

Public Behavior during the Mamlūk Era Social Aberration as Model



Dr. Ashraf Salih Mohamed Sayed^{1,2,3}

¹Averroes University, (Holland)

²Faculty of Arts and Humanities

³Corresponding Author: ashraf-salih@hotmail.com

Submission date: 15/04/2024 Acceptance date: 13/06/2024 Publication date: 30/06/2024



Abstract:

This study presents one of the disadvantages of the Mamluk era by examining the deviations of society, specifically what historical sources mentioned about adultery, rape, prostitution, and homosexuality among the public, as well as what we know about these practices from the reality of popular arts and literature books of this period. The researcher relied on the historical, descriptive and analytical method. The study found that prostitution flourished among the general public and had well-known homes and places, and debauchery and adultery spread in parks and at public celebrations.

key words: Mamlūks; Cairo parks; Cairo women; Ibn Daniyal; The Arabian Nights.

1. Introduction

It is known that the social life in Egypt during the Mamlūk era had a special style, because of the Mamlūks elite itself. Mamlūks did not usually try to mix with the Egyptians, and were not influenced by their customs and lifestyle except in few cases and within a limited scope. This isolation was supported, and resulted in the Mamlūks expansion of slaves' purchases so they have a league that they can rely on to rule the country. Egypt had also witnessed migrations by Mughal people who played an active a role in the popularity of a number of social ills during that era, such as adultery and homosexuality.

In fact, sociologists have agreed that "social life" refers to all aspects of human activity, including sexual relations. But digging in the history of social life throughout the Mamlūk era shows great omission of these relations in sources and references, and whatever referring to them were no more than some hints between the lines. The reason for this, likely, goes back to the researches about the social life of Islamic eras are largely associated with Eastern Islamic traditions, which are characterized of severe reservation, particularly in relation to household and family conditions, the role of women in society, and sexual life in specific.

Researcher cannot deny that society, during Mamlūk era, witnessed a widespread of intimate sexual relations among all classes: the rulers, the ruled, the playful and clerics. Actually, this era is characterized by glamorous style of righteousness and piety, the establishment of religious facilities, and the exaggerated desire to revive religious rituals. But this style reveals to be fake for those who delve deeper into the research; it seems a deceptive coating that masks a profound moral decay. The illustration of the Egyptian society during the Mamlūk sultans' era cannot be completed without reference to these relations, the extent of their spread and severity of their impact. This is what will be revealed in this research.

2. Sexual behaviour

Before we start talking about sexual behavior for the public, we would like to indicate that most historians focused their attention on the practices of the ruling circle, the Mamlūks. History at that time gave its entire attention to Mamlūks, sultans, princes, palaces and cities, and on the other hand neglected the public. We rely here on what a renowned historian, Ibn Taghrībirdī (813 – 874 AH / 1410 – 1470 CE), said about a person, “*We refrained from explaining what happened with him as he was not one of the nobles to praise or disparage his deeds*”. (‘Abd al-Rāziq, 1999, pp. 130 -131) However, we will demonstrate here all the signs that proved such behaviour.

2.1 Fornication

Sultan al-Zāhir Baybars (658 – 676 AH / 1260 – 1277 CE) punished, in 676AH, al-Shaykh Khiḍr ibn Abī Bakr al- ‘Adawī – the sheikh of Damascus Islamic Oratory– as he was proved to have committed adultery and homosexuality. He died in detention. (al-Dawādārī, 1971, Vol. 8, p.223) During the reign of al-Nāṣir Muḥammad ibn Qalāwūn (709 – 741 AH / 1310 – 1341 CE), a Jew was punished, in 734 AH, due to having sex with a Turkish Muslim lady. (Ibn al-Wardī, 1970, Vol. 2, p. 306) In the reign of al-Ashraf Qānṣūh al-Ghūrī (906 – 922 AH / 1501 – 1516 CE), the ruler [*al-Wālī*] ordered a female singer named “*Anas*” to pay 500 Dinars as she had prostitutes at her place in al-Azbakīyah. It happened once, that Sultan Qānṣūh al-Ghūrī accused assistants to senior judges of drinking alcohol and committing debauchery and immorality. (Ṭaqqūsh, 1997, p.557)

On the evening of Saturday, 5 Shawwāl 919 (4 December 1513), Ghars al-Dīn Khalīl, a Cairene Hanafī deputy qadi, left home for a night vigil at the Qarāfah cemetery in Cairo. His wife, expecting her husband to be absent for the entire night, sent for her lover, a certain Nūr al-Dīn al-Mashālī, himself a Shafī‘ī deputy judge. Unfortunately for the two, a neighbor gave notice to the husband, who immediately rode over and found the door locked. When he broke in he found his wife and al-Mashālī in bed, embracing each other under the blanket. According to the account of Ibn Iyās, the lovers tried to settle the matter quietly by filling the husband’s purse.

Al-Mashālī offered the husband a thousand dinars to keep his mouth shut, while the wife offered all the household goods that belonged to her, i.e., her trousseau, in return for his discretion. But the angry husband was not tempted by gold or silver; he locked them both in the house and went over to the court of the military chamberlain to lodge a complaint. When brought before this military judge, al-Mashālī confessed to the charge of adultery, and the chamberlain ordered that al-Mashālī should be stripped, and had both of them beaten severely. The two were then led through the city, facing backwards on the backs of donkeys. Finally, they were fined 100 dinars each. But then came a bizarre twist to this story; as the woman claimed that she was penniless, the officers of the chamberlain, perhaps following standard procedure a bit too rigidly, ordered the husband to pay the fine for his wife's adultery; when he refused, he was put under arrest.

When this semi-comic sequence of events reached the ears of an infuriated Sultan Qānṣūh, he convened his council and blamed the qadis for appointing immoral deputies like al-Mashālī, and demanded that the adulterers be punished in the way prescribed by Islamic law, that is, by stoning. It was an unusual order; no stoning had taken place for many years, and apparently never during Qānṣūh's long reign.

But, while the sultan, representing secular authority, was pushing for an Islamic punishment, several jurists issued a fatwa invalidating the verdict, arguing that al-Mashālī had in the meantime retracted his confession. In an overt struggle over the right to interpret the law, the jurists argued that the sultan was bound to act according to the Islamic law of evidence; execution would be a criminal offence, and the sultan liable for the blood money. At this point the sultan called them all senseless fools, telling one of the jurists: "God willing, I hope you go home and find someone doing to your wife what al-Mashālī did to the wife of Khalīl." Then Qānṣūh dismissed all four chief qadis, paralyzing all legal and economic activity in Cairo for three days. On Wednesday, 7 Dhū al-Qa'dah (3 January), Nūr al-Dīn and his lover were hanged at the gate of the house of one of the jurists who objected to the death sentence. The two lovers were tied to the same rope, facing each other. Their bodies remained on the gallows for two days, until the sultan gave permission to bury them. (Ibn Iyās, 1960, Vol.4, pp. 340 - 350; Ibn al-Ḥimṣī, 1999, Vol. 2, p. 252; Petry, 1994, pp. 149 - 51)

The tragic tale of the two adulterous lovers is a remarkable indication of changes in Mamlūk society. The cuckolded husband, who, instead of seeking either private revenge or the concealment of his wife's infidelity, chooses to go over to the police station and report a crime, is definitely a product of the fifteenth century; a fourteenth-century husband would have found this behavior astounding. Before the middle of the fifteenth century it is practically impossible to find any husband who asked religious or secular courts for help in disciplining his wife. But in the fifteenth century this was a common practice, with husbands lodging public complaints about a wife who ran away from home, or about an affair she was having. It seems that the traditional mechanisms of patriarchy, like a threat of repudiation or physical violence, were now seen as less effective. The account of this adulterous relationship is so striking because it indicates the shifts—nothing less than dramatic—in the power relations within households during the Mamlūk

period, as well as the eventual affirmation of the role of the state in regulating the private sphere. (Rapoport, 2007, p.47)

2.2 Rape (Child sexual abuse)

In (920 AH /1514 CE), we have an exceedingly unusual report of a man who raped and murdered a ten-year-old boy and was sentenced by the sultan Qānṣūh al-Ghūrī to be hanged at the scene of his crime, according to some reports with his amputated genitals hung about his neck. (Ibn Iyas, 1963, vol. 4, pp.278 – 279)

2.3 Prostitution

Prostitution widely prevailed in the medieval times. Disciplinary punishments were imposed on prostitutes every now and then. (Lewinsohn, 1965, Vol.1, p.191) Arab Muslim societies were not free of prostitution. Islamic morals regarding sexuality should have kept those societies safe from commercial sexual exploitation. Although prostitution stopped at some times, it lasted as a deep-seated phenomenon in the traditions of Arab societies. (Bou Hdeiba, 2001, p.263, p.269)

al-‘Aynī (d. 855 AH) who lived in the thirteenth century CE described pimps and situations, *“Especially Egyptian ladies who had indescribable heresies and unstoppable immoralities. They had among them ladies who did immoralities and shared them with men. Some of them were old prostitutes who lay in wait for opportunities of immoralities. Some types of them were matchmakers; they used to get women who were already married engaged to men by causing troubles between them and their husbands”*. (al-‘Aynī, n. d.)

al-‘Aynī’s statements show that brothels were not only accepted and their activities were practiced in public, but the state recognised the activities as deemed a good source of income.

Historical sources indicated the various ways of prostitution, its practices and its names during the mamlūk reign. Prostitutes were called females singers [al-Maghānī] or [al-qīnāt] which could be attributed to taking singing as an ostensible profession while in fact they work in prostitution. They were also called [Banāt al-khaṭa’] or [al-Khūāṭ’] which means the daughters of wrong deeds. (‘Abd al-Rāziq, 1999, p.39) They increased in Egyptian houses during the mamlūk reign. They dressed in a certain way that distinguished them, special scarves and wraps [al-mlā’āt]. (al-Maqrīzī, 1907, Vol. 2m p. 96)

Cairo parks like [al-Brak] and [al-khuljān] were an important factor and the main reason behind the prevalence of social illnesses among the public. Parks were linked to immoral decay such as fornication, homosexuality, Sodomy, taking hashish, drugs and drinking alcohol.

Along the River Nile, there were some places used for fornication, debauchery and other immoral deeds. For example, there was a house on the Nile in Būlāq district, that house was initially owned by Ibn Ezz al-fārāsh, and after his death, it was bought by Tāj al-Dīn al-Azraq and then the house was known as “Dar al-Fāsīqīn” (دار الفاسقين) which means the house of libertines. That house witnessed

debauchery and immorality that exceeded all limits until it was bought by al-Amīr Izzeddin Idmer al-Khutaīrī who changed it into a mosque in 737 AH and named it al-tawbah Mosque “Penitence Mosque”. (al-Shujā‘ī, 1978, p. 12)

Picnicking people used to set up shacks on the Nile and the beaches of lakes. They did several wrong deeds such as drinking alcohol and the like. They mingled with women with no covering. (al-Maqrīzī, 1970, Vol. 4, p. 358) al-Maqrīzī expressed his dissatisfaction with the park society and its immoralities and irreligiousness. He wrote about the bridge that linked Berket al-Raṭlī (بركة الرطلي) with al-Khalīj al-Nāṣirī (الخليج الناصري), “people gather under the bridge and pass by the edge of al-Khalīj seeking fun and pleasure. Mobs and immoral people have been so happy with that bridge until now. It would have been considered one of the most pleasant parks in Cairo, if it was not known for the immoral acts done there”. (al-Maqrīzī, 1907, Vol. 2, p. 166)

al-Maqrīzī likewise portrayed a live image of al-Berka community in the Mamlūk era when he talked about “rub‘ al-Mashaniq” (ربع المشانيق) on the bridge. Although it is obvious that al-Maqrīzī exaggerated in his description, we will understand here what he meant when he said, “There was a pavement under it (by it he meant rub‘ al-Mashaniq). It was called with that name, because those who used to pass by it were distracted by nothing but looking at the pretty women at the widows. It happened that a person placed one Thousand Dinars on the ground starting from the beginning of the pavement up to the end. Those Dinars remained on the ground untaken for 8 days. When that person came back, he found the entire Thousand Dinars with nothing missing, which indicates how busy people were looking at those pretty women standing at the windows”. (Shishtāwī, 1999, p. 324)

Other examples of houses on the beaches of gulfs, there was a district on the al-Khalīj al-Nāṣirī called “rub‘ al-zaytī” (ربع الزيتي) next to Qanṭarah al-Hājib (قنطرة الحاجب). It consisted of a number of houses where immoral people stayed. This district looked from its four sides at gardens and parks. To its east, there was Ghait al-zaytī (غيط الزيتي) which went to pot during al-Maqrīzī days, with a pool of water made in its place. To its west, there was Ghait al-Hājib Baybars (غيط الحاجب بيبارس).

al-Maqrīzī said, “I saw it inhabited, but today it became farms after it had a big door and next to it there was drinking water for passersby. It was fenced by a mud wall. To the south of that district, there was al-Khalīj and Qanṭarah al-Hājib, and the garden located in Ard Al Tabala (أرض الطبالة). To the north of it, there was gardens linked to al-B‘l (البعل) and kūm al-Rīsh (كوم الريش), this district (kūm al-Rīsh) had still been inhabited with lots of pleasures and joys until the year of flood in 755 AH when the houses of kūm al-Rīsh and others were wrecked. The flooding water of the Nile reached Qanṭarah al-Hājib; therefore, rub‘ al-zaytī was wrecked and neglected until it became a big pile towards Qanṭarah al-Hājib and Ghait al-Hājib. I heard those who saw that district talking about the pleasures and entertainments of that district. The public used to say humorously: My lady, where were you, where did you go, and where are you coming from? So she said from rub‘ al-zaytī. Al those years and the people ended as if they were just dreams”. (al-Maqrīzī, n. d., p. 730)

There was next to Qanṭarah al-Mūsūkī (قنطرة الموسكي) a district where whores stayed to practice prostitution. Ansbaī al-Hajeb raided that house in 914 AH, beat the women who were inside and put them on donkeys walking around to publicise them in Cairo streets. Due to the fact that the district was in the neighbourhood of the house of Amir Noūroz, who is the Amir of Mi'at Muqaddam Alf during al-Ghawrī's reign (906 – 922 AH / 1501 – 1516 CE), a dispute took place between Ansbaī and hajeb al-hujab (head of bailiffs) against the Amir and his boys as they wanted to protect that house. al-Ghawrī ended the dispute in favour of Hajeb Al Hujjab. (Ibn Iyās, 1963, Vol. 4, p. 148)

Finally in this regards, Mamlūks had the habit of celebrating the births of al-awliyā' (الأولياء) and al-ṣāliḥīn (الصلحين) (pious and religious ancestors). Lots of immoralities used to take place within such celebrations due to the big number of women and fornicators. It was even said that a hundred and fifty empty bottles of alcohol were found at the night of mawlid Shiekh al- Anbābī. (Naṣṣār, 1999, p. 149)

2.4 Homosexuality

During a visit to Baalbek in (754 AH /1353–54 CE), Ibn Kathīr (d. 774 AH) met a hermaphrodite who was brought up as a girl until the age of fifteen. Then a tiny penis appeared, and the local governor gave orders to celebrate the transformation of the girl into a man by bestowing upon him a military uniform. (Ibn Kathīr, 1994, Vol. 14, p. 198) This is a reference to the existence of a bisexual in the community, the text here is talking about the girl who wore a military uniform has important implications; society accepts it naturally, which means that such things were happening without the disapproval of the people.

In 831/1428, sultan Barsbāy (r. 825 – 841 AH / 1422 – 1438 CE) abolished the taxes on wine and hashish in Cairo but directed special efforts to wiping out vice in Damietta. In this context, we are told about a complaint lodged by residents of the town against a Christian named Ibn al-Mallah, whose sodomitical goings-on were scandalously public. He made a practice of hiring beautiful boys as servants, entertaining them with gifts, wine, and music, and often brazenly retiring to another room to have sex with them and re-emerging in a disheveled state. The sultan himself presided over his trial, at which he first denied the charges but when confronted with irrefutable testimony promptly converted to Islam. This obtained his forgiveness, although with a stern warning from the judge not to revert to his wicked ways-which, we are told, he managed not to do. (al-'Asqalānī, 1972, Vol.3, p. 399 – 400)

Homosexuality was widespread among penmen. Ibn Hajar accused some writers and poor men [al-Ṣūfiyah] and even judges that they loved boys and sleeping with the minors. (al-'Asqalānī, 1998, p. 159) It was said that it was found in the first half of the ninth Hijri century in Sharqiah [al-sharqīyah] a troop of people called al-Mutawa'a (المطوعة) allowed looking at the beautiful hairless boy, so a man of that troop would sit and put his chest on the hairless boy's chest. (al-Sakhāwī, 1972, p. 103 – 104)

With regard to the homosexual bribery to judges, it was mentioned that in the beginning of Rabi'e Al Awal in 877 AH that the sultan ordered judges – as per Al Sirfi's statement–, "To clean their doors from agents and to stop boys who are at their doors". This means that the habit of agents and brokers standing at doors of judges for bribery was so prevalent that it included bribery by boys. Homosexuality was widespread. According to the culture and terminology of that era, the meaning of boys sitting somewhere is that it was for earning a living by homosexuality, which means using the boys to bribe the judge and his agents. This probably caused an embarrassment to the sultan who issued his order in this regard and in turn judges obeyed it, as they were the best people to obey the sultan. (Manşūr, 2012, September 17)

It is worth indicating here that the bribery of judges, mess and increase of marriage contract fees led to the lack of marriage and dissatisfaction of people due to the increase of marriage cost (al-Şāwī, Abū Tīj, 2000) which in turn resulted indirectly in the prevalence of prostitution.

Under al-Ashraf Khalil (r.689-693 /1290-1293), for example the notoriously harsh vizier Ibn Salus was looking for ways to attack 'Abd al-Rahman b. 'Abd al-Wahhab the son of the preeminent jurist Ibn Bint al-A'azz. Besides enlisting various false witnesses to unspecified offenses on 'Abd al-Rahman's part, he also suborned a good-looking young man to claim that 'Abd al-Rahman had committed sodomy with him and found someone else to allege that he had donned the zunnar, the girdle stipulated as Christian dress. 'Abd al-Rahman denied all the charges but admitted they were all plausible, except for that concerning the zunnar, since in fact even Christians donned the zunnur only under duress. Despite lack of proof, he was never the less discharged, publicly humiliated, and briefly imprisoned. (al-Subkī, 1964, Vol.8, p. 173)

There seems to have been more substance to another, long running case against a prominent religious scholar that began under al-Ashraf Khalil's father Qalawun and concluded only under his brother and successor al-Nasir Muhammad. In 686/1287, the jurist, litterateur, and impressive debater Ibn al-Baqaqi was accused of committing immorality, mocking Islam, and, even more gravely, declaring illicit things licit [istiḥlāl al-muḥarramāt], a charge that was legally understood to imply apostasy and thus justify the death penalty. (Rowson, 2008, p. 213)

According to one source, he had gathered around himself a group of impious Turks and other ignorant people to whom he taught that both wine and sodomy (lūāt) were permissible; it is not specified whether he (and they) practiced what he preached. Ibn al-Baqaqi was thrown into prison, where he appears to have languished for many years, engaged in defending himself and sparring with imminent jurisprudents. Finally, in 701/1302, he was beheaded in Bayn al-Qasrayn, the central square of Cairo. (al-Kutubi, 1974, Vol.1, pp. 152 - 53).

3. Arts and Literature

History indicates that the resort of people to the nominal religiosity and ritual practices without paying attention to how correct they were was a normal result of the political, economic and social situations. Likewise, the life practices of immoralities and debauchery would prevail in a hard life environment. As with the increase of wars and battles, there would be no time for a soldier – for example – to weep and cry or to ensure his survival. The same applies to the civilians of the public; therefore, there would be a dire need for joy represented in various celebrations and group festivals whether religious festivals or others. (Aṭārid, 2009, p.76)

Among the folk arts of satirical nature that prevailed in the Mamlūk Egypt was “the Spirit of Shadow” [Kḥayāl al-ẓill] which is a puppet theatre on which puppets moved in front of a transparent curtain watched by a tasteful audience. The morals in sultans era, or the visible and audio image of the relationship between the ruler (the sultan) and the ruled (the public) is clearly seen in Ibn Daniyal’s theatrical texts [Al Babat Al Danialiah] which relates to Ibn Danyial (1238 – 1211 CE) who witnessed the era of Sultan Baybars. The Arabic heritage library had kept literary theatrical texts that relate to him, which are in order: Taif Al Khaial (The Spirit of Shadow), Ajeeb we Ghareeb (The Odd and Strange) and Al Mutaiaam wa Al Dai’e Al Yateem (The infatuated and the Lost Orphan). (Koni, 2013, pp.8 – 31)

Ibn Daniyal expressed the Egyptian society’s immoral deviations in his Al Mutayam wa Al Dai’e Al Yateem. Its subject described some of the statuses of lovers, some of flirtations which are the prominent magic, some of playfulness, and some of immoralities. Al mutayam (the Infatuated) as described by Ibn Danyial was a submissive, hurt, sad, sick, crying, thin lover who had nothing remained on his body but bones, to find out that he was a homosexual person who lost the love of a girl, then he cured his illness with another illness, namely, he became a lover in love with a charming orphan boy. (Aṭārid, 2009, p.82)

Ibn Daniyal certainly qualifies to have his name on this list of "licentious" authors in medieval Arabic literature. (Guo, 2001) But who were the audiences for these sorts of poems? What kind of literary preparation was required to appreciate such parodies? A long dispute among scholars has revolved around the audiences of Ibn Daniyal's art, especially his shadow plays in which poetry is an integral part. Jacob Landau asserts that Ibn Daniyal's shadow plays were written for commoners as lowbrow entertainment, while Badawi and others argue that they were aimed at an elite, even courtly, audience, and that they may well have grown out of, or paralleled, an art with a broader social purview. (Booth, 1993) The question of Ibn Daniyal's audience is complicated and beyond the scope of the present study.

Studies showed that there was at least one part in the tales of One Thousand and One Nights (The Arabian Nights) was written in Egypt during the Mamlūk era. Critics and auditors mostly think that that book was written between the thirteen and fourteen centuries. (Alf Laylah, 2004, Vol.1. p.7) One Thousand and One Nights [Alf Laylah wa Laylah] contained the biggest deal of debauchery. This series is considered to be the most widely spread and most famous and popular books among

the public and nobles due to its wonderful excerpts. In this series, the lustful image is clearly described not separately from the cultural and social environment based on which such tales were generated to absorb love in life. (Bou Hdeiba, 2001, p.195)

Clearly, Cairo in *The Arabian Nights* was the most liberal city that had freedom regarding sexual relationships. It is clear also that the authorities at those times were not strict in executing the limits on sexual relationships or they were unable to execute them due to the large number of different ethnics that came to Cairo. (Stewart, 1987, p.141)

It was noticed that if people fell under restrictions and sexual deprivation in some cities of *Alf laila wa Laila*, they fled from their cities to Egypt to fulfil their sexual needs as mentioned of the tale of (Da'a Ghaleb Al Shahwa Ind Al Nesa and Dawao'ha) which means the Illness and Treatment of Dominating Lust of Women, where a girl had a strong lust to have sex with a monkey, and when her father the sultan discovered her story, he decided to kill her to bury her scandal. So she ran away with her monkey to the safe environment of Egypt to fulfil her desire with the monkey, "She dressed in the way mamlūks dressed, rode a horse, loaded a mule with gold, minerals, and cloth, took her monkey and started her way until she arrived in Egypt where she stayed in some houses of the desert". The writer here did not mean the desert that is far from Egypt, he meant the surroundings around Cairo that are somehow far from the crowdedness, as the princess daily bought, "Meat from a butcher young man", knowing that commercial facilities at that period of time did not exist in the desert except some taverns that were a type of rest stations on the desert roads that linked cities together. (Younes, 2013, p.53)

Cairo women were liberal and brave as they went out to meet men in markets. This sounds normal in a city full of crowded markets. Women used to meet men with no difficulty ('Āshūr, 1963, p.162) as, "The crowdedness of the city (Throughout its long history) makes it too difficult to separate between the two genders". (Stewart, 1987, p.151) It seems that the luxury and welfare lifestyle led by some aristocratic families in Cairo drove those women to liberality, mingling with men and going out from their houses to the markets and shops crowded with the passers-by of different nationalities. (Younes, 2013, p.53) The woman did shopping in the markets, if they would not need anything from the market, they would go to women public baths as they would spend long hours enjoying each other's company, ('Āshūr, 1963, pp.175 – 76) or they would go to weddings as there was no discipline on laws. (Mubārak, 1975, Vol.1. p.342)

While we are at talking about public baths, we should not forget indicating the importance of the public bath during the Mamlūk era. They were not only a place for cleaning the body; they were beautifying places for men and women as well. ('Abd al-Rāziq, 1999, p.148) Therefore, there is no wonder that the Moroccan faqīh (فقيه) Ibn Al Haj criticised his contemporary scholars for letting their women go to those public baths uncovering some of their bodies, "They gather in public baths, then they happen to see each other's bodies". (Ibn al-Hājj, 1903, Vol.2, p.172)

Al Jobbery mentioned in (al-Mukhtār fī kashf al-asrār) which means the “Selected in Uncovering Secrets” that debauchery gatherings in Cairo were full of women beside men. Cairo women at that time went a lot to graveyards, lakes, the Nile and to other places of entertainment and amusement where women shamelessly mingled with men. This provoked religious scholars and faqīhs (الفقهاء), so they called for stopping women from going out in that obscene way. (‘Āshūr, 1971, 572)

The Muslim jurist Ibn Taymiyya (661 – 728 AH / 1256 – 1328 CE), one of the most dramatic civilian figures in the urban society of the Mamlūk Empire, pointed out that God had ordained that women, unlike men, be “both protected and cordoned off”, and that “veiling with clothing and houses [al-istitār bi’l-libās wa’l-buyūt]” be imposed on them because the “appearance of women [in public] is a cause of fitna (temptation) and men are set over them”. All men and all women, no matter how pious, were subject to the passions that led to fitna and, as objects of desire, could themselves also be unwitting causes of fitna. Ibn Taymiyya, like other medieval Muslim jurists, argued that beautiful adolescent boys should also be removed from the public gaze of adult sexuality. (Marmon, 1995, p.8)

Therefore, Ṣadr al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn al-‘Ajamī, the ombudsman [al- Muḥtasib], stopped in (825 AH/1422 CE) women from sitting at the shops to see the carrier [al-Maḥmal]. He stressed on this prohibition. It was a habit that women sat for a part of the day at the shops to watch the carrier so they mingled with men for two or three days which led to the occurrence of unsatisfactory things. (‘Abd al-Rāziq, 1999, p.48)

Additionally, contemporary scholars criticised women for over-beautifying when going out from their homes, as mentioned by Ibn al-Ḥājj. If a woman wanted to go out to streets, she beautified and wore the best of her dress and jewelleryes to go out and mingle with men. Some women during the Mamlūk reign used their beauty to prey on men. A woman would go out to the street fully beautified, walk around in an eye-catching way, “They master the art of walking”. (Ibn al-Ḥājj, 1903, Vol.1, p.244 – 45) If a man desired and demanded her, she would reply that she could not go to anyone but he could follow her to her house. In her house he would pay a high price for his lust. The price on some occasion was his life as he would be murdered and robbed of all his money. (‘Abd al-Rāziq, 1999, p.156)

In the tales of The Arabian Nights, the phenomenon of marital infidelity was highlighted. Those tales portrayed the wives at that time cheating on their husbands with their young lovers. (Mardrus, 1965, VI, p. 403) Some historians related that phenomenon to marrying the girl at an early age to an old man who could be as old as her father. This eventually led the wife to cheating on her husband with a young man of the same age so that she could fulfil a need that she could not fulfil with her old husband. (‘Abd al-Rāziq, 1973, p.194) al-Sha‘rānī documented what was mentioned to him by a woman at that time in this regard, “A religious praying woman said to me, “I hate going out to the market, “why?” I asked, she said, “Because I look at good things (handsome men) so I desire them, then when I come home, I cannot look at my husband’s face”. (al-Sha‘rānī, 1894, Vol.2, pp. 173 – 74)

Conclusion:

It is clear now that the nature of the public was not different to that of the rulers. Prostitution was widespread among the public and it was practiced in known houses and places. Fornication and debauchery prevailed in parks and at the celebrations of religious ancestors. The family was hit by such things as marital infidelity prevailed. The woman went out to the market and crowded places to feel her femininity among men or to sleep with whoever demands her. Homosexuality permeated among women in public baths due to the habit of women gathering naked there. There are some sources indicated that homosexuality hit the judges and their assistants which leads us to saying that what was not documented by sources about the sexual practices for some people was more provocative.

Bibliography List

1. 'Abd al-Rāziq, Aḥmad (1973). *La femme au temps des Mamlouks en Egypte*. Cairo: Institut français d'archéologie orientale du Caire.
2. 'Abd al-Rāziq, Aḥmad (1999). *al-Mar'ah fī Miṣr al-mamlūkīyah* [Women in Mamlūk Egypt]. Cairo: al-Hay'ah al-Miṣrīyah al-Āmmah lil-Kitāb.
3. al-'Asqalānī, Aḥmad ibn 'Alī Ibn Ḥajar (1972). *Inbā' al-ghumr bi-anbā' al-'umr*. vol.3. ed. Hasan Habashi. Cairo: al-Majlis al-A'la li-l-Shu'un al-Islamiyya.
4. al-'Asqalānī, Aḥmad ibn 'Alī Ibn Ḥajar (1998). *Raf' al-iṣr 'an quḍāt Miṣr*. ed. 'Alī Muḥammad 'Umar. Cairo: Maktabat al-Khānjī.
5. al-'Aynī, Badr al-Dīn Maḥmūd ibn Aḥmad (n. d.). 'Umdat al-qārī : Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī. Retrieved from <http://shamela.ws/index.php/book/5756>
6. al-Dawādārī, Abī Bakr ibn 'Abd Allāh ibn Aybak (1971). *Kanz al-durar wa-jāmi' al-ghurar*. Vol. 8. ed. Harman Horlick. Cairo: al-Ma'had al-Ālmānī lil-Āthār al-Islāmīyah.
7. al-Kutubi, Muḥammad ibn Shākir (1974). *Fawāt al-wafayāt*. Vol.1. ed. Ihsan 'Abbas. Beirut: Dār Ṣādir.
8. al-Maqrīzī, Taqī al-Dīn Ahmad ibn 'Alī (1907). *al-Mawā'iz wa-al-i'tibār fī dhikr al-khiṭaṭ wa-al-āthār* [Homilies and consideration by mentioning the history and monuments]. Cairo: [n. p]
9. al-Maqrīzī, Taqī al-Dīn Ahmad ibn 'Alī (1970). *Kitāb al-Sulūk li-ma'rifat duwal al-mulūk* [The behaviour to know countries Kings]. ed. Sa'īd 'Abd al-Fattāh 'Āshūr, Muḥammad Muṣṭafā Ziyādah. Cairo: Maṭba'at Lajnat al-Ta'līf wa-al-Tarjamah wa-al-Nashr.
10. al-Maqrīzī, Taqī al-Dīn Ahmad ibn 'Alī (n. d.). *al-Mawā'iz wa-al-i'tibār fī dhikr al-khiṭaṭ wa-al-āthār* [Homilies and consideration by mentioning the history and monuments]. Retrieved from <http://www.alwaraq.net>
11. al-Sakhāwī, Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Raḥmān (1972). *Kitāb al-tibr al-masbūk fī dhayl al-sulūk*. Cairo: Maktabat al-Kullīyāt al-Azharīyah.
12. al-Ṣāwī, Aḥmad & Abū Tīj, Mīrfat Aḥmad. (2000) *Ṣafaḥāt min daftar aḥwāl al-usrah al-Miṣrīyah*. Jīzah: Markaz Qaḍāyā al-Mar'ah al-Miṣrīyah.
13. al-Sha'rānī, 'Abd al-Wahhāb ibn Aḥmad (1894). *Kitāb Lawāqih al-anwār al-quḍsīyah fī bayān al-'uhūd al-Muḥammadīyah wa-bi-Baḥr al-mawrūd fī al-mawāthiq wa-al-'uhūd*. Miṣr : al-Maṭba'ah al-'Āmirah al-'Uthmānīyah.
14. al-Shujā'ī, Shams al-Dīn (1978). *Ta'rīkh al-Malik al-Nāṣir Muḥammad ibn Qalāwūn al-Ṣāliḥī wa-awlādih* [The history of King al-Nasir Muhammad Al-Salihi and his Sons]. ed. Barbara Schäfer. Vīsbādn : Dār al-Nashr Frānz Shtāynar.
15. al-Subkī, Tāj al-Dīn 'Abd al-Wahhāb ibn 'Alī (1964). *Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfi'īyah al-kubrā*. Vol.8. ed. Mahmud Muhammad al-tanahi & abd al-Fattah Muhammad al-Hulw. Cairo: Dār Iḥyā' al-Kutub al-'Arabīyah.
16. 'Āshūr, Sa'īd 'Abd al-Fattāh (1963). *al-Zāhir Baybars*. Cairo: al-Mu'assasah al-Miṣrīyah al-Āmmah lil-Ta'līf wa-al-Tarjamah wa-al-Ṭibā'ah wa-al-Nashr.

17. ‘Ashūr, Sa‘īd ‘Abd al-Fattāh (1971). Cairo women during mamluk era. In *Abḥāth al-nadwah al-dawlīyah li-tārīkh al-Qāhirah*, Māriss-Abrīl 1969. Cairo: Maṭba‘at Dār al-Kutub.
18. Atārid, Shukrī (2009). “Miṣr al-Mamlūkīyah fi bābāt Ibn Dānīyāl” [Mamlūk Egypt in Ibn Daniyal's shadow plays]. *Journal of al-funūn al-sha‘bīyah*, (84 October – December), 73 – 82.
19. Booth, Marilyn (1993). “Review of Three Shadow Plays by Muhammad Ibn Daniyal”, ed. Paul Kahle, in *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 20 (2), 268 – 69.
20. Bou Hdeiba, ‘Abd al-Wahhāb (2001). *al-Islām wa al-jins* [Sex in Islam]. Trans. Hala al-Ouri. Beirut: Riyād al-Rayyis lil-Kutub wa-al-Nashr.
21. Guo, Li (2001). “13th century AD”. *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 21 (2), 19 – 235.
22. Ibn al-Hājī, Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad (1903). *Kitāb al-Madkhal*. Vol.2. Miṣr : al-Maṭba‘ah al-‘Āmirah al-Sharīfīyah.
23. Ibn al-Ḥimṣī, Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad (1999). *Ḥawādith al-Zamān wa-Wafayāt al-Shuyūkh wa-al-Aqrān*. Vol.2. Beirut: Al-Maktabah al-‘Aṣrīyah.
24. Ibn al-Wardī, Zayn al-Dīn ‘Umar ibn al-Muzaffar (1970). *Tatimmat al-Mukhtaṣar fi akhbār al-bashar: tārīkh Ibn al-Wardī* [History of Ibn al-Wardy]. Vol. 2. ed. Aḥmad Rif‘at Badrāwī. Beirut: Dār al-Ma‘rifah.
25. Ibn Iyās, Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad (1963). *Badā’i‘ al-zuhūr fi waqā’i‘ al-duhūr* [The history of Islamic Egypt]. Vol. 4. ed. Muhammad Mustafa. Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner.
26. Ibn Kathīr, Ismā‘īl ibn ‘Umar (1994). *Al-Bidāyah wa-al-Nihāyah* [Beginning and the End]. Vol. 14. ed. Aḥmad Abū Mulḥim. Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmīyah.
27. Koni, Taghreed Waddah Mustafa (2013). The Egyptian Society in Shamsuddin Ibn Danial Al-Moosely Al-Kahhal's Poetry. Unpublished master's thesis, Najah University, Nablus, Palestine.
28. Lewinsohn, Richard (1965). *Tārīkh al-‘alāqāt al-jinsīyah* [A History of Sexual Customs] Vol.1. (Amīn Salāmah, Trans.). Cairo: Dār al-Fakr.
29. Maṣṣūr, Aḥmad Ṣubḥī (2012, September 17). *Quḍāh al-Shara‘ al-Sunnī: A‘midat al-zulam fi ‘aṣr Qāyitbāy*. Retrieved from <http://www.ahl-alquran.com/arabic/printpage.php>
30. Mardrus, Joseph-Charles (1965). *Mardrus Le Livre des milles et une nuits*. Paris: N.p.
31. Marmon, Shaun (1995). *Eunuchs and Sacred Boundaries in Islamic Society*. New York: Oxford university press.
32. Mubārak, Zakī (1975). *al-Taṣawwuf al-Islāmī fi al-adab wa-al-akhlā*. Vol.1. Beirut: Dār al-Jīl lil-Nashr wa-al-Ṭibā‘ah wa-al-Tawzī‘.
33. Naṣṣār, Luṭfī Aḥmad (1999). *Wasā’il al-tarḥīh fi ‘aṣr salāṭīn al-Mamālīk fi Miṣr* [Entertainment in the era of the Mamlūk sultans in Egypt]. Cairo: al-Hay‘ah al-Miṣrīyah al-‘Āmmah lil-Kitāb.
34. Petry, Carl (1994). *Protectors or Praetorians? The Last Mamlūk Sultans and Egypt’s Waning as a Great Power*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
35. Rapoport, Yossef (2007). *Women and Gender in Mamluk Society: An Overview*. MAMLŪK STUDIES REVIEW, 11 (2), 1 – 47.
36. Rowson, Everett K. (2008). “Homoeerotic Liasons among the Mamluk Elite in Late Medieval Egypt and Syria”. In *Islamicate sexualities: translations across temporal geographies of desire*. (pp. 204 – 238) ed. Kathryn Babayan & Afsaneh Najmabadi. Harvard University Press.
37. Shishtāwī, Muḥammad (1999). *Mutanazzahāt al-Qāhirah fi al-‘aṣrayn al-Mamlūkī wa-al-Uthmānī* [Cairo Parks in the Mamlūk and Ottoman era]. Cairo: Dār al-Āfāq al-‘Arabīyah.
38. Stewart, Desmond (1987). *al-Qāhirah* [Cairo]. Trans. Yaḥyá Ḥaqqī. Cairo: Dār al-Ma‘ārif.
39. Ṭaqqūsh, Muḥammad Suhayl (1997). *Tārīkh al-Mamālīk fi Miṣr wa-Bilād al-Shām*, 648-923 /1250-1517 [History of the Mamlūks in Egypt and the Levant]. Beirut: Dār al-Nafā’is.
40. Unknown Author (2004). *Alf laylah wa-laylah* [The Arabian Nights]. Vol.1. Cairo: Dār al-‘Ilm wa-al-Ma‘rifah.
41. Younes, Muḥammad Abdul Rahman (2013). *Cairo, the city, state and the center in Arabian Nights stories: social, political and historical study*. *Historical Kan Periodical*, 6 (21), 46 – 61. Retrieved from www.kanhistorique.org/Archive/2013/Issue21/Cairo.