The Monk's Daughter and Her Suitor: An Egyptian Shadow Play of Interfaith Romance and Insanity

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The Egyptian shadow play commonly known as *ʿAlam wa-Taʿādīr* tells the story of a Coptic monk whose daughter falls in love with a Muslim merchant. Since its initial discovery in the 1900s, this remarkable play has slipped into oblivion. This article presents a survey of earlier research, an outline of the layers of the composite text based on all known textual and visual testimonies, an analysis of the building blocks—themed *zajal* song-cycles—and a summary of the sole working script that features dialogue as well. These findings will hopefully form a solid foundation for future research into this work, which in many ways is representative of Egyptian shadow plays in the Ottoman and early modern times.

INTRODUCTION: THE DISCOVERY

The shadow play is a theatrical art form with a rich history. In the nineteenth century, Western travelers and adventurers to Egypt reported on their experiences attending "shadow play shows"; but what they saw was actually *karagöz*, an imported genre performed in Turkish.[1] Scholars, on the other hand, began to notice the indigenous Arabic shadow play known as *khayāl al-ẓill*. At the turn of the twentieth century, with Georg Jacob (d. 1937) and Paul Kahle (d. 1964) at the helm,[2] German orientalists conducted fieldwork—discovering manuscripts, attending performances, and documenting them. While their research prioritized Ibn Dāniyāl's (d. 1310) work, the earliest surviving testimony to this art form,[3] attention was paid to later development as well. In 1903 Friedrich Kern (d. 1921) saw a shadow play titled *Liʿb al-bayt* (Play of the House) about the saga of a Coptic monk whose daughter falls in love

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1. E. Lane, *An Account of the Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians* (Cairo, 1836; revised ed. 1860); Ch. Didier, *Les nuits du Caire* (Paris, 1860); for the missionary Haussmann's witness, see W. M. Müller, "Zur Geschichte des arabischen Schattenspiels in Aegypten," *Orientalistische Literaturzeitung* 12 (1909): 342.

2. Georg Jacob was instrumental in spearheading German scholarship on the Arabic shadow play in Egypt, Syria, and Tunisia, as well as on the Turkish *karagöz*. From 1903 to 1909, Paul Kahle served as Lutheran minister and head of the German Oriental Institute in Cairo. Their bibliographies are extensive. Kahle's archives (including some of Jacob's papers) are now in the Paul Kahle Fonds (http://www.paulkahle.unito.it) at the University of Turin. For consistency, the transliteration in this article follows the Modern Standard convention, rather than that of colloquial Egyptian. For dialectical elements in Prüfer's script, I cite his transliteration as well (marked with CP).

3. L. Guo, "Ibn Dāniyāl," *Encyclopaedia of Islam THREE* (Leiden, 2016), 3: 131–33.

with a Muslim merchant. He published a synopsis, based on memory.[4] When Curt Prüfer (d. 1959) came to Cairo for doctoral research shortly afterward, he too set sights on this play. Prüfer made contact with the performer, Darwīsh al-Qashshāsh, a shadow master in Cairo's old town, and gained access to his notebooks. He presented a transcribed script, which he titled *Liʿb ed-dêr* (Play of the Monastery), accompanied by his own line drawings, and submitted it as his thesis at Erlangen, where Jacob taught.[5]

Regarding his source material, Prüfer wrote that in 1905 he saw several manuscripts at the shadow master's place, but was only allowed to view them for a short time.[6] Judging from the content, the primary codex upon which he based his edition is not among the eight surviving manuscripts described below. By all indications, Prüfer's manuscript, which contains poems not found elsewhere (more on this below) and dialogue that is entirely missing from all the eight known manuscripts, is unaccounted for today.[7]

During his stay in Cairo Paul Kahle obtained a manuscript of *zajal* poems for shadow plays from the same master. This *Dīwān kedes* (*kuds*, *kadas*) is attributed to several poets.[8] Among them is Dāwūd al-Munāwī, himself a shadow master, who once performed for the Ottoman sultan and wrote a poem about it.[9] Kahle also hunted down rare shadow play artifacts. Among the eighty-plus flat puppet figures he acquired in the Nile Delta village of al-Manzala, three depict the main characters of the play under discussion: the Monk, his daughter, and her suitor.[10]

German orientalists' work caught the attention of the Egyptian bibliophile, Aḥmad Taymūr (d. 1931),[11] who started his own acquisition in earnest: the well-known Taymūr Manuscripts and Rare Books Collection of the Egyptian National Library has six Ottoman and early modern shadow play manuscripts, three of which were owned by the aforementioned performer al-Qashshāsh.[12] It is apparent that the resourceful shadow master al-Qashshāsh

4. F. Kern, "Das egyptische Schattentheater," in *Spuren griechischer Mimen im Orient*, ed. J. Horovitz (Berlin, 1905), 98–104.

5. C. Prüfer, *Ein ägyptisches Schattenspiel* (Erlangen, 1906). Prüfer left academia shortly thereafter. For his life and work, see D. M. McKale, *Curt Prüfer: German Diplomat from the Kaiser to Hitler* (Kent, Ohio, 1987); A. Vrolijk, "From Shadow Theatre to the Empire of Shadows: The Career of Curt Prüfer, Arabist and Diplomat," *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 156,2 (2006): 369–78.

6. Prüfer, *Ägyptisches Schattenspiel*, xviii.

7. Prüfer made frequent corrections and left some lacunae (see pp. 32, 34, 36, 40, 48, 66, 70, 72, 74, 78, 88, 90, 92, 94, 100, 110, 112, 114, 116, 118, 120, 122, 124, 126, 134, 136, 138, and 140) without citing variations, indicating that he copied from a single source.

8. In the current Turin online database (above, n. 2), only a copy of the first seven folios bears the title *Dīwān kedes* (ARC_472)—and is catalogued under *dīwān*—whereas the original is listed in the category of "shadow play," with a different title (see below). Kahle also acquired another bundle of manuscripts. The etymology of *kedes* is unclear (*kadasa*, "to heap or pile up; press together"; *kuds*, "heap of herbage or grain"). Kahle rendered it as *Schattenspieldichtung.* See his *Zur Geschichte des arabischen Schattentheaters in Egypten* (Leipzig, 1909), 4, 9–10. The term was not listed in his "Eine Zunftsprache der ägyptischen Schattenspieler," *Islamica* 2 (1926–27): 312–22.

9. Kahle, *Zur Geschichte* (Ger. trans. and ed. of the poem on pp. 21–49). Al-Munāwī remarks that he "composed *al-kadas* and *al-manẓūm*" (a parallelism between "piled up" [*zajal* pieces] and "regimented" [*qaṣīda* poems]?) and performed shadow plays.

10. P. Kahle, "Islamische Schattenspielfiguren aus Egypten," *Der Islam* 2 (1911): 185–89.

11. Taymūr recalled his discussion of the origins of the Arabic shadow play with "a researcher at the German Oriental Institute" in "Khayāl al-ẓill," *al-Majalla al-salafiyya* 4 (1918): 77–81. His booklet on shadow plays and Arab visual arts was published posthumously (*Khayāl al-ẓill wa-l-luʿab wa-l-tamāthīl al-muṣawarra ʿinda al-ʿarab* [Cairo, 1957]). Taymūr prepared a table of contents for each manuscript and identified poems, relying upon his intimate knowledge of Egyptian popular culture and folk arts.

12. In 1932 Taymūr's large collection was given to the Egyptian National Library, then the Khedivial Library, whose prestigious directorship Prüfer had failed to obtain in 1911 over British opposition to his "spy activities"

showed the Germans and Taymūr different manuscripts, given that none mentioned the manuscripts reported by the others. Needless to say, there is no inventory of the shadow master's "archives."

After the initial discovery, the remarkable theatrical work of the Coptic monk and his daughter seems to have slipped into oblivion. Taymūr did not publish anything further, and while Kahle evidently planned to carry on, his research notes remain unfinished. In his 1993 encyclopedia of shadow plays, *Khayāl al-ẓill al-ʿarabī*, Fārūq Saʿd reintroduced the work to Arab readership, using two Taymūr manuscripts, as he had no access to Kahle's unpublished material.[13] Recently I was able to examine all six Taymūr manuscripts in Cairo and gain access to Kahle's papers in Turin. It is now time to move forward.

In what follows, I track the trajectory of the play from the seventeenth to the early twentieth century, detailing all known textual and visual testimonies. I document all the elements identified as that of the shadow play, mapping out the various layers of the composite core text. Through a comparison of the "working script" (via Prüfer's transcript, which only covers a fraction of the contents documented by the manuscripts) with the other texts, I discuss the transformations that shed light not only on the play itself, but also on the state of Egyptian shadow theatre in Ottoman and early modern times in general.

I. THE EIGHT KNOWN MANUSCRIPTS

1. (T1) Taymūr *shiʿr*, no. 785: *Kitāb al-Rawḍ al-waḍḍāḥ fī tahānī al-afrāḥ al-musammā bi-ijtimāʿ al-shaml fī fann khayāl al-ẓill* (The Luminous Garden of Joyful Songs, Known as Selected Lyrics from Shadow Plays)

The title(s) make clear that this was a book of poems for performers of shadow plays with special reference to selected scenes. The names of both Ḥasan and Darwīsh al-Qashshāsh, father and son, appear frequently. The randomly arranged verses belong to six plays, chief among them *ʿAlam wa-Taʿādīr*, after the two protagonists.[14] The manuscript is paginated. Consisting of 300 pages, it is made up of two volumes (sg. *kitāb*), in different hands and on various types of paper. The parts that cover *ʿAlam wa-Taʿādīr* are pp. 1–155 and 165–282, written in one hand. Long song-cycles are often marked with a phrase, or refrains, serving as heading. Loosely arranged in terms of the order of the overall narrative line, volume one deals with events before the protagonist's madness and volume two continues from there to the finale. Volume two also includes additional songs.

In addition to *ʿAlam wa-Taʿādīr*, the other shadow plays in the manuscript are *Abū Jaʿfar*, about the farcical rivalry between two countrymen; *Liʿb al-manār* (The Play of the Lighthouse [of Alexandria]), the townspeople's fights against the Crusading naval fleets; *Liʿb al-timsāḥ* (The Play of the Crocodile), about a fisherman's life; *Shaykh Sumaysim*, a Sufi master's dealings with a landowning woman; and *al-Ḥajjiyya* (The Pilgrimage Tale), a comic take on the treacherous journey.[15]

during the Turco-Italian war; for this library incident, see McKale, *Curt Prüfer*, 20–24; Vrolijk, "From Shadow Theatre," 374.

13. F. Saʿd, *Khayāl al-ẓill al-ʿarabī* (Beirut, 1993), 344–64.

14. This play title, which I will use henceforth, appears in different manuscripts with slight variations. The protagonists' names are unconventional. For a discussion of their symbolism, see below. The poems (*azjāl*) were intended to be sung and will therefore also be called songs in what follows.

15. Kahle published the third and second titles respectively: *Das Krokodilspiel (Liʿb et-timsāḥ): Ein egyptisches Schattenspiel* (Göttingen, 1915) and *Das moderne Leuchtturmspiel* (Stuttgart, 1928; another version is *Der Leuchtturm von Alexandria: Ein arabisches Schattentheater aus dem mittelalterlichen Ägypten* [Stuttgart, 1930]).

2. (T2) Taymūr *shiʿr*, no. 970: *al-Sirmāṭa fī azjāl khayāl al-ẓill* (A Collection of Shadow Play Songs)

Aḥmad Taymūr had remarked that *zajal* songs from shadow plays were collected in anthologies known as *sirmāṭa* (*surmāṭa*), of which he possessed several.[16] The songs in this collection can be linked to five shadow plays, chief among them *ʿAlam wa-Taʿādīr*. Different hands are witnessed, as the clusters are arranged randomly. The opening song introduces the presenter (*muqaddim*) as "Ḥasan Qashshāsh and his son Darwīsh Qashshāsh." The manuscript, paginated, has headings that highlight the scenes. The play is divided into four clusters: pp. 1–31; 66–122; 164–81; and 187–203. The clusters are not arranged in any particular order, for the first and second overlap in content. Compared with T1, this codex is much leaner; yet it offers elements not witnessed in the former. Noteworthy is the second cluster, which offers the most detailed headings for the songs and is in essence a condensed version of the complete work.

Other shadow plays found in the manuscript are *Shaykh Sumaysim*, *Liʿb al-timsāḥ*, *Liʿb al-shūnī* (The Play of the Boating), about a disastrous ride by a raucous group crossing the Nile,[17] and *Abū Jaʿfar*.

3. (T3) Taymūr *shiʿr*, no. 666: *Majmūʿ* (Songbook)

On the corner of the title page is a note by Taymūr that the shadow master al-Qashshāsh was also a poet (*nāẓim*) of the anthology, "whose home was at the corner of the Amīr al-Juyūsh marketplace," a stone's throw from the Khan al-Khalili bazaar. The table of contents lists sixty-six *zajal* poems, by al-Shaykh Suʿūd, ʿAlī al-Naḥla, and Dāwūd al-Munāwī al-ʿAṭṭār, showcasing a wide range: love songs and panegyrics (religious and political) for weddings, festivals, and other public celebrations. The manuscript has folio numbers. Three song-cycles from the play, under the rubric "The Sane and the Insane," are included on fols. 94r–104r; 138v–41v; and 150v–52v respectively.

4. (T4) Taymūr *shiʿr*, no. 776: *Safīnat zajal madḥ fī al-nabī* (A Collection of *zajal* Songs in Praise of the Prophet)

Both title page and colophon identify the manuscript as *safīnat zajal*, namely, a songbook in oblong format, like a ship (*safīna*), with the lines running horizontal to the spine. The colophon contains a date of completion: 13 Muḥarram 1301 (15 November 1883), and the name of the scribe and owner, Muḥammad Jād [ibn] Mūsā. Among the sixty-six song-cycles contained herein, two are from "The Sane and the Insane" (pp. 57–60, 173–87). The manuscript is paginated, written in a disciplined and diligent hand.

5. (T5) Taymūr *shiʿr*, no. 667: *Majmūʿ* (Songbook)

In light of the similarities of this codex with T4 and T6, the provenance could be traced to Muḥammad Jād. The anthology consists of mostly devotional, and some didactic, poems. Of the sixty-four song-cycles featured, two were used for *ʿAlam wa-Taʿādīr*: one from "The Sane and the Insane" (pp. 103–27; two missing pages were later inserted between pp. 126 and 127) and one from "Taʿādīr and the Devil (*ʿifrīt*)" (pp. 214–28). The manuscript is paginated, written in a very elegant hand, with detailed headings.

16. "Khayāl al-ẓill," 81. The rare word *sirmāṭa* is not found in any of the classical lexica. For the root meaning of *s-r-m-ṭ* and the derived jargons, "writings of amulets," "book," see Kahle, "Zunftsprache," 318; C. E. Bosworth, *The Medieval Islamic Underworld: The Banū Sāsān in Arabic Society and Literature*, 2 vols. (Leiden, 1976), 2: 250–51 (AD, v. 76).

17. C. Prüfer, "Das Schiffsspiel: Ein Schattenspiel aus Kairo," in *Münchener Beiträge zur Kenntniss des Orients* 2 (1906): 155–69.

6. (T6) Taymūr *shiʿr*, no. 668: *Majmūʿ azjāl qadīma* (Songbook of Old *zajal* Poems)
The colophon states that copying was completed in 1300*h* (1882) by Muḥammad Jād ibn Mūsā, the same copyist and owner of T4 and probably T5. Composed of 105 folios, written in the same *naskh* hand throughout, it contains one song-sequence from "The Sane and the Insane" (pp. 48–53).

7. (K1) Kahle MSB12: *ʿAlam wa-Taʿādīr* "A"
A collection of *zajal* poems by three shadow players of the seventeenth century, al-Shaykh Suʿūd, ʿAlī al-Naḥla, and Dāwūd al-Munāwī al-ʿAṭṭār, who compiled the anthology. A note on the manuscript dated the completion of its copying in 1119*h* (1707). This ought to be the original *Dīwān kedes*. The manuscript was broken up into several incomplete clusters, with non-successive pagination. *ʿAlam wa-Taʿādīr* is the longest of the various plays (comprising 171 out of 215 folios).

8. (K2) Kahle, multiple manuscript fragments of *ʿAlam wa-Taʿādīr*[18]
Loose manuscript leaves related to *ʿAlam wa-Taʿādīr*, which (or some of them) should be from the fragments Kahle acquired in al-Manzala, kept in various folders. (1) MSB16: Twenty-six leaves, kept inside a blue cardboard envelope, bearing the title (as written by Kahle) *al-juzʾ al-khāmis min riwāyat ʿAlam wa-Taʿādīr*; (2) MSB15: Eight leaves in different hands and sizes of paper, kept inside a blue cardboard folder, bearing the title *al-juzʾ al-sādis min riwāyat ʿAlam wa-Taʿādīr*; (3) MSB17: Twenty folios in two quires that contain parts of the play, as stated on a paper band (by Kahle). Leaves are approximately of the same size, but the text was written by different hands; (4) MSB30: Twenty-four folios containing parts of the play.

Thus, of the eight surviving manuscripts, four (T1, T2, K1, K2) deal with shadow plays exclusively and four (T3, T4, T5, T6) are general anthologies of *zajal* poetry. Here we witness a shift in the ways of preservation that reflect the changing times and new needs. Altogether, these songbooks were multi-functional: they could be consulted for shadow theatre as well as for other forms of performance in ritual and didactic settings—wedding celebrations, street variety shows, and Sufi audition sessions.

This is also where the Ottoman and the Mamluk practices diverge, exemplified by Ibn Dāniyāl's tomes, which contain complete literary texts, in both verse and rhymed prose. Likewise, the older term for shadow play, *bāba*, was no longer used in the post-Mamluk era. In its stead are terms such as *liʿb* ("play") or *faṣl* ("act") under the general heading of *khayāl al-ẓill* or *fann al-khayāl* ("shadow play"), as recorded on title pages and colophons of the manuscripts examined. It remains to be seen to what extent the change in terminology reflected the changing mechanism in composing and preserving shadow plays. The above observations do point to a trend of "stockpiling," with multiple-authorship, in text production. While the original playwright might be Dāwūd al-Munāwī of the seventeenth century, credit must also be given to other poet-cum-shadow masters, ʿAlī al-Naḥla, al-Shaykh Suʿūd, all the way down to Ḥasan al-Qashshāsh and his son Darwīsh of the twentieth century.

18. Two manuscripts, currently catalogued as *ʿAlam wa-Taʿādīr* "B" (MSB13) and "C" (MSB14) respectively, were put by Kahle into folders, on which he wrote the title *Qūr u Qibs* and the first verse of the different parts and their subdivision. My recent examination convinces me that most of the poems are from the play *Abū Jaʿfar* instead (Qibs is one of the protagonists). Only a few folios are of *ʿAlam wa-Taʿādīr* (MSB13, five out of sixty; MSB14, thirty out of eighty). In the current Turin database, Kahle's drafts and notes related to *ʿAlam wa-Taʿādīr* are catalogued under both *ʿAlam wa-Taʿādīr* (ARC_433, ARC_434, ARC_436; ARC_437, and ARC_438) and *ʿĀqil wa-Majnūn* (The Sane and the Insane) (ARC_441, ARC_442, and ARC_443). Caution is warranted.

The new approach stemmed perhaps from needs on the ground. Aḥmad Taymūr recalls that *ʿAlam wa-Taʿādīr* "was performed at coffee houses in Cairo and could stretch to seven nights. A shortened version could also be done for one evening's entertainment."[19] Creating shadow plays in Ottoman times had become a dynamic on-going process of material being added over time and on demand. It is perhaps safe to say that there were no finished plays or "scripts" in the form of a complete text with a single author, as is the case with Ibn Dāniyāl and his *bāba*s.

II. THE ARCHEOLOGY OF THE TEXT: THE PLAY AND ITS COMPOSITION HISTORY

To begin with a brief plot summary: Taʿādīr,[20] a merchant of Turk origin and a heavy drinker, tries to buy wine at a Coptic monastery, and is confronted by the monk Munajjā.[21] When a fight breaks out, the monk's daughter, ʿAlam,[22] rushes out to intervene. Smitten, Taʿādīr begins to pursue her relentlessly, in various disguises. She toys with him yet remains elusive. He builds a garden opposite the monastery and then sets it on fire out of frustration. For that he is jailed and then sent to a mental hospital, where he stays for seven years until a doctor from Baghdad cures him of madness and his heavy drinking. Taʿādīr goes back to his beloved only to find that the monk has died. ʿAlam converts to Islam and the couple goes on pilgrimage. On the site of the monastery (now in ruins) a mansion is built and the couple settles there with celebratory fanfare and ʿAlam's lavish trousseau (*jihāz*).

Of the eight manuscripts examined, five (T1, T2, T3, K1, K2) came from, or were associated with, the Qashshāsh family, and three (T4, T5, T6) originally belonged to Muḥammad Jād. They contain substantial elements from *ʿAlam wa-Taʿādīr*, attesting to its prominence in the repertory, but as mentioned, none can claim to be complete—they are either collections of shadow play songs (K1, K2), exclusively shadow play songbooks (T1, T2), or general anthologies of *zajal* poetry (T3, T4, T5, T6), which could also be sung. None of these manuscripts contains dialogue. Verses (songs) arranged in loose order serve as a narrative vehicle to tell stories.

With a few exceptions, all verses are of the *zajal* form. Each stanza (*dawr*, pl. *adwār*) consists of five lines, with the rhyming scheme of *aaabb*. There are other non-classical vernacular forms such as *bullayq* (*ballīq*) and *mawāliyā*.[23] As a rule, a *dawr* is not to be treated as a single "song." Rather, several form a unit, and are performed as solos, duets, and occasionally group singing. A song—more accurately, a song-cycle—is thus made up of a

19. Taymūr, *Khayāl al-ẓill*, 23–24.

20. I was told by a PhD student from Turkey working on satire in Ottoman Turkish *karagöz* that this is not a recognizable Turkish name. In Ottoman Turkish, *taʿzīr* (< Ar. *taʿdhīr*) means "a being without excuse" (Redhouse), as in "useless, good for nothing (?)." Kern spelled the protagonist's name as Taqādīr, which makes no sense either.

21. The name is given different vocalizations: *munajjā* (*minajjā*, T2; *menagge*, Prüfer), or *manja* (*minja, manja*, T1). Munajjā (Saved One) is a genuine Arab male name, if not commonly seen.

22. The Arabic word *ʿalam* ("sign, mark, banner"; pl. *aʿlām*) often denotes a "primary name." The noun *ʿalam* itself is not a proper name; so she is virtually nameless. It is not a recognizable Coptic female name. (My informant was a historian of the Egyptian Coptic Church.) Generally speaking, names in Arabic popular literature are often symbolic, aimed at satire and humor. For the use of "funny names" in Mamluk shadow plays, see L. Guo, *The Performing Arts in Medieval Islam: Shadow Play and Popular Poetry in Ibn Dāniyāl's Mamluk Cairo* (Leiden, 2012), 127–30; for similar, and more elaborate, samples in Ottoman popular narratives, see Yūsuf al-Shirbīnī, *Brains Confounded by the Ode of Abū Shādūf Expounded*, ed. and tr. H. Davies, 2 vols. (New York, 2016), 1: 22–29.

23. For recent research on non-classical, or non-canonic, Arabic poetry, see M. Larkin, "Popular Poetry in the Post-Classical Period, 1150–1850," in *Arabic Literature in the Post-Classical Period*, ed. R. Allen and D. S. Richards (Cambridge, 2006), 191–242; H. Özkan, "The Drug Zajals in Ibrāhīm al-Miʿmār's Dīwān," *Mamlūk Studies Review* 17 (2013): 212–48.

handful of *adwār*; the longest consists of fifty. These song-cycles, called *jumal zajal* in the manuscripts, form the building blocks. Narrative units are designated by headings marked on the manuscripts. These headings, or subtitles, indicate the theme, scene, and moral of a given song-cycle.

A typical song-cycle is composed of an opening (*maṭlaʿ*, a couplet), the main content (*adwār*, multiple stanzas), and a closing, the last-mentioned usually including praise (*madīḥ*), supplication (*istighfār*), and the poet's signature (*istishhād*). A scene is often made up of several song-cycles, introduced by a solo general opening (*istiqbāla*, or *istiqbāla qabliyya*) or, on occasion, a joint opening in duet (*istiqbāla mushtaraka*).[24] Variations occur in different manuscripts, and also in different clusters within one manuscript, which is most often made up of several notebooks loosely bound together. Often, songs are numbered within each song-cycle. A few notebooks offer more detailed subtitles (as stage instructions) than others, and some contain minor alternatives, for example, *Dawr hazl wa-dawr jidd* (The Teasing and the Serious) replacing the more common *Dawr al-ʿāqil wa-dawr al-majnūn* (The Sane and the Insane).

As mentioned above, the poet's name is embedded within the text, usually at the end in *al-istishhād*, "[the poet's] signature witness." In light of this textual convention and taking into account other evidence, I am able to establish various layers of the composite text. In the documentation that has come down to us, the three primary building blocks of the entire play are given headings in the manuscripts of *Awṣāf al-qāʿa* (Descriptions of House [and Garden of the Monastery]), *al-Sakrān wa-l-sakra* (The Drunk and the Drunkenness), and *al-ʿĀqil wa-l-majnūn* (The Sane and the Insane). Attributed to three poets—Dāwūd al-Munāwī al-ʿAṭṭār, ʿAlī al-Naḥla, and al-Shaykh Suʿūd—they form the base, or earliest layer, of the play. Additional songs by later contributors, including father and son al-Qashshāsh, are clustered around these three base blocks.

According to Qashshāsh family lore, *ʿAlam wa-Taʿādīr* had a Syrian–Palestinian genesis. The opening song refers to the original playwright as one "ʿAlī Saʿd, a shadow master (*rayyis*) from Syria, now calling Cairo home." It also mentions that "this play had not been seen in Egypt (*infaqada min Miṣr hādhā al-khayāl*) for many years" before "[Ḥasan al-]Qashshāsh picked it up (*jābahu*)." Taymūr was informed, most likely by Darwīsh al-Qashshāsh, that the protagonist was named ʿUmar in "the old play."[25] At one point, the protagonist refers to himself as having "hailed from Jerusalem (*al-Quds*), my real hometown."[26] The change from an Arab named ʿUmar to a Turk named Taʿādīr made perfect sense if the targeted audience of Cairo was Ottoman. It is therefore very likely that the original text already featured the basic storylines, possibly with the songs composed in the seventeenth century. A further subtle touch is reflected in the lovesick and drunken Turk being cured by a physician-cum-wise man (*ḥakīm*) from Baghdad—the geo-cultural gravity of Iraq, the cradle of classical Arabo-Islamic learning, now geared toward a Turko-Arab Ottoman Cairo. In this connection, it is just another smart element in the overall entertaining-cum-didactic grand design for the play as a whole.

The central role of the songs is characterized, in the opening statement, as "in this play, men of letters (*ahl al-adab*) tell a story through *zajal* [poems]."[27] I have identified more than twenty poets who contributed to the making of the text, in three chronological layers:

24. For consistency, all the Arabic terms are taken from T1. Noticeable variations from other manuscripts will be indicated as they occur.

25. Taymūr, *Khayāl al-ẓill*, 23–24.

26. See below, song-cycle C.4.4 (the "lamp peddler").

27. See below, song-cycle A.2.

First layer, 1600–1700: Dāwūd al-Munāwī al-ʿAṭṭār; ʿAlī al-Naḥla; al-Shaykh Suʿūd.

Second layer, 1800–1900: Balʿūṭī; ʿAlī al-Nāẓim; Abū l-Khadam; ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Niẓāmī; Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Ḥarīr; Rajab; ʿAlī al-Najjār; Ṣiyām; ʿAlī b. al-Fallāḥ; a blind poet named Ḥammād; Ibn ʿAjwa; Ibrāhīm; Aḥmad (Aḥmad Muḥammad); ʿUthmān Maddūkh (Muwaddakh?);[28] Ḥasan al-Qashshāsh.

Final touch, 1900s: Darwīsh al-Qashshāsh.

Dates for two of the poets—Ibn Ḥassān (Ḥassān), shadow master,[29] and ʿAffān—are unknown.

The first layer was responsible for the songs of the framing stories, *al-Sakrān wa-l-sakra* and *al-ʿĀqil wa-l-majnūn*, along with *Awṣāf al-qāʿa*. The later layers add the songs of a section I am calling Wonders of Cairo, in accordance with genre convention, and various new ones to each thematic block, to which I turn.

III. *ʿALAM WA-TAʿĀDĪR*: DRAMATURGICAL TROPES IN SONG-CYCLES

By design, the three major blocks of songs underline the three intertwined tropes of the play—interfaith romance, illicit drinking, and insane love—playing out in three main loci: inside the monastery, at the door of the monastery, and in the mental hospital. The three tropes hang on a common thread, that of borderline transgressions, to be cured or redeemed. While drinking and insane love are stock themes in classical Arabic literature, interfaith romance is less common.

The first layer of the text, traced to a set of poems made for shadow plays by three seventeenth-century poets, was added to over time. Each later version offers a vantage point from which to examine the presentation of interfaith relations in popular literature and culture at a particular juncture in history. While the protagonists' redemptive trajectory carries the overarching theme of Islamic triumph (with the formulaic pilgrimage-as-a-cure-for-all trope), it is the Coptic propensity for building, making, and appreciating fine things in life that constitutes the main attractions of the play, in which the beautiful facade, interior, garden, and, above all, the young lady behind the curtains become the object of the admiring gaze, and infatuation, from outside. Much can be said about this theme and its presentation once a solid textual foundation is established.

In preparation for a critical edition, the layout of the song-cycles below is aimed at piecing together the main narrative structure of the play and documenting variations found in the manuscripts. Since each song-cycle was meant to be envisioned as a scene on the screen, the frequency of its textual appearance is therefore an indicator of the overall importance of a given scene (see the appendix, below, for the distribution of song-cycles among the manuscripts). Since the two Kahle codices are accessible,[30] I confine myself to the six Taymūr manuscripts. A total of some fifty-five song-cycles are identified as belonging to *ʿAlam wa-Taʿādīr*. Most are from T1, with a few exclusively from T2 (marked with an * below). The order of songs in each manuscript is loose, but not totally arbitrary. In light of the original headings (primarily in T1; noticeable variations will be marked as they occur), I group the songs into five clusters: "The Monastery," "The Drunk and the Drunkenness," "The Sane and the Insane," to be bookended by Prelude and Epilogue. I assigned letters to

28. The date of 1275*h* (1858) is found in T3 (Table of Contents).

29. "Based in Damietta": T1 (Table of Contents).

30. See nn. 8 and 18, above. These codices are nevertheless valuable in their own right, for they contain substantial exclusive materials, albeit largely incomplete.

each rubric cluster and numbers to each song-cycle, with a second number indicating a subcycle, or individual songs.

A. Prelude (*madīḥ*)
  A.1. The Presenter (*muqaddim*)[31] opens his show (*kalām al-muqaddim fī ibtidāʾ shughlihi*) by elucidating the moral and didactic values of the shadow play.
  A.2. The Presenter salutes the audience (*madīḥ*). Narjis (Narcissus), Taʿādīr's son, promises a love story about his parents. The Presenter's sidekick, al-Rikhm,[32] and his associates, Abū Ḥirdān and Abū Qarmīṭ, join in.[33]
  A.3. "Wonders of Cairo," songs on landmarks. This added cluster of songs highlights the *ziyāra* motif, namely, "visitation to sites associated with Muslim saints." One (A.3.2) was actually used as the protagonist's opening song in Prüfer's version (see below) instead of the generic ones.
    A.3.1. Opening song with Ramadan celebrations (*istiqbālat luzūm shahr ramaḍān*).[34]
    A.3.2. "Praising the Best Two [Prophet's grandsons]"; the shrine of al-Ḥusayn.
    A.3.3. "Praising al-Sayyida Zaynab"; the eponymous shrine.
    A.3.4. "The Miracles (*karāmāt*) of Abū l-ʿIlāʾ"; the saint for whom the neighborhood of Būlāq Abū l-ʿIlāʾ is known and who is buried in the eponymous mosque there known by the name of Sulṭān Abū al-ʿIlāʾ.
  A.4. "Love," songs on love and lovesickness.
    A.4.1. "The Bliss of Love."
    A.4.2. "Advice on Ideal Behavior," duets between the doctor and the lovesick one.
  A.5. Opening, various monologues and duets.
    A.5.1. The Presenter's opening I: the story and the genesis of the play.
    A.5.2. Taʿādīr's opening (*istiqbāla min al-ʿarīs*).
    A.5.3. The Presenter's opening II: general panegyric (*qaṣīda*).
    A.5.4. The Presenter greets Taʿādīr.
    A.5.5. The Presenter's opening III.

B. The Monastery (*dayr*)
  B.1. Monk's opening (*al-istiqbāla al-masīḥiyya*): "O Jesus, the apostle of God . . ."
  B.2. Taʿādīr knocks on the door of the monastery and is confronted by the Monk.
    B.2.1. Opening duets I (*al-istiqbāla al-mushtaraka*); al-Rikhm joins in.
    B.2.2.* Opening duets II: Taʿādīr and the Monk argue over wine prices.
    B.2.3.* Taʿādīr's opening, asking for God's forgiveness.
    B.2.4. Taʿādīr comes back, demanding wine I.
    B.2.5.* Taʿādīr demands wine II.
  B.3. House and Garden. Taʿādīr marvels at what he sees inside the opulent monastery and the lush garden. Each *dawr*-stanza describes one of the following: door; inside the door; daises (*lawāwīn*); curtains; carpet; wall; roof; garret windows (*qamārī*); stone masonry; looking through the windows (garden view); garden (*bustān*); hazelnuts; fragrant flowers; herbs; trees; and birds.

31. Following age-old tradition, an Arabic shadow play is narrated by a *muqaddim*, who opens the play, tells the story, and often interacts with the characters with the help of his sidekick, al-Rikhm or the like.

32. A physically disabled clown in Egyptian shadow plays; *al-kābis* in the manuscripts.

33. Except for the Presenter and al-Rikhm, other characters do not reenter the play. More research is needed to determine what the relation of this prelude is to the ending (E) featuring the Demon and Genie, who do not appear in the play either. Attributed to al-Munāwī, these two cycles form the oldest framing story.

34. Presumably this song would be included in a performance during Ramadan.

C. The Drunk and the Drunkenness (*al-sakrān wa-l-sakra*)
C.1. Falling in love, ʿAlam (Drunkenness) and Taʿādīr (Drunk).
C.1.1. Drunk to Drunkenness.
C.1.2. Drunk's song.
C.1.3. Description of ʿAlam I (*mawāliyā*).
C.1.4. Description of ʿAlam II (*qaṣīda*).
C.1.5.* Description of ʿAlam III.
C.2. Confessing love, Taʿādīr to ʿAlam (various verse genres).
C.2.1. At the door of the monastery.
C.2.2. Confesses love.
C.2.3. Yearns for the absent beloved (*takhmīs*).
C.2.4. Laments the pain of separation I (various rhyming schemes).
C.2.5. Laments the pain of separation II.
C.2.6.* Monologue ("My heart is full of love").
C.3. Love duets (*tadallul*).
C.3.1. Love duets.
C.3.2. ʿAlam to Taʿādīr.
C.3.3.* Love duets ("My heart is burning").
C.4. Chasing I: Showing off.
C.4.1. To lure ʿAlam, Taʿādīr envisions the house he plans to build and the presents he will buy: tablecloths, bedding, mirrors, jewelry. He then boasts about his talents in crafts, medicine, tailoring, writing, and furnishing.
C.4.2. Among his skills are languages. Taʿādīr tries on "seven languages" to impress: Turkish, Albanian (*arnawūṭī*), Persian, Abyssinian, Berber, Byzantine Greek (*rūmī*), and Syriac.
C.5. Chasing II: The "trick" (*ḥīla*). Frustrated, Taʿādīr has turned to more drastic means. In disguises, he peddles in front of the monastery and flirts with ʿAlam, who continues to toy with him, taking all his wares for free. A Moroccan, another staple of devil's advocate in Egyptian shadow plays, and al-Rikhm, the clown, offer him advice how to pull off the tricks.
C.5.1. Taʿādīr chases after ʿAlam (*ṭarda*).
C.5.2. Taʿādīr in front of the monastery, peddling.
C.5.3. ʿAlam teases the "peddler" about his goose.
C.5.4. Taʿādīr describes lamps and pottery.
C.5.5. The Moroccan's tricks (*zajal* and *bullayq*).
C.5.6. ʿAlam and Taʿādīr argue over chicken and milk.
C.5.7. Al-Rikhm lends Taʿādīr a helping hand.
C.5.8. Taʿādīr lures ʿAlam to come out.
C.6. Marriage proposal.
C.6.1. Taʿādīr contemplates the pros and cons of marriage (*fī dhamm al-zawāj*).
C.6.2. The Presenter advises the groom on the eve of the wedding.[35]

D. The Sane and the Insane (*al-ʿāqil wa-l-majnūn*)
A series of songs, attributed to multiple poets, are lumped together under this heading and depict various scenes. This cluster of songs is found in all of the manuscripts, including the non-shadow play anthologies.

35. The heading is after T1 (fols. 257–61). T2 (fols. 27–31) has a slightly different heading: "The hashish addict sings (to the Presenter)." Attributed to Ḥassān.

D.1. Taʿādīr is in despair, contemplating his lovesickness and drinking problems.[36]
D.2. Paradise lost.
D.2.1. Taʿādīr builds a garden (*janīna*), a paradise vs. the garden (*bustān*) in the monastery.
D.2.2. ʿAlam calls on Taʿādīr to join her in the garden (*bullayq*).
D.2.3. Taʿādīr describes his garden, especially the fruits in it (vs. the garden in the monastery, with flowers and trees).
D.2.4. Taʿādīr describes birds in his garden.
D.3. Madness. Taʿādīr expresses his despair over his "incurable illness," alcoholism and lovesickness.
D.3.1. Verging on insanity.[37]
D.3.2. Madly in unfulfilled love, he sets the garden on fire.
D.3.3. Love and repent.
D.4. In Jail. Taʿādīr is put in jail, "chained in iron rod, naked." A warden, ʿArfatha, refers him to Dr. Kāmil (Dr. Perfect) from Baghdad. In his speech, Taʿādīr switches between two voices, one sane, the other insane.
D.5. In Mental Hospital.
D.5.1. Taʿādīr wakes up, looking for deliverance.
D.5.2. He insists that he is sane, rather has gone mad from love. The doctor responds, "If you are in your right mind, then count the days and months on the calendar for me; and show me all the things you know, regarding learning (*ʿulūm*), knowledge (*maʿrifa*), and wisdom (*ḥikma*)." Taʿādīr is tipped into a burst of maniac erudition, showing off his encyclopedic knowledge. The song-cycle, with fifty *adwār*, covers a wide range of topics (note the order): Calendar (weekdays; Arab, Copt, and "Byzantine" months); Faith (*īmān*, Islam in general, "The Five Pillars"; law; the four law schools; ritual purifications); Hadith (collections, transmitters); Quran (chapters; commentaries); Philology (grammar and rhetoric, poetry and the *Maqāmāt*); Magic and Astrology; Love and Lovesickness (medicine); Sports and Leisure. The therapy-through-speech sessions finally cure him.

E. Epilogue
E.1.* "Ghosts talk"; trios among Taʿādīr, Demon (*al-ʿIfrīt*), and Genie.

IV. PRÜFER'S SCRIPT, "THE MONASTERY," IN PERFORMANCE

As the documentation above shows, the surviving manuscripts demonstrate a broad tradition of a body of material, loosely organized into song-cycles, that displays a great amount of diversity and variety over time.[38] At its base is a seventeenth-century story that appears to be dark (addiction, madness), fatalistic (the ghosts of the past and hereafter), and semi-scholastic (lengthy segments on encyclopedic knowledge, discourse of insanity). How did this kind of material entertain the audience in a theatre? In this regard, Prüfer's transcript—or more accurately, Darwīsh's script—may offer some answers.

Two salient features of this transcript are to be noted. First is the dialogue, which is absent from all known manuscripts. Second is a structural streamlining. While the basic storyline remained intact, the entire sub-plot of "The Sane and the Insane" and the "ghosts" (the son,

36. Attributed to Aḥmad.
37. Attributed to ʿAffān.
38. I have one of the *JAOS* reviewers to thank for this insight and verbatim sentence.

Genie, and Demon) were omitted. In their stead is an elaborate love story, leading to the triumphal finale. In this version, substantial new elements—melodramatic scenes ridden with comic banter and ridiculous farce—were incorporated into the old framework. Since it has never been analyzed in detail, and Prüfer's German translation is not readily available, I present the transcript with my own translation of the Arabic text, highlighting selected passages of dialogue. I divide the text into five scenes.

1. The Presenter vs. the Monk: Building a Monastery

The Presenter (*al-muqaddim*; *almeqaddim* CP) welcomes the audience and meets the Monk. After exchanging greetings (A.5.3),[39] they get into a dispute over a building project:

Presenter: What do you want from me?
Monk: I've heard there is a *meqaddim* [also, "dealer [in goods]"].[40]
Presenter: What about him?
Monk: I want him to show me a piece of land, so I can build a monastery in the area.
Presenter: Build a monastery next to Muslims' houses?
Monk: Why not? Doesn't money buy everything?[41]

They argue over the means to fetch the landlord who lives at a distance: by camel, horse, or horse carriage? "Not fast enough," the Presenter declares. Far from being a *meqaddim* (here, "advancer"), he is rather a *muʾakhkhir* ("slacker"; *me'aḫḫir* CP), he admits. He decides on an ox, to which the Monk winces: "Oh yeah, an ox ride is such a feat—one step forward and a hundred back." The zingers and put-downs hint at the mutual mistrust: one is eager to build the monastery and the other reluctant to comply.

When the Presenter comes to the newly built monastery to collect commissions owed him, the Monk and his son, Paul (*Būlus*), refuse. The Monk ridicules the Presenter, who "claims to be a *meqaddim* (here, "provider"), yet charges fees!" The Presenter threatens legal action. The Monk's mother suggests payment in kind—a dog. The Presenter leaves and uses the dog to "pay" for beverages, food, and clothing at various establishments. Unleashed, the dog runs away.

2. Taʿādīr vs. the Monk: Selling Wine

The Presenter introduces Taʿādīr, who in turn sings about the virtues of the Ḥusayn shrine in downtown Cairo (A.3.2), and then proceeds to reveal what really brings him here: booze. Bent on revenge against the monastery, the Presenter encourages Taʿādīr to get wine there "with tricks." The young Turk finds himself confronting a hostile camp:

People in the Monastery: Who is this, knocking on the door?
Taʿādīr: Hi, brothers! Some said there is a monk; but this place is such a dungeon, full of scumbags.
Paul: Alas, father, looks like the devil wearing a fez is here!
Taʿādīr: Oh no, boy! I only come here to get a jar of wine from you guys.
Monk: Who told you we have wine?

39. Generic songs are marked by the letters and numbers assigned above.
40. This is the beginning of an elaborate set of puns stemming from the root *q-d-m*.
41. Prüfer, *Ägyptisches Schattenspiel*, 12–14.

Taʿādīr: Your customers, who get drunk every night at your place. I asked around, and they led me to this monastery.
Monk: Oh, no, no. Get your wine at the Jewish Quarter, or the Yellow Lane![42]

After some back-and-forth, they start another round of bickering, over prices (too expensive), the quality of *mezza* ("nothing but mule's guts"), even the manner in which to serve wine: Taʿādīr is so drunk, he can reach for the glass only while lying on the ground. Angry about the "empty glass" (he actually drank it every time it was full), Taʿādīr plucks the Monk's beard. Paul watches in horror. The Presenter, hiding behind the wall, plots more revenge.

Taʿādīr comes back at night. The Monk suspects that the drunk at the door resembles the one who beat him up earlier (B.2.2). Taʿādīr denies this and is allowed in. He marvels at the hall and garden (B.3). The Monk recognizes Taʿādīr and presses him to pay for the wine. Taʿādīr refuses. A fight breaks out again.

3. ʿAlam and Taʿādīr: Falling in Love

ʿAlam, Monk's daughter, rushes out, screaming at the attacker:

ʿAlam: Who is beating my father up? Hey, you thug, you beat my father—you'll be struck on the arm, God willing!
Monk: Gimme the money!
Taʿādīr: By the Prophet, shut up! Let the young lady curse. Her cursing makes my body tremble. . . .
Monk: Hey, you talk to me, not my daughter![43]

However, the daughter appears to have other plans:

ʿAlam: Let's go, sir, we better go to your place.
Taʿādīr: O sister, what are we going to do in *my* place?
ʿAlam: So you may bury your head under this pretty dress tail.
Taʿādīr: O lady, a man must keep his cool.[44]

Taʿādīr bribes Paul to make arrangements to sneak his sister out. He confesses his love (C.2.6). Once they get to his house, Taʿādīr says that his mother took the key. ʿAlam urges him to jump over the wall, or smash the window; he is unable to. They turn to other ways to meet.

As planned, Taʿādīr comes to the monastery in varying disguises: a repairman of household items, a baker selling sweets on camelback (and invites ʿAlam for a ride), a milkman, and a chicken farmer.

Taʿādīr proposes to ʿAlam. He starts with a warning against marriage (C.6.1), yet concludes that "It's not good for a woman to stay a virgin." To this ʿAlam replies:

ʿAlam: Women are all alike, brother. Some of us will get married any way [we can].
Taʿādīr: Well, I will marry you. But you must convert to Islam.
ʿAlam: You keep your faith, and I mine!

42. Ibid., 40–42. The Yellow Lane (*al-darb al-aṣfar*) was the commerce district in Cairo's old town, near Khan al-Khalili and Amīr al-Juyūsh Street.

43. Ibid., 58–60.

44. Literally, "a man's weight is measured by his brain"; ibid., 62–64.

Taʿādīr: Nah. We mustn't mix up Islam with other faiths.
ʿAlam: In Islam, what do they say?
Taʿādīr: They say: "With [my] heart and by [my] tongue, I testify that there is no god but Allāh, and that Muḥammad is his messenger."
ʿAlam: Gosh, this is heavy on my tongue.
Taʿādīr: Hey, sister! It's just that you convert to Islam so my fellow Muslims will accept you.
ʿAlam: What's wrong with you, boy! I convert to Islam and abandon my father and people of the monastery?[45]

4. ʿAlam vs. People of the Monastery: Confrontation and Reconciliation

ʿAlam argues with her father and brother over Taʿādīr's marriage proposal. The Monk warns of the consequences:

Monk: ʿAlam, those Muslims, their religion is wide (*wāsiʿ/wâsiʻ* CP).
ʿAlam: Father, better than one that's narrow (*al-dīn al-ḍayyiq/eddîn eddaijik* CP). What does "wide" mean anyway?
Monk: It means that in Islam, marriages and divorces are all okay. A man can have four wives altogether.
ʿAlam: I'm cool with that. What's the problem?
Monk: O, you daughter of a pig! I fear the talk in the monastery![46]

They continue to argue:

ʿAlam: You are dearest to me. I would never mean to upset you.
Monk: Good, then. I will get you a husband, of our faith.
ʿAlam: My husband is Taʿādīr. What's wrong with him?
Monk: He is a Muslim, and we are Jews (*yahūd/jahûd* CP).
ʿAlam: Why? I enter the faith through marriage. One is free to choose faiths.
Monk: Yes, freedom. But everybody returns to his [original] faith.[47]

The intriguing word "Jews" merits comment. It clearly cannot be taken at face value. In the ensuing argument, the Monk explains that he worries about the gossip inside (or around) the monastery regarding ʿAlam marrying a Muslim, because "Jews slander us all the time." Again, it would be odd to take the word "Jews" on its face (and even so, it is baffling that Jews, of all people, would be singled out as the source of the father's anxiety). In this connection, perhaps ʿAlam's own words offer a clue as to its meaning. Later in the story, when ʿAlam pampers herself in the bathhouse in preparation for the wedding, she confides in the attendants and the lady-in-waiting her mixed feelings:

Now I am a Muslim, alone;
no father, no son.[48]
A pity, all those in the faith of the Jews (*ʿalā dīn al-yahūd/ʻala dîn eljahûd* CP),
the old faith of forefathers (*dīn abūhum al-aṣlī wa-dīn al-judūd/dîn abûhum el'aslî wĕdîn elgudûd* CP).[49]

45. Ibid., 98.
46. Ibid., 100–102.
47. Ibid., 102.
48. I understand this to imply that her Copt father will disown her and her future offspring (*khalaf*) will not be recognized by the Church.
49. Ibid., 124. Note that *dīn abūhum* is correct in the colloquial language of the dialogue.

Anxiety and loneliness, being cut off from family ties as a result of conversion, are compounded by her fierce defiance. By mocking her heritage, as simply some sort of forlorn family rather than one stemming from true conviction, she refers to what was believed to be the Jewish origin of Christianity. In light of the popular belief held by Muslims of Isaac and Jacob being the forebears of all Jews and Christians, the intriguing use of the term *al-yahūd* in the play should perhaps not come as a total surprise. More research is needed to determine the frequency and agency of this blanket reference of "Jews" to Christians (and in this case, Copts) in popular culture. *ʿAlam wa-Taʿādīr* offers a few examples in this respect with special reference to Ottoman Egypt.

After lengthy and combative arguments, the Monk finally caves in, giving ʿAlam his blessing. But he is not going out without a fight:

Monk: Well, we will call the monastery people and issue a marriage certificate for you. Bring in a Muslim to witness my daughter's marriage, Taʿādīr!
Taʿādīr: O Monk, I insist on drafting the license at a Muslim place.[50]

People in the monastery lament the departure of ʿAlam, but also celebrate her engagement. They go to the bathhouse to prepare for the wedding. Inside, ʿAlam is pampered by the bathhouse manager and attendants, who praise her conversion and wish her luck. ʿAlam tips lavishly. ʿAlam and Taʿādīr sign the marriage contract. The Moroccan clerk tells ʿAlam that there is one thing left to do: the pilgrimage.

5. ʿAlam and Taʿādīr: Redemption

The Presenter reenters, asking Taʿādīr how he accomplished this mission impossible. In flashbacks, Taʿādīr recalls the trajectory. He invites the Presenter to the wedding. This seemingly redundant segment serves as a recapitulation, leading to the finale. The couple goes on pilgrimage. After being robbed by Bedouin, Taʿādīr encourages ʿAlam to stay the course. They return home safely, ready for a new life together.

What can be learned from the above reconstruction? The original loci-cum-trope-oriented conceptual framework built on song-cycles is now given shape through character-and-plot-centered scenes, with colorful figures and settings. It is refreshingly funny and lean. The seventeenth-century layer is almost untraceable insofar as the generic poems were reduced to a minimum and the verses—attributed to more contemporary poets, chief among them Ḥasan al-Qashshāsh himself—reworked. References to exotic new things add urban and "modern" pizzazz. Among the beverages the Presenter binges on, for example, are "Cognac and a beer of the Monique Dante brand."[51] Visually also, "modern" looks are on display: Prüfer's drawings of the characters, with fanciful clothes and hairdos, differ drastically from the stiff and archaic-looking puppets that Kahle purchased in al-Manzala (see Fig. 1).[52]

With regard to dramaturgy, the theatrics in Prüfer's script are intensified and the tensions heightened. To help the audience quickly get the point, easy-to-identify faith-based opening songs were chosen for each main character. Added farcical acts and brisk dialogue contribute greatly to the enrichment of character. In this respect, the Monk's role is significantly

50. Ibid., 112.
51. Ibid., 24.
52. Prüfer's drawings are of Mennage (10), Taʿādīr (38), and ʿAlam (58). Compare with Kahle's figures, two of which (ʿAlam and Taʿādīr) are published in "Islamische Schattenspielfiguren" (1910), 295–96, figs. 35, 36, and one ("Coptic priest," namely, Monk Munajjā; Fig. 1) in "Arabic Shadow Play in Medieval Egypt," *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society* (April 1954): 85–115.

FIG. 1. The Monk. Photo courtesy of Institut für Medienkultur und Theater, Universität zu Köln (gift from P. Kahle).

enlarged. He appears more frequently—for example, in the beginning scene when he tricks the Presenter and later in his arguments with ʿAlam. His monkish austerity and stubbornness are exacerbated by his profound dislike of Taʿādīr, fueling constant clashes of ideology and personality. If the acrimony between the two was only featured in a few songs in the manuscripts, it is now placed pointedly at the center of the play. The character of ʿAlam is also greatly enhanced; she is more of a person, less a mere stereotype. The generic songs do show her flirtatious innuendoes and her resourcefulness (or cunning) under the circumstances; yet now added are episodes of her confronting the folks in the monastery, reenforcing the moral of the story with a forceful personal touch. Along with other added scenes—in the bathhouse and on the treacherous pilgrimage journey[53]—this helps reshape the play in a more coherent manner, focusing on a sole theme—interfaith romance—and moving more clearly, effectively, and entertainingly.

CONCLUDING REMARKS: EGYPTIAN SHADOW THEATRE ON THE EVE OF MODERNITY

The Egyptian shadow play known collectively as *ʿAlam wa-Taʿādīr* enjoyed a long run. Its themes of social transgression in the form of interfaith romance, drunkenness, and being driven insane by love appear to have contributed to its enduring popularity with Egyptian audiences over at least three centuries and possibly longer. The play's longevity was also sustained by its ever-evolving dynamic transformations. I hope that the findings I have presented—a survey of earlier research, an outline of the layers of the composite text, an analysis of the building blocks (themed *zajal* song-cycles), and a summary of the sole published working script that features dialogue as well—will form a solid foundation for future research on this remarkable work, which in many ways is representative of Egyptian shadow plays in the post-Mamluk era. I will conclude with general preliminary observations of Egyptian shadow theatre on the eve of modernity, in particular regarding documentation, performance, and language.

Egyptian shadow plays in the Ottoman and early modern periods have mostly survived in songbooks, specialized or general anthologies. In this connection, the complete lack of dialogue in surviving manuscripts is noteworthy, yet by no means unique.[54] In all likelihood, dialogue *was* spoken during a shadow play performance (as Prüfer's script evidences), but for the most part it was seldom documented in writing. One possible explanation for this may be attributed to common practice. From the evidence of the surviving manuscripts we can speculate that the performer would partly improvise each performance of a shadow play, picking and choosing from the material associated with the play. This phenomenon was also witnessed in other performance traditions in the Arab world (for example, the *siyar* epic narrative), in that a performer would learn the storylines by heart, rely on a sheet of outlines with poems, and improvise dialogue during the performance.[55]

53. Of the nineteen song-cycles seen in this version, only six are generic songs found in manuscripts. In other words, two-thirds are "new."

54. The plays discovered in the 1900s (by Kern, Prüfer, Kahle, and Taymūr) were nearly all from the same codices examined for this study. In the 1970s, Muḥammad Z. ʿInānī published a play titled *Misṭarat khayāl Munādamat Umm Mujbir* (A Sheet from the Shadow Play "Courting Mother Pushy"), attributed to ʿAbd al-Bāqī al-Isḥāqī (d. 1660). This short play tells the story of a shadow master juggling two wives. It is based on two manuscripts, in Paris and Vienna, both anthologies of poetry with no dialogue; see M. Z. ʿInānī, "Ḥawla khayāl al-ẓill fī Miṣr (2)," *Majallat al-Kātib* 203 (1978): 6–18.

55. D. Reynolds, *Heroic Poets, Poetic Heroes: The Ethnography of Performance in an Arabic Oral Epic Tradition* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1995), esp. 105–35 ("breakdown" of epic into balladic and other forms; the routines of a *sahra* session; master singer in performance).

Another factor in the prioritizing of songbooks over a full-fledged "script" perhaps lies in the rapid decline of shadow play theatre in Ottoman Egypt.[56] In this trying environment, the shadow master would have been forced to take on other forms of performance for survival, recycling the material at his disposal. As the manuscripts analyzed above can attest, especially the general songbooks (T3, T4, T5, T6), the songs cover a wide range of topics, from profound to profane, and would be suitable for various venues outside of the shadow play theatre. Finally, there is also the possible scenario of competition among the performers. A tailor-made script like the one consulted by Prüfer, with exclusive material in it, might be more jealously guarded by the performer, for fear of it becoming known; in all likelihood, it was eventually lost.

In this connection, the plays Kern and Prüfer saw, known to them as "The House" and "The Monastery" respectively, may shed light on the latest phase of transformation of the text. Prüfer's transcript offers a case study of the dissemination of the original themed core elements into loci-centered episodic installments. It is worth noting that there were also shadow play "acts" (sg. *faṣl*) titled *al-Ḥammām* (The Bathhouse), *al-Qahwa* (The Café), and *al-Tiyātrū* (The Theatre) that featured the same protagonists, ʿAlam and Taʿādīr, and depicted the events before and after their wedding.[57] These spinoffs, each marked by a location, could be staged individually as well as be viewed as sequels to the core play.

Finally, in an apparent departure from the Mamluk mode, which retains the classical measures of *sajʿ*, rhymed prose for dialogue, and *qaṣīda*, formal ode for songs, the Ottoman and early modern specimens demonstrate a tendency to favor the vernacular: not only was the dialogue entirely in Egyptian colloquial (and poorly documented perhaps because of that), the songs were mostly in the non-classical *zajal*. A related issue is the "cleanliness" of the language—the songs and dialogue are free of the obscenity and excessive vulgarisms teeming in Ibn Dāniyāl, which some believe may have contributed to the rapid decline of this art form in Egypt.[58] In the present play, even insults and bickering are delivered in light-hearted and measured fashion. For an Ottoman Cairene audience, the rants from the mouth of an inebriated Turk would be as amusing as the curses of a Copt who lost his mind, and beard, over his daughter's affairs. Even with interfaith tension, the banter is more humorous than

56. Around the year 1900 there was only one shadow theatre in Cairo that operated all year long, alongside several seasonal troupes that performed during the winter and holidays at coffee houses. It was also common for the performers to make house calls on demand. During his last stay in Cairo in 1903, Kern discovered a second shadow theatre "near the fish market," which presumably was that of the Qashshāsh's. The troupe performed during the month of Ramadan and in summer at night, and catered to wedding parties; see Kern, "Egyptische Schattentheater," 98–100; Prüfer, *Ägyptisches Schattenspiel*, v–xviii.

57. Taymūr, *Khayāl al-ẓill*, 27–28, where these three acts are briefly described. No references are given. It is likely that Taymūr either saw them performed or heard about them. The Egyptian author Muḥammad S. Kīlānī presented a summary of the play that he either saw, or knew of, in Cairo's Azbakiyya theatre district. This much trimmed version began with the lamp seller peddling to ʿAlam under her window, where her drunk suitor Taqādīr (note the spelling) picked a fight with him. Through the Moroccan fortune-teller's prediction and divine intervention, the happy ending eventually arrives. Slight changes occurred (the lamp seller is a separate character; the Moroccan is no longer a clerk), yet the songs Kīlānī cited are similar to the generic poems discussed in this article. Kīlānī characterized the heroine as a "pretty and loose (*khalīʿa*) girl of the Lake View (*wajh al-birka*)," the affluent neighborhood in which the El Markoseia El Kobra Coptic Orthodox Church was located and rich Copts, French expats, and local elites lived; see M. S. Kīlānī, *Fī rubūʿ al-Azbakiyya: Dirāsa adabiyya tārīkhiyya ijtimāʿiyya* (Cairo, rev. ed. 1985), 47–49, 73–83. The author was still alive in 1985, so the show must have taken place no earlier than the 1910s.

58. Mamluk chronicles reported that Sultan Jaqmaq (r. 1438–53) banned the performance of shadow plays and ordered all the shadow play figures to be burned due to the "lascivious" reputation of this art form at the time; Guo, *Performing Arts*, 107–8.

malicious, much less polemic. Taken together, this cautious new approach, in content and language, that was adopted by shadow masters in Ottoman and early modern Egypt reveals an anxiety, or impulse, to appeal to a larger audience in a challenging time.

APPENDIX: DISTRIBUTION OF SONGS IN TEXTUAL TESTIMONIALS

	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5	T6	K1	K2	P[59]
A.1.	x								
A.2.	x	x							
A.2.1.	x								
A.3.2.	x	x					x	x	x
A.3.3.	x						x	x	
A.3.4.	x						x		
A.4.1.	x								
A.4.2.	x	x					x	x	
A.5.1.	x	x					x		
A.5.2.	x						x	x	
A.5.3.	x	x							x
A.5.4.	x								
A.5.5.	x	x							
B.1.	x	x					x	x	
B.2.1.	x	x					x		
B.2.2.		x					x	x	x
B.2.3.		x							
B.2.4.	x								
B.2.5.		x					x	x	
B.3.	x	x					x	x	x
C.1.1.	x								
C.1.2.	x								
C.1.3.	x	x					x	x	
C.1.4.	x								
C.1.5.		x							
C.2.1.	x	x					x	x	
C.2.2.	x								
C.2.3.	x	x							
C.2.4.	x								
C.2.5.	x								
C.2.6.		x							x

59. Prüfer's edition.

C.3.1.	x	x							
C.3.2.	x						x	x	
C.3.3.		x							
C.4.1.	x								
C.4.2.	x								
C.5.1.	x	x					x	x	
C.5.2.	x								
C.5.3.	x						x	x	
C.5.4.	x						x	x	
C.5.5.	x								
C.5.6.	x								
C.5.7.	x	x					x	x	
C.5.8.	x								
C.6.1.	x								x
C.6.2.	x	x							
D.1.	x								
D.2.1.	x								
D.2.2.	x	x							
D.2.3.	x	x							
D.2.4.	x								
D.3.1.	x	x		x	x		x	x	
D.3.2.	x				x	x	x	x	
D.3.3.			x						
D.4.	x	x	x		x		x	x	
D.5.1.	x				x		x	x	
D.5.2.	x	x	x	x			x	x	
E.1.		x			x				