus succeed in affecting her children's talents and skills.

Some contemporary social historians and researchers have presented hybrid males as active figures in the Abbasid period; thus, the extent of the social status of hybrid royal women (*hajīnah*) should be examined in contrast with pure-blooded noblewomen (*aṣīlah*). For example, this research revealed that 'Ulayyah held private singing assemblies in her household, and had experience with drinking wine and other forbidden behaviours, such as her interest in male slaves. Hybrid free women such as 'Ulayyah demonstrated a greater sense of autonomy and social freedom; it also gave them more choices, different type of education and more opportunities to practise their talents, regardless of their practices within the *ḥarīm* household.⁹⁵⁴ In contrast, pure-blooded noblewomen were restricted to studying Islamic law, *fiqh* and the Qur'an in order to gain prestige and to maintain their religious image, following the royal and high-class customs of female chastity and piety. The biographies of Zubaydah, who was probably a noble of royal blood,⁹⁵⁵ present a considerable example. Most information about her focuses on her charity work and piety,⁹⁵⁶ portraying her as a victim in a court inflated with female slaves wanted for their singing talent. Mez writes that in the Abbasid period, most skilled female singers were enslaved women, while a few of them were royal.⁹⁵⁷ There is no mention of a pure-blooded noblewoman having shown her knowledge or talent in singing. Only 'Ulayyah among the royal women, hybrid or not, whom the primary sources referred to by her skill in singing, though others have been correlated

⁹⁵¹ Al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-ʿarb*, vol 4, 89, 201.

⁹⁵² Al-Iṣfahānī, *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, vol 10, 79.

⁹⁵³ *Ibid.*, 129.

⁹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 135.

⁹⁵⁵ Although a few sources, such as 'Abd Allāh Ibn Qutaybah, *Kitāb al-Ma'ārif* (al-Qāḥirah: Dār al-Ma'ārif, 1983), 379, present Zubaydah as a hybrid by claiming that Zubaydah's mother was Salsabīl, al-Khayzarān's sister, this information is suspicious. The majority of our selected primary sources present Zubaydah as a true full-blooded royal woman and do not mention any relationship between Salsabīl and Zubaydah's father (Ja'far b. al-Manṣūr). This could confirm our earlier statement of the trivialization and omission of women's lives by male primary historians and scholars (see back 150-152). For the purposes of this research, Zubaydah is counted as a full-blooded royal woman.

⁹⁵⁶ Abbott, *Two Queens of Bagdad*, 258, 264.

⁹⁵⁷ Mez, *Al-Ḥaḍārah al-Islāmīyah*, vol 1, 298.

with poetry. Poetry, in contrast, was a common practice in *adab*, and poems are associated with Arabic language dialogues and cultural activities.

Royal women were subordinate to male dominance and followed inflexible traditions regarding the manner of their behaviour, piety and education, but it should not be argued that this was only to protect “the honors of the women”.⁹⁵⁸ Rather, we assume that the jurists’ opinions and verdicts on the prohibition of singing⁹⁵⁹ as talent and entertainment, might have been the key factor in women’s isolation from education and skill in singing. The jurists in general forbade singing assemblies, which could combine with drinking sessions to become unlawful conduct under Islamic law.⁹⁶⁰ The jurists’ opinions on this could affect an individual’s desires, behaviours and education.⁹⁶¹ Since jurists carried religious authority, the concept of singing as a sin and illegal behaviour could influence not only the ruler and royal family, but also the head of Muslim households. Thus, the conduct and attitude of royal women’s education and actions affected their social standing and rank. Most singing and cultural *majālis* required interaction with men; therefore, elite women were essentially prohibited from attending and practicing such activities. Royal women, as high-class figures, had to present the model of piety.

There may have been hidden debates regarding the extent of a *hajīnah* or *aṣīlah*’s behaviours and activities. Although the Abbasid caliphate had clear notions of equal treatment between pure and hybrid men’s positions,⁹⁶² *hajīnah* women might experience a sense of disparity and racism. Looking at the image of pure-blooded women in the literature, the incidents and stories about their acts and behaviours, often charity work or poetry, are highly positive. This is appropriate for the image of royalty drawn from the patriarchal system of elite female piety. In contrast, hybrid royal women’s talents might be inherited and influenced by their mothers, which may have provided them the opportunity to

⁹⁵⁸ Kennedy, “The Harem,” 179.

⁹⁵⁹ However, “there is no legal basis in the Qur’an and the sunna to consider singing or singers unlawful.” See Ignacio Sánchez. “Reading ‘Adab as Fiqh’: Al-Ġaḥiz’s Singing-Girls and the Limits of Legal Reasoning” (‘Qiyās’) / كفة الأدب : رسالة الجاحظ في القياس وحدود القيان في الجاحظ رسالة : كفة الأدب : معارفة / " Bulletin D'études Orientales 60 (2011): 203-21, 209, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41608665>.

⁹⁶⁰ See Zoltan Szombath, *Mujūn: Libertinism in Mediaeval Muslim Society and Literature* (Cambridge: Gibb Memorial Trust, 2013), 2.

⁹⁶¹ See Gordon, “The Place of Competition,” 73.

⁹⁶² Islam established a new law from the pre-Islamic institution of slavery and modified it so that a concubine’s child could have the right to freedom or to inherit his father’s social status; for more discussion see Chapter Three, section 3.2.

widen their education and utilize their skills. The information in primary sources tends to indirectly portray hybrid women's privilege and superiority in singing and poetry as their primary skill and education over religious activities such as studying Qur'an and *fiqh*. This could explain their negative reputation and the focus on disreputable behaviour, such as illicit lovers and wine assemblies, in certain primary sources. Both free royal women and female slaves had rights to different types of education and circumstances. Their rivalry in obtaining extra privileges will be examined in the next section.

5.4. Privileges and wealth

Marriage, motherhood, sexual desirability, behaviour and education all influenced the status of free royal women and female slaves when attempting to acquire significant rights or engaging in activities. These act as the fundamental axes for our examination of their social status. Previously in this thesis, we discussed how the upward social mobility of a *jārīyah*, whether an *Umm al-Walad*, *qīna* or enslaved woman from another profession, follows a clear process in the Abbasid social hierarchy. Several female slaves succeeded in obtaining a higher social status, which affected the manner of their privilege. By attempting to identify these social privileges, this section will analyse both royal and enslaved women's fortunes and social privileges in the Abbasid household.

The economic activities of women in the Abbasid courts have been clearly recorded. Free royal women, for example, managed significant financial affairs. Zubaydah achieved great wealth from her inherited status as princess,⁹⁶³ and her husband Hārūn al-Rashīd further gifted her a great number of "precious stones [*jawhar*], jewelry [*ḥullī*], diadems [*tījān*] and tiaras [*iklīl*]" on their wedding day (165 A.H./782 A.D.).⁹⁶⁴ Similarly, at the wedding of Caliph al-Ma'mūn to noblewoman Būrān in 210A.H./825A.D., her mother and grandmother showed great richness by wearing and distributing jewels, pearls, Dirhams and Dinars.⁹⁶⁵ This behaviour demonstrates their massive wealth, but also the squandering that appeared in many free royal women's actions.

⁹⁶³Al-Isfahānī, *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, vol 8, 259.

⁹⁶⁴Ibn al-Zubayr, *Book of Gifts and Rarities*, 121.

⁹⁶⁵Ibid., 126-127.

Zubaydah was known among court ladies for having economic influence. She is considered by historians to be the first woman to wear expensive gowns embroidered with different kinds of gemstones,⁹⁶⁶ and “gained extensive properties across the different regions of the Abbasid state, using her influence on agents and political figures in society”.⁹⁶⁷ It is notable that despite this, Zubaydah’s image has been always associated with charity and alms works. She contributed to the opening and repair of irrigation canals in the pilgrimage road in Mecca, and in different areas of the Abbasid state. She also gained fame for her considerable performances of the Pilgrimage (*Hajj*) as an act of worship,⁹⁶⁸ and for her charity to the poor and needy.⁹⁶⁹ Zubaydah’s actions, personality and character illustrate the concept of royal women’s piety. Our previous discussion stated that piety was an essential element of elite women’s recorded information and knowledge. Even though Zubaydah was a major model of extravagance in luxuries, her charity acts helped her embody the image of a noble and chaste woman.

A comparable situation can be noted with al-Khayzarān, a freedwoman, wife of the caliph and mother of two future caliphs. Al-Khayzarān’s upward social mobility, from starting as a slave to becoming a caliph’s wife and queen mother, provided her with prestige and fortune. Aḥmad b. al-Zubayr writes that Caliph al-Mahdī granted al-Khayzarān a notable number of slaves, as well as a huge amount of gold and silver Dirhams and Dinars.⁹⁷⁰ Similar to Zubaydah, “al-Khayzarān was known for her gracious donations to the needy; she built mosques and contributed to rebuilding the water channels at her own expense”.⁹⁷¹ Al-Mas‘ūdī also noted that al-Khayzarān was famous for her gifts and generosity, as in 171 A.H/ 787 A.D. she purchased a place at Makkah and transformed it into a charity house to help the poor. It was known as *dar al-Khayzarān*, the house of al-Khayzarān.⁹⁷² With such a noteworthy position, individuals from different classes sought al-Khayzarān’s assistance in meeting

⁹⁶⁶Abbott, *Two Queens of Baghdad*, 237.

⁹⁶⁷See Ibid., 163-165; Alkandari, “Enslaved and Free Women in the Royal Court,” 29.

⁹⁶⁸ Al-Ṣafadī, *Kitāb Al-Wāfi bi-’l-Wafayāt*, vol 14, 119; Abbott, Ibid., 238, 240-242, 244, 246.

⁹⁶⁹ Al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh Madīnat al-Salām*, vol 16, 619.

⁹⁷⁰ Aḥmad Ibn al-Zubayr, *Kitāb al-dhakhā’ir wa al-tuḥaf* (Kuwait: Dā’irat al-Maṭbū’āt wa-al-Nashr, 1959), 18.

⁹⁷¹ Alkandari, “Enslaved and Free Women in the Royal Court,” 29.

⁹⁷² Al-Mas‘ūdī, *Murūj al-Dhahab*, vol 2, 340.

their needs, personal interests and answering their demands.⁹⁷³ Al-Khayzarān's education, knowledge of the Qur'an, hadith and *fiqh* and her charitable acts were the keys that gave her the advantage in gaining a pious reputation and respectable portrayal in the bulk of early primary sources.

Zubaydah, a princess and free royal woman, and al-Khayzarān, a freedwoman and queen, both reflected the disposal of wealth on religious and endowments, regardless of their affluence and squandering of fortune. However, other enslaved women held a contradictory image of Zubaydah and al-Khayzarān, associating them with extravagance and wastefulness.

The financial wealth and affairs of notable enslaved women is undeniable. Faḍl al-Shā'irah sent enormous gifts of 1,000 goats, 1,000 chickens and 1,000 fruits and drinks to Sa'īd b. Ḥāmid, a *Kaṭīb* (writer) in Baghdād.⁹⁷⁴ Mu'nisah al-Ma'mūniyah gave Mutayyam, a female slave owned by 'Alī b. Hishām, a *mukhnagah* (necklace with a huge pearl at the centre) estimated at 3000 Dinars. She also received four red gemstones and four emerald stones.⁹⁷⁵ Further evidence of the wealth of *jawārī* is that Abū 'Alī b. al-Ḥasan borrowed 1,000 Dinars from Shāriyah, and took nearly a year to return the debt without her needing to reclaim the refund.⁹⁷⁶ Female slaves could achieve the ownership of great properties and wealth, and had a notable capacity for gifting and granting.

A female slave's remarkable economic affairs could depend on her profession or her relationships with men. One side suggests that a slave's wealth was the result of her skills and performance, while the other assumes it was derived from her master's identity as a wealthy figure in society.⁹⁷⁷ Both possibilities are valid, however, and the result of the effects of enslavement. Al-Ṭabbūbī writes that a *qīna* shared similar capital and life of luxury to that of a noblewoman, as her master granted her a remarkable amount of expensive gifts such as jewels and clothes.⁹⁷⁸ Several examples of the Abbasid caliphs' gifts to their *qiyān* are

⁹⁷³ Abbott, *Two Queens of Bagdad*, 250.

⁹⁷⁴ Ibn al-Zubayr, *Kitāb al-Dakhaer wa al-tuḥaf*, 18-19; *Ibid.*, 65.

⁹⁷⁵ Ibn al-Zubayr, *Ibid.*

⁹⁷⁶ Al-Iṣfahānī, *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, vol 16, 288.

⁹⁷⁷ Ahmed, *Women and Gender in Islam*, 121.

⁹⁷⁸ Al-Ṭabbūbī, *Al-Qiyān wa 'l-adab*, 65; Muḥammad Ibshīhī, *Al-Mustaṭraf fī kull fann mustaṭraf* (Bayrūt: Dār Maktabat al-Ḥayāh, 1992), 25.

available in the historical records. For example, Caliph al-Mu'tamid granted his *qīna* Shāriyah 1,000 expensive dresses as a reward for her singing.⁹⁷⁹ Similarly, al-Ma'mūn admired the singing of Ishāq al-Mawṣilī's *qīna* and awarded her 50,000 Dirhams.⁹⁸⁰ Finally, Caliph al-Mu'taṣim awarded 100,000 Dirhams to Ibrahim b. al-Mahdī's *qiyān* for their astonishing performance at his court.⁹⁸¹

The case of *qahramānah* provides another notable example of high-class slave women. Umm Mūsá, the *qahramānah* of Shaghab, held a financial role and was responsible for expenses and needs of the servants and entourage in the *ḥarīm* household.⁹⁸² Her broad power and privilege over the court's funds led to her "extorting from them money, wearing apparel, furniture, perfume and jewels".⁹⁸³ Umm Mūsá's economic wealth was estimated at a thousand-thousand Dinars.⁹⁸⁴ The nature of female slaves' professions could have a major impact on establishing and maintaining their wealth.

An *Umm al-Walad* also had great financial power in the Abbasid household. Caliph al-Mutawakkil gifted 500 camels, 500 mules, horses and donkeys and 500 thousand silver Dirhams to his female slave Qabīḥah after she gave birth to al-Mu'tazz.⁹⁸⁵ Qabīḥah owned a considerable amount of capital, jewels and pearls; as a result, her son al-Mu'tazz asked her to loan him money to give to political leaders.⁹⁸⁶ Additionally, "Makhāriq, *Umm al-Walad* of the caliph al-Mu'taṣim, was renowned for squandering her funds on luxuries. This was a result of her having monitored the financial and taxation institution of the Islamic state (*bayt al-māl*), and keeping a certain portion of funds for herself".⁹⁸⁷ Shaghab, the mother of al-Muqtadir, amassed a considerable fortune through her decisive political and judicial actions.⁹⁸⁸ Ibn al-Athīr noted that she owned a number of barley and wheat warehouses and other properties.⁹⁸⁹ Her wealth was one reason for her torture after the death of her son, to get her to confess

⁹⁷⁹ Al-Iṣfahānī, *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, vol, 16, 288.

⁹⁸⁰ Ibid., vol 5, 280

⁹⁸¹ Ibid., vol 10, 93.

⁹⁸² Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil fī 'l-Tārīkh*, vol 6, 491-92.

⁹⁸³ El Cheikh, "The Qahramana," 51; Idem., "Gender and Politics," 158.

⁹⁸⁴ Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil fī 'l-Tārīkh*, vol 7, 10.

⁹⁸⁵ Ibn al-Zubayr, *Kitāb al-Dakhaer wa al-tuḥaf*, 30.

⁹⁸⁶ Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil fī 'l-Tārīkh*, vol 6, 202

⁹⁸⁷ See Ibid., vol 7, 154; al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, vol 9, 389-395; Alkandari, "Enslaved and Free Women in the Royal Court," 29-30.

⁹⁸⁸ El Cheikh, "Gender and Politics," 151-157.

⁹⁸⁹ Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil fī 'l-Tārīkh*, vol 6, 503, vol 7, 76.

to the location of her wealth.⁹⁹⁰ From the above examples, we can conclude that the financial power of an *Umm al-Walad* provided a great opportunity to obtain status and economic wealth through maternity.

Both royal women and *jawārī* have so far been presented as having parallel economic prominence and wealth, regardless of the source of their fortune. Female privilege included much more than owning material goods, however, in fact expanding to include the possession of an entourage of servants. In the Abbasid era, women were similar to men and owned a large number of *ḥarīm* retinue.⁹⁹¹ Table 5.1 presents a total of 27 female slaves whose patrons were women of various social rank. Notably, both free royal women and high-ranking female slaves in Abbasid society had a similar right to possess *jawārī*. For elite women, the majority of these slave girls were servants, while the *qiyān* and poetesses comprised a lower percentage. Zubaydah, for example, owned mostly servants as the royal princess of the Abbasid household.

By contrast, enslaved women showed a preference for owning *qiyān* over domestic slaves. This suggests that the owner's profession, identity, personal passions and her own talent might reflect on her desire to own female slaves of similar skill. Our previous discussion on female slaves prices in our tables and database (see Tables 4.18- 4.21) show that *qiyān* were the most expensive slaves on the market,⁹⁹² and represented a significant extent of the wealth of high-ranking slave woman and their capacity to purchase such high-priced *jawārī*.

'Athamina, writes that female slaves “had themselves [*jawārī*] of their own, who were in fact a kind of choice group known as [*jawārī al-qiyān*]”.⁹⁹³ The ownership of female slaves by other slaves demonstrates that the status of *jawārī* has its own “internal hierarchy”⁹⁹⁴ and grouped system, with one class above the other. For instance, the *waṣṭifah* was a servant from within the *jawārī*, who was of a younger age and whose career was to serve other higher-ranked

⁹⁹⁰ Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil fī 'l-Tārīkh*, vol 7, 76.

⁹⁹¹ Kennedy, “The Harem,” 163-164.

⁹⁹² See Chapter Four, 127. See table 4.11.

⁹⁹³ 'Athamina, “How Did Islam Contribute,” 404.

⁹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

jawārī.⁹⁹⁵ Another example is ‘Utabah, the female slave of Rayṭah bint al-‘Abbās, who was a servant and money-keeper, responsible for purchasing other female slaves for the *ḥarīm* household.⁹⁹⁶ Thus, some *jawārī* combined more than one career, and were socially classified based on the nature of their service and their master’s desire. ‘Arīb owned several *qiyān*, notably Bid’ah and Tuhfat, who were both her servants and her *qiyān*.⁹⁹⁷ ‘Arīb was a high-class female slave whose status as favourite and famous *qīna* for eight Abbasid caliphs and ownership of several *jawārī* demonstrated her elevated status in Abbasid society.

High-ranking female slaves could gain both prestige and wealth, distinguishing them from their enslaved female peers.⁹⁹⁸ Having talent and fame from becoming a man’s favourite consort could lead to greater privileges in the Abbasid court. In another words, the desires and passions of men had a great influence on an enslaved woman’s social rank.⁹⁹⁹ Although free or enslaved women of different social status had the right to own slaves, men, especially the caliphs, “[had] the power to buy and sell any slaves in his household”.¹⁰⁰⁰ This power can be illustrated in two cases. First, Caliph al-Mahdī sold Muhallibiyya, al-Khayzarān’s female slave, to Ishāq b. ‘Aziz without al-Khayzarān’s knowledge or permission.¹⁰⁰¹ Secondly, Caliph al-Ma’mūn ordered Zubaydah, his stepmother, to manumit her servant, Sukkar, in order to marry her.¹⁰⁰² It can be noted that in both incidents, the female owners (al-Khayzarān and Zubaydah) accepted the caliphs’ will and demands. In fact, they had no choice but to perform the caliphs’ wishes, as women’s property and possessions were entirely tied to men under the system of patriarchy. The above discussion confirms that the theory of male dominance over women, found in the works of Lerner and Mernissi, is well-founded, as women from different classes and positions were required to be subordinate to male desires and demands in all affairs.

⁹⁹⁵ Al-Mas‘ūdī, *Murūj al-Dhahab*, vol 3, 378.

⁹⁹⁶ ‘Utabah was then owned by al-Khayzarān; *Ibid*, vol 3, 264.

⁹⁹⁷ Al-Isfahānī, *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, vol 21, 61-66; *Idem.*, *Kitāb al-qiyān*, 114; Ibn al-Sā‘ī, “Consorts of the Caliphs,” 71; Al-Ṣafadī, *Al-Wāfi bi-’l-Wafayāt*, vol 10, 61.

⁹⁹⁸ Gordon, “‘Arib al-Ma’muniya,” 95.

⁹⁹⁹ Schlein, “The Talent and the Intellect,” 76.

¹⁰⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 68.

¹⁰⁰¹ Al-Isfahānī, *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, vol 4, 62.

¹⁰⁰² Al-Jāhīz, “*Risālat al-qiyān*,” vol 3, 71-72; Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, vol 8, 361.

Zubaydah, as a free royal woman, and al-Khayzarān, as a previous *Umm al-Walad* and later a freedwoman, represent noteworthy comparative examples as the wives of caliphs. Zubaydah's biographies present her personal kindness and benevolence for good and charity, mentioning her donations to the poor, the ponds and fountains she dug in Mecca and Medina and the fact that she was a wellspring of education and knowledge.¹⁰⁰³ The pious and religious image of noblewomen returns again, as giving alms as a charitable behaviour is considered a type of worship in Islam.¹⁰⁰⁴ Zubaydah was a pure-blooded noble woman who inherited prestige and respectful status in Abbasid society and became the wife of Hārūn al-Rashīd and the mother of al-Amīn. The status of al-Khayzarān, on the other hand, was derived from her social mobility as a concubine, *Umm al-Walad*, freedwomen and, finally, wife of Caliph al-Mahdī and mother of Caliphs al-Rashīd and al-Hadī. Thus, al-Khayzarān obtained her most distinguished position through motherhood. Although, both women, royal and freedwoman achieved a remarkably high status, however, "women's' status as wives and mothers could never be wholly degraded without degrading their husbands and sons"¹⁰⁰⁵ or patrons.

The status of royal, freedwomen and enslaved women in Abbasid society has been presented as extensive. However, their right to a permanent social position and privileges was variable and uncertain. The high social status that royal women acquired was stable, following the system of inheriting their position from their family, and thanks to the traditional marriage of noblewomen as discussed previously in this chapter.¹⁰⁰⁶ However, stability of position did not guarantee the entirety of their privileges, especially following changes in the power and patronage of the men in their lives, such as caliphs, husbands, brothers or children. For example, Zubaydah enjoyed many privileges and advantages in financial and social affairs during the reigns of her husband, al-Rashīd, and her son, al-Amīn.¹⁰⁰⁷ Conversely, however, in the era of al-Ma'mūn, Zubaydah's power was retracted and limited, particularly her religious practices. Her movements became restricted, even preventing her from

¹⁰⁰³ Al-Ṣafadī, *Kitāb Al-Wāfi bi-'l-Wafayāt*, vol 14, 119.

¹⁰⁰⁴ Reid, *Law and Piety in Medieval Islam*, 52.

¹⁰⁰⁵ Blackburn. "Slavery – its Special Features", 266.

¹⁰⁰⁶ See pages 154-156 of this Chapter.

¹⁰⁰⁷ Abbott, *Two Queens of Baghdad*, 204-207, 251, 265.

performing *Hajj* (pilgrimage to Mecca).¹⁰⁰⁸ Finally Būrān, al-Ma'mūn's wife, convinced him to permit and Zubaydah to make the pilgrimage.¹⁰⁰⁹ Therefore, the social status and privileges of upper-class women depended on their relationships with their male kin and authorities.

The influence of al-Khayzarān, a freedwoman, was also shown to gradually dwindle. As discussed earlier, her power and impact clearly influenced political, economic and social affairs at the early Abbasid court. The climax of al-Khayzarān's influence occurred during her husband al-Mahdī's reign. After his death, the rule of her elder son al-Hadī limited al-Khayzarān's privileges and political power.¹⁰¹⁰ Al-Hadī was clear in preventing his mother from achieving any social mobility, and was also careful to warn other political leaders from forming any connection with her.¹⁰¹¹ Eventually, al-Khayzarān regained significant influence after al-Hadī's death, when her other son, al-Rashīd, became ruler in 170 A.H./786 A.D.¹⁰¹² This confirms Lerner's theory that the power wielded by women must always be granted through the permission of men in order for women to gain wider privileges and higher position.¹⁰¹³ Thus, we can conclude that the potential of a woman's power, whether social or political, depended on her male family members' desires and approval.

The case of an *Umm al-Walad's* position also presents the limited extent of her rights. Both Qabīḥah and Shaghab lost their prestigious status and economic powers after the deaths of their sons, who had both been caliphs.¹⁰¹⁴ Qabīḥah and Shaghab had each been manumitted after the death of their master, also the father of their children, and subsequently became freedwomen.¹⁰¹⁵ Despite this, they experienced a dramatic change in their approval and respect. For instance, Qabīḥah lost her fortune following the Turkish revolt in 255 A.H./869 A.D. and the death of her son al-Mu'tazz.¹⁰¹⁶ Similarly, after death of Caliph al-

¹⁰⁰⁸ Abbott, *Two Queens of Baghdad*, 263.

¹⁰⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰¹⁰ Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, vol 8, 186.

¹⁰¹¹ Primary sources state that al-Khayzarān killed al-Hadī because of his restrictions over her. Ibid., vol 8, 205; Al-Mas'ūdī, *Murūj al-Dhahab*, vol 3, 271-276; Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil fī 'l-Tārīkh*, vol 5, 272, 273.

¹⁰¹² Al-Ṭabarī, Ibid., 228.

¹⁰¹³ Ibid.

¹⁰¹⁴ Qabīḥah was the *Umm al-Walad* of Caliph al-Mutawakil and the mother of Caliph al-Mu'tazz. Shaghab was the *Umm al-Walad* of Caliph Al-Mu'taḍid and the mother of Caliph Al-Muqtadir.

¹⁰¹⁵ For the Islamic law by Caliph 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb establishing the *Umm al-Walad's* status and rights, see Chapter Three, section 3.3.4.

¹⁰¹⁶ Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, vol 8, 393; Ibn al-Sā'ī, *Nisā' al-khulafā'*, 154.

Muqtadir in the year 320 A.H./932 A.D., his mother Shaghab was tortured to get her to admit the location of her fortune, and her wealth was forfeited.¹⁰¹⁷ For the upper classes, the outstanding social power and great influence of *Ummahāt al-Awlad* constantly depended on their maternity. The deaths of their sons led to the loss of their social position and advantages in the Abbasid court.

Other enslaved women could no longer retain their position after their master's death. For example, Maḥbūbah, the singing slave girl of al-Mutawakkil, showed unacceptable behaviour for an enslaved woman to her new owner. Her grief after the murder of al-Mutawakkil and refusal to sing for her new owner¹⁰¹⁸ could be a reason for the decreased demand, downward social mobility and inferior social status experienced by Maḥbūbah and other such female slaves. Danānīr's biography also presents her refusal to sing after the fall of the Barmakids and the death of her master Yaḥyá b. Khālid al-Barmakī (d.189 A.H./805 A.D), although she was forced to sing for the new master.¹⁰¹⁹ Both Maḥbūbah and Danānīr's positions depended on their behaviour, and thus they lost their new masters' interest. We can understand through the above examples that since *jawāri* were enslaved, they were unable to change their social status after their owner's death. However, they did have a great opportunity to present their skills and obedience to their new owner, and could either remain in close proximity or suffer from reduced interest if dismissed.

We have argued that 'Arīb was a significant figure among the *jawāri* of the Abbasid court, as she successfully remained a favoured *qīna* to eight Abbasid caliphs. At this juncture, 'Arīb maintained a stable social position for the rest of her life in the caliphs' court. 'Arīb's talent in singing and poetry were the key factors to her remaining in such a steady position, as she offered a high level of skill and embodied the standard for male desire in entertainment.¹⁰²⁰ Overall, a slave woman's beauty, origin, education, skills, intelligence and ability to satisfy her owner, as well as her complete and utter subordination to the lust and demands of men, were fundamental to her social status and capacity to obtain

¹⁰¹⁷ Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil fī 'l-Tārīkh*, vol 7, 76; for more discussion on Shaghab's role see Bray, "Men, Women and Slaves," 143-146 and El Cheikh, "Gender and politics," 147-160.

¹⁰¹⁸ Al-Iṣfahānī, *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, vol 22, 140-142.

¹⁰¹⁹ *Ibid.*, vol 18, 49-50.

¹⁰²⁰ Her biographies have always described both her beauty and talent.

a wider range of social or monetary privileges.¹⁰²¹ This chapter discussed the social positions of noblewomen and identified the aspect of competition between women of the Abbasid court. Female slaves provided considerable rivals to elite women through maternity, privileges and prestige. This chapter argued that masculine power was the key factor in establishing women's social status and behaviours, as Lerner, Mernissi, Bray and El Cheikh proposed.

Conclusion

This chapter examined the rivalry between elite women and female slaves with regard to their social status and position within the Abbasid household. It is argued that in certain situations, *jawāri* could even act as “anti-wife,” given that a great number of them succeeded in being the caliph's favoured consort, as well as attaining high social status, prestige and extensive privileges. However, this research also shows that certain primary sources, historians and religious scholars controlled the image of enslaved women and their activities and behaviours. Our examination of the status of royal women and *jawāri* in the source material revealed that elite women held the greater share of portrayals as positive and righteous characters. Depictions of female slaves, meanwhile, were more likely to focus on notoriety and infamy. Royal women were portrayed as pious and religious figures according to their high-class status, while the nature of female slaves' professions, especially in singing, attending male assemblies and maintaining sexual availability to their masters, provided the fundamental reason for their negative portrayal in most sources. Two avenues were available to a female slave or freedwoman to improve her reputation: the first was to be manumitted; the second to show an interest in religious knowledge and pious activities, such as the case of the freedwoman al-Khayzarān.

Our evaluation of the social status of *jawāri* and aristocratic women showed that female slaves gained a considerable advantage through marriage and maternity in Abbasid society. By becoming a legal wife, a female slave could officially achieve the status of freedwoman, where she would have similar rights and

¹⁰²¹ See Chapter Four for a discussion of the beauty, origin, education, and skilfulness of female slaves.

prestige to free royal women. Further, becoming the *Umm al-Walad* of a free man provided female slaves with a legitimate and secure social position through their children. The influence of this higher status could result in their attaining considerable economic and social privileges. This research showed, however, that an *Umm al-Walad*'s social standing and entitlements were not absolute, as they were variable after the deaths of her male family members. This was demonstrated in the discussion of Qabīḥah and Shaghab. In contrast, royal women achieved merit and conserved their social positioning by inheritance, but although noblewomen inherited their class, their activities and behaviours could be restrained and controlled depending on their guardian's demands.

Our examination of women's education revealed that elite and royal women were prominent literate intellectuals. However, each woman had a specific type and quality of education, depending on to which social rank she belonged. This research argues that pure-blooded noblewomen were required to practice specific areas of education, such as *fiqh*, while hybrid women were less restricted and had a certain freedom in choosing their talents. A hybrid mother's lineage and skills could affect her children's interests and talents, such as in the case of 'Ulayyah, the famous singer and poet. Elite women, hybrid or pure-blooded, their stories have been always associated with religious behaviours, as required by the custom of showcasing the piety of royal women.

On the other hand, female slaves demonstrated talents in a variety of cultural affairs, especially singing and poetry. The custom of forbidding noblewomen from learning such skills as singing, literature or poetry gave *jawārī* an advantage. This provided female slaves with unprecedented and otherwise unobtainable behaviours and activities for women in order to meet the needs and desires of the men in Abbasid period. Enslaved women of different professions could be great competitors to free royal women in a society that demanded their talents. *Jawārī*, whether *Ummahāt al-Awlād*, *qiyān* or other professions, could dominate prestigious society, gaining privileges and becoming a man's preferred consort. Consequently, the interactions between royal women and female slaves presented a certain degree of jealousy.

This chapter argued that female slaves, especially *Ummahāt al-Awlād* and

qiyān, were notable rivals to elite women. In addition, the aristocracy's custom and tradition of secluding elite women from society acts as a reasonable explanation for the extent of *jawārī*'s merit in some respects. It is important to point out that the existence of competition between royal women and female slaves is mostly due to masculine power and desire, as men were widely responsible for *jawārī*'s professions, social mobility and enormous privileges. Both elite women and female slaves had to be dutiful and obedient to their male relatives or masters in order to acquire a high, stable social status and associated privileges.

The research examined the concept of social mobility using the theories of patriarchy and male dominance to contribute to our understanding of patriarchy in the medieval period. The dominance of men over women is based on deeply-rooted social customs of the natural superiority of men over women. Although Arab women have gained a significant role since antiquity, in the early Islamic and classical period their movements were limited and restricted by men.

This chapter argued that the theory put forth by Lerner and Mernissi on the impact of patriarchal society was confirmed through our examination of female slaves' social status. Since the causes of social mobility and achieving a higher social status provides the heart of the present research, we argue that the systems of patriarchy and male dominance were clear in our examination of women's lives and status. In this chapter, we found that the prestigious position and higher status of female slaves did not greatly depend on their beauty or talent; it rather depended on the moods, desires and passions of men. Thus, we suggest that to a certain extent the systems of patriarchy and of gender norms, as socially practised in Abbasid society, could limit the agency of women, both free and enslaved, in terms of their privileges, mobility and behaviours.

After examining the relations and the social status of both elite and enslaved women, the question still remains of the presence of a true competitor to enslaved women at the Abbasid court. Enslaved men were present in great numbers and in close relation to the caliphs and elite men, gaining various occupations and positions at both the Abbasid court and household. Moreover, while this chapter demonstrated a significant rivalry between free and enslaved

women in profession and social status, our examination of Lerner and Mernissi's feminist theories illustrates that Abbasid society followed a masculine system of dominance over the lives, activities, social status and prestige of women. This led us to examine theories of male dominance and gender with regard to status between social categories: in this case, male slaves in competition with female slaves. The next chapter will examine female slaves' social status in contrast with their enslaved male counterparts (*ghilmān*) in the Abbasid household.

Chapter Six

The *ghilmān*: Enslaved men in competition for social status with female slaves in the Abbasid household and at court

Introduction

The previous chapter showed that female slaves, particularly the *Umm al-Walad* and the *qīna*, provided considerable competition for free noblewomen in the Abbasid household and at court. Both groups could hold significant social status, but while a free woman's rank was assigned at birth, slave women could achieve significant status through maternity, talent or profession. Regardless of the differences or similarities between the women in these categories, however, scholarly and historical sources often present enslaved women as having inferior piety and a negative reputation, while elite women garnered a more appropriate standing in their biographies. The contradictory perspectives of these two groups of women strongly relate to their class, and to whose family they belonged. Free women were restricted by austere customs and forced to remain in seclusion, as they represented high-ranking and honourable families. Meanwhile, although *jawārī* enjoyed an indulgence of their behaviours and choices,¹⁰²² their inferior status as slaves meant their activities were considered unimportant, and the nature of their careers required constant active performance.

The previous chapter asserted the concept of male dominance through the control of both free and enslaved women, which existed as a social custom and norm of the Abbasid era (132-329 A.H./ 750-940 A.D.). Women's privileges, activities, behaviours and social status depended on men's permission and desire. The research analysed the position and social mobility of enslaved women, examining the patriarchy and its influence on women's status and rank. The current chapter sheds light on the gender differences within slavery, as well

¹⁰²² Bouhdiba, *Sexuality in Islam*, 109.

as the relationship between a slave's gender, social position, identity and the nature of their profession in Abbasid society.

The aim of this research is to examine how the relations between gender and labour¹⁰²³ influenced the social status of individual female slaves and their opportunities for mobility in Abbasid society. This chapter applies common conventions of gender and the theory of masculine dominance as articulated by Lerner and Mernissi to explain how gender and masculinity shaped the privilege and social status of both male and female slaves, enabling their specialized functional areas in Abbasid court (132-329 A.H./ 750-940 A.D.).

Lerner writes that an individual's class is always connected to their gender, and that the enslavement of women is associated with "both racism and sexism".¹⁰²⁴ The study of sex, behaviour and social ranking can help us understand the gender relations between groups.¹⁰²⁵ Therefore, consideration of women's status and rank in contrast with that of men is obligatory.¹⁰²⁶ The current chapter analyses the classification of various social groups of male slaves in contrast with enslaved females, and examines the theory of male dominance in the Abbasid era.

For Lerner, sexual dominance over women provides an opportunity for men to control women and obtain patriarchal power.¹⁰²⁷ Men are conceptualized to be powerful and strong, while in contrast, women are powerless and under men's control. In the social scale of a class-based society, free men could gain wider privileges and were capable of independent acts, while enslaved men had fewer options and were less willing to seek social entitlement and advantages due to their enslavement. The social activities and status of free women could be similar to those of female slaves; both were controlled, given fewer rights and limited by their male patrons' desires. Similarly, Mernissi's theory of patriarchy suggests that the life cycles of women, their roles, influences and behaviours, were all controlled by male ascendancy.¹⁰²⁸ Such a society can be

¹⁰²³ I borrowed this idea from, Perry, *Gender, Manumission, and the Freedwoman*, 6.

¹⁰²⁴ Lerner, *The Creation of Patriarchy*, 213, 140.

¹⁰²⁵ *Ibid.*, 238.

¹⁰²⁶ *Ibid.*, 38.

¹⁰²⁷ *Ibid.*, 140, 193.

¹⁰²⁸ Mernissi, *The Forgotten Queens*, 37, 38, 42, 89; El Cheikh, "Gender and Politics," 156-160; Bray, "Men, Women and Slaves," 146.

described as having a patriarchal and misogynistic ideology. This powerful force, the prioritization and advantaging of men, demonstrates that gender plays a significant role in the relations and social status of both sexes.

The Abbasid court and household included both male and female slaves as active figures of entertainment in society, and as the closest companions to the caliphs and elite men. Slaves of both sexes were appointed to specific careers, and could be salaried or granted money and gifts of great value.¹⁰²⁹ A comparative analysis of both enslaved men and women's activities, behaviours, privileges and professions reveals the extent of their social status. This chapter examines the available social rank and mobility for enslaved men in contrast with enslaved women at the Abbasid court. This thesis argues that gender had a large effect on changing an enslaved individual's social status. Through analysing the formation of gender roles and male dominance, this research highlights the significant extent of male slaves' impact and social position in contrast with their female peers in the Abbasid eras (132-329 A.H./ 750-940 A.D.).

This chapter will first discuss the definitions and development of common terminology and concepts used to represent male slaves. In addition, as this chapter explores the relations between men, the position of Islamic law on homosexuality will also be discussed. The Qur'anic verses, hadith collections and three Sunni jurists' opinions¹⁰³⁰ regarding *liwāṭ* (sodomy) will be used to consider the homosexuality of the caliphs and men of the Abbasid period. The chapter will then discuss the nature of male slaves' professions and their "functionalist position"¹⁰³¹ as a cohort in the Abbasid court. The availability of male slaves, their origins and the nature of their careers will be used to examine their social status. Ultimately, this chapter will draw comparisons between enslaved men and women to determine the extent of their status and mobility in the Abbasid social hierarchy.

¹⁰²⁹ Rowson, "Gender Irregularity as Entertainment," 45, 46.

¹⁰³⁰ See page 19, 44-46 for selected sources on the hadith collections and *madhāhib*.

¹⁰³¹ Lerner, *The Creation of Patriarchy*, 26.

The term eunuch comprises two types.¹⁰³² The first, the half eunuch, is a man who has "undergone the ablation of the testicles", which makes it possible to maintain sexual desire. The second type, the *majbūb* (pl. *majābīb*), is the "complete eunuch, deprived of all his sexual organs", who has lost sexual faculties and capacity.¹⁰³³ Al-Ṣanʿānī and al-Jāhīz noted that the practice of castration and emasculation was widely used in Muslim society for animals such as horses and goats.¹⁰³⁴ Notably, however, Islam is clear in prohibiting the act of castration due to its negative side effects on human physical nature, health and behaviour.¹⁰³⁵ The presence of eunuchs is often attributed to Muslims having purchased them from Jewish and Christian traders at the slave markets.¹⁰³⁶ However, while the act of castration is forbidden in Islam, al-Masʿūdī referred to examples of castrated enslaved men as a punishment of adultery in the era of Caliph al-Hādī.¹⁰³⁷ Similarly, Ibn al-Athīr mentioned the practice of castration as a method of torture for opponents of Caliph al-Muqtadir; Caliph Ibn al-Muʿtazz was castrated as a result of his disobedience and denial of al-Muqtadir, the next caliph.¹⁰³⁸ It is clear that the practice of male castration was present in Abbasid society. The aim of this castration, however, was as an act of physical punishment for immoral behaviour or disobedience against the rules or individuals in authority.

The practice of castration has physical effects on men, such as hairlessness and smooth skin, a gentle feminine voice and sensitive emotional character.¹⁰³⁹ These features allowed eunuchs to be employed in different strata at court and

¹⁰³² See al-Masʿūdī, *Murūj al-dhahab*, vol 8, 147-148; Mez, *Al-Ḥaḍārah al-Islāmīyah*, vol 2, 160.

"In classical times the varieties of eunuchs were as followed:

- (1) *Castrai*, clean cut – both penis and testicles.
- (2) *Spadones*, whose testicles only are removed by a process of dragging.
- (3) *Thlibiae*, whose testicles are bruised and [crushed], the seminal glands being thus permanently injured – chiefly applied in the case of the very young".

Norman Penzer, *The Ḥarēm: An Account of the Institution as it Existed in the Palace of the Turkish Sultans with a History of the Grand Seraglio from its Foundation to Modern Times* (London: Spring Books for Bookplan, 1965), 142.

¹⁰³³ See *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed., s.v. "khaṣī," accessed 20 April 2017, http://0-dx.doi.org.lib.exeter.ac.uk/10.1163/1573-3912_ei2glos_SIM_gi_02285. See also Penzer, *Ibid.*, 145; Al-Masʿūdī, *Murūj al-dhahab*, vol 4, 197; For excellent and brief article on eunuch in Islam see Jane Hathaway, "Eunuchs", in *Encyclopedia of Islam*, THREE, edited by: Kate Fleet, Gudrun Krämer, Denis Matringe, John Nawas, Everett Rowson, (2018), accessed 18 June 2018, http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_ei3_COM_27821.

¹⁰³⁴ Al-Ṣanʿānī, *Al-Muṣannaf*, vol 4, 456-458; Al-Jāhīz, *Kitāb al-Ḥayawān* (al-Qāhirah: Sharikat Maktabat wa-Matbaʿat Muṣtafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1996), vol 1, 130-134.

¹⁰³⁵ Al-Jāhīz, *Kitāb al-Ḥayawān*, vol 1, 106; Mez, *Al-Ḥaḍārah al-Islāmīyah*, vol 2, 157.

¹⁰³⁶ Mez, *Ibid.*; Muḥammad Maḥmūd and Yūsuf al-Shammarī, *Al-khiṣyān w'l mutarajjilah fī 'l-dawlah al-ʿArabīyah* (Baghdād: Kulliyat al-Tarbiyah, 2014), 164.

¹⁰³⁷ Al-Masʿūdī, *Murūj al-dhahab*, vol 3, 270,271.

¹⁰³⁸ Ibn al-Athīr, *Al-Kāmil fī 'l-tārīkh*, vol 6 443.

¹⁰³⁹ Penzer, *The Ḥarēm*, 145.

in the household. For the eunuchs of the Abbasid period, the loss of their masculinity let them be guardians of the *ḥarīm*, which represented a man and his family's honour and thus must remain in seclusion from any strange men. Thus, eunuchs had a greater presence in the *ḥarīm*'s household than in other parts of society. This practice of using eunuchs to guard women has historical roots in antiquity, especially in the Byzantine era.¹⁰⁴⁰ Eunuchs who served the *ḥarīm*'s household had to be fully castrated in order to lose their sexual desire for women, although it was possible for half eunuchs to be employed in the men's court.¹⁰⁴¹

6.1 Homosexuality in Islamic law and in practice at Abbasid court

The present chapter deals with homosexuality and relations between men, thus the act of *liwāṭ* (sodomy) provides an important topic of discussion. The objective of this section is to examine the primary Islamic laws regarding male relationships. The Qur'anic verses, the hadith literature¹⁰⁴² and the opinions of the *fuqahā'*, the three al-Kāsānī, Mālik and al-Shāfi'ī will be discussed in order to present the case of homosexuality and homosexual behaviours in the Abbasid era.

The Qur'an refers to sodomy as an immoral act (*fāḥishah*), which is made clear in various verses. For example, in verse 7:80-81:

We also sent Lut: he said to his people: "Do you commit such lewdness such as no people in creation (ever) committed before you? For ye practice your lusts on men in preference to women: ye are indeed a people transgressing beyond bounds."¹⁰⁴³

The act of *liwāṭ* is an unnatural lust: men desiring other men instead of women. "Transgressing" in this verse refers to the Arabic word *isrāf*, which means an

¹⁰⁴⁰ Penzer, *The Ḥarēm*, 149.

¹⁰⁴¹ This will be discussed later in the Chapter.

¹⁰⁴² *Al-Muṣannaf*, *Sahīh al-Bukhārī* and *Sahīh Muslim*. See the introduction of this thesis, 37.

¹⁰⁴³ "Lut is the Lot of the English Bible." See Ali, *The Meaning of the Holy Quran*, 97. For another verse regarding Lut and his people, see the Qur'anic verse 26:160-174.

infringement of Allah's rules by performing what Allah has forbidden.¹⁰⁴⁴ Through this incident, the verse clearly presents the act of sodomy as a sinful and unacceptable behaviour under Islam. The story of Lut's people ended in perdition.¹⁰⁴⁵

The Qur'an also warned Muslims about immoral behaviours in general in verse 7:33:

Say: the things that my Lord hath indeed forbidden are: shameful deeds, whether open or secret; sins and trespasses against truth or reason; assigning of partners to Allah, for which He hath given no authority; and saying things about Allah of which ye have no knowledge.

The *ḥadd* (pl. *ḥuddud*), or textual punishments,¹⁰⁴⁶ are taboos or offences against the laws or rules of society, and those who commit *fawāḥish*¹⁰⁴⁷ merit various legal and social sanctions.¹⁰⁴⁸ Although the act of *liwāṭ* was prohibited, when studying the hadith literature found in our selected sources, neither *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* nor *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* included any chapters on the punishments for committing this act. Only *al-Muṣannaf* by al-Ṣan'ānī discusses the punishment for *liwāṭ*. One hadith states that both the actor and the object of sodomy must be killed;¹⁰⁴⁹ another claims the punishment should be similar to the *ḥadd* for *zinā* (fornication and adultery).¹⁰⁵⁰

According to all Qur'anic verses, hadith literature and scholars' opinions, the act of *zinā* is an illegal act of sexual intercourse in Islam, and all Muslims must be aware of its *ḥadd*. The *ḥadd* for *zinā* is a definite punishment emphasized in Islamic law. For the married individual (*muḥṣan*), the punishment is stoning,

¹⁰⁴⁴ Al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī*, vol 3, 462-463.

¹⁰⁴⁵ See verse 7:84: "And we rained down on them a shower (of brimstone). Then see what was the end of those who indulged in sin and crime!"

¹⁰⁴⁶ "Al-ḥudūd are the limits which Allah has set, and if somebody violates them, he is to be punished according to certain penalties prescribed by Allah." See al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, vol 8, *The Book of Al-ḥudūd*, 403.

¹⁰⁴⁷ *Fawāḥish* (sing. *fāḥishah*) are immoral, disgraceful deeds.

¹⁰⁴⁸ Ali, *The Meaning of the Holy Quran*, 93.

¹⁰⁴⁹ Al-Ṣan'ānī, *al-Muṣannaf*, vol 7, 364.

¹⁰⁵⁰ The prophet's hadith on *liwāṭ*: "Those whom you find committing the act of Lot, kill the active and the passive partner." For other hadith regarding the act of *zinā*, see Ibid., 303, 363, 36; El-Rouayheb, *Before Homosexuality*, 120.

while the unmarried individual (*ghayr muḥṣan*) must be flogged.¹⁰⁵¹ Identification of the perpetrator of adultery, or the presence of four witnesses to the incident, is required in order to validate the punishment.¹⁰⁵² Most importantly, the individual's social standing is an essential requirement for determining the *ḥadd*, as it depends on the person's status of freedom or enslavement. For example, the punishment for an unmarried free man could be 100 lashes, while for enslaved men it might be half that number, or 50 lashes.¹⁰⁵³

As for the three Sunni jurists considered in this thesis, an agreement was reached by Mālik and al-Shāfi'ī regarding the act of *liwāṭ* and its punishment. Both *zinā* and *liwāṭ* are considered immoral sexual behaviours, and therefore both acts should receive similar retribution.¹⁰⁵⁴ In contrast, the al-Kāsānī's attitude is that *liwāṭ* is not considered a sin analogous to *zinā*, because *liwāṭ*, as a homoerotic sexual act, cannot result in the mixing of lineages as *zinā* does.¹⁰⁵⁵ The punishment for *zinā* cannot be applied to the *ḥadd* of *liwāṭ*. In this case, *ta'zīr* is required instead.¹⁰⁵⁶

Similar to the hadith literature, while the three Sunni legal schools do consider the act of *liwāṭ* to be immoral and obscene and thus deserving of punishment, we could not find a comprehensive section on *liwāṭ*. Instead, a few sentences or words on the topic were presented within the chapters on *zinā* and its punishment. This demonstrates the ambivalence of the scholars' beliefs in the correlation between adultery and sodomy.

The distinctive attitude of Ḥanafī regarding *liwāṭ* is significant, and is associated with the practices of the Abbasid period, especially in Iraq. Al-Kāsānī presented

¹⁰⁵¹ See Qur'anic verses 7:32, 24; 2-4; Al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, vol 8, *The Book of Al-ḥudūd*, 422, 429, 435; Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, vol 4, *The Book of Al-ḥudūd (Legal Punishments)*, Chapter 3, *The Hadd Punishment for zinā (Fornication, Adultery)*, 461,462; Al-Ṣan'ānī, *Ibid.*, 305, 349, 363; Mālik, *Muwatta'*, 819, 820, 822; Al-Shāfi'ī, *Umm*, vol 6, 398; vol 7, 336-337, 391; Al-Kāsānī, *Badā'i' al-ṣanā'i'*, vol 9; 216, 250.

¹⁰⁵² See Qur'anic verses 7:32, 24; 2-4; Al-Bukhārī, *Ibid.*; Muslim, *Ibid.*; Al-Ṣan'ānī, *Ibid.*; Al-Shāfi'ī, *Ibid.*; Al-Kāsānī, *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁵³ Al-Bukhārī, *Ibid.*; Muslim, *Ibid.*; Al-Ṣan'ānī, *Ibid.*; Al-Shāfi'ī, *Ibid.*; Al-Kāsānī, *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁵⁴ Mālik, *Muwatta'*, 625; Al-Shāfi'ī, *Ibid.*, vol 7, 345, 351, 354, 370, vol 8, 389. See Ismā'īl Muzanī, *Mukhtaṣar al-Muznī fī furū' al-Shāfi'iyah* (Bayrūt, Lubnān: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyah, 1998), 342.

¹⁰⁵⁵ Al-Kāsānī, *Badā'i' al-ṣanā'i'*, vol 9, 225; El-Rouayheb, *Before Homosexuality*, 128.

¹⁰⁵⁶ Here *ta'zīr* refers to a punishment for specific sins that are not present in the primary sources and require the judge's discretion. See M. Y. Izzi Dien, "Ta'zīr," *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed., s.v., accessed 29 June 2017, http://0-dx.doi.org.lib.exeter.ac.uk/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_7475; El-Rouayheb, *Ibid.*, 118-119.

the Abbasid caliphs' doctrine in the early and middle Abbasid period, which had an effect on the elite courts. A notable example comes from Hārūn al-Rashīd and his closeness with Abī Yūsuf al-Qāḍī,¹⁰⁵⁷ who represented one of the leaders of the Ḥanafī madhab. Ḥanafī opinions on *liwāḥ* had a great influence on and consequences for the practices of the Abbasid court, which served al-Amīn during his father's life and after his rule. During the Abbasid era, an individual's higher status, such as the caliph, could provide him immunity and protection from punishment for his immoral acts. This is clear from the homosexuality and illicit sexual behaviour of Caliph al-Amīn.

The homosexuality of Muslim nobility in the medieval period is more prominent in the historical and literature records on elites than the common people.¹⁰⁵⁸ Caliph al-Amīn was among the first caliphs renowned for his homosexuality and his love and passion for *ghilmān*, the young male slaves.¹⁰⁵⁹ Al-Ṭabarī and Ibn al-Athīr noted that al-Amīn strongly insisted on owning *ghilmān*, who accompanied him permanently and even supervised his food and drink.¹⁰⁶⁰ This affected his tendency to disregard and reject women, both noble and enslaved.¹⁰⁶¹ Indeed, some evidence of al-Amīn's demand for *jawārī* is evident, in spite of his desire for eunuchs and known passion for enslaved men. In *Murūj al-dhahab*, al-Mas'ūdī writes of al-Amīn's great admiration and fondness for his *Umm al-Walad*, Nuḏum, and that he was affected and deeply saddened by her death.¹⁰⁶² Al-Amīn's interest and admiration for *qiyān* is also clear, as our data in Table 2.18 shows that al-Amīn purchased his *qīna* Badhl at the costly price of 20,000 Dirhams.¹⁰⁶³ However, while the above demonstrates that al-Amīn did own enslaved females, the primary sources do not mention information about any relations, such as marriage, with elite women. Presumably, scholars took this evidence of the small number of female slaves, the modest examples of al-Amīn's relations with women as a sign of his homosexuality and of his passionate love (*'ishq*) for *ghilmān*.

¹⁰⁵⁷ See the literature review, 46.

¹⁰⁵⁸ Stefanie Martin, "Role of Homosexuality in Classical Islam" (Honors Thesis Project., University of Tennessee: Knoxville, 1997), 12, accessed 28 March 2014, http://trace.tennessee.edu/utk_chanhonoproj/231.

¹⁰⁵⁹ See page 54-55 for the incident of al-Amīn's mother Zubaydah and her attempt in distract him from *ghilmān*.

¹⁰⁶⁰ Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, vol 8, 508; Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil fī 'l-tārīkh*, vol 5, 410.

¹⁰⁶¹ Ibn al-Athīr, *Ibid*.

¹⁰⁶² Al-Mas'ūdī, *Murūj al-dhahab*, vol 3, 324.

¹⁰⁶³ He also owned another *qīna* named Ḍa'f. See *Ibid.*, 323; Al-Iṣfahānī, *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, vol 4, 10; vol 17, 58.

There is ample evidence of the deliberate indulgence in homosexuality by al-Amīn and other caliphs during the Abbasid period. First, as discussed earlier in this chapter, al-Amīn's relations with eunuchs and *ghilmān* were clearly unacceptable to his own family and society. This was demonstrated when his mother Zubaydah tried to prevent her "son's homosexual tendencies"¹⁰⁶⁴ by granting him *ghulamīyāt*.¹⁰⁶⁵ Al-Amīn's scandalous behaviour with eunuchs, forbidden under Islamic law due to the religious justification for the unlawful nature of sodomy, led him to be targeted by poets.¹⁰⁶⁶ A famous poet of the era of the Abbasid period named al-Ḥasan b. Hānī', also known as Abū Nuwās (d. 198 A.H./814 A.D.),¹⁰⁶⁷ produced a derisive and ironic poem (*hijā'*) against the homosexuality of Caliph al-Amīn. He also stressed the prevalence of the phenomenon of *liwāḥ* among the general public of Baghdād. His verses read:

Praise God all together, All you Muslims.
Then say, and do not flag,
"Lord, grant life to al-Amīn!"
He has promoted eunuchs, until
He has made impotence a religion.
And people one and all have emulated
The Commander of the Faithful.¹⁰⁶⁸

Abū Nuwās' poetry seems depicts *liwāḥ* as practised under al-Amīn's reign, not only by the caliph, but by the common people. The caliph was the model and commander of the faithful, and the people followed their leader's practices and behaviours. The verses shown here directly criticize al-Amīn and present an ambivalent attitude toward his rightness and morality.

Certain Arabic poems and verses accurately portray the social, economic and religious lifestyles of individuals and the nation and can be presented as fact. It

¹⁰⁶⁴ Martin, "Role of Homosexuality," 13.

¹⁰⁶⁵ See page 54-55.

¹⁰⁶⁶ Martin, "Role of Homosexuality", 13.

¹⁰⁶⁷ For valuable information see the biography and works of Abū Nuwās: al-Ḥasan ibn Hānī' Abū Nuwās, *The Note Book of Abū Nuwās: Being Extracts from a Private Record of his Life at the Court of Hārūn al-Rashīd*, trans. Goha al-Misri (London: Marlowe Galleries, 1945); Idem., *Dīwān Abū Nuwās*, ed. Aḥmad al-Ghazzālī (Bayrūt: Dār al-Kitāb al-'Arabī, 1966); Idem., *The Khamriyyāt of Abū Nuwās: Medieval Bacchic Poetry*, ed. and trans., Fuad Caswell (Kibworth Beauchamp, Leicestershire: Matador, 2015). See also Philip Kennedy, *Abu Nuwas* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2005); 'Abd Allāh, Ibn al-Mu'tazz, *Ṭabaqāt al-shu'arā'* (al-Qāhirah: Dār al-Ma'ārif, 1979), 193-217.

¹⁰⁶⁸ English translation taken from al-Ṭabarī, *History of Ṭabarī*, trans., Michael Fishbein, vol 31, 240.

is important to note, however, that the poets' intentions, purpose and motive can inform their verses depending on their relationships with other individuals and their own experiences. In particular, the motives of the above verses by Abū Nuwās can be called into question. According to the biography of Abū Nuwās, he had been a close companion of Caliph Hārūn al-Rashīd and was at court during the early reign of Caliph al-Amīn. Abū Nuwās wrote a number of praise poems to al-Amīn during this era of his reign.¹⁰⁶⁹ However, Abū Nuwās was imprisoned after differences emerged between him and al-Amīn,¹⁰⁷⁰ where he wrote the previously quoted verses against the caliph. Abū Nuwās wrote other verses against al-Amīn during his imprisonment, which occurred during a war between al-Amīn and his brother al-Ma'mūn. Abū Nuwās attempted to glorify the future caliph, al-Ma'mūn, through praiseworthy poems and odes, and went so far as to deny al-Amīn as caliph. After this dispute, al-Amīn chastised him and sent him from the court.¹⁰⁷¹ Thus, Abū Nuwās had political motivation for his derisive verses against al-Amīn.

Abū Nuwās' *dīwān* and biography reveal that he did not take a public stance against homosexuality before his imprisonment. He even gained superior privileges and position at the court of al-Amīn to some extent due to his poems and verses praising homosexuality.¹⁰⁷² Abū Nuwās' *dīwān* included a whole chapter of *gazal al-mudhakkar* (masculine love and erotic poetry), describing slave boys and their relationships with men.¹⁰⁷³ It is clear that Abū Nuwās' personal experiences affected the manner of his poetry. The contradiction between the poems and verses of Abū Nuwās, first in direct or indirect praise and then ironic disapproval of Caliph al-Amīn and homosexuality, before and after the deterioration of his condition and imprisonment, shows that his poems were politically motivated, largely influenced by his own opinions and personal experiences with the caliph. They do not necessarily reflect the views of society as a whole.

¹⁰⁶⁹ Abū Nuwās, *The Note Book of Abū Nuwās*, vol 6, 9.

¹⁰⁷⁰ Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, vol 8, 517.

¹⁰⁷¹ Abū Nuwās, *The Note Book of Abū Nuwās*, vol 9, 20; Ramzi Salti, *Exploring Arab Concept of Homosexuality* (California: University of California, 1997), 51.

¹⁰⁷² Salti, *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁷³ *Ibid.*

Further depictions of homosexuality in the Abbasid period occur in the epistles of al-Jāḥiẓ, whose works provide a fundamental primary source about *jawārī* and *ghilmān*. In “*Risālah al-jawārī w’l ghilmān*,”¹⁰⁷⁴ al-Jāḥiẓ compared the ownership of slave girls and boys and discussed the sexual availability and various characteristics of *jawārī* and *ghilmān*. Al-Jāḥiẓ’s epistle is a critical literary work about the negative phenomena within his society, such as the *zinā* of men with women and *liwāṭ* between men. He described the act of loving *ghilmān*, which was seen as “refined and sophisticated”¹⁰⁷⁵ in Abbasid society. Al-Jāḥiẓ also presented a controversy between *sāhib al-jawārī* (patron of female slaves) and *sāhib al-ghilmān* (patron of male slaves), revealing a very real competition between enslaved men and women and their superiority of presence and demand from men in Abbasid society. Al-Jāḥiẓ’s work assists the present research in demonstrating the extent to which the phenomenon of owning and loving *ghilmān* or *jawārī* were more desirable as male companions at this time.

Al-Jāḥiẓ confirmed that homosexuality was extremely common practice in Abbasid society, and the debate between *sāhib al-jawārī* and *sāhib al-ghilmān* supports the acceptance of owning *ghilmān* as beloveds. Significantly, both *sāhib al-jawārī* and *sāhib al-ghilmān* justified their lawful and unlawful practices based on their own personal interests. From this assertion, al-Jāḥiẓ affirmed the difference between the rules, as put forth by the *fuqahā’* regarding sodomy, the practices of the people and the punishment of that practice in Abbasid society. The justification of homosexuality in society relied on the absence of a verdict found in the Qur’an or hadith and the differences in the opinions of the *fuqahā’*.¹⁰⁷⁶

Al-Jāḥiẓ wrote another epistle, known as “*Risālah tafḍīl al-baṭn ‘alā al-ẓahr*,”¹⁰⁷⁷ in which he directs his message to particular groups of individuals, such as the elites, who disagree with him and his opinion of sodomy as a negative phenomenon. He calls on them to turn and abandon this practice.¹⁰⁷⁸ This

¹⁰⁷⁴ Al-Jāḥiẓ, “*Risālah Mufāharā’ al-jawārī wa ‘l-ghilmān*,” 162-196.

¹⁰⁷⁵ Ayalon, “On the Term ‘Khādim,’” 291.

¹⁰⁷⁶ See the section 6.1 on Homosexuality, *liwāṭ* and *zinā*.

¹⁰⁷⁷ Al-Jāḥiẓ, “*Risālah tafḍīl al-baṭn ‘alā al-ẓahr*,” in *Rasā’il al-Jāḥiẓ*, vol 2, 141-152 (Bayrūt: Dār wa-Maktabat al-Hilāl lil-Ṭibā’ah wa-al-Nashr, 2004), vol 2, 150.

¹⁰⁷⁸ Ibid.

contrasts his epistle “*Risālat al-qiyān*,” discussed in Chapter Four, which revealed that although al-Jāhīz had a clear opinion about certain habits of the *qiyān* and female slaves, such as deception and adultery, he nevertheless accepted their ownership as a lawful prerogative for men under Islamic law.¹⁰⁷⁹ While “*Risālah al-jawārī w’l ghilmān*” and “*Risālah tafḍīl al-baṭn ‘alá al-ẓahr*,” recognize that *ghilmān* had achieved success over enslaved through sexual relations with men, and that the practice of *liwāṭ* and homosexuality were widespread in Abbasid society, al-Jāhīz clearly discards these practices and denounces them as unlawful.

Although *liwāṭ* is clearly forbidden in Islam, our previous discussion confirms that some elite openly indulged in homosexual relations during the Abbasid era, including the act of sodomy. The judicial system was regulated in favour of supreme authority and in the interests of high-ranking families. The majority of the Abbasid caliphs owned a great number of eunuchs, and many of them had sexual relations with these eunuchs.¹⁰⁸⁰ This shows that *liwāṭ* and homosexuality enjoyed a degree of social acceptability at the time.

It is beyond the scope of this research to determine the full extent of the prevalence of homosexuality throughout the entirety of the Abbasid period. However, the above and our evaluation of the works of Abū Nuwās and al-Jāhīz shows that the homosexuality of elites and the caliphs was often condoned and unpunished.¹⁰⁸¹ Historical and literary sources show many examples, like Caliph al-Amīn, of the passion and love of elite men for their *ghilmān*. The biographies and information on the lives of Ṣāliḥ b. al-Rashīd and Jaḥshawīyah, the famous poet, provide direct examples of their homosexuality and their passion and demand for their beloved *ghilmān*.¹⁰⁸² Similarly, Caliph al-Qāhir also possessed a similar manner in his passion for *ghilmān*. Al-Ṣūlī noted that al-Qāhir was negatively affected by the death of his *khādim* Zīrak al-Qāhirī¹⁰⁸³ In addition to the general examples of passion for *ghilmān*, the poets of the court were famous for such affairs. Sa‘īd b. Ḥumayd was a poet known for his sexual

¹⁰⁷⁹ See Chapter Four, 131-132.

¹⁰⁸⁰ This will be discussed in the forthcoming sections.

¹⁰⁸¹ See Salti, *Exploring Arab Concept of Homosexuality*, 51; Charles Pellat, “Liwāṭ,” in *Sexuality and Eroticism Among Males in Moslem Societies*, ed. Arno Schmitt and Jehoeda Sofer (London: Harrington Park Press, 1992), 160.

¹⁰⁸² See al-Isfahānī, *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, vol 10, 148; Ibn al-Mu‘tazz, *Ṭabaqāt al-shu‘arā’*, 359.

¹⁰⁸³ Al-Ṣūlī, *Akhbār al-Rāḍī bi-Allāh wa-al-Mutaqqī Allāh*, vol 5, 80

passion and relations with eunuchs.¹⁰⁸⁴ ‘Abd Allāh b. al-Mu‘tazz was renowned for his hatred of women and preference for *ghilmān*.¹⁰⁸⁵ Sa‘īd b. Wahb was a *mawlā* of Banī Salāmah b. Lu‘ayy who wrote many amatory poems in praise of eunuchs.¹⁰⁸⁶ Abū Nuwās wrote verses of masculine love and erotic poetry describing their bodies and relationships.¹⁰⁸⁷ As discussed earlier in this chapter, Caliph al-Amīn’s homosexuality was clear in biographical, historical and literary sources.¹⁰⁸⁸ From the above, we argue that homosexuality and the desire for *ghilmān* was obvious and common in the Abbasid court. We can therefore assume that enslaved men could obtain a considerable position through their relationships with elite men in the Abbasid court. Thus, the next sections examine the different origins, professions, status and positions between enslaved men and women leading to their social mobility at the Abbasid court.

6.2 The number and origins of enslaved men

The primary historical and literary sources provide considerable evidence for a large number of enslaved men, including their origins and professions. It is important to stress that for a high status family such as aristocrats, the ownership of a large number of various types of enslaved men and women reflected more on their prestige rather than the aspect of wealth.¹⁰⁸⁹ However, owning slaves was not restricted to elites and nobles, but was a common phenomenon from ancient times that continued into the Abbasid era.¹⁰⁹⁰

The demand for owning enslaved men was evident throughout the Abbasid era; despite this, we found little information regarding the prices of enslaved men. Mez states that the normal price for male slaves was around 200 Dirhams,¹⁰⁹¹ while al-Iṣfahānī indicates various prices for enslaved men. First, Abū Ahmad b.

¹⁰⁸⁴ Al-Ṣūlī, *Akhbār al-Rāḍī bi-Allāh wa-al-Mutaqqī Allāh*, vol 18, 112.

¹⁰⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, vol 10, 221,222.

¹⁰⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, vol 20, 210- 213.

¹⁰⁸⁷ See back 202-203.

¹⁰⁸⁸ See back 202-203.

¹⁰⁸⁹ Bray, “Men, women and slaves,” 136.

¹⁰⁹⁰ See Chapter Four, 117-119.

¹⁰⁹¹ Mez, *Al-Ḥaḍārah al-Islāmīyah*, vol 1, 297.

Rāshid purchased his singer slave, Fā'iz, for 300,000 Dirhams,¹⁰⁹² while the price for Taytak, a *ghulām*, was 1,000 Dirhams.¹⁰⁹³ To explain this disparity in slave prices, Ayalon writes that a eunuch was more expensive than a *fahl* (non-castrated slave).¹⁰⁹⁴ This was due to the limited availability of castrated slaves, who might perish or become defective during the castration process, and secondly, their abilities to fulfil specific functions might lead to high demand and thus a higher price.¹⁰⁹⁵ However, as Islamic law prohibited the practice of castration of slaves, eunuchs were often brought from outside Islamic state boundaries. The process of transporting these eunuchs to the Islamic state could also have affected the rise in price and demand.¹⁰⁹⁶

In our selected sources, we note that prices for male slaves were low in contrast with those of enslaved women. As discussed in Chapter Four, female slaves accrued prices between 70,000 Dirhams and 100,000 Dinars, depending on their profession or origin.¹⁰⁹⁷ Clearly, female slaves were purchased at great cost, demonstrating their merit and high demand. Haggling between the buyer and the *nakhās* (slave trader), as well as the slave's own ability, skill and origin all had an effect on slave prices.¹⁰⁹⁸

Our discussion in Chapter Four regarding enslaved women's origins and professions asserted that to a certain extent, a man's demand for his *jawārī* depended on her origins.¹⁰⁹⁹ Similarly, a male slave's origin could be a noteworthy feature for his possession. During the early Islamic period, Slavic Europe provided the main source of eunuchs.¹¹⁰⁰ Indians and Sindhi were known as entertainers and singers, famed for their supposed truthfulness, kindness and intelligence.¹¹⁰¹ Nubian servants, called *al-rajālah al-muṣāfiyah*, were famed guards of the caliph's palace, with numbers reaching 5,000 of military slaves.¹¹⁰² Byzantine slave men were in demand in the era of al-

¹⁰⁹² Al-Isfahānī, *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, vol 19, 165.

¹⁰⁹³ *Ibid.*, vol 23, 145

¹⁰⁹⁴ Ayalon, *Eunuchs, Caliphs and Sultans*, 14.

¹⁰⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 63, 64, 75.

¹⁰⁹⁷ See Chapter Four 127-130; See Table 4.11.

¹⁰⁹⁸ See Chapter Four, 120-121.

¹⁰⁹⁹ See Chapter Four, 121-126.

¹¹⁰⁰ Gordon, *Slavery in the Arab World*, 91.

¹¹⁰¹ Ibn Buṭlān, "*Risālah fī sharā al-raqīq*," 403-404.

¹¹⁰² They held a greater position in the era of al-Muqtadir. Hilāl al-Ṣābī, *Rusūm dār al-khilāfah* (Baghdād: Maṭba'at al-'Ānī, 1964), 9.

Muqtadir, due to society's view of them as beautiful, obedient and loyal to their masters.¹¹⁰³

Additionally, Ibn Buṭlān noted that the most common origins for male slaves in guardianship and military professions were Turks and Sicilians (*Saqālibah*).¹¹⁰⁴ Sicilians were also the second-most common ethnicity for eunuchs after the Turkish, famous for their supposed intelligence and mental capacity, trustworthiness and bravery.¹¹⁰⁵ Black African male slaves were known for their excellent guardianship, similar to the Nubians.¹¹⁰⁶ However, black African eunuchs less desirable, as they were believed to be indolent and leisurely in their movements and activities.¹¹⁰⁷ The number of male African and Sicilian slaves was considerable. Caliph al-Muktafī owned 10,000 slaves,¹¹⁰⁸ while Caliph al-Muqtadir's entourage included 11,000 servants, comprising black male slaves, male slaves from Sicily, 4,000 free and enslaved women and thousands of enslaved men of various origin.¹¹⁰⁹

Turkish slaves comprised the most desirable origin, especially in the era of al-Mu'taṣim.¹¹¹⁰ Turkish male slaves were known for their strong bodies, as well as their abilities in running, archery and fighting.¹¹¹¹ In his epistle "*Manāqib al-Turk*,"¹¹¹² written in the era of Caliph al-Mu'taṣim, al-Jāḥiẓ¹¹¹³ confirmed the military superiority of the Turkish over other origins, including Arabs, Khurāsānīs, *mawālī* and the *Abnā'*.¹¹¹⁴ Al-Jāḥiẓ noted that the Turks were great cavalymen, courageous and skilful in horse riding, war and militarism.¹¹¹⁵

¹¹⁰³ Muḥammad Ibn Ḥawqal, *Kitāb ṣūrat al-'ard* (Bayrūt: Dār Maktabat al-Ḥayāh, 1992), 95. See also al-Jāḥiẓ, *Kitāb al-Ḥayawān*, vol 1, 124,125.

¹¹⁰⁴ Ibn Buṭlān, "*Risālah shirā al-raqīq*," 387.

¹¹⁰⁵ Al-Ṣābī, *Rusūm dār al-khilāfah*, 8; Al-Jāḥiẓ, *Kitāb al-Ḥayawān*, vol 1, 116,117; Ayalon, *Eunuchs, Caliphs and Sultans*, 3.

¹¹⁰⁶ Ibn Buṭlān, "*Risālah shirā al-raqīq*," 374-375, 387.

¹¹⁰⁷ Al-Jāḥiẓ, *Kitāb al-Ḥayawān*, vol 1, 119.

¹¹⁰⁸ Al-Ṣābī, *Rusūm dār al-khilāfah*, 8.

¹¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹¹⁰ Al-Mas'ūdī, *Murūj al-dhahab*, vol 4, 44-45.

¹¹¹¹ Ibrāhīm al-Iṣṭakhārī, *Al-Masālik wa-al-mamālik* (Laydan: Brill, 1970),163; Zakarīyā al-Qazwīnī, *Āthār al-bilād wa-akhbār al-'ibād* (Bayrūt: Dār Ṣādir, 1969), 514.

¹¹¹² Al-Jāḥiẓ, "*Manāqib al-Turk*," in *Rasā'il al-Jāḥiẓ*, vol 1, 473-519.

¹¹¹³ See Ibid., 476-486.

¹¹¹⁴ The *Abnā'* are the descendants of the Khurāsānīs, whose ancestors were supported the Abbasid revolution. For more discussion and details of *Abnā'*, see John Turner, "The abnā' al-dawla: The Definition and Legitimation of Identity in Response to the Fourth Fitna," *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 124 (1): 1–22, accessed 27 October 2017, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4132150>; Crone, "The 'Abbāsīd Abnā' and Sāsānid Cavalymen," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 8, no. 1 (Apr. 1998): 1-19, accessed 27 October 2017, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25183463>.

¹¹¹⁵ Gordon, *The Breaking of a Thousand Swords: A History of the Turkish Military of Samarra (A.H. 200-275/815-889 C.E.)* (New York: University of New York, 2001), 1; Kennedy, *The Armies of the Caliphs*, 27-34.

Caliph al-Mu'taṣim's constant use of Turkish soldiers led to their high numbers within the Abbasid state.¹¹¹⁶ The caliph's own Turkish origin through his mother provided the greatest factor for his actions,¹¹¹⁷ although this had consequences later. Family ties provided the demand and social mobility for slaves of this ethnicity. As a result of the high number of enslaved Turkish soldiers, Caliph al-Mu'taṣim ordered the construction of Sāmarrā (220 A.H./ 835 A.D.). Thanks to his Turkish military commanders, al-Mu'taṣim left Baghdad to the local denizens under his Turkish leader, who was granted great privileges and wealth. The Turkish slaves were then able to own land grants, mosques, markets and houses.¹¹¹⁸

A study by Gordon presents valuable details of the military system and Turkish slave soldier regiments found at Sāmarrā during the Abbasid era.¹¹¹⁹ Gordon argues that Turkish slaves emerged as a presence at the court of al-Ma'mūn, gaining noteworthy status and power under the rule of his brother, al-Mu'taṣim. Gordon writes that their presence and impact became widespread during the later era.¹¹²⁰ Significantly, Turkish soldiers dominated military and political affairs, exercising great authority over Sāmarrā.¹¹²¹ The extent of the Turkish leaders' influence refashioned their rank as elites in society, especially in the areas of politics and administration.¹¹²²

In another work entitled "Preliminary Remarks on Slaves and Slave Labor in the Third/Ninth Century Abbasid Empire",¹¹²³ Gordon writes that in the classical period, societal occupation demanded both skilled and unskilled workers. Unskilled individuals could work in domestic careers, while expert and skilled workers went for specific professions such as military soldiers, administrative

¹¹¹⁶ Gordon, *The Breaking of a Thousand Swords*, 1; Kennedy, *The Armies of the Caliphs*, 118-119; Timothy Power, *The Red Sea from Byzantium to the Caliphate: AD 500-1000* (Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 2012), 157.

¹¹¹⁷ His mother was known as Māridah; See al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, vol 8, 360, vol 9 123; Al-Mas'ūdī, *Murūj al-Dhahab*, vol 4, 39; Al-Ya'qūbī, *Tārīkh al-Ya'qūbī*, vol 2, 428; Al-Isfahānī, *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, vol 5, 156; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-a'yān*, vol 3, 21.

¹¹¹⁸ Al-Mas'ūdī, *Kitāb al-buldān*, 29-32; Idem., *Murūj al-dhahab*, vol 4, 45-46; Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil fī l-tārīkh*, vol 6, 21-22; Kennedy, *The Armies of the Caliphs*, 122; Idem., *The Court of the Caliphs*, 214, 216-219; Gordon, *The Breaking of a Thousand Swords*, 47-65

¹¹¹⁹ Ibid., xx-303.

¹¹²⁰ Ibid., 15-45, 75, 80, 98.

¹¹²¹ Ibid., 15-132

¹¹²² Ibid., 75, 83, 111.

¹¹²³ Idem., "Preliminary Remarks on Slaves and Slave Labor in the Third/Ninth Century Abbasid Empire," in *Slaves and Households in the Near East* (Chicago: The University of Chicago, 2011).

workers and musicians.¹¹²⁴ In the Abbasid era, administrators, soldiers, guards and singers had become powerful figures in the elite courts. As female and male slaves had become employed in a number of professions, male slaves had to be able and willing to engage in physical combat and use military weapons, while female slaves such as the “[*qiyān* had] to be skilled and high level of education.”¹¹²⁵

At first glance, our research suggest that certain origins were considered superior to others. Indeed, the most famous male slave leaders in the middle Abbasid era were Turkish *ghilmān*, thus this ethnicity could be said to have dominated the administrative and military professions. We will discuss this in more detail later in the chapter. This research argues, however, that although Turkish slaves did hold a military supremacy in the Abbasid court, ethnicity and race were not the essential feature for achieving equality in roles, professions and status.¹¹²⁶ Rather, it was the individual’s own gender, ability, intelligence and personal experience can assisted male slaves in forming and obtaining a higher rank and status. Gender, intelligence and skills in both government administration and military service were highly important for men to achieve dominance and improve their social status in the Abbasid state, including ministers and leaders. The ideology of male dominance required physical power and intelligence for an officer to obtain the highest rank and status.

In contrast, male slave singers and poets, as companions and entertainers to the caliphs, achieved the role of entertainer rather than a military rank. This is similar to female *qiyān*, poets and concubines, as their primary duty was to present obedience to their master’s desires through companionship and entertainment. The disparity between male and female slaves is clear, however. Enslaved men had many chances to achieve mobility and higher status through various professions, such as military or administrative leaders, simply due to the privilege afforded by their gender. Female slaves had a limited rate of mobility, and their professions depended on men, specifically the desires and demands of their masters. This was shown in our previous chapter, which discussed the limited boundaries and privileges of the *qīna* and the *Umm al-Walad*. The next

¹¹²⁴ Ibid., 80.

¹¹²⁵ Gordon, "Preliminary Remarks on Slaves and Slave Labor," 81.

¹¹²⁶ Bouhdiba, *Sexuality in Islam*, 33.

section discusses the functions and careers of male slaves in contrast with female slaves in order to determine the extent of their social status in the Abbasid state and at court.

6.3 The significance of enslaved men's functions, occupations and social status

The previous sections discussed the noteworthy presence of male homosexuality and the number and origins of male slaves at the Abbasid court. The most important finding is that male slaves, such as eunuchs, could acquire considerable social mobility and position through their relationships with the elite. Thus, enslaved men could potentially provide a noteworthy rival for female slaves in the Abbasid social hierarchy.

Chapter Four of this research demonstrated that elite men possessed a high number of *jawārī*. The demand for *jawārī* depended on a number of features, such as the beauty, education, skills and sexual appeal of female slaves. The demand for male slaves was similar: based on education, skilfulness and, in the case of homosexual desire, their beauty. In general, a male slave's ability in military activities such as fighting, service, weapons and defence was the most desirable measure of his physical capability.¹¹²⁷ The careers of enslaved males varied according to their vocations and abilities. Some were physically active in domestic services, while others were recruited for military and administrative careers, such as war and the suppression of revolutions.¹¹²⁸ The intellectual and artistic talents of male slaves were used in the military, business and industry, and some worked for the caliphs and princes as managers and leaders.¹¹²⁹

According to al-Ṣūlī,¹¹³⁰ the members of the Abbasid court were divided into three groups. The first category included the caliphs, his family and elite men. The second group comprised the viziers, military leaders, *kuttāb* (sing. *kātib*)¹¹³¹

¹¹²⁷ Lerner, *The Creation of Patriarchy*, 17.

¹¹²⁸ Al-Tirmānīnī, *Al-riqq māḍīyah wa ḥāḍiruh*, 51.

¹¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹¹³⁰ Al-Ṣūlī was the *nadīm* of four caliphs: al-Mukatfī, al-Muqtadir, al-Qāhir and al-Rādī; Al-Ṣūlī, "Qism min akhbār al-Muqtadir billāh al-'Abbāsī, aw, Tārīkh al-dawlah al-'Abbāsīyah min sanat 295 ilā sanat 315 Hijrīyah," in al-Ṣūlī, *Kitāb al-Awrāq* (Baghdād: Dār al-Shu'ūn al-Thaqāfīyah al-'Āmmah, 1999), 12.

¹¹³¹ This phrase refers to a secretary, chancery clerk or bureaucrat.

and judges, while the third group comprised the *ḥujjāb* (sing. *ḥājib*),¹¹³² the male slave chamberlain.¹¹³³ Each of these groups had a private rank and considerable power within the state, but every profession held different privileges and entitlements.¹¹³⁴

In the early Abbasid period, administrative careers were held by Arab and Persian *mawālī*, such as the Barmakids, which maintained political, administrative and cultural dominance during the reign of al-Rashīd.¹¹³⁵ The *mawālī* also acquired the position of *kātib* (secretary) in the early Islamic period, writing and recording letters for rulers and governors.¹¹³⁶ The position of secretary became more significant in the later Abbasid period, as secretaries were present as a visible cohort in the state administration, such as Yaḥyá b. Khālid, who became the close “friend and adviser” of Caliph al-Mahdī.¹¹³⁷

Female slaves had an equivalent position to the male *kātib*, with two historical examples of *jawārī* who became *kātibāt* (sing. *kātibah*) to the caliphs. In the era of al-Mu‘tamad, the essential task of Munyah al-Kātibah was to write the caliph’s letters.¹¹³⁸ Similarly, the primary function of Umm Mūsá was to record and deliver messages from Caliph al-Muqtadir and his mother, Shaghab, to the minister.¹¹³⁹ We should note that both Munyah and Umm Mūsá were *qahramānat*, thus the *qahramānah* may have had a greater chance of being close to the caliphs, statesmen, politicians and administrators. It is clear that female slaves were counterpart to enslaved men at court.¹¹⁴⁰

Enslaved males gained new rights, privileges and practicable status through their closeness to the caliphs. Most notably, *khiṣyān* were able to acquire a wide range of privileges and careers. In the year 158 A.H./775 A.D., upon the death of Caliph al-Manṣūr, his *khādim*, Abū al-‘Anbar was granted the privilege of announcing the caliph’s death to his servants, preventing outsiders and other

¹¹³² This phrase refers to a chamberlain; For excellent and brief article on *ḥājib* see Ian Morris, “Hājib”, in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Three, edited by Kate Fleet, Gudrun Krämer, Denis Matringe, John Nawas, Everett Rowson, (2018), accessed 18 June 2018, http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_ei3_COM_30196.

¹¹³³ Al-Ṣūlī, “*Qism min akhbār al-Muqtadir billāh*,” 16-17.

¹¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹¹³⁵ Al-Mas‘ūdī, *Murūj al-Dhahab*, vol 3, 304; Kennedy, *The Prophet and the Age of the Caliphates*, 147.

¹¹³⁶ Kennedy, Ibid, 138; Bray, “Men, Women and Slaves,” 128.

¹¹³⁷ Kennedy, Ibid.

¹¹³⁸ Ibn al-Sā‘ī, *Nisā’ al-khulafā’*, 126.

¹¹³⁹ Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil fī ‘l-Tārīkh*, 6, 469; See al-Mas‘ūdī, *Murūj al-Dhahab*, vol 4, 324.

¹¹⁴⁰ A further discussion on the *qahramānah*’s position and privileges will be provided later.

servants from seeing the caliph's corpse.¹¹⁴¹ In addition, Naṣīr al-Waṣīf, the *khādim* of al-Mahdī, was the one to inform al-Hādī of his father's death, and was among the first individuals to pledge allegiance to the new caliph.¹¹⁴² Masrūr, the *khādim* of Caliph al-Rashīd, was responsible for the palace's *ghilmān*; his privileges extended to imprisoning famous members of the state administration, such as using soldiers to capture Ja'far al-Barmakī, Yaḥyá b. Khālid, his son al-Faḍl¹¹⁴³ and Muḥammad b. al-Qāsim al-Alawī.¹¹⁴⁴ Rajā' al-Khādim carried the seal (*khatm*), sword (*qaḍīb*) and cloth (*burdah*) of Caliph al-Rashīd to his son al-Amīn.¹¹⁴⁵ Salām al-Abrash was a high-ranking servant of Caliphs al-Manṣūr, al-Hādī and al-Rashīd. He also became the *khādim* of Caliph al-Ma'mūn, responsible for collecting funds and distributing them to the soldiers.¹¹⁴⁶ Likewise, Nawfal was a eunuch appointed trustee (*wakīl*) of al-Ma'mūn's estate in Baghdad, and guard of al-Ma'mūn's family and wealth in Khurasān.¹¹⁴⁷

These examples suggest that *ghilmān* and eunuchs achieved a certain important closeness to the caliphs and performed specific functions at the Abbasid court. The gender of these enslaved men could be a contributing factor to their companionship with the caliphs, both inside and outside the court. As Lerner states, the nature of men's function as assistants, warriors and protectors required hard work and physical strength, stability and travel in peace and war.¹¹⁴⁸ This contrasts with female slaves, whose gender limited their abilities and behaviours, creating the boundaries of their function. To a certain extent, this confirms our previous discussion in Chapters Four and Five, wherein the primary careers of female slaves were characterized around childbearing, entertainment and domestic services. It is essential to examine the crucial roles of gender and masculine power on the function of male and female slaves.

The position of *ḥaramī* refers to the guardians of the *ḥarīm*, who served the mother of the caliph, his consorts and female slaves in the palace. The *ḥaramī*

¹¹⁴¹ Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil fī 'l-Tārīkh*, vol 5, 226.

¹¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 264.

¹¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, 329, vol 6, 15.

¹¹⁴⁴ Masrūr was among the companions of al-Rashīd before his death. See *Ibid.*, vol 5, 354; vol 6, 15.

¹¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, vol 5, 359.

¹¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 469.

¹¹⁴⁷ Ayalon, *Eunuchs, Caliphs and Sultans*, 133.

¹¹⁴⁸ Lerner, *The Creation of Patriarchy*, 17.

was responsible for supervising the women and serving their needs from outside the palace, and thus it was compulsory not only to be eunuch but a *majbūb*, a fully castrated male.¹¹⁴⁹ Only the *majābīb* were permitted to serve in the *ḥarīm*'s household, having lost their masculinity. All non-castrated men, including domestic servants, were unauthorized and thus forbidden to visit the private palace and certain areas of the Abbasid court, while eunuchs could.¹¹⁵⁰ The use of eunuchs can be attributed to their high numbers and the custom of secluding women at court. Eunuchs were used at the *ḥarīm*'s household as they did not present a sexual threat, as discussed earlier in this chapter.¹¹⁵¹ The career of *ḥaramī* carried significant privilege, as they had access to their master anytime, anywhere in the court and private quarters.¹¹⁵² Eunuchs also accompanied the master's *ḥarīm* outside the *ḥarīm*'s household.¹¹⁵³ They supervised the *ḥarīm* and informed the caliph of their behaviour and activities, including what happened inside the *ḥarīm*'s walls.¹¹⁵⁴ This freedom of activity ultimately gave eunuchs a level of privilege above non-castrated male slaves at the *ḥarīm*'s court.¹¹⁵⁵

The nature of eunuchs affected the women of the palace, their passions and desires. The passion for *majābīb*, *ghilmān* did not only affect free and elite men, but also included the women of the Abbasid palace. Chapter Five provided examples of recorded love between free royal women and their *ghilmān*, including 'Ulayyah's interest in Ṭall and Rashā', her own male slaves,¹¹⁵⁶ and Khadījah bint al-Ma'mūn's love for her father's *ghulām*.¹¹⁵⁷ The profound male dominance over women created a life of female seclusion. This separation between women and men greatly influenced the rise of *ghilmān* as women's lovers, thanks to their proximity to women in the palace.

Despite the above examples and our discussion of the influence, career and privilege of eunuchs, *ḥarīm* eunuchs did not receive any additional social status

¹¹⁴⁹ A famous *ḥaramī* was al-Ṣāfi al-Khādīm, known as Al-Ḥaramī; See al-Ṣūlī, *Qism min akhbār al-Muqtadir billāh* 39-40; Ibn al-Athīr, *Al-Kāmil fī 'l-tārīkh*, vol 6, 293, 303, 364; Al-Ṣābī, *Rusūm dār al-khilāfah*, 78.

¹¹⁵⁰ Kennedy, *The Court of the Caliphs*, 33.

¹¹⁵¹ Ayalon, *Eunuchs, Caliphs and Sultans*, 15.

¹¹⁵² *Ibid.*, 18.

¹¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, 19.

¹¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 78; Kennedy; *The Court of the Caliphs*, 178-179.

¹¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 19.

¹¹⁵⁶ Al-Iṣfahānī, *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, vol 10, 130-132.

¹¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, vol 10, 16, 12-13.

or rank resulting from the admiration of elite women. We propose that since the mistresses of these eunuchs were women, their power to grant their eunuchs any higher position was limited. As seen in our examination of the patriarchal system's influence over women in the previous chapter, women's privileges and entitlements depended on male dominance and desire.¹¹⁵⁸ Any situation relating to a woman's ownership of a eunuch could be prevented if her male patrons interfered. In contrast, male slaves and eunuchs owned by men succeeded in improving their position and social status, by improving profession, becoming leaders or by gaining privileges in politics or administration. Male ownership was a significant factor in the higher social mobility of eunuchs and other male slaves, compared to those of female possession.

Another noteworthy male profession of the court was the *ḥājib*, or chamberlain, also known as the concierge, doorkeeper or supervisor of the caliph's door, who was responsible for the visitors who passed through to meet the caliph.¹¹⁵⁹ Hilāl al-Ṣābī wrote about the regulations and customs of the *ḥājib*, stating that the *ḥājib*'s first job was to guard the caliph or vizier and to authorize the entrants.¹¹⁶⁰ By custom of the caliph's palace, all senior statesmen had to receive authorization from the *ḥājib* before meeting the caliph.¹¹⁶¹ For instance, in the era of Caliph al-Mu'taṣim, judges and scholars had to ask permission from Waṣīf al-Turkī al-Ḥājib in order to meet the caliph.¹¹⁶² This afforded the *ḥājib* a significant position at the court.

Later, the profession of *ḥājib* developed to include the supervision of court servants, as well as the employment and renouncement of servants and the entourage. One example is the case of Khafīf al-Samarqandī al-Ḥājib in the reign of al-Mu'taḍid, whose caliph wrote to him to imprison a number of leaders and servants.¹¹⁶³ Al-Rabī' b. Yūnus (d. 170 A.H./786 A.D.) represents the social mobility of male slaves, as he was the *ḥājib* of Caliph al-Manṣūr and became chief of the ministry.¹¹⁶⁴ The most prominent example is the case of al-Rabī', a male slave who became chamberlain, then was eventually manumitted and

¹¹⁵⁸ See Chapter Five, sections 5.2 and 5.3.

¹¹⁵⁹ Al-Fīrūzābādī, *al-qāmūs al-muḥīṭ*, vol 2, 72; Kennedy, *The Court of the Caliphs*, 31.

¹¹⁶⁰ Al-Ṣābī, *Rusūm dār al-khilāfah*, 71.

¹¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 73.

¹¹⁶² *Ibid.*

¹¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, 72.

¹¹⁶⁴ Al-Ṣafadī, *Kitāb Al-Wāfi bi-'l-Wafayāt*, vol 14, 58.

became a noteworthy figure at court.¹¹⁶⁵ Al-Rabī's son, Faḍl, had even wider privileges as the *ḥājib* of Caliph al-Rashīd; his duties included carrying the caliph's seal and imprisoning high-ranking inmates and prisoners.¹¹⁶⁶ The ability of male slaves and freedmen to obtain a higher social position was through their closeness to the caliphs.

The privileges of the *ḥājib* were extended further to allow them to order their *ghilmān* to collect state funds (tax collection) and capture rebels. Sīmā, the *ghulām* of Naṣr al-Ḥājib, became famous for such deeds.¹¹⁶⁷ The office of *ḥājib* gained even more influence through controlling and monitoring the administration and finances of the Abbasid court.¹¹⁶⁸ Further evidence of the *ḥājib*'s considerable position and power is the case of Sawsan al-Ḥājib (d. 269 A.H./883 A.D.), a *ghulām* of Caliph al-Muktafī.¹¹⁶⁹ According to al-Ṣūlī, Sawsan controlled the court affairs.¹¹⁷⁰ Caliph al-Muktafī even asked Sawsan to abandon the profession of *ḥijbah* in return for as much money, weapons and soldiers as he desired, and to nominate the governor of his choice.¹¹⁷¹ This underscores the magnitude of Sawsan's dominance and power over the court, proving that male slaves did in fact have a great deal of control over the state.

It is important to note that the profession of *ḥājib* had two important features. First, it was a long-term position. Our historical sources provide examples of male slaves whose careers as *ḥujjāb* continued across the reigns of three caliphs. Salāmah al-Ṭūlūnī (336 A.H./938 A.D.) was a trustworthy *ḥājib* known as al-Mu'taman who serviced several caliphs: al-Qāhir, al-Rāḍī and al-Muttaqī.¹¹⁷² Another example is al-Rabī, the *ḥājib* of al-Rashīd, whose son came into a similar position during the reign of al-Hādī.¹¹⁷³ The second important feature is that the position of *ḥājib* could be inherited from father to son. Faḍl, son of *ḥājib* al-Rabī, grew up to become *ḥājib* to Caliph al-Rashīd.¹¹⁷⁴ An advantage to owning young male slaves, especially those whose

¹¹⁶⁵ Al-Ṣafadī, *Kitāb Al-Wāfi bi-'l-Wafayāt*, vol 14, 58; Kennedy, *The Court of the Caliphs*, 31.

¹¹⁶⁶ Al-Ṣafadī, *Ibid.*

¹¹⁶⁷ Al-Ṣūlī, "Qism min akhbār al-Muqtadir billāh," 184.

¹¹⁶⁸ Kennedy, *The Prophet and the Age of the Caliphates*, 139.

¹¹⁶⁹ Al-Ṣūlī, *al-Wuzarā' aw Tuḥfat al-umarā' fi tārikh al-wuzarā'* (Bayrūt: Dār al-Fikr al-Ḥadīth, 1990), 26.

¹¹⁷⁰ *Idem.*, "Qism min akhbār al-Muqtadir billāh," 20.

¹¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁷² Al-Ṣābī, *Rusūm dār al-khilāfah*, 76.

¹¹⁷³ Al-Ṣafadī, *Kitāb Al-Wāfi bi-'l-Wafayāt*, vol 14, 5; Kennedy, *The Court of the Caliphs*, 31, 33.

¹¹⁷⁴ Kennedy, *Ibid.*, 33.

parent worked at court, was their loyalty to their master and the master's family.¹¹⁷⁵ Male slaves owned since childhood or from birth had stronger loyalties than slaves purchased at an older age from other masters, who thus might have mixed loyalties.¹¹⁷⁶

Similar to the *ḥājib*, the *khāzin* was a male slave with a remarkable career in the Abbasid court. His primary function was to retain records of the arrests of high-ranking individuals such as clerks, judges, and military leaders. For example, in the year 296 A.H./ 909 A.D., the judge Muḥammad b. Yūsuf al-Qāḍī and a number of clerks were held prisoner under the supervisor of a *khāzin*.¹¹⁷⁷ Mu'nis al-Khāzin represents the influence of *khāzin*, as his privileges expanded to police chief in the year 296 A.H./909 A.D., and to military leader in the following year.¹¹⁷⁸ If a *khāzin* was responsible for the caliph's treasury, he was called *khāzin bayt al-māl*. His primary job was to receive and withdraw finances and disbursements by the order of the caliph, such as rewards for poets and singers.¹¹⁷⁹ Yusr, *khādim* of Caliph al-Muntasir, and Mu'nis, *khādim* of Caliph al-Mu'taḍid, are two famous examples of *khāzin bayt al-māl*.¹¹⁸⁰ Another profession for male slaves was the director of the palace (*mudabbir al-qaṣr*), also known as the *ustādh al-dār* (master of the palace). His job was to manage the affairs, expenses and everyday needs of the palace and the caliph's entourage. One historical example is Shāhak al-Khādim during the era of al-Musta'īn.¹¹⁸¹

The professions of *ḥājib*, *khāzin* and *mudabbir al-qaṣr* shared certain duties, whether supervision of prisoners, collection of finances or palace keeping. As we observed in Chapter Four, out of the professions of female slaves, the palace *qahramānah* held a comparable role and responsibilities to the above.¹¹⁸² Khāliṣah was a financial manager for Caliph al-Mahdī and his wife al-Khayzarān,¹¹⁸³ while Umm Mūsá, Shaghab's *qahramānah*, was responsible for

¹¹⁷⁵ Mottahedeh, *Loyalty and Leadership*, 88.

¹¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷⁷ Al-Ṣūlī, "Qism min akhbār al-Muqtadir billāh," 102.

¹¹⁷⁸ Ibid., 42, 167; Ibn al-Athīr, *Al-Kāmil fī 'l-tārīkh*, vol 6, 442.

¹¹⁷⁹ Al-Ṣūlī, Ibid.

¹¹⁸⁰ Ibid., 42

¹¹⁸¹ Ibn al-Athīr. *Al-Kāmil fī 'l-tārīkh*, vol 6, 151.

¹¹⁸² See Chapter Four, 131, 137-139.

¹¹⁸³ Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, vol 8, 72; Ibid., 4, 370; Al-Tanūkhī, *Nishwār al-muḥāḍarah*, vol 3, 171.

the funds of the palace and court of Caliph al-Muqtadir.¹¹⁸⁴ Zaydān expanded the function of the *qahramānah* further. Female slaves could not only be palace keepers or financial managers; Zaydān's authority evolved to encompass the imprisonment of the elite, as well as famous administrators and military individuals.¹¹⁸⁵ The *qahramānat* Thamal, Umm Mūsá, Ikhtiyār and Fārs all had visible influence through the appointment and imprisoning of viziers of the state.¹¹⁸⁶ To a certain extent, the profession of *qahramānah* granted enslaved females merit and entitlements equal to that of enslaved men, with positions such as housekeeper, financial manager, prison warden, as well as interference in political and administrative affairs.

It is important to note, however, that due to their gender, male slaves were able to attain greater privilege and status by becoming chiefs and military leaders, while female slaves remained in positions of administrative responsibility as *qahramānat*. This was due to what we would call today sexism and male dominance over women. Moreover, while the *qahramānah* Thamal was granted the position of judge at a court of grievances in the year 306 A.H./918 A.D.,¹¹⁸⁷ her authority was restricted and often ruled inadmissible. Al-Şūlī adds that no individuals attended the first day Thamal sat in the court of grievances. Many individuals gathered to resolve their grievances on her second day, but only with the supervision and presence of a male judge, Abū Ḥasan al-Asbābī.¹¹⁸⁸ However, in the era of Caliph al-Mahdī, eunuchs were also permitted to obtain the position of judge, such as Salām al-Abrash, who became a judge of grievances.¹¹⁸⁹ Al-Şābī adds that in the middle Abbasid era, Caliph al-Mu'taḍid appointed his *khādim* Badr al-Mu'taḍidī (d. 311 A.H./923 A.D.) as assessor of inheritance affairs.¹¹⁹⁰ This, in comparison with the female examples above, indicates that gender was a primary factor for obtaining the status of judge, regardless of a man's enslavement. This confirms our hypothesis of male

¹¹⁸⁴ Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil fī 'l-Tārīkh*, vol 6, 469; See al-Mas'ūdī, *Murūj al-Dhahab*, vol 4, 324.

¹¹⁸⁵ Al-Tanūkhī, *Kitāb al-Faraj ba'da al-shiddah*, vol 4,370, vol 5, 27; Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil fī 'l-Tārīkh*, vol 7, 13; vol 6, 489, 493, vol 7, 13; See El Cheick, "The Qahramana," 46.

¹¹⁸⁶ Al-Tanūkhī, *Ibid.*, vol 1, 247; vol 4, 370; *Idem.*, *Nishwār al-muḥāḍarah wa-akhbār al-mudhākarah*, vol 3, 171; Al-Şūlī, "Qism min akhbār al-Muqtadir billāh," 17-19; Ibn al-Athīr. Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil fī 'l-Tārīkh*, vol 6, 491-492.

¹¹⁸⁷ Al-Tanūkhī, *Ibid.*, vol 4, 370-371; See Ibn Ḥazm al-Andalusī, "Risālah fī Faḍl Ummahāt al-Awlad," in *Rasā'il Ibn Ḥazm al-Andalusī* (Bayrūt: Tawzī' al-Mu'assasah al-'Arabīyah lil-Dirāsāt wa-al-Nashr, 1987), vol 2, 81.

¹¹⁸⁸ Al-Şūlī, "Qism min akhbār al-Muqtadir billāh," 209, 210.

¹¹⁸⁹ Aḥmad Ibn 'Abd Rabbih, *Al-'Iqd al-farīd* (Bayrūt: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmīyah, 2006), vol 1,162.

¹¹⁹⁰ Al-Şābī', *al-Wuzarā' aw Tuḥfat al-umarā' fī tārīkh al-wuzarā'*, 249-253.

dominance over most administrative and public affairs.

As shown in this research, Abbasid society was built on masculine dominance, with the lives, movements, professions and social status of women all controlled by men. The case of Thamal showed that individuals could not accept the idea of a female judge. That a woman could become a judge was contrary to male custom and the superiority of men in the profession. We can further interpret the public's approbation only when a male judge was present to monitor Thamal and her council of grievances as evidence that a woman's status and profession were restricted by the customs and traditions of male dominance, compared to men's greater opportunity to achieve prominent and trusted positions. Most *qahramānah* could not retain influence and position without male supervision or approval. This affirms Lerner and Mernissi's theory of masculine authority and gender inequality; even when acquiring similar careers and privileges to men, women's "actions could only appear on the public stage masked by the presence of a man."¹¹⁹¹

Regardless of the issue of gender inequality in professions between enslaved men and women, al-Ṣabī's work, *al-Wuzarā' aw Tuḥfat al-Umarā'* provides an example that emphasizes the high level of respect afforded to *qahramānah*. Al-Ṣabī presents a ceremony of the council for the inauguration of statesmen during the era of Caliph al-Muqtadir. It includes a speech by vizier Ibn al-Furāt, which begins:

The sons of al-Muqtadir, may God grant the caliph along life.

The Lady, mother of al-Muqtadir¹¹⁹², and the sons of al-Mu'taḍid and al-Muktafī, may God prolong your lives.

Thamal and Zaydān, the *qahramānat*, may God prolong your lives.

Naṣr b. Aḥmad, may God grant you a long life, and may your glory and protection be everlasting.

Mu'nīs al-Muẓaffar, may God grant you a long life.

Naṣr al-Ḥājib and Yūsuf b. Dāwud, may God prolong your lives.

Naṣr al-Ḥājib, Shafī' al-Lu'lu'ī, Shafī' al-Muqtadirī, Bishr al-Sharābī, Badr al-Ḥaramī, Mufliḥ al-Aswad,

¹¹⁹¹ Mernissi, *The Forgotten Queens of Islam*, 51.

¹¹⁹² He is referring to al-Sayyidah Shaghab.

Hārūn b. Gharīb, Aḥmad b. Badr, Nāzūk and Yāqūt,
may God glorify you and prolong your lives.
[....]¹¹⁹³

In this formal speech, the vizier Ibn al-Furāt listed the individual names in order according to their status and their importance to the state. He begins with the sons of al-Muqtadir, followed by his mother, Shaghab, his cousins and the *qahramānat*, then the members of the higher professions such as military commanders, regardless of their status as free or enslaved men. This speech illustrates the social mobility of enslaved females, as well as the high status of the *Umm al-Walad* and her *qahramānat* in the era of Caliph al-Muqtadir. The mention of Shaghab as *Umm al-Walad* and female slaves such as the *qahramānat* in such a formal speech suggests that women could achieve significant status and prestige under the reign of al-Muqtadir. These women were honoured by name in the official speech, with prayers offered for a long life, as well as pride and glory. Moreover, the early placement of the women and the late mention of male slaves and military commanders suggests the merit and advancement of the *Umm al-Walad* and her *qahramānat* at the court of al-Muqtadir, not only with their female peers, but also enslaved men. Thus, "although women did not hold actual political positions, they were well placed to influence public affairs, even if inconspicuously".¹¹⁹⁴

In particular, although the formal speech by vizier Ibn al-Furāt provides noteworthy evidence of enslaved women's high position and prestige in contrast with that of enslaved men in the Abbasid state, the available historical and literature records in the primary sources, as seen in our previous discussion, portray the careers, privileges, status and movements of women such as the *Umm al-Walad* and *qahramānat* as limited, restricted by male dominance and the gender system. The Fifth chapter of this research argued that scholars of the medieval era omitted the details of women's roles from the primary historical and literature records to a great extent. As the framework of these records involve documentation written by men for an audience of men in patriarchal communities, we can assume considerable erasure and trivialization of the roles, social status and professions of women

¹¹⁹³ Al-Ṣabī, *al-Wuzarā' aw Tuḥfat al-umarā' fi tārikh al-wuzarā'*, 153-154.

¹¹⁹⁴ El Cheikh, "Revisiting The Abbasid Harems," *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies*, 1, no. 3 (Fall 2005), 12, accessed: 23-10-2017, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40326869>.

in sources about the Abbasid era.¹¹⁹⁵ While the absence of reliable records constrains our viewpoint of this issue, the available information and our discussion of the power and position of women do show evidence of restriction with the consent and monitoring of men.

A significant role and movement of the freedwomen could be noticed in the Abbasid era. In previous chapters, we examined whether elite women and female slaves could acquire formal political status and rank. Although there was a certain movement by women to participate in state political affairs, overall it was unsuccessful. This can be seen in the biography of al-Khayzarān, a former *Umm al-Walad* and freedwoman. Al-Khayzarān gained considerable status at the court of Caliph al-Mahdī and later through her sons, Caliphs al-Hādī and al-Rashīd. Al-Khayzarān's life is associated with her political movements:

Al-Khayzarān's status led to her involvement and participation in state political and economic affairs. One considerable incident that shows al-Khayzarān's influence is her role in persuading the caliph al-Mahdī to choose her sons to succeed him on the throne, and to dismiss his eldest son, 'Abd Allah ['Ubayd Allah], who was born to a noblewoman.¹¹⁹⁶

Due to the great closeness of al-Khayzarān to Caliph al-Mahdī, first as his preferred concubine, then his *Umm al-Walad* and later as his wife, we can assume that she had great influence through him, even nominating her sons for succession after his death. Al-Khayzarān's attempts to accrue political power continued through her son, al-Hādī. "[The] impact of al-Khayzarān is that leaders and wealthy figures in society often gathered at her assembly to discuss state affairs" without consulting Caliph al-Hādī.¹¹⁹⁷ Her political ambition grew wider and more extensive; however, al-Khayzarān's endeavours to achieve authority during her son's reign were ultimately unsuccessful. Al-Hādī's reaction to his mother's attempts is below:

"Wait a moment and listen well to my words.... Whoever from among my entourage - my generals, my servants -

¹¹⁹⁵ See back, 142-143, 146.

¹¹⁹⁶ This paragraph is a quote from my forthcoming and unpublished work: Alkandari, "Enslaved and Free Women in the Royal Court," 29. Sources differ about al-Mahdī's eldest son exact name.

¹¹⁹⁷ Al-Mas'ūdī, *Murūj al-dhahab*, vol 3, 272; See Mernissi, *The Forgotten Queens of Islam*, 60-62; Ibid.

comes to you with a petition will have his head cut off and his property confiscated. What is the meaning of those retainers that throng around your door every day? Don't you have a spindle to keep you busy, a Koran for praying, a residence in which to hide from those besieging you? Watch yourself, and woe to you if you open your mouth in favour of anyone at all."¹¹⁹⁸

This historical account of al-Hādī's response shows frustration regarding his mother's conduct and behaviour. Caliph al-Hādī prohibited the leaders to meet his mother and ordered al-Khayzarān to stop intervening in the sovereignty, state politics and public affairs. While al-Khayzarān continued to participate in a political affairs, her privilege was limited, and thus her endeavour clearly failed.¹¹⁹⁹ The patriarchal dominance is clear, especially in the decisive reaction of al-Hādī to his mother al-Khayzarān. Mernissi's theory of male dominance asserts that masculinity and gender identity are always associated with political authority and cannot be separated.¹²⁰⁰ Thus, just as with al-Khayzarān in the Abbasid court, women continually achieve limited political power in both public and private spheres, in contrast with the political leadership of men. In contrast, with enslaved men who successfully gained authority over the caliphs, such as the case of the Turkish leaders and their influence and dominance on the administration and political affairs of the states.¹²⁰¹

In Chapter Five, we stated that women, in particular *Ummahāt al-Awlād*, often lost their prestige and privilege at the Abbasid court after their patron's death. Shaghab, the mother of Caliph al-Muqtadir, acquired a similar position to al-Khayzarān. However, Shaghab's role as steward and her participation in the political and judicial affairs of state deteriorated rapidly after the death of her son.¹²⁰² In contrast, enslaved males kept their positions long after the caliphs they served died, as seen in the biographies of enslaved men, such as that of Waṣīf al-Turkī (d. 289 A.H./ 902 A.D.), who was employed by al-Mu'taṣim and continued to serve a number of Abbasid caliphs.¹²⁰³ Similarly, Mukhāriq (d. 231 A.H./845 A.D.), a singer of Caliph Hārūn al-Rashīd, was also a musician to

¹¹⁹⁸ Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, vol 8, 206-207; Al-Mas'ūdī, *Murūj al-dhahab*, vol 3, 272; I used the English translation by Mernissi, *The Forgotten Queens of Islam*, 60-62

¹¹⁹⁹ Mernissi, *Ibid.*, 50.

¹²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 30-31; See also Bray, "Men and women," 143-146; El Cheikh, "Gender and Politics," 147-161.

¹²⁰¹ The extent of Turkish authority and power will be discussed in the next section.

¹²⁰² See our discussion in Chapter Five, 138, 182, 186.

¹²⁰³ See page 215-216 of this chapter.

several other Abbasid caliphs.¹²⁰⁴ This illustrates how the status and advantages of women depended on male acceptance of their participation in society, and the influence and authority of men could permit a certain freedom of movement and behaviour for women. We should also note that men often took advantage of women in high-ranking careers and positions of authority, despite women being the minority. Most women to gain political power and social position were freedwomen and former *Ummahāt al-Awlād*. Although prevented from direct involvement in the affairs of the state, motherhood allowed *Ummahāt al-Awlād* to enter the public and political affairs to a certain extent. The next section will discuss the authority and power of enslaved men as military and administrative commanders.

6.3.1 The leadership impact of enslaved males

In the early Abbasid era, *ghilmān* acquired considerable status as administrators and financial officials, but they did not rule the state or obtain positions such as military commander or governor.¹²⁰⁵ Most of their privileges centred on providing companionship to the caliphs, carrying the caliph's seal, imprisoning high-ranking prisoners or acting as chamberlain or secretary.¹²⁰⁶ However, the middle Abbasid period brought about a dramatic development for the rank and privilege of *ghilmān* and other male slaves, and they became significant figures in administrative, civilian and military life.

History provides several noteworthy examples of *ghilmān* who became governor of the province. Mu'nis al-Khādim became governor of Makkah twice, while al-Mawṣil governed Damascus¹²⁰⁷ and Egypt.¹²⁰⁸ Bader al-Mu'taḍidī was given the provision of Faris in 228 A.H./900 A.D.¹²⁰⁹ Itākh governed the province of Yemen in 225 A.H./840 A.D.,¹²¹⁰ while Sabk al-Mufliḥī governed the

¹²⁰⁴ He was a singer at the court of caliphs al-Rashīd, al-Amīn, al-Ma'mūn, al-Mu'taṣim and al-Wāthiq; See al-Iṣfahānī, *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, vol 18, 244, 247-248, 270; Al-Ṣābī, *Rusūm dār al-khilāfah*, 32; Al-Ṣafadī, *Kitāb al-wāfī bi-l-wafayāt*, vol 25, 208-209; Al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-Arab*, vol 4, 197, 205-242.

¹²⁰⁵ Kennedy, *The Prophet and the Age of the Caliphates*, 208-209.

¹²⁰⁶ See the works of of both Ayalon, *Eunuchs, Caliphs and Sultans* and Idem., *The Court of the Caliphs*.

¹²⁰⁷ See Ibn al-Athīr, *Al-Kāmil fī 'l-tārīkh*, vol 6, 442; vol 7, 71-72; Al-Ṣūlī, "Qism min akhbār al-Muqtadir billāh," 177-178, 200.

¹²⁰⁸ Ibn al-Athīr, *Ibid.*, 478.

¹²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 407.

¹²¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 64.

province of Basra in 310. A.H./922 A.D. Bishr al-Khādim governor of Ṭarṭūs in Bilād al-Shām,¹²¹¹ Tikīn al-Khādim governed Egypt for Caliph al-Muqtadir in 297 A.H./909 A.D., where he continued to govern for 15 years.¹²¹²

Male slaves could also acquire a military position in the state, both inside and outside the Abbasid palace and court. Similar to free men, enslaved military men gained superior status in the state as leaders, governors and guards of the caliphs.¹²¹³ Turkish *ghilmān* played active roles during the Abbasid era, organizing themselves into groups who followed their leaders and demanded payment in heavy instalments.¹²¹⁴ As stated previously in this chapter, the majority of *khiṣyān* and *ghilmān* were likely used as guards at the Abbasid court. Al-Tanūkhī notes that al-Mutawakkil owned 4,000 male slaves for this purpose, while al-Muqtadir owned 11,000 *khiṣyān*.¹²¹⁵ According to al-Ṣābī, Caliph al-Mukatfī kept 20,000 male slaves to guard his residence, known as *ghulmān dārīyah*.¹²¹⁶ Al-Baghdādī writes that many *khudām* in the era of Caliph al-Muqtadir gained higher status through becoming military soldiers or *hujāb*.¹²¹⁷ The greatest development for the status and rank of enslaved men occurred during the era of al-Mu'taṣim, when they became renowned as practicable military leaders. This was a remarkable example of upward social mobility, such as the case of Ītākḥ (d. 235 A.H./ 850 A.D.),¹²¹⁸ an enslaved cook first owned by the *khādim* Salām al-Abrash, then purchased by al-Mu'taṣim in 199 A.H./ 815 A.D.¹²¹⁹ Ītākḥ's closeness to Caliph al-Mu'taṣim gave him a rising career; he acquired wider privileges, including killing and capturing by the caliph's orders. Later, in the era of al-Mutawakkil, Ītākḥ became chief military commander of the Turkish army.¹²²⁰ This demonstrates the flexible opportunities provided to male slaves to change their profession and social status. Ītākḥ rose prominently from a domestic servant to a leader and commander. There were many Turkish

¹²¹¹ Ibn al-Athīr, *Al-Kāmil fī 'l-tārīkh*, vol 6, 486; For more information on Bilād al-Shām, see C.E. Bosworth, H. Lammens, V. Perthes and J. Lentin, *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed., s.v. "Al-Shām", accessed 6 October 2017, http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_COM_1031

¹²¹² Ibn al-Athīr, *Ibid.*, 266.

¹²¹³ Mez, *Al-Ḥaḍārah al-Islāmīyah*, vol 1, 311.

¹²¹⁴ Kennedy, *The Prophet and the Age of the Caliphates*. 206-207; See also Crone, "The Emergence of the Slave Soldiers," in *Slaves on Horses: The Evolution of the Islamic Polity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 74-91

¹²¹⁵ Al-Tanūkhī, *Nishwār al-muḥāḍarah*, vol 5, 48.

¹²¹⁶ Al-Ṣābī, *Rusūm dār al-khilāfah*, 8.

¹²¹⁷ Al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh Baghdād*, vol 12, 146.

¹²¹⁸ He also served the caliphs al-Wāthiq and al-Mutawakkil.

¹²¹⁹ Ibn al-Athīr, *Al-Kāmil fī 'l-tārīkh*, vol 6, 101-103.

¹²²⁰ *Ibid.*

leaders similar to Ītākḥ, such as Waṣīf al-Turkī, a male slave who worked as an armorer. He gained the highest position of Turkish *khādim* and served several caliphs, including al-Mu'taṣim, al-Wāthiq, al-Mutawakkil, al-Muntaṣir and several others.¹²²¹

A significant number of male slaves began their careers in domestic service¹²²² before moving on to a higher profession, such as the caliph's *ḥājib*, *kātib* or companion. While it might appear that male and female slaves had a similar opportunity to increase their social status, they differ in one key factor: the nature of their first career, which led to their mobility. For female slaves, as discussed in Chapters Four and Five, their legal sexual availability and education is how they could achieve a higher social status. For enslaved men, their gender meant they could use their personalities and skills to prove their superiority to their masters or the caliph. In particular, the military provided merit and mobility for notable professions.

Male slaves often engaged in combat and military battles, fighting rebels from within or against an outside enemy. Ashnās al-Turkī was a military commander in the era of al-Mu'taṣim, while al-Mutawakkil led an army to conquer Amorium ('Ammūrīyah), a Byzantine city, in 223 A.H./ 383 A.D.¹²²³ Waṣīf al-Turkī led a battle against Byzantium in 248 A.H./862 A.D.¹²²⁴ Yāzamān al-Khādim, al-Mu'tamid's *khādim*, commanded an invasion against Byzantium in 275 A.H./871 A.D.,¹²²⁵ as did Thumāl al-Khādim, al-Muqtadir's *khādim* in 305 A.H./917 A.D.¹²²⁶ Mu'nīs al-Khādim (d. 321 A.H./ 836 A.D.) led an army against Byzantium in 296 A.H./909 A.D., in the era of al-Muqtadir, and also against the army of al-Mahdī 'Alawī in Egypt in 302 A.H./914 A.D. and 306 A.H./ 918 A.D.¹²²⁷ Enslaved males also obtained the position of leader of the constabulary (*ṣāhib al-shurṭah*).¹²²⁸ In the era of al-Mu'taḍid, his *ghulām* Nāzūk al-Mu'taḍidī

¹²²¹ Al-Mas'ūdī, *Murūj al-dhahab*, vol 4, 213; Al-Ṣafadī, *Kitāb al-Wāfi bi-'l-wafayāt*, vol 27, 259; Al-Ṣābī, *Rusūm dār al-khilāfah*, 33; See Gordon, "Preliminary Remarks on Slaves," 73, 79.

¹²²² Gordon, *Ibid.*, 71.

¹²²³ Ibn al-Athīr, *Al-Kāmil fī 'l-tārīkh*, vol 6, 40-41.

¹²²⁴ *Ibid.*, 146.

¹²²⁵ *Ibid.*, 366.

¹²²⁶ *Ibid.*, 498; vol 7, 16.

¹²²⁷ After his success against the 'Ubaydis, Mu'nīs gained the title of al-Muẓaffar (the victory). *Ibid.*, vol 6, 149-150, 501.

¹²²⁸ See Kennedy, "Central Government and Provincial Élités in the Early 'Abbāsīd Caliphate," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 44, no. 1 (1981), 35, accessed 23 October 2017, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/616294>.

was *ṣāhib al-shurṭah* of Baghdad in 310 A.H./ 922 A.D.¹²²⁹ During the reign of Caliph al-Rādī, Bushraa al-Khādim obtained a similar position in 327 A.H./938 A.D. in Ṭartūs, following the death of Thumal al-Rūmī.¹²³⁰ The previous examples of male slaves in military and constabulary positions suggest that these men gained great influence and authority through military service during revolution against Abbasid authority and in war. We argue that the Abbasid caliphs and the state were essentially dependent on male slaves to safeguard them from internal and external dangers throughout the middle Abbasid era.

The nature of the professions and privileges of high-ranking male slaves, their power, status and dominance in political affairs eventually extended to deposing and installing the Abbasid caliphs themselves. Historically, a number of male slaves are mentioned in such affairs. After the death of Caliph al-Wāthiq, Turkish male slaves nominated his son and appointed al-Mutawakkil, who was later killed by his own Turkish male slaves.¹²³¹ Turkish *khudām* such as Bughā al-Sharābī, Bughā al-Kabīr and Atāmish (d. 249 A.H./863 A.D.)¹²³² also appointed al-Muntaṣir. After his death, the same Turkish leaders chose Ahmad b. al-Mu'tasim, naming him al-Musta'in.¹²³³ Turkish *khādim* continued to control, depose and install the Abbasid caliphs in later eras, including al-Mu'tazz, al-Muktafī and al-Muqtadir, who was later deposed and installed again. After al-Muqtadir's death, his Turkish male slaves appointed al-Qāhir as commander of the Abbasid caliphate.¹²³⁴ These Turkish male slave soldiers were fiercely competitive, gaining extraordinary status as the superior group. More than simple military commanders, we could characterize these men as elites.¹²³⁵

6.3.2 The *nudamā'* of the 'Abbasid court

The term *nadīm* (pl. *nudamā'*) refers to companions of the caliph, involving seriousness and humour, drinking, sociability and entertainment, occasionally

¹²²⁹ He became *ḥājib* of Caliph al-Qāhir in 317 A.H./929 A.D. Ibn al-Athīr, *Al-Kāmil fī l-tārīkh*, vol 7, 10, 23.

¹²³⁰ Ibid., 16.

¹²³¹ Al-Mas'ūdī, *Murūj al-dhahab*, vol 4, 97-99.

¹²³² Atāmish became vizier to al-Musta'in. Ibid., 98-99, 118.

¹²³³ Ibid., 117.

¹²³⁴ Ibid., 135, 218, 232, 243, 248; Kennedy, *The Army of the Caliphate*, 124.

¹²³⁵ Kennedy, Ibid., 119, 124.

even taking on the role of preacher (*wā'iz* or *muḥaddith*).¹²³⁶ Significantly, most singers and poets acquired the position of the caliph's *nudamā'*. Since "the role of poetry, music and song was central to the cultural and social life of the Abbasid court,"¹²³⁷ singers and poets used their skills to provide optimal entertainment for company at the caliphs' court. Caliph al-Saffāḥ arranged his companions into various boards, assemblies and councils, calling them *majālis al-julasā'* and *al-musāmirūn* (entertainers).¹²³⁸ The lives of royalty in the Abbasid era involved many cultural gatherings, with singers and poets comprising free and enslaved men and female slaves acting as companions for the caliphs, elite and famous figures in attendance.

The primary historical and literary sources offer many examples of *nudamā'*, including singers and poets to the caliphs. One such figure is al-Ṣūlī, the *nadīm* of four Abbasid caliphs: al-Muktafī, al-Muqtadir, al-Qāhir and al-Rāḍī.¹²³⁹ He was known as al-Shiṭranjī, thanks to his companionship to the caliphs and skills at chess.¹²⁴⁰ Another noteworthy example is Muḥammad b. Ishāq al-Warrāq, a bookseller and bibliographer; who was titled Ibn al-Nadīm based on his close relationships as courtier to the ruler and members of the royal family of the Abbasid court.¹²⁴¹ Al-Mas'ūdī, in *Murūj al-dhahab*, noted that Sharqī b. al-Qaṭāmī (d. 155 A.H./772 A.D.) was preacher and companion to al-Mahdī as well as Khālid b. Barmak.¹²⁴² Abū al-'Atāhiyah, who accompanied al-Rashīd, and Ibrāhīm al-Mawṣilī and his son Ishāq, are other examples of famous *nudamā'* at Abbasid court.¹²⁴³

Al-Iṣfahānī's work, *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, presents additional examples of male singers and poets in the Abbasid court. Importantly, we note that the bulk of male singers and poets comprised either free noblemen or freedmen, while the percentage of male slaves was minor. While some historical singers and poets were *mawālī*, either solitary or from specific clans, the above information suggests that freedmen had considerable career opportunities as musicians,

¹²³⁶ Sarḥān, "Al-Musāmarah wa-al-munadāmah," 21.

¹²³⁷ Kennedy, *The Court of the Caliphs*, 129.

¹²³⁸ Sarḥān, "Al-musāmarah w'l-mu'ānasah," 75-76.

¹²³⁹ Al-Ṣūlī, "Qism min akhbār al-Muqtadir billāh," 12.

¹²⁴⁰ Ibid., 11-12.

¹²⁴¹ For more information see Robinson, *Islamic Historiography*, 4.

¹²⁴² Al-Mas'ūdī, *Murūj al-dhahab*, vol 3, 187; Sarḥān, "Al-musāmarah w'l-mu'ānasah," 76, 79;

¹²⁴³ See al-Iṣfahānī, *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, vol 4, 63; vol 5, 373-374; Al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab*, vol 4, 352.

and that a number of enslaved men might have gained their manumission through the profession. If this was indeed the case, male slaves were given a greater chance for social mobility and higher status through their singing. As discussed in Chapter Four of this research, however, female slave singers had a much lower chance of upward social mobility, particularly of gaining their manumission.¹²⁴⁴

Many Abbasid caliphs and elite had considerable skills and abilities in singing and poetry, including Caliphs: al-Wāthiq, al-Mustanşir, al-Mu'tazz, al-Mu'tamid, al-Mu'taḍid, Ibrāhīm b. al-Mahdī, Abū 'Īsā b. al-Rashīd, 'Abd Allāh b. al-Amīn, Abū 'Īsā b. al-Mutawakki and 'Abd Allāh b. al-Mu'tazz.¹²⁴⁵ As mentioned above, however, a number of free, freed and enslaved male singers and poets were famous at the Abbasid court and assemblies. Of the free singers, Ibrāhīm al-Mawṣilī and his son Iṣḥāq were accomplished musicians who successfully became *nudama'* to various caliphs over an extended period. Ibrāhīm al-Mawṣilī, also known as Ibn al-Nadīm al-Mawṣilī, was the *nadīm* of Caliphs al-Mahdī, al-Rashīd and al-Hādī,¹²⁴⁶ while Iṣḥāq accompanied al-Rashīd, al-Amīn, al-Ma'mūn, al-Wāthiq and al-Mu'taṣim.¹²⁴⁷ Abū al-'Atāhiyah was a prominent poet to both Caliph al-Mahdī and his son al-Rashīd.¹²⁴⁸ Abū Nuwās, the famous poet mentioned earlier in this chapter, was the *nadīm* of both Caliph al-Rashīd and his son al-Amīn.¹²⁴⁹ Ibrāhīm b. al-Mudabbir used his talents in poetry to gain a higher status and companionship of Caliph al-Mutawakkil, eventually becoming a financial administrator.¹²⁵⁰ All the above examples were free males who gained the status of *nudamā'* of the Abbasid caliphs through their talents and singing skills.

Historical examples of freedmen are widespread. 'Amr b. Bānah (d. 279 A.H/ 892 A.D.) was a singer, poet and *nadīm* of a number of Abbasid caliphs, and was extremely close to Caliph al-Mutawakkil.¹²⁵¹ His biography reveals he was

¹²⁴⁴ See Chapter Four, 117-126.

¹²⁴⁵ See al-Iṣfahānī, *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, vol 9, 205, 223, 227, 239; vol 10, 34, 58, 79, 148, 153, 161, 216; Al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-Arab*, vol 4, 89, 190-193.

¹²⁴⁶ Al-Iṣfahānī, *Ibid.*, vol 5, 102-103, 175; Al-Nuwayrī, *Ibid.*, 299.

¹²⁴⁷ Al-Iṣfahānī, *Ibid.*, 173; Al-Nuwayrī, *Ibid.*, vol 5, 3-4.

¹²⁴⁸ Al-Iṣfahānī, *Ibid.*, vol 4, 5.

¹²⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, vol 20, 17-26.

¹²⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, vol 22, 110.

¹²⁵¹ Al-Iṣfahānī, *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, vol 15, 181; Al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-Arab*, vol 5, 21; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-a'yān*, vol 3 479.

of the *mawālī*; his father gained the position of *kātib* and he acquired a notable status in the caliph's court.¹²⁵² Mukhāriq (d. 231 A.H./845 A.D.), a famous singer and freedman (*mawlā*) of Caliph Hārūn al-Rashīd, was musician to five Abbasid caliphs.¹²⁵³ The early life of Mukhāriq reveals that he was a *muwallad*, raised in Madīnah or Kūfah; both places were known for the education and training of male and female slave singers and poets.¹²⁵⁴ Mukhāriq was first owned by a famous *qīna*, 'Ātikah bint Shahdah, who sold him to Āl al-Zubayr for 30,000 Dirhams.¹²⁵⁵ Ibrāhīm al-Mawṣilī then purchased Mukhāriq, dedicating him as a gift to Caliph al-Rashīd.¹²⁵⁶ Mukhāriq was a skilful musician, not only gaining his manumission as a reward for his songs, but also receiving 3,000 Dinars, land and a house in recognition of his superiority in singing against the renowned free singer, Ismā'īl b. Jāmi'.¹²⁵⁷ Similar to Mukhāriq, 'Alawīyah was a singer and *mawlā* of Banī Umayyah, who was owned, educated and trained by Ibrāhīm al-Mawṣilī.¹²⁵⁸ 'Alawīyah was a singer at the Abbasid court from the era of al-Amīn to al-Mutawakkil.¹²⁵⁹ These examples support our theory that male slave singers had a superior opportunity to change their social status, and specifically to gain their manumission, through their profession.

This position of familiarity at the Abbasid court often transferred from father to son, as seen with Ishāq al-Mawṣilī and 'Amr b. Bānah. In her theory of masculine power, Lerner states that within this male-dominated system, a man's social position could be passed down from male to male, from his father to him.¹²⁶⁰ Thus, social class provides a basic means for men to maintain their status to a certain degree regardless of their freedom or enslavement. For women, however, their skills could be hereditary, but the status of female slaves would not necessarily be inherited depending on the desire and lust of their owners. Therefore, in this class-based patriarchal society, the power of the male gender completely dominated women's social mobility and rank.

¹²⁵² Al-İşfahānī, *Ibid.*, vol 15, 181.

¹²⁵³ He was a singer at the court of caliphs al-Rashīd, al-Amīn, al-Ma'mūn, al-Mu'taṣim and al-Wāthiq; See al-İşfahānī, *Ibid.*, vol 18, 244, 247-248, 270; Al-Şābī, *Rusūm dār al-khilāfah*, 32; Al-Şafadī, *Kitāb al-Wāfi bi-ʾl-wafayāt*, vol 25, 208-209; Al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-Arab*, vol 4, 197, 205-242.

¹²⁵⁴ See Chapter Four, 123-125.

¹²⁵⁵ Al-İşfahānī, *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, vol 18, 248.

¹²⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 245.

¹²⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 247.

¹²⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, vol 11, 224; Al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-Arab*, vol 5, 11.

¹²⁵⁹ Al-İşfahānī, *Ibid.*, vol 11, 224.

¹²⁶⁰ Lerner, *The Creation of Patriarchy*, 139.

Significant competition can be noted between free, freed and enslaved men in the music assembly. Al-Iṣfahānī presented an incident whereby Iṣḥāq al-Mawṣilī inquired as to the superiority of Mukhāriq or ‘Alawīyah in singing. Iṣḥāq, a professional singer, declared that ‘Alawīyah had greater talent for the workmanship of singing, while Mukhāriq had a superior and more beautiful sound.¹²⁶¹ This incident reminds us of a parallel rivalry between *qiyān*. While al-Iṣfahānī indicates that both ‘Arīb and Shāriyah were noteworthy female singers at the Abbasid court, Shāriyah was thought to sing at a higher level than ‘Arīb.¹²⁶² However, the primary criteria for superiority between slave women was associated with the identities of their male owners and trainers, not their individual talents. For example, Shāriyah’s trainer was Ibrāhīm b. al-Mahdī, a nobleman and a singer of import at the Abbasid court who could garner her more fame, while ‘Arīb’s teacher was al-Marākibī, who had only minor knowledge and experience in singing.

In contrast, the evaluation criteria for professional male singers, such as Mukhāriq and ‘Alawīyah,¹²⁶³ was considerably different from that of *qiyān* like ‘Arīb and Shāriyah. The assessment of a male singer’s talent depended on his skills, independent from his owner or trainer’s identity. For *qiyān*, their position and talents as women were always evaluated and associated with the rank and identity of their male masters or trainers. In this case, the ideology of male supremacy is clearly shown through the independent nature of male singers’ acts, behaviours, skills and movement in society.

As for enslaved males, the number of *ghilmān* who remained singers is low, although some examples can be found in *Kitāb al-Aghānī*. Sulaym, the *khādim* of al-Rashīd, was a singer trained by Ibrāhīm al-Mawṣilī. Another is Budayḥ, the *ghulām* of Iṣḥāq al-Mawṣilī.¹²⁶⁴ Yusr was the *khādim* of Abū ‘Īsá b. al-Rashīd,¹²⁶⁵ and A’tha’tḥ was a male slave singer owned by Muḥammad b. Yaḥyá.¹²⁶⁶ While depictions of *ghilmān* are commonly found in al-Iṣfahānī’s work, they are widely portrayed as sexual figures, particularly the lovers of

¹²⁶¹ Lerner, *The Creation of Patriarchy*, 224-227.

¹²⁶² See Chapter Five, 175.

¹²⁶³ This is regardless of whether they were enslaved or freed men.

¹²⁶⁴ Al-Iṣfahānī, *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, vol 5, 198.

¹²⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, vol 7, 144.

¹²⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, vol 14, 36.

singers, poets and elites. Indulgence of male homosexuality appears to have been prevalent. To a certain extent, the case of *ghilmān* singers appears similar to enslaved women, as both were beloved of elite men. The availability of a large number of *ghilmān* and female slaves and the drinking and musical performances found at male assemblies could create an atmosphere of sexual incitement and homosexuality between individuals. A number of amatory anecdotes can be found between elite men and *ghilmān*, such as the case of singer Ibrāhīm al-Mawṣilī and his love of Sulaym, the *khādim* of al-Rashīd, or singer 'Amr b. Bānah and his beloved Rizq, *ghulām* of 'Alawīyah.¹²⁶⁷

Female slaves, especially *qiyān* and *shā'irāt*, were extremely close to the caliphs as entertainers and companions at their assemblies, similar to their male counterparts. The constant presence of female slaves at male-dominated cultural and musical councils leads us to refer to these women as *nadīmāt*. There are also historical examples of female slaves acting as *nadīmāt* at the Abbasid palace and court. 'Arīb, as a successful *qīna*, became a great *nadīmah* and companion to eight Abbasid caliphs, constantly presented as a singer and entertainer.¹²⁶⁸ Faḍl al-Shā'irah, a famous female poet, became the companion of Caliph al-Mutawakkil at his assembly, leading him to award her the position of his *nadīmah*.¹²⁶⁹ Other examples of women holding the position of *nadīmah* include Tuḥfah and Bid'ah, 'Arīb's servants.¹²⁷⁰ They found permanent companionship and fellowship with 'Arīb, not only as her servants, but also as her own *qiyān* and performers. Thus, female slaves succeeded in becoming significant partners and companions to both men and women at court.

Importantly, the position of *nadīm*, could be acquired on the basis of the individual's own qualities, characteristics and skills, regardless of the companion's gender.¹²⁷¹ Being male or female, aristocratic, free or enslaved was not a factor for achieving the status of *nadīm*, nor to social mobility, eligibility in the court or closeness to the caliphs or individuals of higher status. Both male and female companions had specific responsibilities and required

¹²⁶⁷ Al-Isfahānī, *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, vol 15, 182, 183.

¹²⁶⁸ Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil fī 'l-Tārīkh*, vol 6, 360; Al-Isfahānī, *Ibid*, vol 22, 43, 60, 63; Ibn al-Sā'ī, *Nisā' al-khulafā'*, 73.

¹²⁶⁹ Al-Isfahānī, *Ibid.*, vol 16, 6-7; Al-Ṣafadī, *Kitāb Al-wāfi bi-'l-wafayāt*, vol 24, 56; Ibn al-Sā'ī, *Ibid*, 104.

¹²⁷⁰ Al-Isfahānī, *Ibid.*, vol 6, 486; vol 21, 61-66; *Idem*, *Kitāb al-qiyān*, 114; Ibn al-Sā'ī, *Nisā' al-khulafā'*, 81; Al-Ṣafadī, *Ibid.*, vol 10, 61.

¹²⁷¹ Sarḥān, "Al-Musāmarah wa-'l-munadāmah," 46.

presenting their merit and efficiency to become prominent companions.

Although the *nadīm* could obtain visible positions at cultural and entertainment assemblies, the caliph's desires and demands restricted their presence at court. At the time of Caliph al-Wāthiq, the *nadīm* Iṣḥāq al-Mawṣilī was required to sit by his companion and could not sing until the caliph permitted him to do so.¹²⁷² Thus, the privileges and capacity of these careers were limited by the caliph's power, regardless of the individual's identity, whether free or enslaved. This is in contrast to the profound impact and success of male slaves as military leaders and state administrators, who obtained a high level of power, authority, status and position in Abbasid state, even over the caliphs. The rank of *nadīm* provided an inferior, restricted advantages.

Chapters Four and Five of this thesis argue that free and enslaved women were restricted in their skills, talents and movement by the demands of their male patrons and guardians. Any opportunities for female slaves, including entitlements or even the ability to obtain higher positions and status, such as *nadīm*, would always be dependent on the desires and entertainment of men like the caliphs. The discussion in this chapter revealed a certain disparity between the social status, profession and the chance for mobility of male and female slaves at the Abbasid court and state.

We understand that women found appropriate means to coexist in their society, the norms of which depended highly on gender roles and male power. Female slaves acquired professions and status such as *kātibāt*, *qahramānat*, *nadīmāt*, *qiyān*, *shā'irāt* and *Ummahāt al-Awlād*. However, while male slaves had the opportunity to achieve a wide variety of careers such as military leaders and administration officer, enslaved women were largely restricted to childbearing, domestic duties, poetry and singing. Thus, most female slaves did not go far beyond the caliph's court; their movements remained within the caliph's palace, private residences and the court.

¹²⁷²Al-Iṣfahānī, *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, vol 5, 158, 190.

Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated that male slaves existed in great numbers during the Abbasid era, and that they could achieve considerable rank and position in relation to free men. This chapter also found undeniable evidence of homosexuality and interest in male slaves in Abbasid society, particularly with eunuchs. The status of elite men provided them certain impregnability to the application of Islamic law regarding homosexuality, allowing them to present a model of unlawful sexual behaviour. However, we argue that the customs of male dominance and patriarchy, the segregation of sexes and female seclusion were the main factors causing the existence of male homosexuality and their interest and demand for young *ghilmān*. This also had great impact on women's passion and love for eunuchs and *ghilmān*, as seen in the life of 'Ulayyah and Khadījah bint al-Ma'mūn.

This research argues that the origins and professions of male slaves greatly influenced their social mobility and status in the Abbasid era. As male slaves performed their various occupations, they gained higher status and increased privilege and authority.¹²⁷³ Moreover, each origin had specific features and characteristics that caused them to be selected for various careers and functions. Notably, Turkish slaves achieved merit and high demand for their position as military leaders and administrators. However, an individual's own abilities and skills were more important for obtaining a higher status and rank at the Abbasid court.

Enslaved males, like enslaved females, held various professions at the Abbasid court. However, the nature of their careers depended highly on their gender. Military and security work was prioritized through its association with masculinity and the idea of power, as well as the perceived inability of women to do such hard work. This chapter argued that sexism and gender roles were considered the ideal, granting a higher social status to men between male and female slaves during the Abbasid period. Enslaved males were able to gain higher social status, professions and authority, as granted by whoever owned them.

¹²⁷³ Ayalon, *Eunuchs, Caliphs and Sultans*, 333.

Their master's status and their own skills and abilities were essential factors to their social mobility and power.

By examining the theory of masculine dominance, this chapter argued that gender was used to "reinforce masculine power"¹²⁷⁴ in the Abbasid era, particularly for male slaves to achieve higher professions at court. We recognize the varying nature of the social scale between the sexes, as men constantly gained dominance and superiority over women in wider affairs. Fundamentally, male slaves were able to establish themselves in great professions and high social status. They obtained the rank of *ḥājib*, *kātib*, or administrative and military leader in the Abbasid court and state. Their gender granted them such privileges as respected professions and high-ranking authority.¹²⁷⁵ Meanwhile, female slaves were at least able to obtain significant careers such as *Ummahāt al-Awlād*, *kātibāt*, *shā'irāt*, *qiyān* and *qahramānat*, even becoming *nadīmāt* of the caliphs.

This chapter argued that female slaves' privileges and functions were limited and dominated by the demands and authority of men. While the skills and talents of enslaved male and female did not necessarily change their social status, in a sexist society that depended on male dominance and accepted a hierarchical system of gender bias, male slaves had more opportunities to attain specific careers, such as in the military. These double standards clashed when enslaved male and female attempted to increase their social mobility and status at the Abbasid palace and court. As a consequence of this system in the Abbasid era, we argue that enslaved women had fewer opportunities to increase their status and profession than enslaved men.

The impact of the theory of masculine dominance is profound. While the roles and functions of female slaves were limited to the palace walls and at court,¹²⁷⁶ enslaved males obtained extensive control over the politics and administration of the state, which awarded them higher social status, position and prestige in both private and public affairs. Therefore, enslaved females had a much less effective position in Abbasid society when compared with enslaved men. The

¹²⁷⁴ Kugle, *Homosexuality in Islam*, 6.

¹²⁷⁵ Gordon, "Preliminary Remarks on Slaves," 76.

¹²⁷⁶ Mernissi, *The Forgotten Queens of Islam*, 62-67.

superiority of enslaved men was permanently crystallized in society thanks to gender norms and preconceived notions of masculinity, based on held principles and stereotypes that affected the status, privileges and lives of female slaves. This male-dominated system, alongside the concept of the superiority of men over women, affected female slaves' social status, rank, careers and opportunity for upward social mobility in the Abbasid era.

Chapter Seven Conclusion

In this research, we examined the lives and social status of female slaves greatly affected by the patriarchal system, gender norms and societal customs that dominated the Abbasid era. Through the study of primary sources from different genres, including history, literature and biography, we conducted an analysis of the social status of female slaves who attempted to increase their rank or social mobility. The study's objective also included an investigation of female slaves' thoughts regarding their notions of ideal freedom. Highlighting the mobility of female slaves in urban Islamic society is important in order to explain the prominent ancient custom of granting freedom to slave women. The primary research question concerned the extent to which slave women were afforded the right to mobility, and how free Muslim individuals accepted the freedwomen in their new rank as participants in society.

The present study drew attention to the movement of women in society during the Abbasid eras by choosing *jawārī* as the subject of a case study. In examining the social mobility achieved by *jawārī* when obtaining greater privileges and rank, this research revealed that female slaves had great opportunity to gain higher status through various methods, such as their profession or motherhood. This research also demonstrated that all women in the Abbasid era, including free noblewomen, freedwomen and *jawārī*, were deeply impacted by male demands and desires, affecting their behaviours, roles and social status. Without the approval of men, women could not enjoy any movement or entitlement in society.

This research explored the status of female slaves in the Abbasid period and presented significant information regarding their lives and social mobility. It contributed to our understanding of the impact of a slave's origin, place of birth, education, charms and profession on her ability to achieve upward mobility, status and position in the Abbasid court and household. The study used a prosopographical method of qualitative data analysis, with a sharp focus on the

detailed characteristics of female slaves, to answer the question of why and how the systems of slavery and patriarchy affected the social mobility of *jawāri* as a group according to their origins, educations and professions.

This thesis found that enslaved women achieved great prominence and social standing in the Abbasid social hierarchy during the Abbasid era. However, although they had a significant influence on the hearts of men and were able to gain wider mobility in society, their gender was a great obstacle in continuing to hold or even obtain higher status, rank and privileges. Despite this fact, women continued to search for power in both political and administrative affairs, which provided a challenge to the social norms of masculine dominance and gender roles in the Abbasid era.

This research adopted a certain set of feminist theories. Lerner and Mernissi's writings on patriarchy, male dominance and gender were foundational and beneficial to our research on the extent of the social status of female slaves in the Abbasid era (132-329 A.H./ 750-940 A.D.), and had wide implications for the research questions and our analysis. The theories we selected, examined, employed in our socio-historical study of women led us to develop our research on women's social status and mobility by investigating the limits of the status and rank of *jawāri* in the Abbasid era through the lens of gender and masculinity. Ultimately, this research found that the concept and practice of hegemonic masculinity led to the creation of gender roles and disparities in social status between both genders, producing a clear disparity between the status and privileges of men and women in society.

Previous studies, such as those by Schacht, Caswell, Hidayatuallah, al-Rasheed and Richardson, have discussed *jawāri* as tools for sex and entertainment, examining their sexual availability, talents and education, or reviewing their political, social and economic roles in the caliphs' courts. In this thesis, we offered a re-examination of the social rank of enslaved women, their methods for achieving upward social mobility and the elements and standards that assisted with their mobility. We chose this research topic not only because it merits in-depth study but also because it offers a new perspective on theoretic approaches to female slaves as agents of social mobility in Abbasid society.

This new perspective occurred through an examination of these women through literary, historical and biographies genres as primary sources.

Many researchers, including Mernissi, Kennedy, Bray, El Cheikh and Gordon, have studied the status of female slaves by examining their professional careers and roles in the Abbasid court and household. This thesis adopted a new approach by developing a qualitative database to investigate the social status and mobility of female slaves based on a number of variables. First, we studied the extent to which their origins, education, chosen career and relations with famous men affected their opportunities for upward social mobility. Next, we examined the privileges and rank of female slaves and the extent to which their social status and mobility confirmed our hypothesis by comparing the status of elite women and their female slave rivals, as well as merit-based opportunities for social mobility between enslaved men and women at the Abbasid court. These elements allowed this research to better study the functions and roles of female slaves, as well as the foundation and reasoning behind their rights, privileges and changes in social status.

While previous feminist research for example by Abbott, al-Hūfī, Schlein and Urban on women's roles have focused on wider periods of Islam such as the pre-Islamic, early Islamic eras and Umayyad period and later periods, the present thesis restricted its scope to the positions, roles, influences and professions of enslaved women at the Abbasid household and court. The originality of this research lies in creating links between masculinity, gender and the individual's social status in order to examine the position of female slaves. The hypothesis of the present research on male dominance has been tested and applied across various aspects of the lives, social classes and categories of female slaves in the Abbasid era. Our examination of the social status of Abbasid female slaves revealed that while these women could be described as visible figures to a certain extent, their movement and status in society were widely restricted by men's desires and dominance.

Chapter Three revealed that the institution of slavery was rooted in ancient civilizations and the pre-Islamic era, a practice that resumed in the early Islamic period and later. However, this thesis argues that Islam endeavoured to modify

and improve the conditions of slaves by encouraging Muslims to manumit their slaves. The development of Islamic law and the presence of legal three Sunni *madhāhib* are associated with the pre-Islamic practice of the *ḥakam*, the assessor. Most manumission law in the early Islamic period depended on the prophet as *ḥakam*, and later the jurists, whose opinions had a great effect on the legal system regarding the manumission and rights of slaves in Islam. The historical development of the position of judges and the law in the classical period informed us of the social context of the development of slavery laws. The authority of judges and jurists greatly affected the public, political, social and economic movements and habits of Muslims, including their daily lives and affairs.

Notably, the practice of slavery and the development of Islamic law regarding manumission effected a change in the status of female slaves, particularly the *Umm al-Walad*. Female slaves had the chance to gain prestige, wealth, authority and social status through motherhood, as mother of a free man and *Umm al-Walad* to a caliph. Motherhood and marriage provided an opportunity for female slaves to achieve upward social mobility, as Islamic law promised freedom and assured privileges to an *Umm al-Walad*. In spite of developments in Islamic law that influenced changes to slavery and manumission, however, social habits and customs greatly affected women's status and rights in practice. This thesis demonstrated that despite the law, gender and the masculine notion of male superiority over women continued to restrict the status and privileges of female slaves.

Apart from the legal methods, Chapter Four argued that other important features could assist female slaves in reaching a higher status in the Abbasid era. The origins, education, skills and careers of female slaves were a prominent factor in their mobility. This study demonstrated that the number of female slaves was at great height during the Abbasid period. Men's desire for owning slaves of different origin, skill, beauty and education greatly influenced their numbers. The higher demands for certain types of slave women and the requirement of the presence of female slaves at male assemblies created a variable effect on slave prices. Certain characteristics, such as a slave's beauty, skills and talent, as well as haggling between slave trader and buyer, could also

affect the price. This research found that female slaves could also achieve higher status by belonging to an influential figure such as a caliph or other wealthy or famous individual. We indicated that specific titles for female slaves indicated certain levels of influence and positions in the household and at court. The titles and names of female slaves likely represented their beauty, celebrity, skills or identity of their owner.

The results of our research revealed three positions or careers held by female slaves that were considered as having higher rank and prestige at the Abbasid court and household. First, the *Umm al-Walad* acquired the most respect and prestige, either when becoming the mother of the caliph's child or when her son became the next caliph. The sexual availability of female slaves allowed them to obtain legal status in society, as the primary merit of becoming an *Umm al-Walad* was receiving freedom after her master's death or by marriage. Second, the *qahramānah* achieved noteworthy status in the Abbasid court. Her participation and presence in the state's internal, financial and judicial affairs granted her certain power and status. Finally, as the assemblies of elite men required a female slave with special ability and talent in singing or poetry, a *qīna*'s closeness to famous and important men awarded her senior standing and privilege.

This research argued that the *Umm al-Walad*, through her maternity, and the *qīna*, especially *muwalladah* as native speaker of Arabic, were particularly successful in achieving distinguished social status. However, Chapter Four of this study reported that a primary factor influencing a female slave's mobility was men's desire and demand for her possession. The previously-listed characteristics of a female slave, as well as her abilities, whether in sexual affairs, singing or poetry, were significant elements affecting her master's lust, and thus his willingness to refashion her status.

Since *jawārī* in the Abbasid era were able to obtain significant prestige, status and privilege, Chapter Five investigated the desire for ownership of female slaves and their establishment in society as anti-wives and competitors to free and elite women in the Abbasid household. Elite men in Abbasid society allowed *jawārī* the chance to improve their social status, and this upward social

mobility encouraged other female slaves to likewise ascend and refashion their social status in the highly stratified Abbasid social hierarchy. *Jawāri* could thus become significant rivals to free women; their maternity and motherhood allowed them to gain the status of freedwomen, becoming the wife of a caliph or granting them the prestigious status of mother of a caliph. Both elite and enslaved women had certain talents, roles and social standings; however, the customs and norms that dictated the seclusion of noblewomen greatly affected and restricted their movements and behaviours. The greater availability of female slaves alongside men in both the private and public spheres afforded them a certain amount of fame and influence.

Since historical and literary records have been largely written by male scholars, depictions of the character, sexual desirability and behaviour of women, whether free or enslaved, have differed greatly depending on the man's desires. This disparity, which often reflects on the portrayal of royal women, could also depend on the custom of female seclusion and male honour. Noblewomen have always been presented as pious and religious figures, while the overall image of *jawāri* is associated with scandal. The presence of *jawāri* at male-only gatherings, the nature of their professions and their legal obligation to provide their owner with sexual intercourse, all factor into their negative portrayal in prominent records written by men.

This disparity between free noblewomen and female slaves extends to education as well. The research has shown that while many women studied in this thesis were well educated, the manner of their education depended on the nature of their lives. Elite women were restricted by the *fiqh* and religious affairs depending on their male patron's view of female seclusion and customs of piety, while *jawāri* were obliged to study specific talents and careers, such as singing, in order to attract male buyers and satisfy their desires, and they were able to practise their skills for both private and public audiences. While, free and enslaved women could obtain significant privileges and position, said privileges were controlled and conditional on the demands and acceptance of men. Their rights were not absolute, but variable. Masculine authority provided the primary motivation and passion for the social status of free and enslaved women. Male

dominance, as master, husband, brother or patron, had control of women's lives and behaviours.

In the Fifth chapter, we examined women's agency as a historical movement in the Abbasid courts and households. We suggested that for elite women or for freedwomen who were previously *Umm al-Walad*, they were surrounded with the custom of seclusion and obedience to their males' patrons, while female slaves as enslaved individuals their entitlements and privileges of power and wealth were interim and mislaying by their skills, abilities and obedience to their master's desires. Therefore, our conclusions help to clarify the subject of social mobility among female slaves in Abbasid society, finding that any mobility for women, especially enslaved women, was largely dependent on the consent of men.

Chapter Six argued for the presence of male homosexuality in the Abbasid era. Although Islamic law was explicit in stating relations between men as illegal behaviour, the homosexuality of elite men and their passion and demand for young *ghilmān* is evident throughout historical and literary records. Certain illegal practices were often overlooked and went unpunished for the upper classes of society, as was the case for the caliphs and noble figures at the Abbasid court and homosexuality. Our analysis of the works of Abū Nuwās and al-Jāhīz revealed the impact of young *ghilmān*, including their closeness and intimacy with elite men. We could thus classify them as a challenge to female slaves in terms of their position and relations with elite men. One notable example is the case of Caliph al-Amīn and his demand for young *ghilmān*, which to some degree extended to an abandonment of women. The influence of *ghilmān* affected elite women as well. One particularly interesting aspect of the seclusion of women in the Abbasid era led to their intimacy with the *ḥarīm*'s *ghilmān*. The love of noblewomen and their relationships with the *majābīb ghilmān* could often be found at the *ḥarīm*'s court and household.

As shown in this dissertation, the flexible social mobility of the Abbasid hierarchy allowed enslaved men to gain significantly higher privileges, profession and rank. This awarded them authority and power on merit through becoming considerable military leaders, police, governors, judges, *ḥujjāb* or

kuttāb. These positions afforded male slaves significant careers in the Abbasid state, both inside and outside the Abbasid palace. Obtaining such a powerful status required intelligence, special abilities, and in some cases, a desirable race and origin.

Enslaved men were able to achieve considerable status and high-ranking careers in contrast to female slaves, although their talents and authority were still controlled and awarded with respect to their gender. While female slaves had to follow specific careers depending on their master's demands, such as concubine, *Umm al-Walad*, *qahramānah*, singer, poet, domestic servant or similar positions, male slaves had a better chance of becoming political leaders, military soldiers or administrators. Male slaves were members of a different class due to their gender, including the privileges and entitlements of their profession upon reaching positions of authority.¹²⁷⁷ Female slaves were treated as objects of sexual desire, reproduction or as entertainers, while male slaves acquired the status of elite and noteworthy figures at the Abbasid court. This research revealed that the female gender had a tremendous effect on a woman's choice of professions, rights, movements and behaviours. The customs of the patriarchy set gendered boundaries for the careers and privileges of female slaves, while prioritizing male slaves in terms of status and professional privileges, especially in political affairs.

Chapter six also demonstrated that enslaved men and women could become successful *nudamā'* and *nadīmāt* to the 'Abbasid court as skilful singers. This was true for all individuals, whether male or female, free or enslaved. However, this thesis revealed that the evaluation criteria for male and female professional singers differed greatly. For *qiyān*, their performance evaluation was closely related to their male patron or instructor, while the vocal presentation of male slaves was determined based on their endowment and talent. Regardless of the evaluation criteria for *nudamā'* or *nadīmāt*, however, their positions were delineated as entertainers who were confined by the appeal, willingness and desires of the caliphs. Thus, their influence could be highly limited in contrast with that of the military and enslaved men in administrative positions.

¹²⁷⁷ Gordon, "Preliminary Remarks on Slaves," 76.

Overall, female slaves were desirable and held a visible presence in the Abbasid palace and court. However, the obstacle provided by their gender, along with the existence of male slaves as rivals, both for closeness to the caliphs and elite men and for control of the highest professions and careers in the state, restricted the movement of female slaves in society. Male slaves were able to surpass women to become essential members of the Abbasid court, palace and state as a result of their gender on top of their intelligence and skills. Thus, enslaved men and women were classified differently in terms of social status, profession, merit and privilege based on their gender.

In Muslim society, a woman's influence was associated with the status she occupied in the household. For example, a new consort would only hold a minor position and limited influence until she proved her merit through performance, either in bearing children, literature or singing.¹²⁷⁸ Enslaved men, as direct competitors to female slaves, had wider success in improving their status, managing and becoming the caliph's closest companion the keys to attaining a higher function. A female concubine had to anticipate and fulfil men's desires in order to gain a higher social status, while male slaves were expected to present extraordinary work. This research emphasized that male slaves could function as upper class. The achievements of enslaved men, including important careers in the military or administration, suggest that they were not only granted prestige, but also became effective directors of the Abbasid court and state.

The research has led us to an understanding of relations between men as well as between men and women. Free men were the guardians and custodians of women throughout their lifetime. Thus, men's ownership of women became not only a personal responsibility, but developed into a prerogative function controlled by social customs and determined by the status of the individual. Our research argued that gender is an ideology that asserts men's patriarchal sovereignty over women, conceptualizing enslaved women as inferior to men with the effect of limiting their class opportunities and chances for mobility in the social hierarchy. Parallelism in status between enslaved men and women was extremely limited. While both men and women were enslaved, hegemonic

¹²⁷⁸ Soha Kader, "The Role of Women in the History of the Arab States," in *Retrieving Women's History: Changing Perceptions of the Role of Women in Politics and Society*, ed., S. J. Kleinberg (Oxford: Berg, 1988), 91.

norms of masculinity permitted male slaves to hold superior status and rank in social, political, economic and cultural affairs. The gendered social ranking within the rigid classification of Abbasid social hierarchy¹²⁷⁹ shows that female slaves had fewer privileges and opportunity to achieve high rank in contrast with their enslaved male peers, who increased their social status and gained superior careers and privilege with the aid of their gender. This confirms the theories of Lerner and Mernissi, who wrote that the concept of masculine gender identity is at the core of individual class supremacy.

By analysing these concepts of social stratification and social mobility, we can categorize an individual's status into two types. First, the status of free individuals depended on ascribed or inherited rank, gender and wealth. Second, a slave could achieve upward social mobility, determined first by gender then by the individual's ability, skill, occupation, education, sex and race. Patriarchal notions of gender comprised the Abbasid social norms that determined an individual's social status, especially women. This research demonstrated that although gender norms affected an individual's social status, male dominance provided the basic foundation for the status of enslaved and free women in classical Abbasid society. The thesis argued that the concepts of masculinity, gender and class limited the entitlements and powers of *jawārī* with regard to social status. From a broad perspective, women could not emancipate themselves from being subordinate to male ascendancy in the Abbasid period, a problem that extended further into later eras.

In a society that allows for mobility in its class hierarchy, seeking a higher position or social status could become a source of motivation or provide a stimulating environment. Individuals could use their personal abilities, talents, and even sex, to increase their rank and authority. The impact of social mobility on achieving a higher status relates to the structure of the hierarchal class system in Abbasid society. Competition was prevalent among individuals in Abbasid society, especially among slaves. We demonstrated this in the present thesis through examples of rivalry between men and women, such as *ghilmān* and *jawārī*, or between people of the same gender, such as *ḥarā'ir* and *jawārī*.

¹²⁷⁹ Rowson, "Gender Irregularity as Entertainment," 66.

Our analysis suggested that the social mobility of female slaves in Abbasid society was conceptualised as totally dependent on the willingness of male patrons and on the patriarchal mode. Notions of superiority and gender norms for men and women also informed this power structure, emphasising differences in all social, cultural and physical activities.

As Abbasid society was open to the possibility of flexible social mobility, this influenced its structure, including the privileges, rank and social status of enslaved individuals. The social status and mobility of female slaves, however, confirms that the Abbasid social norms nevertheless subjugated women's status, rights, habits and movements under male authority. Female slaves, just like elite women, were surrounded by men and restricted by male patrons. Female slaves had the double disadvantage of being both female and enslaved in a society that used gender as the basis for its class-based system of social hierarchy and conceptualized enslaved women as property for sexual and entertainment purposes. Therefore, female slaves' chances of exerting absolute rank influence were low.

Traditions of male dominance and gender norms remain a significant issue in terms of changing the social status of individuals. The concept of men's superiority over women was made particularly clear and explicit regarding the position and role of women in the Abbasid community. Today, certain fundamental concepts of gender found in this research, such as male ascendancy and the subordination of women to men, are still present in certain areas of Muslim societies. However, to give a more optimistic picture of movement in society, efforts are continuing to grant women opportunities, rights, and privileges equal to that of men. Feminist sentiment continues to grow among women behind the scenes, so that they can demand social justice and roles identical to men across the affairs of Muslim society in the future.

Hopefully, the subject of this thesis will stimulate future studies. We highly recommend future research on female slaves as agents of social mobility in other Islamic epochs, such as the Ottoman era. We also recommend the application of our framework and methodology to examine the systems of

patriarchy and gender norms elsewhere, further developing women's socio-historical studies.

List of Tables¹²⁸⁰

Table 4.1: Appearance of female slaves as recorded in al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*.

	Female slave's name	Date of death	Owner	Social position/ profession	Origin	Children	Vol	P
1	Al-Khayzarān	173 A.H/ 789 A.D	Al-Mahdī	Wife of the Caliph	Yemen	Al-Hādī Al-Rashīd	8	121, 213, 234, 239
2	'Amat al-'Azīz	-----	Al-Hādī then al-Rashīd	Wife of the Caliph	-----	Banīnh al-Akābir ¹²⁸¹ Ali b. al-Rashīd	8	228
3	-----	-----	'Udūl al-Khayyāṭ	-----	-----	-----	9	126
4	Shakkalah	-----	Al-Mahdī	<i>Umm al-Walad</i>	Ṭabaristān	Ibrāhīm b. al-Mahdī	7	513
5	Al-Buḥturīyah	-----	Al-Mahdī	<i>Umm al-Walad</i>	Ṭabaristān	Manṣūr b. al-Mahdī	7	513
6	Umm Ja'far al-Aṣghar	-----	Al-Manṣūr	<i>Umm al-Walad</i>	Kūrd	Ja'far al-Aṣghar	8	102
7	Al-Farāshah	-----	Al-Manṣūr	<i>Umm al-Walad</i>	Byzantium	Ṣāliḥ al-Miskīn	8	102
8	Umm al- Qāsim	-----	Al-Manṣūr	<i>Umm al-Walad</i>	-----	Al-Qāsim	8	102
9	Khāliṣah	-----	Al-Khayzarān	<i>Qahramānah</i>	-----	-----	8	72
10	----- ¹²⁸²	-----	Al-Mahdī	Concubine	-----	-----	8	184
11	Mājīnah	-----	Al-Hādī	Concubine	-----	-----	8	227
12	Marājil	-----	Al-Rashīd	<i>Umm al-Walad</i>	Khurāsān	Al-Ma'mūn	8	360

¹²⁸⁰ These tables constitute a background for the present research and refer mainly to the Fourth chapter and parts of the Fifth and Sixth chapters.

¹²⁸¹ Ibn Ḥazm presents 'Amā al-'Azīz's sons' names as Ismā'īl, 'Abd Allāh and Mūsā al-a'mā; See 'Alī Ibn Ḥazm, *Jamharat ansāb al-'Arab* (Bayrūt: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyah, 1983), vol 1, 23.

¹²⁸² It has been mentioned that she was a Christian woman; See al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, vol 8, 184.

13	Qaşaf	-----	Al-Rashīd	<i>Umm al-Walad</i>	-----	Al-Qāsim al-Mu'taman Sakīnah	8	360
14	Māridah	-----	Al-Rashīd	<i>Umm al-Walad</i>	Sogdia	Al-Mu'taşim	8 , 9	360 , 123
15	Rathm	-----	Al-Rashīd	<i>Umm al-Walad</i>	-----	Şāliḥ	8	360
16	'Irrābah	-----	Al-Rashīd	-----	-----	Muḥammad Abū 'Īsá Al-Ḥiṣn	8	360
17	Shadhrah	-----	Al-Rashīd	<i>Umm al-Walad</i>	-----	Muḥammad Abū Ya'qūb	8	360
18	Khubth	-----	Al-Rashīd	<i>Umm al-Walad</i>	-----	Muḥammad Abū al-'Abbās	8	361
19	Duwāj	-----	Al-Rashīd	<i>Umm al-Walad</i>	-----	Muḥammad Abū Ali	8	361
20	Kitmān	-----	Al-Rashīd	<i>Umm al-Walad</i>	-----	Muḥammad Abū Aḥmad	8	361
21	Ḥamdūnah	-----	Al-Rashīd	<i>Umm al-Walad</i>	-----	Muḥammad	8	361
22	Ghuşaş	-----	Al-Rashīd	<i>Umm al-Walad</i>	-----	Fāṭimah	8	361
23	Sukkar	-----	Al-Rashīd	<i>Umm al-Walad</i>	-----	Umm Abīhā	8	361
24	Raḥīq	-----	Al-Rashīd	<i>Umm al-Walad</i>	-----	Umm Salamah	8	361
25	Shajar	-----	Al-Rashīd	<i>Umm al-Walad</i>	-----	Khadījah	8	361
26	Khazaq	-----	Al-Rashīd	<i>Umm al-Walad</i>	-----	Umm al-Qāsim	8	361
27	Ḥalá	-----	Al-Rashīd	<i>Umm al-Walad</i>	-----	Ramlah	8	361
28	Anīq	-----	Al-Rashīd	<i>Umm al-Walad</i>	-----	Umm 'Alī	8	361
29	Samandal	-----	Al-Rashīd	<i>Umm al-Walad</i>	-----	Umm al-Ghāliyah		361
30	Zaynah	-----	Al-Rashīd	<i>Umm al-Walad</i>	-----	Rayṭah	8	361
31	Qarāṭis	-----	Al-Mu'taşim	<i>Umm al-Walad</i>	Byzantium	Al-Wāthiq	9	101
32	Qabīḥah	-----	Al-Mutawakkil	<i>Umm al-Walad</i>	-----	Al-Mu'tazz	9	176
33	Ḥabashīyah	-----	Al-Mu'taşim	<i>Umm al-Walad</i>	Byzantium	Al-Mutawakkil	9	179

34	Qurab	-----	Al-Wāthiq	<i>Umm al-Walad</i>	Byzantium	Al-Muhtadī	9	391
35	Shaghab	-----	Umm al-Qāsim ¹²⁸³ then al-Mu'taqid	<i>Umm al-Walad</i> ¹²⁸⁴	-----	Al-Muqtadir	10	139
36	Ḥalūb	-----	Al-Rashīd	<i>Umm al-Walad</i>	-----	Arwá	8	360
37	Rawāḥ		Al-Rashīd	<i>Umm al-Walad</i>	-----	Muḥammad Abū Sulaymān	8	360
	Faṭīm	-----	Al-Amīn	<i>Umm al-Walad</i>	-----	Mūsá	8	514

Table 4.2: Appearance of female slaves as recorded in al-Jāhiz, “*Risālat al-qiyān*”.

	Female slave's name	Date of death	Owner	Social position/ profession	Origin	Children	P
1	Khāliṣah	-----	Al-Khayzarān	<i>Qahramānah</i>	-----	-----	71
2	‘Utabah	-----	Rayṭah bint al-‘Abbās	<i>Qahramānah</i>	-----	-----	71
3	Sukkar	-----	Zubaydah	Wife of caliph ¹²⁸⁵	-----	-----	71, 72
4	Turkiyah	-----	Zubaydah	Servant	-----	-----	71
5	Duqqāq	-----	Al-‘Abbāsah	Servant	-----	-----	71
6	Ḍalūm	-----	Umm Ḥabīb	Servant	-----	-----	71
7	Qusṭanṭīniyah	-----	Umm Ḥabīb	Servant	-----	-----	71
8	Ḥamdūnah	-----	Naṣr b. al-Sindī	-----	-----	-----	71

¹²⁸³ She was Umm al-Qāsim bint ‘Abd Allāh b. Ṭāhir. See al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, vol 10, 42.

¹²⁸⁴ She became a freedwoman after the death of Al-Mu'taqid (d. 289 A.H./902 A.D.). Ibid., 139.

¹²⁸⁵ The caliph al- Ma'mūn manumitted and married her. See al-Jāhiz, “*Risālat al-qiyān*,” vol 3, 71-72; Ibid, vol 8, 361

Table 4.3: Appearances of female slaves as recorded in al-Şafadī, *Kitāb Al-wāfi bi-'l-wafayāt*.

	Female slave's name	Date of death	Owner	Social position/ profession	Origin	Children	Vol	P
1	Işhāq al-Andalusīya	272 A.H./ 885 A.D.	Al-Mutawakkil	<i>Umm al-Walad</i>	-----	Al-Muwaffaq Al-Mu'ayyad	8	281
2	Bid'ah	302 A.H./ 914 A.D.	'Arīb	Servant <i>Qīna</i>	-----	-----	10	61
3	Bunnān	-----	Al-Mutawakkil	<i>Shā'irah</i>	-----	-----	10	182
4	Jamīlah	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	11	114
5	Al-Khayzarān	173 A.H./ 789 A.D.	Al-Mahdī	Wife of the Caliph	Yemen	Al-Hādī Al-Rashīd	13	280
6	Danānīr	-----	Yaḥyá b. Khālid al-Barmakī	<i>Qīna</i> <i>Shā'irah</i>	<i>Muwalladah</i> from Madīnah	-----	14	21
7	Duqqāq	-----	Yaḥyá b. al-Rabī'	<i>Umm al-Walad</i>	-----	-----	14	14
8	Dulafā'	-----	Ibn Ṭarkhān	-----	-----	-----	14	18
9	Rakhīm	-----	Al-Mahdī	<i>Umm al-Walad</i>	-----	Al-'Abbāsah	14 16	75 382
10	Shāriyah	-----	Al-Mahdī Al-Mu'taşim Al-Wāthiq	<i>Qīna</i>	<i>Muwalladah</i> from Baṣrah	-----	16	43
11	Shaghab	321 A.H./ 933 A.D.	Al-Mu'taḍid	<i>Umm al-Walad</i>	-----	Al-Muqtadir	16	98
12	Shakkalah	-----	Al-Mahdī	<i>Umm al-Walad</i>	Ṭabaristān (Daylam)	Ibrāhīm b. al-Mahdī	16	102
13	'Arīb	-----	Al-Ma'mūn, al-Mu'taşim, al-Mutawakkil, al-Muntaşir, al-Wāthiq, al-Mu'tazz, al-Mu'tamid and al-Mu'taḍid	<i>Qīna</i> <i>Shā'irah</i>	<i>Muwalladah</i>	-----	19	364

14	Maknūnah	-----	Al-Mahdī	<i>Umm al-Walad</i>	-----	'Ulayyah	22	228
15	'Inān	-----	Al-Nāṭifī	<i>Shā'irah</i>	<i>Muwalladah</i> from Yamāmah	-----	23	91
16	Farīdah al-kubrā	-----	Āl al-Rabī', al-Barāmikah, al-Amīn	Wife of free man	<i>Muwalladah</i> from Ḥijāz	-----	24	9
17	Farīdah al-ṣuḡhrā	-----	Al-Wāthiq	<i>Qīna</i>	-----	-----	24	9
18	Faḍl al-Shā'irah	260 A.H./ 874 A.D.	Al-Mutawakkil	<i>Shā'irah</i>	<i>Muwalladah</i> from Yamāmah	-----	24	56
19	Hīlānah	173 A.H./ 789 A.D.	Al-Rashīd	-----	-----	-----	27	240
20	Fityān	-----	Al-Mutawakkil	<i>Umm al-Walad</i>	Byzantium	Al-Mu'tamad	6	181

Table 4.4: Appearance of female slaves as recorded in Ibn al-Sā'ī, *Nisā' al-khulafā'*.

	Female slave's name	Date of death	Owner	Social position/ profession	Origin	Children	P
1	Ghādir	173. A.H/ 886 A.D.	Al-Hādī then Al-Rashīd	Wife of the Caliph ¹²⁸⁶	-----	-----	62
2	Ḥamdūnah bint Ghaḍīd	-----	Al-Rashīd	<i>Umm al-Walad</i>	-----	Muḥammad	70
3	Hīlānah	173. A.H/ 886 A.D.	Al-Rashīd	-----	-----	-----	71

¹²⁸⁶ She was a *qīna* and then manumitted and married the caliph al-Rashīd. See Ibn al-Sā'ī, *Nisā' al-khulafā'*, 62.

4	Bid'ah al-Kubrā	-----	Al-Ma'mūn then 'Arīb	<i>Qīna</i> Servant	-----	-----	81
5	Mu'nisah al-Ma'mūniyah	-----	Al-Ma'mūn	Concubine	Byzantium	-----	97
6	Qurrat al-'Ayn	-----	Al-Mu'tašim	Concubine	<i>Muwalladah</i>	-----	99
7	Farīdah Amīniyah	-----	Āl al-Rabī', al-Barāmikah, al-Amīn	<i>Qīna</i>	<i>Muwalladah</i> from Hijāz	-----	101
8	Ishāq al-Andalusīya	270 A.H./ 883 A.D.	Al-Mutawakkil	<i>Umm al-Walad</i>	-----	-----	102
9	Al-Mutawakkilīyah	-----	Al-Mutawakkil	<i>Qīna</i>	-----	-----	119
10	Ḍirār	298 A.H./ 911 A.D.	AL-Muwaffaq	<i>Umm al-Walad</i>	-----	Al-Mu'taḍid	127
11	Khamrah	378 A.H./ 988 A.D.	Al-Muqtadir	<i>Umm al-Walad</i>	-----	'Tsá	130
12	Qabīḥah	-----	Al-'Abbās b. Ḥasan	-----	-----	-----	154
13	Sarīrah al-Rā'iqīyah	348 A.H./ 959 A.D.	Muḥammad b. Rā'iq	<i>Qīna</i>	<i>Muwalladah</i>	-----	159
14	'Arīb	277 A.H./ 890 A.D.	al-Ma'mūn, al-Mu'tašim, al-Mutawakkil, al-Muntašir, al-Wāthiq, al-Mu'tazz, al-Mu'tamid and al-Mu'taḍid	<i>Qīna</i> <i>Shā'irah</i>	<i>Muwalladah</i>	-----	73

15	Faḍl al-Shā'irah	257 A.H./ 871 A.D.	Al-Mutawakkil	<i>Shā'irah</i>	<i>Muwalladah</i> from Yamāmah	-----	104
16	Bannān	-----	Al-Mutawakkil	<i>Shā'irah</i>	-----	-----	111
17	Nabat	-----	Mukhfirānah al-Mukhanath then al-Mu'tamad	<i>Qīna</i> <i>Shā'irah</i>	-----	-----	123
18	Khallāfah	-----	Al-Mu'tamad	-----	-----	-----	126
19	Dawlah	-----	'Abdallāh b. al-Mu'tazz	-----	-----	-----	15
20	Munyah al-Kātibah	-----	Al-Mu'tamad	<i>Kātibah</i>	-----	-----	126
21	Maḥbūbah	-----	Al-Mutawakkil	<i>Qīna</i> <i>Shā'irah</i>	<i>Muwalladah</i>	-----	113
23	'Inān	-----	Al-Nāṭifī	<i>Shā'irah</i>	<i>Muwalladah</i> from Yamāmah	-----	64
24	Farīdah al-Ṣuḡhrā	-----	'Umar b. Bānah, al-Wāthiq then al-Mutawakkil	Wife of caliph ¹²⁸⁷	-----	-----	122

Table 4.5: Appearance of female slaves as recorded in al-Mas'ūdī, *Murūj al-Dhahab*.

	Female slave's name	Date of death	Owner	Social position/ profession	Origin	Children	Vol	P
1	-----	-----	Abū Ja'far al-Manṣūr	<i>Umm al-Walad</i>	Kurdistān	Sulaymān 'Īsā Ya'qūb Ja'far al-Aṣghar	3	225

¹²⁸⁷ She was *qīna* then-manumitted and married by the caliph al-Mutawakkil. See Ibn al-Sā'ī, *Nisā' al-khulafā'*, 122.

2	Ḥusnah	-----	Al-Mahdī	Concubine	-----	-----	3	356
3	Al-Khayzarān	-----	Al-Mahdī	Wife of the Caliph	Yemen	Al-Hādī Al-Rashīd	3	259 , 269
4	'Utabah	-----	Rayṭah bint al-'Abbās then al-Khayzarān	Servant	-----	-----	3	261
5	Sawdā'	-----	-----	<i>Qīna</i>	-----	-----	3	299
6	-----	-----	Yaḥyá b. Khālid al-Barmakī	<i>Qīna</i>	-----	-----	3	305
7	Barrah	-----	Al-'Abbāsah bint al-Mahdī	Nursemaid ¹²⁸⁸	-----	-----	3	311
8	Ḍa'f	-----	Al-Amīn	<i>Qīna</i>	-----	-----	3	323
9	Nuẓum ¹²⁸⁹	-----	Al-Amīn	<i>Umm al-Walad</i>	-----	Mūsá	3	324
10	Marājil	-----	Al-Rashīd	<i>Umm al-Walad</i>	Khurāsān	Al-Ma'mūn	4	5
11	-----	-----	-----	<i>Qīna</i>	-----	-----	4	11
12	Māridah bint Shabīb	-----	Al-Rashīd	<i>Umm al-Walad</i>	-----	Al-Mu'taṣim	4	39
13	Qarāṭis	-----	Al-Mu'taṣim	<i>Umm al-Walad</i>	Byzantium	Al-Wāthiq	4	54
14	Shijā'	247 A.H/ 887 A.D.	Al-Mu'taṣim	<i>Umm al-Walad</i>	Khawārizm	Al-Mutawakkil	4	70, 97
15	'Awwādah	-----	Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm	<i>Qīna</i>	-----	-----	4	82
16	Maḥbubah	-----	Al-Mutawakkil	<i>Qīna and Shā'irah</i>	-----	-----	4	101

¹²⁸⁸ Al-Mas'ūdī mentioned that Barrah was a nursemaid to the sons of Al-'Abbāsah and Yaḥyá al-Barmakī. See al-Mas'ūdī, *Murūj al-Dhahab*, vol 3, 311.

¹²⁸⁹ She was known as Umm Mūsá; See *Ibid.*, 324.

17	Ḥabshīah	-----	Al-Mutawakkil	<i>Umm al-Walad</i>	Byzantium	Al-Muntaṣir	4	105
18	Umm Mūsá	-----	Shaghab	<i>Qahramānah</i>	-----	-----	4	108
19	-----	-----	Al-Rashīd	Servant	-----	-----	4	113
20	-----	-----	Sa'id b. Muḥammad al-Ṣaghīr	<i>Umm al-Walad</i> ¹²⁹⁰	-----	-----	4	114
21	Makhāriq	-----	Al-Mu'taṣim	<i>Umm al-Walad</i>	Sicily	-----	4	117
22	-----	-----	Muḥammad b. Ṭāhir	<i>Qīna</i>	-----	-----	4	126
23	Qabīḥah	-----	Al-Mutawakkil	<i>Umm al-Walad</i>	-----	-----	4	134
24	Mu'nisah	-----	Al-'Abbāsah bint Al-Mahdī	<i>Qīna</i>	-----	-----	4	139
25	Qarab	-----	Al-Wāthiq	<i>Umm al-Walad</i>	Byzantium	Al-Muhtadī	4	147
26	Fityān	-----	Al-Mutawakkil	<i>Umm al-Walad</i>	<i>Muwalladah</i> from Kūfah	Al-Mu'tamad	4	159
27	Ja'far	-----	Ṣā'id b. Mukhlid	Concubine	-----	-----	4	167
28	-----	272. A.H./ 884 A.D.	Al-Mu'tamad	<i>Umm al-Walad</i>	-----	Al-Muwaffaq	4	167
29	Ḍirār	-----	Ṭalḥah al-Muwaffaq	<i>Umm al-Walad</i>	-----	Al-Mu'taḍid	4	184
30	Shaghab	-----	Al-Mu'taḍid	<i>Umm al-Walad</i>	-----	Al-Muqtadir	4	232
31	Ḍalūm	-----	Al-Mu'taḍid	<i>Umm al-Walad</i>	Turkistān	Al-Mukatfī	4	232
32	Ḍalūm	-----	Al-Muqtadir	<i>Umm al-Walad</i>	-----	Al-Rāḍī	4	257
33	-----	-----	Al-Mu'taḍid	<i>Umm al-Walad</i>	-----	Al-Qāhir	4	248

¹²⁹⁰ She was a *qīna* and became *Umm al-Walad* of Muḥammad al-Ṣaghīr. See al-Mas'ūdī, *Murūj al-Dhahab*, vol 4, 114.

34	-----	-----	Al-Muqtadir	<i>Umm al-Walad</i>	-----	Al-Muttaqī	4	270
35	-----	-----	Al-Mukatfī	<i>Umm al-Walad</i>	-----	Al-Mustakfī	4	282

Table 4.6: Appearance of female slaves as recorded in al-Ya'qūbī, *Tārīkh al-Ya'qūbī*.

	Female slave's name	Date of death	Owner	Social position/ profession	Origin	Children	Vo I	P
1	Salāmah al-Barbarīyah	-----	Muḥammad b. 'Alī	<i>Umm al-Walad</i>	Barbar	Abū Ja'far al-Manṣūr	2	297
2	Al-Khayzarān	172. A.H./ 788 A.D.	Al-Mahdī	Wife of the Caliph	-----	Al-Hādī Al-Rashīd	2	340
3	Al-Ṭālahīyah	-----	Abū Ja'far al-Manṣūr	<i>Umm al-Walad</i>	-----	Ṣāliḥ Ya'qūb	2	328
4	Marājil	-----	Al-Rashīd	<i>Umm al-Walad</i>	Khurāsān	Al-Ma'mūn	2	394
5	-----	-----	Mūsá al-Kāzim	<i>Umm al-Walad</i>	Ḥabashah	Al-Riḍā	2	400
6	Shakkalah	-----	Al-Mahdī	<i>Umm al-Walad</i>	-----	Ibrāhīm b. al-Mahdī	2	408
7	Māridah	-----	Al-Rashīd	<i>Umm al-Walad</i>	-----	Al-Mu'taṣim	2	428
8	Qarāṭīs	-----	Al-Mu'taṣim	<i>Umm al-Walad</i>	-----	Al-Wāthiq	2	438, 439
9	Shajā'	-----	Al-Mu'taṣim	<i>Umm al-Walad</i>	-----	Al-Mutawakkil	2	444
10	Ḥabshīah	-----	Al-Mutawakkil	<i>Umm al-Walad</i>	Byzantium	Al-Muntaṣir	2	445
11	Qabīḥah	-----	Al-Mutawakkil	<i>Umm al-Walad</i>	-----	Al-Mu'tazz	2	463

12	Qarab	-----	Al-Wāthiq	<i>Umm al-Walad</i>	Byzantium	Al-Muhtadī	2	469
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Table 4.7: Appearance of female slaves as recorded in Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-a'yān wa-anbā' abnā' al-zamān*.¹²⁹¹

	Female slave's name	Date of death	Owner	Social position/ profession	Origin	Children	Vol	P
1	Zubaydah	-----	Yaḥyá b. Khālid al-Barmakī	<i>Umm al-Walad</i>	<i>Muwalladah</i> from Madīnah	Abū al-Faḍl	4	27
2	Māridah	-----	Al-Rashīd	<i>Umm al-Walad</i>	-----	Al-Mu'taṣim	3	21
3	Washīkah	-----	'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Khurāsānī	<i>Umm al-Walad</i>	Khurāsān	-----	3	145 - 156
4	Ḥinzābah	-----	Al-Faḍl b. al-Furāt	<i>Umm al-Walad</i>	Byzantium	Ja'far b. al-Faḍl	3	424
5	Shakkalah	-----	Al-Mahdī	<i>Umm al-Walad</i>	-----	Ibrāhīm b. al-Mahdī	1	39
6	'Utabah	-----	Al-Mahdī	Servant	-----	-----	1	219
7	Shijā'	-----	Al-Mu'taṣim	<i>Umm al-Walad</i>	Turkistān	Al-Mutawakkil	1	350
8	Maḥbūbah	-----	Al-Mutawakkil	<i>Qīna Shā'irah</i>	-----	Maḥbūbah	1	356 , 355
9	-----	-----	Ibn al-Zayyāt	<i>Umm al-Walad</i>	-----	'Umar	5	102

¹²⁹¹ Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-a'yān wa-anbā' abnā' al-zamān*.

Table 4.8: Appearance of female slaves as recorded in Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil fī 'l-Tārīkh*.

	Female slave's name	Date of death	Owner	Social position/ profession	Origin	Children	Vo I	P
1	Qarāṭīs	227 A.H./ 890 A.D.	Al-Mu'taṣim	<i>Umm al-Walad</i>	Byzantium	Al-Wāthiq	6	73
2	-----	-----	'Adūl b. al-Khayyāt	Concubine	-----	-----	6	79
3	'Alm	-----	Ṣāliḥ b. Shihāb then al-Wāthiq	<i>Qīna</i>	-----	-----	6	93
4	-----	-----	Ibrāhīm b. al-Mahdī	<i>Qīna</i>	-----	-----	6	92
5	Shajā'	247 A.H./ 861 A.D.	Al-Mu'taṣim	<i>Umm al-Walad</i>	-----	Al-Mutawakkil	6	109 , 141
6	Ḥabshīah	-----	Al-Mutawakkil	<i>Umm al-Walad</i>	Byzantium	Al-Muntaṣir	6	149
7	Qarab	-----	Al-Wāthiq	<i>Umm al-Walad</i>	Byzantium	Al-Muhtadī	6	201
8	Qabṭḥah	-----	Al-Mutawakkil	<i>Umm al-Walad</i>	-----	Al-Mu'tazz	6	202
9	'Arīb	227 A.D./ 890 A.H.	'Abd Allāh b. al-Marākibī then al-Ma'mūn, al-M'utasem, al-Mu'tazz then al-Wāthiq	<i>Qīna and Shā'irah</i>	<i>Muwalladah</i>	-----	6	360
10	Shaghab	321 A.H./ 933 A.D.	Al-Mu'taḍid	<i>Umm al-Walad</i>	-----	Al-Muqtadir	6	382
11	Ḍirār	-----	Talḥah Al-Muwaffaq	<i>Umm al-Walad</i>	-----	Al-Mu'taḍid	6	411

12	Jījak	-----	Al-Mu'taḍid	<i>Umm al-Walad</i>	Turkistān	Al-Mukatfī	6	437
13	Umm Mūsá	-----	Shaghab	<i>Qahramānah</i>	-----	-----	6	469
14	Bid'ah	-----	'Arīb	<i>Qīna</i> and servant	-----	-----	6	486
15	Zaydān	-----	Al-Muqtadir	<i>Qahramānah</i>	-----	-----	6	489
16	-----	-----	Ḥaznāh, Umm al-Faḍl b. Ja'far b. al-Furāt	Servant	-----	-----	7	20
17	Qahramānat al-Qāhir	-----	Al-Qāhir	<i>Qahramānah</i>	-----	-----	7	84
18	Marājil	-----	Al-Rashīd	<i>Umm al-Walad</i>	Khurāsān	Al-Ma'mūn	5	191
19	Umm al-Qāsim	-----	Al-Manşūr	<i>Umm al-Walad</i>	-----	Al-Qāsim	5	219
20	Umm Ja'far al-Aşghar	-----	Al- Manşūr	<i>Umm al-Walad</i>	Kūrd	Ja'far al-Aşghar	5	219
21	Umm Şāliḥ al-Miskīn	-----	Al- Manşūr	<i>Umm al-Walad</i>	Byzantium	Şāliḥ	5	219
22	Zahrā'	-----	Ma'n b. Zā'idah	Concubine	-----	-----	5	221
23	Khayzarān	-----	Al-Mahdī	Wife of the Caliph	Yemen	Al-Hādī Al-Rashīd	5	277 , 231
24	Ḥasnah	-----	Al-Mahdī	Concubine	-----	-----	5	259
25	-----	-----	Īsá b. da'b	<i>Qahramānah</i>	-----	-----	5	276
26	Ḍa'f	-----	Al-Amīn	<i>Qīna</i>	-----	-----	5	400
27	-----	-----	Al-Mahdī	<i>Umm al-Walad</i>	Ṭabaristān	Ibrāhīm b. al-Mahdī	5	135

28	Zahrā'	-----	Ma'n b. Zā'idah	Wife ¹²⁹²	-----	-----	5	221
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Table 4.9: Appearance of female slaves as recorded in al-Iṣfahānī, *Kitāb al-Aghānī*.

	Female slave's name	Date of death	Owner	Social position/ profession	Origin	Vol	P
1	'Inān	-----	Al-Nāṭifī then al-Rashīd	<i>Shā'irah</i>	<i>Muwalladah</i> from Yamāmah	23	23
2	Maḥbūbah	-----	Al-Mutawakkil	<i>Qīna Shā'irah</i>	<i>Muwalladah</i> from Baṣrah	22	22
3	'Ubaydah al-Ṭunbūriyah	----- ¹²⁹³	Abū al-Samrā' al-Ghassānī	Wife of a free man ¹²⁹⁴	-----	22	22
4	Khunth ¹²⁹⁵	-----	Ibrāhīm al-Mawṣilī then al-Rasheed	<i>Qīna</i>	-----	16	16
5	'Arīb	-----	'Abd Allāh b. al-Marākibī then al-Ma'mūn, al-Mu'taṣim, al-Mutawakkil, al-Muntaṣir, al-Wāthiq, al-Mu'tazz, al-Mu'tamid and al-Mu'taḍid	<i>Qīna Shā'irah</i>	<i>Muwalladah</i>	21	21, 57
6	Faḍl al-Shā'irah	-----	Muḥammad b. al-Faraj then al-Mutawakkil	Shā'irah	<i>Muwalladah</i> from Baṣrah	19	19
7	Shāriyah	-----	Ibrāhīm b. al-Mahdī then	<i>Qīna</i>	<i>Muwalladah</i> from Baṣrah	16	16

¹²⁹² She was a concubine then Ma'n b. Zā'idah freed her and married her and gave her 10,000 Dirhams as a dowry. See Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil fī 'l-Tārīkh*, vol 5, 221.

¹²⁹³ Al-Iṣfahānī mentioned that she died in the region of Al-Mu'taṣim (218-227 A.H./833-842 A.D.); See al-Iṣfahānī, *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, vol 22, 144, 145.

¹²⁹⁴ She was a slave singer who became the wife of 'Alī b. al-Faraj al-Rukhājī, although they divorced after his daughter's death. She became a singer again, but this time as a freedwoman, as under Islamic law, when a free man wanted to marry a slave girl he had to grant her manumission her first; See Ibid., 144, 146

¹²⁹⁵ Her title, or nickname, was Dhāt al-Khāl. See Ibid., vol 6, 234, 237, 239.

			al-Mu'taṣim				
8	Danānīr	-----	Muḥammad b. Kunāsah	<i>Shā'irah</i>	<i>Muwalladah</i> from Kūfah	13	13
9	Başbaş	-----	Yaḥyá b. al-Nafīs then al-Mahdī	<i>Qīna</i> ¹²⁹⁶	<i>Muwalladah</i> from Madīnah	23	21
10	Duqqāq	-----	Ḥamdūnnah bint al-Rashīd then 'Ghaṭīf then Yaḥyá b. al-Rabī'	Wife ¹²⁹⁷	<i>Muwalladah</i> from Madīnah	23	24
11	Danānīr	-----	Yaḥyá b. Khālid al-Barmakī	<i>Qīna</i> and <i>Shā'irah</i>	<i>Muwalladah</i> from Madīnah	18	47,4 8
12	Salāmah al-Zarqā'	-----	'Abd al-Malik b. Rāmīn then Ja'far b. Sulaymān	<i>Qīna</i>	<i>Muwalladah</i> from Ḥijāz	15	40
13	Fāṭimah	-----	Ja'far b. Yaḥyá al-Barmakī	Concubine ¹²⁹⁸	<i>Muwalladah</i> from Yamāmah	21	47
14	Umm Fadl al-Shā'irah	-----	-----	Concubine	<i>Muwalladah</i> from Yamāmah	19	215
15	Badhl al-Şaghīrah	-----	Ali b. Hishām ¹²⁹⁹	<i>Qīna</i>	-----	7	235
16	Khimār	-----	Yaḥyá b. Mu'ādh and then Hārūn b. 'Abd Allāh al-Rabī'	<i>Qīna</i>	Qandahār	5	116
17	Dāḥah	-----	Āl Al-Faḍl b. Rabī'	<i>Qīna</i>	-----	12	75
18	Rayyīq	-----	Ibrāhīm b. al-Mahdī	<i>Qīna</i>	-----	16	9
19	Maşābīḥ	-----	Al-Aḥḍab al-Muqaīm	<i>Qīna</i>	-----	19	174

¹²⁹⁶ She was the *Umm al-Walad* of al-Mahdī, the mother of 'Ulayyah bint al-Mahdī. see al-Işfahānī, *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, vol 23, 21.

¹²⁹⁷ She was *Umm al-Walad* of Yaḥyá b. al-Rabī' and then was manumitted before he married her. See *Ibid.*, 12, 203.

¹²⁹⁸ *Umm al-Walad* of Ja'far b. Yaḥyá al-Barmakī; it is said that she was 'Arīb's mother; see *Ibid.*, vol 21,47.

¹²⁹⁹ It is said that she was owned by al-Mu'taṣim and became his wife; See, *Ibid.*, vol 7, 235.

20	Nabat al-Bakrīyah	-----	-----	Qīna	-----	22	114
21	Bahār	-----	Zubaydah	Servant	-----	18	268
22	Lamīs	-----	'Abd Allāh b. Ṭāhir	Qīna	-----	5	238
23	Ḍa'f	-----	Al-Amīn	Qīna	-----	4	10
24	Al-Muhallabīyah	-----	Al-Khayzarān	Servant	-----	4	47
25	'Ubaydah	-----	Al-Muhallabīyah	Servant	-----	4	47
26	Jashah	-----	Abū 'Uthmān al-khādīm then Ibrāhīm al-Mawṣilī	Servant	-----	5	106
27	Jum'ah bint Jashah	-----	Ibrāhīm al-Mawṣilī	Servant	-----	5	106
28	Amān	-----	-----	Qīna	-----	5	112, 113
29	-----	-----	'Alī al-Yamānī	Qīna	-----	5	125
30	Ṣalfah	-----	Ziryāb then al-Muqtadir	Qīna	-----	5	144
31	-----	-----	Zuzul al-Ḍarib	Qīna	-----	5	147, 148
32	Dūshār	-----	Ibrāhīm al-Mawṣilī	Qīna ¹³⁰⁰	Rayy	5	175
33	Dīmīn	-----	Ishāq b. Ibrāhīm al-Mawṣilī	Qīna	-----	5	182
34	Maknūnah	-----	Al-Mahdī	Qīna ¹³⁰¹	Muwalladah from Madīnah	10	129
35	Sharah	-----	Shāriyah, Umm	Wife ¹³⁰²	-----	16	10

¹³⁰⁰ *Umm al-Walad* of Ibrāhīm al-Mawṣilī. See al-Iṣfahānī, *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, vol 5, 175.

¹³⁰¹ She was *Umm al-Walad* of al-Mahdī, the mother of 'Ulayyah bint al-Mahdī; see *Ibid.*, vol 10, 129.

¹³⁰² She was a servant and then became wife of Ibn al-Baqqāl. See *Ibid.*, vol 16, 10.

			al-Mu'tazz, then al-Mu'tamid				
36	Fawz	-----	Muḥammad b. Maṣṣūr	Concubine ¹³⁰³	-----	17	52
37	Yumn	-----	Fawz	Servant	-----	17	55
38	Shājī	-----	'Ubayd Allāh b.'Abd Allāh b. Ṭāhir	Qīna	-----	9	31
39	-----	-----	Ruqayyah bint al-Faḍl b. Rabī'	Qīna	-----	19	159
40	----- ¹³⁰⁴	-----	-----	Concubine	-----	17	169
41	Tuḥfah	-----	'Arīb	Qīna Servant	-----	21	61- 66
42	Bid'ah	-----	'Arīb	Qīna Servant	-----	21	66
43	Ṣaḥar	-----	Al-Rashīd	Concubine	-----	16	236
44	Ḍiyā'	-----	Al-Rashīd	Concubine	-----	16	236
45	Badhl ¹³⁰⁵		Ja'far b. Mūsā al-Hādī then al-Amīn	Qīna	Muwalladah from Madīnah	17	58
46	Washīkah	-----	Badhl	Servant	-----	17	44
47	Rabīḥah	-----	'Abd Allāh b. Rāmīn then Ja'far b. Sulaymān	Concubine	-----	15	44
48	Sa'dah	-----	'Abd al-Malik b. Rāmīn	Concubine	-----	15	44
49	'Ātikah bint Shahdah	-----	Al-Rashīd	Qīna	Muwalladah	6 18	184, 185

¹³⁰³ She was *mudabirah* by al-'Abbās b. al-Aḥnaf. See al-Iṣfahānī, *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, vol 17,52.

¹³⁰⁴ Christian female slave and the beloved of 'Abd Allāh b. al-'Abbās. See *Ibid.*, 17, 169.

¹³⁰⁵ She was *mudabirah* of Ja'far b. Mūsā al-Hādī. See *Ibid.*, 58.

							244
50	Farīdah al-Kubrā	----	Āl Al Rabī', al-Barāmīkah then al-Amīn	Wife of free man ¹³⁰⁶	<i>Muwalladah</i> from Ḥijāz	4	90
51	Farīdah al-Ṣuḡhrā	-----	'Umar b. Bānah, al-Wāthiq then al-Mutawakkil	Wife of caliph ¹³⁰⁷	-----	4	91
52	Khill	----	'Umar b. Bānah	<i>Qīna</i>	-----	4	91
53	Qalm al-Ṣāliḥiyah	-----	Ṣāliḥ b. 'Abd al-Wahhāb then al-Wāthiq	<i>Qīna</i>	<i>Muwalladah</i>	13	244
55	'Asālīj	----	Abū 'Īsā b. al-Rashīd	<i>Qīna</i>	-----	19	172
56	Qīymah	-----	Abū 'Īsā b. al-Rashīd	<i>Qīna</i>	----	19	172
57	Rāḥah	----	Al-Ḥusayn b. Yaḥyá	<i>Qīna</i>	-----	19	177
58	Riyāḍ	-----	Abū Ḥammād	<i>Qīna</i>	-----	4	91
59	Khashaf al-Wāḍiḥiyah	----	Al-Wāthiq	<i>Qīna</i>	-----	4	91
60	Ṭuḡhyān	-----	Zubaydah	Servant	----	10	132
61	'Alam al-Samrā'	-----	'Abd Allāh b. Mūsá al-Hādī	Concubine	----	10	145
62	Bannān	-----	Al-Mutawakkil	<i>Shā'irah</i>	-----	19	217
63	Muḥayyāt	-----	Al-Mahdī	<i>Umm al-Walad</i>	-----	10	79
64	Mulaykah	----	Uḥayḥah b. al-Jālīḥ	<i>Qīna</i>	-----	15	29
65	Saḥīqah	-----	Zurayq b. Manīḥ	<i>Qīna</i>	-----	15	41, 42
66		-----	Al-Mahdī	Servant	-----	23	

¹³⁰⁶ She was a *qīna* and then freewoman (she married a free man). See al-Iṣfahānī, *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, vol 4, 90.

¹³⁰⁷ She was a *qīna* and then the caliph al-Mutawakkil manumitted and married her. See *Ibid.*, 91.

	Ja'farah ¹³⁰⁸						16,18
67	Masrūrah	-----	Ishāq b. al-Ṣabāh then Abū al-Ḥajnā'	Concubine	-----	23	29
68	Malīḥah	-----	-----	<i>Qīna</i>	<i>Muwalladah</i> from Baṣrah	23	43
69	'Ubādah	-----	Abū 'Umayr	<i>Qīna</i>	-----	23	47
70	Rīm	-----	-----	-----	-----	13	211
71	Jawhar	-----	Barbar then woman from the clam of Sulaymān b. 'Alī	Servant <i>Qīna</i>	-----	13	212, 218, 221, 226
72	Jūdānah	-----	Muṭī' b. Iyās	Concubine	-----	13	231
73	Barbar	-----	Muḥammad b. Sulaymān then Salamah b. 'Ayāsh	<i>Qīna</i> ¹³⁰⁹	-----	20	187-189
74	Shakkalah	-----	Al-Mahdī	<i>Umm al-Walad</i>	Ṭabaristān	10	97
75	Mutayyam al-Hāshimīyah	-----	Bainnānh bint 'Abd Allāh al-Marākibī then 'Alī b. Hishām	<i>Qīna Shā'irah</i> ¹³¹⁰	<i>Muwalladah</i> from Baṣrah	7	222
77	Ḍaf	-----	Al-Amīn	<i>Qīna</i>	-----	5	99
78	Māridah	-----	Al-Rashīd	<i>Umm al-Walad</i>	Sogdia	5	156
79	Hushaymah al-Khammārah	-----	Ishāq al-Mawṣilī	Servant	-----	5	268
80	Shaḥá	-----	Al-Wāthiq	<i>Qīna</i>	-----	5	280
81	Qurashīyah al-Zabbā'	-----	Al-Mahdī	<i>Qīna</i>	-----	6	112, 113

¹³⁰⁸ She became a wife of the freeman Nuṣīb al-Aṣghar who was titled by al-Mahdī as Abū al-Ḥajnā'. Al-İṣfahānī, *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, vol 23, 16, 18.

¹³⁰⁹ She has been freed, however, there is no mentioned of her method of manumission; See Ibid., vol 20, 187-189.

¹³¹⁰ Al-İṣfahānī mentioned that she was manumitted after her master death, 'Alī b. Hishām. See Ibid., vol 6, 222.

82	Qurashīyah al-Bayḍā'	----	Al-Mahdī	<i>Qīna</i>	----	6	112, 113
83	Qurashīyah al-Sawdā'	----	Al-Mahdī	<i>Qīna</i>	----	6	112, 113
84	Sāmir	----	-----	-----	----	10	40,5 0
85	Ziryāb al-Wāthiqīyah	----	Al-Wāthiq	<i>Qīna</i>	----	10	59,2 19
86	Al-Dhu'ābīyah	----	Manṣūr b. al-Mahdī	-----	-----	10	85
87	Athīr	----	Manṣūr b. al-Mahdī	-----	-----	10	85
88	Ṣadūq	----	Ibrāhīm b. al-Mahdī	Concubine	-----	10	102
89	Zahrah	----	Ibrāhīm b. al-Mahdī	<i>Qīna</i>	-----	10	104
90	-----	----	Ibrāhīm b. al-Mahdī	-----	Persian	10	111
91	Khalūb	-----	'Ulayyah bint al-Mahdī	Servant	----	10	135
92	Ghayḍah	-----	Ibrāhīm b. al-Mahdī	<i>Qīna</i>	----	10	136
93	Umm Ubaydah	-----	Rayṭah then al-Mahdī	Servant	----	10	208, 212, 213
94	Bint al-Karāa'	----	----	<i>Qīna</i>	----	10	223
95	Khuzāmá	----	Al-Ḍabṭ al-Mughnī	<i>Qīna</i> <i>Shā'irah</i>	----	10	223
96	Maktūmah	----	Abū al-Naḍīr	<i>Qīna</i>	----	11	194
97	Ḍaf	----	'Abd Allāh b. Ṭāhir	<i>Qīna</i>	----	12	69

98	'Azzah al-Aḥwaṣ	-----	Al-Aḥwaṣ	<i>Shā'irah</i>	----	12	84,8 5
99	Khidā'	----	Al-Mu'taṣim's uncle then the son of al-Mahdī	<i>Qīna</i>	----	12	101, 104
100	Al-Zarqā'	----	Al-Mu'adhhal b. Ghaylān	<i>Umm al-Walad</i>	----	13	159
101	----	----	Ibn al-Jawāhirī	<i>Qīna</i>	----	13	161
102	Mutayyam	----	Owner from Baṣrah	----	----	13	176
103	Rīm	----	Nakkhās	Servant	----	13	201, 211
104	Khansā'	----	Hāshim al-Naḥwī	<i>Qīna</i> <i>Shā'irah</i>	----	14	130
104	Su'ād	----	Ẓarīf	<i>Qīna</i>	----	14	228
105	Sahīqah	---	Zurayq b. Manīḥ	<i>Qīna</i>	----	15	42
106	Manhalah	----	Owner from banī 'Abs	----	----	15	179
107	Judānah	----	Ilyās b. Mutī'	-----	----	13	231
108	Juwayrīyah	----	Muḥammad b. Kunāsah	----	----	13	237
109	-----	----	Owner from banī Hāshim in Baṣrah	<i>Qīna</i>	----	14	18
110	Qumrīyah al-Baktamurīyah	-----	Al-Billūrī	<i>Qīna</i>	----	14	73, 44
111	-----	-----	Al-Billūrī	<i>Qīna</i>	-----	14	73, 44
112	-----	-----	Āl Yaḥyá b. Mu'ādh	<i>Qīna</i>	-----	14	85
113	Maryam	----	A woman from Madīnah	<i>Qīna</i>	<i>Muwalladah</i> from Madīnah	14	109

114	Sukkar	----	'Asim Abū al-Shibl	-----	-----	14	125
115	Lahab	----	Khālid b. Yazīd b. Hubayrah	<i>Qīna</i>	-----	14	126
116	Jāriyah sawdā'	----	'Asim Abū al-Shibl	-----	-----	14	130
117	'Uthmah	----	Ibn Marār	----	-----	16	178
118	Ẓabyah	-----	Banī Nahār b. Rabī'ah then Zā'idah b. 'Abd Allāh	<i>Umm al-Walad</i>	----	16	179
119	Tebr	----	Muḥammad Abu al-Shīṣ	-----	-----	16	284
120	Ṭibbā'	----	Muḥammad b. Sahl	<i>Qīna</i>	-----	17	42
121	Ka'b	-----	Abū 'Ukl al-Muqayyen	<i>Qīna</i>	-----	18	113
122	Mazlūmah	-----	Al-Daḡiqī	-----	-----	18	117
123	Habah al-Mughannīyah	-----	Al-Daḡiqī	<i>Qīna</i>	-----	18	117
124	Janān	-----	Bānah bint 'Umar b. al-'Aṣ	<i>Shā'irah</i>	-----	18	127
125	Rīm	-----	Ashja' 'Amr al-Sulamī	-----	-----	18	171
126	-----	-----	Ḥarb b. 'Amr al-Thaqafī	<i>Qīna</i>	-----	18	183
127	Al-Shāh	-----	-----	<i>Qīna</i>	-----	18	183
128	Bint Iblīs	-----	Ibn Maryam	<i>Qīna</i>	-----	18	253
129	Rāmishnah	-----	Bakr b. al-Naṭṭāh	-----	-----	19	80
130	Durrah	-----	A man from Hāshim tribe	<i>Qīna</i>	-----	19	87
131	Khansā'	-----	Hishām al-Makfūf	<i>Shā'irah</i>	-----	19	129
132	Bustān	-----	Abū Ḥudhayfah	<i>Qīna</i>	-----	20	49

133	Shanīn	-----	Muḥammad b. Ṭāhir	<i>Qīna</i>	-----	20	84
134	‘Ulayyah	-----	Saḥāb	----	-----	20	150, 151
135	Saḥāb	-----	Al-Mu‘taṣim	----	-----	20	150, 151
136	Jānī	----	Abū Ghassān	<i>Qīna</i>	----	20	155
137	Ḥasnā’	-----	A man from Barmakids	<i>Shā’irah</i>	---	20	218
138	Burhān	-----	Al-Mutawakkil	-----	----	21	35
139	Raqībah	----	-----	<i>Qīna</i>	-----	21	51
140	Al-Bakrīyah	----	Ibrāhīm b. al-Mudabbir	<i>Qīna</i>	-----	22	119
141	Malīḥah	----	-----	<i>Qīna</i>	<i>Muwalladah</i> from Baṣrah	23	43
142	‘Ubādah	----	Abū ‘Amīrah	<i>Qīna</i>	-----	23	47
143	Banāt	----	Muḥammad b. Ḥāmid	<i>Umm al-Walad</i> ¹³¹¹	-----	23	95, 100
144	Mu’nisah	-----	Al-Ma’mūn	Concubine	----	23	112
145	A’ta’ta	-----	----	----	-----	23	118
146	Rukhāṣ	-----	----	<i>Qīna</i>	-----	23	35

Table 4.10: Appearance of female slaves as recorded in al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Imā’ al-shawā’ir*.

	Female slave’s name	Date of death	Owner	Social position/ profession	Origin	P
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¹³¹¹ She was a *qīna* and then *Umm al-Walad* of Muḥammad b. Ḥāmid. See Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil fī ‘l-Tārīkh*, vol 23, 95,100.

1	'Inān	266 A.H./880 A.D.	Al-Nāṭifī then al-Rashīd	<i>Shā'irah</i>	<i>Muwalladah</i> from Yamāmah	27
2	Danānīr	-----	Muḥammad b. Kunāsah	<i>Shā'irah</i>	<i>Muwalladah</i> from Kūfah	53
3	Fadl al-Shā'irah	257 A.H./ 871 A.D.	Muḥammad b. al-Faraj then al-Mutawakkil	<i>Shā'irah</i>	<i>Muwalladah</i> from Baṣrah	59
4	Ālam al-Ḥusn	-----	-----	<i>Qīna</i>	-----	62
5	Taymā'	-----	Khuzaymah b. Khāzīm	<i>Shā'irah</i>	<i>Muwalladah</i> from Madīnah	85
6	Sakan	-----	Ṭāhir b. al-Ḥusayn	<i>Qīna</i>	-----	89
7	Şıf	-----	Ibn Khuḍayr	<i>Qīna</i> <i>Shā'irah</i>	<i>Muwalladah</i> from Baṣrah	97
8	Nasīm	-----	Aḥmad b. Yūsuf	<i>Qīna</i> <i>Shā'irah</i>	<i>Muwalladah</i>	101
9	'Ārim	-----	Zalbihddah al-Nakkhās	<i>Shā'irah</i>	<i>Muwalladah</i> from Baṣrah	105
10	Salmā al-Yamānīyah	-----	Abū 'Abbād	<i>Shā'irah</i>	<i>Muwalladah</i> from Yamāmah	109
11	Murād	-----	'Alī b. Hishām	<i>Qīna</i> <i>Shā'irah</i>	<i>Muwalladah</i> from Madīnah	113
12	Badhl	-----	'Alī b. Hishām	<i>Qīna</i>	<i>Muwalladah</i> from Madīnah	113
13	Mutayyam al-Hāshimīyah	-----	'Alī b. Hishām	<i>Qīna</i> <i>Shā'irah</i>	<i>Muwalladah</i> from Baṣrah	119
14	Rayyīq	-----	Ibrāhīm b. al-Mahdī	<i>Qīna</i>	-----	119
15	Hīlānah	-----	-----	<i>Shā'irah</i>	<i>Muwalladah</i>	125, 126
16	Samrā'	-----	-----	<i>Shā'irah</i>	<i>Muwalladah</i>	125, 126
17	Ḍalūm	-----	Muḥammad b. Muslim	<i>Qīna</i> <i>Shā'irah</i> <i>Kātibah</i>	-----	131

18	'Arīb al-Ma'mūnīyah	277 A.H./ 890 A.D.	Al-Ma'mūn, al-Mu'taṣim, al-Mutawakkil, al-Muntaṣir, al-Wāthiq, al-Mu'tazz, al-Mu'tamid and al-Mu'taḍid	<i>Qīna</i>	<i>Muwalladah</i>	135 - 148
19	'Āmil	----	Zaynab bint Ibrāhīm	<i>Qīna</i> <i>Shā'irah</i>	----	151
20	Rayyā	----	Al-Mutawakkil	<i>Shā'irah</i>	<i>Muwalladah</i> from Yamāmah	155
21	Ẓamyā'	----	Al-Mutawakkil	<i>Shā'irah</i>	<i>Muwalladah</i> from Yamāmah	160
22	Maḥbūbah	-----	Al-Mutawakkil	<i>Qīna</i> <i>Shā'irah</i>	<i>Muwalladah</i>	159
23	Bannān	-----	Al-Mutawakkil	<i>Shā'irah</i>	-----	167
24	Rayyā	-----	Ishāq b. Ibrāhīm al-Mawṣilī	<i>Qīna</i>	-----	175
25	Şayd	-----	Ishāq b. Ibrāhīm al-Mawṣilī	<i>Qīna</i>	-----	171
26	Dīm̄n	-----	Ishāq b. Ibrāhīm al-Mawṣilī	<i>Qīna</i>	-----	171
27	Amal	-----	Şāliḥ b. al-Rashīd	<i>Shā'irah</i>	-----	175
28	Mathal	----	Ibrāhīm b. al-Mudabbir	<i>Shā'irah</i>	<i>Muwalladah</i> from Madīnah	179
29	Nabat	-----	Mukhfirānah al-mukhanath then al-Mu'tamad	<i>Qīna</i> <i>Shā'irah</i>	-----	183
30	Rābi'ah	-----	Ishāq b. Ibrāhīm b. Muṣ'ib	<i>Shā'irah</i>	<i>Muwalladah</i> from Madīnah	189

31	Şahib	----	Ibn Ṭarkhān al-Nakhhās	<i>Qīna Shā'irah</i>	-----	193
32	Qāsim	----	Ibn Ṭarkhān al-Nakhhās	<i>Qīna Shā'irah</i>	-----	197
33	Bid'ah	-----	'Arīb	Servant <i>Shā'irah Qīna</i>	-----	201
34	Mahā	----	'Arīb	<i>Qīna Shā'irah</i>	-----	207
35	Julnār	-----	Sister of al-Rāshid b. Ishāq then al-Rāshid b. Ishāq	<i>Qīna Shā'irah</i>	<i>Muwalladah from Kūfah</i>	211
36	Khansā'	-----	A man from Āl Yaḥyá al-Barmakī	<i>Qīna Shā'irah</i>	-----	215
37	Ghuṣn ¹³¹²	----	Abū al-Aḥḍab al-Nakhhās	<i>Umm al-Walad</i>	-----	221

Table 4.11: Prices of female slaves according to Tables 4.1 to 4.10.

	Female slave's name	Origin	Career	Previous master	Price	Buyer	Source
1	'Amā al-'Azīz	-----	Concubine	Al-Rabī' b. Yūnus	Gift	Al-Hādī	Al-Ṭabarī, <i>Tārīkh al- Ṭabarī</i> , vol 8, 228.
2	Al-Khayzarān	Yemen	Concubine	-----	----- -	Al-Mahdī	Al-Ṭabarī, <i>Tārīkh al- Ṭabarī</i> , vol, 334.
3	Maknūnah	<i>Muwalladah from Madīnah</i>	<i>Qīna</i>	-----	100,00 0 Dirham s	Al-Mahdī	Al-Iṣfahānī, <i>Kitāb al- Aghānī</i> , vol 10.129.
4	Shāriyah	<i>Muwalladah from</i>	<i>Qīna</i>	Woman from Banī Hāshim	300 Dinars	Ibrāhīm b. al-Mahdī	Al-Iṣfahānī, <i>Kitāb al-</i>

¹³¹² She has been freed after her master death. See al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Imā' al-shawā'ir*, 221.

		Başrah					<i>Aghānī</i> , vol 16.5.
5	-----	-----	-----	Ibrāhīm b. al-Mahdī	Offer 70,000 Dinars	Al-Mutaşim	Al-Işfahānī, <i>Kitāb al-Aghānī</i> , vol 16,9.
6	-----	-----	-----	Al-Mutaşim	55,000 Dinars	Ibrāhīm b. al-Mahdī	Al-Işfahānī, <i>Kitāb al-Aghānī</i> , vol 16, 8.
7	Fadl al-Shā'irah	<i>Muwalladah</i> from Başrah	<i>Shā'irah</i>	Muḥammad b. al-Faraj	Gift	Al-Mutawakkil	Al-Işfahānī, <i>Kitāb al-Aghānī</i> , vol, 19, 215.
8	'Arīb	<i>Muwalladah</i>	<i>Qīna</i> Shā'irah	'Abd Allāh b. al-Marākibī	100,000 Dirhams	Al-Ma'mūn	Al-Işfahānī, <i>Kitāb al-Aghānī</i> , vol, 21, 53.
9	'Inān	<i>Muwalladah</i> from Yamāmah	<i>Shā'irah</i>	Al-Nāṭifī	250,000 Dirhams	Al-Rashīd	Al-Işfahānī, <i>Kitāb al-Aghānī</i> , vol, 23,84.
10	Maḥbubah	<i>Muwalladah</i> from Yamāmah	<i>Qīna</i> and <i>Shā'irah</i>	'Abd Allāh b. Ṭāhir	Gift	Al-Mutawakkil	Al-Işfahānī, <i>Kitāb al-Aghānī</i> , vol 22, 141,142.
11	Dhāt al-Khāl	-----	<i>Qīna</i>	Ibrāhīm al-Mawşilī	70,000 Dirhams	al-Rashīd	Al-Işfahānī, <i>Kitāb al-Aghānī</i> , vol 16, 234.
12	Badhl	<i>Muwalladah</i> from Madīnah	<i>Qīna</i>	Ja'far b. Mūsā al-Hādī	20,000 Dirhams	Al-Amīn	Al-Işfahānī, <i>Kitāb al-Aghānī</i> , vol 17,58.
13	Başbaş	<i>Muwalladah</i> from Madīnah	<i>Qīna</i>	Yaḥyá b. al-Nafīs	17,000 Dinars	Al-Mahdī	Al-Işfahānī, <i>Kitāb al-Aghānī</i> . Vol 15, 21.
14	Rubīḥah	-----	Concubine	'Abd al-Malik b. Rāmīn	100,000 Dirhams	Ja'far b. Sulaymān	Al-Işfahānī, <i>Kitāb al-Aghānī</i> , vol 15, 44.
15	Sa'dah	-----	Concubine	'Abd al-Malik b. Rāmīn	90,000 Dirhams	Şāliḥ b. 'Alī	Al-Işfahānī, <i>Kitāb al-Aghānī</i> , vol 15, 44.
16	Salāmah al-Zarqā'	-----	<i>Qīna</i>	'Abd al-Malik b. Rāmīn	80,000 Dirhams	Ja'far b. Sulaymān	Al-Işfahānī, <i>Kitāb al-Aghānī</i> , vol 15, 44.
17	Farīdah al-Şuḡhrá	-----	<i>Qīna</i>	Işhāq al-Mawşilī	Gift	Al-Wāthiq	Al-Işfahānī, <i>Kitāb al-Aghānī</i> , vol 4,91,92.

18	Qalam al-Şāliḥīyah	<i>Muwalladah</i>	<i>Qīna</i>	Şāliḥ b. ‘Abd al-Wahhāb (he offer 100,000 Dinar)	10,000 Dinars	Al-Wāthiq	Al-İşfahānī, <i>Kitāb al-Aghānī</i> , vol 3, 413,244.
19	Mutayyam al-Hāshimīyah	<i>Muwalladah</i> from Baṣrah	<i>Qīna Shā’irah</i>	Lubānah bint ‘Abd Allāh b. Al-Marākibī	20,000 Dirhams	‘Alī b. Hishām	Al-İşfahānī, <i>Kitāb al-Aghānī</i> , vol 7, 222.
20	Sarīrah al-Rā’iqīya	-----	<i>Qīna</i>	Ibn Ḥamdūn al-Nadīm	13,000 Dirhams	Muḥammad b. Rā’iq	Ibn al-Sā’ī, <i>Nisā’ al-Khulafā</i> , 159.
21	Nabat	-----	<i>Qīna</i>	Mukhrūfānah al-Mukhnath	30,000 Dirhams	Al-Mu’tamid	Al-İşfahānī, <i>Kitāb qiyān</i> , 123,124.
22	-----	-----	-----	‘Udūl al-Khayyāṭ	Offer 100,000 Dinars	Al-Rasheed	Ibn al-Athīr, <i>Al-Kāmil fi’l-Tārīkh</i> , vol 6, 79; Al-Ṭabarī. <i>Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī</i> , vol 9, 126.
23	‘Alam	-----	<i>Qīna</i>	Şāliḥ b. ‘Abd al-Wahhāb	15,000 Dinars	Al-Wāthiq	Ibn al-Athīr, <i>al-Kāmil fi’l-Tārīkh</i> , vol 6, 93.
24	Khimār	Qandahār	<i>Qīna</i>	Yaḥyá b. Mu’ādh	200,000 Dirhams	Hārūn b. ‘Abd Allāh al-Rabī’	Al-İşfahānī, <i>Kitāb al-Aghānī</i> . vol 5,116.
25	Shrah	-----	Servant	Shāriyah	10,000 Dinars	Qabīḥah	Al-İşfahānī, <i>Kitāb al-Aghānī</i> . vol 16, 288.

Table 5.1: *Jawārī* owned by women according to Tables 4.1 to 4.10.

	Female slave’s name	Social position / Profession	Date of death	Owner	Owner’s social status	Source
1	Khāliṣah	<i>Qahramānah</i>	-----	Al-Khayzarān	Freed woman	Al-Ṭabarī, <i>Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī</i> , 8,72; Al-Jāḥiẓ., <i>Risālat al-qiyān</i> , vol 3,

						71.
2	Shaghab	<i>Umm al-Walad</i> ¹³¹³	-----	Umm al-Qāsim bint 'Abd Allāh b. Ṭāhir ¹³¹⁴	Free woman	Al-Ṭabarī, <i>Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī</i> , 10, 139
3	'Utabah	<i>Qahramānah</i>	-----	Rayṭah bint al-'Abbās	Free royal woman	Al-Jāḥiẓ, <i>Risālat al-qiyān</i> , vol 3, 71; Al-Mas'ūdī, <i>Murūj al-Dhahab</i> , 3, 261.
4	Sukkar	Wife of caliph	-----	Zubaydah	Free royal woman	Al-Jāḥiẓ. <i>Risālat al-qiyān</i> , vol 3, 71,72.
5	Turkīyah	Servant	-----	Zubaydah	Free royal woman	Al-Jāḥiẓ, <i>Risālat al-qiyān</i> , vol 3, 71.
6	Duqqāq	Servant	-----	Al-'Abbāsah	Free royal woman	Al-Jāḥiẓ, <i>Risālat al-qiyān</i> , vol 3, 71.
7	Ẓalūm	Servant	-----	Umm Ḥabīb	Free woman	Al-Jāḥiẓ, <i>Risālat al-qiyān</i> , vol 3, 71.
8	Qusṭanṭīniyah	Servant	-----	Umm Ḥabīb	Free woman	Al-Jāḥiẓ,

¹³¹³ She became a freedwoman after the death of al-Mu'taḍid (d. 289 A.H./902 A.D.).

¹³¹⁴ Then she became al-Mu'taḍid female slave.

						<i>Risālat al-qiyān</i> , vol 3, 71.
9	Bid'ah	Servant <i>Qīna</i>	302 A.H./ 914 A.D.	'Arīb	Enslaved woman	Al-Ṣafadī, <i>Kitāb Al-wāfi bi-'l-wafayāt</i> , vol 10, 61; Ibn al-Sā'ī, <i>Nisā' al-khulafā'</i> , 81; Ibn al-Athīr, <i>al-Kāmil fī 'l-Tārīkh</i> , vol 6, 486; Al-Iṣfahānī, <i>Kitāb al-Aghānī</i> , vol 21, 66.
10	Umm Mūsá	<i>Qahramānah</i>	-----	Shaghab	<i>Umm al-Walad</i>	Al-Mas'ūdī, <i>Murūj al-Dhahab</i> , vol 4, 108; Ibn al-Athīr, <i>al-Kāmil fī 'l-Tārīkh</i> , vol 6, 469.
11	-----	Servant	-----	Umm al-Faḍl b. Ja'far b. al-Furāt	Free woman	Ibn al-Athīr, <i>al-Kāmil fī 'l-Tārīkh</i> , vol 7, 20.
12	Bahār	Servant	-----	Zubaydah	Free royal woman	Al-Iṣfahānī, <i>Kitāb al-Aghānī</i> , vol 18, 268.
13	Al-Muhallabīyah	Servant	-----	Al-Khayzarān	Freed woman	Al-Iṣfahānī, <i>Kitāb al-Aghānī</i> , vol 4, 47.
14	'Ubaydah	Servant	-----	Al-Muhallabīyah	Enslaved woman	Al-Iṣfahānī, <i>Kitāb al-Aghānī</i> , vol 4,

						47.
15	Sharah	Servant	-----	Shārīyah then Umm al-Mu'tazz	Enslaved woman	Al-Iṣfahānī, <i>Kitāb al- Aghānī</i> , vol 16, 10.
16	Yumn	Servant	-----	Fawz	Enslaved woman	Al-Iṣfahānī, <i>Kitāb al- Aghānī</i> , vol 16, 55.
17	-----	<i>Qīna</i>	-----	Ruqayyah bint al-Faḍl b. Rabī'	Free royal woman	Al-Iṣfahānī, <i>Kitāb al- Aghānī</i> , vol 19, 159.
18	Tuhfah	<i>Qīna</i> Servant	-----	'Arīb	Enslaved woman	Al-Iṣfahānī, <i>Kitāb al- Aghānī</i> , vol 21, 61, 66.
19	Washīkah	Servant	-----	Badhl	Enslaved woman	Al-Iṣfahānī, <i>Kitāb al- Aghānī</i> , vol 17, 44.
20	Ṭughyān	Servant	-----	Zubaydah	Free royal woman	Al-Iṣfahānī, <i>Kitāb al- Aghānī</i> , vol 10, 132.
21	Jawhar	Servant <i>Qīna</i>	-----	Barbar then woman from the clam of Sulaymān b. 'Alī	Enslaved woman Free woman	Al-Iṣfahānī, <i>Kitāb al- Aghānī</i> , vol 13, 212, 218, 221, 226.

22	Mutayyam al-Hāshimtyah	<i>Qīna</i> <i>Shā'irah</i>	-----	Bainnānh bint 'Abd Allāh al-Marākibī	Free woman	Al-Iṣfahānī, <i>Kitāb al-</i> <i>Aghānī</i> , vol 7, 222.
23	Maryam	<i>Qīna</i>	-----	A woman from Madīnah	Free woman	Al-Iṣfahānī, <i>Kitāb al-</i> <i>Aghānī</i> , vol 14,109.
24	Khalūb	Servant	-----	'Ulayyah bint al-Mahdī	----	Al-Iṣfahānī, <i>Kitāb al-</i> <i>Aghānī</i> , vol 10, 135.
25	'Āmil	<i>Qīna</i> <i>Shā'irah</i>	-----	Zaynab bint Ibrāhīm	Free woman	Al-Iṣfahānī, <i>Al-Imā' al-</i> <i>Shawā'ir</i> , 151.
26	Julnār	<i>Qīna</i> <i>Shā'irah</i>	-----	Sister of al-Rāshid b. Ishāq	Free royal woman	Al-Iṣfahānī, <i>Al-Imā' al-</i> <i>Shawā'ir</i> , 211.
27	Mahā	<i>Qīna</i> <i>Shā'irah</i>	-----	'Arīb	Enslaved woman	Al-Iṣfahānī, <i>Al-Imā' al-</i> <i>Shawā'ir</i> , 207.

Database

Table 4.12: The numbers and origins of female slaves' regardless of social position according to Tables 4.1 to 4.10.

Origin	Number
<i>Muwalladāt</i>	38
Qandahār	1
Yemen	1
Kürd/ Kurdistān	2
Byzantium	9
Sogdia	1
Ḥabashah	2
Ṭabaristān (Daylam)	2
Khurāsān	2
Khawārizm	1
Sicily	1
Turkistān	3
Rayy	1
Persia	1
Did not mentioned their origins	218
Total	283 female slaves

Table 4.13: Numbers of *muwalladāt* whose place of birth according to Tables 4.1 to 4.10.

<i>Muwalladāt's</i> place of birth	Number
Madīnah	11
Yamāmah	7
Başrah	7
Kūfah	3
Hijāz	2
Unknown place of birth	8
Total	38 <i>Muwalladah</i>

Table 4.14: The social position, profession and number of female slaves, regardless of their origin according to Tables 4.1 to 4.10.

Female slave social position	Number
Concubine	26
<i>Qīna</i>	102
<i>Shā'irah</i>	37
Servant	20
Wife	10
<i>Umm al-Walad</i>	68
Nursemaid	1
<i>Kātibah</i>	2
<i>Qahramānah</i>	6
Did not mention their position	29
Total	301¹³¹⁵

Table 4.15 The numbers and origins of *Umm al-Walad* regardless of their social position according to Tables 4.1 to 4.10.

Origin	Number
<i>Muwalladah</i>	4
Kūrd/ Kurdistān	2
Byzantium	9
Sogdia	1
Ḥabashah	1
Ṭabaristān (Daylam)	2
Khurāsān	2
Khawārizm	1
Sicily	1
Turkistān	3
Barbar	1
Did not mentioned their origins	41
Total	68 female slaves

¹³¹⁵ There were seventeenth of these female slaves had two or three different career and social status at the same time.

Table 4.16: *Qinyān*'s number depended on their origins according to Tables 4.1 to 4.10.

Origin	Number
<i>Muwalladah</i>	18
Qandahār	1
Rayy	1
Did not mentioned their origins	83
Total	103 female slaves

Table 4.17: *Shā'irat*'s number depended on their origins according to Tables 4.1 to 4.10.

Origin	Number
<i>Muwalladah</i>	16
Did not mentioned their origins	21
Total	37

Table 4.18: Wives' numbers depended on their origins according to Tables 4.1 to 4.10.

Origin	Number
Yeman	1
<i>Muwalladah</i>	2
Did not mentioned their origins	7
Total	10

Table 4.19: The numbers of female slaves' with recorded prices, according to their professions in Table 4.11.

Female slave's professions	Number
<i>Qiyān</i>	15
Concubines	4
<i>Shā'irat</i>	5
Servants	1
Did not mention their careers	1
Total	26 ¹³¹⁶

Table 4.20: The numbers of female slaves' with recorded prices, according to their origins in table 4.11.

Female slave's origin	Number
<i>Muwalladāt</i>	10
Yemen	1
Qandahār	1
Did not mentioned their names	11
Total	23

Table 4.21: The numbers of *Muwalladāt* with recorded prices, according to their place of birth in table 4.11.

<i>Muwalladāt</i>'s place of birth	Number
Madīnah	3
Yamāmah	2
Başrah	3
Unknown place of birth	2
Total	10

¹³¹⁶ Three of these female slaves were both singers and poets.

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