Al-Madīna Al-Baddāla in Al-Farabi's Ārā' Ahl Al-Madīna Al-Fāḍila Wa Muḍāḍḍātihā (The Virtuous City): An Alternative Name

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ABSTRACT

The paper discusses the name of the second 'ignorant city' of the faulty associations mentioned in *Ārā' ahl al-madīna al-fāḍila wa muḍāḍḍātihā* (The Virtuous City) and *Kitāb Assiyāsa Al-madaniyya* (The Political Regime) by Abū Nasr al-Fārābī. In the first book the city is named بدالة (baddāla= changing city). In the second book, it is named نذالة (nadhāla= the city of meanness). The definitions of the two cities are almost identical which raises the question: why are there two different names for one city? On the other hand, when comparing both the definitions with the two names, it becomes clear that none of them is compatible with the meaning wanted. The paper therefore discusses this issue adopting the hypothesis that the word in question is misread most probably by the ancient scribes due to confusing the Arabic diacritical characters composing it. The paper goes through all the similar diacritical characters that could be confused, reviews all the words possible resulting from combining these characters, and eventually, studies the lexical meanings of these words and compares them to the city's definitions. The paper concludes that the compatible name is نذّالة naddāla (the city of avidity, avarice and meanness).

Al-Farabi

Al-Farabi (870- 950) is one of the most prominent medieval Arab Muslim philosophers. He created a turning point between his predecessors and successors especially in his approach towards philosophy and religion. It is well known that he studied Greek philosophy and contributed much to reconcile it with Islam. According to the historical sources, he studied in Harrān, one of the most important intellectual centers of Christianity [Ibn Abi Usaibiʻa, 1986: 604, 605; Ibn Khillikan, 1994: 153]

Al-Farabi was not of a little written production, but a great deal of this production was destined to loss. One of the main causes of this loss is that he wrote in a non-systematic way, in pamphlets that his disciples had difficulty copying, collecting and storing [Ibn Abi Usaibi'a, 1986: 609]. His writings influenced many of the following philosophers such as the Brethren of Purity, Avicenna and Averroes among many others.

His methodology depends on the identification, classification and analysis of the elements of a subject, benefiting from the tools of logic and unprecedented taxonomic skills, at least in the Islamic world. These skills are clearly shown in his extraordinary *Iḥsā' Al'ulūm* (Enumeration of the Sciences = *De scientiis*).

Despite the variety of his philosophical corpus, Al-Farabi is better known in the field of political philosophy clearly reflected in *Ārā'* (The Virtuous City) - a work considered one of the most ancient utopias of Islamic history, if not the most ancient.

Ārā' ahl al-madīna al-fāḍila wa muḍāḍḍātihā (The Virtuous City)

In fact the exact dating of the work is not clear. But one of the sources confirms that Al-Farabi began to draft it in Baghdad, the Abbasid capital, and completed it in Egypt around 948, two years before his death. We also learn that the work was originally five separate works titled respectively: The Virtuous State, the Barbarian State, the Sinful State, the Revolutionary State and the Anarchic State. Once in Egypt, he again went through the manuscript and provided chapter headings. Later, someone requested him to add subheadings to clarify the division of the subject matter. He did so in Cairo in the year 337/948, dividing the book into six subsections [Ibn Abi Usaibi'a, 1986:608]

We must report here that most of the editions of the work that we have in hand today are divided into thirty-seven chapters, while Walzer's English edition [Walzer, 1985], for example, follows the original six chapters: no major difference, however, in the content.

Following the division of thirty-seven chapters, we can classify the topics covered in the work into two main fields:

The first one, consisting of twenty-five chapters, is dedicated to explaining the Farabian theory known as *Alfayḍ Al'ilāhi* (divine emanation). It can be summarized as a hierarchical vision of the celestial and terrestrial worlds: it begins with the highest perfection and descends gradually down to our imperfect earthly world. Perfection, from the Farabian perspective, is freeing and separating oneself completely from matter. Therefore, on the top of the pyramid there is the First Cause which is an incorporeal, unique, omnipotent intelligence or intellect. The ultimate perfection, the First Cause, is perfect also because its existence does not depend on any other existence; on the contrary, it is the cause of every other existence. Al-Farabi identifies the First Cause with God. From the First Cause ten entities or beings emanate. These beings are also incorporeal or immaterial, and therefore perfect intellects. The perfection of the

separate intellects is naturally of a degree lower than the divine perfection, because their existence depends on an external cause, the First Cause.

Each of the incorporeal intellects thinks its own existence and 'intelligizes' the First Intellect, God, and is responsible of managing one of the heavenly bodies. The hierarchical order of these ten intellects starts then from the most excellent and gradually to the tenth, the least excellent, called the Active Intellect which responsibility is our sublunary/ terrestrial world, and is, moreover, the link between the two worlds: terrestrial and celestial, human and divine.

The second field, composed of twelve chapters, is dedicated to the description of human society, and, therefore, of the perfect city as the best model of human society; its sovereign and his qualities; the things common to the inhabitants of the excellent city; and, finally, the cities opposite to the excellent one.

It is clear that the first field represents the metaphysical part of the work. The second, however, is the political part. Metaphysics and politics are not separated from each other though; Al-Farabi believes that the excellent city should be structured according the hierarchical model of the world: The head of the city is the most excellent man of all others, and his relation to other citizens is analogous to the relation of the First Cause with respect to living things. Thus, the order of the citizens is analogous to the hierarchical order of the incorporeal beings: the most excellent citizens, and therefore the ones closest to the head of the city, do the noblest acts, while the less excellent the citizens are, the lowest the acts they do and the lowest their social degree is. Then there are the cities that are not structured according to the hierarchical metaphysical model. They are called the cities opposite to the virtuous city.

The second ignorant city baddāla/ nadhāla (changing/ mean): an alternative name

Al-Farabi's writing style is known to have accuracy in terminology, deepness of meaning and rational coherence in linking different topics: "The book is written in a sober and clear style; the author makes no attempt to achieving literary brilliance by the use of diverting digressions or attractive rhetorical devices" [Walzer, 1985: 5]

In spite of this, in his enumeration of the faulty cities, or those opposed to the excellent city, we find two different names for one city: **baddāla** (changing) and **nadhāla** (meanness). In the light of the three Farabian stylistic characteristics mentioned above, the names used for this one city are going to be subjected to study and analysis. The current paper is an attempt to understand the compatibility between each name and its semantic meaning.

In the *Ārā'*, there are four types of the cities opposed to the excellent one: the ignorant city *Madīna ğāhiliyya*; the wicked *Madīna Fāsiqa*; the city which deliberately changed its character *Madīna Mubaddila*; and the city which has missed the right path though faulty judgment *Madīna ḍālla* [Al-Farabi, 2011: 89,90]. The Ignorant one has seven types: the city of necessity *Madīna aḍ-ḍarūra*; the changing city *Madīna baddāla*; the city of depravity *Madīna al-*

ḫissa wa aš-šaqwa; the city of honor *Madīna al-karāma*; the city of power *Madīna at-taġallub*; and the democratic/ anarchic city *Madīna al- ǧamāʿiyya* [Al-Farabi, 2011: 89,90]. It is possible to interpret many of the strictures of the ignorant cities as references to the actual conditions of life in Bagdad around A.D. 900 [Walzer, 1985: 4].

Striking is, in fact, the name of the second ignorant city: in the *Ārā'*, Al-Farabi calls it **al-madina al-baddāla**, which literally translates to "the changing city" or "the city of constant change". While in *Assiyāsa Al-madaniyya*, the same city is called **madinat al-nadhāla** which literaly translates to "the city of moral depravity" [Al-Farabi, 1964: 88,89]. However, the number of the ignorant cities in the two books remains intact; six cities. Striking again is the fact that the two definitions of **al-baddāla** and **al-nadhāla** are almost identical:

Al-baddāla: the aim of its people is to co-operate in the acquisition of wealth and riches, not in order to enjoy something else which can be got through wealth, but because they regard wealth as the sole aim in life [Al-Farabi, 2011: 89,90]

Al-nadhāla: the one in which people cooperate to obtain wealth, material prosperity and abundance of things that can be bought by means of silver and gold coins, accumulating them in greater quantities of the necessary, with no other purpose than the love of opulence or out of avarice, without spending goods except the indispensable for the subsistence of bodies. [...] Wealth is obtained in many ways analogous to those with which one obtains the necessary, such as agriculture, herding, hunting and theft, or through voluntary social relations (*mu'āmalāt*) such as trade, rent [of properties], etc [Al-Farabi, 1964: 88,89]

It is evident from the two definitions that there is no substantial difference. The only difference is that the second one additionally explains in detail the ways in which riches are collected.

The two different names given to this one city has caused some controversy between those who studied and commented on Al-Farabi. A few of them [Abu Rayyan, 1992: 265; Zayed, 2000: 56] argue that **al-baddāla** and **al-nadhāla** are actually two different cities. And some of them add **nadhāla** mentioned in *Assiyāsa* to the six cities mentioned in the *Ārā'* making the total number of the ignorant cities seven: "In *Kitāb Assiyāsa Al-madaniyya*, Al-Farabi adds a seventh city to the ignorant ones" [Fakhoury &Aljarr, 1993: 149]. We strictly disagree with this opinion for the simple fact that Al-Farabi never lists **al-baddāla** and **al-nadhāla** together neither in *Ārā'* nor in *Assiyāsa*.

In addition, studying the two definitions given above, it is evident that we are in front of one single city. The abbreviation in the city's definition in *Ārā'* could be due to at least two motives: 1. the composition of *Ārā'* took place years after the composition of *Assiyāsa*, 2. the *Ārā'*, as mentioned above, was written over several stages. Therefore, it is not wrong to say that the second definition found

in *Ārā'* is the same as the first one found in *Assiyāsa* but in an abbreviated form. So it is clear that this is a single city, not two.

This controversy has affected the foreign translations of *Ārā'* and *Assiyāsa* as well. In the Italian translation of *Ārā'*, **al-baddāla** is translated into *la città rovesciata* [Campanini, 1996: 227] While in the French translation, it is translated into *la cité de l'échange* [Jaussen, 1949: 86]. In the Italian edition of *Assiyāsa,* **al-nadhāla** is translated into *la città vile* [Campanini, 2007: 345], while in the French edition, Vallat gives the city the title *la cité oligarchique* but, in the city's description, he translates **al-nadhāla** literally to *la constitution sordide et la communauté formée des gens aux moeurs sordides*. [Vallat, 2012: 190].

In the English edition of *Ārā'*, on the other hand, Walzer translates **al-baddāla** into 'the city of meanness' [Walzer, 1985: 225]. It seems that he completely neglects **al-baddāla** given its incompatibility, and borrows the city's name as it is in *Assiyāsa*, i.e. **al-nadhāla**, since one of the lexical meanings of meanness is lack of generosity. Although meanness could be more compatible taken into consideration that the citizens "do not spend if not on the indispensable for the subsistence of the bodies", it still is not compatible with the lexical meaning of **al-nadhāla** in Arabic, and not enough to express the main quality of the citizens which is the extreme avarice for wealth and material gain. Extreme avarice is a thing and lack of generosity is something else although they often are put together. This is going to be more clarified further on.

The city's name is still ambiguous; on one side, if the two definitions are for the same single city, why does Al-Farabi call it **al-baddāla** here and **al-nadhāla** there? On the other hand, these two words are way too far from being synonyms. A possible explanation of this ambiguity is that Al-Farabi's language is abstract and his writings are pregnant with theorizing, and concepts and words that are not familiar [Hammu, 2011: 10]. Walzer [1985: 12] also agrees with this opinion confirming that "he consistently uses the abstract style with which the Christian translators of the eighth, ninth and tenth centuries had recently enriched Arabic prose. This means that the terms he adopts are for the most part unusual, being often the equivalent of Greek and/ or Syriac terms, and therefore not obviously associated with familiar common Arabic terms".

This could explain the use of **al-baddāla** which, as native Arabs, we confirm to be unfamiliar and unusual as will be seen shortly. But **al-nadhāla** is completely excluded from this affirmation. Moreover, the unfamiliarity cannot explain the fact that the two words are not synonyms. Actually Bu Melhem [1996: 101] completely excludes **al-nadhāla** on the basis that it is improper and not compatible with the description of the city's inhabitants.

For farther clarification, below are the lexical definitions of **nadhāla** given in some of the ancient Arabic language dictionaries:

nadhāla[1]**:**

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[1] The determiner (al-) is omitted since it does not affect the meaning.

a. *maṣdar: raǧulun nadhlun wa nadhilun man tazdarīhi fī ḫilqatihi wa ʿaqlihi* (noun: villainous person: a person who is despised either because of his physical appearance or his reason) [Al-Farāhīdī, 2003, vol. 8: 186; Ibn Manthūr, 1994, vol. 11: 656; Alfairūzabādī, 2005, vol. 1: 1062; Azzubaidi, 1975, vol. 30, 477]

b. *maṣdar: ḫissa: nadhlun wa nadhilun alladhī tazdarīhi fī ḫilqatihi wa ʿaqlihi* (noun: villainous person; a person that people despise because of his physical appearance or his reason) [Al-Harawī, 2001, vol. 14: 311]

c. *maṣdar: ḫissa: nadhlun wa nadhilun alḫasīs almuḫtaqar fī ǧamīʿi aḥwālihi*: (noun: villainous person; despicable and contemptible in every aspect) [Ibn Sīda, 2000, vol. 10: 71]

It is clear from the definitions above that the meaning of **nadhāla** is not compatible with the description of the citizens who exaggerate in collecting and accumulating riches. Very striking again is that the synonym of **nadhāla**, as reported by the dictionaries above, is **ḫissa**, the very name of the third ignorant city *Madinat Al-ḫissa wa aṣṣuqūṭ*: "the aim of its people is the enjoyment of the pleasure connected with food and drink and sexual intercourse, and in general of the pleasures of the senses and of the imagination, and to give preference to entertainment and idle play in every form and in every way" [Al-Farabi, 2011: 90]. Here Al-Farabi's choice of **ḫissa** is accurate in the basis of the depravity and immorality of the citizens. The foreign translations are also accurate in the case of this (**ḫissa**= **nadhāla**) city: in the Italian translation, it is *la città della depravazione e della bassezza* [Campanini, 1996: 229]; in the French translation, it is *la cité de l'abjection et du malheur* [Jaussen, 1949: 86], and in the English translation, it is *the city of depravity and baseness* [Walzer, 1985: 225]

In other words, both **nadhāla** and **ḫissa** are suitable to describe the qualities of the third ignorant city, but not the second one. The question is then: how could **nadhāla** and **ḫissa** be synonyms but each one of them is a name of two cities with completely different qualities? In this regard Bu Melhem comments "we do not know why Al-Farabi chooses this word that does not apply to the citizens' qualities. A villainous is a despicable person in his religion or pedigree. The citizens of this city are not villainous" [Bu Melhem, 1996: 11]. Thus we agree that **nadhāla** is completely improper.

It is clear now that the English translation of **nadhāla** (meanness) is not compatible; the lexical meaning of **nadhāla** in Arabic does not match the lexical meaning of *meanness* in English. **Nadhāla** in Arabic is used for someone despicable in his religion, morals or reason, while *meanness* in English is used for someone who is not generous. Thus *meanness* is not a synonym, so to speak, of **nadhāla**. The English lexical meaning of *meanness* might be appropriate, to some certain point, but it is not completely right as it is going to be explained further.

The question then is: Why does Al-Farabi use a wrong word? In an attempt to explain this mistake Saqer assumes that the right word is **baddāla,** and suggests that the problem lies in the Arabic diacritical characters composing it:

"Another opinion I consider more probable is that **nadhāla** نذالة is in fact not but the same **baddāla** بدالة. The error is actually in the location of the diacritical points. The right word is **baddāla** بدالة, but the diacritical point of the initial ب (b) was transferred from the bottom to the top transforming it to a ن (n). In addition, a diacritical point was added to the د (d) transforming it to a ذ (dh]). Probably the clearest evidence of this error in diacritical points is that if we read what Al-Farabi wrote about **nadhāla** نذالة, we certainly will find that he refers to the same **baddāla** بدالة." [Saqer, 1989: 55]

We find Saqer's hypothesis very convincing and backed with a lot of historical examples. Both *Ārā* and *Assiyāsa* are not excluded from these errors especially that they were copied and recopied by hand hundreds of times. Walzer [1998: 30] lists fifteen manuscripts of the *Ārā* along with the original one from A.D. 941. He also confirms "the majority of the manuscripts are complete, although sections of the text have been inadvertently omitted here and there or dropped out by the loss of the leaves due to physical damage […] philosophical texts were, it seems, written without diacritical points more frequently than others, and scribes have not infrequently misunderstood the exemplar which they copied and added the wrong consonantal signs" [Walzer, 1998: 22].

The scribes' mistakes make Saqer's hypothesis more credible. Therefore we agree with him that the number of the ignorant city is six not seven. We also find it acceptable to dismiss **nadhāla** for its incompatibility. But before we haste to decide that **baddāla** is the right word like Saqer, the Italian and the French translations did, we first must go through its lexical meanings exactly the way we did with **nadhāla**.

Baddāla:
ism: *ṣarrāf*: *baqqāl; bāi' al-mawadd al-ġitha'iyya al-maḥfūẓa* (noun: greengrocer; a dealer in food and household provisions; cambist [*Al-Mu'ǧam al-Waṣìt*, 2004: 44; Ibn Manzur, 1994: 40]

Even if selling food and household provisions involves the practice of commerce, it still does not match the definition of **baddāla**; commerce is one of the many other ways the citizens of **baddāla** collect wealth with. Money-exchange, on the other hand, seems close to the meaning, nonetheless it is not mentioned as one of the methods of collecting and accumulating money. Besides, exchanging money is one thing and accumulating it avidly is another thing.

Baddāla:

sìġhat mubālaġa, i.e. a hyperbole. Hyperbole in Arabic roughly means the intensity and condensation of meaning. It mainly exaggerates the meaning of the present participle. Saleh [2005: 7] summarizes the Hyperbolic meanings in Arabic as: a) expressing the extreme meaning of an attribute, b) exceeding the limit of the attribute in terms of place or time, and c) penetration, ability, addition, exaggeration and exceeding limits. In terms of derivation, hyperbole is derived from the trilateral intransitive or transitive verb to emphasize, strengthen and exaggerate the meaning [Yacoub 1996:128]. A simple example would be:

Table 1

Trilateral verb	Present participle	Hypebole
Kadhaba (كذب) Lie	Kādheb (كاذب) Lying/ lier	Kadhdhāb (كذّاب) Lies alot/ big lier
Saraqa (سرق) Steal	Sāreq (سارق) Stealing/ thief	Sarrāq (سراق) Steals alot/ big thief

Accordingly, **baddāla** is a hyperbole derived from the verb **badala**. Following are the meanings of **badala** in some of the ancient Arabic dictionaries:

a. *ġayyara*, *qalaba* (change; exchange) **[Al-Azdi, 1987: 300]**
b. *badala aš-šay'a biġairihi*: *ittaḥadhahu 'iwaḍan wa badalan*: (change one thing with another: replace it) [*Al- Mu'ǧam al-Waṣìt*, 2004: 44]
c. *badala aš-šay'a ittaḥadhahu minhu badalan, wa tabaddala: taġayyara* (to substitute, to change) [Al-Fairuzabadi, 2005, vol. 1: 965; Al-Farahidi, 2003, vol. 8: 45; Az-zubaidi, 1975, vol. 28: 64; Ibn Sidah, 2000, vol. 4: 343]
d. *attabdīl taġhyīr assoura ilā souratin uḫrā* (to change something from one state to another) [Al-Harawī, 2001, vol. 14: 93]

We understand then that the hyperbole **baddāla,** derived from the verb **badala,** means someone who changes, distorts or substitutes a lot. Surprisingly, even **baddāla** is obviously not compatible with the definition of the city. That raises the previous question again: why does Al-Farabi use an incompatible word? At this point, one even might start accepting that our philosopher did in fact commit a mistake. We are not suggesting that Al-Farabi is infallible, but the fact that he also was the author of very prestigious and eloquent poems in Arabic gives a very credible evidence to doubt the mistake assumption.

In a personal effort to explain this mistake?, we borrow Saqer's diacritical points hypothesis. The error in the diacritical points is possible due to the similarity between the characters ـب and ـن (b and n), and د and ذ (d and dh). While the confusion between the latter two is limited since there is no third similar character, the first two could be confused with another three similar characters: ـت, ـث and ـي (t, th, and y). If the word in question is written without diacritical points (بـدالـه), it is

necessary to consider all the possibilities of the characters composing it. Knowing that there are five possibilities for the initial ـبـ, and two possibilities for the second ـد, it is difficult to decide which combination is the right one. The only possible way to know the right word is to examine all the possible combinations, which combinations form meaningful words, and, eventually, on the basis of the meaning, decide which of these words is compatible with the city's definition. The following table illustrates the process:

Table 2

Character	ـد (d)	Meaning	ذ (dh)	Meaning
ـبـ (b)	بـدالة² baddāla	Yes	بـذالة badhdhāla	Yes
تـ (t)	تـدالة tadāla	No	تـذالة tadhāla	No
ثـ (th)	ثـدالة thadāla	No	ثـذالة thadhāla	No
ـنـ (n)	نـدالة naddāla	Yes	نـذالة nadhāla	Yes
ـيـ (y)	يـدالة yadāla	No	يـذالة yadhāla	No

In addition to **baddāla** and **nadhāla**, the table above resulted in two more possible meaningful words: **badhdhāla** and **naddāla**. Following, we are going to examine the lexical meaning of each of the new words.

1. *Badhdhāla* is a hyperbole of the trilateral verb **badhala**

a. *badhala*: *'atā*; *badhdhāl kathiru al-badhli lilmāl*, *karīm* (give generously; expenditure ; spending; synonym: generous) [*Al- Muʿǧam al-Waṣìt*, 2004: 45]

b. *fiʿlu albadhli naqīḍu manaʿa, wa kul man ṭābat nafsuhu li šayʿin fa hua bādhel* (giving or spending generously; opposite of hoarding) [Al-Farāhīdī, 2003, vol. 8: 187; Al-Fairūzabāi, 2005, vol. 1: 965; Azzubaidi, 1975, vol. 28: 71]

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² The characters ـة (ta marbuta) and ـه (h) are similar to each other, but the confusion between the two is excluded in this case: the word in question دالة is a feminine hypebole of the feminine noun مدينة (city), so the ـة is a suffix that indicates the feminine gender. As for the ـه, as a suffix it indicates a pronoun.

c. *fi'l a'tāhu wa jāda bihi. Rağulun badhdhāl idha kāna kathīru albadhli lil māl* (give generously; someone who spend money generously) [Ibn Manzūr, 1994, vol. 11: 50; Al-Harawī, 2001, vol. 14: 311]

From a first glance on the meanings above, spending and giving money generously is completely contradictory to the lifestyle of our citizens: according to the definition given, they actually hoard riches without spending them if not on the necessary. Here it is worthy shedding light on one of the most interesting rhetorical characteristics of the Arabic language: euphemism. In English, euphemism is a mild or indirect word or expression substituted for one considered to be too harsh or blunt when referring to something unpleasant or embarrassing: *let go* is a euphemism of *expel*. Arabic language on the other hand, uses the complete opposite or the antonym of the wanted word as a euphemism: *basīr* (sighted) is a euphemism of *darīr* (blind), *mafāza* (paradise) is a euphemism of *saḥrā'* (desert) [Al-Farāhīdī. 2003, vol. 3: 345].

If this peculiar and interesting euphemism was to apply on the case we have in hand, Al-Farabi would have meant with **badhdhāla** (extremely generous) the complete opposite i.e. extremely greedy/ insatiable for wealth and gain. But having in mind that Al-Farabi's language is abstract and devoid of rhetorical expressions as Walzer and Hammu argue, we have no choice but to exclude the euphemism hypothesis. In addition, the names Al-Farabi uses for the other cities are compatible with their definitions, which make a rhetorical exception with the second city unlikely. This leaves us the last choice of **naddāla**.

Naddāla is a feminine hyperbolic form of the verb **nadala.** Following are the lexical meanings of the verb **nadala** in Arabic dictionaries:

a. *nadalahu nadlan: ġarafa minhu bi kaffihi jam'ā' kutalan, wa qīla huwa al-ġarf bel yadain jamī'an* (to scoop, to ladle something with both hands in handfuls) *Annadl maṣdar: naqlu aššay', annaqlu wa liḫtilās, naqlu aššay' min mawḍi'in li āḫar, nadala al-māl: iḫtajanthu, iḫtalasahu* (noun: moving something from one place to another; to steal money; to extremely hoard money without spending it) [Ibn Manzūr, 1994, vol. 11: 653]

b. *nadalahu nadlan: naqalahu min mawḍi'in li āḫar, wa huwa al-muḫtalis, wa qīla nadalahu idhā tanāwalahu bel yadaini ğamī'an* (to move something from one place to another; to snatch away; to scoop, to ladle something in handfuls) [Azzubaidī, 1975, vol. 30: 472]

c. *al-ḫubza mina as-sufra ianduluhu nadlan ġarafa minhu bikaffihi ğam'ā' kutalan; nadalat iadaihi al-māl: ġamiratā; nadala al-luṣūṣ: ḫatafū fī ḫiffatin wa sur'a* (the bread from the table: take it in handfuls with both hands; fill both hands with money; thieves: stealing money lightly and quickly) [Ibn Sida, 2000: 333, 334]

According to the definitions given above, the hyperbole **naddāla** means a person who exaggerates in hoarding, accumulating and not spending money even by means of theft. We believe that this meaning

is similar, if not identical, to the description of the city. Here again we quote the definition of the city to better appreciate the compatibility of **naddāla**:

"the aim of its people is to co-operate in the acquisition of wealth and riches, not in order to enjoy something else which can be got through wealth, but because they regard wealth as the sole aim in life"

"[….] Wealth is obtained in many ways analogous to those with which one obtains the necessary, such as agriculture, herding, hunting and theft, or through voluntary social relations (*mu'āmalāt*) such as trade, rent [of properties], etc"

It should be noted here that the use of the hyperbolic form **naddāla** instead of the present participle **nādila** is a very good choice and expresses perfectly the meaning wanted, i.e. the exaggeration in the citizens' act of hoarding riches. Typical of the Farabian jargon, **naddāla** is indeed an unusual and unfamiliar word, yet it is this unfamiliarity that reflects Al-Farabi's accuracy.

It is evident now that the Italian and the French translations of the word in question are not accurate. As for the English translation, even *meanness* is not completely compatible. Here are the definitions of *meanness:*

a. Mean (adj): not generous, not willing to give or share things, especially money: she's always mean with money. Opp. Generous [Oxford, 2000: 793].
b. Mean (adj): not willing to spend money [Macmillan, 2002: 885]

Although *meanness* can be more compatible, taking into account the fact that citizens do not spend if not the indispensable for the existence of bodies, in our opinion, it still turns out a non-precise translation of **nadhāla** in Arabic, for the following reasons:
First, it is true that the lack of generosity is one of the qualities of the citizens, which makes *meanness* suitable to some certain point. But let's not forget that *meanness* is the translation of **nadhāla**; the lexical meaning of *meanness* does not express the same lexical meaning of **nadhāla**. As we have seen, **nathāla**, in Arabic, is used for a despicable person for his religion, his customs or his morals, while *meanness*, in English, is used for a non-generous person. Therefore, even if *meanness* seems to be suitable for the definition of the city, it is not a correct translation, that is, it is not a synonym of **nadhāla**.
Secondly, we have concluded that the right and most compatible name is **naddāla**, which could be explained, in view of the definition given to the city, with a number of qualities of the citizens: avidity, avarice and lack of generosity. *Meanness* is simply not an enough word to express all of these meanings.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The names used for the second ignorant city **baddāla** and **nathāla**, in *Ārā' ahl al-madīna al-fāḍila wa muḍāḍḍātihā* (The Virtuous City) and *Kitāb Assiyāsa Al-madaniyya* (The Political Regime) by Abu Nasr Al-Farabi, are not compatible with meaning wanted based on the definitions given to the city. Adopting the hypothesis that there is a confusion in the Arabic diacritical points composing the word in question, it results that they are not two different cities, but one single city. Examining all the diacritical characters that could be confused, there results tow other possible words **badhdhāla** and **naddāla.** Having studied the lexical meanings of these new words, it seems that ***naddāla*** (avidity, avarice and lack of generosity) is the most compatible word with the definition of the city in question.

If our conclusions are to be convincing, we recommend modifying the name of the second ignorant city in both *Ārā' ahl al-madīna al-fāḍila wa muḍāḍḍātihā* and *Kitāb Assiyāsa Al-madaniyya* and their foreign translations.

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