Zaynab al-Ghazālī's Women, Marriages, and Contradictions:

Her Life as an Archive

Lucia Carminati

Abstract

Zaynab al-Ghazālī (1917-2005) is regarded as a pioneering figure in the field of women's preaching and religious teaching in Egypt. Her story, however, remains largely undocumented. In Western scholarship, al-Ghazālī has often been framed in terms of a contradictory figure, whose own choices flagrantly undercut her statements on the role of women in Islamic society. Trying to go beyond this type of appraisal, her writings are analyzed in order to question whether or not Zaynab al-Ghazālī's intellectual genealogy should be understood within the context of her considerable exposure to a well-developed discourse of women's rights at the turn of the twentieth century. Indeed, she made available to Muslim women a particular field of arguments, while foreclosing for them certain possibilities for action. Overall, her statements and choices in life need to be read as a function of her historical and geographical context and her positioning needs to be framed within the consciousness on the role women had come to play in the public domain.

Keywords: Zaynab al-Ghazālī, Muslim women, preacher, gender.

Double-blind peer-reviewed article

> I pray the morning prayer. After repenting for my sins and praying to the Prophet for almost an hour, I listen to the news from the world. Then, I remain with the greatness of the Holy *Qurʾān* and with the Prophetic *aḥadīṯh* until the sleep catches me and I sleep an hour or two. Afterwards, I go to my office and I perform the two bowings of the duha [a morning prayer], after which I do not leave my office except for prayers or for an appointment out of the house, and all my appointments out of the house are in the interests of the daʿwa (al-Ghazālī and Ibn al-Hāshimī, 1989, pp. 22-23).

This is how Zaynab al-Ghazālī, Egyptian *dāʿiya* or preacher/religious teacher1 (1917-2005), described her daily life. Al-Ghazālī , who is regarded as a pioneering figure in the field of women's daʿwa in Egypt and is known for her collaboration with the Muslim Brotherhood in the 1950s and 1960s, reached adulthood when there had already been almost three decades of women's activism in Egypt. Her genealogy as

dāʿiya was a product of the ethos of her times and the new possibilities that were opening up for women at the turn of the twentieth century in Egypt. In the late nineteenth century and for the first two thirds of the twentieth century, as argued by Margot Badran, the reforming, revitalizing doctrine of Islamic modernism accorded space for a feminism within the framework of the religious culture and provided a congenial climate for its evolution (Badran, 1995).

What emerges in al-Ghazālī's discussion of womanhood and gender roles in the context of a Muslim society is a modernist religious activism embedded in conservative terms. As claimed by Leila Ahmed, "al-Ghazālī was tenaciously committed to indigenous culture and to pursuing a feminism - or, at any rate, female subjectivity — in indigenous terms"[2] (Ahmed, 1992, p. 206). She was able to successfully break away from traditional norms of familial duty; her success should be understood within the context of her considerable exposure to a well-developed discourse on women's rights in the early decades, including her year with the Egyptian Feminist Union (EFU), the first explicitly feminist association (*al-ittihād al-nisā'i al-miṣri*).[3] However, while making available to Muslim women certain possibilities for action through her social and religious activism, she subscribed to particular religious discourses of womanhood and gender roles that stood in apparent contradiction with her conduct. She saw herself as exceptional and was adamant about placing her gender activism within the framework of Islamic discourse, assuming greater independence of movement for herself than for "ordinary" women[4] (Badran, 2009, p. 314). It is these cracks between speech and action that this paper will delve into, by taking into account the theoretical possibilities engendered by al-Ghazālī's thought and life and the necessity of working with inconsistencies in the attempt to frame her life history.

There are a few biographies of Zaynab al-Ghazālī in Arabic and no extensive history in English, Arabic, or French on the work of the organization she founded, the Society of Muslim Ladies.[5] Since the notion of autobiography has been expanded to encompass a range of practices, forms, and voices in order to counterbalance the culturally specific and exclusionary history of writing practices,[6] this paper will deal with diverse materials in an attempt to retrieve al-Ghazālī's narrative of herself. It will be grounded in the interviews that took place between 1979 and 1982, the writings that al-Ghazālī herself authored: *al-dāʾiya* zaynab *al-ghazālī*: *Masīrat* jihad *wa-hadīth* min *al-dhikrayāt* min *khilāl kitābātihā*, appeared in two volumes in 1989 and in 1990, and her prison memoir, *Ayām* min *ḥayātī*, that was published for the first time in 1972.[7] Biographical chronicles can be primary sites for exploring the social and cultural processes shaping the contexts in which they originated[8] and women's autobiographies in specific specifically can deeply imbricate ideas of the historical self, community, gender, and sexual difference (Yaqin, 2013, p. 173). Nonetheless, we must keep in mind that the self in any autobiography is not fixed. It takes different forms within and across discrete social and political contexts. As shown by Marilyn Booth (2001, p. XXX), women's biographies need neither be dismissed or deplored as sanctioning a hegemonic and monolithic view of ideal womanhood nor be celebrated as counter-hegemonic. They can be both and they can be neither. A coherent subject is not a prerequisite for a biography (Booth and Burton, 2009, p. 8). Moreover, autobiographical writing questions received forms of historical knowledge. Are life writers different from historians? Are they not just

aiming to "tell a story" about the past?[9] In what ways can an autobiography account for a lived life and be considered a history? Who counts as a historical subject and what counts as an archive?[10] How do certain self-narratives obscure or conceal the "self"? (Booth, 2013, p. 8). Can we expect that "self" to be consistent? Rather than providing answers, this paper struggles with these questions and falls in line with those studies suggesting that an autobiography can offer a rich if elusive archive for historical analysis.[11] Most obviously, female autobiographies represent the lives of the women who tell them: their struggles and desires, their disappointments and dramas (Burton, 2013, p. 186). What is more, as far as the new histories of women, gender, and sexuality in the Middle East and South Asia are concerned, they provide alternative narratives to the inaccurate and oversimplified ones that often govern public understandings of the region.[12] Moreover, as argued by Beth Baron, texts authored by women can offer a corrective against treating Middle Eastern women as a-historical beings (Baron, 1994, p. 8).

One last caveat deals not with the text itself but with our own reading of it. Not only do we have to realize that the ways in which we approach a text are saturated with our own politics (Booth, 2013, p. 9), but we also need to be attentive to what Lambert-Hurley calls "outside interference" (2013, p. 73); readers, editors, and publishers all take roles in crafting a memoir for public consumption. Moreover, as far as our sources are concerned, we must note that the interactive process of oral interviews shapes the text in unpredictable ways: the interviewer sets questions and conditions answers. As Badran reminds us, all autobiographical texts have mediators of one sort or another as well as an ultimate mediator: the reader, viewer, or listener (Booth, 2013, p. 13).

Women in Society and the Female Role in the Family

Al-Ghazālī's intellectual production can be considered as part of that body of literature aimed at defining and regulating social behavior through the prescription of norms for the modern female/feminine subject (Booth, 2001, p. 284). As previously noted, al-Ghazālī's adulthood coincided with the coming of age of a "sociopolitical ethos" as well as new possibilities that opened up for women at the turn of the twentieth century (Mahmood, 2005, pp. 68-69). While few women's organizations oriented around an Islamic framework had been established earlier in the century, such as the tarqiyat al-mar'a (i.e. Society for Women's Progress) which was created in 1908 to promote the enforcement of the sharī'a (Baron, 1994, pp. 176-177), most of the associations formed by women tended to privilege a secular-nationalist discourse. However, even so-called "secular" organizations, such as Hodā Sha'rāwī's EFU, never renounced religion or understood secularism to imply atheism. Nonetheless, there were differences; in contrast with the EFU, the Society was open only to Muslim women. Moreover, while the EFU's overall ideological framework was secular, the Society operated more exclusively within the framework of religion. With its focus on women's familial duties and obligations, the Society contrasted with the EFU, intent on calling for the reform of family law and on championing greater access for women to public roles.

In terms of familial duties and obligations, al-Ghazali was keen on extolling the absolute equality of the sexes. However, she also emphasized complementarity in the private sphere rather than equality and stressed the male authority over women (Badran, 2009, p. 27). "Wondering about the image of woman in Islam is something

strange," al-Ghazali declared. And she rhetorically asked: "Why don't we ask ourselves about the image of the man in Islam?" On the one hand, she argued that the woman and the man are one in Islam — one indivisible truth: "God did not distinguish between them, then why do we wonder about the presence of woman in Islam?" (al-Ghazali, 1990, pp. 230-231). The *sharī'a*, she stated, prescribes equality between man and woman. God guaranteed this to women "without differentiation or preference" (*Qur'ān* 47:97), since God promises whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, that they will live a good life and will be rewarded [in the Hereafter].[13] The equality of the sexes was hence a crucial tenet in her discourse. However, in regard to what she terms the "woman's awakening," she argued that such an awakening took place so that the Muslim woman could give precedence to her home, uplifting herself through her children and her husband. In her opinion, the awakening did not occur so that the Muslim woman could imitate the Western woman.

On the whole, al-Ghazālī argued that women will find their full liberation in Islam. While lauding the principle of "absolute equality" of women and men in Islam, she simultaneously promoted adherence to conventional patriarchal gender roles and relations in the family. This, however, held true for "ordinary" women; not for herself (Badran, 2009, p. 314).

What also emerges from al-Ghazālī's words is a normative emphasis on the "nature" of gender, the role gender should play in reordering society, and the places women and men should occupy. According to al-Ghazālī, the woman went against her nature: "she got out of the house, abandoned the raising of her children, competed with men in the workplace, refused the guardianship [*qiwāma*] of the man and freed herself of all attributes of femininity, causing the houses to be deserted, the children [to become] like orphans" (Al-Ghazālī, 1989, pp. 47-48). While constructing gender norms for women, she proceeded to do the same for men. According to al-Ghazālī, both the women who ask for equality with men in all affairs and the men who demand equality with women and compete with them ignored the *ḥadīṯh* of the Prophet Muhammad: "Allah cursed all those among men who try to look like women and all those among women who try to look like men" (quoted in al-Ghazālī, 1989, pp. 47-48). Not only is femininity thus defined and confined, but so too is masculinity. Ideal femininities and ideal masculinities thus emerge as crucial axes for organizing society, while the blurring of gender boundaries endangers such organization. Al- Ghazālī thus traced women's and men's places in society and, in so doing, sketched her own notion of what the ideal state should be (Booth, 2001, p. 282).

Both men and women have responsibilities, although in different realms. While the husband's role is to work and earn money to provide for his family, the woman is responsible for the organization of the home, the fulfillment of her husband's requests and the education of the children: "This is her most sacred mission: preparing the men for the politics of the state with all its responsibilities, and preparing the righteous mother for the homes of tomorrow […] It is a very dangerous issue for her to go out to work, wandering all around, wasting her mission, neglecting her role in society," (al-Ghazālī and Ibn al-Hāshimī, 1989, p. 39). In her opinion, "it should be no surprise that the ummah is mourning the loss of a generation, the loss of the masculinity of its young men and of the seriousness of its young girls" (al-Ghazālī

and Ibn al-Hāshimī, 1989, p. 39). The woman should "take care of her husband and of her children and offer the community a sound and healthy generation rather than go out to work, mix, unveil, and move about without control or supervision [*zābit* or *rāqib*]" (al-Ghazālī and Ibn al-Hāshimī, 1989, p. 24). The private space of the home is where femininity thrives. The public sphere is a place for making money and politics. The contemporary working woman has "gone out of her nature" and "strayed from the path…[…], and the result is that "our children have already lost the route to adulthood" (al-Ghazālī and Ibn al-Hāshimī, 1989, p. 40). The home remains the foundation for the woman because houses without women are spaces deprived of life (al-Ghazālī and Ibn al-Hāshimī, 1990, p. 230).

Al-Ghazālī admitted there were exceptions to this traditional, gendered division of labor: in case women found themselves obliged to work "to fulfill the responsibilities and the burdens of life," the state should provide or find a suitable employment for each individual (al-Ghazālī and Ibn al-Hāshimī, 1989, p. 39). Moreover, al-Ghazālī conceded that there are some fields in which women can partake if necessary, so that they can support men in the building of society. Such is the case with the fields of nursing or of education since women are best suited to discipline both boys and girls. When asked if the *da'wa* is something that pertains to men only, knowing that she herself is a *dā'iya*, she answered that "no doubt men are the ones playing a fundamental role in this realm." She also noted that women's basic role is that of "preparing and organizing the home so that it is a paradise for their husbands to rest after the troubles of the day" (al-Ghazālī and Ibn al-Hāshimī, 1990, p. 230).

Al-Ghazālī's treatment of the Muslim family allows us to identify some inconsistencies in her views. Marriage represents, according to al-Ghazālī, "a path to happiness". To illustrate her point, she quoted the *Qur'ān*: "And of His signs is that He created for you from yourselves mates that you may find tranquility in them; and He placed between you affection and mercy" (*Qur'ān* 16:21; quoted in al-Ghazālī and Ibn al-Hāshimī, 1989, p. 93). For the *dā'iya*, marriage is a spiritual, lifelong bond that Allah legislated for his servants, and women play a crucial role in it. For the younger generations, however, al-Ghazālī feared that marriage has become a

> …bodily entertainment, or a means to material advantage, or a way to gain in the world of positions, jobs, and fleeting wealth; […] homes are created but they are void of tranquility, security, peace, and love, and are isolated and secluded from society. (al-Ghazālī and Ibn al-Hāshimī, 1989, pp. 93-94)

A veritable war, she added, was being waged on Muslims from all sides: at home, in the street, at school, and in the printed and audiovisual media with their massive campaigns about the need to organize the family and use contraceptive means (Al-Ghazālī and Ibn al-Hāshimī, 1989, p. 87, p. 84). Al-Ghazālī wrote that the Muslim family has received strong blows aimed at the elimination of what remains of its Islamic character. Her concern with the need to produce new and sound generations of Muslims was clear when she stated that "a house full of love and of residents is better than one thousand houses with cabinets full of money and where love and affection have run out" (al-Ghazālī and Ibn al-Hāshimī, 1989, p. 94). The human being, she claimed, is affection and spirit. She stressed the importance, in "the world

of the permissible," of the bond of spirit and body, of affection and love, and of the dedication to a home for the thriving of Muslim generations in society (al-Ghazālī and Ibn al-Hāshimī, 1989, p. 94). She focused on the nuclear family, on the privacy of the couple, and on heterosexual intimacy. The woman's ability to serve her husband, raise her children, keep her house clean, and maintain her family's status all reflect her crucial role in the family as well as in society. As argued by Mona Russell, the Egyptian home had become "a small kingdom in and of itself" and the "building block for the Egyptian nation" (Russell, 2004, p. 165).

Although al-Ghazālī emphasized women's primary roles as wives and mothers, she carved out a public role for herself and attracted working women to her cause (Badran, 2009, p. 45). In that respect, she could be seen as a paradoxical figure who urged other women to abide by their duties as mothers, wives, and daughters, but who lived her own life in a manner that challenged these conventional roles prescribed to other women. "I married twice," she declared, and "found that [my first] marriage took up all my time and kept me from my mission, and my husband did not agree with my work. I had one condition: that if we ever had any major disagreement we would separate, and the Islamic cause was essential" (Hoffman, 1985, p. 237). After she reached an agreement with Hassan al-Bannā in 1948, shortly before he was sentenced, she decided to relinquish forever the idea of getting married, so that she would devote her entire life to the *da'wa* (al-Ghazālī, 1994). However, she eventually decided to remarry. As she herself explained, she managed to neither neglect her familial duties nor hinder the fulfillment of her role at the Society of Muslim Ladies (al-Ghazālī, 1994, p. 13). When her husband noticed that a number of Muslim youth were frequently visiting her at home, he asked: 'Is there *Ikhwān* [Brotherhood] activity here?' To that question, she reportedly answered by reminding him of the time they agreed to marry. "As we were going to be married," she wrote, "I told you there was something in my life that you needed to know about so that you wouldn't ask me questions about it later on, for I will never relinquish it." And she continued by saying that she believed in the message of the *Ikhwān*:

> I am under a pledge of allegiance, until death for the sake of Allah, to Hassan al-Bannā. So far, I have not taken a single step which would bestow upon me this divine honor. However, I believe one day I will take this step that I wish and dream of. If that day comes, and because of it, a clash is apparent between your personal interests and economic activities on the one hand, and my Islamic work on the other, and that I find that my married life is standing in the way of *da'wa* and the establishment of the Islamic state, then, each of us should go his and her own way. (al-Ghazālī, 1994, p. 37)

She added that she could not ask her husband at that time to share with her that struggle, but that it was her right not to be stopped from undertaking this *jihād*. Moreover, her husband was not even supposed to ask her about her activities. She concluded by saying to him: "In the event of any clash between the interest of the marriage contract and that of the *da'wa*, our marriage will end, but the *da'wa* will always remain rooted in me" (al-Ghazālī, 1994, pp. 38-39). As highlighted by Badran, al-Ghazālī left her first husband because he interfered with her Islamic activism (Badran, 2009, p. 315). Apparently, she threatened her second husband to do the same.

Conclusion

Al-Ghazālī's own life choices often contradicted her statements on the role of women in an Islamic society. She gave herself permission to prioritize work over family whereas she did not extend that same right to other women. With respect to her marriages and her own life, her personal story epitomizes the disconnect between professed ideology and individual choices/agency: she divorced her first husband for interfering with her religious work and agreed to marry her second husband, an older man who was already married and perhaps less demanding, only under the condition that he would recognize the primacy of her *da'wa* work over their marriage (cooke, 2001). Moreover, she called on women to enter the field of the *da'wa* and she advised them to concentrate their efforts on other women, given that they "can understand their temperaments, circumstances, and characteristics, and therefore will succeed in reaching their hearts and solving their problems, and [will be able] to follow their issues" (al-Ghazālī, 1994 and 1996, quoted in Mahmood, 2005, p. 181). However, she did not follow this advice in her own *da'wa* activity, which she conducted among men as well, thus rising to a position of leadership in the Muslim Brotherhood (Mahmood, 2005, p. 181). Interviewed by Valerie Hoffman in 1981,al-Ghazālī declared:

> Islam does not forbid the woman to actively participate in public life. It does not prevent her from working, entering into politics, and expressing her opinion, or from being anything she wants, as long as it does not interfere with her first duty as a mother, the one who first trains her children in the Islamic call (Hoffman, 1985, p. 236).

Al-Ghazālī's activism was shaped by the liberal discourse of early nationalism, with its emphasis on women's public visibility. This influence is evident in her position that Muslim women should play an active role in public, intellectual, and political life, with the important caveat that these responsibilities should not interfere with what she considers to be women's divinely ordained obligations toward their immediate kin.[14] Moreover, transgressing the boundaries of exemplary female comportment is allowed only to a small and select group of activists, working to realize the Islamist society of the future. Once this is achieved, even those exceptional women are to return to their domestic duties. As emphasized by Booth, al-Ghazālī stressed in her writings that in a perfect world, where *jihād* is not necessary, women would not need to leave their home. On the one hand, then, women's permissible political work is not seen to threaten the gendered status quo, since it does not entail achieving power (Booth, 2001, pp. 296-298). Once a metaphor for nation-building, the woman now has become "the metaphor for a family-centered and Islamically defined social cohesion" (Booth, 2001, pp. 305-307). On the other hand, however, even if these women leave home when the faith calls, they cannot be totally "domesticized" and modern notions of "public" and "private" are ill-suited to define their lives. The emphasis on women's primary loyalty to the faith, even if framed within their role as wives and producers of future Muslims, means that women are not shown as necessarily relegated exclusively to the domestic sphere. Thus, even though the boundaries of the domestic are permeable only in specific circumstances, protecting the faith and preserving the community provide compelling reasons to disobey fathers and husbands (Booth, 2001, p. 301, p. 304).

In conclusion, it is possible to read al-Ghazālī's statements and choices in life as components of a diversified repertoire available to her contemporaries and as an archive of options available to women. On the one hand, she used the rhetoric of a domestic ideal, but on the other hand she subverted its meaning through her own behavior. She thereby manifested a "tension between the prescriptive articles and the descriptive self-authoring" in what made her a "dynamic, if isolated, model of social revolution" (cooke, 1995, p. 163). She guided her women readers to an almost unthinkable compromise between domesticity and political activism: "these are not separate realms," cooke has claimed, "but rather behaviors ranging across a continuous spectrum" (cooke, 1995, pp. 152-153).

It is through an analysis of the discursive construction of women's life histories that the debate around concerns shared by Islamist and secular feminists alike can be opened (Booth, 2001, p. 309). Secular and Islamic feminisms, as argued by Badran, "have never been hermetic entities: they are not oppositional forces, but rather have been in conversation and have joined forces in activist campaigns" (Badran, 2009, pp. 2-6). Al-Ghazālī's social and religious activism and the narrative she left of it can be conceived as archival sites of this conversation and of these joint efforts. Many historians think of the archive as a physical location, "an institutional site in a faraway place" (Burton, 2013, p. 139). Moreover, many still think of autobiography as an appropriate historical source only if it can be verified by "real" material from a "real" archive (Lambert-Hurley, 2013, p. 62) and they wonder whether life narratives constitute a "proper" archive (Booth, 2009, p. 11). However, as suggested by Antoinette Burton, objectivist approaches to history writing should be challenged and the gendered presumptions of what counts as evidence, archive, impact, and history must be probed (Burton, 2013, p. 187). Looking at the works of women authors as archival sites can productively disrupt the alleged "purity" of the archive: "all archives are provisional, interested, and calcified in both deliberate and unintentional ways […] all archives are, in the end, fundamentally unreliable – the archive of women's memory no more or less so than any other" (Burton, 2003, p. 26).

While social theories tend to focus on abstract phenomena, "real lives sprawl in their sheer exuberance across conventional categories" and "the patterns of individual lives elude even the best categories" (Burke, 1993, p. 6). As argued by Margot Badran, Zaynab Al-Ghazālī illustrates the complexity of placing, defining, and interpreting women (Badran, 2009, p. 314). Given her simultaneous prioritizing of duty to the faith before duty to the family and her independence with regard to her own marriages, Zaynab Al-Ghazālī simultaneously provided a model (Booth, 2001, p. 296) as well as a counter-model. Her actions subverted the very norms she advocated. Exploring the cracks between her actions and her statements opens up possibilities for understanding a spectrum of actions encompassing conformity and/or resistance and the implications of these actions for women's activism on a broader level.

Lucia Carminati is a Ph.D. candidate at the Department of History, University of Arizona
Email: lcarminati@email.arizona.edu

· ·

ENDNOTES

* I want to thank Hafsa Oubou for our exciting lexical discussions, Aomar Boum and Yasseen Noorani for their patient reading of a graduate student's work, and the anonymous reviewers of Al-Raida for their stimulating suggestions.
1. Dā'in literally means "the one who invites"; da'wa can be translated as "call, appeal, bidding, summoning, missionary activity, propaganda, invocation, prayer". Hans Wehr and J. Milton Cowan. A Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic (Ithaca, N.Y.: Spoken Language Services, 1976), p. 283. According to Saba Mahmood, in the 20th century, the term came to be associated with proselytization activity among Muslims and non-Muslims alike. In the last fifty years, it has come to refer primarily to those activities "that urge fellow Muslims to greater piety." Saba Mahmood, Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2005), p. 201.
2. On Al-Ghazālī as an Islamic feminist, see miriam cooke, "Feminist Transgressions in the Postcolonial Arab World," Critique: Critical Middle Eastern Studies 8, no. 14 (1999): p. 102. On Egyptian feminism, see Margot Badran, Feminists, Islam, and Nation, p. 20; Margot Badran, Feminism in Islam: Secular and Religious Convergences (Oxford, England: Oneworld Publications Oneworld PublicatioGamal ns, 2009), p. 2; Marilyn Booth, May Her Likes Be Multiplied : Biography and Gender Politics in Egypt (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), p. XXXVII.
3. Mahmood, Politics of Piety, p. 182; Badran, Feminists, Islam, and Nation, p. 3.
4. Badran reports that she patterned herself after the early women warriors of Islam, who, she says, "have given as much to Islam than men, even more," Badran, Feminists, Islam, and Nation, p. 3. Al-Ghazālī wrote seven profiles of women of this early community, a three-part life of Khawla bt. al-Awzār, and a sketch of Hāgar (published at different times). They would be then republished as "Qabas min mu'mināt," in Al-Dā'iya Zaynab al-Ghazālī: Masīrat jihād, pp. 169-188. See Booth, May Her Likes Be Multiplied, p. 420. The biographical studies of famous women or the retelling of well-known historical events with the recognition of the role played by women has a long indigenous history. As claimed by Meriwether and Tucker, the inclusion of women has forced a change in the way structures of power were conceived and these studies have made the point that "women are as fully capable of wielding power and exercising authority as men." Margaret L. Meriwether and Judith E. Tucker, Social History of Women and Gender in the Modern Middle East, (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1999), p. 4.
5. There are biographies of al-Ghazālī by Shahrazad Al-'Arabi (Zaynab al-Ghazālī min al burnita ila al higāb, Bayt al-hikma, Manshiyyat al-sadr, Cairo, 1996) and Ibn al-Hāshimī (1989, 1990). Valerie Hoffman interviewed her in 1985; Margot Badran did so in 1989. And miriam cooke met her and interviewed her in 1995, see miriam cooke, Women Claim Islam: Creating Islamic Feminism Through Literature (New York: Routledge, 2001), p. 105.
6. Margot Badran, "Theorizing Oral History as Autobiography: A Look at the Narrative of a Woman Revolutionary in Egypt," Journal of Women's History 25, no. 2 (2013): p. 161; Amina Yaqin, "Autobiography and Muslim Women's Lives," Journal of Women's History 25, no. 2 (2013): p. 173; Marilyn Booth, "Locating Women's Autobiographical Writing in Colonial Egypt," Journal of Women's History 25, no. 2 (2013): p. 37; Marilyn Booth and Antoinette Burton, "Editors' Note," Journal of Women's History 21, no. 3 (2009): p. 11; Sidonie Smith, Reading Autobiography: A Guide for Interpreting Life Narratives (Minneapolis, MN ; London: University of Minnesota Press, 2001).
7. Her prison memoir (translated: "Days from my Life") was published in 1972. It tells the story of her dealings with the leading members of the Muslim Brothers, of her opposition to Gamāl 'Abd al-Nāser, and of the six years she spent in prison (at first in the War Prison and then Qanātir, the women's prison of Cairo). By 1994/1995 it had reached its 11th printing. miriam cooke, "Zaynab Al-Ghazālī: Saint or Subversive?" Die Welt Des Islams 34.1 (1994), p. 2. miriam cooke, "Ayyām min Hayātī: The Prison Memoirs of a Muslim Sister," Journal of Arabic Literature 26.2 (1995): pp. 147-164.
8. See David Arnold, Stuart H Blackburn, Eds., Telling Lives in India: Biography, Autobiography, and Life History (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004), p. 19; Edmund Burke, Struggle and Survival in the Modern Middle East (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), p. VII.
9. Siobhan Lambert-Hurley, "Life/History/Archive: Identifying Autobiographical Writing by Muslim Women in South Asia," Journal of Women's History 25, no. 2 (2013): p. 62; Smith, Reading Autobiography, pp. 13–15; Hayden White, "The Value of Narrativity in the Representation of Reality," Critical Inquiry 7, no. 1 (1980): pp. 5–27.
10. Lambert-Hurley, "Life/History/Archive," p. 62; Antoinette M. Burton, Dwelling in the Archive: Women Writing House, Home, and History in Late Colonial India (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 141.
11. Burton, Dwelling in the Archive, p. 5; Booth, "Guest Editorial Note," p. 7; Booth and Burton, "Editors' Note," p. 8.
12. Sadaf Jaffer, "Women's Autobiography in Islamic Societies," Journal of Women's History 25, no. 2 (2013): p. 153. On the potential of an expanded historical and geographical scope to decenter the study of autobiographical writing away from what many had seen as its European (and mostly masculine) origins, see also Marilyn Booth, "Guest Editorial Note: Women's Autobiography in South Asia and the Middle East," Journal of Women's History 25, no. 2 (2013): p. 9.
13. See Badran, Feminists, Islam, and Nation, pp. 210-211. Badran, Feminism in Islam, pp. 27-28. (Interview with Al-Ghazālī, Cairo, February 1989). Mahmood, Politics of Piety, pp. 68-69.
14. According to Al-Ghazālī, she is allowed, for instance, to run for public office or to hold the position of a judge; she is, however, against the idea that a woman should be allowed to hold the position of President or Prime Minister of a Muslim nation. Al-Ghazālī and Ibn al-Hāshimī, Humūm al-mar'ah, pp. 242-256. See also cooke, Women Claim Islam, p. 106.

REFERENCES

Abu-Lughod, L. (1998). Remaking Women: Feminism and Modernity in the Middle East. Princeton, N.J.:
        Princeton University Press.
Ahmed, L. (1992). Women and Gender in Islam: Historical Roots of a Modern Debate. New Haven: Yale
        University Press.
Al-Ghazālī, Z. (1994). Return of the Pharaoh: Memoir in Nasir's Prison (M. Guezzou, Trans.). Leicester,
        UK: The Islamic Foundation.
Al-Ghazālī, Z. (1994 and 1996). Ila Ibnatī: al-juz' al-awwal and Ila Ibnatī: al-juz' al-thāni. Cairo: Dār al-
Tauzī' wal-Nashr al-Islāmi.
Al-Ghazālī, Z. and Ibn al-Hāshimī. [MS2]Z. (1989). Al-Dā'iya Zaynab al-Ghazālī: Masīrat jihād wa-hadīth
        min al-dhikrayāt min khilāl kitābātihā [The Preacher Zaynab al-Ghazālī: the Journey of the
        Jihād and the Account of Her Memories Through Her Writings]. Cairo: Dār al-I'tisām.
Al-Ghazālī, Z. and Ibn al-Hāshimī. (1990). Humūm al-mar'ah al-Muslimah wa-al-dā'iyah Zaynab
        al-Ghazālī [The Concerns of the Muslim Woman and the Preacher Zaynab al-Ghazālī]. Cairo:
        Dār al-I'tisām.
Arnold, D. and Blackburn, S. (Eds.). (2004). Telling lives in India: Biography, autobiography, and life
        history. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
Badran, M. (2009). Feminism in Islam: Secular and religious convergences. Oxford, England: Oneworld
        Publications.
Badran, M. (1995). Feminists, Islam, and nation: Gender and the making of modern Egypt. Princeton,
        N.J.: Princeton University Press.
Badran, M. (2013). Theorizing oral history as autobiography: A look at the narrative of a woman
        revolutionary in Egypt. Journal of Women's History, 25 (2), 161–70.
Baron, B. (1991). The making and breaking of marital bonds in modern Egypt. In N. R. Keddie and B.
        Baron (Eds.), Women in Middle Eastern history: Shifting boundaries in sex and gender, (pp. 275-
        291). New Haven: Yale University Press.
Baron, B. (1994). The women's awakening in Egypt: Culture, society, and the press. New Haven: Yale
        University Press.
Baron, B. (2005). Egypt as a woman. Nationalism, gender, and politics. Berkeley: University of
        California Press.
Booth, M. (2013). Guest editorial note: Women's autobiography in South Asia and the Middle East.
        Journal of Women's History, 25 (2), 7–14.
Booth, M. (2013). Locating women's autobiographical writing in colonial Egypt. Journal of Women's
        History, 25 (2), 36–60.
Booth, M. (2001). May her likes be multiplied: Biography and gender politics in Egypt. Berkeley, CA,
        USA: University of California Press.
Booth, M. (2013). Women's autobiography in South Asia and the Middle East. Journal of Women's
        History, 25 (2), 7–14, 189.
Booth, M. and Burton, A. (2009). Editors' Note. Journal of Women's History, 21 (3), 7–12.
Burke, E. (1993). Struggle and Survival in the Modern Middle East. Berkeley: University of
        California Press.
Burton, A. (2013). An assemblage/before me: Autobiography as archive. Journal of Women's History,
        25(2), 185–188.
Burton, A. (2003). Dwelling in the archive: Women writing house, home, and history in late colonial
        India.New York: Oxford University Press.
Campanini, M. (2005). Storia dell'Egitto contemporaneo: Dalla rinascita ottocentesca a mubarak
        [Contemporary History of Egypt: From the Nineteenth-century Revival to Mubarak]. Roma:
        Edizioni Lavoro.
cooke, m. (1994). Zaynab al-Ghazali: Saint or subversive? Die Welt Des Islams, 34(1), 1-20.
cooke, m. (1995). Ayyām min Hayātī": The prison memoirs of a Muslim sister. Journal of Arabic
        Literature, 26 (2), 147-164.
cooke, m. (1999). Feminist transgressions in the postcolonial arab world. Critique: Critical Middle
        Eastern studies, 8 (14), 93-105.
cooke, m. (2001). Women claim Islam: Creating Islamic feminism through Literature. New York:
        Routledge.

Hatem, M. (1998). Secularist and islamist discourses on modernity in egypt and the evolution of the postcolonial nation-state. In Y. Haddad and J. L. Esposito (Eds.). Islam, gender, & social change, (pp. 85-99). New York: Oxford University Press.

Hoffman, V. J. (1985). An islamic activist: Zaynab al-Ghazali. In E. W. Fernea (Ed.) Women and the Family in the Middle East: New Voices of Change, (pp. 233-254). Austin: University of Texas Press.

Jaffer, S. (2013). Women's autobiography in islamic societies: Towards a feminist intellectual history. Journal of women's history, 25 (2), 153-160.

Keddie, N. R. and Baron, B. (1991). Women in Middle Eastern history: Shifting boundaries in sex and gender. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Mahmood, S. (2005). Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.

Meriwether, M. L. and Tucker, J. E. (1999). Social history of women and gender in the modern middle east. boulder: westview Press.

Mitchell, R. P. (1969). The society of the Muslim brothers. London: Oxford University Press.

Lambert-Hurley, S. (2013). Life/History/Archive: Identifying Autobiographical Writing by Muslim Women in South Asia. Journal of Women's History, 25 (2), 61–84.

Pollard, L. (2000). The family politics of colonizing and liberating Egypt, 1882–1919. Social Politics, 7 (1), 47-79.

Pollard, L. (2005). Nurturing the nation. The family politics of modernizing, colonizing and liberating Egypt (1805-1923). Berkeley: University of California Press.

Russell, M. L. (2004). Creating the new Egyptian woman: Consumerism, education, and national identity, 1863-1922. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.

Sonbol, A. (1996). Women, the Family, and Divorce Laws in Islamic History. Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press.

Smith, S. (2001). Reading Autobiography: A Guide for Interpreting Life Narratives. Minneapolis, MN; London: University of Minnesota Press.

Tadros, M. (2012). The Muslim Brotherhood in Contemporary Egypt. Democracy Defined or Confined? London: Routledge.

White, H. (1980). The value of narrativity in the representation of reality. Critical Inquiry, 7 (1), 5-27.

Yaqin, A. (2013). Autobiography and Muslim women's lives. Journal of Women's History, 25 (2), 171-184. USA: University of California Press.