

## Women in al-Şafadī's *Kitāb al-Wāfi bi-l-Wafayāt*: A Study of Biographical Representation and Roles

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**Abstract:** This research investigates the portrayal of women's documentation of their roles and representations in the significant Mamluk era source, *al-Wāfi bi-l-Wafayāt* by Şalāḥ al-Dīn al-Şafadī (d. 764 A.H./1363 A.D.). Through applying mixed methods approach with a combination of quantitative and qualitative analysis of women's biographies in the text, the study analyses the portrayal of women's roles and functions while highlighting how al-Şafadī framed female figures from different Islamic eras, primarily through religious, intellectual and sympathetic lenses. His selection of women's model reflects the dominant morals and cultural values of his era. This research includes that *al-Wāfi bi-l-Wafayāt* functions as a historical record that not only preserves women's presence but could serve as a tool for producing historical discourses on women within Islamic collective memory.

**Keywords:** Biography, Mamluk period, al-Şafadī, *al-Wāfi bi-l-Wafayāt*, women.

## النساء في كتاب الوافي بالوفيات: دراسة في تمثيل التراجم والأدوار

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**ملخص البحث:** تحاول هذه الدراسة الكشف عن منهج توثيق سير النساء وتمثيلتهن في مؤلفات التراجم الإسلامية، وذلك عبر دراسة كتاب (الوافي بالوفيات لصلاح الدين الصفدي ٧٦٤هـ / ١٣٦٣م) وتحليله، الذي يُعدُّ أحد أبرز مؤلفات تراجم العصر المملوكي. وتستخدم هذه الدراسة منهج التحليل الكمي والنوعي لتراجم النساء، لتوضيح طبيعة تصوير الشخصيات النسائية وأدوارهن في مختلف العصور الإسلامية. وقد توصلت الدراسة إلى عدد من النتائج من أبرزها: أن اختيارات الصفدي قد أسهمت في إنتاج تصوير ونسق خاص لحضور المرأة في مجالات محددة كالنقوى والعلم والعمل الخيري، مما يوضح أن منهجه لم يكن مرتبطاً فقط بتسجيل معلومات عن المرأة بطريقة عشوائية، بل هو انعكاس لخلفيته الثقافية والاجتماعية والدينية المتناغمة مع سياقات عصره. وبناء على ذلك، يخلص هذا البحث إلى أن كتاب الوافي بالوفيات يعتبر مصدراً مهماً لا يكشف فقط عن دور المرأة ومكانتها في العصور الإسلامية، بل يُعدُّ أيضاً وسيلة لإنشاء خطاب تاريخي يعيد تشكيل حضور المرأة ضمن الذاكرة الإسلامية الجمعية.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** التراجم، الصفدي، العصر المملوكي، النساء، الوافي بالوفيات.

## Introduction

Medieval historians and researchers have always been interested in studying Islamic historical sources alongside biographical collections, which include available information on individuals, men and women, and details about their lives across different Islamic periods. They are also documenting personal backgrounds of individuals, their affiliations, occupations, and social, cultural and political roles, thus providing an important perspective to understand the cultural and social context of their time. Although the historical sources include rich details about women, the biographical collections provide information about their lives, activities and roles in different spheres, helping inform knowledge of the portrayal of women's position within Islamic eras. One of the famous biographical sources is *Kitāb al-Wāfi bi-l-Wafayāt* by Şalāh al-Dīn al-Şafadī (d. 764 A.H./1363 A.D.)<sup>(1)</sup>, who was born into a famous Damascus family and was educated by renowned scholars from Cairo, Damascus, and other Islamic regions. While also being known as a famous writer, historian and poet of the Mamluk period. Al-Şafadī held a high rank as an official administrative officer in his Mamluk era and authored significant texts of literature, poetry and biography.<sup>(2)</sup>

*Al-Wāfi bi-l-Wafayāt* is an encyclopaedic dictionary including 29 volumes, according to the digital version available in the *al-Maktabah al-shāmilah* digital library.<sup>(3)</sup> It introduces more than 10,000 biographies of notable Islamic figures, representing the Prophet's companions, military leaders, writers, jurists, poets and intellectuals from the Islamic East (*mashriq*) and West (*maghrib*) regions. Al-Şafadī did not provide separate sections for women's biographies, instead he presented them alongside male figures in the text. Additionally, he employed several organisational methods like alphabetising by name, title, lineage, position,

profession, and roles. He also frequently included the date of their birth or death. It's worth noting that this methodology offers solid insight and perspective on how females are portrayed in the biographical context of Islamic historiography.

This study addresses the representation of women in Islamic biographical books as one of the primary means that have contributed to shaping historical memory and the image of women in cultural discourse. The fundamental question is to what extent *al-Wāfi bi-l-Wafayāt* documents and portrays women's lives, roles and contributions across various periods of Islamic history and what these biographies reveal about the social and cultural frameworks of al-Şafadī's own Mamluk era. Such an examination can inform our understanding of women, their historical realities and the ways in which they were remembered, while also offering new insight into the dynamics of memory and participation in classical Islamic societies and their biographical writing.

Al-Şafadī in *al-Wāfi bi-l-Wafayāt*, focused on providing information about notable male figures and offered significant information about women. These female figures represent different eras and roles, such as female companions, scholars, Ḥadīth transmitters, poets and singers. He also identified differences in women's social status and families to provide significant information about their intellectual and social achievements and contributions. Al-Şafadī not only documented women's contributions across centuries of Islamic history but also reflected on the complex realities of their positions, roles and practices in his own time, the Mamluk era.

Although the women whose biographies are recorded in the work had lived in earlier periods and were not contemporaries of al-Şafadī, his preservation of their lives offers an opportunity to assess both the historical roles of women and the contemporary lens through which those roles were understood. This study uses *al-Wāfi bi-l-Wafayāt* as a primary source for exploring how women were represented in Islamic biographical writing and what these representations reveal about their positions, activities and presence in the intellectual and social life of the Mamluk era. Interestingly, by examining Islamic biographical sources, we can gain great insight of information of women's lives, dating back to the early third Islamic century A.H. (9th A.D.). For examples, Muḥammad b. Sa'd (d. 230 A.H./845

(1) Şalāh al-Dīn al-Şafadī, *al-Wāfi bi-l-Wafayāt*, ed. Aḥmad al-Arnā'ūt, Turkī Muştafā, (Bayrūt: Dār Iḥyā' al-Turāth al-'Arabī, 2000). It is important to note that another edition of *al-Wāfi bi-l-Wafayāt* was edited by Hellmut Ritter (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1991). However, the present study relied on the Beirut edition, as it provides the most complete version available and was used for textual verification and analysis.

(2) F. Krenkow, "Şafadī," Various authors & editors, *Encyclopaedia of Islam First Edition Online*, Brill, 2012, [https://doi.org/uoelibrary.idm.oclc.org/10.1163/2214871X\\_eiL\\_COM\\_0174](https://doi.org/uoelibrary.idm.oclc.org/10.1163/2214871X_eiL_COM_0174).

(3) Based on the 29-volume digital edition available from *al-Maktabah al-Shāmilah*, <https://shamela.ws/>. The printed edition may vary in terms of the number of volumes.

A.D.) in his *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*<sup>(4)</sup>, dedicated sections to female biographies, such as the female companions (*ṣahābīyāt*) and successors (*tābi'iyāt*) of the prophet ﷺ, and he emphasised their roles and familial connects throughout the formative Islamic period.<sup>(5)</sup> Similarly, Aḥmad al-Balādhurī (d. 279 A.H./892 A.D.), in the genealogical, political source *Ansāb al-Ashrāf*<sup>(6)</sup>, included references to women and their active participation in the cultural, social and political spheres.

However, by the 8th century (14th A.D.), Shams al-Dīn al-Dhahabī (d. 748 A.H./1348 A.D.), in *Siyar al-lām al-nubalā*<sup>(7)</sup>, developed this approach by applying accounts of prominent women as figures, representing them in scholarly and religious biographical narratives. In the 9th A.H./15th A.D. century biographical source, *al-Durar al-Kāminah fī a'yān al-mi'ah al-thāminah*<sup>(8)</sup>, Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī (d. 852 A.H./1449 A.D.) included a great number of accounts of women, documenting their lives and activities alongside those of their male contemporaries. Ibn Ḥajar represents many of these women as active participants in the social, intellectual and even political spheres of the Mamluk era.<sup>(9)</sup> A much later, from the 14th A.H./20th A.D. century, continuation of this tradition can be found in Khayr al-Dīn al-Ziriklī's (d. 1396 A.H./1976 A.D.) *al-A'lām*<sup>(10)</sup>, which documents the lives of men and women from pre-Islamic periods up until the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, in an encyclopedia format.

To some extent, although the common purpose of previous biographical sources was similar, their

aim and methodologies differ significantly from al-Ṣafadī those of *al-Wāfi bi-l-Wafayāt*, including 29 volumes that cover figures from the earliest Islamic centuries to al-Ṣafadī's own time. Thus al-Ṣafadī's text offers a broad chronological model that allows a wider perspective on the roles and contributions of women across centuries. Since, *al-Wāfi bi-l-Wafayāt* represents the Mamluk era context, this study sheds light on the distinguished standards of al-Ṣafadī's methodology, which is characterized by the social and religious values. This shaped the way women were portrayed not only in scholarly and genealogical terms, but also in literary and cultural perspectives. Significantly, *al-Wāfi bi-l-Wafayāt* creates links between earlier biographical collections, such as those by Ibn Sa'd, al-Balādhurī and al-Dhahabī, as well as the later authors and scholars such as Ibn Ḥajar and other scholars such as al-Ziriklī, whose approaches in many ways were adopted and modified upon al-Ṣafadī's approach.

*Al-Wāfi bi-l-Wafayāt* was selected as the main source for this study because it represents one of the main sources and comprehensive biographical collections of the eighth/fourteenth centuries. This work also combines a great detail about a famous figures including caliphs, scholars, poets and jurists and others, as well as a noteworthy number of female figures, who have not been sufficiently examined in previous scholarship. This makes al-Ṣafadī's *al-Wāfi bi-l-Wafayāt* an ideal corpus for studying and analysing how women were represented in medieval Islamic biographical discourse.

As far as can be determined, the subject of women in *al-Wāfi bi-l-Wafayāt* has received only limited scholarly attention. Only one study, by Nuhād Ni'mah al-Shammārī, '*Ālimāt 'Irāqīyāt min kitāb al-Wāfi bi-al-wafīyāt lil-Ṣafadī* (d. 764 A.H./1349 A.D.)'.<sup>(11)</sup> To some extent, al-Shammārī investigated directly with this topic; however, she only limited her focus on Iraqi women. Thus, although her research offers useful information for the analysis of women in *al-Wāfi bi-l-Wafayāt*, her survey represents a limited scope on the comprehensive biographical notion of women in the text. The aim of this present study is to analyze and illustrate the portrayal of women in *al-Wāfi bi-l-Wafayāt* in different Islamic eras and regions as a model for understanding their roles and contributions and raising questions about how the

(4) Muḥammad b. Sa'd, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*, ed. 'Alī Muḥammad 'Umar, (al-Qāhirah: Maktabat al-Khānjī, 2001).

(5) See Ruth Roded, *Women in Islamic Biographical Collections: From Ibn Sa'd to Who's Who* (London: Lynne Rienner, 1994), for an excellent study and discussion of Ibn Sa'd's approach to documenting women.

(6) Aḥmad al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-Ashrāf*, ed. Muḥammad Humayd Allāh, (al-Qāhirah: Ma'had al-Makhṭūṭāt bi-Jāmi'at al-Duwal al-'Arabīyah, 1959).

(7) Shams al-Dīn al-Dhahabī, *Siyar A'lām al-Nubalā*, ed. Shu'ayb al-Arna'ūt, (Bayrūt: Mu'assasat al-Risālah, 1996).

(8) Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī, *al-Durar al-Kāminah fī A'yān al-Mi'ah al-Thāminah*, ed. 'Alī Khūrshīd, 2nd edition, (Ḥaidarābād: Dā'irat al-Ma'ārif al-Uthmānīyah, 1972).

(9) Amīnah Muḥammad Jamāl al-Dīn, "Tarājīm al-Muḥaddithāt fī al-'Asr al-Mamlūkī: Dirāsah Ṭahlīliyyah fī al-Maṣādir", *Majallat Markaz al-Buḥūth al-sunnah wa-sīrah*, Qatar University, 6, (1993): 467-490, <http://hdl.handle.net/10576/8667>.

(10) Khayr al-Dīn al-Ziriklī, *al-A'lām*, 15th edition, (Bayrūt: Dār al-'Ilm lil-Malāyīn), 2002.

(11) Nuhād Ni'mah al-Shammārī, "Ālimāt 'Irāqīyāt min Kitāb al-Wāfi bi-al-Wafīyāt lil-Ṣafadī, d. 764 A.H. = 1349 A.D.," *Journal of Arab Scientific Heritage*, 42, (2019): 301-344.

text documents their lives and what these accounts reveal about women's historical and social contexts. In addition, this paper seeks to shed new light on the representation of women in al-Ṣafadī's *al-Wāfi* as a social-historical study.

This study is divided into four sections and applies both quantitative and qualitative analytical approaches to examine women's representation in *al-Wāfi bi-l-Wafayāt*. The first section represents the methodological framework adopted for collecting and analysing the references to women in the text. The second section, "Women's Roles and Functions," offers a quantitative and descriptive analysis of women's social and occupational roles. The third section, "Chronological Analysis of Women's Representation," explores and provides a qualitative interpretation of how women's portrayals developed across different historical eras, from the early Islamic period (*Ṣadr al-Islām*, including the lifetime of the Prophet ﷺ and the Rightly Guided Caliphs رضي الله عنهم), to the Umayyad, Abbasid, Andalusī and Mamluk periods.<sup>(12)</sup> The fourth section, "Reproducing the Images of Women in Mamluk Historical Memory Through al-Ṣafadī's *al-Wāfi bi-l-Wafayāt*," discusses and analyses the social values and cultural frameworks that shaped al-Ṣafadī's understanding of women in his own Mamluk era and society.

### Methodology

The methodology applied to this study includes both quantitative and qualitative analytical approaches, which survey *al-Wāfi bi-l-Wafayāt*, in which the names and biographical accounts of all women mentioned across the volumes were collected and classified.<sup>(13)</sup> While the methodology of the data collection relied on the electronic edition available through *al-Maktabah al-shāmilah*, it allows us to efficiently search and identify women's names across the 29 volumes.

The data collection comprised two approaches, both electronic and manual research. A manual inspection of the volume was performed to confirm the accuracy of the search results and to ensure that no women's biographies were omitted. In parallel, an electronic search was employed to identify keyword searches for female identifiers such as *bint* (daughter of), *umm* (mother of), *zawjah* (wife of), and other corresponding phrases reflecting the

women's social and intellectual roles. These included references to *ṣahābīyāt* (companions), *muḥaddithāt* (Ḥadīth transmitters), *shā'irāt* (poets), *kātibāt* (writers), *mughan'iyāt* (singers), *ʿĀlimāt* (scholars), *wā'izāt* (preachers) and others. These women are also represented in the text in terms of their social status. Some were Ḥarā'ir (freeborn women) and occupied positions as daughters, wives or sisters of noteworthy male figures, while others were *jawārī* (enslaved women), including *ummahāt al-Awlād* (enslaved women who gave birth to their masters' children). This approach improved the availability and validity of the database.

The research dataset includes 305 women from different backgrounds and historical periods. It is important to note that the overall number of women's biographies (305) differs slightly between both sorts of tables depending on the analytical focus. For example, Table 1 includes 284 women classified by their functional roles, however, some women had more than one role, while others were recorded without a particular function. Table 2 represents the chronological distribution of 273 women, some of whose biographies lack any indication of chronological information and were therefore excluded from this table's data. By employing this strategy, the distinctions reflect the analytical scope rather than any ambiguities in the data.

The data was collected and analysed using a quantitative framework, and each biography was categorized depending on the woman's name, family affiliation (particularly male kinship ties), her era in which she lived, social role, title and epithet. This information was classified and organized into tables, which allowed the data to be cross-referenced and analysed according to roles and historical periods categories. Only entries that presented complete and independent biographies of women were included in the database. Brief or non-relevant mentions of women within male biographies were excluded. Therefore, we classified the findings using a statistical approach, such as tables and pie charts, which highlighted the distribution of women across different timeframes and categories. For the clarity, the following table illustrates the structure of the database used for organizing and coding the biographical entries<sup>(14)</sup>:

(12) The women documented in *al-Wāfi bi-l-Wafayāt* are confined to these main historical eras, and later periods are not covered.

(13) It's worth mentioning that during our data collection process, no women are mentioned at all in some volumes of the work, particularly in the initial sections.

(14) A sample is provided below to show the structure and coding process of the collected data. Although, we collected a large number of women and recorded them in reference tables, these tables cannot be included due to the word-count limit; however, the appendix includes tables and pie charts to provide a clearer comparative perspective for analysing our data.

**Figure 1: Illustrative sample showing the structure and coding process of the database used in this study.**<sup>(15)</sup>

Entry No.	Name	Death date	Title/Epithet	Historical Era	Social Status (Free/Enslaved)	Field (Religious / Literary / Charitable)	Volume No.	Page No.	Notes

Percentages were calculated from the numerical data recorded in these tables and are visually represented in the corresponding pie charts (Figures 1-2), which demonstrate the proportional distribution of women according to their roles and chronological periods. This methodology allowed us to understand the perception of how women's lives, positions and roles were recorded, omitted or emphasized in the text, and it also revealed al-Şafadī's values and of his biographical writings. Consequently, the applied framework established a valuable basis for the analysis of the women's accounts and offered a great extent of understanding of how women were portrayed in *al-Wāfi bi-l-Wafayāt*.

### Women's Roles and Functions

This section examines and evaluates the roles and functions of women depending on the recordings of *al-Wāfi bi-l-Wafayāt*, by utilising the dataset of 284 women. It's important to point out that family relationships, such as being mothers, daughters, sisters or wives of prominent and famous individuals, such as caliphs, rulers, judges or scholars were not classified as an independent role of women, because they do not represent functional participation. Nevertheless, these relationships are significant and were examined since they could influence women's possibilities for education, authority and the gaining of different roles; as a result, the study classified the women depending on the roles clearly identified in their biographies. More importantly, this classification not only highlights the social, religious and cultural activities in which women participated but also provides insight into the values and expectations associated with women in different historical contexts, as represented and framed by al-Şafadī in his biographical narratives. The database shown in this study demonstrated the extent of prominent forms that clarify the framework al-Şafadī chose to represent and document women.

(15) Note: Due to the formatting restrictions imposed by the journal's layout guidelines, it was not possible to insert the full table in its original form, as its length and number of columns exceeded the allowed page width. Therefore, the table was converted into an image format and inserted into the methodology section to provide a clear visual representation of the data structure and the coding process applied.

The discussion in this section represents three key themes and discussions: the diversity of women's roles and the overlapping of multiple functions; the religious dominance that shaped women's documented functions; and the cultural significance of women's status and roles.

The findings in Table 1 and Figure 2 show a significant diversity in the roles of women in *al-Wāfi bi-l-Wafayāt*. It reflects women's participation in the cultural, social and religious spheres, as they represented religious figures such as female companions (*ṣaḥābīyāt*), Ḥadīth transmitters (*muhādithāt*), jurists (*faqīhāt*), Qur'an memorizers (*ḥāfiẓāt al-qurān al-karīm*) and preachers (*wā'izāt*). They also contributed to the literary and cultural fields as poets, writers and singers, while others were engaged in charitable and welfare work.<sup>(16)</sup> Our examination results show that women combined multiple functions, as a great number of them obtained two or more prominent roles or functions, demonstrating the wide range of women's contributions to their societies. One noteworthy example is the case of 'Ā'ishah bint Ismā'il al-Zubaydī (d. 624 A.H./1227 A.D.)<sup>(17)</sup>, who was a renowned poet and scholar. Bībī bint 'Abd al-Şamad al-Harawīyah (d. 447 A.H./1055 A.D.), also was known for her transmission of Ḥadīth and her educational ability to teach.<sup>(18)</sup> Other examples of women obtained both jurisprudence education and literary abilities were highly represented women engagement in religious affairs such as Karīmah bint Ahmad al-Mrouziyyah (d. 465 A.H./1072 A.D.)<sup>(19)</sup>, 'Amat al-Karīm bint al-Nāsiḥ 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Ḥanbalī (d. 679 A.H./1280 A.D.)<sup>(20)</sup> and Zaynab bint Makkī (d. 688 A.H./1289 A.D.)<sup>(21)</sup>. Other women were also identified as both preachers and literary figures, such as Şafīyah bint 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Ya'ish (d. 620A.H./1223 A.D.).

*Al-Wāfi bi-l-Wafayāt* also records pious women whose reputations were based on their religious piety, including Tmani bint al-Mubarak (d. 558

(16) It is worth pointing out that our dataset did not indicate women's political participation, this is due to their insufficient records in *al-Wāfi bi-l-Wafayāt*, however, a few of these women were mentioned in terms of their family affiliations such as queens, mothers of kings, daughters of rulers or wives of a sultan, rather than as active participants. See for example, al-Şafadī, *al-Wāfi bi-l-Wafayāt*, 9:222; 10:119; 11:178; 13:142,136,237; 14:17,53; 16:119,328,552; 22:228; 24:247.

(17) Al-Şafadī, *al-Wāfi bi-l-Wafayāt*, 24:254.

(18) Ibid., ١٠:٢٢٣.

(19) Ibid., 24:254.

(20) Ibid., 9:221.

(21) Ibid., 15:43.

A.H./1162 A.D.)<sup>(22)</sup> and Ḥuramīyah bint Tammām b. Ismā'īl (d. 691 A.H./1292 A.D.)<sup>(23)</sup>. It can be noted that some accounts of women combine multiple functions, positions and skills.<sup>(24)</sup> This reflects an obvious notion of women's diverse contributions in different Islamic eras and societies, because the range of roles attributed to these women demonstrates that they were renowned for their varied abilities and their biographies reflect the extent of their social and intellectual involvement. Thus, al-Ṣafadī's work demonstrates a certain understanding of women's roles across different periods. It can be assumed that women's visibility was shaped by their engagement in various social, intellectual and religious spheres as presented in the text. This functional framework of the accounts of women indicates how they were commemorated as multifaceted agents whose functions and roles extended and developed across various Islamic eras.

Significant indications can be observed in religious roles, as they comprise the most dominant category in al-Ṣafadī's documentation of women. The *ṣahābīyāt* alone accounted for 143 women (50.4%; see Figure 2 and Table 1) when combined with other *faqīhāt* and *muḥāddithāt*, *ḥāfiẓāt al-qurān* or other pious women (*al-nisā' al-taqīyyāt*). The total number of *ṣahābīyāt* shows that they form the largest group number within the data. The superiority of their numbers highlights the intellectual and educational authorities functioned as an influential angle of perspective, through which women were noticeably recognised and honoured. It can be noted that al-Ṣafadī often framed and structured those women's biographies based on their religious authority participations and knowledge, such as Arwā bint 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib (d. 50 A.H./620 A.D.)<sup>(25)</sup> and Salmā bint Qays al-Najārīyyah<sup>(26)</sup>, who were praised for their close and direct connections to the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, whereas other examples like Umm Ḥakīm bint al-Zubayr<sup>(27)</sup> and Hind bint 'Usayd al-Anṣārī<sup>(28)</sup> were considered for their roles as scholarly contributions.<sup>(29)</sup> Significantly, the

religious manner of women's accounts as represented in the text greatly reflects the Mamluk era's cultural priorities, which associated women's participation and recognition were associated with religious piety, learning and moral reputation. Hence, it can be suggested that women's representations in *al-Wāfi bi-l-Wafayāt*, are associated with the comprehensive conceptual and intellectual notion of the Mamluk society were women's religious learning and the transmission of knowledge were regarded as essential to bearers of Islamic tradition.<sup>(30)</sup>

The examination of the biographies also reveals that the designations, such as pious woman, *ṣāliḥah* or *shaykhah ṣāliḥah* (righteous and pious female scholar), and those known for charity were portrayed as fundamental roles by al-Ṣafadī. Table 1 and Figure 2 illustrate that these religiously framed categories constituted significant categories. Notably, pious women numbered 28 (9.9%), preachers (*wā'izāt*) eight (2.8%), *ḥāfiẓāt al-qurān* three (1.1%), *faqīhāt* 14 (4.9%) and charitable women four (1.4%). Together, they constitute the largest religious sub-category, after female companions. It can be emphasised here that moral and charitable characteristics clarify how cultural and intellectual accomplishments can frequently be linked with religious virtue and the ideal conception of women's identities in Muslim societies. Women's education, piety and charitable works are described in the biographies in terms of religious and moral frameworks. Since, women's education, piety and charitable works are described in the biographies in terms of religious and moral frameworks, we argue that these elements shape how women are recognised in *al-Wāfi bi-l-Wafayāt* and how their portrayal is framed within Islamic historical narratives and collective memory.

The data presented in Table 1 and Figure 2 show a category of women whose activities were primarily literary, such as poets, writers, singers and historians. As shown in Table 1 and Figure 2, this category accounts for approximately 26% of the women in our dataset, with most of them were poets (7%), followed by writers (*kātibāt*; 4.2%) and then historians (*mu'arrikhāt*; approximately 1%). It can be assumed that cultural affairs served as an obvious model in *al-Wāfi bi-l-Wafayāt*, which is evident in the examples of women like Rābi'a al-'Adawīyyah

(22) Ibid., 10:250.

(23) Ibid., 11:265.

(24) See the next section for a chronological analysis of women's representation in *al-Wāfi bi-l-Wafayāt*.

(25) Al-Ṣafadī, *al-Wāfi bi-l-Wafayāt*, 8:236.

(26) She is the Prophet's paternal aunt. Ibid., 15:191.

(27) She is the Prophet's maternal aunt. Ibid., 13:82.

(28) Ibid., 27:231.

(29) It is important to note that the above examples do not present comprehensive insight into the documentation of al-Ṣafadī, while other examples are recognized by their family relation to the prophet or for their scholarly contributions.

(30) This notion will be examined in greater detail in the third section entitled "Reproducing the Images of Women in Mamluk Historical Memory Through al-Ṣafadī's *al-Wāfi bi-l-Wafayāt*."

(d. 185 A.H./ 801 A.D.)<sup>(31)</sup>, al-Janhā' bint Naṣīb<sup>(32)</sup>, Ḥafṣah bint al-Hājj ar-Rakūniyyah (d. 586 A.H./ 1190 A.D.)<sup>(33)</sup>, Fadl al-Shā'irah<sup>(34)</sup> and Bannān<sup>(35)</sup> were acknowledged as prominent poets, while others were renowned as qiyān (female enslaved singers and poets), such as Shāriyah<sup>(36)</sup>, Danānī<sup>(37)</sup>, Bid'ah<sup>(38)</sup>, 'Arīb<sup>(39)</sup> and Dulafā'<sup>(40)</sup>, who were famous for their literary and musical performances at elite cultural gatherings. Consequently, al-Ṣafadī's approach demonstrates that women from different social statuses and cultural backgrounds could have participated in these activities and affairs, which illustrated the high opportunities for women to contribute to the broader literary and intellectual spheres in Islamic societies.

It can be observed that al-Ṣafadī's biographies in *al-Wāfi bi-l-Wafayāt* reveal an obvious distinction among women based on their social status. According to his records, he included 11 (3.9%) female singers, all of whom were *jawāri* (enslaved women), and 20 (7%) female poets (*shā'irāt*), most of whom were free and belong to the elite class (see Table 1 and Figure 2). The data indicate that a certain number of *jawāri*, were primarily associated with entertainment and ownership, in contrast to free women who were often associated with literary achievement and intellectual production. However, the *jawāri*'s functions and activities were mainly linked to famous and wealthy men, such as caliphs, princes or court officials. Therefore, we can find that *jawāri*'s biographies were always associated with their male patrons rather than their personal agency. On the other hand, free noble women poets were acknowledged for their rank as individual females, producing a merit literary perception. This reflects how these women were more active, visible and socially recognised within al-Ṣafadī's framework. Overall, this demonstrates the extent to which women's social status could be a great aspect in the portrayal of their participations and functions in classical Muslim society within the broader of historical and biographical heritage.

After presenting a quantitative account of women's diverse roles and functions in al-Ṣafadī's biographical framework, the next section turns to a

qualitative chronological analysis that presents how women's biographies reflect changes and continuities across different eras, from the *Jāhilīyyah* to the *Ṣadr al-Islām*, Umayyad, Abbasid, Andalusī and Mamluk periods.

### Chronological Analysis of Women's Representation

According to the dataset in Figure 3 and Table 2 it appears that most of the documented women in *al-Wāfi bi-l-Wafayāt* are from the early Islamic period (36%) and the Abbasid period (28%). However, lower proportions were found in the Umayyad (6.2%), *Jāhilīyyah* (2.6%), Andalusī (1.8%) and Mamluk (7%) periods. It can be assumed that this distribution reflects the historical circumstances in which these women lived and the thematic priorities of al-Ṣafadī's biographies. This aspect will be discussed and analyse in more detail below.

The analysis of Figure 3 and Table 2 show the superiority of women in the early Islamic period in the dataset, as they represent the largest group, with a total number of 166 women (60.8%). Notably, most of these women were the *ṣahābīyāt* of the Prophet ﷺ, thus their biographies highlight their prominence and direct engagements in the formative era of Islam, and the significance of their transmission of the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth. Mashhiar al-Salman notes that early Muslim women played an important role in learning and transmitting Islamic knowledge as reliable scholars and transmitters.<sup>(41)</sup> Consequently, the high number of 166 female companions during the early Islamic period affirms their determined influence in religious and cultural roles in society. This demonstrates that the contributions of female companions were fundamental to the documentation of Islam's traditions and legacy. Evidently, al-Ṣafadī's approach presents the contributions of these women as essential to the documentation of Islam's traditions and legacy. This demonstrates how al-Ṣafadī's work relates to the previous historical and cultural traditions and norms, which preserve the central positions of women in the first generation of Islam. To a large extent, *al-Wāfi bi-l-Wafayāt* served to establish conceptions of women as models of moral authority and piety.

(31) Al-Ṣafadī, *al-Wāfi bi-l-Wafayāt*, 14:37.

(32) Ibid., 11:249.

(33) Ibid., 13:67.

(34) Ibid., 24:56.

(35) Ibid., 10:182.

(36) Ibid., 16:43.

(37) Ibid., 14:21.

(38) Ibid., 10:61.

(39) Ibid., 19:364.

(40) Ibid., 14:18.

(41) Mashhiar Hasan al-Salman, *The Noble Women Scholars of Hadith: Women's Concern with the Prophetic Hadith*, trans. Abu Hayyan Salal bin Abdul Ghafur, and Abdulhaq al-Ashanti, (London: Jamiah Media, 2010), 17–18. For another noteworthy study, see Mohammad Akram Nadwi, *Al-Muhaddithat: The Women Scholars in Islam*, (London: Interface Publications, 2013), 17–245.

For the Abbasid period, Figure 3 and Table 2 represent the second highest proportion of women in the dataset, with a total of 59 women (21.6%), drawing attention to their considerable intellectual and cultural activities and roles. Obviously, al-Şafadī focuses on Abbasid women as scholars, pious, writers, poets and singers, thus he represents a range of women's roles that could be obtained. However, his range of interest reflects the social practices of Abbasid society, where women from different classes, both free and enslaved, could participate in intellectual and religious activities.<sup>(42)</sup> Al-Şafadī's perspective clearly portrays and acknowledges Abbasid women's experiences and the roles they performed during this period, and distinguishes them from other eras, such as the *Jāhilīyyah*, Umayyad, Andalusī and Mamluk periods.

In comparison, during the Umayyad period, the text records around 17 women (6.2%), many of these whom are mentioned only in relation to male family members, as wives or mothers, or noted for their beauty, references that were not counted as independent roles or functions in this study. Others were described as poets or nurses, and a small number were identified as Ḥadīth transmitters (see Figure 3 and Table 2). This highlights al-Şafadī's narrow approach to documenting women's contributions in this period. While many other historical studies provide a great deal of information about women's roles and activities in the Umayyad period<sup>(43)</sup>, al-Şafadī offers limited representation of their contributions and functions. However, The *Jāhilīyyah* period is represented by an even smaller number of women than the Umayyad, with only seven biographies recorded (2.6%) (see Figure 3 and Table 2). Most of these women were known for their poetry. Although the pre-Islamic era celebrated prominent female poets and singers, thus al-Şafadī limited his attention to this group which could reflect to his conceptual priorities, similar to the Umayyad period.

A similar observation is noted for the Andalusī period, which shows that only five women were

recorded (1.8%) (see Figure 3 and Table 2). Most importantly, these women were primarily pious, jurists, Ḥadīth transmitters. Despite the historical prominence of Andalusian women in intellectual and cultural spheres as scholars, writers, singers and poets, again al-Şafadī highlights only a few women in this category. His approach indicates a priority for women who fulfilled scholarly and religious standards and contributions, rather than providing a comprehensive notion of the activities of the women in this era. A similar concept also applies to al-Şafadī's own era, the Mamluk period, for which he documented 19 women (7%) (see Figure 3 and Table 2), who were predominantly jurists, *muḥāddithāt*, *shaykhāt* and pious. This focus suggests that al-Şafadī's religious orientation favours women linked to the religious and moral values he considered important.<sup>(44)</sup> Although, to some extent, the number of Mamluk women may seem realistic, they are few when compared to the large number of women from the early Islamic and Abbasid eras. This selectivity highlights both al-Şafadī's inherent values and biographical approach, as well as his preference for how women's functions and roles are portrayed in various historical contexts. The following section builds on this analysis by examining the social and cultural context of the Mamluk period to explain al-Şafadī's selectivity and implications of how he documented the image and women in *al-Wāfi bi-l-Wafayāt*.

### Reproducing the Images of Women in Mamluk Historical Memory Through al-Şafadī's *al-Wāfi bi-l-Wafayāt*

Konrad Hirschle in his work *Medieval Arabic Historiography: Authors as Actors*, argues that medieval historians can be considered active participants rather than passive recorders of events. He stresses that it is unambiguous that what they wrote clearly reflects to a great extent their intellectual and cultural societies.<sup>(45)</sup> By assuming that what they wrote reflected their intellectual and cultural backgrounds, this study considers al-Şafadī as a dynamic agent who outlined historical and moral subjects through selective narrative contexts, rather than by simply gathering biographical material. Fundamentally, al-Şafadī's portrayal of women reflects the intellectual, cultural, and moral standards of his own Mamluk society, and represents a model of how historiography served as an

(42) It is important to note that the study shows al-Şafadī's differentiation between the roles acquired by free women and slave women. See back p. 5 for more details.

(43) For examples, as Buthaynah Bin Ḥusayn, *Nisā' al-Khulafā' al-Umawīyīn (qirā'ah Jadīdah)*, (Bayrūt: Manshūrāt Al-Jamal, 2014); Amal Obead Althubiti, "Al-Adāwī al-Siyāsiyah li-al-Nisā fi Ahad al-Dawlah al-Umawīyah wa-Musāhamātihuna fi Mukhtalaf Majālāt al-hayāh: Nisā' al-Bait al-Umawīyah Unmūdhajan," *Majallat Buḥūth Kullīyat al-Ādāb*, Jāmi'at al-munfiyah, 132, 2, (2020): 3-25, <http://search.mandumah.com/Record/1231684>.

(44) For more discussion, see p. 5 and the discussion in the next section.

(45) Konrad Hirschle, *Medieval Arabic Historiography: Authors as Actors* (London: Routledge, 2006), 1-6.

interpretive act rather than a basic record. Following this perspective, this section examines how al-Şafadī re-imaged the portrayal of women of his own Mamluk society.

*Al-Wāfi bi-l-Wafayāt* indicates several kinds of methods in which women participate and engage in moral and religious contexts. Yet, the examination of women and their chronological distribution in the text suggests that al-Şafadī's biographies were influenced by specific objectives to define models of women who were associated with the social and dominant religious values of the Mamluk period. Although social and cultural historians have analysed on the societies guided by the methodology adopted by al-Şafadī, he either emphasized or omitted women's roles and functions.<sup>(46)</sup> However, through the examination of this study, we suggest that he underlines Mamluk women's engagements in different activities, making religious, cultural and social contributions, thus the available examples selected by al-Şafadī represent a collective historical memory of women of the period. As discussed earlier in the first and second sections on his portrayal of women across various Islamic eras, he highlights women's contributions to Ḥadīth and religious scholarship. This approach supports the hypothesis of this research and assists the broader conception of al-Şafadī's perception of women's agency within both the moral and intellectual context of Islamic tradition and society's collective memory.

It is worth mentioning that historical and literary sources have highlighted the cultural and intellectual activities in which women in Mamluk society participated and gained great opportunities for educational and cultural participation during this era. Obviously, our previous discussion shows that Mamluk women representations in *al-Wāfi bi-l-Wafayāt* classified as preachers, jurists, poets and singers, were noted for their literary and scholarly pursuits. Consequently, these social and intellectual spheres benefited from the influence of Mamluk norms and traditions, which distinguished women and gave them a great advantage in this religious field during this era. Al-Şafadī asserted that Mamluk women were described in pious epithets as *shaykhah ṣāliḥah* or *mu'ammirah* (long lived), *muḥāddithāt*, *faqīhah* and *ālimāh*. This was said of, for example, 'Ā'ishah bint Muḥammad Ḥarrānīyah (d. 736 A.H./1336 A.D.)<sup>(47)</sup>, 'Āmina bint Ibrāhīm b. Faḍl, Sitt al-

Ahal (d. 703 A.H./1303 A.D.)<sup>(48)</sup> and Sitt al-Wuzarā' (d. 717 A.H./1327 A.D.)<sup>(49)</sup>. Therefore, al-Şafadī clearly focused on portraying women as models of pious figures that could reflect broader patterns in the devout Mamluk society. Mohsen Khalifa's study on female scholars in the Mamluk period supports our hypothesis, as he provides important discussion on women as central figures in the religious and scholarly networks of the era.<sup>(50)</sup> The analysis of the dataset (see Figure 2, 2, and Table 1, 2), determining the great extents to which Mamluk women were scholars and literary figures, indicating that al-Şafadī's choices in *al-Wāfi bi-l-Wafayāt* reflect the dominant religious, cultural and intellectual values of the time.

Medieval Islamic historians and scholars like, Randi Deguilhem, Khalifa, Rīm Fahd al-Sābiḥ and others<sup>(51)</sup>, have focused on the Mamluk era as a period when women had great opportunities and played effective roles in engaging in *fiqh*, literature, religious education and poetry across Egypt, Damascus and other regions. They argued that women took part in mosques, religious activities, schools and religious gatherings and circles, and in the founding *awqāf* (single *waqf*) and *ribāṭ* (single *ribāṭ*), which combined both charitable and educational functions.<sup>(52)</sup> Although there is significant knowledge supporting women's high education in the Mamluk era, primarily revolving around the religious fields, it is essential to note that preparing women to perform religious rituals must have been associated with the boundaries of Islamic

(48) Ibid., 9:221.

(49) Ibid., 15:73.

(50) Mohsen Abdelaty Haredy Khalifa, *Female Transmission of Hadith in the Mamluk Period: An Annotated Edition and Study of Ibn Hajar's Mu'jam Ash-Shaykha Maryam*, (Phd diss., LIRS, Faculty of Humanities: Leiden University, 2014), 59–70.

(51) Randi Deguilhem, "The Waqf in the City," *The City in the Islamic World*, (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2008), 923–925, 928, 94; Khalifa, Ibid., 67–79; Rīm Fahd al-Sābiḥ, "Al-Athar al-Ijtimā'ī 'l-Mar'ah Khilāl al-'Aşr al-Mamlūkī' (648–823 A.H./1250–1517 A.D.)," *Waqā'i' Tārīkhīyah*, Jāmi'at al-Qāhirah Markaz al-Buḥūth wa-al-Dirāsāt al-Tārīkhīyah, 1, 33: (2020): 223–225.

(52) *Awqāf* refers to a charitable endowment used to fund religious, social, educational and social institutions. Among the *Awqāf* were *Ribāṭ*, which combined charitable, religious and educational functions and often provided services for indigent widows or divorced women. See Aḥmad Mukhtār Umar, *Mu'jam al-Lughah al-'Arabīyah al-Mu'āşirah* (Riyādh: 'Ālam al-kutub, 2008), 2:847, 3:2485.

(46) For examples, Al-Sābiḥ, al Salman, al-Shammarī, Deguilhem, Jamāl al-Dīn and Khalifa and others.

(47) Al-Şafadī, *al-Wāfi bi-l-Wafayāt*, 16:348.

laws.<sup>(53)</sup> Women in this era could issue *'ijāzah* (scholarly permission) to both men and women, thus, the educational system consisted of scholarly licenses to certify jurists and Ḥadīth scholars.<sup>(54)</sup> One can argue that the flexible opportunities provided to women for scholarly participation allowed women to engage in religious practices and legitimized their roles as jurists and Ḥadīth transmitters.

To a great extent, the portrayal of al-Şafadī in *al-Wāfi bi-l-Wafayāt*, highlights Mamluk women's presence and authority in and contributions to the scholarly customs of the period. Since al-Şafadī illustrated the ideal notion of womanhood associated with religious learning, piety and virtue<sup>(55)</sup>, as well as his biographical selections revealing a value frame in which educated women could be recognised and celebrated for their authority and moral conduct. Thus, his biographical approach shaped a path for the historiographical heritage of Muslim women in the Mamluk era.

Further indication can be found in al-Şafadī's interest in women's biographies, in his other work *A'yān al-ʿAşr wa-A'wān al-Naşr*<sup>(56)</sup>, where he expresses his main sustained concern with the representation of women during the Mamluk period. Likewise, *al-Wāfi bi-l-Wafayāt* and *A'yān al-ʿAşr* cover biographical accounts of both men and women from the seventh and eighth centuries A.H. (13th and 14th centuries A.D.), underlining their roles in the Mamluk social and intellectual context. Whereas *al-Wāfi bi-l-Wafayāt* primarily records

women from earlier historical periods, *A'yān al-ʿAşr* clearly focuses on women of al-Şafadī's time, particularly their roles in religious and cultural practices. Considering the above, it is perhaps worth mentioning that al-Şafadī's approach in *al-Wāfi bi-l-Wafayāt* and *A'yān al-ʿAşr* are parallel to or interact with other primary sources found in the biographical writings of other Mamluk scholars from the 9th A.H./15th A.D. century. Primary contemporary works by Aḥmad b. Khallikān (d. 681 A.H./ 1282 A.D.), Muḥammad al-Kutubī (d. 745 A.H./ 1363 A.D.), Kamāl al-Dīn al-Udfuwī (d. 748 A.H./ 1348 A.D.), Ibn Ḥajar and Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūfī (d. 911 A.H./ 1505 A.D.),<sup>(57)</sup> show similar forms in highlighting women's functions and roles at that time and they obviously emphasized their scholarly networks, including religious scholars.

It could be suggested that al-Şafadī's writing can be seen as a model for later scholars' approaches to the documentation of women, especially in illustrating the continuity of a broader Mamluk biographical framework in which religious, intellectual and social principles influenced the documentation of women's contributions across the medieval Islamic periods. It can be concluded that since al-Şafadī's portrayal of women attempts to reintegrate female figures within his Mamluk intellectual and moral conceptual frameworks, his approach in *al-Wāfi bi-l-Wafayāt* clearly contributed to the development of the historical memory of women in Muslim biographical literature.

### Conclusion

By analysing and verifying women's representation through al-Şafadī's book, *al-Wāfi bi-l-Wafayāt*, this study has furnished certain knowledge that serves as both a cultural and historical source, contributing to guiding the collected biographies and narratives of women across various Islamic eras. Using both quantitative and qualitative analysis, this research revealed al-Şafadī's obvious tendency to select women

(53) Nikki R. Keddie and Baron Beth, eds. "Women and Islamic Education in the Mamluk Period," *Women in Middle Eastern History: Shifting Boundaries in Sex and Gender*, (London: Yale University Press, 1991), 148–150, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt1bhkp33>.

(54) Khalifa, *Female Transmission of Hadith in the Mamluk Period*, 76; Keddie and Beth, *Ibid.*, 144–14.

(55) It is important to note that, from our perspective, Doris Behrens-Abouseif's work demonstrates that the lives of Mamluk women were deeply influenced by the principles of piety and morality, which defined not only their beauty but also their religious devotion and social status, as indicators of virtue and integrity in Mamluk society. Although Behrens-Abouseif does not explicitly address this point, her work on Mamluk society suggest the background moral and social context in which these concepts were shaped. To a great extent, stereotypes of Mamluk women completely influenced how women framed their portrayal in literary and biographical customs and traditions, as well as how they described their daily conduct and social presence. See Doris Behrens-Abouseif, *Dress and Dress Code in Medieval Cairo*, (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2023), 149-169.

(56) Şalāh al-Dīn al-Şafadī, *A'yān al-ʿAşr wa-A'wān al-Naşr*, ed. 'Alī. Abū Zayd, Māzin et al, (Bayrūt, Lubnān, Dimashq, Sūriyah, 1998).

(57) For their respective biographical works, see: Aḥmad b. Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-ʿA'yān wa-ʿAnbā' ʿAbnā' al-Zamān*, ed. Iḥsān ʿAbbās, (Bayrūt: Dār Şādir, 1994); Muḥammad al-Kutubī, *Fawāʾ al-Wafayāt*, ed. Iḥsān ʿAbbās, 3rd edition, (Bayrūt: Dār Şādir, 2012); Kamāl al-Dīn al-Udfuwī, *al-Ṭāli' al-sa'īd al-jāmi' asmā' nujabā' al-Şa'īd*, ed. Sa'd Muḥammad Hasan, (al-Qāhirah: al-dār al-Miṣriyah lil-Ta'lif wa-al-Naşr, 1966); al-ʿAsqalānī, *al-Durar al-Kāminah fī A'yān al-Mi'ah al-Thāminah*; Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūfī, *Bughyat al-Wu'ah fī Tabaqāt al-Lughawīyīn wa-al-Nuḥāh, Nuzhat al-Julasā' fī Ash'ār al-Nisā'*, ed. Muḥammad Abū al-Faḍl Ibrāhīm, (Şayḍā: al-Maṭba'ah al-ʿaşriyah, 1982).

associated with religious scholarship, moral virtue and social fame. Al-Şafadī's approach framework broadly structured and reflected the broader Mamluk value society of the religious and cultural norms. This is shown not only regarding women from the early Islamic period, but also to those of his own time, which refined our understanding of how women's roles were remembered and portrayed in various historical contexts.

The statistical findings of this study illustrate that women engaged in religious and charitable activities made up more than half of the total figures across the different Islamic eras, whereas literary and social figures formed small proportions. The study thus reveals that al-Şafadī's work functions as both a record of religious and historical figures and as a conceptual framework and model that helped shape moral and intellectual perceptions of women in Mamluk society. It also highlights the continuing importance of biographical writings as a key role in constructing collective memory in Islamic historiography and in various contexts. Significantly, this study presents that al-Şafadī did not merely produce earlier biographical conventions but rather adapted them to articulate the ideals of his own era. His portrayals reveal both social, cultural and moral evaluations that evolved across time. Thus, this study provides a greater understanding of the dynamic relationship between historiographies, cultural, and moral ideology in premodern Muslim scholarship.

By re-evaluating the contexts of women in the biographical collection of al-Şafadī, this study contributed to a greater insight into how cultural, moral, and historical authorship intersects in the medieval Islamic period. While this research presents a great insight into women in al-Şafadī's *al-Wāfi bi-l-Wafayāt*, other biographical collections, such as those by Ibn Khallikān, Ibn Taghrībirdī (d. 874 A.H./1470 A.D.), or others awaiting future study, are also necessary to achieve a deeper and more comprehensive knowledge of women's representation across Islamic traditions. To gain a greater, more comprehensive knowledge of the portrayals of women through Islamic history, some gaps must be examined by performing an analysis of biographical collections and other historiographical sources. The hope is that the ambiguity of women's representation in medieval Islamic biographical sources will be addressed by researchers.

#### Appendices:

**Table 1: Categorization and Distribution of Women's Roles and Functions in *al-Wāfi bi-l-Wafayāt***

Role / Function	Number of women
Companions ( <i>ṣaḥābīyāt</i> )	143
Ḥadīth transmitters ( <i>muhādithāt</i> )	19
Jurists ( <i>faqīhāt</i> )	14
Qur'ān Memorizers ( <i>ḥāfiẓāt al-qurān</i> )	3
Pious women	28
Scholars ( <i>ālimāt</i> )	1
Poets ( <i>shā'irāt</i> )	20
Writers ( <i>kātibāt</i> )	12
Historians ( <i>mu'arrikhāt</i> )	1
Preachers ( <i>wā'izāt</i> )	8
Charitable Women ( <i>al-nisā' al-khayerrāt</i> )	4
Slave women ( <i>jawārī</i> )	20
Singers ( <i>mughniyyāt</i> )	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>248</b> <sup>(58)</sup>

**Table 2: Distribution of Women in *al-Wāfi bi-l-Wafayāt* by Historical Period**

Historical Period	Number of Women
<i>Jāhilīyyah</i> Period	7
Early Islam Period ( <i>Şadr al-Islām</i> )	166
Umayyad Period	17
Abbasid Period	59
Andalusī Period	5
Mamluk Period	19
<b>Total</b>	<b>273</b> <sup>(59)</sup>

(58) The total number of categories (284 women) does not equal the total number of individual women (304), because some women were included in more than one category, while others were recorded without any specific role and were consequently not included in any category.

(59) It is worth mentioning that al-Şafadī in some cases did not include detailed chronological information, such as life dates, family affiliations, or other background references. However, the total number still serves as the basis for our analysis in this table.

**Figure 2: Categories and Proportions of Women in al-Wāfi bi-l-Wafayāt**

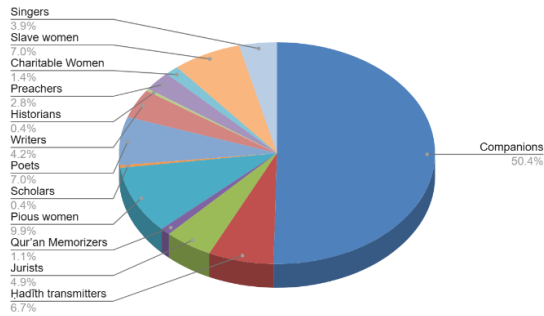


Figure 2: This figure shows the main categories of women documented, indicating the relative proportions of social, religious and cultural roles. Percentages correspond to the total number of 284 of women classified by functional roles (see table 1).

**Figure 3: Chronological Analysis of Women's Representation in al-Wāfi bi-l-Wafayāt**

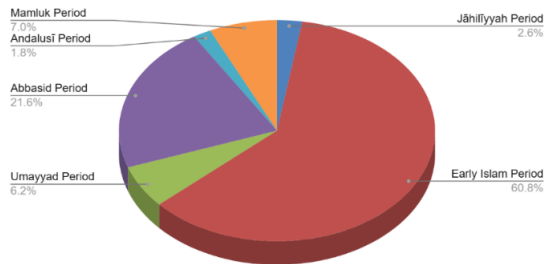


Figure 3: This figure represents the number and percentage of women recorded across various historical periods, illustrating shifts in representation across different eras. Percentages correspond to a total of women 273 (see table 2).

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