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Jeanne d’Arc, Arab Hero: Warrior Women, Gender Confusion, and Feminine Political Authority in the Arab-Ottoman *Fin de Siècle*

Marilyn Booth

From history, we learn how many a secluded chamber yields a slayer-lion, and how many a hennaed hand receives the reins of kingdoms . . .

... How many they are: intrepid women like Jeanne d’Arc, philosophers like Hypatia, poets like al-Khansa’! How many thousands of women have made intellect their leader [*amir*], striving their backer [*zahir*], piety their general [*qa’id*], probity their scout [*ra’id*], and contemplation their companion [*jalis*].¹

In the opening article of the first Arabophone women’s magazine, *al-Fatat* (The young woman, Alexandria, Egypt, 1892–94), founder-editor Hind Nawfal (1860–1920) invoked a parade of formidable women in history as she addressed herself, letter-like, to women (*sayyidati*, “my ladies”). It was an era when middle- and upper-strata women across the world were working to garner expanded educational, political, economic, and legal rights for females. Like late-nineteenth-century rosters of “women worthies” elsewhere, Nawfal’s list intimated a sense of gender-specific community across place and time—in this case, from medieval France to classical Greece to ancient Arabia, and—in her first-person address—to contemporary Egyptian and Ottoman Arabophone women.

Nawfal’s metaphor—slayer-lion issuing from the boudoir—was readable within a topos familiar to her presumed readership: the male leaders that fledgling modern nation-states needed were products of strong, devoted mothers. “Lion” was an ancient Arabic descriptive for male warrior-heroes. But maybe the lions were women. Implicitly at least, Nawfal’s figuration mobilized the venerable presence in Arabic popular epic and Arab-Islamic history of warrior women, juxtaposed to women as rulers everywhere and to Jeanne d’Arc as that singular, malleable figure of female heroism, celebrated across so many sites and eras. Nawfal capped this obeisance to history’s female heroes by hailing a veritable surge of unnamed women, marshaling their ideal and operative character traits, personifying these feminine qualities as male figures associated with political leadership and military campaigns: “masculine” positions fulfilled by heroic traits of a platoon of leaderly women.

The women's magazines following *al-Fatat* deployed famous-woman biography to encourage shifting roles for female readers while embedding new feminine lives in constructions of "tradition." From ancient to contemporary, profiles of women across the world—especially those with origins around the eastern Mediterranean—might inspire readers. This genre paralleled the "greatest-events-and-most-famous-men" feature fronting the mainstream magazine *al-Hilal*, its first issue appearing two months before *al-Fatat*'s. Perhaps it was a riposte to another popular miscellany, *al-Muqtataf*, where women's biographies and writings mostly appeared in the "Home management" section toward the back of the magazine.²

In 1895, Jeanne d'Arc was amongst *al-Hilal*'s "most-famous-men." Surfacing occasionally in "malestream" magazines, Jeanne made more appearances in the women's press. At least sixteen biographies of her appeared in Egypt-based women's magazines before 1940 (at least nine in the 1920s), others in Ottoman Syria. My study some years ago of "the Egyptian Jeanne d'Arc" as an evolving localized figure within Egyptian anti-colonial modernizing nationalist formulations, crystallizing in post-First World War activism, demonstrates how such representations were saturated in local, time-salient gendered expectations. Biographies of the 1920s emphasized Jeanne's modesty, religiosity, and devotion to homeland as earlier Arabic biographies had, but they gave increased emphasis to her domestic proclivities and salt-of-the-earth peasant-ness. They celebrated her resistance—anachronistically—to "the British."³ And they suggested that her religiosity was transferable across faiths. In other words, she was a perfect 1920s Egyptian female patriot and representative of the nation, akin to the peasant woman in Muhammad Mukhtar's famous statue "Egypt's renaissance." As in France, so in Egypt: the imagined Jeanne played a unificatory-nationalist role, subtending (or uneasily repressing) political differences—although in France "she" also carried the banner for competing political agendas.⁴ Decades later—following the Free Officers' revolution, Egypt's allegiance to the non-aligned movement, and the emergence of organized Palestinian resistance—Jeanne appeared in 1950s–60s collections titled "Fighting women" and "Woman in theatres of struggle," an anti-colonial fighter.⁵

Jeanne's earliest sightings in Arabic, 1879–96, were not so marked by imperatives of anticolonial nationalism. In Egypt, nationalist sentiment and organizations emerged gradually after the shock of the 1882 British invasion; Ottoman Syrians' trajectory was differently complex. *Fin-de-siècle* contestations around gender and nature, women's rights, and women's political demands shaped figurations of Jeanne and other "fighting women" in biographies by early female intellectuals with feminist inclinations, and equally, those produced by male intellectuals interested in harnessing women's capacities for modernizing societies. In the 1880s–90s, it was less nationalism than questions of gender identity in and for modernity that seem to infuse these texts, consonant with debates on "the woman question" (and more silently, "the man question"). One cannot predict perspectives from gender of authorship, but divergences among these texts suggest an alignment of gender and political perspective. This becomes particularly evident when the imagined Jeanne d'Arc joins her warrior-women sisters-in-arms as they were portrayed in the same and contemporaneous publications. For these were populated by a cosmopolitan panoply of female figures. Jeanne was not the only militarily engaged female hero in the public eye.

The woman warrior was an available heritage figure, indigenous and borrowed, multiple of guise, appropriated by early proponents of expanded lives for women *and* by their opponents. Medieval and early modern anecdotes of historically attested Arab-Islamic and pre-Islamic warrior women resurfaced in *fin-de-siecle* publications. In cafes and homes, people listened to popular epics from a vernacular tradition celebrating legendary pre- and early-Islamic-period women combatants. Overlaying this was an emerging practice of women's history writing as a polemic enmeshed in "the woman question" as a local debate responding to critiques from Europe. Finally, as women's activism elsewhere generated nervousness in the Arabic press (via articles translated from Europe and North America), representations of women's struggles for national-political rights were framed in narratives of politically aspirational women as violent and uncontrollable, desexed or resexed as men manqué. These narratives depended on cross-societal, masculinist, often misogynist, narratives of "modern Amazons."

Nineteenth-century Arabic biographies of Jeanne d'Arc, this chapter argues, index a relatively fluid, ambiguous and differentiated (but forceful) discourse on gender and political voice that would later become more fixed. A certain gender fluidity in 1890s portrayals of Jeanne, even those that do not foreground story elements such as cross-dressing and military leadership, is evident, later giving way to a national-feminine iconography set within a rather rigid role-separation schema where women are aligned with "home." But the Jeanne representations accrue additional nuance when read alongside other woman-warrior images contributing to a contentious public conversation on gender-rights in modern nation-formation. Because any woman-warrior figure—against the backdrop of patriarchal gender expectations—tends to highlight issues of gender ambiguity or fluidity, the woman-warrior imagined serves as one notation of how open to question a community's gender conventions are at a given moment. Competing representations of woman-warrior figures suggest a multiplicity of perspectives and attempts to manage them.

Reading Jeanne d'Arc

In the nineteenth century, Arabophone elites' earlier intellectual activity became a concerted knowledge movement. While manuscript production continued, government-initiated and private ventures energized newspaper, magazine, and book publishing. Bringing their senses of heritage into conversation with how-to debates on attaining suitable indigenous modernity, intellectuals reassessed the premodern Arabic literary-intellectual-scientific heritage—repackaging medieval and later works for new audiences—as they evaluated challenges posed by Europe's politico-economic power and social models. Like nineteenth-century thinkers elsewhere, many vigorously supported educating girls—for intelligent motherhood—but differed on what girls must study, raising the specter of challenges to patriarchal authority in and beyond the family. Recognizing and re-voicing European stadial histories that linked societies' advancement to women's status, they argued over how to define and enact that status.

Integral to this intellectual-political activism were new modes of history writing incorporating older historiographical models (biographical dictionaries, dynastic chronicles) and creatively appropriating histories composed elsewhere. Ancient histories of the eastern Mediterranean region offered senses of heritage and authority to colonized or peripheralized elites. World histories and the European-format encyclopaedia, plus prolific borrowing of material from European periodicals, opened up the world to local readers, as works by Arab travel writers had done for centuries. These contemporary works did not necessarily espouse stadial history, but they collated material that nourished it.

In such works, Jeanne d'Arc made her first Arabic appearances. Syrian-Armenian writer-translator Yuhanna Abkariyus (c. 1832–89), from a Beirut-based intellectual family, published a massive world history, *Qatfal-zuhur fi ta'rikh al-duhur* (The plucking of blooms on the history of the ages, 1875, 1885); it would become a source for the first full-length Arabic biographical dictionary of world women. Abkariyus included a few warrior queens and fighting women: Semiramis, Zenobia, Boudicca. His sketch of Jeanne d'Arc was admiring. In a time of turmoil for France, “in 1429 a star of good fortune shone on the horizon: there appeared the maiden Jeanne d'Arc, daughter of a peasant, exhibiting piety and godliness.” Neither cross-dressing nor visions (highly visible, problematic story elements in so many Jeanne representations across time and space) figured in this abbreviated, circumspect account. When her father refused her permission to leave home, Jeanne went “secretly to [Dauphin] Charles... her intrepidity astonished him.” She led the small army he provided “with courage that men’s zeal and bravery fall short of,” soon “breaking” the English hold. “She did things so astounding to the English that they thought she must be a sorceress.” Her trial and murder were “blameworthy deeds, a grievous sight to make bodies shiver.”⁶

Jeanne appeared in the encyclopaedia project spearheaded by educator, translator-publisher, and all-round culture activist Butrus al-Bustani (1819–83). He realized this ambitious work with help from family members (possibly including his well-educated writer daughters). Eleven volumes came out (nine in Beirut 1876–87, two in Cairo 1898–1900), though the project remained unfinished.⁷ Jeanne’s entry in volume six (1882) was more detailed than Abkariyus’s narrative. Did the language imply Protestant skepticism on visions? People of her region were strong believers in *khurafat* (legends), this text noted. Jeanne

was full of imaginings, very pious.... She loved stories of the Virgin and was familiar with the widespread tale that a virgin would save France.... She believed in supernatural apparitions, talking about voices she heard and visions she saw. A few years later, it came into her head that she was called to save her country and crown its king. The Burgundians’ descent on her village strengthened her belief in the soundness of her musings.⁸

This narrative mentions that Jeanne wore armor and carried a sword but is silent on cross-dressing. Jeanne is portrayed less as leader than as helper. (For example: she stayed on after Charles’s crowning only because his male deputy feared losing Jeanne’s aura of authority.) The sympathetic focus is on her steadfast and consistent

performance in the interrogation she faced from malevolent foes, *lahutiyyin muhtalin*, “cunning, deceitful theologians.”⁹ (Harsh language on French men of religion is interesting given al-Bustani’s difficult personal history with Maronite clergy and Protestant missionaries.) “Feminine” characteristics predominate: “The life history of that maiden was beyond reproach; she was renowned for purity, chastity, and modesty. No spilt blood stained her hand; her majestic bearing evinced gentle graciousness. Her awe-inspiring gravity was a source of wonder to all ... these [qualities] restrained her soldiers from brutish behaviour.”¹⁰ Jeanne becomes a “civilizing” figure, exemplary for “feminine” refinement as constructed in the era’s discourse, which posed these qualities as natural and timeless attributes and yet also as outcomes of a trained domesticity that could and ought to “tame” men’s behavior. Aspects of her history that have generated unease in many contexts are not completely absent, but they are not foregrounded, and this treatment minimizes gender ambiguity: Jeanne’s ability to lead is predicated not on a fighter image but on that of a morally and socially impeccable, and subordinate, feminine presence.

Abkariyus’s and al-Bustani’s texts maintain gender-differentiated boundaries of aspiration, attribute, and efficacy. Two biographies in works authored by women position Jeanne somewhat differently. By 1879, Maryam al-Nahhas Nawfal (1856–88), mother of *al-Fatah*’s editor Hind Nawfal and her writer-sister Sara, had composed a biographical dictionary of women, *Ma’rid al-hasna’ fi tarajim mashahir al-nisa’* (The fine woman’s exhibition: Biographies of famous women). Only a sixteen-page prototype appeared; what was apparently a two-volume work was otherwise lost. The prototype comprised lives of Çeşm-i Âfet Hanım (d. 1907)—third consort of Khedive Isma’il (reg. 1863–79) and sponsor of Egypt’s first state girls’ school, who underwrote publication—and “a few famous women,” as Zaynab Fawwaz (c. 1850–1914) would describe it in her profile of al-Nahhas several years later. In February 1879, the author’s husband Nasim Nawfal published an announcement of the project, with a plea for subscribers to facilitate publication. Among the subjects, he said, were “women famous ... for storming barricades.”¹¹ The prototype included Jeanne d’Arc—at least five pages out of sixteen—followed by Catherine of Russia and ancient Arab poet Layla bt. Hudhayfa b. Shaddad.¹²

Ma’rid portrays Jeanne as emotionally cognizant—as a very young girl—of the political scene (framed in national terms) as it impinged on her environs: “She was frightened at what she saw of France’s disturbed state and the disasters befalling it; her heart broke and her alarm grew when the English drew near her birthplace.”¹³ Jeanne would linger in a nearby wood to “contemplate her homeland’s misery, her head hanging low, held-back tears now flowing ... hot with the flame of fervour and regret.” Recalling the prophecy about France’s salvation, “she wondered: could she be that girl?” Then, “she recalled what she had heard about women famed for courage and bold initiative, saving their country from ruin, like the women of Bohemia who bore weapons and defended the homeland’s honour.” The text lists several names.¹⁴ Al-Nahhas, biographer of women, assumes Jeanne’s political precocity and worldly knowledge; but would this unlettered peasant girl have heard of the women who became known as Bohemia’s Amazons?¹⁵ In her time, al-Nahhas might well have heard of the Bohemian Amazons. Enconced in Czech nationalist and feminist imaginaries by the 1880s, these

figures drew fascinated attention from writers across Europe. As Jitka Malečková has shown, moving “from mythology to national myth,” their story became one of fighting for the homeland rather than (as in some, myth-laden, versions) for reinstitution of lost female rule.¹⁶ Al-Nahhas’s proto-nationalist interpretation highlighted Jeanne as putative “reader” of famous-woman history, inspired by exemplary forebears. Jeanne becomes the perfect nineteenth-century female-feminist patriotic pupil. But she is less demure or devout than she is politically astute and ambitious.

The narrative is vivid and fiction-like, describing Jeanne’s first visions with none of al-Bustani’s cautious tone. It puts Jeanne in the ranks of young patriots seeking to serve militarily through less exalted channels: “she showed her desire to enlist with the volunteers, to go to the battlefield, to join the French army. Her father grew troubled and angry He decided to marry her off.” Thus, Jeanne’s first test occurred in response to her attempted transgression of gender norms. She surmounted it. Then, won over, “the captain” at Vaucouleurs gave her “a burnished sword . . . the garb of war . . . and a mount.” By the time she reached Charles, “news of Jeanne soared near and far.” The people of Orléans begged Charles to send her to them in their hour of need. Only then did she have a royal audience: “she entered wearing the uniform of war and armed: eighteen years of age, her darkish complexion imbued with a pale glow, her eyes black with a magical quality, her form slender, her face displaying knight-like bravery and intelligence.” With this gender-bending appearance, even at her first audience she found adversaries insinuating her guidance was satanic. The text injects a note of feminine solidarity: the bishops whom Charles assigned to interrogate her feared to disturb the royal house: “they knew Jeanne had gained the liking of the queen and queen mother.”¹⁷ There is evidence that Charles’s mother-in-law, Yolande of Aragon, supported Jeanne. But likely this was because Yolande opposed the pro-Burgundian views of Charles’s advisors: she saw Jeanne as possibly useful.¹⁸ It was not a question of gender solidarity, as al-Nahhas’s text intimates. This narrative also sketches Jeanne as popular hero. Facing interrogation, “she buckled on her sword, donned the garb of war and struggle, mounted her noble steed, and grasped the lance of St Catharine.”¹⁹ This biography emphasizes her determination despite the clerical establishment’s harsh opposition, and highlights her cross-dressed visibility as unproblematic for her staunch followers, specified as the civilian masses and soldiers.

Sketching Jeanne as an unconventional, politically motivated, and astute girl, al-Nahhas’s biography showed her growing into a decision-maker and risk-taker (under divine guidance). The coronation at Rheims “was a momentous occasion heralding joy and delight: by Jeanne’s courage and bold initiative the French ably chased the English from the territory they had seized.”²⁰ Historically, the English were not expelled from France in Jeanne’s lifetime. It is unclear whether the biography’s declaration refers to the initial, partial rout, or implies credit to Jeanne posthumously for final victory. The vocabulary naming Jeanne’s powers—“courage and bold initiative,” terms associated with masculine heroism—echoes precisely the text’s earlier characterization of the Bohemian women whom Jeanne recalled. Al-Nahhas gestured to a connected history of women’s active defense of nation or homeland, a theme more explicit and yet less military in later, “high-nationalist” Arabic biographies of Jeanne.

The narrative's intense emotional register culminates in direct address, linking the biographical subject to young unmarried female readers, and all to patriotism: "Woe is you, O Jeanne, do you die hands fettered after your sword touched the head of the enemies [?]... O maidens, do you bewail a young woman who dies for love of her homeland, having prepared for it victory's crown even as it wilfully neglected to save her from destruction [?]."²¹ This biography's tone and terms of address diverge from al-Bustani's and Abkariyus's, a difference of genre *and* apparent communicative intent. Perhaps al-Nahhas had read the English translation of Dumas père's 1842 romance *Jehanne, la pucelle*.²² (None of the texts discussed here name their source, and none acknowledge each other.)

About fifteen years later, readers could peruse Zaynab Fawwaz's biography of Jeanne in her sweeping biographical dictionary of women, published by Egypt's prestigious government press. This work comprised 453 biographies, the majority Arab and/or Muslim while incorporating women of Europe, North America, and South and East Asia. Fawwaz's massive project drew from al-Bustani and Abkariyus, but was rooted in the Arabic-Islamic tradition of biographical dictionaries. These had emerged as a technology for remembering and ascertaining the veracity of the Prophet's contemporaries and later followers, sources on his deeds and words. The genre ramified, embracing variously defined groups of eminent individuals. Fawwaz signaled her focus—women—and her generic intertext in her title, *al-Durr al-manthur fi tabaqat rabbat al-khudur* (Pearls scattered on the classes [*tabaqat*] of ladies of cloistered spaces). *Tabaqat* was shorthand for the genre tradition, wherein women had appeared but never as *sole* focus. Quite a few of Fawwaz's subjects were warrior women.

Fawwaz's biography of Jeanne d'Arc differed from al-Nahhas's in structure, language, and tone, perhaps a product of diverse educations. Al-Nahhas's training in Anglophone missionary schools in Ottoman Syria gave her facility in English and familiarity with European literature. Fawwaz was tutored in Arabic letters and Islamic texts in her native south Lebanon and later in Egypt, her adopted home. She was familiar with historical chronicles, premodern Arabic *adab* works, and biographical compendia featuring anecdotes of literati, scholars, and other eminent women and men. The profile's debt to Arabic biographical style is evident, beginning with a physical description that verifies a moral countenance. Jeanne was

pure of complexion, slender of build, with deep-black eyes; coal-black hair fell over her shoulders. Visible on her graceful countenance were the qualities of bashfulness, sweetness and humility, while her features gave indication of strength of purpose, far-reaching goals, and cool self-possession.²³

The latter comprised heroic traits ascribed conventionally to male leaders (and in Fawwaz's volume, to females). My earlier study on Jeanne d'Arc saw this constellation of attributes as describing "the core of the ideal woman: bashful and resolute, sweet and self-possessed, mild and highly ambitious.... Such a mix of traits was crucial for the dynamic yet self-effacing female presence that many in Egypt... saw as underwriting their vision of national progress."²⁴ But the self-effacing aspect becomes more dominant in the 1920s biographies. It is there in Fawwaz's characterization, but not in the way

she describes Jeanne's life and actions. When Fawwaz wrote, opposition to the British occupation was gathering. Yet there was not the programmatic energy that would emerge slowly beginning from 1906. Her Jeanne was less a national/ist image than a feminine-heroic one: Jeanne as consistently ambitious, visible, and strong. "She was always mounting a stallion²⁵ and racing ahead, without saddle or bridle, in boldness and valour."²⁶ Again, these terms—*jara'a*, *furusiyya*—conventionally labeled the heroic masculine.

In February 1921, *al-Mashriq* (founded 1898), a Catholic journal produced by the University of St Joseph in Beirut, republished Fawwaz's biography in celebration of Jeanne d'Arc's recent canonization. Its title highlighted Fawwaz's identity and mentioned Jeanne's sainthood anachronistically (Jeanne was not yet beatified, let alone sainted, when Fawwaz wrote): "A Muslim woman writer honours the saint Jeanne d'Arc." The introduction celebrated ecumenical and geographical communion: both Egypt and Syria could celebrate Fawwaz as their own. The biography, said this Catholic journal, displayed Fawwaz's "balanced judgment."²⁷ Reproducing the biography "word-for-word" to honor both St Jeanne and Zaynab Fawwaz, the magazine announced, however, that it would "indicate what was missing due to lack of knowledge and incorrect wording." Its third footnote read: "She did not mount a horse before going to war." Presenting Jeanne as a fearless, skilled horse-rider early in life, Fawwaz's text was challenged by this 1921 republication as historically inaccurate.²⁸ Consistently, the magazine's footnotes played down Fawwaz's emphasis on Jeanne as bold, athletic, and visible.

Fawwaz narrates another sign of precocity: "aged five," the girl began "having religious apprehensions." *Al-Mashriq* corrected this to age thirteen and assured readers that Jeanne's *hawajis* "were not fancies but rather, noble sentiments of piety."²⁹ The magazine glossed Fawwaz's wording: Jeanne's "asserting [*za'ima*] that angels and saints appeared to her" signified "confirming," not the more doubtful (or rebellious) "asserting." This annotated version promoted Jeanne's veracity and her visions' religious validity, taming the tenor of forceful individuality that surfaced matter-of-factly in Fawwaz's narrative. Jeanne left her village for a nearby town, working for a widow who ran a *pensione*, said Fawwaz, "striving loyally, showing initiative in her work and chastity in her behaviour, and then returning to her father."³⁰ It may be over-reading to link this to Fawwaz's feminist politics, but in the early 1890s she was publishing essays upholding singlehood for women over painful marriages, advocating women's right and need to be prepared for waged work, and declaring their upright conduct as workers despite men's bad behaviors.³¹ *Al-Mashriq* again "corrected." Rather than "returning to her father," Jeanne "returned with her family to Domrémy": thus, the new version implied, she was not a working girl on her own.³² The magazine's version seemed to negotiate prevailing understandings of respectability for 1920s Arab middle-strata girls.

Preparing to meet the heir apparent, Jeanne "donned a knight's garb," said Fawwaz. *Al-Mashriq* added a footnote: "She did so on the basis of inspiration from her visions."³³ Fawwaz, in other words, did not explain or justify Jeanne's equestrian skills, assumption of masculine attire, or act of leaving town alone. For the Catholic magazine thirty years later, without an external guiding force none of it could have happened. Divergence between Fawwaz's text and its later "reproduction" displays a process of

narrative containment, consistent with prevailing nineteenth-century woman-warrior representations across cultures.³⁴

In an interesting spin, Fawwaz localized Jeanne's story linguistically, borrowing from the Qur'anic story of Yusuf (Joseph) to ventriloquize English soldiers' reaction as, witnessing Jeanne's triumphs, "terror possessed [their] hearts." The words Fawwaz put in the mouths of the English echoed words said (in the Qur'an) by women assembled in the Egyptian official's home after his wife tried to seduce Yusuf: "He cannot be a human being, he is none other than a noble angel." In the Qur'an, the hostess commanded his detention, Joseph declared incarceration preferable to the women's demands, "and God... deflected their wiles from him."³⁵ For the stunned English in Fawwaz's narrative, Jeanne "cannot be a human being, she is none other than a noble angel." This intertextual element introduces a note of gender inversion, linking Jeanne to Yusuf's purity, and the English military men to the dishonorable women's "wiles." *Al-Mashriq* noted the quotation's source without comment. (Fawwaz had not: presumably her envisioned readers would recognize the phrase.)

Of these nineteenth-century Arabic Jeanne narratives, Fawwaz's is the most challenging to conventional visions of gender roles and relations. Fawwaz's Jeanne is an astute leader, agential negotiator, and skilled horsewoman. This contrasts both with earlier biographies and with 1920s portraits highlighting Jeanne's self-effacing sacrifice for France, portrayed as a colonized nation.³⁶ Indeed, *al-Mashriq*'s 1921 version made this move. Fawwaz described Jeanne's confusion and dismay at Charles's refusal to let her return home; if this led to failure, still the text emphasized heroic qualities: only now did Jeanne's "zeal and bravery" desert her. *Al-Mashriq* glossed Fawwaz's narrative as "something of an exaggeration," observing that "St Jeanne d'Arc... remained in confusion and doubt for a time, but preferred in the end to sacrifice herself in service to her homeland, her death spurring France's complete and final victory over England."³⁷ Even as *al-Mashriq* praised Fawwaz for writing "judiciously" about the Catholic saint, it muted her emphasis on Jeanne's fearless *furusiyya*—her knightly qualities—while highlighting religiosity and divine guidance.³⁸

Malestreaming Jeanne

Just before *Pearls Scattered* was fully printed, Jeanne d'Arc appeared in *al-Hilal*'s biographical series. In volume four (1895–96), the front-page "greatest-events-and-most-famous-men" feature mostly offered biographies of deceased nineteenth-century men: newspaper editor Salim Taqla; Louis Pasteur; Joseph Garibaldi; Victor Emmanuel II; former Ottoman governor Rustum Pasha; Butrus al-Bustani; and Gordon Pasha. Lebanon-based missionary educator Cornelius van Dyck was still alive but died soon after. Molière, Dante, Martin Luther, and Socrates also appeared. And there was Jeanne d'Arc. In its heading, was *al-Hilal* using *rijal* (men) in its extended and notionally ungendered sense of "trustworthy sources" or (as *rijalat*) "distinguished people"? This seems unlikely. Jeanne was one of the men, and it was an awkward fit.

True to the magazine's practice, the issue's first page featured an image (Figure 8.1).³⁹ Unlike Fawwaz's description of Jeanne, *al-Hilal*'s visual Jeanne had short "pageboy"

Figure 8.1 Frontispiece to *al-Hilal* 4: 4 (October 15, 1895). Private collection of M. Booth.

hair; a lowered, averted gaze; short tunic or skirt; and upper body armor. Her crossed arms hugged a sword; another hung at her side. The tip of the sword between her arms fell in front of a second element, a vague shape with hands or gloves distinct. This image must have been derived ultimately from a popular statue by Marie d'Orléans (1813–39) of Jeanne d'Arc at prayer. This work was the model for numerous images of Jeanne across Europe, particularly as it could be “read” in various ways, as Nora Heimann has demonstrated (Figure 8.2).⁴⁰ Likely, *al-Hilal*'s image came from a secondary rendering;

Figure 8.2 Jeanne D'Arc, from the statue by Princess Marie of Orléans in the gallery at Versailles, from Mark Twain, *Personal Recollections of Joan of Arc*. Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.

it suggests simplicity and modesty but not necessarily prayer, though readers might see her crossed hands as a sign of Christian piety. As Heimann observes of the original sculpture, what was absent was as significant as what was there: it did not include “overt references to religious convention” or royalist overtones.⁴¹

Likely, *al-Hilal*’s editor Jurji Zaydan (1861–1914) came upon this image and took the opportunity to use it, rather than selecting it deliberately from among several. It was not a simple matter to acquire usable images. (At one point, Zaydan pleaded with readers to send images of individuals he wanted to feature—giving a list—but for whom he had no portrait.⁴²) Even so, it seems he found a particularly appropriate image that could speak meaningfully to various audiences.

As Heimann notes, the statue “acknowledges Joan’s controversial cross-dressing, but it de-emphasizes it by placing a modest skirt over the armor covering the Maid’s lower limbs.”⁴³ In other ways, the image might appear as androgynous to *al-Hilal*’s readers. This not only complicated the “most-famous-men” rubric but presaged ambiguities in the text that followed. But in its very gesture to gender ambiguity, this text placed “heroic qualities” firmly and exclusively in the grip of men as a gender category with fixed attributes.

She is the maiden who has bewildered historians over how to name and label her. For she united the gentle sex’s delicacy with the courageous audacity of great military leaders and the wisdom of great philosophers. She came close to matching the prophets.⁴⁴

This contrasts with al-Nahhas’s and Fawwaz’s deployments of such traits as ungendered designations of excellence garnering authority.

Matching the prophets? In an Islamicate context, though controversially, some have regarded Mary, mother of Jesus, as holding *almost* prophet status.⁴⁵ For any other woman to approach this seems unthinkable, as much for Christians such as Zaydan as for Muslims. In her milieu, Jeanne was associated with (suspect) female visionaries, and with Mary through the mystery play genre. In the 1890s, for a non-Catholic Christian (Zaydan, whose magazine advanced a modernizing, science-oriented ethos), was “near-prophetic” status the least troubling way to explain divine visions? The text mentioned “portents” around Jeanne’s birth in a secular vein, as instantiating legendary elements common in life histories of the great:

Rarely do you read biographies of great men, especially military leaders and heroes, without encountering events said to have occurred before or in the hour of their births There might be no truth in those narratives beyond some phrase spoken by the mother, female neighbour, or midwife, but not often does one attend a birth without hearing the like.⁴⁶

Framing a female hero’s birth, this statement placed her in the category of male heroes and set this category apart from women as sources of dubious information. The comment feminized “legendary” tales to dismiss them, articulating an oft-expressed view: “women’s gossip” (like *khurafat*) was antithetical to true and serious history (not

to mention sober nationhood). In other ways, too, this biography bore the imprint of Zaydan's didactic mission. The novelist in him emerged in the profile's vivid detail, while the popular-didactic historian surfaced in its digressive mini-narratives on French and English history. Like the historical novels Zaydan wrote, this text presented history through a female figure at once centered (as narrative protagonist) and decentered (as agent of political action). This was the volume in which Zaydan published serially his novel *Armanusa al-misriyya* (Armanusa the Egyptian), recounting the Muslims' conquest of Egypt, with the eponymous female protagonist at the center of the story but not in the thick of battle.⁴⁷

Al-Hilal's Jeanne introduced the emergent domesticity discourse which justified girls' schooling as necessary to efficient home management and child-raising. Partly adapted from Victorian England and contemporary France, grafted onto local notions of a gendered division of labor, this ideal of family management (incorporating companionate monogamous marriage) became a consistent theme in later Jeanne biographies and—complicatedly—throughout Arabic women's biography. It shaped Jeanne's desire to return home, resituating herself in the bosom of family. But for *al-Hilal*, it explained Jeanne's oddity, a girl kept *apart* from the domestic hearth with consequences for her understanding of the world: "She spent her childhood with her godmother, because her mother was occupied with homemaking tasks and managing her husband's and children's needs."⁴⁸ The godmother reprised the talkative women mentioned earlier and the pervasive "old women" [*'aja'iz*] of oral lore. Her intervention explained Jeanne's imaginings:

In leisure hours this godmother related stories told by that age's old women, of spirits and demons and sainted ancestors who were (they claimed) in perpetual communication with the living. Because the girl was keenly intelligent and sensitive, she was affected... whenever her godmother ceased talking she asked for more... and so she grew up believing in spirits.⁴⁹

This passage echoes homilies in the press on the dangers of storytelling (and novel-reading) for the impressionable young (especially females), and the corruption of children's minds by "ignorant" mothers relating tales of the supernatural.

Marie d'Orléan's statue included a plinth on which a helmet and gloves lay. In *al-Hilal*, the treatment of the plinth seems possibly ambiguous in its lack of detail, possibly readable as a shadowy second figure, crouching and half-hidden, perhaps even reaching for the sword-tip. Might readers interpret this as a gesture to the narrative's supernatural aspect, a hint that Jeanne's agency was not her own? For al-Nahhas, Jeanne was the perfect pupil, the unconventional girl with female military heroes, the precocious politico. For Zaydan, she was the impressionable victim of women's tales. Perhaps men like al-Bustani and Zaydan, whose writings advanced ecumenical, even secular, notions of modern society, including support for girls' education, had to explain away the visions. Fawwaz and al-Nahhas appeared not to have such anxieties.

Jeanne sallied forth in *al-Hilal* as determined and courageous. But unlike al-Nahhas and Fawwaz, *al-Hilal* related this demeanor as almost a sex change, Jeanne as gender anomaly rather than exemplar of feminine aspirations and abilities: "Where she had

been soft of voice, gentle in speech, fond of solitude, she now became a person of ringing tones, so bold she spoke to others only through commands and prohibitions." In Arabic, "to command and prohibit," a common idiom with religious overtones, is the province of political-religious leaders (presumed male). This biography offered leaderly details. But even as Jeanne appeared in her actions as bold and self-sufficient (staunching her wounds), she "screamed like a child at the pain." Later, "her eyes gushed tears" at Charles's "cowardice"; celebrating the coronation, she addressed him "with tears in her eyes." The biography does recount that in prison, alive on condition that she not resume wearing masculine garb, "she felt abased and servile, and could not bear staying in prison; they found her once again in men's clothes."⁵⁰ *Al-Hilal's* awkwardness in situating Jeanne—man or woman?—bespoke debates transpiring in its own pages.

Women Warriors around Ancient Arabia and Elsewhere

Although neither later women's magazines nor *al-Hilal* featured many women of war and politics, Fawwaz's biographical dictionary did. There, Jeanne was in the company of warrior leaders including those of ancient Semitic or other "nearby" communities. Fawwaz profiled women who led resistance to foreign (including colonial) rule, defended against invaders, or kept invaders distant through vigorous state management. Boudicca, "mother of the tribe of Briton-land,"⁵¹ Cleopatra VII, and Zenobia of Palmyra resisted the Romans; Bilqis, queen of Sheba, resisted Solomon and his army. There were ancient Assyrian ruler Semiramis; Amalekite ruler al-Zabba' Na'ila bt "Umar, a quasi-legendary figure who triumphed militarily—and revenged her father's death—through ruses; Daluka bt. Zabba," queen of ancient Egypt's Copts; Sajah, tribal leader and rival prophet resisting Muhammad's leadership in seventh-century Arabia; Azarmidokht and Purandokht, daughters of Khosrow II and, briefly, Sasanian monarchs in the seventh century as the Persians attempted to repel the Arab Muslims' eastward march; tenth-century St Olga of Kiev, presented as assiduous war strategist; Dahya, medieval Berber sorcerer-queen and indefatigable military leader; Khadija of the Maldives (reg. 1347–80?); Khamani bt Ardeshtir b. Bahman, consummate strategist, mother of Darius I; Habus al-Shihabi of nineteenth-century Lebanon, scion of a ruling house, a politician in her own right; and Agustina de Aragón, known as "the virgin of Zaragoza" (1786–1857), an epithet and a story that echo Jeanne's proto-nationalist construction. At a crucial moment in her city's resistance to French invasion in 1808, Agustina stepped up to fire a cannon, rallying her compatriots. As portrayed in *Pearls Scattered*, these women combined smart strategy—reversing misogynistic notions of "women's wiles" famously named in Yusuf's story and deployed in Arabo-Islamic polemics to demolish women's public activities⁵²—with strength and loyalty to family and "nation." Often they succeeded *to* leadership because of kinship ties to men. But they succeeded *in* leadership through their own abilities. The probably legendary Daluka marshaled Egypt's women—including female sorcerer Budur—to protect the realm, following the drowning of Pharaoh and his male warriors, explained the biography. If women leaders fill a vacuum in times of need, Daluka's abilities and loyalty—and her political success—contrast with the corrupt, tyrannical, and drowned ruler she replaced.⁵³

Comparing Fawwaz's warrior-women lives to those in al-Bustani's encyclopaedia and Abkariyus's history elicits striking divergences. The encyclopaedia entry on Semiramis (in volume 10, published after the patriarch's death) foregrounded her as legend, calling her heroic story dubious; deeds attributed to her were the accomplishments of "her husband and other kings." But Fawwaz treated her as an indisputably historical personage responsible for her kingdom's flourishing as well as military ventures. Her people so venerated her that they deified her, "asserting that ... she assumed a dove's likeness." Expressing scepticism on this point, Fawwaz maintained focus on the *historical* personage: "Whatever the case, she was the pride of women of the ancient era, the light in that age's lamp." Here is a different deployment of gender fluidity: confirming women's equal abilities, rejecting arguments that their feats were due to men. This reasserted the feminine, but as infinitely capacious in the subject's roles as individual hero and categorical force. Fawwaz named not "her folk"—the adoring subjects—but rather "ancient women," constructed as collective subject through Semiramis's example.

Fawwaz's biography appeared before al-Bustani's but after Abkariyus's history: the latter's chapter on Semiramis was likely one of her sources. Yet Fawwaz eschewed Abkariyus's emphasis on motives: "Covetous greed aroused her," he observed, "inciting her to seize all other kingdoms in the world." This divergence is noticeable because otherwise, Fawwaz's narrative of Semiramis's major campaign is almost identical to Abkariyus's. Unlike Fawwaz, Abkariyus did not find Semiramis worthy of pride: "Thus ended the life of this great queen whose assiduous habit was to raid and mount wars out of greed for conquests and booty, rather than spending her time effectively managing her kingdom and making a success of her nation."⁵⁴ Fawwaz's highlighting of Semiramis's military skill and peacetime leadership abilities shows more affinity with Christine de Pisan's life of Semiramis in her *Book of the City of Ladies* (1405). Neither sexualized Semiramis as had Dante and Boccaccio.⁵⁵

Fawwaz's biography of Agustina followed al-Bustani's word-for-word: "When the French besieged the city ... she participated in the defence, growing famous for the courage she displayed. She was called 'Artillerywoman' because she wrested a fuse from an artilleryman's hand ... and fired cannon at the besiegers. As reward for her service ... she was given leadership of a soldiers' unit and several medals." Here ended al-Bustani's text. Fawwaz added: "She persisted in battle, gaining victory time after time ... against the French."⁵⁶ This text highlights Agustina's military heroism less as spectacular single event, more as vocation. In Spain she was constructed as national/ist hero. But there is no indication of continued military leadership, though Agustina probably provided continued support work, and her act of heroism earned her an honorary military title and pension.⁵⁷

This array of historical and quasi-legendary figures was clustered around the Mediterranean, including the lands of Fawwaz's first readers. Amongst women warriors and consistent with the volume's overall population, Europeans were there but at the margins. Warrior women "locals" spanned wide swathes of territory and time. They intermingled alphabetically with writers, scientists, religious figures, royal consorts, and queens known for statecraft (Militarily significant figures could include Byzantine queens, Elizabeth I, Catherine II, Victoria, Isabella I—all *Pearls*.) Fawwaz's

profiles emphasized the “warrior” role as one in a range of public feminine heroic positions. She assumed the historical existence of subjects rather than dismissing them as mythological. Historically attested or not, figures such as Semiramis—and Jeanne d’Arc—had been mythologized through myriad retellings. Distancing such figures from “History” meant dismissing their historical existence, hence significance. Mythologizing the female heroic was one means to discount the transgressive figure of the woman warrior.⁵⁸ For Fawwaz, these figures were neither dismissible nor confinable within gender-conventional attributes. Concerning women’s potential, they were not necessarily extraordinary. In company with Semiramis, they were “the pride of women.” And they were real.

Fighting for the Faith

Although Jeanne’s gender normativity varies strikingly across these early Arabic biographies, her religious devotion is consistently attested as a praiseworthy feminine trait, albeit with intimations of “womanly superstition” in the biographies published by al-Bustani and Zaydan. The mix of religious and battlefield zeal aligns biographies of Jeanne with those of another group among Fawwaz’s *Pearls*, early Muslim women famous for battlefield roles alongside the Prophet, often downplayed by later pre-modern treatments.⁵⁹ These early Muslim women fit into a longer tradition of local female warriors, pre-Islamic Arabian Bedouin adept at poetry and the sword, creating continuity if not direct linearity with stories of the region’s ancient warrior-queens. Warrior-poet Khawla bt al-Azwar and others, profiled by Fawwaz and in women’s magazines, exemplified women’s dedication and capability as workers for the nation or the community of Muslims. The second issue of the long-running women’s magazine *Fatat al-sharq* (Young woman of the East, est. 1906) featured ‘Ikrisha bt. al-Atrush, ‘who united attributes of courage and of literary refinement. She attended the Battle of Siffin and, standing between the two ranged sides, made eloquent speeches provoking the army of ‘Ali b. Abi Talib, may God be pleased with him.’⁶⁰ Ancient Bedouin women on the battlefield were a usefully vague referent. Were they fighting? Or playing crucial support roles: shaming men into action and challenging foes, binding wounds, carrying water, composing elegies for martyred male family members? This ambiguity echoed the gender equivocacy of profiles of Jeanne. Like her, they were profiled as “national” heroines in the post-1918 intensification of nationalist anti-colonial sentiment. In the 1890s as in the 1920s, their images might be problematic for proponents of gender-differential clarity, who magnified women’s domestic roles and expressed anxiety at women’s political-professional demands. Correspondingly, they were useful to those like Fawwaz who argued the opposite.

Another familiar warrior-woman category was problematic for congruent reasons: heroes of Arabic popular epic. As a genre associated with unlettered audiences and vernacular oral recitation, which publishers repackaged in cheap, poorly printed booklets, epic and its spin-off tales were a cultural institution not celebrated by modernizing intellectuals. If the performance tradition foregrounded

male storytellers, in reform discourse epics and other vernacular narratives were sources of legend fuelling “old wives’ tales,” akin to the women’s talk inferred in *al-Hilal*’s Jeanne biography. But epic was also associated with the feminine through women-warrior characters. These works “usually present legendary versions of historical events, and famous historical figures play leading roles in them,” Remke Kruk notes, while they combine the fantastic and the mundane—like some *Pearls* sketches.⁶¹ They draw on legend-wrapped tales of ancient Arab and early Muslim exploits, and a tradition of female knights in Arabic, Persian, Urdu, and Turkish literatures, although no archaeological record exists of indigenous female warriors.⁶² Kruk finds epic’s female heroes paralleling legendary (“historicized” through biography) tales of Semiramis or Zenobia, indeed themes present in retellings of Jeanne d’Arc’s life: her childhood penchant for horseback riding, her cross-dressing.

Associated with “the popular” and the imaginary, perhaps epic’s warrior women were too challenging as gender-bending female icons to figure in turn-of-the-century discussions of gender right. They inhabited an archive of performance and memory: did their shadows haunt the modern production of women-warrior biography for a target audience of middle-class readers? Woman-warrior figures did not appear in Arabic novels (though a few female characters found themselves obliged to take up arms in self-defense), even though the early Arabic novel did borrow motifs, character types, and plot lines from oral storytelling.

Enter the Amazons

As Kruk notes, Arabic epic’s warrior women are not the Amazon figures of ancient Greek myth and modern imaginaries. Their stories accord with some classical historical descriptions of fighting women within Scythian and adjacent semi-nomadic groups. The epics’ women did not live in female-dominated societies or woman-only communities. They were not hostile to men: they married, and supported sons and daughters both. They partook in Muslim piety and fought for Islam. They did not challenge patriarchal structures.⁶³ Occasional motifs suggest that artists and audiences crafting epics over time were familiar with Amazon legends coming into Arabic through translations of Hippocrates and Alexander narratives.⁶⁴ A tenth-century Arabic medical work described Amazons to illustrate the category of “masculinized woman”:

those whose femininity has coarsened and whose nature has become close to that of men who are brave, gallant, and courageous. There are thus those who set out to encounter valiant warriors and to venture into battle, in the way that ‘A’isha (with whom God may be pleased) did on the Day of the Camel, and like some of the women of the Turks and the daughters of the Byzantines do.⁶⁵

That this writer associated the Prophet’s spouse ‘A’isha with the Amazons, for her presence and role at a battle over leadership succession, disapproved of then and later,

presages the term's modern re-emergence as women were seeking political subjecthood. In Arabic, by the 1890s Amazons had made their way into public discourse—but not as role models. The “Amazons” entry in al-Bustani's encyclopaedia had been succinct and neutral: some writers insisted on their historicity, others disputed it. They “made great conquests, to the border of Assyria, penetrating Africa and Europe, building cities in Asia Minor.” The entry mentioned famous Amazon queens associated with the Greeks; African Amazons; Scythians; and the eighth-century Bohemians “whose existence is not doubted; under Libussa and Vlasta's leadership they sowed terror... and were destroyed only with great effort.”⁶⁶ These were the Bohemians al-Nahhas cited as inspiring young Jeanne. Al-Bustani did not draw on Czech nationalist reconstructions of these figures as embodying “gender harmony.” But neither did he highlight competing images coupling “Amazons” with “cruel man-haters.”⁶⁷

Da'irat al-ma'arif was not the Amazons' first nineteenth-century Arabic staging ground. In September 1871, the Egyptian government's school magazine, *Rawdat al-madaris al-Misriyya* (Egyptian Schools' Garden, established 1870 in Cairo) published “The Amazon Army.” Reprising Greek and Roman reports on ancient Amazons of the Caucasus and Spanish explorers' narratives on Central American Amazons, the essay incorporated a report on the “Amazon army” of Dahomey translated from the London magazine *Gentleman's Journal*. It translated the *Journal's* “news hook,” too: Women “of strong minds” who were “demanding insistently to have men's pleasures, their work, their management [roles] and responsibilities” needed reminding that this might mean facing “sailors' storms and battleground fighting.” (The Arabic translation modulates the original's racist language somewhat.⁶⁸) Dahomey's fighting women are described as fierce, cruel warriors, “surpassing men in their savage deeds”; they are portrayed as frenzied and half-mad rather than as skilled soldiers.⁶⁹ The Arabic article's opening echoed the translated text's warning:

Often, we have recollected the Amazonian army, especially when it reached us that the women of France were enlisting as soldiers during the siege of Paris to help defend their homeland and cherished possessions. No doubt everyone who has heard about the Amazon Army of France wants more information about that army which inspired France's women to take it as a model in the recent war—especially since many women in the world, notably those famous for strong minds and bold initiative, are trying these days to obtain all the rights men have, and are demanding that female rulers, ministers and judges be drawn from among them. Obviously, women who demand to enjoy the rights of men are obligated to bear the [same] hardships and troubles they [masc.] bear, and must prepare themselves accordingly.⁷⁰

The spectral “Amazon” was shaped by contemporary gender politics.

There is another layer to the story: *Rawdat al-madaris* took this article—including the embedded translation—from Butrus al-Bustani's serial *al-Jinan* (established 1870), published in Beirut.⁷¹ Here, “Amazons” did not enjoy the neutral tone of the encyclopedia. *Al-Jinan* reported on France's new “Amazon Army of the Seine” in December 1870, based on an article in *The Times*. Women were enlisting in droves, ready to defend their capital city.⁷² The description gestured to gender-specific expectations that drew

on familiar narrative conventions, emphasizing these female soldiers' envisioned role as carers for (male) soldiers. There was a "gender-segregated" aspect to the venture: the women's uniforms and light rifles were to be funded by donations from wealthy women aware that "the enemy would plunder their finery and jewels, were they to conquer Paris."⁷³ In this circulating discourse on "Amazons"—the *Gentleman's Journal* and *Times* in London, the *Times* correspondent in Paris, *al-Jinan* in Beirut and *Rawdat al-madaris* in Cairo—prescriptions and proscriptions for women, their own public aspirations, male commentators' palpable anxiety about women's political demands, and spectral histories were intertwined. Was *al-Jinan* trying for the jocular in its conclusion? "What is hoped is that our women do not come to the point of forming an Amazon army like America's Amazons, lest we lose them; nor like Asia's Amazons, lest they kill males; nor like Africa's Amazons, lest they lose their gentle kindness."⁷⁴ But, it added, women *were* to acquire "energy and initiative" such that they might no longer frighten their children with tales of the bogeyman and the ghoul. Did *al-Jinan's* hopes (repeated in *Rawdat al-madaris*) dispel the "ghoul" of the Amazon by evoking the figure of the mother?

A decade later, male Beirut intellectuals were deploying the Amazon image even more antagonistically, as Arab women were becoming increasingly publicly vocal on political rights.

Amazons and Electoral Politics

Although the 1890s were not the first decade witnessing Arabic-language debates on masculinity and femininity, or "nature" and social roles, arguably issues of gender and authority came to the fore then. As girls' schooling became more acceptable, worries about elite girls' and women's reading, public presence, and alleged consumption practices mounted (discursively, at least) with the growing presence in Arab cities of Europeans and their social, commercial, and cultural institutions (including "French novels" in translation). Anger at European imperial reach in Africa and Asia, especially Britain's ongoing occupation of Egypt and French colonial rule in northern Africa, gave a political edge to local attacks on European "habits" and their moral and material costs. The proliferation of daily newspapers, magazines, and translated-adapted texts in print fostered discursive intimacy with European practices and concepts. Nowhere was this dialectic of familiarity/anxiety more evident than in debates and commentaries on gender and authority in modern societies.

Local outlooks and imported ideas converged in discursive constructions of domesticity as a privileged space of trained activity. This would (proponents believed) enhance women's and girls' senses of their appointed role in society and underwrite support for girls' schooling, while maintaining females' association with home and discouraging aspirations for public careers. But where did one draw boundaries? What of women who did not adhere to domestically bounded lives, whether out of choice or necessity? (As Fawwaz and others pointed out, Egyptian peasant and urban working-class women did not have the luxury of staying home.) As Fawwaz worked on her compendium, argument raged on gender's significance to modernity. Just months before *al-Hilal* published its biography of Jeanne d'Arc, it hosted a venomous debate,

involving over a dozen contributors, women and men, on the question: “whether women can demand all the rights of men.” This continued for six months, centered on issues of gender and nature, invoking European polemicists—a reminder that local commentators drew on all manner of European thought, against as much as for more flexible understandings of gender’s meanings for social organization. Readers responded to a physician in the Egyptian Delta city of Damietta who attacked women’s intellectual and professional aspirations by drawing on European medical authority, brain “science,” and theories of animal evolution. Women, he argued (drawing also on medieval European and Arabophone writings), were inferior mentally and physically, capable only of housework and childcare, a difference decreed by science, history, and God. Two months after Jeanne’s biography appeared, this doctor, Amin al-Khuri, sent *al-Hilal* a similarly dismissive response to the question: “whether learning or wealth most improves a woman’s status.” Other contributors opted for “learning” (the era’s keyword). Khuri went for “wealth,” saying female “learning” could never amount to much. Implicitly, he excluded women as unable even to comment.⁷⁵ Not long before, Fawwaz had engaged in a debate on similar themes via a different approach: Qur’an interpretation and (mis)uses of historically accreted exegesis.⁷⁶ This followed her earlier debate with Lebanese writer Hanna Kurani over “women and nature”: Kurani espoused the “liberal” view that women equaled men in capacity but their capabilities were altogether different. But, like many in Europe, she saw gendered spheres as divinely decreed. Did Fawwaz’s biography of Jeanne, with her divine sanction for military leadership, possibly contest that view? Or was the extraordinary Jeanne, as *al-Hilal* suggested, temporarily an honorary male, graced by feminine traits? What sparked the women’s debate was Kurani’s critique of British suffragists. Fawwaz responded furiously, taking a social-constructionist position and praising British women for far-sighted activism.⁷⁷

The Beirut newspaper *Lisan al-hal* agreed with Kurani, said Fawwaz. This prominent paper’s management (founder-editor Khalil Sarkis and managing-editor nephew Salim Sarkis) was bothered enough to publish a long editorial citing previous articles supporting “women’s work,” although, it clarified, the newspaper did not support women’s political rights. Many amongst the liberal male intelligentsia liked to champion “women’s rights,” but only insofar as these did not challenge family or state authority, vested in men. Why, an article in *Lisan al-hal* commenting on the *al-Hilal* debate mused, did women waste their time writing on political rights? Couldn’t they write about childrearing instead? Biographies of politically and militarily active women had to contend with this constrictive discursive environment.

Consider *Lisan al-hal*’s representation of European and North American women’s political activities. Its coverage of the 1892 women’s suffrage bill, narrowly defeated in Parliament following William Gladstone’s strong opposition, disparaged the suffragists’ campaign as it told readers its sole concern was “moderation.” Its anxiety about women’s political aspirations was already clear in frequent reporting on women’s activisms, the tone varying from guarded approval to patronizing scepticism to outright disgust. In 1890, an article on “American Amazons” conveyed “wonder” that a group of New York women sought martial arts training. The headline was footnoted: “Amazon is a name applied to mannish women who fought in ancient times.” This gloss distanced fighting

women even as the article brought “Amazons” into contemporary life. The opening linked “Amazons” to contemporary gender politics as a widespread preoccupation.

In the port city [Beirut], they confer on whether civilisation rests more on men or women. Amongst one who's positive and one who's negative, one passive and another combative, and yet another demanding women's rights, a group of men exists who recognize no womanly distinctions except childbirth, child-raising, and keeping an orderly home. Today we give them news that newspapers in the West are transmitting in astonishment—and we are first among them in that.⁷⁸

The article exploited gender stereotypes to belittle women: surely it was only a matter of their attraction to wearing military uniform. Amidst furious debates over gender equality in the United States, *Lisan* speculated, men were asserting superior strength; women felt obliged to respond. Hence the New York “Amazons”—explicable only in responsive mode, whether to fashion or to men.

The article ended on a note of uneasy mockery. “It is hoped that when these new armies enter the battlefield, they will restrain themselves from killing and spilling blood viciously, as related by the historian Herodotus about Scythian Amazons, who on the battlefield proved harsher-hearted than men.” The tone⁷⁹ turned darker: colonialist racism and misogyny conjoined in a derisively worded image of “women's armies” defending the continent from native inhabitants: “How sad if we see more than one Amazon skull—known to more than one hairdresser in New York City—becoming décor elements in Indian huts.” Contempt, stereotype, and patronizing “humor” laced the finale.

If the American Amazons intend to stand firm and serious they must prepare to suffer. . . . we don't doubt women's ability to appear strong and active, judging by the energy we have seen . . . in their daily transactions with husbands, brothers, and male relatives. It is not farfetched that they could resemble Napoleon or Wellington, knowing how to direct their strengths at the enemy's weaknesses. Anyway, America's men might be very willing to accept their mothers-in-law entering the battlefield.⁸⁰

If this was gender fluidity or gender inversion, it was only sarcastically so, and served rather to solidify the cross-societal misogynistic notion of “women's wiles.” The tone echoed the anxieties voiced in the 1870s “Amazon” articles about women's evident martial proclivities, the fear that they would lose their “gentle kindness.”

Other articles on women's crime and violence used the label “Amazon.”⁸¹ Referring to readers' disbelieving reaction to the American Amazon story, one addressed recent election of an all-woman slate to the town council, Edgerton, Kansas. “Woman and her political position” linked women's “militancy” to political aspirations. Seemingly approving male politicians' support for political women (based on women's “propensities”: “cleanliness and peace”), it concluded that women's political work was doomed to failure. “A bad outcome for women's rights: recently in Edgerton, Kansas, women were elected. . . . They exerted themselves to the extent of their ability to

undertake action and reform, but their actions were criticized widely and forcefully. They all resigned, returning to the domestic domain.”⁸² *Da'irat al-majlis al-baytiyya* (“sphere of the domestic council”) satirically echoed the municipal council, *al-majlis al-baladi*. If the women’s adversaries were implicitly to blame, so, it seems, were the women.

In *Lisan al-hal*, stories of women asserting physical strength and acting violently and criminally commingled with reports of women’s political aspirations. Circulating amongst newspapers—from London or Chicago to Beirut, between Beirut, Cairo, and Istanbul—stories created a multi-sited echo chamber of masculine authority. Reporting on a young German woman arrested for spying near Paris, *Lisan* reproduced the comment of its source, Egyptian paper *al-Mahrusa*: “It is astounding how far the Europeans have gone: their women are not satisfied vying with men in knowledge’s arena, refined comportment’s racecourse: no, they must compete in the military and political arts.”⁸³

As images in London’s *Punch* and, earlier, in the *Gentleman’s Journal*, suggest, “Amazon” was a powerful symbolic figure for a scare-discourse on suffragists. Amazons stood for women *en masse*, women fighting for women, emasculating men. Warriors by “profession” rather than for temporary missions, they challenged a patriarchal discourse dependent on “nature’s” order. For medieval Europeans, Carol Myscowski notes, Amazons “represented the wholly other...warriors possessed of corrupted femininity and disharmonious attributes.”⁸⁴ This captures *Lisan al-hal*’s “Amazons.”

A potent trans-cultural image, Amazons in *Punch*, *Lisan al-hal*, and other organs calibrated men’s anxieties about women’s political demands as threatening the gender-hierarchical social order. For their image challenged assumptions about patriarchal authority as “natural.” Unlike Jeanne d’Arc, these women could not be made palatable as figures acting in obedience to a higher (male or male-god) authority. No wonder German feminists’ writings were embracing Amazon collectivities.⁸⁵ In Arabic, al-Nahhas’s reference to Bohemian queens as Jeanne’s model appears the sole positive reference. Was it deliberate that she did not call them “Amazons”? For Amazons as a named category were deployed to discredit feminists. And if, in men’s imaginings across centuries, Amazons were “peripheral to the world of whoever [was] writing about them,”⁸⁶ finding Amazons in North America or France was alarmingly close, in a world where some local women supported their Western peers’ activism, even if they carefully distanced their praise.

Lisan al-hal welcomed female writers. This was significant, a strong signal that women were entirely capable of participating as serious commentators on public issues of the day. But the lines were firmly drawn. *Lisan al-hal* drew on the language of rights in a particular way: “Female writers of Syria...have risen, demanding women’s rights in the sphere of knowledge: if she cannot bear a sword, she can carry a pen.” Calling women’s intellectual work central to the “knowledge awakening,” *Lisan* circumscribed acceptable “women’s rights” to the right to write, and took credit for generating women’s presence in public discourse.⁸⁷ It encouraged men to “aid” daughters, wives, and female relations to “cultivate their minds...and push them to action.” Again, the newspaper congratulated itself: “*Lisan al-hal* has...fervently encouraged them, opening its doors to accept their writings, now seeing the fruit of its efforts ripening.” No wonder women like Fawwaz, Nawfal, and al-Nahhas emphasized

women's own efforts—women's heroism, whether on horseback or as journalists, in a fluid space not fully defined by biology. *Lisan al-hal*'s self-congratulatory article appeared one day after defeat of the woman suffrage bill in London, a defeat *Lisan* approved.⁸⁸

From Gender Fluidity to Invisibility: Jeanne d'Arc's Ottoman Sex-change

"Jeanne" as Arab hero entailed multiple displacements. Yet, her un-Amazon-like story as well as her remoteness—in time, place, and cultural milieu—facilitated her adoption as a locally intelligible hero, while the emerging ideological commitments of anticolonial nationalism would mute that distance, as Jeanne in Arabic became the thoroughly feminized embodiment of nationalist womanhood: the refined peasant, the home-oriented woman dedicated to the nation, the faith-and-nation anti-"British" helpmeet. Earlier, in the 1890s, gender fluidity appeared more prominent. Al-Nahhas's heroic history maven and Fawwaz's forthright horsewoman contrasted with Zaydan's gender "confusion," al-Bustani's implied discomfort with visionary leadership, and *Lisan al-hal*'s prescriptively gendered spheres. The profiles appearing in men's publications tended to mute gender fluidity or turn it into a more troubling gender confusion or ambiguity. In Jeanne's very oddity, and her linkage to feminine and unlettered "superstitions" (antithesis of modernity), and differently in *Lisan*'s Amazon figures, these narratives reaffirmed patriarchal normativity. In contrast, Fawwaz and al-Nahhas embraced Jeanne as a figure whose fluidity was a chosen strategy, a proof-text for feminine agency. They showed Jeanne and other warrior women as working on behalf of female and popular collectivities, whereas for the texts produced by men, Jeanne's acts were singular. As Jeanne became increasingly nationalized, that she fought for a national collectivity and not for herself or for women meant that her "excesses" in gender terms could be reassigned as self-sacrificial crisis strategy. This was not the case for Amazons and other women warriors. For those advocating women's activism on behalf of women, the woman warrior might stand as a challenge to masculine patriarchal authority.

Halfway between the nineteenth-century profiles and the 1920s nationalized and domesticated Jeanne, two texts demonstrate her multifaceted symbolic utility across spatial-cultural divides. In March 1910, *Fatat al-sharq* published a translated notice: "View of the Chinese on Jeanne d'Arc." Someone with a French name "about to join missionaries in China" had sent it to a French journal dedicated to Jeanne d'Arc. He described asking a senior Chinese bureaucrat "what his people thought of France's saviour." The bureaucrat remarked on "Europeans' prevalent view" of China as "steeped in the darkness of savagery." But, he added, "knowledge is spreading fast." If "the common people" were ignorant of Jeanne d'Arc, "eminent people have studied European history." Not only did they know of Jeanne: "our scholars, even if most follow Confucius, believe in her divine mission The barbarians of the Far East prove they have more finely-tuned views than some European historians." The speaker mentioned an ancient Chinese

monarch, Wu Zetian [*Wutsutin*] (624–705), as a powerful female ruler, but privileged Jeanne as “image of your nation, in her live belief, dignity and courage.” Knowledge of Jeanne d’Arc becomes a marker of worldliness, of belonging to a “global” modern elite, as she is “back-translated” from Chinese to French, and thence to Arabic. Yet this particular instance of the international circulation of Jeanne’s symbolic potential effaces her gendered embodiment and social embeddedness. The same was happening more locally.

In 1908, the triumph of Ottoman constitutionalist opposition to Sultan Abdülhamid II’s repressive regime was greeted euphorically throughout Ottoman Arab territories. Among peons to the constitution was a poem appearing in *Fatat al-sharq*, edited in Egypt by a female Syrian émigré. “That’s Jeanne d’Arc, but she’s Turkish,” authored by a male poet in Alexandria, appeared initially to celebrate female heroism.⁸⁹

A splendid maiden of the Turks has rescued us
Through exertions of the free and the army
She has pulled us out from the darkness into light,
And we’ve become like the peoples of strength

The poem recounted a history of tyranny ending in emergence of a “party” (*hizb*) demanding “justice, brotherhood, equality.” It criticized political division based in religious difference. “Do not say you are Muslim or Christian/for in rights we are all equal.” The reformist party, Young Turkey (*Turkiya al-fatat*; in English, usually Young Turks), is gendered feminine through the grammatically feminine place name, modified by the adjective “young” a homonym of the magazine’s title rubric for young womanhood. This party is “the Turkish Jeanne d’Arc.” But the “maiden” party is a brotherhood, eclipsing the femaleness of *al-fatat*. The poem lauds by name individual male heroes of the constitutional movement, with no mention of women amongst this hailed collectivity. This Turkish (in Arabic) Jeanne d’Arc is a man amongst men; or, the allegorical sign of fraternity.

This translation of Jeanne’s image into a collective brotherhood—exploiting the historical figure of Jeanne to efface it, rendering Jeanne’s history as myth and re-gendering it male—appeared a decade before the surge of Egyptian-nationalist-inflected Arabic Jeanne biographies. Literarily obscure, it speaks volumes on gender’s political uses in an emerging nationalist agenda that invoked Woman as sign and helpmeet of modernity while silencing women as political agents. Instantiating a familiar phenomenon in liberationist nationalisms the world over, this figuration of gender “fluidity” used feminine heroism in the name of masculinized activism, even as women in Egypt and across the Ottoman Empire were articulating gender-specific demands in a language of rights.

Read in these overlapping contexts, did Jeanne d’Arc in Arabic moderate and manage the emergent-envisioned nation’s need for active women against the frightening specters of militant or demandingly political women that the local press “retweeted” translationally as it reported on world events? Perhaps Jeanne in Arabic also tamed warrior-woman images from classical Arabic biographical sources and heroic epics of quasi-legendary ancient conflicts. Jeanne was not the Amazon haunting men’s writings on women, rights, and politics. Yet “Jeanne” as female action hero, in the known

lineaments of her life, remained inevitably an ambivalently posed figure, embodying gender transgression *as well as* acceptable “feminine” sacrifice for the homeland. Arabic treatments of her history, posed amidst those of other sword-wielding women, testify to the difficult salience of feminine public articulation and political work in a transitional-colonial modernity: what would it mean for the men?

Notes

- 1 [Hind Nawfal], “Iydaḥ wa-iltimas wa-istismah,” *al-Fatat* 1, no. 1 (November 20, 1892): 1–7. Translations mine unless noted otherwise. I use “Jeanne d’Arc” rather than the English equivalent because this is how it was transcribed in Arabic: *jān dārk*.
- 2 Marilyn Booth, *May Her Likes Be Multiplied: Biography and Gender Politics in Egypt* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).
- 3 Marilyn Booth, “Jeanne d’Arc, Egyptian Nationalist: Community, Identity, and Difference,” chap. 6 in Booth, *May*, 233–269; Marilyn Booth, “The Egyptian Lives of Jeanne d’Arc,” in *Remaking Women: Feminism and Modernity in the Middle East*, ed. Lila Abu Lughod (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), 171–211. On her family’s socio-economic status, e.g., Jan van Herwaarden, “The Appearance of Joan of Arc,” in *Joan of Arc: Reality and Myth*, ed. D.A. Berents et al. (Rotterdam: Erasmus University; Hilversum Verloren, 1994), 19–70; 35; Larissa Juliet Taylor, *The Virgin Warrior: The Life and Death of Joan of Arc* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 5–6. I mention more of the many sources on Jeanne in *May*.
- 4 Venita Datta, *Heroes and Legends of Fin-de-Siècle France: Gender, Politics, and National Identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 31; chap. 4.
- 5 Sufi ‘Abdallah, *Nisa’ muharabat* (Cairo: Dar al-ma’arif, 1951); Fa’iza ‘Abd al-Majid, *al-Mar’a fi mayadin al-kifah* (Cairo: Wizarat al-thaqafa, 1967).
- 6 Yuhanna Abkariyus, *Qatf al-zuhur fi ta’rikh al-duhur*. Second edition (Beirut: n.p., 1885), 451–452. On the sorcery issue, Marina Warner, *Joan of Arc: The Image of Female Heroism* (New York: Knopf, 1981); “Joan of Arc: A Gender Myth,” in D.A. Berents et al., *Joan of Arc*, 97–117.
- 7 On these works, Marilyn Booth, *Classes of Ladies of Cloistered Spaces: Writing Feminist History through Biography in Fin-de-Siècle Egypt* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015), chap. 5.
- 8 Butrus al-Bustani, *Kitab da’irat al-ma’arif* 6 (Beirut: Matba’at al-ma’arif, 1882), 360–361.
- 9 al-Bustani, *Da’ira* 6, 360.
- 10 al-Bustani, *Da’ira* 6, 361.
- 11 Nasim Nawfal, “I’lan,” *Misr* 2, no. 47 (May 24, 1879): 4, quoted in Booth, *May*, 2–3. Fawwaz detailed al-Nahas’s project and setbacks (Booth, *May*, 317–18n7).
- 12 Maryam ibnat Jabra’il Nasrallah al-Nahas qarinat Nasim Nawfal al-Tarabulusiyya al-Suriyya, *Mithal li-kitab Ma’rid al-hasna’ fi tarajim mashahir al-nisa’* (Alexandria: Matba’at Jaridat Misr, April 25, 1879). The copy I used lacked pp. 2–6; Jeanne’s entry must begin on p. 6.
- 13 al-Nahas, *Mithal*, 7.
- 14 The copy is torn; partial names remain.

- 15 It may be that Amazon lore was more known and accepted than contemporary scholars have generally thought—but in medieval France? Adrienne Mayor, *The Amazons: Lives and Legends of Warrior Women Across the Ancient World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014).
- 16 Jitka Malečková, “Nationalizing Women and Engendering the Nation: The Czech National Movement,” in *Gendered Nations: Nationalisms and Gender Order in the Long Nineteenth Century*, ed. Ida Blow, Karen Hagemann, and Catherine Hall (Oxford: Berg, 2000): 293–310.
- 17 Quotations: al-Nahhas, *Mithal*, 7, 8, 8, 8.
- 18 Taylor, *The Virgin Warrior*, 35, 204; van Herwaarden, “The Appearance,” 30–32, 40.
- 19 Al-Nahhas, *Mithal*, 9.
- 20 al-Nahhas, *Mithal*, 10.
- 21 al-Nahhas, *Mithal*, 11.
- 22 Alexandre Dumas [père], *Jehanne, la Pucelle, 1429–1431* (Paris: Magen et Comon, 1842). In English, Alexander Dumas, *Joan the Heroic Maiden*, trans. Louisa C. Ingersoll (New York and Philadelphia: E. Ferrett and co., 1846). After writing this, I was interested to see that Nora Heimann mentions this work as an important contributor to Jeanne’s shifting image in nineteenth-century France, toward the spiritual. Nora M. Heimann, “The Princess and the Maid of Orléans: Sculpting Spirituality During the July Monarchy,” in *Joan of Arc and Spirituality*, ed. Bonnie Wheeler and Ann Astell (ser. The New Middle Ages, New York: Palgrave/St. Martin’s Press, 2003), 229–247; 238.
- 23 Zaynab bt. ‘Ali b. Husayn, b. ‘Ubayd Allah b. Hasan b. Ibrahim b. Muhammad b. Yusuf Fawwaz al-‘Amili, *al-Durr al-manthur fi tabaqat rabbat al-khudur* (Bulaq/Misr: al-Matba’a al-kubra al-amiriyya, 1312 AH), 122. On the publishing history, Booth, *Classes*, chap. 1.
- 24 Booth, *May*, 242.
- 25 *al-faras* can be masculine or feminine: Fawwaz refers to it using the masculine pronoun.
- 26 Fawwaz, *al-Durr*, 122.
- 27 “Ikram katiba muslima lil-qadisa Jan dark,” *al-Mashriq* 19, no. 2 (February 1921): 108–114; 108.
- 28 “Ikram,” 108fn3. Footnotes correct spellings of personal and place names—errors perhaps due to Fawwaz (or typesetters) not knowing French.
- 29 “Ikram,” 109fn2.
- 30 Fawwaz, *al-Durr*, 122.
- 31 See my forthcoming book, *Feminist Thinking in Fin-de-siècle Egypt: The Career and Community of Zaynab Fawwaz*.
- 32 “Ikram,” 109fn6.
- 33 Fawwaz, *al-Durr*, 122; “Ikram,” 109fn8.
- 34 Helen Watanabe-O’Kelly, *Beauty or Beast? The Woman Warrior in the German Imagination from the Renaissance to the Present* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010); Warner, *Joan of Arc*.
- 35 Fawwaz, *al-Durr*, 123; “Ikram,” 110fn3, noting a grammatical discrepancy; Fawwaz changes masculine [*hadha* ... *huwa*] to feminine [*hadhihi* ... *hiya*]. Q 12: 31. This passage is one source of notions of “women’s cunning” (here, “treachery”), *kayd al-nisa’*, which Fawwaz interrogates in biographies.
- 36 Booth, *May*, chap. 6.
- 37 Fawwaz, *al-Durr*, 123–124; “Ikram,” 112fn2.

- 38 Fawwaz: as fire consumed Jeanne, “she implored, in a voice to make her enemies weep.” *Al-Mashriq* adds: “She was imploring the Messiah, asking that his sacred cross be placed before her, and she died saying: O Jesus. The flame did not touch her heart.” Fawwaz, *al-Durr*, 124; “Ikram,” 113fn7.
- 39 “Jan dark: Fatat Urliyan,” *al-Hilal* 4, no. 4 (October 15, 1895): 121–128; 4: 5 (November 1, 1895): 166–168; 121.
- 40 Nora M. Heimann, *Joan of Arc in French Art and Culture (1700–1855): From Satire to Sanctity* (Aldershot, Hampshire: Ashgate, 2005), 130–154; Heimann, “The Princess,” 229–247. And personal communication from Nora Heimann (January 2019), for whose comments I am grateful, while remaining responsible for my own interpretation.
- 41 Heimann, “The Princess,” 236.
- 42 [Jurji Zaydan], “Iltilimas min hadarat al-qurra,” *al-Hilal* 4, no. 11 (February 1, 1896): 407.
- 43 Heimann, “The Princess,” 229–230.
- 44 “Jan dark,” *al-Hilal*, 122.
- 45 Barbara Stowasser, *Women in the Qur’an, Traditions, and Interpretation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 69, 77–78.
- 46 “Jan dark,” *al-Hilal*, 122.
- 47 Marilyn Booth, “Fiction’s Imaginative Archive and the Newspaper’s Local Scandals: The Case of Nineteenth-Century Egypt,” in *Archive Stories: Facts, Fictions, and the Writing of History*, ed. Antoinette Burton (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), 274–295.
- 48 “Jan dark,” *al-Hilal*, 122.
- 49 “Jan dark,” *al-Hilal*, 122.
- 50 Quotations: “Jan dark,” *al-Hilal*, 124, 127, 128, 128, 168.
- 51 Fawwaz, *al-Durr*, 102, taken largely from Butrus al-Bustani, *Kitab da’irat al-ma’arif*, vol. 5 (Beirut: Matba’at al-ma’arif, 1881), 658–659. See Booth, *Classes*, 409n97. In a coeval historical (publication) parallel, Charlotte Stopes began her 1894 pamphlet for British suffrage societies with “ancient British women,” specifically Boudicca. Charlotte Carmichael Stopes, *British Freewomen: Their Historical Privileges* (London: Swan Sonnenschein, 1894). Jane Rendall, “Recovering Lost Political Cultures: British Feminisms, 1860–1900,” in *Women’s Emancipation Movements in the Nineteenth Century: A European Perspective*, ed. Sylvia Paletschek and Bianka Pietrow-Ennker (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2004), 33–52; 33.
- 52 Booth, *Classes*, 55–56, 84–85, 170, 183–185.
- 53 Fawwaz, *al-Durr*, 191–192; Booth, *Classes*, 83–84. The sorcerer is also a *Pearl* (*al-Durr*, 90).
- 54 Quotations: Booth, *Classes*, 187–190. Fawwaz, *al-Durr*, 251–252; al-Bustani [family], *Kitab da’irat al-ma’arif*, vol. 10 (Cairo: Matba’at al-Hilal, 1898), 90–91; Abkariyus, *Qatf al-zuhur*, 18–20.
- 55 Watanabe-O’Kelly, *Beauty*, 194.
- 56 Butrus al-Bustani, *Kitab da’irat al-ma’arif* vol. 3 (Beirut: Matba’at al-ma’arif, 1878), 792; Fawwaz, *al-Durr*, 42; Booth, *Classes*, 178.
- 57 Adrian Shubert, “Women Warriors and National Heroes: Agustina de Aragón and Her Indian Sisters,” *Journal of World History* 23, no. 2 (June 2012): 279–313, esp. 297–301.
- 58 Watanabe-O’Kelly emphasizes the mythological as prevalent until the modern era in German warrior-women representations. What work does the history/myth divide itself accomplish?

- 59 Asma Afsaruddin, "Early Women Exemplars and the Construction of Gendered Space: (Re-) Defining Feminine Moral Excellence," in *Harem Histories: Envisioning Places and Living Spaces*, ed. Marilyn Booth (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010), 23–48.
- 60 Tammam al-Karkabi, "Shahirat al-nisa': 'Ikrisa ibnat al-'Atrush," *Fatat al-sharq* 1, no. 2 (November 15, 1906): 47–48; 47. A pioneer of under-the-masthead female biography, *Fatat al-sharq* would publish biographies of Jeanne d'Arc and Zaynab Fawwaz.
- 61 Remke Kruk, *The Warrior Women of Islam: Female Empowerment in Arabic Popular Literature* (London: I.B. Taurus, 2014), 2.
- 62 Kruk, *The Warrior Women*, 15–16. See also Mayor, *The Amazons*.
- 63 Kruk, *The Warrior Women*, 19–20.
- 64 Kruk, *The Warrior Women*, 16–17.
- 65 Kruk, *The Warrior Women*, 16, quoting al-Marwazi's *Kitab taba'i' al-hayawan*.
- 66 Butrus al-Bustani, *Kitab da'irat al-ma'arif*, vol. 4 (Beirut: Matba'at al-ma'arif, 1880), 349–350.
- 67 Malečková, "Nationalizing Women," 304.
- 68 My quotes are from my back-translation from the Arabic rather than from the original. The translation of Amazons from English to Arabic is fascinating but cannot be pursued further here. "Female Warriors of Dahomey," *The Gentleman's Journal* (November 1, 1869): 77–78.
- 69 "Jaysh al-Amazun," *Rawdat al-madaris al-misriyya* 2, no. 11 (15 Jumada II 1288 [September 1, 1871]): 6–10; 8, 9.
- 70 "Jaysh al-Amazun," 6.
- 71 "Jaysh al-Amazun," *al-Jinan* 2, no. 14 (July 5, 1871): 474–477.
- 72 "Jaysh al-Amazun al-Sayni," *al-Jinan* 1, no. 23 (December 1, 1870): 711–712.
- 73 "Jaysh al-Amazun al-Sayni," 712.
- 74 "Jaysh al-Amazun," 477.
- 75 The debate occurred largely in *al-Hilal* January, June 1894. Fruma Zachs and Sharon Halevi, *Gendering Culture in Greater Syria: Intellectuals and Ideology in the Late Ottoman Period* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2015), 32–33; Marilyn Booth, "This tyranny you have called nature: Misogyny and/as Science," unpublished ms. Later intervention: Amin Khuri, 'Bab al-murasalat: Hal ta'lu manzilat al-mar'a bi-l-'ilm akthar am bi-l-mal,' *al-Hilal* 4, no. 13 (March 1, 1896): 489–494.
- 76 Discussed in my forthcoming book on Fawwaz.
- 77 Marilyn Booth, "Peripheral Visions: Translational Polemics and Feminist Arguments in Colonial Egypt," in *Edinburgh Companion to the Postcolonial Middle East*, ed. Anna Ball and Karim Mattar (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2018), 183–212.
- 78 "al-Amazuniyyat al-amrikiyyat," *Lisan al-hal* 13, no. 1236 (May 29, 1890): 2. Source given as the *Telegraph*.
- 79 It is unclear what is quoted and what is *Lisan al-hal*'s commentary.
- 80 "al-Amazuniyyat al-amrikiyyat," 2. Source given as the *Telegraph*.
- 81 E.g., "Amazuniyya nimsawiyya," *Lisan al-hal* 13, no. 1238 (June 5, 1890): 3. Space limitations preclude elaboration.
- 82 "al-Mar'a wa-markazuha al-siyasi," *Lisan al-hal* 13, no. 1238 (June 5, 1890): 2.
- 83 "Jasusa alamaniyya," *Lisan al-hal* 14, no. 1277 (October 20, 1890): 3.

- 84 Carole A. Myscofski, *Amazons, Wives, Nuns and Witches: Women and the Catholic Church in Colonial Brazil 1500–1822* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2013), 36. Also Watanabe-O’Kelly, *Beauty*, 38–42.
- 85 Watanabe-O’Kelly, *Beauty*, 39, chap. 8.
- 86 Watanabe-O’Kelly, *Beauty*, 39.
- 87 “Khatir mulahiz,” *Lisan al-hal* 14, no. 1391 (March 14, 1892): 3. Unusually, a notice at the bottom of page 1 highlights this: “On the issue’s last page is the article ‘Khatir mulahiz,’ so consult it.” See also “Majallat al-fatat,” *Lisan al-hal* 14, no. 1404 (May 2, 1892): 1.
- 88 Booth, “Peripheral.”
- 89 As’ad Efendi Arqash, “Tilka Jan Dark innama Turkiyya,” *Fatat al-sharq* 3, no. 1 (October 1908): 22–24.