

## Anklets: כ'לאכ'ל *Khalākil*

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**Abstract.** Yemenite jewellery are very famous, however those from the eighteenth century are less scrutinize.

I wish to focus on a pair of stamped anklets, signed by Sālem Kasil, a Jewish silversmith from *Gā'bir al-'azab* ג'ראע ביר אלעזוב, the Jewish neighborhood outside Ṣan'ā, as a test case of Jewish and Yemeni Art. The target is to shed light on כ'לאכ'ל *Khalākil* as a Jewish safeguard, due to its unique iconography of ostriches and fishes. The basis is the crossroad of Jewish thought and Yemeni Art formulas regarding ostriches and fishes at Yemen. The iconography of ostriches in the context of *Khalākil* was never researched before and is shown here for the first time.

כ'לאכ'ל *Khalākil* would be examined from the point of view of art history. Examples of ostriches and or fishes as a Yemeni brand in Yemenite art would be provided since antiquity up – till the twentieth century. כ'לאכ'ל *Khalākil* present the only piece of jewel known to us today made by Sālem Kasil and signed by him.

[*Yemen, jewellery, fertility, ostriches, fishes*]

### Introduction

Yemenite jewellery are very famous, however those from the eighteenth century are less scrutinize. In the frame of my Ph.D. dissertation I showed fourteen different types of Jewish jewellery adorned by the Jewish bride at *Gā'bir al-'azab* ג'ראע ביר אלעזוב and *Radā'* רדא. That includes anklets, known as כ'לאכ'ל in Judeo-Yemenite script, which is the Hebrew writing of the Yemenite speaking (<http://www.oraberger.co.il/phd/>). Jewels in couplets, such as anklets, hardly survived from Yemen from the eighteenth century. That turns the pair of כ'לאכ'ל *Khalākil* from 1771/2 by the Jewish silversmith Sālem Kasil to a test case of Jewish and Yemeni art (Figs. 1–5).

This paper is concerned with an intact original pair of *Khalākil* that shows ostriches and fishes as its iconography. The iconography of ostriches in the context of *Khalākil* was never researched before and is shown here for the first time. The silversmith Sālem Kasil chiseled his name סאלם קסיל in Judeo-Yemenite script on it (Fig. 2). The *tābi'*, which is the official stamp of the Zaydi Imam, dates it to 1771 / 2 and shows al-Mahdi as the ruling Imam (Fig. 2). At the essence of its existence lie four questions. First, why ostriches and fishes? Second, is it a new iconography of Yemen? Third, what is the art formula of ostriches and fishes and what we can conclude out of that? Fourth, is it the same (pl.) of the Jewish bride of the classical Cairo Geniza community (ninth – twelfth centuries)?

### Jewellery must be given to the bride

Jewellery must be given to the Jewish bride and are her personal property. This is the Jewish law. The Judeo-Arabic trousseau lists of the classical Cairo Geniza community support that law by showing a very specific and detailed assessment of each of the jewels that had been given to Jewish brides of Fustat (old Cairo). In addition to the name of each jewel and its detailed description, the trousseau lists specify the materials it is made of, any unique feature and its exact monetary value in gold dinars, the official money at the time (Goitein 1983, iv: 200–222). Anklets: כ'לאכ'ל (pl.) and (s.) are included and were dominant in the early eleventh century (Goitein 1983, iv: 200–201, 221–222; Olszowy-Schlanger 1998: 334–339, no. 23/line 20 & 378–381, no. 37/line 13).



**Fig. 1** A pair of Jewish Ostriches כ' לְאַק' ל' *Khalākil* signed by the Jewish silversmith קְסֵל סָלֵם Sālem Kasil, dated to 1771/2.

A pair of gilding silver hollow anklets with ostrich head terminals at the edges. The total weight is about a quarter of kilo. The front is decorated all along with fish ponds, showing swimming fishes, known in Judeo-Yemenite as *حُتٍ hutī*. Signed קְסֵל סָלֵם [?] in Judeo-Yemenite script, which is Yemenite speaking in Hebrew letters. Stamped with *tābi'*, which is the official stamp of the Zaydi Imam in Yemenite, which dates it to 1771/2 and shows al-Mahdi as the Zaydi Imam. Gā' bīr al-'azab בַּיְתָה קָאָע, the Jewish neighborhood outside Ṣan'ā. Courtesy of Sotheby's Tel-Aviv, State of Israel.



**Fig. 2** A pair of Jewish Ostriches כ' לְאַק' ל' *Khalākil* signed by the Jewish silversmith קְסֵל סָלֵם Sālem Kasil, dated to 1771/2.

A detail belonging to the “Ostriches *Khalākil*” in Fig. 1. The Ostrich head terminal is executed by the casting technique, known in Qānūn Ṣan'ā Law as *al-ṣabb al-abyad*, meaning white casting to indicate it is made of silver. The signature קְסֵל סָלֵם, in Judeo-Yemenite script, is on the ostrich head terminal. The Yemenite *tābi'* is stamped on the very narrow edge, showing al-Mahdi as the Zaydi Imam and the year 1771/2.

In contrast, there are no trousseau lists in Yemen. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the focus is on the total monetary value of all the jewels the Jewish bride got. Hence, the total sum of money is written and officially signed by two witnesses on the back side of the marriage contract of the Jewish bride, whose responsibility is to keep it with her. The marriage contract was given to the just married women at the end of the religious ceremony known in Hebrew as *Kiddoshin*, after which the bride and the groom are a married couple. Indeed, the Jewish marriage contracts from Yemen show the total monetary value of all the jewels the bride got, but in that system there is no information on the types of the jewels (pp.132–135 at: <http://www.oraberger.co.il/phd/>). The point that emerges from that is therefore, the same iconography for the varied arts of the Jewish wedding. Hence, the *Khalākil* by Sālem Kasil should point on ostriches as the subject of painted Jewish marriage contracts from Yemen, as well.

## Description

The basic structure of this *Khalākil* from 1771/2 by Sālem Kasil is two silver straws bent to two ellipses made by hand. Each is not a perfect ellipse as the two edges do not meet each other, but rather extend and overlap each other. The extinctions are functional as each enables to plug in a cast terminal. Each of the four terminals is a cast ostrich head accompanied with a part of its throat, as well (henceforth, the “Ostriches *Khalākil*”) (Figs. 2, 3).



Fig. 3 A pair of Jewish Ostriches Khalākil signed by the Jewish silversmith סאלם סאלם Sālem Kasil, dated to 1771/2.

A detail belonging to the “Ostriches Khalākil” in Fig. 1.

Traces of gilding technique, known in Qānūn Ṣan’ā Law as *tilā*, is shown in the inner part. the heaviest part of each anklet is the ostrich head accompanied with a part of its throat. The throat is not seen. Whilst the ostrich head should stay out as a terminal, the throat part should be plugged in and is fixed from the outside by silver nails. All the four ostriches heads accompanied with a part of the throat are silver casting (*al-ṣabb al-abyad*).



Fig. 4 A pair of Jewish Ostriches Khalākil signed by the Jewish silversmith סאלם סאלם Sālem Kasil, dated to 1771/2.

A detail belonging to the “Ostriches Khalākil” in Fig. 1.

Each anklet is wider in the center and much narrow at the edges besides the ostriches heads terminals. That creates the effect that each anklet is designed as a long curved swell ostrich through. The curved swell ostrich through effect or illusion, is very important to our subject as the fertility symbol of the ostrich mail.

By hammering, known in Qānūn Ṣan’ā Law as *matrūq*, Sālem Kasil had executed each of the hollow anklets. That easily can be seen by the very tiny space just between the two edges all along the interior part of the anklets.

While the Jewish woman walked, the ostriches heads are directed left and right to her body and thus touch not her legs. She was probably looked like accompanied with gold fishes, ostriches heads and each anklet as a swell curved ostrich through.

When the Jewish bride, whose name is not known yet, got this specific “Ostriches Khalākil” from Sālem Kasil she could adorn it on the spout. In order to do that, she had to slip each of her foot into each anklet and start walking. I name such type of jewel, made of one or two big pieces of solid silver by one silversmith and ready to be adorned on the spot, ‘one piece jewel’. In our case, the structure of each anklet is made of two silver big pieces joined together with no soldering: a hollow straw bent to an overlapping ellipse and cast ostrich head accompanied with a part of its throat plugged inside as a terminal. Only the ostrich head is seen as the throat was plugged inside and had been fixed with two silver nails from opposite sides from the outside. The silver nails were riveted by hammering from outside via the tube into the cast ostrich throat. The hammering not only had riveted the nails inside the ostriches throats, but also widen the nails and thus fixed it into the tube. Hence, as long as the nails stayed riveted each anklet is intact. The fact that the pair of “Ostriches Khalākil” of Sālem Kasil is still intact today, means that the method of combining together two big pieces with nails is an excellent one. I name such fixation with no soldering ‘cold joining’ (Figs. 2, 3).

The nails do not scratch the legs, as the four ostriches heads terminals are far from the legs (Fig. 1). In fact, all parts of Khalākil touching the legs of the Jewish woman are made of plain smooth silver to ensure her safety. The decoration is only on the external parts. The “Ostriches Khalākil” show a series of seven fishes ponds as its art program decoration (Fig. 4). Each shows a flock of swimming curved fishes, deeply engraved inside the silver around a drop-shaped green paste that marks the center of each (Figs. 4, 5). The “Ostriches Khalākil” are gilded all over, including those parts that touch the legs.



Fig. 5 A pair of Jewish Ostriches כ' לְאַכ' ל' *Khalākil* signed by the Jewish silversmith סאלם סאלם Sālem Kasil, dated to 1771/2.

A detail belonging to the “Ostriches *Khalākil*” in Fig. 1.

The “Ostriches *Khalākil*” show a series of seven fishes ponds as its art program decoration. Each anklet shows a flock of swimming curved fishes, deeply engraved inside the silver around a drop shaped green glass paste that marks the center of each. The technique is known in Judeo-Yemenite as *al-Naksh șalāl* technique, which is reducing some silver out of a thick surface. The glass paste is known in Judeo-Yemenite as *fusūs ṣṣāf*.

Neither *al-Naksh șalāl* technique, nor *fusūs ṣṣāf* are not mentioned in *Qānūn Ṣan'ā* Law.

From the point of view of the general appearance of *Khalākil*, in contrast to a straw, each anklet is wider in the center and much narrow at the edges just besides the ostriches heads terminals (Figs. 1, 4). That creates the effect that each anklet is designed as a long curved swell ostrich throat. As we would see, the curved swell ostrich throat effect or illusion, is very important to our subject. While the Jewish woman walked, the ostriches heads are directed left and right to her body and thus touch not her legs. She was probably looked like accompanied with gold fishes, ostriches heads and each anklet as a swell curved ostrich throat. The questions that emerge from that are two. First, where else could we find such combination of ostriches and fishes? Second, why ostriches and fishes?

### Hebrew Illuminated Bibles

The earliest Jewish visual context showing ostriches or fishes are Hebrew illuminated bibles. It should be mentioned that only very few Hebrew illuminated bibles from Yemen had been survived and only some had been researched yet. Therefore, the fact that we do not have, at the same Hebrew illuminated bible an illumination of both ostriches and fishes, does not mean that there was no such combination. However, at this stage of the research, ostriches and fishes as illuminations of Hebrew illuminated bibles from Yemen, can be shown, either from different illuminated bibles, or from different century. Both will be examined below:

### The Ostriches Pentateuch

In July 2008, I examined the illuminated Pentateuch, now in The Jewish Theological Seminary, New York, L66. I name it the “Ostriches Pentateuch” after its art program that shows ostriches all along (Figs. 6–9). Though it is documented in the inside Lutzki



Fig. 6 The Jewish mating dance formula of the ostrich male as the art program of Hebrew Illuminated Pentateuch.

In nature, whilst performing the mating dance in-front the female, the throat and the legs of the ostrich male are getting red and the red throat is swelling, as well as, the mating ostrich is moving his spread black feathers in curving circles from side to side of his body as demonstrated in Figs. 10, 11.

The strong disproportion between the curving swell throat and the eliminated body, as shown here, creates a Jewish art concept of the ostrich male mating dance, clear to Jews at the time.

Even though, few ostriches are painted on each folio, the presentation of ostriches continuously all along the Pentateuch creates a strong effect of a flock of ostriches.

The “Ostriches Pentateuch”, Radā’, Yemen.

End of the twelfth century.

The Ostriches Pentateuch is the only one showing an art program between the written columns all along the Pentateuch and as so of ostriches.

Paper. Ink. Red color. Green color. Gold dust color.

The Jewish Theological Seminary, New York, L66, folio. 12 r.  
Courtesy of The Jewish Theological Seminary, New York.



Fig. 7 The Jewish mating dance formula of the ostrich male as the art program of Hebrew Illuminated Pentateuch.

In addition to Fig. 6, here is folio. 31 v., of the “Ostriches Pentateuch”.

The ostrich male shows almost no body at all. What is left from the ostrich male body is expressed here as a horizontal red line (up in the center).

1 I would like to thank The Rare Books Library in The Jewish Theological Seminary, New York, that has been especially generous and helpful in sharing their knowledge and information with me. Most of all I want to give special thanks to Dr. Jay Rovner, the chief manuscript bibliographer.

catalog of The Jewish Theological Seminary (henceforth, JTS) its art program was never researched (Lutzki 1961: 58).<sup>1</sup> It has no colophon and no date. I date it to the end of the twelfth century on the basis of style. Its main importance lies in three. First, it is earlier to the Rasulid rule over Yemen (r. 1229–1445). Second, it belongs to a rare group of Hebrew illuminated bibles from Yemen, that had been created under the Ayyubid rule over Yemen (r. 1172–1229). Third, it is the only one showing an art program between the written columns all along the Pentateuch and as so of ostriches (Figs. 6–9). The presentation of ostriches continuously all along the Pentateuch creates a very unique and strong effect of a flock of ostriches, even though, maximum three ostriches are painted on each folio.



Fig. 8 The Jewish mating dance formula of the ostrich male as the art program of Hebrew Illuminated Pentateuch.

In addition to Figs. 6, 7, here is folio. 79 v., of the “Ostriches Pentateuch”.

Here, the black/white feathers of the ostrich male is demonstrated as well.



Fig. 9 The Jewish mating dance formula of the ostrich male as the art program of Hebrew Illuminated Pentateuch.

In addition to Figs. 6, 7, here is folio. 95 r., of the “Ostriches Pentateuch”.

The Jewish scribe utilized his colors to emphasize the most important feature for him. That is the red color of the unusual swell and curved red throat typical only to the courting male while trying to persuade a female to mate with him. Thus, on the background of the black feathers and the unusual red color of his throat and legs, typical only to this situation (Fig. 6–11). The red color of his unusual curving red throat is the most unique, representative and dominant feature of fertility of the mating ostrich male, typical only to its invitation to mate, known as the mating dance. In non mating time the color of his throat and legs is white, exactly as those of the female, and its throat is not curved at all.

In non mating time, the main difference between the male and the female is the color of the feathers. Whilst those of the male are black with some white at the edges, those of the female are brown (Fig. 12). As the Israel Nature and Parks Authority showed via the photographed mating dance as shown in Figs. 10, 11, whilst performing the mating dance, the throat and the legs are getting red and the red throat is swelling, as well as, the mating ostrich is moving his spread black feathers in curving circles from side to side of his body whilst making a dreadful voices out of his swell throat.<sup>2</sup> As shown up in Figs. 10, 11, on the basis of that phenomenon in nature, the Yemeni Jewish art formula shows a conceptional and short version of the mating dance. That was done by focusing only on three of its features: the curving swell throat, the red color of that throat and the red color of the legs. In order to emphasize these features, the ostrich body was eliminated almost totally, intentionally. The elimination is very important as, actually, the ostrich body is huge and dominant. As far as I know, only the Jewish formula had eliminated the ostrich body. All the other formulas from Yemen, as shown latter, did not do that. By eliminating the ostrich body, the Jewish formula made a clear message that its focus is fertility (Fig. 6–9).

of its library, *Sharon Lieberman Mintz* the curator of Jewish art and *David Sclar*.

2 [http://parks.org.il/Builda-Gate5/general2/data\\_card.php?Cat=690~720~166113922~Card7~&ru=&SitesName=parks&Clt=&Bur=292924583](http://parks.org.il/Builda-Gate5/general2/data_card.php?Cat=690~720~166113922~Card7~&ru=&SitesName=parks&Clt=&Bur=292924583).



**Fig. 10** The mating dance of the ostrich male as preforming in nature in the State of Israel.

The red color of the unusual swell and curved red throat is typical only to the courting male. Thus, on the background of the black feathers. In non mating time the color of his throat and legs is white, exactly as of the female, and its throat is not curved at all. In non mating time, the main difference between the male and the female is the color of the feathers. Whilst those of the male are black with some white at the edges, those of the female are brown as demonstrated in Fig. 12.

Whilst performing the mating dance, the throat and the legs are getting red and the red throat is swelling, as well as, the mating ostrich is moving his spread black feathers in curving circles from side to side of his body whilst making a dreadful voices out of his swell throat.

The Israel Nature and Parks Authority,  
State of Israel.

Photographed in December 2006 by Dr. Beni Shalmon at the Hai-Bar Yotveta, at the Israeli Negev, as shown at: [http://parks.org.il/BuildaGate5/general2/data\\_card.php?Cat=690~720~166113922~Card7~&ru=&SiteName=parks&Clt=&Bur=292924583](http://parks.org.il/BuildaGate5/general2/data_card.php?Cat=690~720~166113922~Card7~&ru=&SiteName=parks&Clt=&Bur=292924583)



**Fig. 11** The mating dance of the ostrich male as preforming in nature in the State of Israel.

In addition to Fig. 10, another position of the same mating dance.

All along the “Ostriches Pentateuch”, the mating dance formula is repeated with many variation, including different colors of the swell throat and the eliminated body (Figs. 6–9), as well as, different proportions of the swell curved throat (Fig. 7). Fol. 31 v., for example, shows almost no body at all. What was left from the ostrich male body is expressed as a sort of a horizontal red line (Fig. 7 up in the center). The repeated Jewish mating dance formula is not a many times copy of one ostrich, but a free hand painting variation on it. The strong disproportion between the curving swell throat and the eliminated body, creates a Jewish art concept of the ostrich male mating dance, clear to Jews at the time (henceforth, the Jewish mating dance formula). It contains an information encoded within it, to be decoded only by he who knows the mating dance and of Jewish thought regarding ostriches.

Comparing this Jewish mating dance formula with the “Ostriches *Khalākil*”, shows that the same formula was implied into the “Ostriches *Khalākil*” made in 1771/2 by Sālem Kasil (Figs. 1–5, 6–9). That erises the question was the Jewish mating dance formula of the “Ostriches Pentateuch” from the end of the twelfth century, a pattern book for Jewish silversmiths in the eighteenth century at Ga’ bīr al-’azab, the Jewish neighborhood outside Ṣan’ā? If yes, why?



Fig. 12 Running male and a female ostriches.

The male has black feathers with white at the edges and its tail is of white feathers, whilst the female has only brown feathers.

Photographed by Pazia Miller מילר פזיה in 2009 at the Safari, Ramat-Gan (The Zoological Center Tel Aviv- Ramat Gan). <http://he.wikipedia.org/wiki/%D7%A9>

## The Fishes Ṣan'ā Pentateuch

In July 2008 I examined the illuminated Pentateuch, now in The British Library, London, MS Or. 2348, whose colophon dates it to 1469, Ṣan'ā. I named it the “Fishes Ṣan'ā Pentateuch” after its fishes presentation at folios 38 v., 39 r., and 152 r. (Figs. 13–15). Ilana Thahan, the curator of the Hebrew manuscripts at the British Library named it the “San'a Pentateuch” (Tahan 2007: 22–27). However, as Berger showed, an earlier Pentateuch had been scribed in 1206 at Ṣan'ā (Berger 2010). Therefore, in order to prevent a confusion of the two, I prefer to name it also after its fishes illumination (Figs. 13–15).

The research situation shows that the “Fishes Ṣan'ā Pentateuch” is the only Hebrew illuminated Pentateuch survived from Yemen presenting fishes as art formula. It was never researched in the context of the arts at Yemen, only, either in the context of Jewish art in general, or in the context of Islamic art in general.<sup>3</sup> Hence, it is a special opportunity to show its fishes illuminations in the context of the arts in Yemen.

The juxtaposed couplet of carpet pages (full illuminated folio), folios 38v., 39r., show many couplets of swimming curving fishes in the space between the two central circles (Fig. 13). If we would minimize that composition and replace the inside circle with a green paste, which is a painted glass to imitate a gem-stone, we would have the swimming fishes of the fishes ponds of the “Ostriches Khalākil” (Figs. 13, 4, 5). The silver fishes ponds of the “Ostriches Khalākil” are in the shape of an ellipse rather of a circle. That is by purpose, as experience had thought Jewish silversmiths that while bending a solid silver, in the shape of a circle, on the slanted surface of *Khalākil*, the deformation of the circle would be an ellipse. To prevent that, Sālem Kasil, the Jewish silversmith of the “Ostriches Khalākil” already used ellipse solid silver for his fishes ponds. That suit, as well, the composition of the “Fishes Ṣan'ā Pentateuch”, as each of the fishes couplets creates an ellipse composition (Figs. 13, 14). After all, the main composition is the repeated

3 For the context of Jewish art in general see: Gutmann 1979: 42–43; Ferber 1977; Narkiss 1992: 25b–26. For the context of Islamic art in general see: Ettinghausen 1964.

**Fig. 13** Couplets of dynamic twisted swimming fishes as the art program of Hebrew Illuminated carpet pages.

Juxtaposed two carpet pages (full illuminated page) showing pairs of swimming fishes. Each pair of the plenty swimming fishes creates an ellipse composition. The outline of each fish is made of the Hebrew biblical text. The Fishes Ṣan'ā Pentateuch, 1469, Ṣan'ā, Yemen. Paper. Ink. Red color. Green color. Blue color. Hebrew text of Psalms 119, 121 and 122. The British Library, London. Ms Or. 2348, folios 38 v., 39 r. Courtesy of The British Library, London.



**Fig. 14** Couplets of dynamic twisted swimming fishes as the art program of Hebrew Illuminated carpet pages.

A detail belonging to Fig. 13, out of folio 39 r.



**Fig. 15** Single fishes as the art program of Hebrew Illuminated Page.

Four single fishes between the columns of Ha'azino Song (Deuteronomy 32). The outline of each fish is made of the Hebrew biblical text. The Fishes Ṣan'ā Pentateuch, 1469, Ṣan'ā, Yemen. Paper. Ink. Red color. Green color. Blue color. Hebrew text of Psalms 119, 121 and 122. The British Library, London. Ms Or. 2348, folio 152 r. Courtesy of The British Library, London.



ellipse composition by the many couplets of swimming fishes (Fig. 13). The question that emerges from that is therefore, was the “Fishes Ṣanā Pentateuch”, 1469, which had been scribed about a decade after the end of the Rasulid rule over Yemen, a pattern book for Sālem Kasil at Ga’ bīr al-’azab? If yes, why?

## Ostriches and Fishes in Jewish Thought

Jewish thought is very specific in defining the dangerous situations in life that need ‘preservation and strengthening’ ‘גָּמָשׁ’. In the Jewish Talmud it is said that there are three, who need preservation and strengthening. These are: “who ever is ill, a groom and a bride.” (Bbylonian Talmud, Blessing, 54b).

## Ostriches and the Jewish wedding

It should be mentioned that in Jewish law the marriage is activating only by the groom. Only the groom can make the marriage blessing (in Hebrew: *Kiddushin*) and not the bride. The groom must do the marriage blessing only with an object that has a monetary value. The original Jewish custom was to make the *Kiddushin* blessing with a money coin and not with a ring, which is a latter custom. Jews of Yemen kept the old custom of getting married with a coin, at least up till the end of the eighteenth century (Qāfīh 1984). In the presence of two witnesses, the groom dipped the coin in wine, made the marriage blessing and gave the signed marriage contract to the bride. However, the Jewish Mishna allows to get married with an ostrich egg, as an ostrich egg is known as very expensive (Mishneh Torah, Red Cow, 6/4).

That provides the explanation why marriage Jewish contracts from Yemen in the eighteenth century are painted with ostriches, either at the top (Figs. 16, 17), or at the bottom (Fig. 18). In addition to the swell throat and the eliminated body which appears as an extension of the swell throat, an additional variation is shown. That is the running positioning of the legs (Figs. 12, 16–18). A speed running is an unique quality of the ostrich which gives it the ability to escape from being hunted. Since antiquity, that quality had turn ostriches hunting to a challenge for rulers and a brand of royalty as clearly demonstrated on the personal gold fan of Tutankhamun (Figs. 19–23). On the front, the hunting scene demonstrates the running quality of the ostriches by showing that the hunting was done from a running chariot by using a bow and lot of errors (Figs. 19, 20). On the back, the dead ostriches are demonstrated. Its legs are emphasized by its presentation at the very front level (Figs. 21, 22). At the time, the fan was surrounded with ostriches feathers all around and therefore the message was passed also from a distance. Nowadays, the ostriches feathers are off and the fan looks quite modest from a distance. In order to see the hunting scene, one must see it from a close distance (Fig. 23). The ostriches hunting scene provides the explanation why ostrich feathers are so common in adorning the rulers in ancient Egyptian art as documented intensively on colorful fresco wall paintings as a routine.

The demonstration of the running quality of the ostrich by emphasizing its legs is also shown in another Hebrew illuminated bible from Yemen (Fig. 24). In contrast to the “Ostriches Pentateuch”, it appear here only once, in the context of Egypt, a well known zone of ostriches at the time. In July 2008, I examined that illuminated Pentateuch, now in JTS, New York, L62. I name it the “Earliest Aden Pentateuch” after its source. Though it is documented in the inside Lutzki catalog of JTS, its art program was never researched (Lutzki 1961: 54 ).<sup>4</sup> I dated it to the end of the twelfth century on the basis of style.

<sup>4</sup> I would like to thank The Rare Books Library in The Jewish Theological Seminary, New York, that has been especially generous and helpful in sharing their knowledge and information with me. Most of all I want to give special thanks to Dr. Jay Rovner, the chief-manuscript bibliographer of its library, Sharon Lieberman Mintz the curator of Jewish art and David Sclar.



**Fig. 16** Ostriches on painted Jewish marriage contract (in Hebrew: *Ketubbah*).

A pair of juxtaposed ostriches are just at the top center of the *Ketubbah* of the elite bride Sarah daughter of Yitzhak al-Kāra  
שָׂרָה בָּנָת יִצְחָק אֶלְקָרָה.  
Paper. Brown Ink. Red Ink. Green Ink.  
Gā' bīr al-'azab, the Jewish neighborhood outside San'ā, Yemen. 1790.  
The Jewish Theological Seminary, New York, Ket. 319.  
Courtesy of The Jewish Theological Seminary, New York.



**Fig. 17** Ostriches on painted Jewish marriage contract (in Hebrew: *Ketubbah*).

A detail belonging to Fig. 16.  
The eliminated body is expressed by combining together the throat, the body and the tail to one elongated narrow unit. The running legs are emphasized, probably, as running together after the mate is part of the mating process of Ostriches. Thus, it indicates a successful mate.



**Fig. 18** Ostriches on painted Jewish marriage contract (in Hebrew: *Ketubbah*).

A pair of juxtaposed ostriches at the bottom of the *Ketubbah* of the elite bride Badra bint Musa ben Joseph ben MoVeRa Yakov al-Zairi (meaning Our Teacher and Our Rav) בָּדָרָה בָּנָת מֹסָא בָּן יוֹסֵף בָּן מִזְרָחִי. Paper. Ink.  
This *Ketubbah* is unique by being written by MaHaRiTZ, whose son Josef is the groom as mentioned in Badra's *Ketubbah*. Gā' bīr al-'azab, the Jewish neighborhood outside San'ā, Yemen. 1790. The eliminated body is expressed by combining together the throat, the body and the tail to one elongated narrow unit. The running legs are emphasized, probably, as running together after the mate is part of the mating process of ostriches. Thus, it indicates a successful mate. The raised up wing is shown as separated from the body. The collection of Yhuda Levi Nahum, an enterprise to expose Yemenite treasures, Holon, State of Israel.  
Photo after: Seri "n.d.": 22.

Four points emerge from that. First, ostrich egg and the running ostrich formula is rooted in Jewish art from Yemen in the context of the Jewish wedding. Second, the running ostrich formula was not limited to antiquity, as would show latter, but has a continuation via Hebrew illuminated bibles and Jewish painted marriage contracts at Yemen. Third, ostrich feathers were a royalty brand in antiquity and thus a luxurious brand. It is reasonable to assume that that was the situation at Yemen, as well. Forth, in the eighteenth century, Jews of Yemen knew to decode the fertility information encoded in the Jewish mating dance formula.



**Fig. 19** Ostriches hunting in Ancient Egypt.

Ostriches hunting on the front of the personal gold fan of Tutankhamun. At the time, the fan was surrounded with ostriches feathers all around and therefore the message was passed already from a distance. The hunting scene demonstrates the running quality of the ostriches by showing that the hunting was done from a running chariot and by using a bow and lot of errors.

Photo after: Stoddert, Holt & Hudson 1976: Plate 11.



**Fig. 20** Ostriches hunting in Ancient Egypt.

A detail belonging to Fig. 19.  
The art formula of the hunted ostrich as looking backward.



**Fig. 21** Ostriches hunting in Ancient Egypt.

The back side of Fig 19.

The focus of the back is on the successful result of the hunting, as the dead two ostriches are demonstrated. Here, the legs of the dead ostrich are emphasized by its presentation at the very front level.



**Fig. 22** Ostriches hunting in Ancient Egypt.

A detail belonging to Fig 21.



Fig. 23 Ostriches hunting in Ancient Egypt.

Ostriches hunting on the front of the personal gold fan of Tutankhamun. At the time, the fan was surrounded with ostriches feathers all around. When found, the ostriches feathers were crumpling. Thus, in order to understand its message, one must look on the ostriches hunting scene from a close.

Photo after: Stoddert, Holt & Hudson 1976: 127.



Fig. 24 Ostrich as a mark of a new section of Hebrew Illuminated Pentateuch.

Ostrich as a mark of Parashat Beshallach <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beshalach> (Exodus 13:17) (in Hebrew: Parashah is a new section for reading the Torah in the synagogue). The section deals with the trek of the Israelite after the let go from Egypt by the Pharaoh (the official title of the king in Ancient Egypt). The ostrich here illuminates the idea of Egypt as a well known ostriches zone.

The “Earliest Aden Pentateuch”, Aden, Yemen.  
End of the twelfth century.

Paper. Ink. Red color. Gold dust color.  
The Jewish Theological Seminary, New York, L62, folio. 88 v.  
Courtesy of The Jewish Theological Seminary, New York.

## Ostriches and infertility

An ostrich egg is mentioned in the Babylonian Talmud as a remedy for infertility of a woman (Babylonian Talmud, Sabbath, 106b). That provides the explanation why ostrich eggs were must in the decoration of the celebration room of the Jewish woman after giving birth at *Gā' bīr al-'azab*. That is clearly demonstrated by a black/white photo documentation of such celebration room, taken by the well known Jewish photographer at *Gā' bīr al-'azab*, Yihye Haiby, in ca. 1930–1940. The photograph shows dozens of ostrich eggs hanged on the walls of the celebration room, limited for women only, just before the celebration had started (Fig. 25).

## Ostriches as the art of the synagogue

It should be emphasized that in the eighteenth century the Jewish mating dance formula was expanded from the wedding context to the art of the synagogue, as well. There are, at least, two examples of the Jewish mating dance formula as painted on ceremonial objects in the synagogue. The one is a Torah case showing the Jewish mating dance formula and ostriches feathers as painted all around (Fig. 26). The other is a Torah Teva (stand to put on the Torah scroll on while reading) showing ostriches as painted on its sides and front (Fig. 27). Hence, it is clear that the Jewish mating dance formula is a phenomenon in Jewish art at Yemen in the eighteenth century on the background of Jewish thought.

A Torah case, probably from Radā', probably from the eighteenth century, is painted all over with a repeated couplet of ostriches, surrounding by four ostrich feathers in the shape of the natural crystal of the diamond as shown from up to dawn view (Fig. 26).

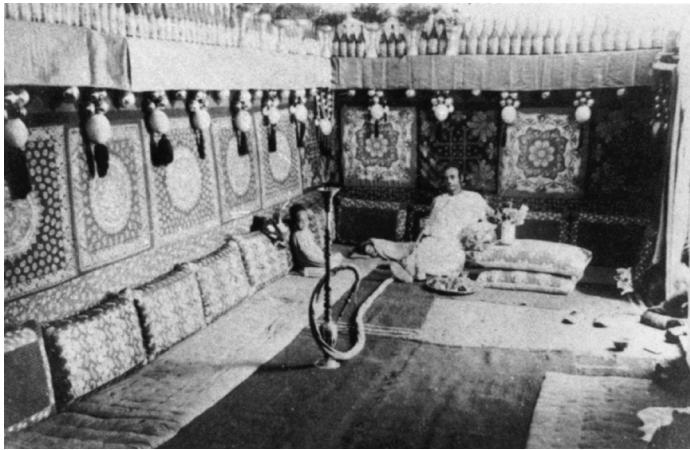


Fig. 25 Ostrich eggs as a fertility symbol.

Dozens of ostrich eggs hanged on the walls of the celebration room for a Jewish woman after giving birth, limited for women only, at Gā' bīr al-'azab just before the celebration.

Ostrich eggs were must in the decoration of the celebration room of the Jewish woman after giving birth after the Jewish Babylonian Talmud that presents the ostrich egg as a remedy for infertility of a woman.

Black/white photo documentation of the celebration room for a woman after giving birth, just before the celebration. Taken in ca. 1930–1940 by Yihye Haiby, the Jewish photographer at Gā' bīr al-'azab, who photographed himself with a baby and his nephew in that room before the celebration had started.

Photo after: Sha'ar 1985: 81, Fig. 149.



Fig. 26 Ostriches as painting on Torah case.

The Torah case, probably from Radā', probably from the eighteenth century, is painted all over with a repeated couplet of ostriches, surrounding by four ostrich feathers in the shape of the natural crystal of the diamond as shown from up to dawn view. The running quality of the ostrich is shown by the raising up single wing shown in profile. Raising up the wings is typical to the running ostrich as shown in Fig. 12. Running together after the mating includes in the mating of a couple of ostriches. Hence, we may have here a variation to the Jewish mating dance formula.

A wood Torah case. Green color. Gold dust.

Photo after: Muchawsky-Schnapper 2000/157.



Fig. 27 Ostriches as painting on Torah Teva of the Badīhī family. משפחת בדִיחִי.

Gā' bīr al-'azab, the Jewish neighborhood at San'ā, Yemen.

Rare black / white photo taken in the synagogue of the Badīhī family, showing Matanya Badīhī reading the Torah scroll on the Torah Teva. This Torah Teva is painted all around with ostriches in en-face and in profile positioning.

The photo was taken in ca. 1930–1940, in the synagogue of the Badīhī family by Yihye Haiby, the Jewish photograph at Gā' bīr al-'azab.

The Torah Teva itself is from Radā' and dated to the eighteenth century.

The Badīhī family is originated from Radā' and from there came in the eighteenth century to Gā' bīr al-'azab. When they made *Alia* (in Hebrew: come back) to the State of Israel, they brought that Torah Teva from their synagogue with them.

Photo after: Sha'ar 1985: 15, Fig. 11.

Here, the running quality of the ostrich is shown by the raising up single wing shown in profile. Raising up the wings is typical to the running ostrich as shown in Fig. 12 and it might be for the acceleration. Ostriches can not fly and the couplet wing is not to fly with. On the other hand, running together after the mating is included in the mating process. Hence, that might be a variation to the Jewish mating dance formula.

It is important to mention that such Torah case was for Torah scroll only, as can easily seen by its size and shape, not for a codex as for example the “Ostriches Pentateuch” (Figs 26, 6–9). By the Jewish law, a Torah scroll is a hand written, under a strict set of rules, and never ever illuminated. In contrast, the illumination of the codex format of the Hebrew bible is permitted. Hence, the art of the Torah case reflects the spirit of the community, as the Torah scroll is a general protective mental. There are no painted Torah cases after the eighteenth century from Yemen. On the other hand, there is no information

yet on the art of the Torah case from Yemen earlier to the eighteenth century. Thus, at this point of the research it is hard to point on the first example of ostriches as the art program of the Torah case at Yemen.

The Torah Teva of the Badīhī family משפחת בדיחי was photographed at Gā' bīr al-'azab by Yihye Haiby ייחיא חייבי in ca. 1930–1940. The black/white photo shows a rare panorama of ostriches, in profile and in en-face view, on the front and sides. The photo was taken in the family synagogue at Gā' bīr al-'azab (Fig. 27). The family is originated from *Radā'* and from there came to Gā' bīr al-'azab in the eighteenth century. When they made *Alia* (in Hebrew: come back) to the State of Israel, they brought that Torah Teva from their synagogue with them. This Torah Teva has been published, but never researched yet, and therefore it is not dated. On the basis of its style, it is from the eighteenth century, probably from *Radā'*.

As Sha'ar showed, the Badīhī family was a very famous merchant family for jewellery at Gā' bīr al-'azab and supplied work to many Jewish silversmiths (Sha'ar 1985: 15, Fig. 11). Hence, in the context of this family, ostriches are not only presented as safeguards, but also as a family symbol. Thus, on the basis of the Jerusalem Talmud that shows goldsmiths as employing ostriches to purify gold alloys in natural ways, rather by acids as done by goldsmiths and silversmiths up till today (Jerusalem Talmud, Yoma 23a). As Tobi showed, in the eighteenth century, the Jewish community at Gā' bīr al-'azab and *Radā'* maintained strong connections on the basis of family relationships, Jewish leaderships and commercial connections (Tobi 1992: 18–19). The ostriches subject, as demonstrated on ceremonial objects in both places, shows art connection, as well.

The point that emerges from that is therefore, that ostriches is the brand of the Jewish community in the eighteenth century at Gā' bīr al-'azab and *Radā'*. Hence, the Ostriches Khalākil from 1771/2 is only one example to demonstrate that (Fig. 1). The question that arises from that is was ostriches of the eighteenth century a retro brand, or, was ostriches always a brand of Yemen, even before its unique demonstration in Hebrew illuminated bibles under the Ayyubids (Figs. 6–9, 24)?

## Why Fishes?

Fishes are special and unique in Jewish thought as safeguards. The source for that is rooted in Jacob's blessings of Josef and Josef's sons Menashe and Ephraim (Genesis 48, 15–17). The Jewish Talmud has interpreted and has explained fishes in the sea as protected from the evil eye by being covered by water, over which the evil eye has no control (Babylonian Talmud, Blessing, 20a Gemara). The belief in the evil eye is ancient and based on the popular belief attributing to the human eye the power to transfer harm and the ability to warding it off. The term evil eye is found in Jewish thought, as well as, certain ways to abolish its harm. According to Jewish thought the evil eye does not penetrate into water. Therefore water protects against the evil eye. Fishes, pearls and corals, existing and living in the sea, are therefore blessed, as the evil eye has no control over them, thanks to the water that covers them.

The "Fishes Ṣan'ā Pentateuch", 1469, shows the blessed fishes as a fertility brand and therefore emphasizes its quantity (Figs. 13–15). Thus, fishes had turned into a brand of safeguards, fertility and protection of the Jewish community as a whole at Yemen. The concept had been easily distributed at the Jewish community at Ṣan'ā via illuminated Hebrew bibles, as for example the "Fishes Ṣan'ā Pentateuch". According to sale notes on folios 37 v. and 38 r., it had been donated to the synagogue of the Hantal חננאל family at Ṣan'ā. As studding the Bible on a daily basis is a Jewish requirement, after Book of Joshua 1: 8, and as that was done at Yemen in the synagogue, therefore, Jews had studied the "Fishes Ṣan'ā Pentateuch" every day in the Hantal חננאל family synagogue. Hence,

טענה גנא בנה אלזיביב באן ענד טאלם אלטביב ז' אואק ונץ מעצעט	1
זונג' דמאלאג', זונג' חג'אלאת ח' אואק ורבע זונג' חדאוד וקיתין	2
זונג' זיאכיר נץ וקיה ופרדה חדודי מן קרשין ופרדה חדודי ת'אנני	3
זונג' בילאכ'ל סת אואק באקי קימת אונג'אלאת אלאונג'ל ויב' ונץ	4
זונג' חג'זיל ח'אניאת מוכראיאת ענדיה.	5
הודה טאלם טי אלחג'אלאת ח' אואק אלא רבע זונג' חדאוד [גונץ] קפליה	6
זונג' זיאכיר ד' קפלאל, ופרדה חדודי ענדיה רהנה מן אבראה[ס]	7
ג'בני, וכדר'אלך הודה אן ענדיה להא זונג' חג'זיל ויקול אנהן ענדיה מרהונאת.	8
הודה פי אלכ'לאכ'ל [ ] קול. טי ד' קרש ורבע.	9
ונגא אקרת בדקה ענדיה בקרש ורבע וקרש חג'יר ופרדה חדודיה	10
אג'יר	11
טענה גנא בתו של אלזיביב, שיש «לה» אעל טאלם אלטביב מעצעט «במשקל» שבע אוקיות וחזci,	1
זונג' דמאלאג', זונג' חג'אלאת «במשקל» שמונה אוקיות ורבע זונג' חדאוד «במשקל» שתי אוקיות,	2
זונג' זיאכיר במשקל חצי אוקיה, וחוקדי בזוד בערך של שני גרשים, וחודח בזוד אחר,	3
זונג' בילאכ'ל «במשקל» שש אוקיות. היה ערך האונג'ל שניסיעשר וחצי «גרשים».	4
זונג' חג'זיל אחרות מושכחות אצלו.	5
הודה טאלם על החג'אלאת «במשקל» חמש אוקיות. פחות ורבע, זונג' חדאוד [חונץ] קפליה,	6
זונג' זיאכיר ארבע קפלות, וחוקדי בזוד אצלו משכך של בת אבראה[ס]	7
ג'בני, וכן הודה שיש לה אצלו זונג' חג'זיל, והוא טען כי הן ממושכחות אצלו.	8
הודה על הכלאכ'ל [ ] בארכעה גרשים ורבע.	9
ונגא הודה בדקה שאצלה «בערך של» גרש ורבע גרש חג'יר, וחודחיה בחדת	10
שכר <?>	11

Fig. 28 Pair of *Khalākil* of the Jewish Gana bint al-Zabib.

The earliest known Jewish *Khalākil* at Yemen is from a written documentation in Judeo-Yemenite script, found at the archive of Shalom Sinjāb, the president of the Jewish community outside Radā', dated to 1735–1754. The assertive גנא בנה אלזיביב Gana bint al-Zabib, set a lawsuit to the Jewish court of law, demanding her jewels from her ex-husband. She testified on her pair of anklets by its Judeo-Yemenite name כ'לאכ'ל and by its weight, which is a hundred and eighty grams (line 4). Photo after: Tobi 1992: 72–73.

these fishes were exposed to all Jews of that synagogue constantly. Everyone who had studied that Pentateuch knew these fishes. Therefore, the many couplets of fishes of the “Fishes Ṣan’ā Pentateuch” are a study case representing Jewish ideas via art, as a way of visual communication and publicity in the Jewish community at Ṣan’ā, on the basis of Jewish thought.

The “Ostriches *Khalākil*” from 1771/2 by Sālem Kasil of *Gā’ bīr al-’azab*, demonstrates the exact idea by its silver fishes ponds (Figs 4, 5). The combination of ostriches and fishes in one piece jewel might be his innovation. On the other hand, it might already had been demonstrated on Hebrew illuminated bibles from Yemen that had not been survived.

The point that emerges from that is therefore the question, how the earliest Jewish *Khalākil* at Yemen looked like? As Tobi showed, the earliest known Jewish כ'לאכ'ל at Yemen is from a written documentation, in Judeo-Yemenite script, found at the archive of Shalom Sinjāb, the president of the Jewish community outside Radā', dated to 1735–1754 (Tobi 1992: 72–74). The assertive גנא בנה אלזיביב Gana bint al-Zabib, set a lawsuit to the Jewish court of law, demanding her jewels from her ex-husband. Her pair of anklets is described and mentioned twice on that document. She testified on it by its Judeo-Yemenite name כ'לאכ'ל and by its weight, which is a hundred and eighty grams. Her ex-husband testified on it by the same name and by its monetary value at the time at Yemen, which was

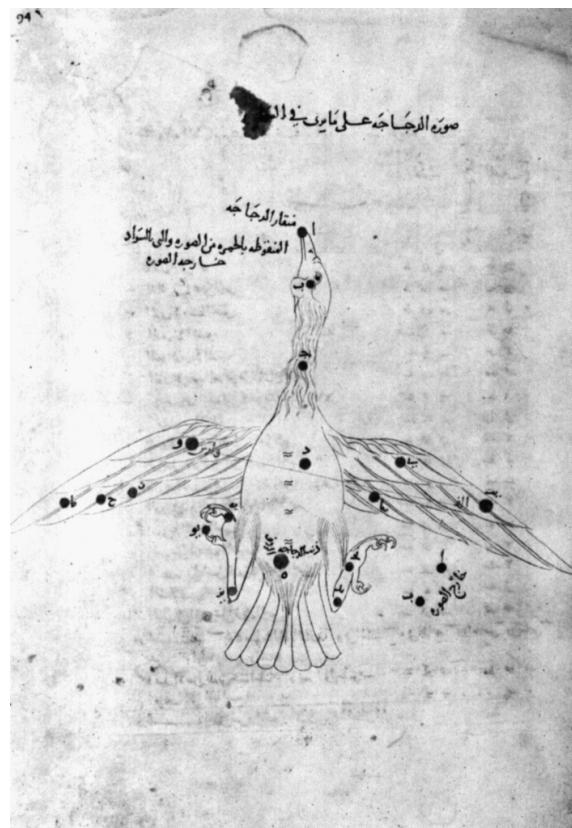


Fig. 29 Falcon breast: Wide at the center and narrow at the edges.

A drawing of a falcon beast as demonstrated in the context of astronomy in the Book of Fixed Stars, Baghdad, 1009/10, written by al-Sūfī for the Buyid Sultan Adud al-Dawlah. The upward flying position of the falcon exposes the beautiful shape of its breast – wide in the middle and narrow at its edges. The shape had been implied into anklets having a typical falcon breast shape – wide at its center and narrow at the edges as demonstrated in Figs. 30, 1.

The Bodleian Library, Oxford. Marsh 144, fol. 4.

Ink: Red Color.

Courtesy of The Bodleian Library, Oxford.

four and a quarter *kirsh* (Fig. 28 lines 4 & 9). The fact that the description is very short by both, means that everyone in the Jewish community knew it at the time. Hence, there was no need to give more details rather its name, weight and price, for its identification.

That also means that 'כ'ל לאכ'ל had a past at the Jewish community outside Radā' and it was a well known type. It is therefore reasonable to assume that its origin at Yemen was Radā', or Aden. Radā' was a five day walking south east to Ṣan'ā and three days walking to Aden. However, the basic fact is that we are lack of information how it looked like, in spite of the fact that it was very expensive and heavy. The only information on the Jewish 'כ'ל לאכ'ל is much earlier and not from Yemen, but from the Cairo Geniza records. From the Cairo Geniza documentation we are familiar with a type of anklets, named after the breast of the falcon, *Khālakhil sadr al-Bāz*. As Goitein showed, at the beginning of the eleventh century, *Khālakhil sadr al-Bāz* were usually of gold and were the most prestigious jewellery items at the Cairo Geniza community (Goitein 1983, iv: 200, 221).

The origin of the name comes after observation of falcons (כ'ל al-Bāz) in-flight and the long tradition of the falcon as a healing symbol in ancient Egyptian art. The falcon appears also in the context of astronomy, which was the most important science of the period. The upward flying position of the falcon exposes the beautiful shape of its breast – wide in the middle and narrow at its edges (Fig. 29). The shape had been implied into



Fig. 30 Buyid *Khalākil* (pl.).

A drawing of a pair of Buyid *Kalākil* (pl.) as adorned by Andromed, as demonstrated in the context of astronomy in the Book of Fixed Stars, Baghdad, 1009/10, written by al-Sūfi for the Buyid Sultan Adud al-Dawlah.

The Bodleian Library, Oxford. Marsh 144, fol. 167.  
Ink: Red Color.

Courtesy of The Bodleian Library, Oxford.

anklets having a typical falcon breast shape – wide at its center and narrow at the edges. That is clearly shown by a pair of anklets, presented in the context of astronomy, in the Book of Fixed Stars, Baghdad, 1009/10, written by al-Sūfi for the Buyid Sultan Adud al-Dawlah (Fig. 30). A single silver anklet of the type from the period had been survived from Persia, now in The Metropolitan Museum, New York. It shows a perfect match to al-Sūfi's drawing (Fig. 31). The match shows an anklet in the shape of a perfect circle. It is closed, wide in the center and narrow at the edges. A hollow big hemisphere is exactly in the center, combining the two narrow edges to a circle. It has almost no decoration, as its focus is on creating a perfect three-dimensional circle. As Liveo showed, geometry in general and those of three-dimensional geometry equilateral structures, in particular, was an intellectual challenge of the Buyid sultans of Baghdad (Liveo 2003: 99–101). Thus, three-dimensional geometry equilateral structures had been implied into silversmiths as a science-art cooperation. As Jenkins showed, the Cairo Geniza documentation is an important means to identify not only Jewish jewels of the period, but Islamic jewels, as well (Jenkins 1997: 418c). It is therefore important to mention that, as far as it is known at this moment of the research, ostriches and or fishes are not part of the milieu of the Cairo Geniza records. As far as I know, none of the survived anklets of the period, silver or gold, in museums has no ostriches or fishes decoration at all. Inspite of the fact that museums



**Fig. 31** Silver Faradat Khalākil (s.): Single anklet.

A silver single anklet of the time of the Cairo Geniza community. In the beginning of the eleventh century, in the Cairo Geniza community, *Khālakhil* were usually of gold and were the most prestigious jewellery items.

This specific anklet is in the shape of a perfect circle. It is closed, wide in the center and narrow at the edges. A hollow big hemisphere is exactly in the center, combining the two narrow edges to a circle. It has almost no decoration, as its focus is on creating a perfect three-dimensional circle, as geometry in general and three-dimensional geometry equilateral structures, in particular, was an intellectual challenge to imply on jewels.

The anklet is made of a solid sheet of silver.

Greater Iran, 11th century.

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Everett Birch, 1981 (1981.232.4).

Photographed by Warren Bennett.

Courtesy of The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

5 The Mawz'a exile (1678–1680) was a decree of transferring all Jews of Yemen to Mawz'a in the Tihamā in south west Yemen. It is known by Jews of Yemen, in Judeo-Yemenite, as *Sarchat Mawz'a* (The walk to Mawz'a). As it is not our subject here, only two sources are mentioned out of the many on this subject: Qorach 1954: 9–12; Shavit, Lockwood & Serjeant 1983: 392b.

6 For the map, done in July 1763 by Carsten Niebuhr, showing Gā' bīr al-'azab outside San'ā, marked as "Bir el Assab", see: Berger 2009: 93/15.

show these anklets as Islamic artifacts, it is not clear at all, was it in use by Muslim, or by Jewish women.

However, Yemen after 1680, is a test case to a clear border of separation between silversmith for Jews versus silversmith for Muslims, in both cases by Jewish silversmiths. It had started as a decree going with the reverse of the Mawz'a decree preventing Jews to leave in towns only in the outskirts.<sup>5</sup> As Berger showed, it had continued with silversmiths of *קָאע בֵּר אַלְעַזָּב* Gā' bīr al-'azab, the new neighborhood established by Jews outside San'ā in 1680, as result of that decree, who preferred to make jewels at home at Gā' bīr al-'azab, for Jews only, rather to work at the silver market in San'ā for everyone.<sup>6</sup>

That was already the actual situation upon the nomination of Rabbi Yihye Zaluh *רְבִי יְהִיָּה צָלָה* as the supreme leader of the Jewish court at Gā' bīr al-'azab in 1758 (known after his death as MaHaRiTZ). He set out rulings on the issue of the separation of the Jewish silversmith market from the Muslim market segment, here and there by Jewish silversmiths. The target of his ruling was that the separation must be total, to prevent any

involvements of any kind by Muslims in silversmith work for Jews. As his ruling was synchronized with Qānūn Ṣan'ā Law, the Zaydi Imams law from the begining of the eighteenth century, he assured that no Jewish silversmith mistakenly would violate Qānūn Ṣan'ā Law. Such violation meant a collective punishment against the Jewish community, as that was the way of the Zaydi Imams. His law was the law of all Jews of Yemen. It was valid two hundred years and cut off after the big waves of *Alia* of Jews of Yemen to the State of Israel in ca. 1950, as there were no Jewish silversmiths any more at Jemen to imply it (pages 96–100 at: <http://www.orberger.co.il/phd/>; Berger 2009: 91–94).

Three points emerge from that. First, we may assume that ostriches and fishes show an iconography unique to Jewish *Khalākil* from Yemen. Second, the innovation had been occured sometime between the Cairo Geniza community and the “Ostriches *Khalākil*” of 1771/2 by Sālem Kasil (Figs. 31, 1–5). Third, the direction of that innovation was probably from Aden, via Radā' to Gā' bīr al-'azab.

It should be also mentioned that fishes were an important subject in the life of the Jewish community of Yemen. As Rabbi Sa'id Sa'di רַבִּי סָעִד צָעִדִי of Gā' bīr al-'azab, who wrote on Jewish life there in 1717–1725 showed, the Judeo-Yemenite name of fishes is חַטִּף *hutī*. Also, that Jews of Aden were well known professional fishermen, at the time, and a decree to fish on Saturday, the holy day of the Jews, had come upon them. Also, that Jews of Mocha on the Red Sea, had experienced an ecological disaster, which carried to the shore dead fishes and the stink of that struck them almost a month (Qāfīh 1957).

That is not the first time we heard on fishes by Jews of Yemen. As Tobi showed, Abraham ben Chalfon, the Adeni Jewish poet of the twelfth century or the beginning of the thirteenth century, wrote a Judeo-Yemenite poem on a whale swept to the port of Aden as an exeleration of nature created by God (Tobi 1991: 159–162). That may leads to interpret fishes of folios 38v., 39r. and 152 r. of the “Fishes Ṣan'ā Pentateuch” as whales (Figs. 13–15). In Jewish thought a whale represents the future Jewish Messianic Era, as according to Babylonian Talmud a whale is the meal that would be prepared by God to the rights when the Messia would arrive. As Roussin showed, a whale in Jewish art of Beit She'arim (State of Israel, Galilee) from early Byzantine period at Israel, presents a salvation iconography (Roussin 1981: pp. 6–8). As Muchawsky-Schnapper showed, the Beit She'arim's Nacropolis proves Jews from Yemen had come to bury there in the third century CE (Muchawsky-Schnapper 2000: 13). Hence, the connections were not necessarily limited only to burial matters, but to Jewish thought and art as its means of visual communication.

## Fishes as the Rasulid brand of Aden

As Sadek showed, fishes are found on coins from Aden dating from the rule of the Rasulid Sultans of Yemen al-Mujāhid 'Alī (r. 1321–1363) and al-Afdal Isma'il (r. 1363–1376) (Sadek 1991: 279/88). That presents fishes as an official brand of Aden under the Rasulid sultans of Yemen (r. 1229–1454), who ruled Yemen from Ta'izz district at south west Yemen. As an official monetary mean, fishes coins spread easily at Yemen as being in use by all. As so, fishes and its several art formulas had turned to very common brand at day life and the economy of Yemen at the time (Figs. 32–36). That arises the question was the art formulas of fishes on Rasulid coins a source of inspiration for the Jewish scribe of the “Fishes Ṣan'ā Pentateuch”, 1469 (Figs. 13–15, 32–36)?

It should be mentioned that the “Fishes Ṣan'ā Pentateuch”, was scribed fifteen years latter to the end of the Rasulid rule and about a century latter to the struck of the fishes coins. But, as Nützel showed, even in the second half of the nineteenth century Rasulid fishes coins were available to get at Yemen, and as result Eduard Glazer (1855–1908) brought some with him to Europe (Nützel 1891: 5) (Fig. 32).<sup>7</sup> Lane-Poole proved the

<sup>7</sup> I would like to thank Mary Hinton, the librarian, Department Coins & medals, the British Museum, London for her kind help to find the book, as well as, to Prof. Stefan Heidemann, Jena University, Germany, Islamic Department, for sending me the pdf. version of the book.



Fig. 32 Swimming fishes on Rasulid silver coin.

The art formula of Rasulid swimming fishes showing a couplet of dynamic twisted swimming fishes in a circle composition.  
A Rasulid silver coin (reverse).  
The coin bears a mint stamp and is dated.  
Mint is illegible, 1384.  
Photo after: Nützel 1891: 88.

same idea by presenting Rasulid fishes coins, nowadays in the British Museum, London, which had been brought to England via The English East India Company (Lane-Poole 1880 x: plate xxiv/360–20/360–52/360–54) (Figs. 33–35).<sup>8</sup> Heidemann proved the same idea by presenting Rasulid fishes coins available to get at Yemen centuries after its struck, nowadays in Jena University Germany (Fig. 36).<sup>9</sup> The point that emerges from that is that at the time, the Jewish scribe of the “Fishes Ṣan’ā Pentateuch”, 1469, could easily utilized the art formulas of fishes on Rasulid coins for his needs. There are two art formulas of fishes on Rasulid silver coins. The one shows a couplet of dynamic twisted swimming fishes as a circle composition (Figs. 32, 33, 36). The other shows a single fish, pointed either to the right or to the left (Figs. 34–35).

However, the scribe of the “Fishes Ṣan’ā Pentateuch” did not copied the Rasulid fishes, but rather upgraded it into a unique Jewish brand by making some art manipulations on it. As for example, he exaggerated the fishes size, multiplied its number and created its outline to be made of Hebrew biblical text (Figs. 13–15). As Farber showed, the Hebrew biblical text outline is a unique Jewish Art form, already in use for illuminating Hebrew bibles of the Cairo Geniza community (Ferber 1977: 12–18). In addition, the Jewish scribe, turned the circle composition into an ellipse one (Fig. 14). He did that by moving each of the two swimming fishes a little bit to the sides. Alleged, a little change, but that had turned the close composition of a circle, not only into an open one, but also, to a much dynamic and less formal, as well as, the fishes to vivid (Figs. 13, 14).

On the other hand, we may assume some other two hypothesis. The first, an earlier Hebrew illuminated bible, having fishes as its art program have been existed at Aden, much before the Rasulid period. As Berger showed, Hebrew illuminated bibles from Yemen are earliest to the Rasulid rule over Yemen (1229–1454), as for example, the earliest known Ṣan’ā Pentateuch, 1206, had been scribed and illuminated under the Ayyubid rule over Yemen and theirs art influence on Jewish scribes there (Berger 2010). The second, an earliest non Yemeni art prototype of fishes had been already known at Aden, since the period of the Cairo Geniza community, at least. As the Metropolitan Museum of Art showed, a Chinese art prototype of a triplet curving swimming lucky fishes, presenting an endless energy, as painted on bowls, had a great influence on Islamic art of Persia and Egypt (O’Neill 2000: 74, 75). It is known that Chinese luxurious products, such as painted porcelain, are well known from the Cairo Geniza community records and had arrived Egypt via the port of Aden during the east west trade of the Fatimid and the Ayyubid periods.

As Porter showed, luxurious artifacts had been imported from Egypt for and or by the Rasulid sultans of Yemen in the thirteenth century and artists were imported from Egypt and Syria to Ta’izz district for Rasulid Art projects (Porter 1998a: 232–235; Porter 1998b: 91–93). A fishes example for such an imported art is the brass tray of the Rasulid Sultan of Yemen, Mu’ayyad Da’ud (r. 1296–1321), nowadays in the Metropolitan Museum, New

8 I would like to thank Dr. Vesta Curtis, curator, Department Coins & Medals, The British Museum, London and all her team for their kind help while examining Rasulid coins in the Department, in July 2008 and 2009.

9 I would like to give special thanks to Prof. Stefan Heidemann, Jena University, Germany, Islamic Department, for his kind help and generosity by sending me photos of Rasulid coins showing fishes and ostrich, he had photographed in 2003 at the Islamic Department of Jena University (Figs. 36, 42). For one of the ostriches coins see: Heidemann 2004.



**Fig. 33** Swimming fishes on Rasulid silver coin (right).

The art formula of Rasulid swimming fishes showing a couplet of dynamic twisted swimming fishes in a circle composition.  
 A Rasulid silver coin.  
 The coin bears a mint stamp and is dated.  
 Mint: Aden, 1343.  
 Photo After: Lane-Poole 1880: x / pl. xxiv / 360-20.  
 The British Museum, London.



**Fig. 34** Swimming fish on Rasulid silver coin (right).

Art formula of Rasulid single swimming fish pointed to the right.  
 A Rasulid silver coin.  
 The coin bears a mint stamp and is dated.  
 Mint: Aden, 1374.  
 Photo After: Lane-Poole 1880: x / pl. xxiv / 360-54.  
 The British Museum, London.



**Fig. 35** Swimming fish on Rasulid silver coin (right).

Art formula of Rasulid single swimming fish pointed to the left.  
 A Rasulid silver coin.  
 The coin bears a mint stamp and is dated.  
 Mint: Aden, 1372.  
 Photo After: Lane-Poole 1880: x / pl. xxiv / 360-52.  
 The British Museum, London.



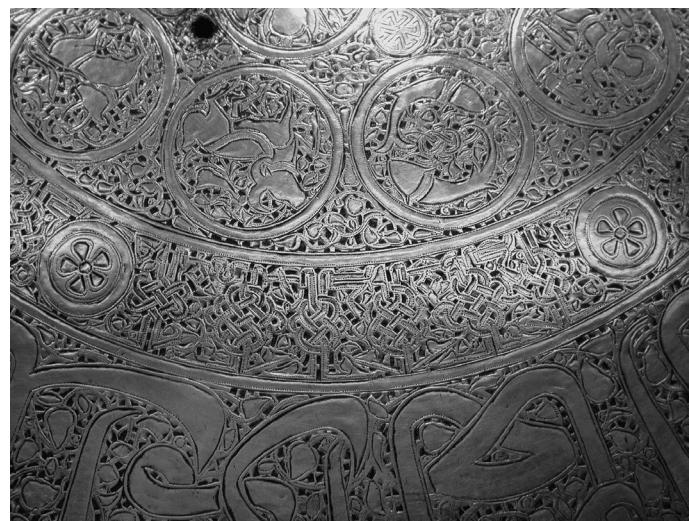
**Fig. 36** Swimming fishes on Rasulid silver coin (r. 1229–1454).

Two art formula of Rasulid swimming fishes. The one shows a couplet of dynamic twisted swimming fishes in a circle composition. The other shows a single fish. The single fish is pointed, either to the right, or to the left.  
 Rasulid fishes silver coin.  
 Photographed in 2003 by Stefan Heideman.  
 Jena University, Germany, Islamic Department, OMJ-2003-31-014\_reverse.  
 Courtesy of Stefan Heidemann, Jena University, Germany, Islamic Department.



**Fig. 37** Rasulid fishes as a zodiac sign.

Brass tray inlaid with silver – A detail.  
Inscribed with the name of the Rasulid Sultan of Yemen Muayyad Dawud (r. 1296–1321).  
This couplet of swimming fishes in a composition of a circle, is from the central roundel of the tray, containing a representation of the seven planets and the twelve signs of the Zodiac.  
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Edward C. Moore Collection, Bequest of Edward C. Moore, 891(91.1.605).  
Diameter: 70 cm.  
Condition: Nowadays, the silver of the fishes is off. Only the chiseled preparations work in the brass for the silver foils is shown and present the couplet of swimming fishing.  
Photographed by Warren Bennett.  
Courtesy of The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.



**Fig. 38** Rasulid fishes as a zodiac sign.

Another detail belonging to Fig. 37.

York, (Figs. 37, 38).<sup>10</sup> Here, the fishes art prototype is of a zodiac sign. As Livio showed, astronomy had been entered Islam from the classical world, as result of adopting what had been left out of the classical science (Livio 2003: 98–99). The idea of fishes as a zodiac sign and its art prototype includes.

Two points emerges from that. First, that Jewish scribes had a first hand knowledge with the arts at Yemen. Second, that Jews of Yemen, while walked to Mawz'a in 1678, and back in 1680, as well as, while staying at Mawz'a at Ta'izz district, had a first hand knowledge with what had been left from the Rasulid art at Ta'izz district and with Rasulid fishes coins there.

### Was ostrich the brand of Yemen?

10 I would like to thank the Islamic Department of The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, for their kind help, especially to Navina Haidar, Dr. Stefano Carboni, Warren Bennett and Anick Des Roches.

Everything mentioned above, regarding the Rasulid fishes coins, repeats regarding the Rasulid ostrich coins (Figs. 39–42). The only exception is that ostriches, in contrast to fishes, do not appear on imported artifacts made for the Rasulid sultans of Yemen. The ostrich is a local Yemeni brand, known already before the Rasulid rule over Yemen, as shown at the “Ostriches Pentateuch” and the “Earliest Aden Pentateuch”, both from the Ayyubid period at Yemen (Figs. 6–9, 24). Hence, Sālem Kasil, the Jewish silversmith of the “Ostriches *Khalākīl*” from 1771/2 could utilized the ostrich, either as a Jewish



360-80

**Fig. 39** Running ostrich? Or, ostrich freeing its feathers?  
On Rasulid silver coin (right).

An art formula combining together the running ostrich with freeing the white tail feathers of the ostrich male, as demonstrates in nature in Fig. 44. Whilst the running ostrich is shown in profile, the tail feathers are shown in en-face. The focus is on the spiral effect of the edge of the tail feathers, which are shown here one by one.

Rasulid silver coin.

The coin bears a mint stamp and is dated.

Mint obliterated, 1403.

Photo After: Lane-Poole 1880: x / pl. xxv / 360–80.

The British Museum, London.



**Fig. 40** Ostrich freeing its feathers on Rasulid silver coin.

An art formula showing a male ostrich freeing its white tail feathers, as demonstrates in nature in Fig. 44. The tail feathers are shown in en-face. The focus is on the spiral effect of the edge of the tail feathers. The ostrich itself is shown in profile.

Rasulid ostrich silver coin.

The coin bears a mint stamp and is dated.

Mint: Zabid, Ta'izz district, 1404.

Photo after: Nützel 1891: 63.



**Fig. 41** Ostrich hunt by a falcon on Rasulid silver coin.

The running ostrich is shown in profile and the focus is on its legs.

The falcon that dives over it is shown from birds-eye view.

Rasulid ostrich silver coin.

The coin bears a mint stamp and is dated.

Mint: Zabid, Ta'izz district, 1384.

Photo after: Nützel 1891: 57.



**Fig. 42** Running ostrich? Or, ostrich freeing its feathers? On Rasulid silver coin (r. 1229–1454).

An art formula combining together the running ostrich with freeing the white tail feathers of the ostrich male. Whilst the running ostrich is shown in profile, the tail feathers are shown in en-face. The focus is on the spiral effect of the edge of the tail feathers, which are shown here one by one.

Rasulid ostrich silver coin.

Photographed in 2003 by Stefan Heideman.

Jena University, Germany, Islamic Department, OMJ-2003-31-096\_reverse.

Courtesy of Stefan Heidemann, Jena University, Germany, Islamic Department.

brand, or as a Rasulid brand as his art prototype, or both. The question that arises is therefore, did an ancient archetype had been existed at Yemen as a mutual prototype for both?

Ma'rib, the capital of ancient Sheba, at a distance of about 160 kilometer east to Ṣan'ā, provides such ancient archetype (henceforth, the Ma'rib archetype) (Fig. 43). The Ma'rib archetype shows a group of running ostriches as a relief frieze on a huge stone, nowadays out of its context, as had been photographed in 1976 by Christian Robin and dated by him



**Fig. 43** The Ma'rib ostriches archetype: The running ostriches.

Relief frieze of running ostriches on a huge stone. Nowadays out of its context (one of four, all of them with relief frieze of running ostriches). Ma'rib, the capital of ancient Sheba, about 160 kilometer east to San'ā, Yemen. 750 BC. Photographed in 1976 by Christian Robin. Courtesy of Christian Robin.

to ca. 750 BC.<sup>11</sup> No colors. It is important to mention that the original context was a building, probably a temple. As so, it was, probably, at the top and was looked at from down up, rather straight ahead as we look at it today. Hence, it was intentionally made as shorting. Therefore, the proportions we see today were made of some exaggeration, in order to see it properly while looking at it from down up in its original context, at the time. It should be mentioned that running includes in the mating situation of ostriches as well. Thus, running ostriches indicate fertility as well.

The Ma'rib archetype shows the running ostriches only from the side. No en-face presentation. As so, all the features, already mentioned up, exist here very clearly: the running spread legs, the curved throat, the raising up wing, the elongated horizontal body having the closed tail as its extension (Figs. 45, 6–9, 24, 16–18, 26, 27, 39–42). The only exceptions are those of the Jewish Hebrew illuminated bibles, which are: colors, the swelling throat, the eliminated body and freeing the tail in profile (Figs. 6–9, 24). Hence, The Ma'rib archetype versus the two Jewish prototypes of the "Ostriches Pentateuch" and the "Earliest Aden Pentateuch" from the end of the twelfth century shows the Jewish innovation in four: The first is color. Especially the swell red throat and the red legs, as well as, the black color of the feathers of the male ostrich (Fig. 8). The second and the third are the swell and curved position of the red throat and the elimination of the body (Figs. 6–9). The fourth is freeing the tail as shown in profile (Fig. 24).

On the other hand, the Ma'rib archetype versus the Rasulid prototypes shows the Rasulid innovation in two: The first is the en-face positioning while freeing the tail which puts it just in the center of the composition in order to emphasize the beautiful white feathers of the male tail in contrast to its black feathers (Figs. 39, 40, 44, 42, 10, 11). It should be mentioned that the female has no black feathers at all, only brown (Fig. 12). The en-face positioning of freeing the tail was very important to the Rasulid as it is on the coins, in-spite of the fact that there is no color on the coins to emphasize it, all of it a silver coin (Figs. 39, 40, 42, 44). In order to emphasize the freeing feathers, the delicate sepa-

11 I would like to thank Prof. Christian Robin, Collège de France, Paris, for advising me regarding ostriches reliefs on ancient temples of Sheba and providing me with his digital files of the four ostriches reliefs as a collection of four huge stones he had photographed in 1976. In 2010 he was a member of the group of "Ancient Arabia and its Relations with the Surrounding Cultures", The Institute for Advanced Studies (IAS) of Jerusalem, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem ([http://www.as.huji.ac.il/research\\_groups/arabia/](http://www.as.huji.ac.il/research_groups/arabia/)) Prof. Christian Robin dates the four ostriches reliefs to ca. 750 BC.

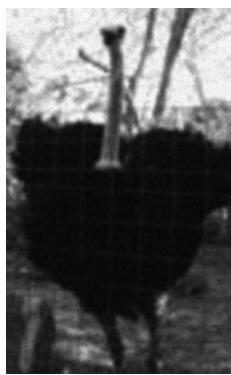


Fig. 44 A male ostrich freeing its feathers.

This non mating male ostrich is recognized by its black feathers and the white feathers of the tail.

The white freeing feathers of the tail show spiral at the edges.

The freeing white feathers of the tail, especially the spiral effect of its edge, had been imitated on Rasulid silver coin as clearly shown on Fig. 42.

Whilst the free spiral feathers of the tail on the Rasulid coins are shown, one by one, in en-face, the running ostrich itself is shown in profile.

rated curving edges of the white feathers of the male tail are shown one by one. The second Rasulid prototype is the hunted ostrich (Fig. 41). At Yemen, in contrast to ancient Egypt, hunting an ostrich was done by riding on a horse with the aid of a falcon. Thus, the hunted ostrich and the falcon are shown on coins (Figs. 41, 19–22).

All that provides an explanation for the varied ostrich presentations of Jewish artifacts of the eighteenth century (Figs 16–18, 26, 27). It also provides an explanation for the unique body-less ostrich presentation by Sālem Kasil, the Jewish silversmith of the “Ostriches Khalākil” from 1771/2, who had turned the pair of anklets to a body-less ostrich, by executing only its head and the curved swell throat (Figs. 1–4). The variety, yet similarity, shows that ostriches were not only a very well known brand in the Jewish community at Radā' and Gā' bīr al-'azab in the eighteenth century, but a continuation to the the Ma'rib archetype of ca. 750 BC, as well.

The Ma'rib archetype is supported by a latter variation, dated by Christian Robin to 700–640 BC, nowadays in the National Museum of Ḩan'ā (Fig. 45).<sup>12</sup> Here, the relief shows two running groups of ostriches in juxtaposing and symmetry, as well as, just in the center, a meeting of a couplet of ostriches in what is named in the research as the kicking gesture.<sup>13</sup> However, in the light of the mating dance, it looks to me as a mating gesture as well. Christian Robin assumes ostriches to be a fertility symbol in the context of the kingdom of Sheba.<sup>14</sup> The point that emerges from that is that fertility is the common denominator of the Ma'rib archetype, including its variation, as well as, all the Jewish presentations at Yemen, of which the “Ostriches Khalākil” of 1771/2 by Sālem Kasil, is our subject and our starting point (Figs. 43, 45, 10, 11, 1–5).

As Potts showed, the running ostrich was a well known art archetype in Arabian peninsula already in the early second millennium BC (Potts 2001: 185/2, 3). However, the art formula of the early second millennium BC shows no fertility features at all. Hence, the Ma'rib archetype is the earliest mutual art archetype, for both the Jewish and the Rasulid prototypes at Yemen, as well as for the “Ostriches Khalākil” of 1771/2 by Sālem Kasil (Figs. 43, 45, 1–5).

### What Qānūn Ḩan'ā Law has to say regarding anklets?

As Serjeant showed, the legal document that had fixed all the rules at the market (suq) of San'ā was Qānūn Ḩan'ā Law, that the Zaydi imams had instated at the beginning of the eighteenth century, not long after the reverse of *Srht Mawza* (Serjeant R.B. & al-Akwa'Ismā'il 1983: 179, 183b, 184a).

Qānūn Ḩan'ā Law had set the obligation to stamp each piece of jewellery with *tābi'*, which is the official stamp of the Imam, but, it was not mentioned where it was done, who was responsible to stamp the jewellery, the cost, or the language. As we can see, it is clear

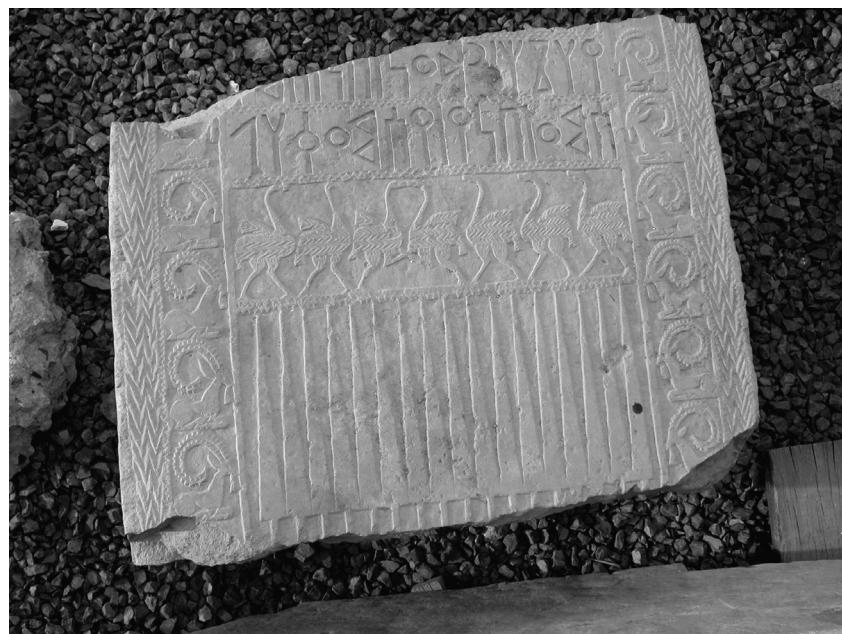
12 I would like to thank Prof. Christian Robin, Collège de France, Paris, for providing me the photo. Also, I would like to thank Dr. Paul Yule, Ruprecht-Karls University, Heidelberg, Germany, who kindly sent me his copy of the following book: Mounir Arbach et Remy Audouin, *Nouvelles découvertes archéologiques dans le Jawf (République du Yémen). Opération de sauvetage franco-yéménite du site d'as-Sawdā' (l'antique Nashshān)*.

Temple intra-muros I, Rapport préliminaire, Centre français d'archéologie et de sciences sociales de Sanaa, 2004. A black/white photo of Fig. 45 is presenting and marked as Fig. XXX. An identical artifact is Fig. XXXI, also in black/white.

13 For the typology of ostriches, in general, and for ‘the kicking gesture’ positioning in particular, see the digital version of *Iconography of Deities and Demons in the Ancient Near East* at: <http://www.religions-wissenschaft.uzh.ch/idd/index.php>

I would like to thank Dr. Tallay Ornan, Archaeology, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Mount Scopus, with whom I consulted regarding ostriches in the Ancient World. Dr. Tallay Ornan directed me to Prof. Keel Othmar, who kindly passed my request to Jürg Eggler, University of Fribourg, Department of Biblical Studies, who kindly e-mailed me the link of the above mentioned IDD article. I would like to thank all of them for their kind and helpful help and information.

14 I would like to thank Prof. Christian Robin, Collège de France, Paris, for sharing with me his ideas regarding ostriches in Yemen.



**Fig. 45** The Ma'rib ostriches archetype variation: The mating gesture.

Relief frieze of two symmetry juxtaposed groups of running ostriches on a huge stone. Just in the center, a meeting of a couplet of ostriches in what is looked to me as a mating gesture in the context of the mating dance of the ostrich male, trying to persuade a female to mate with him. Ma'rib, the capital of ancient Sheba, about 160 kilometer east to Ṣan'ā, Yemen. Nowadays out of its context. 700–640 BC.

Photographed in 1976 by Christian Robin.

Courtesy of Christian Robin. Nowadays, in the National Museum of Ṣan'ā.

that *fābi'* was in Arabic and it had included the year and the name of the ruling Imam. That means that as a rule, the *fābi'* was changed every year or upon the change of the Imam. In addition, Qānūn Ṣan'ā Law had fixed the obligation of each silversmith to chisel his name on each piece of jewellery. Jewish silversmiths wrote their names in Hebrew as they were interested to identify their work, which already had an excellent reputation. It is important to mention that at the beginning of the eighteenth century Muslim silversmiths did not have any sort of exclusivity in the silver market – *suq al-fiddah* – at the *suq* of Ṣan'ā. As Berger showed, Qānūn Ṣan'ā Law had fixed the rules of the profits of the silversmiths. Clarity was the key word. The rules were very clear, simple and easy to calculate by three features: weight, profit and purity of the silver (pp. 85–90 at: <http://www.oraberger.co.il/phd/>).

### Weight

The weight of the silver jewel was the most important feature, as the profit of the silversmith was fixed per each standard weight unit of the jewel. That standard weight was named *waqiyah* and it was equal to 29.7 grams. That means that the profit of the silversmith was fixed for each *waqiyah* of the jewel. As so, the first interest of each silversmith was to create the heaviest and largest jewel he could. Hence, weight was the law and as a result the style.

### Profit

Under the weight as the first feature, five other levels of profit of the silversmith were scaled from the most expensive down:

The first group was defined for *Zar'*, *Duqqah*, *Labbah*. The profit of the silversmith for *Zar'*, *Duqqah*, *Labbah* was a quarter of *qirsh* (the local silver coin) per each *waqiyah*.

*Duqqah* was defined as a 'hollow ball'. That very basic archetype was not limited to a certain shape, size, decoration, combination. The Jewish silversmith had tried to make it, by the law, the biggest he could in order to make it the heaviest for a jewel, as well as, for the Jewish finials for Torah scroll (called by their Hebrew name *Rimonim* – pomegranates). Hence, *Duqqah* was the Islamic law and as a result the style.

*Labbah* was defined as a choker. The Jewish silversmith tried to make it the widest he could and as three-dimensional as possible in order to make it the heaviest possible. Hence, *Labbah* was the Islamic law and as a result the style. None have survived from the eighteenth century.

The second group was defined for *ta'dīl*. *Ta'dīl* was an official silver ingot cast out of specific European silver coins authorized by the Imam and specifically listed in Qānūn San'ā Law. *Ta'dīl* was a standard ingot in the weight of one *waqīyyah* (29.7 grams). The profit of the silversmith was a quarter of *qirsh* per each *waqīyyah*. Qānūn San'ā Law had fixed that only silversmiths are allowed to buy *ta'dīl* from other authorized silversmiths and that was done only at *suq al-fiddah* (the silver market) of San'ā.

The third group was defined for *maṭrūq*. *Maṭrūq* was defined as a technique of hammering a flat solid platform of silver making it three-dimensional for ornamental weapons as daggers, swords and guns. The profit of the silversmith was an eighth of *qirsh* and four *buqshahs* per each *waqīyyah*.

The forth group was defined for *al-ṣabb al-abyad* of *Maqṣarah* and *'Aṣāwir*. *Al-ṣabb al-abyad* means white casting. The white color was specifically mentioned to emphasize that the casting was of silver. *Maqṣarah* was the cast buckle of the dagger belt. *'Aṣāwir* were twisted cast bracelets. The profit of the silversmith was an eighth of *qirsh* per each *waqīyyah*. Hence, *al-ṣabb al-abyad*, *Maqṣarah* and *'Aṣāwir* were the law and as a result the style.

The fifth group was defined for *tilā*. *Tilā* was defined as gilding over silver. That technique stood by itself. The profit of the silversmith was comprised by all the following three features together: The cost of the gold needed to gild the specific jewel, the cost of the mercury for the same purpose and the cost of the gold as a profit. There was no gilding without mercury, which was an imported material, usually from Europe, and therefore expensive.

### Purity

The target of the Imam was to create a confidence in the expensive metals, of which the focus here is on silver. Therefore he had set up an uncompromising system to supervise the purity of the silver. By that he guaranteed lack of forgery. As is known, silver is an element and appears in nature in its purity phase as a white shining and beautiful bright metal. A precious metal that does not oxidize and does not changes its white color. In contrast, while creating silver alloy by smelting together silver and copper, new qualities are achieved. There is no doubt that silver alloy is less expensive than pure silver, as well as, less beautiful. The copper inside the silver alloy is oxidized. As result, there is no longer the white color, but different degrees of grays. Purity is therefore, the relation of the pure silver vis-à-vis copper. The more pure silver the component contains, the more expensive it is. Qānūn San'ā Law had fixed pure silver as a grade of itself and in addition to it four more grades of silver alloys:

The first purity group was *mukhlaṣ*. *Mukhlaṣ* was defined as pure silver. Qānūn San'ā Law was extremely strict regarding *mukhlaṣ*. It had fixed *tābi'* and the name of the silversmith on it and also chiseled the word *mukhlaṣ* as well.

The second purity group was *ta'dīl*. *Ta'dīl* was defined as an official alloy ingot in the weight of one *waqīyyah*, cast out of specific European coins authorized by the Imam and specifically listed in Qānūn San'ā Law. All the authorized European money had the same purity. As *ta'dīl* had the protection of the Imām, Qānūn San'ā Law had fixed only *tābi'* on silver jewellery made of *ta'dīl*. The silversmith did not have to chisel his name on it. That provides the explanation to silver jewellery with no name of the Jewish silversmith on.

The third purity group was *nuṣṭī*. *Nuṣṭī* was defined as an alloy made of half pure silver and half copper. Qānūn San'ā Law had fixed *tābi'* and the name of the silversmith chiseled on the jewellery.



**Fig. 46** Muslim women adorned with jewels at Mocha.

Black-white etching.  
Mocha, the Red Sea,  
west Yemen.

1762.

The etching was done by George Baurfeind, the artist of the Denish Expedition to Yemen (1762/1763), at Mocha in 1762.  
Photo after: Niebuhr 1994.

The fourth purity group was *rub'ī*. *Rub'ī* was defined as an alloy made of quarter pure silver and three quarters of copper. Qānūn San'ā Law had fixed *tābi'* and the name of the silversmith chiseled on the jewellery. As a rule, everything under *rub'ī* was considered as a fraud.

The fifth purity group was recycling. In addition to the above mentioned, Qānūn San'ā law had reluctance a norm that had no official name to create a new jewellery piece out of broken or old jewellery that the client had brought in person to the silversmith. It was up to the silversmith to decide whether he agreed to recycle these jewels or not. However, if he had agreed, it was up to him to examine the purity and not to accept less than *rub'ī*. On the new piece jewel, the name of the silversmith was chiseled as for the law, but without *tābi'*. That means that the new jewel piece did not have the protection of the Imam and only the silversmith was responsible for it.

The point that emerges from that is that Qānūn San'ā Law, which is the Islamic law, is mute regarding anklets in general and *Khalākil* in particular. That means that anklets were not adorned by Muslim women and had been executed by Jewish silversmith for Jewish women exclusively as a Jewish jewel. That is supported by the absence of anklets from the only visual documentation of Islamic women adorned with jewels at Yemen, done in 1762 at Mocha by George Baurfeind, the artist of the Denish expedition to Yemen (Fig. 46). This visual documentation was taken few decades after the lawsuit of the Jewish Gāna bint al-Zabib from Rādā' regarding her jewels, including כ'לאקל *Khalākil* (Fig. 28), as well as, a decade before the Ostriches *Khalākil* of 1771/2 by Sālem Kasil, the Jewish silversmith of Gā' bīr al-'azab (Figs 1–5).

Some explanation is needed, therefore, on the relationship between the Jewish silversmith and Qānūn San'ā Law (Chapter one in <http://www.oraberger.co.il/phd/>).

The focus of Qānūn San'ā Law was law and economy. No limitations were made on Jewish silversmiths regarding art models. That was valid for Jewish silversmiths working

at Gā' bīr al-'azab for Jews exclusively, as well as, for Jewish silversmiths working for Muslims at *suq al-fiddah* at the *suq* of Ṣan'ā. It should be emphasized that Qānūn Ṣan'ā Law was more flexible than the Ottoman Law, which was the law before the Zaydi Law. The Ottoman controlled Yemen from Ṣan'ā for a hundred years (r. 1538/9–1629) and forced the Ottoman Law on Yemen. As part of that law they had limited silversmiths work only in the market. That was for the sake of supervision on the precious metals – gold and silver – as it is known from such Law in the goldsmiths market in Jerusalem under their control (Cohen 1982: 48).

However, as Qānūn Ṣan'ā Law, which was the new law of the Zaydi Imams, had no restrictions neither on the work place, nor on art models, Jewish silversmiths were free to use any art sources they wished. Therefore it is clear that, as Jews were not permitted to live in towns at Yemen from 1680 on, as a decree going with the reverse of Mawz'a Exile decree, and therefore had to established themselves at Gā' bīr al-'azab outside Ṣan'ā, *suq al-fiddah* at Ṣan'ā was not attractive for them any more, neither for work purposes nor to buy jewellery. Only the trip from Gā' bīr al-'azab to *suq al-fiddah* and back took about four hours walking. In addition, as Ṣan'ā was a commercial town, money had to be paid in order to enter throughout the gates, each time.

As Qānūn Ṣan'ā Law did not limited silversmiths to *suq al-fiddah* only, there was no limitation on Jewish silversmiths to work at Gā' bīr al-'azab at theirs homes. Gradually, Gā' bīr al-'azab had turned out to be the exclusive place of business for Jewish silversmiths regarding Jewish needs. Gā' bīr al-'azab had started in 1680 with about 1,000 Jews. At the first quarter of the eighteenth century its population was reduced by a series of natural disasters and military attacks, as Jews were easy target to kill, since Gā' bīr al-'azab was an open place, not surrounded by walls as Ṣan'ā was. In spite of that, the Jewish community at Gā' bīr al-'azab recovered. Carsten Niebuhr had reported that in July 1763, when being there, the Jewish community had 2,000 inhabitants, which meant that since the first half of the eighteenth century, the Jewish community at Gā' bīr al-'azab had gradually become a preferable market segment for Jewish silversmiths.

That was already the actual situation upon the nomination of the well known Rabbi Yihye Zaluh רבי יחיא צלאח as the supreme leader of the Jewish court at Gā' bīr al-'azab in 1758 (known after his death as MaHaRiTz). He set out rulings on the issue of the separation of the Jewish silversmith market from the Muslim market segment, here and there by Jewish silversmiths. Not only that he was an extraordinary religious personality, also he was a silversmith, as at Yemen, public servants in the Jewish community made living from their work, after the ruling of Maimonides.

The target of his ruling was that the separation must be total, to prevent any involvements of any kind by Muslims in silversmith work for Jews. As his ruling was synchronized with Qānūn Ṣan'ā Law, he assured that no Jewish silversmith mistakenly would violate Qānūn Ṣan'ā Law. Such violation meant a collective punishment against the Jewish community, as that was the way of the Zaydi Imams.

As far as I know there is no comparative research juxtaposing Qānūn Ṣan'ā Law (in Yemenite-Arabic script) with the ruling of MaHaRiTz (in Judeo-Yemenite script). His ruling was documented in *al-Mswade* אלמסודה – the documentation of the Jewish court at Gā' bīr al-'azab in the eighteenth century in Judeo-Yemenite script. His ruling became the law in the Jewish community all over Yemen not only at Gā' bīr al-'azab. His law was the law for all Jews of Yemen all along the two hundred years from 1758 up till the big waves of *Alia* to the State of Israel in ca. 1950. His ruling, of a total separation, shaped the Jewish silversmith at Yemen from 1758 till 1950. Since 1950 on there is no Jewish silversmith at Yemen.

Therefore, it is clear that Jewish silversmiths at Gā' bīr al-'azab in the eighteenth century had compiled the techniques mentioned in Qānūn Ṣan'ā Law, but not Islamic iconography. My Ph. D. dissertation had proved the existence of fourteen different types of

jewellery owned by the Jewish bride in the eighteenth century at Gā' bīr al-'azab and Radā' ( <http://www.oraberger.co.il/phd/> ). All of them had shown techniques mentioned in Qānūn Ṣan'ā Law. However, the survived jewellery show, as well, some other techniques not mentioned at all in Qānūn Ṣan'ā Law.

### What Sālem Kasil implied to Khalākil out of Qānūn Ṣan'ā Law?

Sālem Kasil, the Jewish silversmith of the “Ostriches *Khalākil*” from 1771/2, had definitely implied techniques/principles out of Qānūn Ṣan'ā Law as the Zaydi Law. However, two of his techniques are not from Qānūn Ṣan'ā Law. After Qānūn Ṣan'ā Law, he implied the following: having the official stamp of the Zaydi Imam (*fābi'*), chiseling his name, purity, hammering technique (*maṭrūq*), silver casting technique (*al-ṣabb al-abyad*) and gilding technique (*tilā*). However, *fuṣūṣ* ፩፩ – glass paste, and *al-Naksh* ፩፩ technique, which is reducing some silver out of a thick surface / material, are not from Qānūn Ṣan'ā Law.

The official stamp (*fābi'*) shows al-Mahdi as the Zaydi Imam and the year [11] 85 AH as the date, which is 1171/2 CE. The official stamp appears as a little ellipse hammered niche, just besides the ostrich head (Fig. 2). His Judeo-Yemenite name (Yemenite speaking in Hebrew letters) סעדי קסיל [?סעדי קסיל] is chiseled on the ostriches heads (Fig. 2). Regarding purity, the combination of *fābi'* and his chiseled name shows that the purity is either a half pure silver and half copper alloy (*nuṣfi*), or, a quarter pure silver and three quarters of copper alloy (*rub'ī*). It can not be pure silver, as the word *mukhlaṣ* does not appear. It can not be *ta'dīl* purity as his name appears. It can not be recycling as *fābi'* appears.

By hammering (*maṭrūq* technique) Sālem Kasil had turned two flat *nuṣfi/rub'ī* solid silver platform, into a pair of hollow tube anklets, whose two long edges almost meet each other at the interior side. That easily can be seen by the very tiny space just between the two edges all along the interior part of the anklets (Fig. 4). However, from our point of view, the most interesting, as well as, the heaviest part of each anklet is the ostrich head accompanied with a part of its throat. The throat is not seen. Whilst the ostrich head should stay out as finial, the throat part should be plugged in and is fixed from the outside by silver nails. All the four ostriches heads accompanied with a part of the throat are silver casting (*al-ṣabb al-abyad*) (Figs. 2, 3). As being heavy, the plugging zone is a delicate and sensitive joint. To make it stable the long throat must be plugged in quiet deeply. Hence, the throat is not seen and only the ostrich head is seen. However, as Bothmer and Puin showed when the fixing nails are out, the throat is exposed and gives us a hint how all the casting unit was looked like before being plugged in (Bothmer 2000: 21 down).

The “Ostriches *Khalākil*” of 1771/2 by Sālem Kasil is gilded all over (*tilā*). Nowadays, the interior part has only traces of gilding, but the fishes ponds are steel almost perfectly gilded (Figs. 1–5). The nine fishes ponds, all along the exterior part of each anklet, show many twisted swimming fishes executing by reducing some silver out of the thick unit. That was done by a chisel, known in Judeo-Yemenite as ፩፩ *al-Naksh*. That technique is not mentioned at all by Qānūn Ṣan'ā Law. The center of each fish pond is marked by a green *fuṣūṣ* to imitate the water color (Fig. 5). *Fuṣūṣ* is a Mamluk term for cast glass as a gem-stone. Therefore, green *fuṣūṣ* were ideal to set in the center of each fishes pond representing the Jewish idea of fishes covered by water. Thus, in contrast to Qānūn Ṣan'ā Law, which is mute regarding gem-stones.

Weight is the most important feature of Qānūn Ṣan'ā Law. That feature arises two questions. The one, when and who was the first Jewish silversmith to cast silver ostrich head to be plugged inside *Khalākil* as terminals? The second, was it before Qānūn Ṣan'ā Law? Or, was it as result of Qānūn Ṣan'ā Law? It is not clear when the phenomenon had

started, however, it is clear that Qānūn Ṣan'ā Law had speedup it as result of emphasizing weight as the most important feature for the silversmith, as his profit is calculated, first of all, by the weight of the jewel.

The direction of that phenomenon can easily be noticed by comparing the weight of *Khalākil* of Gana bint al-Zabib (1735–1754) with *faradat Khalākil* (one out of a pair) after 1762 as shown by Bothmer and Puin (Bothmer 2000: 21 down). As Tobi showed, the weight of the pair of *Khalākil* of Gana bint al-Zabib was 180 grams (Tobi 1992: 72–74) (Fig. 28 lines 4). However, as Bothmer and Puin showed, the weight of only *faradat Khalākil*, whose appearance is almost identical to each of those of Sālem Kasil of 1771/2, was 155 grams (Bothmer 2000: 21b). The point that emerges from that is that along the eighteenth century *Khalākil* increased its weight and had turn to a dominant jewel, almost as it was in the beginning of the eleventh century in the Cairo Geniza community (Figs. 1, 31).

That might be corroborated also by the transition of the fertility brand of Jewish painted marriage contracts (in Hebrew: *Ketubbot*) (pl.) at *Gā' bīr al-'azab* from a hen and a chicken to ostriches (Figs. 16–18). In Jewish thought a hen and a chicken is a fertility symbol on the basis of the Babylonian Talmud. The Babylonian Talmud presents the Jewish habit of the Talmud period to present such a pair before the bride and the groom telling them to be fruitful and multiply like a hen and a chicken and fulfill the Jewish commandment to procreate (Babylonian Talmud, *Gittin*, 57a).

The transition from a hen and a chicken to ostriches is clearly shown at the painted *Ketubbah* (s.) of the elite bride Romey bint Abraham ben Salim al-Sheikh al-Lewi רומייה בת אברהם בן סאלם אלشيخ אללוי, nowadays, in the Israel Museum, Jerusalem (Muchawsky-Schnapper 2000: 178). At the center, just between the bride and the groom, it is clearly shown that a chicken is going to be released in front of the new couple. But at the bottom, two ostriches are shown. Indeed, the chicken is in focus, but, the ostriches are there, as well.

A hen and a chicken are not at all on the *Ketubbah* of the elite bride Badra bint Musa ben Joseph ben MoVeRa Yakov al-Zairi בדרה בת מוסא בן יוסף בן יעקב אלצראי, 1790 (meaning Our Teacher and Our Rav), 1790. Here, only two ostriches are painted one opposite the other at the bottom (Fig. 18). This *Ketubbah* is unique by being written by MaHaRiTZ, whose son Josef is the groom as mentioned in Badra's *Ketubbah*. Hence, it shows the official trend regarding ostriches as replacing the hen and the chicken. Another example to demonstrate that trend is the *Ketubbah*, of the elite bride Sarah, daughter of Yitzhak al-Kāra שרה בת יצחק אלקארה of 1790 (Figs. 16, 17). Here, two big juxtaposed ostriches are just at the top center. All the three brides are from the upper class Jewry of *Gā' bīr al-'azab*, according to their family names, as well as, by the high appraisal of their jewelry as written on the back of the *Ketubbot* (Berger 2005: 136–138; pp. 131–133 at: <http://www.orabberger.co.il/phd/>).

The point that emerges from that is that ostriches are a sweeping phenomenon and brand of Jewish art in the eighteenth century at *Gā' bīr al-'azab* and *Radā'*, probably all over south Yemen. As so, ostriches are safeguards of the Jewish community as a whole and not only of the Jewish bride in particular. The “Ostriches *Khalākil*” of 1771/2, by Sālem Kasil present that phenomenon via precious metals, silver and gold. Silver and gold were the most important precious materials of the Zaydi Imams who had turned San'ā to theirs capital in the beginning of the eighteenth century. As part of that they had turned the mint of San'ā to the exclusive and the only official mint (Berger 2005: 39; pp. 68–69 at: <http://www.orabberger.co.il/phd/>). That provides the explanation for the very heavy pair of *Khalākil*, in the weight of about a quarter of kilo, as part of the personal property of the Jewish bride and woman at *Gā' bīr al-'azab* and *Radā'*, and the specialization of Jewish silversmiths of *Gā' bīr al-'azab* and *Radā'* to execute such heavy and big jewels as the “Ostriches *Khalākil*” (Figs. 1–5).

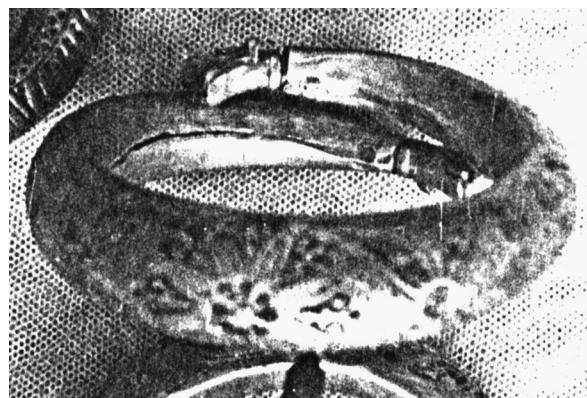


Fig. 47 The Rathjens *Khalākīl* (pl.).

Gā' bīr al-'azab, the Jewish neighborhood at Ṣan'ā, Yemen.  
 Firs half of the nineteenth century.  
 The structure is identical to that of the "Ostriches *Khalākīl*" of 1771/2, by Sālem Kasil of Gā' bīr al-'azab, (Fig. 1), but the iconography of the external decoration differs as the fishes are off. Instead, engraved roundels replace the fish ponds of the "Ostriches *Khalākīl*" of 1771/2, by Sālem Kasil (Fig. 5).  
 Black-white rare photo.  
 Photographed by Carl Rathjens in 1937 at the workshop at the home of a Jewish silversmith at Gā' bīr al-'azab whilst this pair of *Khalākīl* was brought into by Jews to be melt as an old piece for its heavy solid silver.  
 Hamburg, Hamburgisches Museum für Völkerkunde.  
 Courtesy of The Hamburgisches Museum für Völkerkunde, Hamburg, Germany.

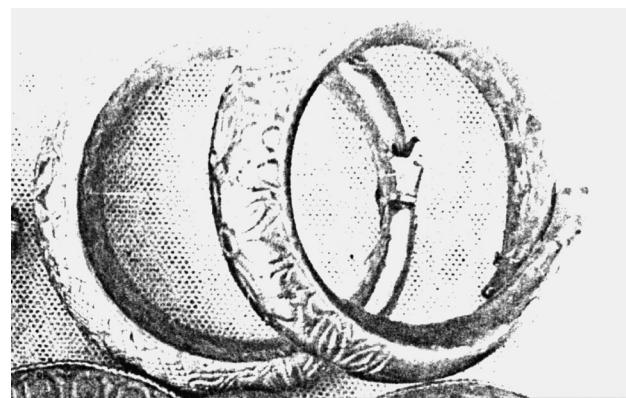


Fig. 48 Another pair of the Rathjens *Khalākīl* (pl.).

Gā' bīr al-'azab, the Jewish neighborhood at Ṣan'ā, Yemen.  
 Firs half of the nineteenth century.  
 The structure is identical to that of the "Ostriches *Khalākīl*" of 1771/2, by Sālem Kasil of Gā' bīr al-'azab, (Fig. 1), but the iconography of the external decoration differs as the fishes are off. Instead, engraved roundels replace the fish ponds of the "Ostriches *Khalākīl*" of 1771/2, by Sālem Kasil (Fig. 5).  
 Black-white rare photo.  
 Photographed by Carl Rathjens in 1937 at the workshop at the home of a Jewish silversmith at Gā' bīr al-'azab whilst this pair of *Khalākīl* was brought into by Jews to be melt as an old piece for its heavy solid silver.  
 Hamburg, Hamburgisches Museum für Völkerkunde.  
 Courtesy of The Hamburgisches Museum für Völkerkunde, Hamburg, Germany.

## Continuation?

On that background it is important to mention that at Gā' bīr al-'azab and Radā' the "Ostriches *Khalākīl*" are off after the eighteenth century. As far as I know, the only evidence for the "Ostriches *Khalākīl*" at Gā' bīr al-'azab and Radā' after the eighteenth century is only as a photographed version (Figs. 47, 48). The two pairs of "Ostriches *Khalākīl*", as documented by figs. 47, 48, were brought into the studio at the home of a Jewish silversmith at Gā' bīr al-'azab, in 1937, to be melt for its heavy silver as an old Jewish piece of solid silver. These two pairs had been photographed there by Carl Rathjens from the Hamburg Museum of Ethnography, Germany, to his request, just before its melting, as a honor gesture of the Jewish silversmith, whose name is not known yet (henceforth, the Rathjens *Khalākīl*).<sup>15</sup>

The Rathjens *Khalākīl* are definitely not from the eighteenth century after its iconography as it show no fishes. As we saw, the combination of ostriches and fishes is typical to *Khalākīl* of the eighteenth century as demonstrated by the "Ostriches *Khalākīl*" by Sālem Kasil (Figs. 1–5). On the other hand, the Rathjens *Khalākīl* are definitely not from the second half of the nineteenth century after its structure which is one piece jewel. One piece jewel was off Jewish silversmith at Gā' bīr al-'azab since 1872 as result of the second Ottoman conquest of Yemen, ruling from Ṣan'ā. The second Ottoman conquest had turned jewels to be based on machine wire work, as well as, a structure of many little pieces, instead of the hand made work based on solid silver platform

<sup>15</sup> I would like to thank Dr. Rudiger Vassen and Gertrud Schier for the photo (forth travel of Carl Rathjens to San'ā 1937–1938).



**Fig. 49** The Barat faradat *Khalākil* (s.).

Barat, north east Yemen.  
The third decade of the twentieth century.  
Silver. Gilding (traces). Filigree.  
The structure is identical to that of the “Ostriches *Khalākil*” of 1771/2, by Sālem Kasil of Gā’ bīr al-’azab, (Fig. 1), but the iconography of the external decoration differs as the fishes are off. Instead, roundels of flat and rough filigree work replace the fish ponds of the “Ostriches *Khalākil*” of 1771/2, by Sālem Kasil (Fig. 5).  
Photo after: Muchawsky-Schnapper 2000/122 left.



**Fig. 50** The Barat faradat *Khalākil* (s.).

A detail belonging to the Barat faradat *Khalākil* (s.) in Fig. 49. Roundels of flat and rough filigree work replace the fish ponds of the “Ostriches *Khalākil*” of 1771/2, by Sālem Kasil (Fig. 5).  
Photographed by Reuven Milon.  
Courtesy of The Israel Museum, Jerusalem, State of Israel.

and a structure of one or two big pieces only, as for example the “Ostriches *Khalākil*” (Figs. 1–5). As result, the only option for dating the Rathjens *Khalākil* is to the first half of the nineteenth century.

Jewish silversmith at Gā’ bīr al-’azab in the first half of the nineteenth century is an anigma and was hardly researched. From the historical points of view the period shows a decline of the Jewish community and as result of Jewish art. The most important points for the cut off of “Ostriches *Khalākil*” are two. The first, continued cycles of starvation at the end of the eighteenth century and at the beginning of the nineteenth century. That means, the collapse of Jewish silveramiths. The second, the instability of the Zaydi Imams rule and theirs harassment of the Jewish leadership of Gā’ bīr al-’azab. As result, a significant part of the leadership left Gā’ bīr al-’azab to other Jewish communities at the periphery, especially at west and north Yemen. Among it silversmiths who brought their knowledge, tools and style and kept working at the new places in the style of Gā’ bīr al-’azab. As result, though “Ostriches *Khalākil*” were off at Gā’ bīr al-’azab, its continuation occurred at the periphery. As for example at Barat at north east Yemen. The Israel Museum, Jerusalem shows one out of a pair of “Ostriches *Khalākil*” worn by Jewish women at Barat, north east Yemen, in the first decades of the twentieth century (Fig. 49) (henceforth, the Barat *Khalākil*).

Like the Rathjens *Khalākil*, the Barat *Khalākil* has no fishes (Figs. 49, 50). The points that emerge from that are three. The first, the cut off of fishes from Jewish iconography at Gā’ bīr al-’azab and Radā’ from the nineteenth century on. The second, the cut off of the

combination of ostriches and fishes from Jewish iconography at Gā' bīr al-'azab and Radā' from the nineteenth century on. The third, both the Rathjens *Khalākīl* and the Barat *Khalākīl* are the leftover of Jewish iconography and silversmiths of the eighteenth century and as so, do not stand by themselves.

### Ostriches or birds?

As the “Ostriches *Khalākīl*” are off Gā' bīr al-'azab after the eighteenth century, the question is would it be possible for ostriches to be transferred to another type of jewel? In order to find that the *Labbah Tyur* should be examined. In general, the *Labbah Tyur* is the very last type of Jewish jewel that had been invented at Gā' bīr al-'azab in the last decades, before the big waves of *Alia* to the State of Israel, in ca. 1950. As Muchawsky-Schnapper showed, the Israel Mueum, Jerusalem holds such *Labbah Tyur*, made in the studio of Yihye al-Abyadh at Gā' bīr al-'azab (Muchawsky-Schnapper 2000: 130, 131). The name ‘tyur’ in Judeo-Yemenit means birds, however, its iconography was hardly researched yet.

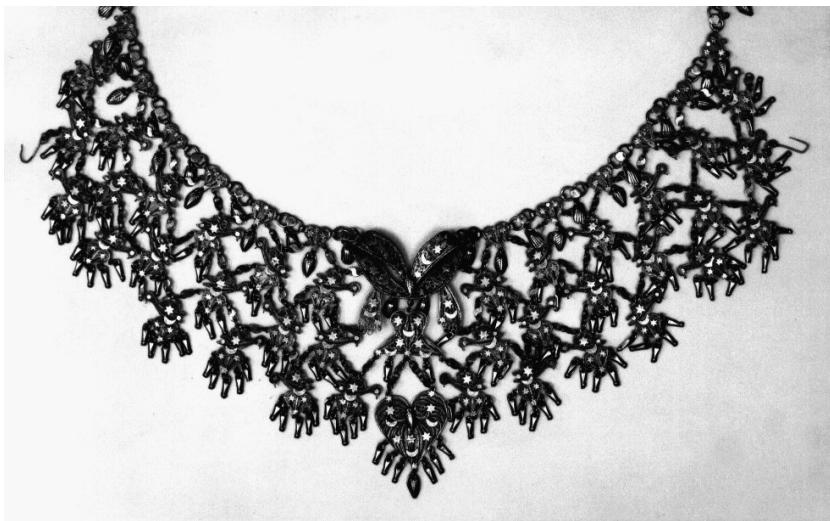
In 1987, I examined another *Labbah Tyur*, which was the personal property of a Jewish woman from Gā' bīr al-'azab, whose name is not known yet, who arrived to the State of Israel in 1950 (Fig. 51).<sup>16</sup> The juxtaposition of her *Labbah Tyur* with all the ostriches prototypes already shown in this article, shows almost all the features of ostriches (Figs. 52, 53). The first is the swell throat of the mating ostrich of the “Ostriches Pentateuch” and of the “Earliest Aden Pentateuch” (Figs. 6–11, 52). The second is the raised up wing of the Ma'rib archetype and its variation, the Rasulid coins, the Jewish marriage contracts and the Torah box (Figs. 53, 43, 45, 39, 16–18, 26). The third is the elimination of the body, or combining together the throat, the body and the tail to a long and narrow unit of the mating ostrich of the “Ostriches Pentateuch” and the Jewish marriage contacts (Figs. 53, 6–11, 16, 17). The forth is the running legs as shown by all the examples in this article, with the only exception of the “Ostriches *Khalākīl*” by Sālem Kasil (Figs. 53, 1–5). However, *Labbah Tyur* shows the legs as a separate element, either as the two parts of the heart, or the units beneath, each of it made of little double sided hollow die-forming work, freely hanged from the heart (Fig. 53). The fifth is the flock of ostriches of the Ma'rib archetype and its variation, as well as, the flock of ostriches all along the “Ostriches Pentateuch” (Figs. 51, 43, 45, 1–5). The sixth is the en-face freeing of the white feathers of the ostrich male tail as shown on Rasulid silver coins and on the Torah Teva (Figs. 53, 44, 40, 42, 27). That feature is demonstrated by the swirling filigree work of *Labbah Tyur*, imitating the white swirling edges of the freeing feathers in nature (Fig. 44).

The point that emerges from that is that ostriches had continued as safeguards of the Jewish woman via the *Labbah Tyur*. That had occurred only for two decades. The next safeguards of the Jewish community at Yemen was ‘On Wings of Eagles Operation’, named as so after Exodus 19: 4 and Deuteronomy 32: 11, which had been conducted in 1949–1950 by air-plains bringing Jews of Yemen to the State of Israel, named by Jews of Yemen, who were not familiar with air plains, as ‘Eagles of Metal’.

### Summing up

In conclusion, therefore, we can say, first, that ostriches and fishes are safeguards in Jewish art at Yemen. Second, ostriches and fishes had a past at Yemen as fertility and or luxury brands. Third, that was utilized by Jewish art at Yemen as a crossroad of Jewish thought and Yemeni art formulas. Regarding ostriches, the main innovation of Jewish art at Yemen was its focusing on the mating dance of the male and its translation into

<sup>16</sup> I would like to thank Liana Zur, Jerusalem, State of Israel, who let me to examine her *Labbah Tyur* (Figs. 51–53).

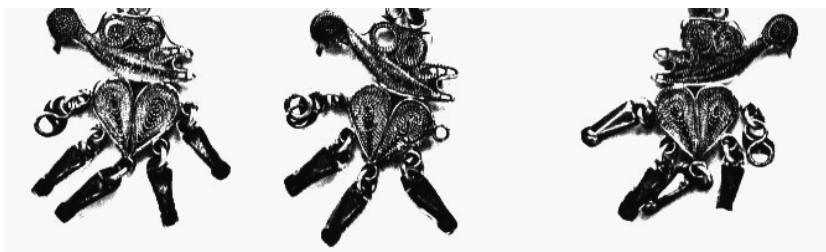


**Fig. 51** *Labbah Tyur* (s.): The ostriches Labbah?, or, the birds Labbah?

Gā' bīr al-'azab, the Jewish neighborhood at Ṣan'ā, Yemen.  
 The forth decade of the twentieth century.  
 Silver. Gilding. Filigree.  
 Condition: Some of the ostriches are off.  
 This ostriches *Labbah* has few history phases: Made at Gā' bīr al-'azab in the forth decade of the twentieth century. In 1950 brought from Gā' bīr al-'azab into the State of Israel as the personal property of a Jewish woman who made Alia (come back) to Israel. It was bought, in the State of Israel, almost no time after getting off the airplaine, for a very high price, at the time, by an Israeli restorator, who had studied restoration at Vienna and appreciated the Art of the jewl.  
 Photographed by Reuven Milon.  
 Courtesy of Liana Zur, Jerusalem, State of Israel.  
 A similar jewel, yet not identical, was executed by the Jewish silversmith Yihye al-Abyadh לְיַהְיֵה אֶבְיָד at Gā' bīr al-'azab in paralel time and is now in The Israel Museum, Jerusalem, State of Israel, 977.70.



**Fig. 52** *Labbah Tyur* (s.): The ostriches Labbah?, or, the birds Labbah?  
 A detail belonging to *Labbah Tyur* (s.) in Fig. 51.



**Fig. 53** *Labbah Tyur* (s.): The ostriches Labbah?, or, the birds Labbah?

Some of the ostriches that had been taken off from *Labbah Tyur* in Fig. 51.  
 The elimination of the body, or combining together the throat, the body and the tail to a long and narrow unit, is highly expressed by the filigree work. The filigree work is based mainly on spiral work that recall the freeing tail spirals of the ostrich mail in nature as shown in Fig. 44, as well as, on Rasulid coins from Yemen, as shown in Fig. 42.  
 The legs are a separate element, either as the two parts of the heart, or the units beneath. Each of it is made of little double sided hollow die-forming work, freely hanged from the heart.

clear and dominant art features: the read curved and swell throat and the red legs, emphasized by the elimination of the body. The “Ostriches Pentateuch” from the end of the twelfth century and the “Ostriches כְּלָאָקֵל *Khalākil*” of 1771/2, by the Jewish silversmiths Sālem Kasil provide significant examples for that (Figs. 1–11). As the ostriches had been preserved via Jewish art at Yemen, up till ca. 1950, it is clear that Jewish art at Yemen is its conservator. Regarding fishes, the main innovation of Jewish Art at Yemen is its focus on Hebrew writing as the outline. Fourth, the “Ostriches *Khalākil*” of 1771/2, by Sālem Kasil is not a copy of *Khalākil* of the Jewish bride of the Cairo Geniza community, though it based on it, as it show structural and iconographic innovation. In contrast to *Khalākil* of the Cairo Geniza community, which show a perfect closed circle composition, at Yemen, an open ellipse composition, ended with ostrich head terminals is the new concept. In contrast to geometry as the iconography of *Khalākil* of the Cairo Geniza community, ostriches and fishes are the new iconography of the “Ostriches *Khalākil*” of 1771/2, by Sālem Kasil. Neither ostriches nor fishes are known in the context of jewels of the Cairo Geniza community. The combination of ostriches and fishes is therefore a unique Yemeni Jewish feature.

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