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## The Function of Poetry in the Maqamat al-Hariri

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**THE FUNCTION OF POETRY  
IN THE *MAQAMAT AL-HARIRI***

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the  
Louisiana State University and  
Humanities and Social Sciences College  
in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements of the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy

in

The Department of Comparative Literature

by

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## Table of Contents

Acknowledgments .....	ii
List of Tables .....	iv
Abstract .....	v
Introduction .....	1
Chapter 1. The <i>Maqama</i> and al-Hariri .....	6
The <i>Maqama</i> : A New Genre in Medieval Arabic Literature .....	6
Al-Hariri: His Life and His <i>Maqamat</i> .....	46
Chapter 2. Themes, Language, and Structure in al-Hariri's Poetry .....	69
Introduction .....	69
Two Types of Poetry in the <i>Maqamat al-Hariri</i> ( <i>Qasidahs</i> and <i>Qit'ahs</i> ) .....	70
The Function of Poetry in the <i>Maqamat al-Hariri</i> .....	92
Trickery in al-Hariri's Poetry .....	99
Placement of poetry in the <i>Maqamat al-Hariri</i> .....	109
Al-Hariri's Poetic Themes .....	113
How al-Hariri Alternates Poetic Exchanges Between the Protagonist and the Narrator .....	119
The Poetic Language of the <i>Maqamat al-Hariri</i> .....	123
Meters and Rhymes in the <i>Maqamat al-Hariri</i> .....	134
Chapter 3. Community Issues in al-Hariri's Poems .....	139
Introduction .....	139
Political Highlights of the Abbasid Caliphate .....	140
Social Descriptions .....	142
Religious Content and Context .....	153
Psychological Aspects of the <i>Maqamat al-Hariri</i> .....	166
Chapter 4. Al-Hariri's Superiority over Other Poets .....	176
Introduction .....	176
Al-Hariri's Superiority over Classical Arab Poets .....	176
Al-Hariri's Superiority over al-Hamadhani .....	180
Al-Hariri's Superiority over His Contemporary Poets .....	212
Conclusion .....	227
Bibliography .....	229
Vita .....	235

## List of Tables

1. Protagonists and Narrators in Popular Arabic <i>Maqamat</i> .....	24
2. Al-Hariri's Life and <i>Maqamat</i> .....	68
3. Al-Saruji and His Family Members Who Trick Characters .....	108
4. Al-Saruji Tricks a Governor and a Judge .....	109
5. Placement of Poetry in the <i>Maqamat al-Hariri</i> .....	110
6. Number of Verses per <i>Maqama</i> .....	112
7. Number of <i>Maqama</i> with the Fewest Verses .....	113
8. Number of Verses per Character .....	135
9. The <i>Maqamat al-Hariri</i> Characters' Meters Recited .....	135
10. Rhyming Letters for the Characters in the <i>Maqamat al-Hariri</i> .....	137

## Abstract

The *Maqamat al-Hariri* is one of the most notable examples of prose in Arabic literature. Called one of the most eloquent statements of medieval Arabic prose, it also serves as a religious, social, cultural, and political document of the Abbasid Caliphate. As a writer, al-Hariri became a famous figure in Arabic literature after writing his *maqamat*. This dissertation studies al-Hariri as a poet through his most important prose work, the *Maqamat al-Hariri*.

Chapter 1 of the dissertation provides an overview of the *maqama* genre, including its definition, themes, stylistic features, character types, a brief history of *maqamat* studies, and illustrations of *maqamat* genre. Furthermore, the review presents a brief biography of al-Hariri and his most famous text, the *Maqamat al-Hariri*, with a focus on his reasons for writing the work. Finally, the review contains a detailed discussion of the *Maqamat al-Hariri*, including its format, setting, prefatory material, content, structure, characters, locations, styles, commentaries, illustrations, and legacy.

Chapter 2 examines the themes, language, and structure in al-Hariri's poetry, including the two types of poetry in the *Maqamat al-Hariri*. The chapter also looks at the function of poetry in the *Maqamat al-Hariri*; the use of trickery in al-Hariri's poetry; the placement of poetry in the *Maqamat al-Hariri*; al-Hariri's poetic themes; the poetic exchanges between the protagonist (Abu Zayd al-Saruji) and the narrator (al-Harith ibn Hammam); the poetic language of the *Maqamat al-Hariri*; and meters and rhymes in the *Maqamat al-Hariri*.

Chapter 3 considers the community issues in al-Hariri's poems, focusing on political, social, religious, and psychological aspects.

Chapter 4, which examines al-Hariri's superiority over all other Arabic poets, is divided into three sections: al-Hariri's superiority over other classical Arab poets; al-Hariri's superiority over

al-Hamadhani; and al-Hariri's superiority over the poets of his own era. The chapter compares poetry in eight *maqamat* written by al-Hamadhani and al-Hariri.

The Conclusion, discusses the significance of the *Maqamat al-Hariri* in medieval and modern Arabic literature, and argues that more studies on *maqama* poetry will help to advance this important academic topic.

## Introduction

At present, many researchers of classical and medieval Arabic literature focus more on traditional Arabic poetry than on Arabic prose. As a result of this critical attention, classical and medieval Arabic prose, including the formal invention known as the *maqama* (“assembly”), has not received an adequate amount of scholarly attention. *Maqamat* (the plural of *maqama*), which were first invented in the eleventh century A.D. and lasted into the nineteenth century, are a collection of short rhymed prose stories, usually fifty, which have two main characters: the protagonist and the narrator. The latter always appears as a character in the story and always has a relationship with the protagonist.

Each *maqama*, which is two to ten pages long, contains, in Rina Drory’s words, “practically everything, from literary models to particular themes, motifs, situations, verses of poetry, figures of speech, clichés, and ready-made rhymed-prose formulas.”<sup>1</sup> The earliest practitioner of the *maqamat* was Badi’ al-Zaman al-Hamadhani<sup>2</sup> (969–1008 A.D.), and the latest famous practitioner was Muhammad al-Muwaylihi (1868–1930).

Despite the availability and diversity of many prose texts, the complex discipline of the *maqama*, which showcases the enormous facility and ingenuity of geographically diverse authors, has been relatively neglected by scholars and critics, a fact that can be demonstrated by the relative dearth of published academic works on *maqamat*. Taking into consideration the wealth of prose texts available for study, this field remains fertile for academic inquiry.

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<sup>1</sup>Rina Drory, “The Maqama,” in Maria Rosa Menocal, Raymond P. Scheindlin, and Michael Sells, eds., *The Literature of Al-Andalus* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 190.

<sup>2</sup>Zaki Mubarak (1892–1952), who is an Egyptian literary scholar, claims that al-Hamadhani is not the originator of the *maqama* genre in Arabic literature, although he rivaled (*arada*) Ibn Durayd’s (837–933 A.D.) forty tales (*ahadith*). Mubarak states that al-Hariri was wrong when he wrote in the preface of his *maqamat* that al-Hamadhani invented the *maqama* genre. Zaki Mubarak, *Al-Muqtataf*, 76, 418–421 and 561–564. However, al-Hamadhani’s originality in the *maqama* genre, as Alfred Beeston states, includes two characteristics: the adoption of rhymed prose (*saj’*) in the *Maqamat al-Hamadhani* and his stories are fictitious. Alfred Beeston, “The Genesis of the Maqamat Genre,” *Journal of Arabic Literature*, 1971, 1–12.



*Maqamat* reflect the social, historical, cultural, economic, linguistic, and literary fabric of the societies in which they were written. When one compares them across regions, writers, and time periods, *maqamat* can offer insights into all aspects of Arabic culture and civilization, including history and literature.

At a time when poetry had dominance over prose in Arabic literature, the works of Abu Muhammad al-Qasim al-Hariri (1054–1122 A.D.) invigorated the *maqamat* by devising new interpretations of the genre. Al-Hariri, who is most famous for composing a collection of fifty trickster tales, was the literary successor to al-Hamadhani. Like the earlier writer, he employed two recurring characters who are placed in a sequence of episodes. Throughout al-Hariri's work, he employed the same protagonist, Abu Zayd al-Saruji, who is a trickster who uses his wits, wiles, and eloquent speech to achieve his ends; and he also employed the same fictional narrator, al-Harith ibn Hammam.

From the time of their composition, al-Hariri's stories were meant to instruct and amuse the ordinary reader, while being simultaneously popular with scholars and the upper classes. These works invigorated the *maqamat* by al-Hariri devising new forms for the genre. Because of their enormous popular and critical success, al-Hariri's narrative structure became the model for the entire genre in Arabic literature. As was typical of medieval Arabic literature, al-Hariri's tales are allegorical. Throughout his work, in accordance with the basic structure of allegory, people, places, things, and events have two layers of significance. First, there is the literal level: whatever actually happens within the narrative; and second, there is the figurative or symbolic level: what those people, places, things, and events stand for outside the narrative.

The purpose of this dissertation is to explore the ways in which al-Hariri developed the allegorical and poetic characteristics of the *maqamat*, altering them from a merely pleasing

(and relatively minor) genre to one that accomplishes deep social and political critiques, becoming a mainstay of Arabic literature. This dissertation focuses on al-Hariri as a poet through his trickster character, his narrator, and others characters, including the trickster's wife and adolescent son.

One hallmark of the story collection known as the *Maqamat al-Hariri* is the inclusion of poetry in all the stories. This is one departure from the practice of al-Hamadhani, who, as al-Hariri notes in the preface to his own work, sometimes did not include poetry in his *maqamat*. In the *Maqamat al-Hariri*, rhymed prose (*saj'*) and poetry work in harmony to express images, concepts, and emotions. Al-Hariri made prose and poetry peaceful competitors. Shawqi Daif (d. 2005),<sup>3</sup> who was an Arabic literary critic and historian, said that al-Hariri wrote prose ornamented with poetry.<sup>4</sup>

The poetry employed in the *Maqamat al-Hariri* has several features that address, respond to, and reflect the social, political, religious, and psychological life of al-Hariri's contemporary society. For example, the use of *mukdyn* (beggars) throughout his work, including a focus on their character and tricks, describes a social reality that was overlooked by other authors of his day. In political terms, the poems in the *Maqamat al-Hariri* dramatize the European Crusades against the Muslims. In religious terms, the poetry utilized throughout the *Maqamat al-Hariri* borrows from a tradition of preaching. Psychologically, the poems explore the conscious and unconscious experience of pain and neglect. In addition, the poetry in the *Maqamat al-Hariri* is influenced by contemporary Abbasid poetry,<sup>5</sup> which is characterized by didacticism, preaching, and heavy drinking of wine.

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<sup>3</sup>Shawqi Daif, *Al-Asr al-Abbasi al-Thani* ["The Second Abbasid Period"] (Cairo, Egypt: Dar al-Ma'arf, 1980).

<sup>4</sup>Shawqi Daif, *Al-Maqamah* ["The Maqama"] (Cairo, Egypt: Dar al-Ma'arf, 1954).

<sup>5</sup>Abbasid poetry is named after the Abbasid Caliphate, which lasted from the eighth to the thirteenth century A.D.

The poetry in the *Maqamat al-Hariri* is dramatic and realistic, never employing exaggeration. Furthermore, al-Hariri's poetry utilizes the actual language of beggars of his day, as well as their behavior, their ideas, their characters, and their tricks.<sup>6</sup> It is a poetry that is firmly grounded in its historical, social, and cultural setting, which means that it can be studied both as poetry and as an historical document that gives us insight into what life was like in the Muslim world of the twelfth century A.D. Because of the stories' dual function as both poetry and social document, this dissertation will argue that poetry and trickery in the *Maqamat al-Hariri* encompass two areas of work that need to receive greater critical scrutiny.

This study examines al-Hariri as a poet, focusing on his poems in his *maqamat*. Al-Hariri intentionally chose poetry to explore and reveal different aspects of Arabic religious, social, cultural, and political life. As a literary device, rather than a strictly social or political one, al-Hariri's poetry in his *maqamat* has two main dramatic purposes: to change the subject; and to justify and prepare for the departure of characters. The themes of trickery and fraud, both of which are deeply embedded in al-Hariri's poetic content, function throughout the *Maqamat al-Hariri*. By combining these themes with these dramatic techniques, al-Hariri intended to demonstrate his superior poetic talents.

Furthermore, al-Hariri combined poetry and prose in one genre. Of course, *maqamat* are principally considered a prose genre, but al-Hariri's originality was to include poetry in each *maqama*. Even the narration in the *Maqamat al-Hariri* uses rhymed prose that comes close to being poetry.

Al-Hariri composed fifty *maqamat*, all of them written in highly stylized Arabic. There are very few studies in English or Arabic that examine al-Hariri's use of poetic genres. Moreover,

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<sup>6</sup>It should be noted, however, that al-Hariri's poetry contains no obscenities, which may characterize the limits of Arabic realism at the time.

in those studies that do touch on his poetry, it is part of a larger argument, so that the poetic analysis is mostly an afterthought, rather than a key focus. This critical lapse requires the correction of a dedicated study that places al-Hariri's use of poetry at the center of his work.

Currently, there are few studies of Arabic *maqamat*, including the *Maqamat al-Hariri*, which address the use and function of poetry. That can be seen when we compare the number of studies of Arabic poetry in general with the number of studies of the *maqamat*. What is needed, therefore, is a study that can expand our understanding of this traditional prose genre by focusing on how the features of poetry operate within it to support the functions of Arabic prose.

There are numerous reasons to study the poetry in the *Maqamat al-Hariri*. First of all, the *maqama* genre is one of the most beautiful Arabic literary genres. It has influenced literary traditions in several other languages, including Hebrew, Persian, Syriac, and Spanish. The present writer hopes that this dissertation will enrich the critical and contextual understanding of the poetry in the *Maqamat al-Hariri* for scholars of medieval literature.

In order to understand reactions to al-Hariri's *Maqamat*, the present writer has chosen to examine the writings of a small number of significant classical Arab critics, including al-Jahiz (776–868 A.D.), Qudama ibn Ja'far (873–948 A.D.), Ibn Rashiq al-Qairwani (999–1063 A.D.), Yaqut al-Hamawi (1179–1229 A.D.), Ibn al-Athir (1160–1233 A.D.), and Ibn Khallikan (1211–1282 A.D.). These critics lived before, during, and after al-Hariri's time, and the present writer attempts to balance the evident bias some of the writers held against al-Hariri's poetry with the insights that can be gleaned from their commentary. In addition, throughout the dissertation the present writer cites poems from the *Maqamat al-Hariri* to provide evidence for or against various critical claims.

## Chapter 1. The *Maqama* and al-Hariri

The time has come to examine the *maqama* which, for as long as one cares to remember, has been exhibited in a museum slowly gathering dust. Occasionally, tourists or local visitors come to contemplate it, lowering their heads or bending their bodies in some uncomfortable posture. What are we to do with Hamadhani and Hariri? What does the *séance* [in the French meaning of “assembly”] represent for us today? How are we to read it? We must admit that these questions are hard to resolve, since we are implicated in them.

— Abdelfattah Kilito<sup>7</sup>

### The *Maqama*: A New Genre in Medieval Arabic Literature

#### Introduction

Storytelling is a method frequently employed by authors, since writing narratives can provide interesting reading for all types of readers. The Arabs first wrote down their poetry in the pre-Islamic period (*al-jahiliyya*). Therefore, that period shall be treated as a starting point for the history of Arabic literature, both poetry and prose. The *Qur'an* is the earliest extant work in which complete tales are recorded in Arabic. However, since the Arabs at the time were not familiar with written prose stories, they at first thought that the *Qur'an* was a poetic text. However, Arabic culture, the short story as an independent literary genre in the modern sense, distinct from the *maqama* genre, the proverb, the novel, and the poem, is a very recent concept, going back no more than a century.

The *maqama* (literally translated as “assembly, picaresque narrative, or episodic story”) is one of the most important genres in medieval Arabic literature. As a format, it falls between prose and poetry, although it is perhaps most accurately described as a variety of Arabic rhymed prose. *Maqamat* emerged in the 11th century A.D. with Badi' al-Zaman al-Hamadhani (969–1008 A.D.), the godfather of the *maqama* genre.<sup>8</sup> Of al-Hamadhani's collection of four hundred *maqamat*, roughly fifty-two have survived.

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<sup>7</sup>Abdelfattah Kilito, *Al-Maqamat: Al-Sard wa al-Ansaq al-Thaqafiyah* [“The *Maqamat*: The Narration and Cultural Patterns”], trans Abdulkabir al-Sharqawi (Casablanca, Morocco: Toubkal Publishing Press, 2001), p. 4.

<sup>8</sup>Shawqi Daif, *Al-Maqamah* [“The *Maqama*”] (Cairo, Egypt: Al-Ma'arf House, 1954).

Orfali and Pomerantz ask an important question: Did scholars lose *maqamat* when they collected the *Maqamat al-Hamadhani* in the nineteenth century? These authors found a lost *maqama* of the *Maqamat al-Hamadhani*, entitled “*al-Maqamah al-Tibbiyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Medicine”), which they categorize as a picaresque and comic *maqama*. Orfali and Pomerantz claim that the importance of this *maqama* is that it is the only *maqama* about medicine in the *Maqamat al-Hamadhani*, although al-Hamadhani did not study medicine.<sup>9</sup> Furthermore, Orfali and Pomerantz found three *maqamat* attributed to al-Hamadhani—“*al-Maqamah al-Hamadhaniyya*”, “*al-Maqamah al-Sharifiyya*”, and “*al-Maqamah al-Khatamiyya*” all of which, like a majority of the *Maqamat al-Hamadhani*, contain the trickery theme.<sup>10</sup>

The *maqama* genre continued with al-Hariri, who along with al-Hamadhani is considered one of the original masters of *maqamat* in Arabic literature. Through the work of these two writers, rhymed prose and the *maqama* genre became synonymous.

Other prominent writers of medieval Arabic *maqamat* included Ibn Butlan (1001–1038 A.D.), al-Saraqusti (d. 1143 A.D.), al-Zamakhshari (1075–1144 A.D.), Ibn al-Jawzi (1116–1200 A.D.), and Nasif al-Yaziji (1800–1871 A.D.). The legacy of Arabic *maqamat* has had an impact on other medieval literature, including Hebrew literature, since some authors, including al-Harizi (1165–1225 A.D.), also wrote Hebrew *maqamat*. Furthermore, translations and explanations of Arabic *maqamat* exist in Hebrew literature. Some writers of Hebrew *maqamat* are considered to have imitated the *Maqamat al-Hariri*. The legacy of Arabic *maqamat* in other languages is seen not only in Hebrew literature, but in Persian and Spanish literature as well.

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<sup>9</sup>Bilal W. Orfali, and Maurice A. Pomerantz, “A Lost Maqama of Badi’ al-Zaman al-Hamadani?” *Arabica*, vol. 60, nos. 3–4 (2013), 245–271.

<sup>10</sup>Bilal W. Orfali and Maurice A. Pomerantz, “Three Maqamat Attributed to Badi’ al-Zaman al-Hamadhani (398/1008),” *Journal of Abbasid Studies*, vol. 2, no. 1, 2015, 38–60.

This chapter provides a definition of *maqama*, its features, its themes, a brief history of *maqamat* in Arabic and Hebrew literature, and an overview of the influence of *maqamat* in other languages. The present writer considers the protagonist and the narrator as the main characters of *maqama*, and discusses what makes the *maqama* genre unique, including the use of rhymed prose (*saj'*), fictional characters, and the mixture of poetry and prose. Finally, this chapter examines how writers of the *maqama* genre used *saj'* and whether they used it in similar or different ways.

### ***Maqama* Defined**

The term *maqama* has been used since the pre-Islamic period, and even predates al-Hamadani's writings. In *Jahiliyyah* (pre-Islamic times, literally the period of moral ignorance) and early Islamic cultures, *maqamat* had their origin in the term *majlis*—a session or sitting (literally a place of standing to speak, from the verb *jalasa*, “to sit down”), specifically with members of one's tribe.<sup>11</sup> Translated into English, *maqama* commonly means assembly.

In terms of form, a *maqama* consists of a short anecdotal text, written in a mixture of elaborate rhymed prose and poetry, that has two main characters: the protagonist (usually a trickster) and the narrator.<sup>12</sup> The length of each *maqama* is usually between two and ten pages. The structure typically consists of the following parts: (1) an *isnad* (a chain of narrators), (2) a general introduction, (3) an episode, (4) a recognition scene, (5) an envoi (a short quotation of verses), and (6) a finale. Readers of the *maqama* genre would consider these works to be rather

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<sup>11</sup>Robert Irwin, *Night and Horses and the Desert: An Anthology of Classical Arabic Literature* (New York: Anchor, 2002); Jaakko Hameen-Anttila, *Maqama: A History of a Genre* (Helsinki, Finland: University of Helsinki Press, 2002); Badi' al-Zaman al-Hamadani, *Maqamat of Badi Zaman al-Hamadani*, trans W. J. Predergast (London and Dublin: Curzon Press, 1973); and Alfred Felix Landon Beeston, “Al-Hamadani, al-Hariri, and the Maqamat Genre,” *The Cambridge History of Arabic Literature* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 15–32.

<sup>12</sup>Paul Sprachman, “Le beau garçon sans merci: The Homoerotic Tale in Arabic and Persian,” in J. W. Wright and Everett Rowson, eds., *Homoeroticism in Classical Arabic Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 192–209.

*hazl* (amusing) more often than *jidd* (serious).<sup>13</sup>

In traditional Arabic literature, Badi' al-Zaman al-Hamadani is considered the first writer to have adopted the term *maqama* (*al-maqama al-adabiyya*), using the word *maqama* in his sermons (*hadith*, s.; *ahadith*, pl.). Al-Hamadani typically expressed his ideas in the forms of short parables, using rhetorical language. In all of his fifty-two *maqamat*, al-Hamadani faithfully followed this same structure.

### ***Maqamat* Themes**

Authors of *maqamat* do not describe emotions, but instead focus on the experiences of individuals in the stories. Often *maqamat* have one major theme, which is usually *kudya* (begging), and several subthemes. Historically, *maqamat* were not only focused on the use of rhetorical and humorous language, but were also an attempt to teach culture and knowledge. Some themes present in *maqamat* include *nahw* (Arabic grammar), *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence), literary criticism, historical chronicles, medicine, and scientific knowledge.<sup>14</sup>

For an example of literary criticism, in “*al-Maqamah al-Qariziyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Poesie”), al-Hamadani compares two individual poets from the Umayyad period, Jarir (653–728 A.D.) and al-Farazdaq (641–728 or 730 A.D.), widely known for their feud poems with each other. As ‘Isa ibn Hisham notes:

Compare Jarir and al-Farazdaq. Which of them is superior? He [the protagonist, al- Iskandari] answered: Jarir’s poetry is more sophisticated and linguistically richer, but al-Farazdaq’s is more vigorous and more brilliant. Jarir is a more caustic satirist, and he presents himself as more noble in the field of poetry, whereas al-Farazdaq is more ambitious and belongs to the nobler clan. Jarir, when he composes love poems, draws tears. When he vituperates he destroys, but when he eulogizes, he exalts. Al-Farazdaq in panegyric is all sufficient.

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<sup>13</sup>Rina Drory, *Models and Contacts: Arabic Literature and Its Impact on Medieval Jewish Culture* (Danvers, MA: Brill, 2000).

<sup>14</sup>Daif, *Al-Maqamah*.



When he scorns he degrades, but when he praises, he gives full value.<sup>15</sup>

*Maqamat* authors might compose works consisting of functional debates, discuss what happened in their communities, or preach religious doctrine.<sup>16</sup> When used for preaching, such *maqamat* are called “exhortative *maqamat*.” As an example of these exhortative *maqamat* from al-Hamadhani, the narrator, ‘Isa ibn Hisham, in “*al-Maqamah al-Wa’ziyya*” (“The *Maqama* of the Exhortation”) asks the protagonist, Abu al-Fath al-Iskandari, about his gray hair, and al-Iskandari responds with the following lines:

A warner, but a silent one  
And a guest, but a gloating one.  
The messenger of death, but  
Verily he will stay on till I accompany him.<sup>17</sup>

One common *maqama* topic is travel. Several authors, including al-Hamadhani and al-Hariri, describe their own journeys, or those made by others, to various destinations. Al-Hamadhani wrote several *maqamat* on this theme of travel,<sup>18</sup> selecting his traveling cities from Iran and Iraq, while al-Saraqusti took his readers far away to China. Most such *maqamat* begin with an arrival scene.

One interesting topic of al-Hamadhani’s and al-Hariri’s *maqamat* is *kudya*, which includes both begging and picaresque tricks. Other *maqamat* might describe various animals. Such

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<sup>15</sup>Irwin, *Night and Horses and the Desert*.

<sup>16</sup>Daif, *Al-Maqamah*.

<sup>17</sup>Badi’ al-Zaman al-Hamadhani, *Maqamat of Badi Zaman al-Hamadhani*, pp. 89–90:

نذير ولكنه ساكت\*\*\*و ضيف ولكنه شامت  
واشخاص موت ولكنه\*\*\*إلى أن أشيعه ثابت

<sup>18</sup>For example “*al-Maqamah al-Balkhiyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Balkh”), “*al-Maqamah al-Kufiyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Kufa”), “*al-Maqamah al-Isfahaniyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Isfahan”), “*al-Maqamah al-Jurjaniyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Jurjan”), “*al-Maqamah al-Baghdadiyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Baghdad”), “*al-Maqamah al-Basriyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Basra”), “*al-Maqamah al-Nishapuriyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Nishapur”), and other *maqamat*.

animal stories emerged as one specific subgenre of *maqamat* of the medieval period.<sup>19</sup> Over time, the *maqamat* seem to have become more like fables, which often carry an ethical message.<sup>20</sup> Thus, a *maqama* can serve as a proverb or fable, with its instructional and moralistic content made explicitly and implicitly. Occasionally, various authors utilized *maqamat* for their own means, sometimes in a crafty way. A *maqama* as a fable can be clearly seen in the *maqamat* of Ibn Sharaf al-Qayrawani (999–1067 A.D.), an Andalusian writer.

*Maqamat* were also used to promote an author's personal views. For instance, Ahmad ibn Muhammad al-Khafaji (d. 1659 A.D.) wrote a *maqama* called "*al-Maqamat al-Rumiyyah*", in which he laments that his society and era fail to truly understand his talents. In another vein, some authors used *maqamat* to discuss social causes or political issues. For example, al-Yaziji addresses Arab identity in the context of the Ottoman Empire in *Majma' al-Bahrayn* ("The Confluence of the Two Seas").<sup>21</sup> Moreover, Kennedy argues that the writers of the *maqama* genre had more freedom than the writers before them to cover taboo topics, including sexual innuendo.<sup>22</sup>

### **Features of *Maqamat***

*Maqamat* were often written to achieve specific literary or pedagogical goals. One significant purpose of *maqamat* is to illustrate the higher modes of Arabic literary expression, especially for teaching students these modes. Since *maqamat* do not have well-developed plots,

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<sup>19</sup>Hameen-Anttila, *Maqama*; and Devin Stewart, "The Maqama," in Roger Allen and Donald Sidney Richards, eds., *Arabic Literature in the Post-Classical Period* (Cambridge, U.K: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 145–158.

<sup>20</sup>Douglas C. Young, *Rogues and Genres: Generic Transformation in the Spanish Picaresque and Arabic Maqama* (Newark, DE: Juan de la Cuesta—Hispanic Monographs, 2004).

<sup>21</sup>Muhsin Al-Musawi, "Pre-Modern Belletristic Prose," In Roger Allen and D. S. Richards, eds., *Arabic Literature in the Post-Classical Period*. Cambridge, UK and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006, 101–133.

<sup>22</sup>Philip Kennedy, *Recognition in the Arabic Narrative Tradition* (Edinburgh, Scotland: Edinburgh University Press, 2016).

some scholars may not regard them as stories, given the importance of plot as a story element. Indeed, in many *maqamat*, the authors are not necessarily focused on developing a plot, but rather are composing tales to teach students the eloquence of Arabic vocabulary and literature.

For example, al-Hamadhani did not intend to merely create stories, but rather to teach pupils to become literary writers and skilled speakers. He used the parable format for ease of understanding. To make his *maqamat* more interesting for his readers, he chose as his protagonist a literary scholar, who is also a *mukdy* (beggar).<sup>23</sup> Thus, one purpose of the *maqama* genre is instructional, and many resemble a short talk or discussion. Al-Hamadhani, in particular, tried to use his *maqamat* as a way of motivating readers through the illustrative format. However, some scholars who contend that the *maqama* is actually a type of story make comparisons between *maqamat* and stories in modern literature. For example, Hameen-Anttila believes that al-Hariri intended to write his *maqamat* as stories. This critic also considers the tale found in each *maqama* to be purely fictionalized.<sup>24</sup>

Shawqi Daif, an Egyptian scholar of Arabic literature, argues that *maqamat* are closer to modern fiction than is usually supposed. However, unlike most modern fiction, the descriptive features are not the essential component. Instead, the primary purpose of *maqamat* is didactic, and the details are merely a way to illustrate how the characters act or interact. Furthermore, *maqamat* had a sophisticated rhythm that was mainly targeted to an educated audience, thereby leaving less sophisticated readers at a disadvantage.

Given its role as a literary illustration, the *maqama* focuses on language more than meaning. After Badi' al-Zaman al-Hamadhani laid the groundwork for the *maqama*, subsequent *maqama* writers tended to pay more attention to vocabulary than meaning.

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<sup>23</sup>Daif, *Al-Maqamah*.

<sup>24</sup>Hameen-Anttila, *Maqama*.

Therefore, the foundation of the *maqama* is the external form and verbal ornamentation. One benefit of these features was that literary scholars competed to show the richness of vocabulary in *maqamat*, thereby creating a vital new form of expression.<sup>25</sup>

In the *maqama* genre, there are certain characteristic features, among which rhymed prose (*saj'*) is one of the most important. The rhyming style of *maqamat* is close to that of earlier Abbasid rhymed prose.<sup>26</sup> Some *maqamat* authors, including al-Hamadhani, al-Hariri, and al-Saraqusti, use complicated rhyming styles that are not found in classical Arabic poetry. For example, the last letter of each verse must be the same letter in all verses.<sup>27</sup> To achieve this complex pattern, writers of *maqamat* often use *saj'* (a rhyming prose ending), which is a highly artificial rhyming technique for prose in Arabic literature. *Saj'* in the *maqamat* is employed instead of the ending rhyming expression (*rawi*) in poetry. In *Lisan al-'Arab* ("Tongue of Arabs"), Ibn Manzur (1232–1311 A.D.) defined *saj'* as "rhymed [in assonance] speech...to speak in utterances with divisions, like the divisions of poetry, but without meter."<sup>28</sup> Also, in *al-Qamous al-Muhit* ("The Surrounding Ocean"), al-Firuzabadi (1329–1414 A.D.) describes *saj'* as "rhymed speech, or the cultivation of speech by means of rhyme [rhymed final consonant]."<sup>29</sup>

Al-Hamadhani was one of the early literary scholars in Arabic to use *saj'* as a path to describe anecdotes,<sup>30</sup> and authors such as al-Hariri and other writers of *maqamat* who came later continued in this vein.<sup>31</sup> The use of *saj'* in *maqamat* is lively. An example of this occurs in

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<sup>25</sup>Daif, *Al-Maqamah*.

<sup>26</sup>Drory, *Models and Contacts*.

<sup>27</sup>Tamas Ivanyi, "On Rhyming Endings and Symmetric Phrases in al-Hamadhani's Maqamat," In J. R. Smart, ed., *Tradition and Modernity in Arabic Language and Literature* (Richmond, VA: Curzon Press, 1996), 210–228.

<sup>28</sup>Ibn Manzur, *Lisan al-'Arab* ["Tongue of Arabs"] (Cairo, Egypt: Dar al-Ma'arf, n.d.), p. 189

<sup>29</sup>Majdu al-Din al-Firuzabadi, ed. *Al-Qamus al-Muhit* ["The Surrounding Ocean"] (Beirut, Lebanon: Mu'asasa al-Risala, 1987), p. 939

<sup>30</sup>Beeston, "Al-Hamadhani, al-Hariri and the Maqamat Genre."

<sup>31</sup>Daif, *Al-Maqamah*; and Irwin, *Night and Horses and the Desert*.

the *Maqamat al-Hamadhani*: “*wa-qad ‘arhafa ‘udhunaihi, wa-tamah a bi-‘ainaihi, yajudhdhu quwa al-habli bi-mashafirihi, wa-yakhuddu khadd al-ard I bi-h awafirihi*”<sup>32</sup> (translated as “he had cocked his ears, he was glaring with his eyes, gnawing the strands of the rope with his lips, and scoring the surface of the ground with his hoofs”). According to Young, each rhymed line (*saj’ah*) usually has the same number of letters and words (*saj’ah*, s.; *saj’at*, pl.).<sup>33</sup>

In his second *maqama*, *Kitab al-Nasa’ih al-Kubra*, al-Zamakhshari uses binary pairs of *saj’* (AABBCC...).<sup>34</sup> Like al-Hamadhani, al-Hariri and al-Saraqusti use *saj’* in *maqamat* in conventions, which illustrates the skilled technique of its composer. Al-Saraqusti writes his *saj’* in the style of *luzum*, derived from the work of Abu al-‘Ala’ al-Ma’arri’s (973–1057 A.D.). In this unique format, the composer of a *saj’ luzumiat* uses a rhyming of multiple syllables rather than just one syllable.<sup>35</sup> A notable example of al-Ma’arri’s work is *Lozum ma la Yalzam* or *al-Luzumiat* [“Unnecessary Necessity”], and this style is reflected in al-Saraqusti’s *al-Maqamat al-Luzumiyah*.

Other striking characteristics of the *maqamat* include the use of *mumathala* (assonant prose), so that the *wazn* (meter) of *faqarat* (phrases) is equal. An example from al-Hamadhani’s *maqamat* is: “*wa-‘uqidati nnaru ‘ala safarihi, wa nabah a al-‘awwa ‘u ‘ala\_‘atharihi*” (translated as “a patched smock; an exile after whose departure the fire of banishment was kindled, in whose wake the howling dogs have barked”).<sup>36</sup>

A different kind of rhetorical embellishment is found in the *jinas* or *tajnis* (paronomasia) of *maqama*, in which two or more words have a similar sound and the same root letters, but a

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<sup>32</sup>Badi’ al-Zaman al-Hamadhani, *Maqamat of Badi’ Zaman al-Hamadhani*, p. 40:

وقد أرهف أذنيه، وطمح بعينه، يجذ قوى الحبل بمشافره، ويخد خد الأرض بحوافره

<sup>33</sup>Young, *Rogues and Genres*.

<sup>34</sup>Hameen-Anttila, *Maqama*.

<sup>35</sup>Young, *Rogues and Genres*.

<sup>36</sup>Badi’ al-Zaman al-Hamadhani, *Maqamat of Badi’ Zaman al-Hamadhani*, p. 38:

وأوقدت النار على سفره، ونبح العواء على أثره

different meaning. These words may share both *saj'* and *jinas*.<sup>37</sup> Starting with al-Hamadhani, the use of *badi'* (rhetorical ornamentation or the innovative use of figurative language) of the *maqamat* flourished, and was considered a sign of the virtuosity of the *maqamat's badi'*, especially its *saj'*.<sup>38</sup>

Many *maqamat* from the medieval period are written not only as a tool for literary studies, but also to represent the lives of lower social classes as seen through their styles of speech and literary tastes.<sup>39</sup> *Maqamat* may also contain *Qur'anic*, *hadith*, and poetic quotations. Al-Hariri is quoting a famous hadith when he writes, "The works are [to be judged] according to their intentions" (*al-a'mal bi n-niyyat*).<sup>40</sup> In most *maqamat*, there is poetry, argument, and rhymed proverbs. Also, writers of *maqamat* use linguistic tropes in both prose and poetry.<sup>41</sup>

Abdelfattah Kilito believes there is a relationship between *maqamat* and *qasidah* (poetry) in the *hikaya* (pl. *hikayat*) or story genre. The *hikaya* is similar to the *maqama* and *ghazal* (love poetry) subgenres. Kilito contends that *qasidah* and *ghazal* are actually *hikaya*, and he compares these to the relationship between *maqamat* and *qasidah*. The nature of the *hikaya* is closer to that of the *maqama* rather than the *qasidah*, since they both employ fictionalized narration, narrative structure, and dialogues. Furthermore, both the *maqama* and the *hikaya* are inspired from real-world events or ideas of their time.

On the other hand, one contrast between the two is that the *maqama* is more didactic and features greater verbal ingenuity. Al-Tanukhi (939–994 A.D.), a judge and contemporary of al-Hamadhani's, composed a collection of *hikayat* entitled *al-Faraj Ba'd al-Shidda* ("Relief After Hardship"). Although al-Tanukhi's *hikayat* use *saj'*, as do al-Hamadhani's *maqamat*, they both

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<sup>37</sup>Young, *Rogues and Genres*.

<sup>38</sup>Young, *Rogues and Genres*; and Al-Musawi, "Pre-Modern Belletristic Prose."

<sup>39</sup>Dwight F. Reynolds, "Popular Prose in the Post-Classical Period," in *Cambridge History of Arabic Literature* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2006), vol. 6, 245–269.

<sup>40</sup>Hameen-Anttila, *Maqama*.

<sup>41</sup>Young, *Rogues and Genres*.

focus on eloquent tricksters.<sup>42</sup> One major difference between these two authors is that al-Tanukhi asserts that his stories were real and not fictional, and thus, regardless of their stylistic differences, some critics would consider them to fall in the category of literature.<sup>43</sup> Most Arab writers of short stories before al-Hamadani, including al-Jahiz (939–994 A.D.), who wrote *Kitab al-Bukhala'* (“Book of Misers”), wrote real stories, while the writers of the *maqama* genre invented fictional stories within Arabic literature.

Hameen-Anttila argues that modern Arabic novels were influenced by both classical Arabic literature, especially the *maqama* genre, and European literary traditions. He discusses the similarities between the *maqama* and the novel, including fictitious protagonists, story length, and the existence of a plot. At the same time, Hameen-Anttila believes that there are substantial differences between the *maqama* and the novel, most notably that each episode in the *maqama* is not necessarily a continuation of a previous episode, as in a novel. Examining the social conventions and readership for *maqamat* and novels, Hameen-Anttila concludes that *maqamat* were written to be read by scholars, whereas novels were written to be read by the general public.<sup>44</sup>

### **The Protagonist, the Narrator, and Other Characters in *Maqamat***

One of the unique factors of the *maqama* genre is its fictional characters and fictional *isnad* (a chain of narrators). Most authors of *maqamat* gave names to their characters. In doing so, they tried to create fictitious personalities, rather than using historical figures. They typically focused on two main characters: the *batal* (protagonist) or the *muhtal* (trickster) and the *rawi*

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<sup>42</sup>Beeston, “Al-Hamadani, al-Hariri and the Maqamat Genre”; Young, *Rogues and Genres*; and Rosella Dorigo Ceccato, “Drama in the Post-Classical Period: A Survey,” in Roger Allen and D. S. Richards, eds., *Arabic Literature in the Post-Classical Period* (Cambridge, U.K. and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 347–368.

<sup>43</sup>Hameen-Anttila, *Maqama*.

<sup>44</sup>Jaakko Hameen-Anttila, “The Novel and the Maqama,” in Wail S. Hassan, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Arab Novelistic Traditions* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 89–102.

(narrator.)<sup>45</sup> *Maqamat* usually follow a specific scheme: (1) the narrator arrives in a city; (2) there is a gathering for discussion; (3) the protagonist participates in the assembly, using eloquent language; (4) the narrator or one of the characters gives a donation to the protagonist; (5) the protagonist leaves the assembly; (6) the narrator discovers the protagonist's real identity; (7) the narrator follows the protagonist; (8) the protagonist gives his justification for what he has done; (9) the narrator and the protagonist part ways; and (10) the narrator leaves the city.<sup>46</sup>

Another feature of *maqamat* is a fictional *isnad*, which is a chain of narrators. For instance, in one of al-Hamadhani's *maqamat*, he writes: "'Isa ibn Hisham related to us..." (*haddathana 'Isa ibn Hisham qala...*).<sup>47</sup> The *isnad* of *maqamat* was considered a spoof of the *isnad* of the *hadith*.<sup>48</sup> Since a *maqama* is a short narration, there are not that many characters in each *maqama*.<sup>49</sup> Most *maqamat* have a protagonist, a narrator, and a few characters. Some of them, however, may not have a protagonist, a narrator, or either. And a few writers of *maqamat* do not use any characters at all.

Most *maqamat* begin with some type of a speech by the narrator. For instance, "'Isa ibn Hisham related to us..." which may be changed a little (e.g., to 'Isa ibn Hisham narrates). Al-Hamadhani normally has the narrator *haddathana* (report to *us*), while Ibn Naqiya typically uses the view that the narrator *haddathani* (reports to *me*). Ibn Sayqal uses four sayings: (1) *haka*, (2) *haddatha*, (3) *akhbara*, and (4) *rawa*. In his writings, al-Saraqusti sometimes uses *haddatha* and sometimes *qala*. On the other hand, in his *maqamat*, al-Hanafi, a literary scholar of the twelfth century, most often uses *haka*. Overall, the most common wording of the narrator

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<sup>45</sup>Beeston, "Al-Hamadhani, al-Hariri and the Maqamat Genre."

<sup>46</sup>Stewart, "The Maqama."

<sup>47</sup>Al-Hamadhani, *Maqamat of Badi Zaman al-Hamadhani*, p. 29.

<sup>48</sup>Hameen-Anttila, *Maqama*.

<sup>49</sup>Young, *Rogues and Genres*.



who begins the *maqama* is *haddathana*. The narrator of the *maqamat* of Ibn al-Murabi (d. 1350 A.D.), whose name is Shakir al-Ayadi, talks directly to the audience, saying, “Hear from me a story (*hadith*).”

Wacks argues that in *maqamat* in general the narrator and the author are the same, so there is no need (or place) for the *isnad* (stylistic chain of transmission), which signals the implicit mode of performance in the Arabic *maqamat* and in the Hebrew *maqamat*. Wacks believes that a frame story is narrated explicitly, yet is still narrated as if it were an anecdote (not a fable), since the author and narrator are the same person.<sup>50</sup>

In *maqamat*, the narrator is fictional, not real, and he is a *muhaddith* (storyteller). The narrator is an integral part of events in *maqamat*. He usually describes the subject or case at the beginning of each *maqama*. The narrator is often described as an observer of the event as it happens. The narrator may be unaware that he will be in the same place as the protagonist. On the other hand, the protagonist of the *maqama* is intelligent and unscrupulous. The protagonist of a *maqama* uses his persuasive argumentation skills differently in each *maqama*, and typically uses his eloquent language to cheat the naïve narrator out of his money. When the narrator discovers the protagonist’s fraud, the protagonist usually defends himself, and the narrator is unable to retrieve his money, thanks to the protagonist’s charm, eloquence, and cleverness. These fictional characters of the *maqamat* are thus described by their writers in rhymed prose.<sup>51</sup>

Before the protagonist and the narrator part at the end of the *maqama*, the protagonist presents an envoi, which is a short quotation of verses that explains his philosophy and clarifies his behavior. These short verses are related to both the recognition scene and the protagonist’s

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<sup>50</sup>David A. Wacks, *Framing Iberia Maqamat and Frametale Narratives in Medieval Spain* (Danvers, MA: Brill, 2007).

<sup>51</sup>Hameen-Anttila, *Maqama*.

identity. For example, in “*al-Maqamah al-Jahiziyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Jahiz”), al-Iskandari recites the following lines:

Alexandria is my home,  
If but there my resting-place were fixed,  
But my night I pass in Nejd,  
In Hijaz my day.<sup>52</sup>

In the recognition scene and the envoi, the protagonist and the narrator are alone, while the previous events are set with other people. An example of the finale of a *maqama* is seen in “*al-Maqamah al-Khamriyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Wine”), in which ‘Isa ibn Hisham says: “I sought refuge with God from the like of his condition, and I marveled at the holding back of subsistence from men of his ilk. We enjoyed that week of ours with him, and then we departed from him.”<sup>53</sup> The *maqama* describes the marginalized intellectual as using his sarcastic mindset to face society.<sup>54</sup>

Badi’ al-Zaman al-Hamadhani chose one narrator, ‘Isa ibn Hisham, for all his *maqamat*. Similarly, he also chose one protagonist, Abu al-Fath al-Iskandari, who appears as both a literary scholar and a beggar who demonstrates the eloquence of the Arabic language when he speaks.<sup>55</sup> Monroe contends that al-Hamadhani did not develop his protagonist-trickster, Abu al-Fath al-Iskandari, equally in all his episodes, but created contradictions in the sophistication of the character.<sup>56</sup> One literary scholar of the *Maqamat al-Hamadhani*, al-Husri (1029–1095 A.D.),

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<sup>52</sup>Al-Hamadhani, *Maqamat of Badi Zaman al-Hamadhani*, p. 62:

إسكندرية داري\*\*\*لو قر فيها قراري  
لكن ليلى بنجد\*\*\*وبالحجاز نهاري

<sup>53</sup>Al-Hamadhani, *Maqamat of Badi Zaman al-Hamadhani*, p. 141:

قال عيسى بن هشام: فاستعدت بالله من مثل حاله. وعحبت لقعود الرزق عن أمثاله. وطنينا معه أسبوعنا ذلك ورحلنا عنه.

<sup>54</sup>Al-Musawi, “Pre-Modern Belletristic Prose.”

<sup>55</sup>Daif, *Al-Maqamah*; and Stewart, “The *Maqama*.”

<sup>56</sup>James Thomas Monroe, *The Art of Badi az-Zaman al-Hamadhani as Picaresque Narrative* (Beirut, Lebanon: Center for Arab and Middle East Studies, American University, 1983).

said about al-Hamadhani's characters:

Al-Hamadhani created an exchange in *maqama* between two characters, one of whom he called 'Isa ibn Hisham and the other, Abu al-Fath al-Iskandari, and had them exchange pearls of wisdom and witty, charming phrases on amusing matters, so as to make the sad person laugh and arouse the complacent...., and he sometimes assigned the action to one and the narration to the other.<sup>57</sup>

Similar to al-Husri, Ibn Sharaf al-Qayrawani of Seville (999–1067 A.D.) stated:

Al-Hamadhani also fabricated (*zawwara*) highly ornamental *maqamat*, improvising [the stories] at the end of his literary sessions. He would ascribe them to a narrator who had told him the story and whom he called 'Isa ibn Hisham, and would claim that this narrator had heard the tale from a man of eloquence whom he (al-Hamadhani) called Abu al-Fath al-Iskandari.<sup>58</sup>

In addition, al-Hariri discusses al-Hamadhani's characters in the preface of his *maqamat*:

In a meeting devoted to that learning whose breeze has stilled in this age, whose lights are nigh gone out. There ran a mention of the Assemblies which had been invented by Badi' az Zeman, the sage of Hamadan (God shew him mercy); In which he had referred the composition to Abu'l Fath of Alexandria and the relation to 'Isa, son of Hisham. And both these are persons obscure, not known; vague, not to be recognized.<sup>59</sup>

Thus, the protagonist of al-Hamadhani's *maqamat*, Abu al-Fath al-Iskandari, and the narrator, 'Isa ibn Hisham, were both created by al-Hamadhani's imagination. They are fictional characters, and al-Hamadhani is considered to be one of the first authors in Arabic literature to rely on a fictional protagonist in all his stories. However, al-Iskandari notes that this is true of most of al-Hamadhani's *maqamat*, but not all of them. For instance, al-Hamadhani did not

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<sup>57</sup>Drory, *Models and Contacts*, pp. 18–19.

<sup>58</sup>Drory, *Models and Contacts*, p. 19.

<sup>59</sup>Thomas Chenery, Francis Joseph Steingass, and F. F. Arbuthnot, eds. and trans., *The Assemblies of Al-Hariri*, translated from the Arabic with an Introduction and Notes Historical and Grammatical (London: Williams and Norgate, 1967), vol. 1, pp. 104–105:

فإنه قد جرى ببعض أندية الأدب الذي ركبت في هذا العصر ريحه، وخبت مصابيحها، وذكر المقامات التي ابتدئها بديع الزمان، وعلامة همدان، رحمه الله تعالى، وعزا إلى الفتح الإسكندري نشأتها، وإلى عيسى بن هشام روايتها، وكلاهما مجهول لا يعرف، ونكرة لا نتعرف.

mention his hero in “*al-Maqamah al-Baghdadiyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Baghdad”) nor in “*al-Maqamah al-Ghailaniyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Ghailan”). In “*al-Maqamah al-Iblisiyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Iblis”), the protagonist is only mentioned at the end of the *maqama*.<sup>60</sup>

For his second *maqama*, Ibn Sharaf selects the name of Abu al-Rayyan al-Salt ibn al-Sakan, who is actually an historical person. He also chooses al-Jurjani as the narrator of his third *maqama*, which does not have a protagonist.<sup>61</sup> In addition, Ibn Naqiya al-Baghdadi (1020–1092 A.D.) selects al-Yashkuri, who is a nosy fellow, as the protagonist of his *maqamat* and employs multiple narrators. Al-Yashkuri appears in different situations in each *maqama*, and is not a particularly sympathetic protagonist. In fact, the author is rather tough on him.

Another author, al-Kamil al-Khwarizmi in the twelfth century, uses himself as the narrator of his *maqamat*. Furthermore, his narrator is also the protagonist, who tells stories about his adventures. Al-Hariri follows the *Maqamat al-Hamadhani* style in dialogue between the narrator and the protagonist. He chooses Abu Zayd al-Saruji as the protagonist and al-Harith ibn Hammam as the narrator of his *maqamat*. Some scholars believe that al-Harith ibn Hammam was created in al-Hariri’s imagination, and that Abu Zayd al-Saruji is a real person.<sup>62</sup>

Kennedy also insists that the protagonists of both the *Maqamat al-Hamadhani* and the *Maqamat al-Hariri*, al-Iskandari and al-Saruji, respectively, have both a private and a public personality. The protagonist is usually not recognized until the end of a *maqama*.<sup>63</sup> Al-Saraqusti (d. 1143 A.D.) chooses Abu Habib al-Sadusi as the protagonist of his *maqamat*, and al-Sa’ib ibn Tammam as the narrator. Also, al-Saraqusti has a third character, al-Mundhir ibn Hammam, who discourses with al-Sa’ib ibn Tammam. Ibn Abi al-Khisal (1073–1146 A.D.) borrowed the names of his narrator and his protagonist from al-Hariri: al-Harith ibn Hammam and Abu Zayd

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<sup>60</sup>Daif, *Al-Maqamah*; and Hameen-Anttila, *Maqama*.

<sup>61</sup>Hameen-Anttila, *Maqama*.

<sup>62</sup>Daif, *Al-Maqamah*.

<sup>63</sup>Kennedy, *Recognition in the Arabic Narrative Tradition*.

al-Sarujī.<sup>64</sup> Ibn Sayqal al-Jazari (d. 1301) named his protagonist Abu Nasr al-Misri and his narrator al-Qasim ibn Jaryal al-Dimashqi. Ibn Musallam chose al-Fath al-Mawsili as the narrator and Abu al-Nabhan, a rather respectable character, as the protagonist of his *maqamat*. Al-Suyuti (1445–1505 A.D.) selected Hashim ibn al-Qasim as the narrator and Abu Bishr al-'Ulabi as the protagonist of his *maqamat*. In al-Hadrami's *maqamat*, the narrator is called Al-Nasir ibn Fattah, while the protagonist is Abu Zafar al-Hindi. Nasif al-Yaziji (1800–1871 A.D.) chose Maimon ibn Khuzam as the protagonist of his *maqamat* and Suhail ibn Abbad as the narrator.<sup>65</sup>

The fictional protagonist and narrator are one of the writer's main fictional techniques within the *maqama* genre. Some authors of the *maqama* ascribe their own words to these fictional characters. Ibn Mari (d. 1193 A.D.) stated in the preface to his *maqamat*, "I called the narrator Abu al-Kayr ibn al-Harith, and the person who [the story] is about Abu al-Fadhil ibn al-Warith."<sup>66</sup> Al-Hanafi selects Abu 'Amr as the protagonist of his *maqamat*.<sup>67</sup> Abu al-Faraj ibn al-Jawzi (1116–1200 A.D.), a Muslim scholar in the Middle Ages, also wrote in the preface to his *maqamat*, "So that he should be known by name, I called him Abu al-Qawim (that is, a righteous man), because I discovered that he received inspiration from Abu al-Taqwīn (he who has ability to lead people on the right way, the way of Allah), for those who have the knowledge are distinguished by their ability to create parables, and only the knowledgeable understand them."<sup>68</sup>

This declaration of the protagonist and the narrator's name becomes a defining aspect of

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<sup>64</sup>H. Nemah, "Andalusian Maqamat," *Journal of Arabic Literature*, 1974, 83–92.

<sup>65</sup>Daif, *Al-Maqamah*; Stewart, "The Maqama"; Hameen-Anttila, *Maqama*; and Hassan Abbas, *Nash'at al-Maqamah fi al-'Adab al-Arabi* ["The Beginning of the Maqama in Arabic Literature"] (Cairo, Egypt: Ma'arif's House, 1954).

<sup>66</sup>Drory, *Models and Contacts*, pp. 19–20.

<sup>67</sup>Hameen-Anttila, *Maqama*.

<sup>68</sup>Drory, *Models and Contacts*.

*maqamat*, even in Hebrew *maqamat*. Al-Harizi (1165–1225 A.D.), a rabbi, translator, poet, and scholar in Spain during the Middle Ages, stated in the preface of his *maqamat*, *Sefer*

*Takhemoni*,

All the words of this book I have put upon the tongue of Herman, the EzraHITE, and in the name of Heber, the Kenite, I have founded and built them, although neither of them live in our generation; and all that I have mentioned in their name never was and never happened, but was only fiction.<sup>69</sup>

The standard of chosen names for protagonists and narrators in *maqamat* explains the fictional limits of this genre.<sup>70</sup> Nevertheless, al-Zamakhshari (1075–1144 A.D.) did not employ a protagonist nor a narrator in his first *maqama*, *Atwaq al-Dhahab fi al-Mawa'iz al-Khutab* (“Golden Necklaces of Exhortations and Sermons”).<sup>71</sup> However, he chose his own *kunya* (nickname), Abu al-Qasim, as the only character in his second *maqama*, *Kitab al-Nasa'ih al-Kubra*. In contrast, al-Rashid (d. 1166 or 1167 A.D.) made himself the narrator of his *maqamat*, following al-Hamadhani’s and al-Hariri’s theme of the narrator who recognizes the protagonist’s fraud. In the *maqamat* of Safa’addin, the narrator is the same protagonist character.<sup>72</sup>

In Hebrew *maqamat*, Ibn Shabbetai did not follow the Arabic *maqamat* style when he wrote a single tale narrated in the third person, having only a protagonist. The protagonist of his *maqama* is not the comic rogue, as in most *maqamat*, but a young pious Jew, Zerah, who listens to his father’s advice and avoids friendship with women. His behavior inspires other men to abandon having sex with their wives and lovers. This then leads the women to ask for help from an old witch, who uses a girl to seduce Zerah. Afterward, Zerah does not know what

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<sup>69</sup>Drory, *Models and Contacts*, p. 20.

<sup>70</sup>Drory, *Models and Contacts*.

<sup>71</sup>Daif, *Al-Maqamah*.

<sup>72</sup>Hameen-Anttila, *Maqama*.

to do, whether to flee or get a divorce.<sup>73</sup>

Table 1. Protagonists and Narrators in Popular Arabic *Maqamat*

<i>Maqamat</i>	Protagonists	Narrators
The <i>Maqamat al-Hamadhani</i>	Abu al-Fath al-Iskandari	‘Isa ibn Hisham
The <i>Maqamat al-Hariri</i>	Abu Zayd al-Saruji	Al-Harith ibn Hammam
The <i>Maqamat Ibn Mari</i>	Abu al-Fadhl b. al-Warith	Abu al-Kayr ibn al-Harith
The <i>Maqamat Ibn Naqiya</i>	Al-Yashkuri	Multi narrators
The <i>Maqamat al-Saraqusti</i>	Abu Habib al-Sadusi	Al-Sa’ib ibn Tammam & al-Mundhir ibn Hammam
The <i>Maqamat Ibn Abi al-Khisal</i>	Abu Zayd al-Saruji	Al-Harith ibn Hammam
The <i>Maqamat Ibn Sayqal</i>	Abu Nasr al-Misri	Al-Qasim ibn Jaryal al-Dimashqi
The <i>Maqamat Ibn Musallam</i>	Abu al-Nabhan	Al-Fath al-Mawsili
The <i>Maqamat al-Suyuti</i>	Abu Bishr al-’Ulabi	Hashim ibn al-Qasim
The <i>Maqamat al-Hadrami</i>	Abu Zafar al-Hindi	Al-Nasir ibn Fattah
The <i>Maqamat al-Yaziji</i>	Maimon ibn Khuzam	Suhail ibn Abbad

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<sup>73</sup>Michelle M. Hamilton, *Representing Others in Medieval Iberian Literature* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).

## The History of *Maqamat* Studies

### The Arabic *Maqamat*

The *maqama* genre has an important role in medieval Arabic literature, beginning with its original form and continuing into later centuries and through progressive changes. In the tenth century, the *hikaya* (“tale”) developed from its oral tradition to a written one, whereas the *maqama* is an Arabic literary genre that began as a written one.<sup>74</sup> Al-Tha’alibi (961–1038 A.D.), author of the noted work *Kitab Yatimat al-Dahr* (“The Unique Pearl”), mentions Badi’ al-Zaman al-Hamadhani as the first writer of a *maqama*.<sup>75</sup>

Although the *Maqamat al-Hamadhani* was widely dispersed, development of the *maqama* stylistic genre peaked in the works of al-Hariri (1054–1122 A.D.). The *Maqamat al-Hariri* spread quickly during al-Hariri’s time, and there are numerous *shuruh* (commentaries) on his works. Many people traveled from various places, including *al-Andalus* (Spain), to hear al-Hariri recite his *maqamat* in person.

Both al-Hamadhani and al-Hariri are regarded as masters of this genre in Arabic literature. Although al-Hamadhani is considered the originator of the *maqama* genre, nevertheless al-Hariri has become more famous as the genre’s master, and his *maqamat* are considered the most famous.<sup>76</sup>

A century after the time of al-Hamadhani and al-Hariri, the *maqama* was accepted as a new genre in Arabic literature. Some scholars believe that this shift occurred because the *Maqamat al-Hamadhani* was written in a new format, and some time had to elapse before the *maqama* genre was embraced as another Arabic poetic model.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>74</sup>Ceccato, “Drama in the Post-Classical Period.”

<sup>75</sup>Drory, *Models and Contacts*.

<sup>76</sup>Stewart, “The Maqama”; and Drory, *Models and Contacts*.

<sup>77</sup>Drory, *Models and Contacts*.



Al-Husri (1029–1095 A.D.) believed that al-Hamadhani wrote his *maqamat* as a response to Ibn Durayd’s (837–933 A.D.) *Arba’una Hadidan* (“the Forty Tales”). Al-Husri said about Ibn Durayd, “He created [the Forty Tales] from the springs of his heart and quarried them from the quarry of his mind.”<sup>78</sup> Ibn Durayd’s tales were widely accepted as Arabic literature. However, Beeston contends that al-Hamadhani was the creator of the *maqama* genre, not Ibn Durayd, as Zaki Mubarak (1892–1952) claimed.<sup>79</sup> Al-Husri also credited al-Hamadhani with successfully formulating the new *maqama* genre.<sup>80</sup>

Badi’ al-Zaman al-Hamadhani himself did not write a preface for his *maqamat* to introduce his work and the new genre, as al-Hariri and other authors of *maqamat* did. Many authors of *maqamat* have stated that the poetry in their *maqamat* was indeed their innovation. For example, al-Hariri declared:

And of the poetry of others I have introduced nothing but two single verses, on which I have based the fabric of the Assembly of Holwan; and two others, in a couplet, which I have inserted at the conclusion of the Assembly of Kerej. And, as for the rest, my own mind is the father of its virginity, the author of its sweet and its bitter.<sup>81</sup>

Al-Hamadhani also taught many students and created some of his *maqamat* expressly for them. Shawqi Daif believes that al-Hamadhani recited his *maqamat* as *mu’aradat* (contrafaction), seeking to emulate the original *ahadith* verses by Ibn Duraid, who created forty *ahadith* for his students to teach them the eloquence of the classical Arabic style. Probably, Ibn Duraid’s *ahadith* also inspired al-Hamadhani to create his *maqamat*. Some scholars believe that

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<sup>78</sup>Drory, *Models and Contacts*, p. 14.

<sup>79</sup>Beeston, “The Genesis of the Maqamat Genre.”

<sup>80</sup>Drory, *Models and Contacts*.

<sup>81</sup>Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, trans Thomas Chenery (Edinburgh, Scotland: Williams and Norgate, 1867), vol. 1, p. 106:

ولم أودعه من الأشعار الأجنبية إلا بيتين فذنين أسست عليهما بنية المقامة الحلوانية. وآخرين توأمين ضمنتهما خواتم المقامة الكرجية. وما عدا ذلك فخاطري أبو عذره، ومقتضب حلوه ومره.

al-Hamadhani was also influenced by al-Jahiz (776–868 A.D.).<sup>82</sup> Al-Hamadhani’s output totals more than fifty-two *maqamat*, not all of them with the same subject or length.<sup>83</sup>

Scholars of the *maqamat* written after al-Hariri see them as a complete genre.<sup>84</sup>

Brockelmann’s *Geshichte der arabischen Litteratur* lists ninety-nine works entitled *maqamat*. In Chauvin’s catalogue of Arabic *maqamat*, there is a list of al-Hamadhani, al-Hariri, and fifty-nine other writers, most of whose manuscripts still exist. Blachere and Masnou list al-Hamadhani, al-Hariri, and seventy-five others as *maqamat* writers. Some of these writers are directly related to the Arabic *maqama* genre, whereas others are connected via spiritual stations or saints’ miracles, including al-Sulami (d. 1106 A.D.) and al-Suhrawardi (837–933 A.D.).<sup>85</sup> In their infancy, Arabic *maqamat* were recited publicly in dialectical Arabic.<sup>86</sup>

**Al-Hamadhani—His Life and Contributions.** When the *maqama* genre is presented in Arabic literature, al-Hamadhani is one of the two most prominent writers who come to mind, along with al-Hariri. Al-Hamadhani’s nickname is Badi’ al-Zaman (the Marvel or Wonder of the Age), and he is also known in Arabic literature as al-Hamadhani (the man from Hamadhan) because he was born of Arab parents in the Persian city of Hamadhan. Al-Hamadhani is famous for winning a literary debate with Abu Bakr al-Khwarizim (d. 1012 A.D.), a famous literary scholar of classical Arabic literature.<sup>87</sup>

One of al-Hamadhani’s languages was Persian, and his writings include some Persian poems that he translated into Arabic. His work shows a mastery of the Arabic language. We know that he studied in Hamadhan under the famous tenth-century lexicographer Ibn Faris

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<sup>82</sup>Daif, *Al-Maqamah*; and Hameen-Anttila, *Maqama*.

<sup>83</sup>Hameen-Anttila, *Maqama*.

<sup>84</sup>Hameen-Anttila, *Maqama*.

<sup>85</sup>Stewart, “The Maqama.”

<sup>86</sup>Hamilton, *Representing Others in Medieval Iberian Literature*.

<sup>87</sup>Abbas, *The Beginning of the Maqama in Arabic Literature*; Beeston, “Al-Hamadhani, al-Hariri and the Maqamat Genre”; Ceccato, “Drama in the Post-Classical Period”; Daif, *Al-Maqamah*; Hameen-Anttila, *Maqama*; and Irwin, *Night and Horses and the Desert*.

(941–1004 A.D.), and then began his travels through cities across modern-day Iran and Iraq.<sup>88</sup>

Al-Tha'alibi (961–1038 A.D.) showed a great interest in al-Hamadhani's work, as can be seen in the following passage:

He was the miracle of Hamadhan, the rarity of the spheres, the first-born of mercury, unique in Time, the white spot on the forehead of his generation. No one is like him in innate acumen and swiftness of mind, nobility of character, clarity of intelligence and mental strength. There is nowhere his equal in gracefulness of prose and its *bons mots*, in specialties of verse and its witticisms. Never has anyone been seen nor heard of who would have reached like him the essence of *adab* [literature] and its secrets or who would have brought about such wonders and magic as he did.<sup>89</sup>

Al-Hamadhani was widely considered a man of rare abilities. For example, al-Tha'alibi wrote:

One could recite to him once a *qasidah* of fifty verses that he had never heard before, and he could repeat it from the beginning to the end without making a mistake. He could also take just one glance at four or five double-paged letters (*waraqah*) and recite them without error to an audience. He was often asked to extemporize a *qasidah* or a letter on novel matter or a strange subject, and he would promptly do it. He had the ability to write a letter beginning with the last line and working back to the first, and it would come out most graciously and wittily.<sup>90</sup>

The *Maqamat al-Hamadhani* has been published multiple times with commentaries by different scholars, including the Egyptian scholar Sheikh Muhammad 'Abduh.<sup>91</sup> The *Maqamat al-Hamadhani* deals with its protagonist, Abu al-Fath al-Iskandari, as an infamous rogue scholar.<sup>92</sup> The protagonist travels to different Persian cities, and most of his *maqamat* reflect the city names. Moreover, he gives his *maqamat* animal titles, such as “*al-Maqamah al-*

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<sup>88</sup>Hameen-Anttila, *Maqama*.

<sup>89</sup>Abu Mansure Muhammad al-Tha'alibi, *Yatimat al-Dahr fi Mahasin Ahl al-'Asr* [“The Unique Pearl of the Century on the Graces of Our Contemporaries”], Beirut, Lebanon: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 2002, vol. 4, p. 256.

<sup>90</sup>Al-Tha'alibi, *Yatimat al-Dahr*, vol. 4, p. 256.

<sup>91</sup>Ivanyi, “On Rhyming Endings and Symmetric Phrases in al-Hamadhani's *Maqamat*.”

<sup>92</sup>Irwin, *Night and Horses and the Desert: An Anthology of Classical Arabic Literature*.

*Asadiyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of the Lion”). Al-Hamadhani also used food to entitle his work, as in “*al-Maqamah al-Madhiriyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of the Madhirah” [soup with meat]). Sometimes he gave a title according to the theme of the *maqama*, including “*al-Maqamah al-Qariziyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Poesie”). Thus, al-Hamadhani did not have a single way of naming his *maqamat*.<sup>93</sup>

Unfortunately, al-Hamadhani did not live to see his *maqamat* become famous in his lifetime, as al-Hariri did. However, the *Maqamat al-Hamadhani* did become quite well known after al-Hamadhani’s death. Readers who are interested in cultural studies will enjoy the *Maqamat al-Hamadhani* because they reflect the social life of the author’s time. They also provide philological lessons for those interested in the classically eloquent Arabic writing style. Most readers enjoy the ornate language of the *Maqamat al-Hamadhani*.<sup>94</sup>

In the period between al-Hamadhani and al-Hariri, authors of *maqamat* mostly followed al-Hamadhani’s writing style. In far away Andalusia, several contemporary authors wrote *maqamat*, but unfortunately most of their works have been lost. Ibn Naqiya al-Baghdadi, also known as Ibn al-Bundar, was the first author to exactly follow al-Hamadhani’s writing style. He wrote ten *maqamat*, naming them *maqamat adabiyya* (“literary *maqamat*”). In his preface, he stated:

There are stories (*hikayat*) the expressions of which we have made beautiful and the words and meanings of which we have polished. We have adorned them with ornaments of eloquence for both the reader and the narrator (*rawi*) [to enjoy]. Some of the older writers have done the same.<sup>95</sup>

One of the significant differences between the *Maqamat al-Hamadhani* and the *Maqamat*

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<sup>93</sup>Daif, *Al-Maqamah*.

<sup>94</sup>Beeston, “Al-Hamadhani, al-Hariri and the Maqamat Genre”; and Hameen-Anttila, *Maqama*.

<sup>95</sup>Hameen-Anttila, *Maqama*, p. 133.

*Ibn Naqiya* is that al-Hamadhani's works are set in several different locations, whereas the *Maqamat Ibn Naqiya* is set in only one place, Baghdad. The *Maqamat Ibn Naqiya* is also easier to read than the *Maqamat al-Hamadhani* or the *maqamat* of later authors, including al-Hariri.<sup>96</sup>

Ibn Butlan (1001–1038 A.D.), a Christian physician in Baghdad, traveled to Aleppo and Egypt and wrote a *maqama* on medical lore entitled *Da'wat al-Atibba'* ("the Physician's Dinner Party"). The difference between the *Maqamat al-Hamadhani* and the *Maqamat Ibn Butlan* is that the former is a collection of separate stories, whereas Ibn Butlan's *maqama* is one continuous story.<sup>97</sup>

Al-Kamil al-Khwarizmi, a poet in the twelfth century and a contemporary of al-Hariri, wrote a *maqamat* entitled the *Kitab al-Rihal maqama* ("The Book of the Journeys"), which has been lost, except for some quotes. One of the main differences between his *maqamat* and those of the *Maqamat al-Hamadhani* and the *Maqamat al-Hariri* is the treatment of the characters. Al-Khwarizmi's narrator is himself, in contrast to al-Hamadhani and al-Hariri, who used fictitious narrators and protagonists. Hameen-Anttila wonders whether al-Khwarizmi's text is a *maqama* or a *risala* (a literary epistle), since there is no narrator, and the protagonist is the author himself. Also, the language of al-Khwarizmi's *maqamat* is less ornate than al-Hamadhani's or al-Hariri's.<sup>98</sup> This may be one reason why al-Khwarizmi's work does not have as good a reputation as al-Hamadhani's and al-Hariri's.

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<sup>96</sup>Hameen-Anttila, *Maqama*; and Abbas, *The Beginning of the Maqama in Arabic Literature*.

<sup>97</sup>Hameen-Anttila, *Maqama*; and Abbas, *The Beginning of the Maqama in Arabic Literature*.

<sup>98</sup>Jaakko Hameen-Anttila, "Al-Kamil al-Khwarizmi and His *Kitab ar-Rihal* as a *Maqama* Collection," *Anaquel de Estudios Arabes*, 1997, 141–162.

**Al-Hariri and His Influence on the *Maqama* Genre.** Abu Muhammad al-Qasim ibn Ali Al-Hariri, who is as well known as al-Hamadhani, created more than fifty *maqamat*. Many authors of *maqamat* after al-Hamadhani tried to imitate al-Hamadhani's style, but they did not succeed until al-Hariri wrote his *maqamat*. Al-Hariri perfected the *maqama* genre begun by al-Hamadhani. Al-Hamadhani's influence on al-Hariri is still strong, however, and some *maqamat* of the *Maqamat al-Hariri* are modeled after several of al-Hamadhani's *maqamat*.<sup>99</sup>

Although al-Hariri followed al-Hamadhani, he created new frameworks for the *maqama* genre, and the structural format of his *maqamat* had a huge impact on most of the *maqama* authors who followed him. There were some forty authors of *maqamat* in the ten years after al-Hariri died, most of them from the Middle East. All of them followed al-Hariri's structure for the *maqama*: (1) he selected one narrator and one protagonist; (2) he used ornate language; (3) the main themes of his *maqamat* are adventure and begging (*kudya*); and (4) he wrote philological *maqamat*.

Before al-Hariri, the titles of these works did not contain the word *maqamat*, but most authors used the term *maqamat* in their titles after al-Hariri.<sup>100</sup> Ibn Sayqal is one author who faithfully followed al-Hariri's *maqama* structure: *isnad*; general introduction; episode; recognition; envoi; and finale. He wrote nearly fifty *maqamat* in the al-Hariri style.<sup>101</sup> His work *al-Maqamat al-Zayniyya* ("The *Maqama* of Zayna") shows the deep influence of the *Maqamat al-Hariri*, and in his preface to his *maqamat* he refers to al-Hariri.<sup>102</sup>

Abu al-Qasim Mahmud 'Umar al-Zamakhshari, one of the prominent scholars of the twelfth century, used the preaching style of *maqamat* in his work *Atwaq al-Dhahab fi al-Mawa'iz wa al-Khutab* ("Golden Necklaces of Exhortations and Sermons"). It is a collection of

<sup>99</sup>Hameen-Anttila, *Maqama*.

<sup>100</sup>Hameen-Anttila, *Maqama*.

<sup>101</sup>Young, *Rogues and Genres*.

<sup>102</sup>Hameen-Anttila, *Maqama*.

one hundred *maqamat* in rhymed prose. Al-Zamakhshari did not only preach to others, but also to *nafsahu* (his own soul). Although his *maqamat* do not feature rogues and protagonists, as do the *Maqamat al-Hamadhani* and the *Maqamat al-Hariri*, al-Zamakhshari still followed their *maqamat* structure. He also wrote a book in the *maqama* genre entitled *Kitab al-Nasai'h al-Kubra* (“The Great Sin”). In it, we find fifty *maqamat*, including a preface, in which he noted that he wrote his *maqamat* in the third person. Al-Zamakhshari wrote five *maqamat* on the subject of [philology](#), following al-Hariri’s style in building some of his *maqamat* on allusions. His two collections of works consist of *maqamat* and pious literature. Al-Zamakhshari wrote his *maqamat* in verses.<sup>103</sup>

Another poet of note was Al-Nu’mani, who wrote *maqamat* following both the Hamadhanian and the Haririan structure, which included an *isnad*, a general introduction, an episode, and a finale (after he met al-Hariri in Basra), although he did not use the envoi in his *maqamat*. The narrator of the *Maqamat al-Nu’mani* is unknown.

Another writer, Khatiraddawla al-Baghdadi (d. 1157 A.D.), wrote more than fifty *maqamat* following the Hamadhanian model of *maqama* and imitating al-Hariri’s *maqamat*. Al-Rashid wrote *maqamat* following the Haririan style. Safa’addin wrote *maqamat* using most of the *maqama*’s features, including the *isnad*. Al-Wahrani (d. 1179 A.D.) wrote three *maqama* texts using *hija*’ (satire) and sometimes rough humor: two of these are satirically titled with *maqama* in the title. Al-Wahrani wrote his *maqamat* under the category of invective literature. Al-Wahrani’s purpose was also panegyric. Another writer, Ibn Mari, tried to compete with al-Hariri by writing sixty *maqamat* in the Haririan style, compared to al-Hariri’s fifty, but he could not match al-Hariri’s eloquence.<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>103</sup>Hameen-Anttila, *Maqama*.

<sup>104</sup>Hameen-Anttila, *Maqama*.

Abu al-'Ala' Ahmad al-Hanafi wrote thirty *maqamat*, collected as a manuscript in Laleli, Turkey, and edited by Rescher. Al-Hanafi's *maqamat* start with a six-page preface, which begins with an *isnad* and moves to a long general introduction that describes his arrival in a city. Like some other authors, he did not employ an envoi.<sup>105</sup>

**Andalusian *Maqamat* and al-Saraqusti.** In Andalusia and North Africa, the *Maqamat al-Hamadhani* and the *Maqamat al-Hariri* are well-known, so it was natural that their achievements inspired admiration and imitation, both of a general kind and in particular, in the writing of *maqamat*. Al-Hariri's model for *maqamat* had a big impact on Andalusian authors. Although Ibn Mu'allim (d. 1040 A.D.) wrote both *maqamat* and narrative *risala*, he is considered the first notable writer of *maqama* in Andalusia. Ibn Bassam (776–868 A.D.), an Andalusian poet and historian, who compared al-Hamadhani and Ibn al-Mu'allim in his famous work *Al-Dhakhirah fi Mahasin Ahl al-Gazira* ("The Treasury Concerning the Merits of the People of Iberia"), called Ibn Mu'allim *Badi' dhalika al-Zaman* ("the Wonder of the Age"). In Tunisia, the *Maqamat Ibn Sharaf* vies with the Hamadhanian *maqamat*. One of al-Hamadhani's *maqamat* criticizes Arabic poets from the pre-Islamic period. Abu Hafs 'Umar ibn al-Shahid also wrote *maqamat* during al-Hamadhani's time, but only twelve pages of his *maqamat* have survived.<sup>106</sup>

Ibn 'Iyad al-Labli was one of the first writers to show the influence of the *Maqamat al-Hariri*. Ibn Arqam also wrote *maqamat* inspired by al-Hariri. Ibn Abi al-Khisal (1073–1146 A.D.), a famous Andalusian vizier, competed with the *Maqamat al-Hariri* in his writing. The structure of his *maqamat* is: (1) *isnad*, (2) general introduction, (3) episode, (4) recognition scene, (5) envoi, and (6) finale.

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<sup>105</sup>Hameen-Anttila, *Maqama*.

<sup>106</sup>Abbas, *The Beginning of the Maqama in Arabic Literature*; and Hameen-Anttila, *Maqama*.



Abu al-Tahir Muhammad al-Saraqusti al-Andalusi ibn al-Ashtarkuwi, who is the most prominent writer of the *maqama* genre in Andalusia, wrote fifty *maqamat*, entitled *al-Maqamat al-Luzumiyah*, which is one of the most widely read Andalusian works. Al-Saraqusti was heavily influenced by al-Hariri and became the Andalusian successor to the *Maqamat al-Hariri* school.<sup>107</sup> Most of his *maqamat* are of the *kudya* (picaresque or roguish) type. The published collection of his *maqamat* does not have a preface.

Al-Saraqusti, who clearly shows the influence of al-Hariri, employed the same structure in all of his *maqamat*: (1) *isnad*, (2) a general introduction, (3) episode, (4) recognition scene, (5) envoi, and (6) finale.<sup>108</sup> The *Maqamat al-Saraqusti* often makes the reader doubt if the beloved character is real or fictitious. The author discusses his contemporary skeptical philosophy in his work. In *al-Maqamat al-Luzumiyah*, al-Saraqusti represented elements of Andalusian and Arab Muslim society. Most of his *maqamat* are set outside the Islamic government courts. An example occurs in *maqama* 9 when al-Sa'ib, the narrator of his *maqamat*, arrives in Baghdad, searching for diversions:

When the *jinni* who inspired my youth was a *marid* [a real devil], and the arrow of my idleness was penetrating, I used to be acquainted with every scoundrel, and sought to drink from every raincloud and downpour of love. I had often heard that the City of Peace [Baghdad] was a seat of knowledge and eminent scholars..., so I determined to travel, twisting together the various strands of my resolution. When I arrived there, I did not cease to traverse its quarters and alleys: to explore its commodities and neighborhoods in their various species and kinds; to accost its buxom maidens and lascivious women.... While I was wandering about in its lanes and its fair landmarks appeared before me, I suddenly came upon a bevy of women strutting about in mantles and cloaks, swaying like branches, manifesting virtuous beauty, whispering words to one another that were sweeter than honey and deadlier than misfortune.<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>107</sup>Hameen-Anttila, *Maqama*; and Young, *Rogues and Genres*.

<sup>108</sup>Hameen-Anttila, *Maqama*.

<sup>109</sup>Hamilton, *Representing Others in Medieval Iberian Literature*.

One of al-Saraqusti's main focuses in his *maqamat* is the element of rhymed prose. Five of his *maqamat* employ particularly difficult prose, in which the rhyme is entirely in the consonants: *hamza* (‘), *ba’* (b), *jim* (j), *dal* (d), and *nun* (n). He also wrote four *maqamat* for which rhymes go through all the letters of the alphabet. One of al-Saraqusti's *maqamat* follows the rhyme scheme *aaa bbb ccc*, etc., and two follow the rhyme scheme *aa bb cc*, etc.<sup>110</sup> He does not use a single vowel rhyme, as al-Hamadhani and al-Hariri did. Instead, he wrote in a more complicated double rhyme.

The golden age of Andalusian *maqamat* began with the *Maqamat al-Saraqusti*. The rhyme became the main focus of the *maqama* genre. In the late twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the *maqama* developed very little. Nevertheless, the genre had a renaissance in fourteenth-century Spain and North Africa. Ibn al-Murabi' al-Azdi (d. 1350 A.D.) and Ibn al-Khatib (1313–1374 A.D.), an Andalusian vizier, are two notable writers of *maqamat*.<sup>111</sup>

**Authors of *Maqamat* in Different Regions of the Islamic World.** In 1181 A.D., Ibn al-Jawzi completed fifty *maqamat*, following al-Zamakhshari's pious writing style.<sup>112</sup> Ibn al-Sigal al-Jazari wrote fifty *maqamat* as well.<sup>113</sup> Likewise, Ahmad al-Qalqashandi (1355–1418 A.D.), a medieval Egyptian writer known for his famous book *Subh al-A'sha fi Sina'at al-Insha'* (“The Dawn of the Blind or Daybreak for the Night-Blind Regarding the Composition of Chancery Documents”), wrote a *maqama* following al-Hariri's structure.<sup>114</sup>

Thus, following al-Hariri's style came to mean writing fifty *maqamat* in *saj'* (rhymed prose) with two central characters, the narrator and the protagonist, and occasionally more.

Another writer, Abu 'Abd Allah ibn Abi al-Khisal, closely followed the literary lead of the

<sup>110</sup>Stewart, “The Maqama.”

<sup>111</sup>Hameen-Anttila, *Maqama*.

<sup>112</sup>Hameen-Anttila, *Maqama*.

<sup>113</sup>Daif, *The Maqama*; and Stewart, “The Maqama.”

<sup>114</sup>Al-Musawi, “Pre-Modern Belletristic Prose.”

*Maqamat al-Hariri*, using the same names for his narrator and protagonist.<sup>115</sup>

The shadow plays (*Khayal al-Zill*) by Ibn Daniyal (1238–1310 A.D.) are considered *maqamat*. The book *Nuzhat al-Nufus* by Ibn Sudun (d. 1464 A.D.) is also regarded as *maqamat* that use both classical Arabic language and comparatively rhymed prose. The *maqama* continued to be a well-read genre of Arabic literature in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, and there is no shortage of authors of that genre.

Although the *Maqamat al-Hariri* is still considered the criterion for the *maqama* genre in those centuries, the writers after al-Hariri created a few innovations. For example, writers of *maqamat* kept the fictional *isnad* with rhymed prose. A narrator in some of these *maqamat* is considered a protagonist. ‘Ali ibn Muhammad ‘Ala’addin (d. 1317 A.D.) wrote *Marati’ al-Ghizlan*, a romantic story that begins with an *isnad* and became a famous work at that time. Ibn al-Wardi (1292–1349 A.D.), a famous historian, wrote *maqamat* entitled *Antakiyya*. In that work, the narrator-cum-protagonist from Ma’arrat al-Nu’man, a city in northwestern Syria, portrays Antioch. His *maqamat*, in which he describes the plague sweeping across the Middle East and Europe, became his most famous work.<sup>116</sup>

Ibn Musallam (d. 1485 A.D.) wrote ten *maqamat*, which imitate al-Hariri’s style. Jalal al-Din al-Suyuti (1445–1505 A.D.) wrote *Maqamat Rashf al-Zulal min al-Sihr al-Halal*, which is considered a bridge between post-classical and pre-modern *maqamat*.<sup>117</sup> Al-Suyuti also wrote *al-Maqamah al-Durriyyah*, to compete with Ibn al-Wardi’s *maqamat*. Al-Suyuti’s *maqamat* are full of variety. Another author, al-Qalqashandi (1355–1418 A.D.), wrote *Al-Kawakib al-Durriyya fi al-Manaqib al-Badriyya*, which is considered an example of the *maqama* becoming an autobiography of al-Nathir ibn Nazzam (the Prosaist, son of Poet) as the narrator. Another

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<sup>115</sup>Stewart, “The Maqama.”

<sup>116</sup>Hameen-Anttila, *Maqama: A History of a Genre*.

<sup>117</sup>Al-Musawi, “Pre-Modern Belletristic Prose.”

notable writer, al-Ghazafi (d. 1589 A.D.) composed a *maqama* to the highest judge in Egypt, Shihab al-Din Ahmad al-Ansari, using new styles of poetry. Al-Hadrami in the sixteenth century wrote fifty *maqamat* following the Haririan model.<sup>118</sup>

The eighteenth century is the century of the *maqama* renaissance. Al-Hifni (d. 1764 A.D.) wrote his *Maqamat al-Muhakama bayan al-Mudam wa al-Zuhur* (“Maqama on the Case of the Wine and the Flowers”), which contains both *maqamat* and literary criticism in a debate. Likewise, Ibn al-Salahi (d. 1766 A.D.) wrote a *maqama* eulogizing the Messenger of God. The *maqama* genre continued with al-Idkawi (d. 1770 A.D.), who composed *al-Maqama al-Gumuddiyya* (“The *Maqama* Embracing the Messenger of God”).<sup>119</sup>

Nasif al-Yaziji (1800–1871 A.D.) is credited with reviving the *maqama* in modern Arabic literature. His *maqamat* have been described as gleaming.<sup>120</sup> Although al-Yaziji follows the *Maqamat al-Hariri* style, in his book *Majma’ al-Bahrayn* (“The Merging of the Two Seas”) in 1855, he wrote a total of sixty *maqamat*.<sup>121</sup> Al-Rafi’i (d. 1815 A.D.) wrote two types of *maqama*: the descriptive and the debating.<sup>122</sup> Shaikh Hasan al-’Attar (d. 1834 A.D.) described French colonialism in Egypt in his modern *maqama*, as did al-Jabari (d. 1913 A.D.), who lived in North Africa.<sup>123</sup>

### **Hebrew *Maqamat***

By the end of the twelfth century, the *maqama* began to be cultivated by Hebrew writers living in Andalusia and Christian Iberia. In their adaptations, the genre underwent several changes. While the essential features remained consistent in the Hebrew *maqamat*, a number of

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<sup>118</sup>Hameen-Anttila, *Maqama*.

<sup>119</sup>Hameen-Anttila, *Maqama*.

<sup>120</sup>Hameen-Anttila, *Maqama*.

<sup>121</sup>Daif, *Al-Maqamah*; and Stewart, “The Maqama.”

<sup>122</sup>Hameen-Anttila, *Maqama: A History of a Genre*.

<sup>123</sup>Hameen-Anttila, *Maqama* ; and al-Musawi, “Pre-Modern Belletristic Prose.”

specifically Jewish cultural and literary features are present in the work of writers such as al-Harizi (1165–1225 A.D.) and Ibn Zabara (1140–1200 A.D.), contributing to the uniqueness of the Hebrew *maqamat*. These authors provided a different solution to the problem of narrativity and fictionality inherited from their Arabic predecessors, and this difference affected the way performance is represented in the texts. Al-Harizi and Ibn Zabara wrote during a period when the tradition of secular literature in Hebrew was relatively new. Hebrew poets did not begin to produce profane compositions until the end of the tenth century. At that point, a group of poets in Andalusia began to write secular poetry in Hebrew, adapting Arabic poetic metrics, themes, imagery, and metaphors.<sup>124</sup>

The Arabic *maqama* genre has a strong relationship with Hebrew literature. Hebrew *maqamat* originated among Andalusian Jews in both the Islamic and Christian eras. One similarity of the *maqamat* written by Jews to Arabic *maqamat* is that some Jews were fluent in Arabi and chose to write in that language.<sup>125</sup> Hebrew *maqamat* usually follow the Arabic *maqama* structure, not only in language but also in literary style, especially that of al-Hamadhani and al-Hariri.<sup>126</sup> Hebrew *maqamat* do not use fiction to represent the world. Rather, they employ fiction to show the writers' verbal ingenuity. Arabic *maqamat* are typically written in ornate language that describes reality in parody and satire, giving readers realistic information about the rhythm of the *maqama*.

One particularly notable writer of Hebrew *maqamat* is Yahuda al-Harizi (1166–1225 A.D.), who translated the *Maqamat al-Hariri* into Hebrew. After that, al-Harizi felt capable of writing his own *maqamat* in Hebrew, which he entitled *Tahkemoni*. Part of al-Harizi's purpose was to

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<sup>124</sup>Wacks, *Framing Iberia Maqamat and Frametale Narratives in Medieval Spain*.

<sup>125</sup>Hameen-Anttila, *Maqama*; and Hamilton, *Representing Others in Medieval Iberian Literature*.

<sup>126</sup>Drory, *Models and Contacts*; Hamilton, *Representing Others in Medieval Iberian Literature*; and Arie Schippers, "The Hebrew Maqama," in *Maqama: A History of a Genre* (Helsinki, Finland: University of Helsinki, 2002), 302–327.

demonstrate the wealth of the Hebrew language, showing that it could achieve anything that could be achieved in Arabic. His *maqamat* represent aspects of ordinary life, including food and furniture.<sup>127</sup> Hebrew *maqamat* show the customs and culture of Jewish intellectuals in Iberia. Authors of Hebrew *maqamat* did not just imitate Arabic *maqamat*, but wrote about their own issues and concerns, including their heritage of traditional Judaism. As in the Arabic *maqamat*, Ibn Shabbetai and al-Harizi used poetry in their *maqamat*. However, their use of poetry was different, since they employed it to examine their Jewish identity and national aspirations, especially Sephardic Jews.<sup>128</sup>

Shelomoh ibn Saqbel (or Shelomoh ibn Sahl), who lived under Muslim rule in Andalusia during the twelfth century, wrote the first well-known Hebrew *maqama*, *Ne'um Asher ben Yehudah* (“The Utterances of AbY”). Later, Yosef ibn Zabara (1140–1200 A.D.) wrote *Sefer Sha'ashu'im* (“Book of Delights”). And Ya'aqob ben El'azar wrote *Sefer ha-meshalim* (“Book of Stories”) in rhymed prose. Immanuel ben Solomon of Rome (1261–1328 A.D.) wrote *Mahberot Immanu'el*, which shows the influence of al-Harizi's *maqamat* style. In the fourteenth century, Yisshaq ben Yosef Pulgar wrote *Ezer ha-dat* (“The Help of Religion”).

Abraham ben Ezra (1089–1167 A.D.) wrote a philosophical *maqama* called *Hay ben Meqis*.<sup>129</sup> Judah ben Shabbetai and Judah al-Harizi both wrote famous Hebrew *maqamat*, which treat the subject of Jewish nationalism, including Jews living in subjugation under their non-Jewish rulers. Ibn Shabbetai and al-Harizi, both of Northern Iberia in the second half of the twelfth century, grew up with the tradition of classical Arabic literature, and their writing reflects that.<sup>130</sup>

In Ben Shabbetai's *maqamat*, *Minhat Yehuda sone' ha-nasim* (“Gift of Yehudah the Women

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<sup>127</sup>Drory, *Models and Contacts*.

<sup>128</sup>Hamilton, *Representing Others in Medieval Iberian Literature*.

<sup>129</sup>Schippers, “The Hebrew Maqama.”

<sup>130</sup>Hamilton, *Representing Others in Medieval Iberian Literature*.

Hater”), the author combines rhymed prose and poetry using a satirical tone. One of the issues he discusses is life in the Andalusian Jewish communities. In one of the *Maqamat Ben Shabbetai*, the female character Kozbi talks straight to the Lord as a prophet would:

“Lo! Instead of peace, bitterness, I have, bitterness, bitterness. O thou who built the upper chambers within the waters, who gave us private parts: the upper and the lower; who chose men and rejected women; who caused to sprout in man the beard and penis for his fame and glory, and who gave the daughters of Eve passion and the lust of death (the uterus). Fatten the heart of this man and blind his eyes in order to destroy his transgression.”

She ends her prayer and leaves Zerah’s tent. And Zerah, as his pleasure turns to pain, did not know the Lord had abandoned him. And Kozbi the cruel stood before him. And Lo! Plague stood before him.<sup>131</sup>

In this passage of the *maqama* of Ibn Shabbetai, Kozbi prays to God to help her, and God listens to her prayers. Her point here is that God creates women in a rank lower than men.<sup>132</sup>

Al-Harizi, considered the greatest author of Hebrew *maqamat*, composed fifty *maqamat*, entitled *The Tahkemoni*, in the style of al-Hamadhani and al-Hariri.<sup>133</sup> The Hebrew poets al-Harizi and Ibn Shabbetai use allegory and imagery in the same poetic universe in their *maqamat*. They wrote their *maqamat* in rhymed prose and poetry, just as in Arabic *maqama* structure.<sup>134</sup> Although they lived under Christians rather than Arabs in Castile and Provence, they were both educated in the Andalusian pattern of the courtier-rabbi. Together they show us the unique and beautiful expression of the Hebrew language. The protagonist travels through space and time in the Mediterranean Jew’s world in al-Harizi’s *maqamat* and to pre-Biblical Earth in Ibn Shabbetai’s.<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>131</sup>Hamilton, *Representing Others in Medieval Iberian Literature*, p. 63.

<sup>132</sup>Hamilton, *Representing Others in Medieval Iberian Literature*.

<sup>133</sup>Michelle M. Hamilton, “Poetry and Desire: Sexual and Cultural Temptation in the Hebrew Maqama Tradition,” in Michelle M. Hamilton, David Wacks, and Sarah Portnoy, eds., *Wine, Women and Song: Hebrew and Arabic Literature of Medieval Iberia* (Newark, DE: Juan de la Cuesta, 2004), pp. 59–73; and Arie Schippers, “The Hebrew Maqama.”

<sup>134</sup>Hamilton, “Poetry and Desire.”

<sup>135</sup>Hamilton, *Representing Others in Medieval Iberian Literature*.

### ***Maqamat* in Languages Outside of Arabic and Hebrew Literature**

As the *maqama* did in Andalusia, the genre migrated and was acclimatized into Persian and Syriac literary culture.<sup>136</sup> One example in early Persian is al-Qadi Hamid al-Din al-Balkhi's (d. 1163 A.D.) twenty-three *maqamat*, which follow al-Hariri's style. The *Maqamat al-Hariri* is well known within Jewish and Christian communities, which translated them, and other authors wrote similar works in Hebrew and Syriac.<sup>137</sup> Similarly, the Arabic *maqama* genre has a long connection with Spanish literature.<sup>138</sup> Gonzalez Palencia, a Spanish Arab in the 1920s, contends that *maqamat* played a role in the rise of the Spanish picaresque novel.<sup>139</sup>

Jareer Abu-Haidar notes the resemblance that exists between *maqamat* and numerous Spanish picaresque novels. This author argues that Spanish picaresque novels, which made a serious contribution to medieval literature, resemble *maqamat* in terms of their structure. In particular, Abu-Haidar discusses the similarities between the *Maqamat al-Hariri* (1110 A.D.) and the first picaresque novel, *The Life of Lazarillo de Tormes and of His Fortunes and Adversities* (1554 A.D.), whose author is unknown.<sup>140</sup>

In the West, oriental scholars have translated the *Maqamat al-Hariri* into Latin, English, Spanish, and German, so we can assume that there have been readers for those works. The question is *who* reads *maqamat* in English? One answer is that undergraduates in Arabic literature and world literature read *maqamat* in English. It is difficult to translate *maqamat* from Arabic to other languages, but the older English translations are good because they are written in flowery language.

There are two excellent translations of *maqamat* in English that Prof. Roger Allen assigns

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<sup>136</sup>Stewart, "The Maqama."

<sup>137</sup>Daif, *Al-Maqamah*.

<sup>138</sup>Young, *Rogues and Genres*.

<sup>139</sup>Stewart, "The Maqama."

<sup>140</sup>Jareer Abu-Haidar, "Maqamat Literature and the Picaresque Novel," *Journal of Arabic Literature*, 1974, 1–10.



for his students at the University of Pennsylvania<sup>141</sup>: Nicholson’s translations of two *maqamat* in the *Maqamat al-Hariri* (“The *Maqama* of Sawah” and “The *Maqama* of Damascus”)<sup>142</sup> and van Gelder’s translation of two *maqamat* in the *Maqamat al-Suyuti* (“The *Maqama* of Yaqutiyya” and “The *Maqama* of Miskiyya”),<sup>143</sup> both of which replicate some the stylistic features of the original text.

Fleischer contends that the *Maqamat al-Hariri* is difficult to translate. Since its discovery, the Hebrew version of the *Maqamat al-Hariri* has sparked enthusiasm among Jewish and non-Jewish scholars. It is the greatest achievement by a medieval Jewish author because of the complex nature of the *Maqamat al-Hariri*. Fleischer argues, however, that al-Harizi’s translation of the *Maqamat al-Hariri* into Hebrew is notable because it demonstrates al-Harizi’s poetical abilities. Fleischer notes that most of al-Harizi’s translation has been lost except for twenty-seven out of fifty *maqamat*, which were preserved in a manuscript at Oxford. Sometimes, the translations are not suitable to convey the full meaning of the original texts.<sup>144</sup>

The influence of *maqamat* in general, and specifically the *Maqamat al-Hariri*, on Western literature seems to be slight, compared to works such as *A Thousand and One Nights* (“The Arabian Nights”). However, one can see the influence of *maqamat* in Spanish literature in its stories about beggars and the homeless. One such Spanish character is Picaroon, who is similar to Abu al-Fath al-Iskandari, the protagonist of the *Maqamat al-Hamadhani*, and Abu Zayd al-

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<sup>141</sup>Roger Allen, “Teaching the Maqamat in Translation,” in Mushin al-Musawi, ed., *Arabic Literature for the Classroom: Teaching Methods, Theories, Themes and Texts* (London and New York: Taylor & Francis, 2017).

<sup>142</sup>R. A. Nicholson, *Translations of Eastern Poetry and Prose* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1922).

<sup>143</sup>Geert Jan Van Gelder, “Four Perfumes of Arabia: A Translation of al-Suyuti’s al-Maqama al-Miskiyya,” *Res Orientales*, 11 (1999), 203–212; and Geert Jan Van Gelder, “Precious Stones, Precious Words: Al-Suyuti’s Al-Maqama Al-Yaqutiyya,” in Arnoud Vrolijk and Jan P. Hogendijk, eds., *O ye Gentlemen Arabic Studies on Science and Literary Culture* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2007), 313–332.

<sup>144</sup>Allen, “Teaching the Maqamat in Translation”; and Ezra Fleischer, “Overlooked Fragment of the Translation by Yehudah al-Harizi or the Maqamat of al-Hariri,” *Journal of Jewish Studies*, 24 (1973), 179–184.

Saruji, the protagonist of the *Maqamat al-Hariri*.<sup>145</sup>

Another example that medieval European literature may have been impacted by Arabic literature can be seen in Boccaccio's *Decameron*, which incorporates some elements from Arabic tales. Perhaps one explanation of why Arabic *maqamat* did not influence medieval European literature was the difficulty of translating the eloquence of Arabic. In contrast, Arabic *maqamat* were widespread in Hebrew literature.<sup>146</sup> However, there do exist some translations of Arabic and Hebrew *maqamat* in Western European tongues between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries.<sup>147</sup> Some scholars contend that Arabic and Hebrew *maqamat* influenced Christian Europe's embrace of the Latin elegiac comedy. *De Vetula*, a thirteenth-century elegiac comedy written in Latin, is similar to the Hebrew style of *maqamat*.

### **Illustrations of the *Maqamat***

Illustrations were forbidden in Muslim society in the eighth and ninth centuries. However, artists began to draw in the tenth century, and illustration was accepted by the eleventh century. Colors are important in illustration, and not a simple element. Alaa al-Iami believes that al-Wasiti's drawings in the thirteenth century were not done for scientific reasons, but were instead used to clarify certain events of the *Maqamat al-Hariri* to make it easy and simple for readers. Al-Iami notes that al-Wasiti drew camels and people in the *Maqamat al-Hariri* in great detail, including the human and animal bodies and the carriers.<sup>148</sup>

Illustrations of *maqamat* became common in the thirteenth century with the increased Muslim interest in images. However, illustrations of *maqamat* vanished in the late fourteenth

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<sup>145</sup>Daif, *Al-Maqamah*.

<sup>146</sup>Hameen-Anttila, *Maqama*.

<sup>147</sup>Hamilton, *Representing Others in Medieval Iberian Literature*.

<sup>148</sup>Alaa H. Al-Iami, "The Pictures of the Camel in Islamic Codex Munimnemat al-Hariri," *Al-Adab Journal*, 125 (2018), 25–36.

century. There are hundreds of *maqamat* manuscripts. Nonetheless, only thirteenth-century illustrations of manuscripts still exist. Those illustrations exist in some of the main Islamic cities: Baghdad, Mosul, Cairo, and Damascus.<sup>149</sup> Today, the thirteenth-century illustrated versions of the *Maqamat al-Hariri* survive in libraries around the world, including in Egypt, Turkey, the United States, and Germany.<sup>150</sup>

Places to find *maqamat* manuscripts and miniature manuscripts of *maqamat* include the following:

### **Sana'a Mosque**

In the Great Mosque in Sana'a, a manuscript of *maqamat* can be found based on the twenty-six photographs of illustrations from the manuscript that Oleg Grabar, a scholar of Arabic illustrations, got from one of his professors in 1974. Its colophon has the date Safar 1121 (April 1709), and most of its miniatures are in an Indian-inspired style appropriate to a Yemeni creation.<sup>151</sup>

### **John Rylands Library in Manchester, England**

A 680-page manuscript (33cm by 25cm) in this library contains 141 miniatures, more than any other collection of *maqamat*. Rice described it as “crude folk art,” a judgment with which it is difficult to disagree.<sup>152</sup> This manuscript is interesting, however, for two reasons: despite its extremely poor quality, and some of its miniatures are directly inspired by al-Wasiti's masterpiece.<sup>153</sup>

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<sup>149</sup>Oleg Grabar, *The Illustrations of the Maqamat* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1984).

<sup>150</sup>Oleg Grabar, “Pictures or Commentaries: The Illustrations of the Maqamat of al-Hariri,” in Peter J. Chelkowski, ed., *Studies in Art and Literature of the Near East* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah, 1974), pp. 85–205.

<sup>151</sup>Grabar, *The Illustrations of the Maqamat*.

<sup>152</sup>Grabar, *The Illustrations of the Maqamat*.

<sup>153</sup>Grabar, *The Illustrations of the Maqamat*.

### **The British Library in London**

A 7,293-page manuscript (43cm by 30cm) in this library contains an impressive 437 folios, which indicates that it was meant to be a luxury manuscript. The title of each story is beautifully drawn. Unfortunately, the manuscript was never completed, so its pages are filled with blank spaces left for miniatures, often meant to face each other. Very few miniatures were finished, a few crude representations were added sometime later, and others have been sketched in red ink.<sup>154</sup>

### **Suleymaniye Esad Efendi, in Istanbul, Turkey**

A 2,961-page manuscript (30cm by 22cm) in this library contains 216 folios. The manuscript was discovered in 1960 by Richard Ettinghausen (1906–1979 A.D.), who was an historian of Islamic art. The beginning and the end of the manuscript are missing, and a few pages in the body of the text were replaced in comparatively recent times. The fifty-six miniatures are badly damaged, but it is clear that they consistently deal with the elaborate depiction of natural and architectural settings.<sup>155</sup>

### **The Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris**

A 3,929 page manuscript (32cm by 21.5cm) in this library is sometimes called the Saint-Wast *Maqamat* because it once belonged to the abbey of that name in northern France. It now has 196 folios. Its initial pages are lost, and the first folio begins with the second *maqama*. The last seven folios and several other places in the body of the manuscript are of more recent date and are badly damaged. The colophon has not been preserved. Despite its many retouched, repainted, and damaged miniatures, it is fascinating for the extraordinary variety of its images,

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<sup>154</sup>Grabar, *The Illustrations of the Maqamat*.

<sup>155</sup>Grabar, *The Illustrations of the Maqamat*.

from simple narrative illustrations to highly complex scenes that can fill up to two folios, like a double-page spread in a magazine. The manuscript holds an esteemed position as a recognized masterpiece of the Baghdad School of Painting.<sup>156</sup>

## **Conclusion**

The *maqama* genre is one of the most beautiful historic genres originating in medieval Arabic literature. We can best view and understand *maqamat* as instructional works (or cautionary tales), which also teach writing style and life lessons. *Maqamat* are a prolific genre that began in the late tenth century by Badi' al-Zaman al-Hamadhani, were sustained in the eleventh and twelfth centuries by al-Hariri and others, and continue to this day. The most common features of *maqamat* are the fictional narrator and protagonist, the fictional stories, and the mixture of poetry and prose. Other significant features are the use of rhymed prose, the *isnad*, philological interests, and a travel theme. The *maqama* genre continues to be attractive to modern Arabic authors.<sup>157</sup>

### **Al-Hariri: His Life and His *Maqamat***

## **Introduction**

Al-Hariri, who is best known for his fifty *maqamat*, is one of the great literary scholars of Arabic literature, and also one of the masters of artistic prose. A study of Arabic *maqamat* cannot be considered complete without considering the *Maqamat al-Hariri*. Al-Hariri's contribution to Arabic literature was not to create the *maqama* genre, since that credit goes to al-Hamadhani. Rather, at a time when poetry dominated prose in Arabic literature, al-Hariri's works invigorated the *maqamat* by suggesting new interpretations of the genre. In addition, the

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<sup>156</sup>Grabar, *The Illustrations of the Maqamat*.

<sup>157</sup>Stewart, "The Maqama."

*Maqamat al-Hariri* raised the standard of writing to a new level. Furthermore, al-Hariri's *maqamat* structure became the preeminent model of the *maqamat* genre in Arabic literature.

The following section provides a brief biography of al-Hariri's life, including his full name, birth, death, family, character, journeys, jobs, works, and teachings. The section ends with a discussion of al-Hariri's important contributions to Arabic literature.

## **The Life of al-Hariri**

### **His Birth, His Life, and His Death**

Abu Muhammad al-Qasim ibn 'Ali ibn Muhammad al-Hariri was born in 1054 A.D. in the town of Mashan, which is close to Basra in Iraq, and he lived most of his life in the vicinity of Basra. Biographers note that he seemed to be happy with his life and his success as a poet and prose writer. He died in 1122 A.D.<sup>158</sup>

### **His Family**

Al-Hariri and his wife had three sons, all of whom were prominent figures in their own right. The first son, Obaidullah, was a respected judge in Basra. Abdullah, the second son, worked as a writer of official government documents in a Baghdad *diwan*.<sup>159</sup> The third son, Muhammad, was a poet and writer like his father.<sup>160</sup>

### **His Character**

Al-Hariri was an intelligent and cunning individual. Besides his intelligence, he possessed the gift of rhetoric. One particular story illustrates these aspects of his character. A visitor came to Basra to meet al-Hariri and read his *maqamat*. People had told the man that he could usually

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<sup>158</sup>Abu Muhammad al-Qasim ibn Ali al-Hariri, *Maqamat al-Hariri*, ed. Issa Saba (Beirut, Lebanon: Sader's Publisher and Beirut's Publisher, 1965); Daif, *Al-Maqamah*; Grabar, *The Illustrations of the Maqamat*; Hameen-Anttila, *Maqama*; Hamilton, *Representing Others in Medieval Iberian Literature*; and Stewart, "The Maqama."

<sup>159</sup>A *diwan* was a government-sponsored meeting place for writers. In the twelfth century, writing was regarded as the highest career in Islamic culture.

<sup>160</sup>Daif, *Al-Maqamah*.

find al-Hariri at the mosque. So, he went there and came upon al-Hariri, but without knowing who he was. The man asked al-Hariri where he could find al-Hariri, having decided that the ugly man in front of him was not the famous writer. When al-Hariri saw the man looking contemptuously at him, the visitor finally realized that this ugly fellow was indeed al-Hariri, and asked if he could read al-Hariri's *maqamat* aloud to him. But al-Hariri coldly asked the man to leave.<sup>161</sup>

### **His Journeys**

Al-Hariri first traveled to Basra to learn Islamic law. While there, he also studied Arabic language and literature and came to be considered a master of the Arabic language. Additionally, he traveled to Baghdad, the capital, which helped to publicize his writings and increase his fame.<sup>162</sup>

### **His Job**

Al-Hariri worked as a *sahib al-barid* (minor civil servant) in Basra, writing reports for the government about important and controversial issues of the day.<sup>163</sup>

### **His Works and Poetry**

As one of the most famous Arabic writers, al-Hariri wrote both prose and poetry. However, he is better known for his prose, especially his *maqamat*, which are considered among the most impressive works in Arabic literature, although his other works also have generated substantial interest. In addition to his *maqamat*, al-Hariri wrote several other books in different genres.

Two of those were philological texts: the *Durrat al-Ghawwas fi Awham al-Khawass* ("Book of

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<sup>161</sup>Daif, *Al-Maqamah*.

<sup>162</sup>Al-Hariri, *Maqamat al-Hariri*; Daif, *Al-Maqamah*; and Hameen-Anttila, *Maqama*.

<sup>163</sup>Hameen-Anttila, *Maqama*.

the Pearl Diver in Language”), an anthology of corrections to common linguistic errors in Arabic expressions (*lahn al-‘amma*); and the *Mulhat al-I’rab* (“The Beauties of Grammar”), a 375-line didactic poem on Arabic grammar.<sup>164</sup>

Al-Hariri also wrote numerous stylish letters and verses, including an epistle entitled *al-Risala al-Siniyya* (“The Epistle of Sin Letter”), in which every word has the Arabic letter *sin* (*s*) in it. Similarly, he wrote *al-Risala al-Shiniyya* (“The Epistle of the Shin Letter”), in which each word includes the Arabic letter *shin* (*sh*).<sup>165</sup>

### **His Teachings**

In Baghdad, al-Hariri became quite well known as an author, and frequently had scholars and nobility gather in his garden to hear his *maqamat* or lectures and engage in literary discussions. Al-Hariri authorized hundreds of copies of his *maqamat*. In his own lifetime, he saw his *maqamat* become renowned, and he reportedly had over seven hundred students from various Islamic lands come to read his *maqamat* aloud to him. This large number of devotees indicates the high regard that al-Hariri’s contemporaries had for his works. After his death, students came to his three sons to study the *Maqamat al-Hariri*. Al-Hariri’s sons continued to teach and disseminate his works, explaining the meaning and the difficulty of the language to students. His son Muhammad was particularly skilled and devoted to carrying on his father’s legacy.<sup>166</sup>

### **The Importance of al-Hariri to Arabic Literature**

Al-Hariri initiated the vogue for belletristic prose.<sup>167</sup> Previous to his writings and those of such notables as al-Jahiz (776–868 A.D.) and al-Hamadhani, poetry had been the dominant

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<sup>164</sup>Al-Hariri, *Maqamat al-Hariri*; Daif, *Al-Maqamah*; and Hameen-Anttila, *Maqama*.

<sup>165</sup>Hameen-Anttila, *Maqama*; and Stewart, “The Maqama.”

<sup>166</sup>Daif, *Al-Maqamah*; Hameen-Anttila, *Maqama*; and Stewart, “The Maqama.”

<sup>167</sup>Muhsin al-Musawi, “Pre-Modern Belletristic Prose.”



genre in classical Arabic literature.

### **The *Maqamat al-Hariri***

Al-Hariri finished his *maqamat* in the twelfth century. His first *maqama*, written in 1101, was “*al-Maqamah al-Haramiyya*” (“The *Maqama* of Haram”). Nevertheless, for unknown reasons, he gave it the number 48 in his *maqamat*. It is likely based on his meeting with a man named al-Saruji, whose name he gave to his protagonist. Some scholars believe that al-Hariri finished writing all of his *maqamat* by 1110 A.D. With the exception of his *maqamat*, his writing is not spectacular. Al-Hamadhani is credited with creating the *maqamat* genre, but al-Hariri was the innovator who set the standards for the genre and paved the way for later authors of *maqamat*.

### **Why al-Hariri Wrote the *Maqamat al-Hariri***

Some Arabic literary scholars believe that al-Hariri wrote his *maqamat* because the ruler of Basra encouraged him to, while others think that the vizier of Caliph al-Mustarshed, Anosherwan ibn Khaled, supported and financially sponsored al-Hariri’s *maqamat*. Some Arabic literary scholars have speculated that another vizier of Caliph al-Mustarshed, Ibn Sadaqah, subsidized al-Hariri to write his *maqamat*.

The main purpose of the *Maqamat al-Hariri* is to show the beauty and ornate qualities of the Arabic language. Al-Hariri wanted his *maqamat* to be artistic expressions of Arabic literature, so he wrote his *maqamat* with the aim of having scholars and other readers focus on his use of language rather than the content of his stories. In the preface of his *maqamat*, he states his reasons for writing the collection. “I wrote them,” he says, “simply for entertainment and for making myself famous.”<sup>168</sup>

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<sup>168</sup>Al-Hariri, *Maqamat al-Hariri*; Daif, *Al-Maqamah*; and Hameen-Anttila, *Maqama*.

Al-Hariri's goal, then, in composing his *maqamat* was to provide a learning experience about Arabic grammar and vocabulary. In al-Hariri's time, some scholars were biased against fiction genres. Therefore, he protected his work from such criticism by placing it in an educational context.<sup>169</sup>

### **The Format of the *Maqamat al-Hariri***

Al-Hariri's fifty *maqamat* are relatively short; most not longer than ten pages. Each *maqama* has its own story, and the author does not weave together a continuing narrative among the *maqamat*. In al-Hariri's preface, he mentions that he has written a collection of fifty *maqamat*. After his death, fifty *maqamat* became the typical number that most *maqamat* authors chose to include in their works, becoming an established convention in the Arabic literary canon.<sup>170</sup>

Al-Hariri's narrator, al-Harith ibn Hammam, always uses one of five pre-selected verbs at the beginning of each *maqama*: (1) *haddatha* (reported); (2) *akhbara* (informed); (3) *rawa* (related); (4) *haka* (told); and (5) *qala* (said). The *isnad* (chain of narrators) in the *Maqamat al-Hariri* has two parts: *rawa al-Harith ibn Hammam* ("Al-Harith ibn Hammam related") and '*an Abi Zayd al-Saruji* ("From Abi Zayd al-Saruji"). Al-Hariri wrote rhyming prose in the narrator's and the protagonist's tongues, using ornamental and eloquent language and *saj'* (rhyming prose endings) to convince audiences about his discourses.<sup>171</sup>

### **Where al-Hariri Wrote the *Maqamat al-Hariri***

Arabic literary scholars are unsure where al-Hariri wrote his *maqamat*. Some believe that he wrote them in Baghdad, whereas others suggest that he wrote them in Basra and

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<sup>169</sup>Irwin, *Night and Horses and the Desert*.

<sup>170</sup>Daif, *Al-Maqamah*; Hameen-Anttila, *Maqama*; Irwin, *Night and Horses and the Desert*; and Stewart, "The Maqama."

<sup>171</sup>Al-Musawi, "Pre-Modern Belletristic Prose"; Hameen-Anttila, *Maqama*; Irwin, *Night and Horses and the Desert*; and Stewart, "The Maqama."

subsequently brought them to Baghdad to present to the literary scholars who gathered there. Some Arabic literary sources believe that al-Hariri only wrote his first forty *maqamat* in Basra and the other ten in Baghdad. Some literary scholars of his day did not believe that he wrote the forty *maqamat*, suspecting that he had plagiarized them. Thus, they asked him to write ten more *maqamat*, which he initially refused to do, but that only led to even louder charges of plagiarism. Eventually, al-Hariri did compose ten additional *maqamat*.<sup>172</sup>

Al-Sharishi (1181–1222 A.D.), who wrote an important commentary on al-Hariri's *maqamat*, argued that al-Hariri wrote two hundred *maqamat*. Subsequently, he picked out the best fifty of them and destroyed the rest, as many writers do. Shawqi Daif believes that al-Hariri wrote all fifty *maqamat* together (rather than forty first and ten later), and he also thinks that al-Hariri wrote his *maqamat* in Baghdad. However, Ibn Kalikan (1211–1282 A.D.) stated:

I saw in one of the collections that al-Hariri at first wrote [only] forty *maqamat*, and he brought them to Baghdad and claimed they were his. A group of Baghdad Arab literati did not believe him, saying that he did not compose them, but that rather someone from Maghreb did, a man of eloquence who died in Basra and whose writings found their way to al-Hariri, and he fraudulently ascribed them to himself.<sup>173</sup>

In reality, al-Hariri did not publish all of his fifty *maqamat* at the same time. Rather, some of his earlier *maqamat* were circulated before he published the entire collection of fifty.<sup>174</sup>

### **The Preface of the *Maqamat al-Hariri***

Medieval authors did not typically write a preface to explain the process of creating their work or to clarify the relationship of their work to a genre. The preface of the *Maqamat al-Hariri* shows the author's modesty with regard to this classic and now famous work of Arabic

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<sup>172</sup>Daif, *Al-Maqamah*; and Hameen-Anttila, *Maqama*.

<sup>173</sup>Drory, *Models and Contacts*, p. 31.

<sup>174</sup>Daif, *Al-Maqamah*; and Hameen-Anttila, *Maqama*.

literature. The preface includes evidence of al-Hariri's respect for and appreciation of the *Maqamat al-Hamadhani*. In his preface, al-Hariri praises al-Hamadhani's work and suggests his primacy as the creator of the *maqamat* genre. In addition, al-Hariri discusses al-Hamadhani's characters, noting that:

In a meeting devoted to that learning whose breeze has stilled in this age, whose lights are nigh gone out, there ran a mention of the Assemblies which had been invented by Badi' az Zeman, the sage of Hamadan (God shew him mercy); in which he had referred the composition to Abu'l Fath of Alexandria and the relation to 'Isa, son of Hisham. And both these are persons obscure, not known; vague, not to be recognized.<sup>175</sup>

Additionally, al-Hariri explains in his preface that he did not write his *maqamat* as one collection, and he also discusses why he wrote fifty *maqamat*. He does not mention in the preface how individuals should read his *maqamat*. At the end of his preface, al-Hariri quotes a famous *hadith* of the Prophet Muhammad, "*al-a'mal bi al-niyyat*" ("The works are [to be judged] according to their intentions"). Al-Hariri was clever to end his preface with this famous *hadith*, giving a preemptive justification if someone were to be offended by his *maqamat*.<sup>176</sup>

### **The Content of the *Maqamat al-Hariri***

In his preface, al-Hariri states:

I suffered from frozen genius, and dimmed intelligence, and failing judgment, and afflicting cares, Fifty Assemblies, comprising what is serious in language and lively, what is delicate in expression and dignified; the brilliancies of eloquence and its pearls, the beauties of scholarship and its rarities: Besides what I have adorned them with of verses of Koran and goodly metonymies, and studded them with Arab proverbs, and scholarly elegancies, and grammatical riddles, and decisions dependent on the meaning of words, and original addresses, and ornate orations, and tear-moving exhortations, and amusing.<sup>177</sup>

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<sup>175</sup>Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 1, pp. 104–105:

فإنه قد جرى ببعض أندية الأدب الذي ركبت في هذا العصر ربحه، وخبت مصابيح، ذكر المقامات التي ابتدعها بديع الزمان، وعلامة همدان، رحمه الله تعالى، وعزا إلى الفتح الإسكندري نشأتها، وإلى عيسى بن هشام روايتها، وكلاهما مجهول لا يعرف، ونكرة لا نتعرف.

<sup>176</sup>Hameen-Anttila, *Maqama*; and Drory, *Models and Contacts*.

<sup>177</sup>Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 1, pp. 105–106:

Except for two, all the verses in the *Maqamat al-Hariri* are “*khatiri abu ‘udhrihi*” (“my own original writing”). As al-Hariri states in his preface:

Of the poetry of others I have introduced nothing but two single verses, on which I have based the fabric of the Assembly of Holwan; and two others, in a couplet, which I have inserted at the conclusion of the Assembly of Kerej. And, as for the rest, my own mind is the father of its virginity, the author of its sweet and its bitter.<sup>178</sup>

In addition to his discussion of linguistic and rhetorical ideas, including *badi’* (rhetorical ornamentation), *saj’* (rhyming prose endings), and *jinas* or *tajnis* (paronomasia), al-Hariri describes the local community in his lifetime and provides us a sense of history regarding major social and literary issues. For example, in “*al-Maqamah al-Faradiyya*” (“The *Maqama* of the Legal”), he provides answers to thorny issues about inheritance law. In “*al-Maqamah al-Taybiyya*” (“The *Maqama* of Taybeh”), he discusses one hundred trick questions in *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence). In “*al-Maqamah al-Qati’iyya*” (“The *Maqama* of the Portion”), he answers questions about some of the most difficult grammatical rules. Among the most interesting features of the *Maqamat al-Hariri* are the various portrayals of the trickster, al-Saruji, in both religious and ethical episodes, as in “*al-Maqamah al-Sana’aniyya*” (“The *Maqama* of Sana’a”), and in literary and humorous references, as in “*al-Maqamah al-Qati’iyya*” (“The *Maqama* of the Portion”), which is called *kudya* (“begging”), and includes both begging and picaresque behavior.<sup>179</sup>

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وأنشأت على ما أعانيه من قريحة جامدة، وفطنة خامدة، ورية ناضبة، وهموم ناصبة خمسين مقامة تحتوي على جد القول وهزله ورقيق اللفظ وجزله وعرر البيان ودرره، وملح الأدب ونوادره إلى ما وشحتها به من الآيات، ومحاسن الكتابات، ورضعته فيها من الأمثال العربية، واللطائف الأدبية، والأحاجي النحوية، والفتاوي اللغوية، والرسائل المبتكرة، والخطب المحيرة، والمواعظ الميكية، والأصاحيق الملهية

<sup>178</sup>Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 1, p. 106:

ولم أودعه من الأشعار الأجنبية إلا بيتين فذنين أسست عليهما بنية المقامة الحلوانية. وآخرين توأمين ضمنتهما خواتم المقامة الكرجية. وما عدا ذلك فخاطري أبو عذره ومقتضب حلوه ومره

<sup>179</sup>Al-Hariri, *Maqamat al-Hariri*; and Stewart, “The *Maqama*.”

### **The Structure of the *Maqamat al-Hariri***

The structure of the *Maqamat al-Hariri* closely follows the six-section format of the *Maqamat al-Hamadhani*: (1) the *isnad*; (2) a general introduction; (3) an episode; (4) a recognition scene; (5) an envoi; and (6) a finale. Al-Hariri created these six parts in almost all of his *maqamat*.

One of al-Hariri's innovations to the *maqama* genre is the introduction of *ruq'a*, written poetry. Specifically, his original technique was to employ an envoi written by the protagonist, in this case Abu Zayd al-Saruji, that is later discovered by either the narrator, al-Harith ibn Hammam, or the beguiled audience in the story. The protagonist leaves his *ruq'a* and sneaks away without notice.

For example, in the fourth *maqama*, "*al-Maqamah al-Dimyatiyya*" (The *Maqama* of Damietta"), al-Hariri's *ruq'a* concerns al-Saruji's promise to come back—which he never does—and al-Hariri devotes a few verses to the cause of this disappearance. Meanwhile, al-Harith ibn Hammam later finds the *ruq'a* on a camel's saddle.

The *ruq'a* can also be much longer, as in "*al-Maqamah al-Rahabiyyah*" (The *Maqama* of Rahab"), in which the *ruq'a* employs twelve verses to describe al-Saruji to the duped *qadi* (judge). In this episode, al-Harith is apprehensive about the content of the *ruq'a*. Consequently, he decides to open it and read it. His fears are confirmed as his tears stream down his cheeks after reading the *ruq'a*, and he chooses not to deliver the letter to the judge.<sup>180</sup>

### **The Protagonist, the Narrator, and Others Characters in the *Maqamat al-Hariri***

Al-Hariri has only one *batal* (protagonist) in his *maqamat*, Abu Zayd al-Saruji, and one *rawi* (narrator), al-Harith ibn Hammam al-Basri. It appears that al-Hariri chose these names for their allegorical meaning. Zayd and 'Amr were common names often used, for example, in

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<sup>180</sup>Hameen-Anttila, *Maqama*.

classical Arabic grammar books. Whenever Abu Zayd does one of his tricks, al-Harith will be one of the spectators in the crowd. The protagonist and the narrator are always coincidentally in the same place in each Haririan *maqama*. Al-Sharishi thinks that al-Hariri picked the name Abu Zayd because it is a *kunya* (nickname) that represents time or fate (*al-dahr*).<sup>181</sup>

When al-Hariri selected al-Harith ibn Hammam as his narrator, he was referring to a famous *hadith* of the Prophet Muhammad: “Call yourselves by names of the prophets; the names best liked by Allah are ‘Abd Allah and ‘Abd al-Rahman, the truest names are al-Harith (‘one who works hard for his bread’) and Hammam (‘one who has a goal and persists to attain it’), the ugliest names are Harb and Murra.” Al-Harith and Hammam are appropriate name choices congruent with al-Hariri’s goal of presenting the narrator as a positive character.<sup>182</sup>

Al-Hariri chose Abu Zayd al-Saruji for his protagonist, following the example of al-Hamadhani, who named his protagonist Abu al-Fath al-Iskandari. Hariri’s methods of naming the narrator and the protagonist in his *maqamat* became the literary model for choosing names in the *maqamat* genre. Ibn Kalikan says:

The mentioned Abu Zayd is a character represented by a man of the name of al-Mutahhar ibn Salam or Salar, a grammarian and lexicographer who was friendly with al-Hariri, and studied under him in Basra.<sup>183</sup>

One commentary on al-Hariri claims:

I found this in the handwriting of al-Waraqusti: I asked the Sun of the Poets, Talha al-Nu’mani what al-Hariri, the author of the *maqamat*, looked like. He described al-Hariri’s appearance to me . . . , and stated that he used to live in the Banu Haram region of Basra. Then he said: “As for Abu Zayd al-Saruji, he was tall, had a goat-like beard, and was of Syrian origin. He used to buy oil for lighting, and give it to people.”<sup>184</sup>

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<sup>181</sup>Hameen-Anttila, *Maqama*.

<sup>182</sup>Drory, *Models and Contacts*, p. 21.

<sup>183</sup>Drory, *Models and Contacts*, p. 30.

<sup>184</sup>Drory, *Models and Contacts*, p. 30.

Some 250 years later, Ibn Kathir (1301–1373 A.D.) stated:

There are those who claimed that Abu Zayd and al-Harith ibn Hammam al-Mutahhar [*sic*] never existed, and [that al-Hariri] composed these *maqamat* in the manner of the fables; and there are others who said that Abu Zayd ibn Salam al-Saruji did exist, was a virtuous man and a scholar of language. God only knows.<sup>185</sup>

This debate among Arabic literary scholars and commentators about al-Hariri's narrator and protagonist continues to this day, with some who believe that al-Harith ibn Hammam and Abu Zayd al-Saruji are not real but fictional characters, and others who believe the opposite.<sup>186</sup>

Ibn Kalikan quotes a story from one of al-Hariri's sons:

One day my father was at the mosque in Banu Haram, and an old man wearing a pair of travel-worn, tattered old rags, looking worn out and yet speaking eloquently with fine expressions, entered. And people asked him: "Where are you from?" He answered, "From Saruj." They asked: "What is your name (*Kuniya*)?" And he answered, "Abu Zayd." And [then] my father composed the forty-eighth *maqama*, known as *al-Haramiyya*, and he attributed it to the mentioned Abu Zayd.<sup>187</sup>

This text appears to offer some proof that al-Saruji did exist, that he lived in al-Hariri's time, and that he met al-Hariri in Basra. Daif mentions that some scholars believe that al-Saruji's real name is al-Mutaher Ibn Salar. Al-Mutaher was one of al-Hariri's students, who read aloud his teacher's *maqamat* and *Mulhat al-I'rab* ("The Beauties of Grammar").<sup>188</sup>

Al-Hariri describes al-Saruji as an ugly character of great eloquence. In "*al-Maqamah al-Raqta*" ("The *Maqama* of the Address"), he states that al-Saruji tells nice stories, but has ugly teeth ("*husn mulah*" and "*qubh qalah*"). Al-Saruji is typically engaged in trickery to swindle al-

<sup>185</sup>Drory, *Models and Contacts*, p. 31.

<sup>186</sup>Al-Hariri, *Maqamat al-Hariri*; Hameen-Anttila, *Maqama*; and Drory, *Models and Contacts*.

<sup>187</sup>Drory, *Models and Contacts*, p. 28.

<sup>188</sup>Daif, *Al-Maqamah*; Hameen-Anttila, *Maqama*; and Drory, *Models and Contacts*.



Harith's or a third person's money by using his eloquent language. Al-Hariri does not typically know al-Saruji at the beginning of each *maqama*. Nor in nearly every *maqama* does al-Hariri let the narrator know about the protagonist's trickery until the end of the verse. The only exception to this rule is "*al-Maqamah al-Tiflisiyya*" ("The *Maqama* of Tiflis").

Al-Hariri's verses portray the protagonist's deceit through his linguistic eloquence. And although al-Saruji lies and cheats in most of the *maqamat*, he does use the Qur'an in his speeches. Additionally, al-Hariri varies al-Saruji's appearance by presenting his protagonist differently in each *maqama*, sometimes dressed miserably, but occasionally well dressed. He also sometimes presents al-Saruji alone or accompanied by his son or wife. For the first forty-nine *maqamat*, al-Saruji continues to engage in his dishonest ways. However, in the last *maqama* (the fiftieth), "*al-Maqamah al-Basriyya*" ("The *Maqama* of Basra"), the protagonist repents of his bad behavior.<sup>189</sup>

Daniel Beaumont notes how al-Hariri served to correct al-Hamadani's weak development of the protagonist in his *maqamat* by developing his own protagonist, al-Saruji, giving him the principal role in every *maqamat*.<sup>190</sup> James Monroe contends that al-Hamadani did not develop his protagonist-trickster, Abu al-Fath al-Iskandari, equally in all his episodes, creating contradictions in the sophistication of the character.<sup>191</sup>

### **The Locations of the *Maqamat al-Hariri***

Most of the *maqamat* are set in the Arabian Peninsula, Iraq, Iran, Syria, Egypt, and North Africa. In fact, the author named most of his *maqamat* by the name of the city in which the story occurs. Examples of these titles include "*al-Maqamah al-Sana'aniyya*" ("The *Maqama* of

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<sup>189</sup>Daif, *Al-Maqamah*; Hameen-Anttila, *Maqama*; Stewart, "The *Maqama*"; Al-Musawi, "Pre-Modern Belletristic Prose"; and Irwin, *Night and Horses and the Desert*.

<sup>190</sup>Beaumont, Daniel. "The Trickster and Rhetoric in *Maqamat*." *Edebiyat*, 1994, 1–14.

<sup>191</sup>James Thomas Monroe, *The Art of Badi az-Zaman al-Hamadani as Picaresque Narrative* (Beirut, Lebanon: Center for Arab and Middle East Studies, American University, 1983).

Sana'a"), "*al-Maqamah al-Dimashqiyya*" ("The *Maqama* of Damascus"), "*al-Maqamah al-Samarkandiyya*" ("The *Maqama* of Samarkand"), "*al-Maqamah al-Tabriziyya*" ("The *Maqama* of Tabriz"), "*al-Maqamah al-Basriyya*" ("The *Maqama* of Basra"), and others.<sup>192</sup>

### **The Eloquence of the *Maqamat al-Hariri***

Al-Hariri chose the stories of each *maqama* from various literary and folk sources, and one of the most impressive features of the *Maqamat al-Hariri* stories is the eloquence of the writing. The *Maqamat al-Hariri* is an example of the eloquence and proficiency of al-Hariri's use of Arabic, which, according to some critics, represents the highest linguistic artistry. Al-Hariri frequently employed verbal pyrotechnics in his *maqamat*, which were designed to showcase his fluency in Arabic. Thus, the *Maqamat al-Hariri* demonstrates both artistic expertise and a mastery of rhetorical skills.<sup>193</sup>

Like *al-Risala al-Siniyya* and *al-Risala al-Shiniyya*, "*al-Maqamah al-Qahqariyya*" ("The *Maqama* of the Reversed") can be read both backwards and forwards (palindromes), with either way producing its own meaning. Hameen-Anttila thinks it is easier to write both backwards and forwards in Arabic than in English. Nonetheless, he believes that it was not easy for al-Hariri to compose a backwards and forwards *maqama*. In "*al-Maqamah al-Maghribiyya*" ("The *Maqama* of the West"), al-Hariri wrote beautiful palindromic verse.

Moreover, in "*al-Maqamah al-Maraghiyya*" ("The *Maqama* of Maraghah") and "*al-Maqamah al-Raqa*" ("The *Maqama* of the Address"), he composed verses containing either all pointed or all unpointed letters. In "*al-Maqamah al-Raqa*" ("The *Maqama* of the Address"), al-Sharishi greatly admires al-Hariri's usage of language and his technical skill in his use of dotted and undotted letters. Like a dictionary, the *Maqamat al-Hariri* contains a wide range of

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<sup>192</sup>Irwin, *Night and Horses and the Desert*; Stewart, "The *Maqama*."

<sup>193</sup>Hameen-Anttila, *Maqama*; Stewart, "The *Maqama*"; Grabar, *The Illustrations of the Maqamat*; and Hamilton, *Representing Others*.

vocabulary, especially higher Arabic words that were used by some students of Arabic as study guides to learn, memorize, and recite literary passages.<sup>194</sup>

### **Commentaries on the *Maqamat al-Hariri***

The eloquence of the *Maqamat al-Hariri* encouraged many literary scholars to publish commentaries on al-Hariri's works. The *Maqamat al-Hariri* was not only widely read and copied, but there exist more than thirty commentaries written in the century and a half after his death. Al-Hariri's son, Muhammad, was one of the earliest scholars who wrote explanations of his father's *maqamat*. The first written commentary on the *Maqamat al-Hariri* was written by the Baghdadi 'Ali ibn Muhammad ibn Ahmad Abu al-Qasim al-Rahbi ibn al-Simnani (d. 1105 A.D) in his work *Hashiya 'ala Maqamat al-Hariri* ("Footnote on *Maqamat al-Hariri*"), written during al-Hariri's lifetime. There are many other notable commentaries on the *Maqamat al-Hariri*, including those by Ibn al-Khashshab (1099–1171 A.D.), al-Sharishi (1114–1188 A.D.), al-'Ukbari (1143–1219 A.D.), al-Mutarrizi (d. 1193 A.D), and Shumaym al-Hilli (d. 1205 A.D). These commentaries were written when al-Hariri first circulated his *maqamat*. Some of the commentators came from as far away as al-Andalus to hear the *Maqamat al-Hariri* directly from the mouth of the poet. Unfortunately, some commentaries have been lost.<sup>195</sup>

The Andalusian scholar al-Sharishi wrote a lengthy commentary on al-Hariri's *maqamat* in five volumes, expressing his greater admiration for al-Hariri than for al-Hamadhani. When al-Hariri praises al-Hamadhani in his preface, arguing that his *maqamat* represent the perfection of the *maqamat* genre, al-Sharishi believes that al-Hariri is just being courteous. To support this argument, al-Sharishi quotes the following passage:

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<sup>194</sup>Al-Hariri, *Maqamat al-Hariri*; Daif, *Al-Maqamah*; Hameen-Anttila, *Maqama*; Stewart, "The Maqama"; and Irwin, *Night and Horses and the Desert*.

<sup>195</sup>Al-Hariri, *Maqamat al-Hariri*; Daif, *Al-Maqamah*; Hameen-Anttila, *Maqama*; Stewart, "The Maqama"; Drory, *Models and Contacts*; and Hamilton, *Representing Others*.

“*man idda’a li nafsihi fadlan wa zdara ghayrahu innahu qallama yakunu illa mamqutan*” (Who claims for himself superiority and makes light of others, usually ends up being loathed).<sup>196</sup>

Another scholar, Ibn al-Kashshab al-Baghdadi (1099–1171 A.D.), wrote an essay called *Naqd al-Maqamat al-Haririyya* (“A Refutation of *Maqamat al-Hariri*”), in which his main argument concerns what he considers the truths and falsehoods in the *Maqamat al-Hariri*. Ibn al-Kashshab’s essay encouraged Ibn Barri (1106–1187 A.D.) to write an essay defending the *Maqamat al-Hariri*, stating:

Ibn al-Kashshab’s argument against al-Hariri’s hero Abu Zayd al-Saruji and al-Harith ibn Hammam, bears no relevance here, since there existed in reality such a man as Abu Zayd. Taj al-Din related this and said: I heard the faithful narrator Abu Bakr, a worshipper of Allah, son of Muhammad ibn Ahmad, a Baghdad fabric merchant, tell: I heard al-Hariri, the author of the *maqamat*, tell: Abu Zayd al-Saruji was a beggar with a gift for words who made his rounds of the gates most eloquently. He showed up at Basra, and one day he stood at the mosque of Banu Haram and asked for alms using his eloquent language. One of the governors was present, and the mosque was full of worthy people. Abu Zayd made them marvel at the eloquence of his language and the fine way he formulated his statements and his wit, and recounted that Byzantines took his daughter prisoner, just as was told in the *al-Maqama al-Haramiyya*, the *maqama* number forty-eight. [Al-Hariri] continued: That same evening the dignitaries and scholars of Basra gathered at my home, and I told them about the beggar and his tremendous talent for getting what he wanted by the skill of his tongue. Every one of the guests told that he saw the same beggar at his own mosque, and had heard him speak even more beautifully than I had, and that at every mosque he would change his clothes and appearance and prove his talent at scheming. Each one was amazed at his expertise in his field, and I composed *al-Maqama al-Haramiyya* [named after the mosque in the Basrian suburb Banu Haram], and afterwards modeled the other *maqamat* on it, and it was the first *maqama* that I wrote.<sup>197</sup>

### **The Legacy of the *Maqamat al-Hariri***

In a short time, the *Maqamat al-Hariri* became the model for the *maqamat* genre and the

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<sup>196</sup>Ahmad ibn ‘Abd al-Mu’min al-Sharishi, *Sharh Maqamat al-Hariri al-Basri* [“Commentary of *Maqamat al-Hariri*”] (Beirut, Lebanon: Maktaba al-Taqaifiyyah), vol. 1, p. 21.

<sup>197</sup>Drory, *Models and Contacts*, pp. 27–28.

epitome of Arabic *maqamat*. Hundreds of *maqamat* were written in imitation of al-Hariri's verses, using the fifty-verse format of rhymed prose. However, most critics will agree that these later *maqamat* did not reach the eloquence of al-Hariri's, and they could not compete with the *Maqamat al-Hariri*.<sup>198</sup>

Al-Hariri inspired writers outside of Iraq to compose *maqamat*. One of these writers, the Andalusian al-Saraqusti (d. 1143 A.D.), faithfully followed al-Hariri's style for the behavior of his protagonist, who in the last *maqama* becomes a good man and rejects all of the bad behavior he had committed earlier. In Persia, Hamid al-Din Abu Bakr al-Balkhi wrote twenty-three *maqamat* following al-Hariri's structure. Some scholars believe that the Arabic stories of rogues, particularly as seen in the *Maqamat al-Hariri*, impacted the European and especially the Spanish genre of picaresque fiction. However, Hameen-Anttila believes it was not easy for European writers to borrow from the Arabic *maqamat* because the *Maqamat al-Hariri* is not easy to imitate in any other language except Hebrew.<sup>199</sup>

### **The Illustrations of the *Maqamat al-Hariri***

Abdelfattah Kilito claims that there are three interpretations of the *Maqamat al-Hariri*: as commentary, as translations, and as illustrations (i.e., paintings).<sup>200</sup> In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the *Maqamat al-Hariri* often received lush illustrations. In the thirteenth century, Yahya ibn Mahmud ibn al-Wasiti was well known for his illustrations of the *Maqamat al-Hariri*.<sup>201</sup>

Some scholars believe that *Maqamat al-Hariri* should not have illustrations because images

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<sup>198</sup>Daif, *Al-Maqamah*; Drory, *Models and Contacts*; Hameen-Anttila, *Maqama*; and Stewart, "The Maqama."

<sup>199</sup>Daif, *Al-Maqamah*; Hameen-Anttila, *Maqama*; Hamilton, *Representing Others*; Irwin, *Night and Horses and the Desert*; and Stewart, "The Maqama."

<sup>200</sup>Abdelfattah Kilito, "Perec and al-Hariri," in Abdelfattah Kilito, ed., *Arabs and the Art of Storytelling: A Strange Familiarity* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2014), pp. 131–139.

<sup>201</sup>Grabar, *The Illustrations of the Maqamat*; and Robert Hillenbrand, *The Schefer Hariri: A Study in Islamic Frontispiece Design* (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2007).

take readers far from the richness of the narrative text. However, Pakzad and Panahi argue that al-Wasiti's illustrations present visual images of the social life that cannot be seen in the narrative text, and are therefore historically useful.<sup>202</sup>

### **The *Maqamat al-Hariri* in Translation**

One of al-Hariri's *maqama* can be read forwards and backwards from beginning to end, while other *maqamat* alternate between dotted and undotted words—all of which makes it a challenge to translate his work. Abdelfattah Kilito thinks that it is difficult to translate the *Maqamat al-Hariri* because of the eloquent Arabic linguistic style in which they were written. He believes that each sentence in the *Maqamat al-Hariri* is written to say, "No one can possibly translate me!" Kilito concludes his discussion of the difficulty of translating the *Maqamat al-Hariri* by claiming that al-Hariri wanted to protect his work by making it so brilliant that no one could equal it.<sup>203</sup>

The *Maqamat al-Hariri* was translated into several languages, including English, French, German, Hebrew, Italian, Latin, Persian, Spanish, Syriac, Urdu, and others. Al-Hariri translated al-Hariri's *maqamat* into Hebrew, and subsequently wrote his own *maqamat*. Other Hebrew authors of *maqamat* also wrote in imitation of the *Maqamat al-Hariri*.<sup>204</sup>

### **Al-Hamadhani and al-Hariri**

The *Maqamat al-Hamadhani* was the main inspiration for al-Hariri's *Maqamat al-Hariri*, and in fact al-Hariri is considered the successor of al-Hamadhani in this genre. Al-Hamadhani and al-Hariri have many commonalities and some differences with respect to their *maqamat*. Some Arabic literary scholars believe that the fame of the *Maqamat al-Hamadhani* increased

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<sup>202</sup>Zahra Pakzad and Mahboube Panahi, "Social Criticism in Hariri's Maqamat with a Focus on al-Wasiti's Miniature Paintings," *Asian Social Science*, vol. 12, no. 12, 2016, 82–89.

<sup>203</sup>Abdelfattah Kilito, *Thou Shalt Not Speak My Language*, trans. Wail S. Hassan (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2002).

<sup>204</sup>Al-Hariri, *Maqamat al-Hariri*; Daif, *Al-Maqamah*; and Hameen-Anttila, *Maqama*.

after al-Hariri wrote his *maqamat*. Al-Qalqashandi (d. 1418) believes that the *Maqamat al-Hamadhani* was eclipsed by the *Maqamat al-Hariri*, stating that al-Hariri's *maqamat* "pushed the *maqamat* of al-Hamadhani into oblivion."<sup>205</sup> Other scholars have observed that the *Maqamat al-Hariri* is simply more proficient than al-Hamadhani's works in narrative, poetry, and the eloquent use of the Arabic language.<sup>206</sup>

Al-Hariri wrote several *maqamat* that closely resemble the *Maqamat al-Hamadhani*. For example, his description of food in *maqama* #7, "*al-Maqamah al-Barqa 'idiyya*" ("The *Maqama* of Barkaid"), is similar to the description of food in al-Hamadhani's "*al-Maqamah al-Baghdadhiyya*" ("The *Maqama* of Baghdad"). Additionally, the language of al-Hariri's "*al-Maqamah al-Sinjariyya*" ("The *Maqama* of Sinjar") is close to the language of al-Hamadhani's "*al-Maqamah al-Madiriyya*" ("The *Maqama* of Madirah), both describing the same delicious sweets, but with a different vocabulary.

In al-Hariri's "*al-Maqamah al-Sinjariyya*" ("The *Maqama* of Sinjar"), al-Saruji writes that he had a slave girl as a concubine, but did not want to disclose any information about her because he did not want to lose her. On one occasion, he drinks wine as he describes the girl to his neighbor. When the neighbor tells the governor about the slave girl, al-Saruji is forced to hand her over to the governor as *his* concubine.

Furthermore, al-Hariri's "*al-Maqamah al-Samarqandiyya*" ("The *Maqama* of Samarcand") is similar to al-Hamadhani's "*al-Maqamah al-Khamriyya*" ("The *Maqama* of Wine"). The protagonists in both *maqamat*, al-Saruji and al-Iskandari, are *khatibs* (preachers) and *imams* (leaders of prayers), while al-Hariri focuses on the undotted letters in al-Saruji's sermon

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<sup>205</sup>Shihab al-Din Abu al-Abbas Ahmad al-Qalqashandi, *Subh al-A'sha fi Sina'at al-Insha'* ["The Dawn of the Blind or Daybreak for the Night-Blind Regarding the Composition of Chancery Documents"] (Cairo, Egypt: Wizarat al-Thaqafa wa al-Irshad al-Qawmi), vol. 14, p. 110.

<sup>206</sup>Al-Hariri, *Maqamat al-Hariri*; Hameen-Anttila, *Maqama*; and Rosella Dorigo Ceccato, "Drama in the Post-Classical Period: A Survey," in Roger Allen and D. S. Richards, eds., *Arabic Literature in the Post-Classical Period* (Cambridge, UK and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 347–368.

(*khutba*).<sup>207</sup>

Likewise, al-Saruji, the protagonist of the *Maqamat al-Hariri*, mentions al-Iskandari, the protagonist of the *Maqamat al-Hamadhani*, in his poem at the end of “*al-Maqamah al-Hijriyya*” (“The *Maqama* of Hajr”), stating that he is a more eloquent speaker than al-Iskandari.<sup>208</sup>

Al-Hariri followed al-Hamadhani’s style in writing each *maqama* with its own story. Therefore, each *maqama* has an independent story line and is not in sequence, except for two: “*al-Maqamah al-Ramliyya*” (“The *Maqama* of Ramlah”) and “*al-Maqamah al-Taybiyya*” (“The *Maqama* of Taybeh”), which have a logical sequence. In “*al-Maqamah al-Ramliyya*” (“The *Maqama* of Ramlah”), al-Saruji goes on a *hajj* (pilgrimage). In the next *maqama*, “*al-Maqamah al-Taybiyya*” (“The *Maqama* of Taybeh”), al-Hariri connects the *maqama* to the previous one by continuing al-Saruji’s story in a temporal sequence. Also, al-Hariri gives his *maqamat* numbers. In his first *maqama*, he describes the narrator and then the protagonist.<sup>209</sup>

One of the differences between al-Hamadhani and al-Hariri is that al-Hariri is more difficult to understand, since he uses opaque styles in his writing, making it hard to read the *Maqamat al-Hariri* without commentaries. The *Maqamat al-Hariri* is one of the most difficult books to read and understand in literary Arabic prose. Al-Hariri wrote his *maqamat* to be read in a single collection, while the *Maqamat al-Hamadhani* was gathered into a collection later. Moreover, al-Hamadhani borrowed verses from other poets, while al-Hariri relied on his own verses and rarely borrowed any from other writers. In addition, the use of *saj’* (rhymed prose) in the *Maqamat al-Hariri* is more structured than in the *Maqamat al-Hamadhani*. Al-Hariri liked paired *saj’* (AABBCC...), and seldom used triads (AAABBBCCC...). He also wrote

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<sup>207</sup>Hameen-Anttila, *Maqama*.

<sup>208</sup>Hameen-Anttila, *Maqama*.

<sup>209</sup>Daif, *Al-Maqamah*; and Hameen-Anttila, *Maqama*.



fewer long *saj'* than did al-Hamadhani. On the other hand, al-Hamadhani wrote in various styles of *saj'at*, using both pairs and triads.<sup>210</sup>

## Conclusion

Al-Hariri is truly one of greatest prose writers in Arabic literature. His fifty *maqamat* are an iconic work in Arabic literature at large, and in the *maqamat* genre in particular. Al-Hariri's poems were not as famous as his *maqamat*. His other books, *Durrat al-Ghawwas fi Awham al-Khawass* ("Book of the Pearl Diver in Language") and *Mulhat al-I'rab* ("The Beauties of Grammar"), became known because of his fame in writing the *maqamat*. Al-Hariri's ornate writing was the essential purpose of his *maqamat*, while the secondary goal was to espouse moral or didactic positions. Another minor objective of his *maqamat* was to create pleasure in the reader through the use of eloquent language.

Each *maqama* of the *Maqamat al-Hariri* has a separate story. Al-Hariri starts his *maqamat* with an *isnad* that follows a general introduction. Thereafter, he writes an episode and a recognition scene. Al-Hariri ends some of his *maqamat* with an envoi and then a finale. Abu Zayd al-Saruji, who is his only protagonist, tricks people out of their money by using his eloquent language, while al-Harith ibn Hammam is his only narrator. Most Arabic literary scholars believe that al-Saruji was a real man and not a fictional character.

There are many literary commentaries on the *Maqamat al-Hariri*. Al-Sharishi wrote the most famous and longest of these. Additionally, many *maqamat* writers after al-Hariri imitated his style and techniques. Al-Wasiti drew and published a famous illustrated work of the *Maqamat al-Hariri*, which was translated into many languages. Al-Hariri's humility can be seen in the preface of his *maqamat*, where he shows his respect and admiration for the

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<sup>210</sup>Hameen-Anttila, *Maqama*; and Irwin, *Night and Horses and the Desert*.

*Maqamat al-Hamadhani.*

Table 2. Al-Hariri's Life and *Maqamat*

His name	Abu Muhammad al-Qasim ibn 'Ali ibn Muhammad al-Hariri
Birth	1054
Death	1122
Profession	Civil servant ( <i>sahib al-barid</i> )
Number of his <i>maqamat</i>	50
His protagonist	Abu Zayd al-Saruji
His narrator	Al-Harith ibn Hammam
Purposes of the <i>maqamat</i>	Ornamentation, entertainment, education, and tricks
Settings	Arabian Peninsula, Iraq, Iran, Syria, Egypt, and North Africa
Contents of the <i>maqamat</i>	Bedouin proverbs Learned witticisms Grammatical riddles Lexical quibbles ( <i>fatawa</i> ) Original letters Ornate speeches Sermons that cause tears Jokes that cause laughter
Structure	(1) the <i>isnad</i> ; (2) a general introduction; (3) an episode; (4) a recognition scene; (5) an envoi; (6) a finale; and sometimes (7) a <i>ruq'a</i> (a written poem)
Commentaries	Ibn al-Khashshab, al-Mutarrizi, al-'Ukbari, al-Sharishi, and others

## Chapter 2. Themes, Language, and Structure in al-Hariri's Poetry

And of the poetry of others I have introduced nothing but two single verses, on which I have based the fabric of "The Assembly of Holwan"; and two others, in a couplet, which I have inserted at the conclusion of "The Assembly of Kerej." And, as for the rest, my own mind is the father of its virginity, the author of its sweet and its bitter.

Al-Hariri<sup>211</sup>

### Introduction

Poetry has an important position in the literature of most nations, since it fascinates souls and mesmerizes hearts. Poetry is passed down through languages and memorized through souls. Many critics and scholars have examined good and bad poetry, explaining its essence and various types as a genre.

Kilito disagrees with Perec (1936–1982 A.D.), a French novelist, filmmaker, documentarian, and essayist, who described al-Hariri as an Arab poet. Kilito argues that al-Hariri is not known as a poet, although he wrote a didactic poem on grammar *Mulhat al-I'rab fi al-Nahw* ("The Beauties of Grammar")<sup>212</sup>. However, Kilito states that al-Hariri was known in the Arab world for his famous work in the *maqama* genre. Kilito claims that Perec was familiar with al-Hariri's writing style, especially al-Hariri's word games, since al-Hariri carried out a lexical trick in every *maqama*.<sup>213</sup>

Although al-Hariri followed al-Hamadhani's structure in writing his *maqamat*, he recited

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<sup>211</sup>Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 1, p. 106, trans Thomas Chenery (Edinburgh, Scotland: Williams and Norgate, 1867):

ولم أودعه من الأشعار الأجنبية إلا بيتين فذین، أسست عليهما بنية المقامة الحلوانية. وآخرين توأمين ضمنتهما خواتم المقامة الخرجية. وما عدا ذلك فخاطري أبو عنده، ومقتضب حلوه ومره

<sup>212</sup>a grammatical treatise in verse

<sup>213</sup>Abdelfattah Kilito, "Perec and al-Hariri," in Abdelfattah Kilito, ed., *Arabs and the Art of Storytelling: A Strange Familiarity* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2014), pp. 131–139.

poetry in each *maqama*, whereas al-Hamadhani sometimes did not include poetry in his *maqamat*. Al-Hariri asserted that he intended to ornament his *maqamat* in both form and content:

I suffered from frozen genius, and dimmed intelligence, and failing judgment, and afflicting cares, Fifty Assemblies, comprising what is serious in language and lively, what is delicate in expression and dignified; the brilliancies of eloquence and its pearls, the beauties of scholarship and its rarities: Besides what I have adorned them with of verses of Koran and goodly metonymies, and studded them with Arab proverbs, and scholarly elegancies, and grammatical riddles, and decisions dependent on the meaning of words, and original addresses, and ornate orations, and tear-moving exhortations, and amusing.<sup>214</sup>

In the *Maqamat al-Hariri*, rhymed prose (*saj'*) and poetry work in harmony to express images, concepts, and emotions. Writers of *maqamat* made prose and poetry peaceful competitors.

### **Two Types of Poetry in the *Maqamat al-Hariri*: *Qit'ahs* and *Qasidahs***

The *Maqamat al-Hariri* includes *qasidahs*, which are longer poems that consist of seven or more *bayts* (verses), and *qit'ahs*,<sup>215</sup> which are shorter poems with fewer than seven *bayts*. Each of these types has unique features related to their themes and philosophical views. Philosophy is an especially important aspect of al-Hariri's work, which helps to explain why he turns from prose to poetry to express his meanings.

Some scholars have regarded *qit'ahs* as the source of Arabic poetry. As Muhammad ibn Sallam al-Jumahi (756–845 A.D.) mentioned in his book *Tabaqat Fuhul al-Shu'ara'* ("Classes of Champion Poets"), Arab poets in the pre-Islamic period only recited *qit'ahs*, and did not

<sup>214</sup>Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 1, pp. 105–106:

وأنشأت على ما أعانيه من قريحة جامدة، وفطنة خامدة، ورية ناضبة، وهموم ناصبة خمسين مقامة تحتوي على جد القول وهزله ورقيق اللفظ وجزله وعرر البيان ودرره، وملح الأدب ونوادره إلى ما وشحتها به من الآيات، ومحاسن الكتابات، ورسعته فيها من الأمثال العربية، واللطائف الأدبية، والأحاجي النحوية، والفتاوي اللغوية، والرسائل المبتكرة، والخطب المحيرة، والمواعظ المبكية، والأضاحيك الملهية.

<sup>215</sup>There are also short poems in English. For example, Alfred Lord Tennyson (1809–1892), who was a British poet, was famous for writing short poems.

start to recite *qasidahs* until the reigns of Heshim ibn Abd Manaf (464–497 A.D.) and Abd al-Muttalib (497–578 A.D.).<sup>216</sup>

Ibn Rashiq al-Qayrawani (999–1063 A.D.) analyzed both *qit'ahs* and *qasidahs* in his book *Al-'Umdah fi Mahasin al-Shi'r wa Adabihi wa Naqdihi* (“The Mainstay Concerning Poetry’s Embellishments, Correct Usage, and Criticism”), noting that some Arab poets recited both types of poetry, but especially liked to recite *qit'ahs* because they focus on a single topic.<sup>217</sup>

Abdullah ibn al-Zibara, a pre-Islamic Arab poet, justified why he recited *qit'ahs* more than *qasidahs*, suggesting that *qit'ahs* are more popular because they are shorter. Moreover, when the poet al-Jamaz was asked why he recited *qit'ahs* more often than *qasidahs*, he responded, “One verse is better than more verses.”<sup>218</sup>

Recent scholars have also discussed *qit'ahs* and *qasidahs*. For example, Youssef Bakkar noted that some Arab poets chose *qit'ahs* more often than *qasidahs* for three basic reasons: artistic, formal, and psychological. The artistic reason was that the poets could easily edit out unnecessary verses to create *qit'ahs*. The formal reason was that listeners could memorize the shorter *qit'ahs* more easily than the longer *qasidahs*, so poets thereby acquired more listeners. The psychological reason was that poets tried to avoid boring their listeners with overly long *qasidahs*.<sup>219</sup>

*Qit'ahs* represent brevity, which enhances concentration, allowing listeners and readers to more easily enjoy the poetry. This concentration also helps listeners and readers to understand the emotional experience and interact with it quickly. Sometimes the length of *qasidahs* may

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<sup>216</sup>Muhammad ibn Sallam al-Jumahi, *Tabaqat Fuhul al=Shu'ara'* [“Classes of Champion Poets”] (Jeddah, Saudi Arabia: Dar al-Madani, 1980).

<sup>217</sup>Ibn Rashiq al-Qayrawani, *Al-'Umdah*.

<sup>218</sup>Ibn Rashiq al-Qayrawani, *Al-'Umdah*, vol. 1, p. 178:

أقول بيتاً واحداً أكتفي\*\*\*بذكره من دون أبيات

<sup>219</sup>Youssef Bakkar, *Bina' al-Qasidah fi al-Naqd al-Arabi al-Qadim* [“The Structure of the Poem in Classical Arabic Criticism”] (Beirut, Lebanon: Dar al-Andalus, 1982).

cause boredom and lack of concentration. This circumstance led Arab poets during the 'Abbasid Caliphate to choose *qit'ahs* more often than *qasidahs*. This phenomenon is noticeable in most Arabic poetry types, including *hija'* (satirical and vituperative poetry), *zahriyya* (flower poetry), *rawdyya* (garden poetry), *khamriyya* (bacchic poetry), *ta'amiyya* (food poetry), *ritha'* (elegiac poetry), *hazliyyat* (pleasantries), and *mu'allaqat* (poetry posted on walls).

During the Abbasid Caliphate, *qit'ahs* became an artistic model for all poetry. *Qit'ahs* were a response to people's taste during that time, illustrating the popularity of poetry and its rapid spread.<sup>220</sup>

Some Abbasid poets who preferred to recite *qit'ahs* rather than *qasidahs* include Bashar ibn Burd (714–784 A.D.), Abbas ibn al-Ahnaf (750–809 A.D.), Abu Nuwas (756–814 A.D.), and al-Hussain ibn al-Dahhak (779–864 A.D.).

Arab critics argue over how many verses constitute a *qasidah* and how many verses constitute a *qit'ah*. Al-Akhfash (d. 830 A.D.) believed that *qasidahs* must have at least three verses, and that *qit'ahs* must have fewer than that. Ibn Jinni (934–1002 A.D.) believed that *qasidahs* must have at least fifteen verses, and *qit'ahs* must have fewer than that. Abu Zakaria al-Farra (761–822 A.D.) believed that *qasidahs* must have at least twenty verses, and that *qit'ahs* must have fewer than that. Ibn Rashiq al-Qayrawani (999–1063 A.D.), in his book *Al-'Umdah fi Mahasin al-Shi'r wa Adabihi wa Naqdihi* ("The Mainstay Concerning Poetry's Embellishments, Correct Usage, and Criticism"), stated that *qasidahs* must have at least seven verses, and that *qit'ahs* must have fewer than seven verses—a point with which the present writer agrees, since shorter poems are more easily memorized and can focus on one theme.

Poets are influenced by their environment, and al-Hariri was an Abbasid poet, which means

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<sup>220</sup>Ismail Ezz al-Ddin, *Fi al-Shi'r al-Abbasi: Al-Ru'iah wa al-Fann* ["Abbasid Poetry: Vision and Art"], (Cairo, Egypt: Dar al-Ma'arf, 1980).

that he imitated the Abbasid poetic tradition in his preference of *qit'ahs* over *qasidahs*. *Qit'ahs* account for two-thirds of the poems in the *Maqamat al-Hariri*, and *qasidahs* account for the remaining third. This indicates that *qit'ahs* are more appropriate for riddles, trickery, and humor. In mapping this distinction between poetic genres, the present writer will study which topics al-Hariri addressed with *qasidahs* and which topics he addressed with *qit'ahs*.

Furthermore, the writer will compare *maqamat* that have only one *qasidah* or *qit'ah* with *maqamat* that have more than one of either style to see when al-Hariri decides to limit or expand his use of these poetic elements. Shawqi Daif believes that al-Hariri's writing in his *maqamat* is ornate, using various prose embellishment styles.<sup>221</sup> The *qit'ahs* in al-Hariri's poetry have between one and seven verses, address various topics, and have several purposes.

One of the features of *qit'ahs* is thematic unity. *Qit'ahs* are designed to create a coherent poetic experience for readers. Al-Sharishi (1114–1188 A.D.) stated that a poetic verse (*al-bayt al-shi'ri*) is like a house (*al-bayt min al-'abniyah*), whose foundation is knowledge, whose front door is experience, and whose meaning is people. A house is not good unless it is inhabited.<sup>222</sup>

As an example of thematic unity, one might cite "*al-Maqamah al-Maghribiyyah*" ("The *Maqama* of the West"), in which al-Saruji recites the following lines:

Excellent are this company, who are true of speech, princes in bounty.  
They surpass mankind in far-famed virtues, they surpass them in their gifts.  
I have talked with them, and found that Sahban [an eloquent pre-Islamic speaker]  
in their presence would be as Bakil [an inelegant pre-Islamic speaker]:  
And I alighted among begging, and me with a rain that poured.  
I swear that if the generous are a shower they are a flood.<sup>223</sup>

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<sup>221</sup>Shawqi Daif, *Al-Maqamah* ["The *Maqama*"] (Cairo, Egypt: Al-Ma'arf House, 1954).

<sup>222</sup>Abu al-Abbas Ahmed ibn Abdumomen al-Qaisi al-Sharishi, *Sharh Maqamat al-Hariri* ["Commentary on *Maqamat al-Hariri*"], edited by Mohammed Abu el-Fadl Ibrahim (Beirut, Lebanon: al-Maktabah al-'Asriyyah, 1992), vol. 2, p. 219.

<sup>223</sup>Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 1, pp. 197–198:

الله در عصايبه\*\*\*صدق المقال مقاولا

In this *qit'ah*, there is only one theme or purpose, which is to praise the crowd in the story and reveal the people's good qualities.

Also, in “*al-Maqamah al-Qati'yyah*” (“The *Maqama* of the Portion”), al-Saruji speaks the following lines:

How long, Su'ad, wilt thou not join my cord, nor pity me for what I meet with?  
I have been patient with thee until my patience is overcome, until my spirit has  
almost reached my throat.  
But come! I am resolved to do myself right, drinking thereby to my mistress as  
she drinks to me;  
For if union (*waslan*)<sup>224</sup> please her then union (*wasl*)<sup>225</sup>; but if rupture then  
rupture like a very divorce.<sup>226</sup>

Al-Hariri shows in this *qit'ah* how the lover suffers love and pain with his beloved, which leads to his loss of patience. As a result, either union or separation must occur.

*Qit'ahs* can be differentiated from *qasidahs* in terms of both their brevity and their focus. As evidence of this, we can turn to “*al-Maqamah al-Maltiyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Maltiyah”), which describes a focused situation in which al-Saruji recites a *qit'ah* about his hometown, Saruj. The *qit'ah* suggests the focus and brevity in al-Saruji's heart as he describes his hometown as follows:

Each mountain-path is path for me, and ample is my dwelling there.  
Save that for Seruj town my heart is crazed with longing, mad with love.

فاقورا الأنام فضائلاً\*\*\*مأثورة وفواضلاً  
حاورتهم فوجدت سحاً\*\*\*بئناً لديهم باقلاً  
وحللت فيهم سائلاً\*\*\*فلقيت جوداً سائلاً  
أقسمت لو كان الكرا\*\*\*م حياً لكانوا وابلأ

<sup>224</sup> وصلأ

<sup>225</sup> وصل

<sup>226</sup>Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 1, p. 245:

إلام سعاد لا تصلين حيلي\*\*\*ولا تأوين لي مما ألقى  
صبرتُ عليك حتى عيل صبري\*\*\*وكادت تبليج الروح التراقي  
وها أنا قد عزمت على انتصاف\*\*\*أساقي فيه خلي ما يساقي  
فإن وصلأ أذ به فوصل\*\*\*وإن صرماً فصرم كالطلاق



She is my virgin land from whence my erstwhile youthful breeze has sprung.  
 And for her mead<sup>227</sup> so rich of growth above all meads I fondly yearn.  
 Afar from her no sweet is sweet to me, delightful no delight.<sup>228</sup>

Another example of the brevity and focus of *qit'ahs* in the *Maqamat al-Hariri* is in “*al-Maqamah al-Hajriyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Hajr”), in which al-Saruji recites the following lines:

The stranger, who trails his skirt pompously, meets but with scorn, how will he  
 fare then abroad, if food and drink fail him?  
 But no distress brings disgrace upon the high-minded man: camphor and musk,  
 well ye know, though pounded spread fragrance,  
 The ruby is often tried in *Ghada*-fire's<sup>229</sup> fiercest glow, the fire abates, but the  
 ruby still remains ruby.<sup>230</sup>

Although this *qit'ah* has three verses, it compares the rich stranger and the poor stranger, since foreignness is difficult to abide when the stranger has money to buy food, which becomes much more difficult if the stranger does not have money. However, al-Saruji resists this humiliation by preserving his dignity. Whatever al-Saruji is facing, he is strong, so that “the ruby still remains ruby.”

In addition to the unity of theme, brevity, and focus, some *qit'ahs* in the *Maqamat al-Hariri* are realistic, since they carry a deep social and psychological content that al-Hariri wanted to display in his *maqamat*.<sup>231</sup> In “*al-Maqamah al-Karjiyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of

<sup>227</sup>Mead is an alcoholic beverage made by fermenting honey.

<sup>228</sup>Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 2, p. 81:

كل شعب لي شعب\*\*\*ويه ربي رحب  
 غير أني بسروح\*\*\*مستهام القلب صب  
 هي أرضي البكر والج\*\*\*و الذي فيه المهيب  
 وإلى روضتها الغن\*\*\*اء دون الروض أصبو  
 ما حلا لي بعدها حل\*\*\*و ولا اعذوذب عذب

<sup>229</sup>*Ghada* is a kind of wood used as kindling to start fires.

<sup>230</sup>Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 2, p. 158:

إن الغريب الطويل الذيل ممتهن\*\*\*فكيف حال غريب ما له قوت  
 لكنه ما تشين الحر موجعة\*\*\*فالمسك يسحق والكافور مفتوت  
 وطالما أصلي الباقوت جمر غضى\*\*\*ثم انطفي الجمر والباقوت باقوت

<sup>231</sup>Nouri Jafar, *Ma' al-Hariri fi Maqamateh* [“With al-Hariri in his *Maqamat*”] (Baghdad, Iraq: Wisart al-

Kerej”), the *qit’ah* represents a real image of a real poor individual. Al-Saruji recites the following lines:

Well done he who has clothed me with a fur coat, which shall be my protection  
from shivering!  
He has clothed me with it, preserving my heart’s blood; may he be preserved  
from the harm of men and Jinn!  
Today he shall deck himself with my praise; tomorrow he shall be decked with  
the silk of paradise.<sup>232</sup>

When al-Saruji pretends to suffer from a severe cold, his hand shakes to represent his dire situation. Then he solicits people to have mercy on him for what he is facing. Al-Saruji offers praise to anyone who will give him a coat, stating that God will provide him the silk of paradise.

In “*al-Maqamah al-Taflisiyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Tiflis”), al-Saruji speaks the following lines:

I show me in rags, so that people may say, a wretch that forbears with the  
hardships of time  
I feign to the world to be palsied of face, for often my heart thus obtaineth its  
wish;  
Ay, but for my raggedness find I compassion, and but for the palsy I meet with  
my wants.<sup>233</sup>

This *qit’ah* shows a realistic image of the society, as if a picture were taken by a photographer. The *qit’ah* represents *mukdyn* (beggars) and their tricks to get money from

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Shu’un al-Islamiyah, n.d).

<sup>232</sup>Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 1, p. 256:

الله من ألبسني فروة\*\*\*أضحت من الرعدة لي جنة  
ألبسنيها وأقياً مهجتي\*\*\*وقي شر الإنس والجنة  
سيكتسي اليوم ثنائي وفي\*\*\*غد سيكسى سندس الجنة

<sup>233</sup>Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 2, p. 62:

ظهرتُ برث لكيما يقال\*\*\*فقير يُزجي الزمان المزجي  
وأظهرت للناس أن قد فلجت\*\*\*فكم نال قلبي به ما ترجى  
ولولا الرثاة لم يرث لي\*\*\*ولولا التفالج لم ألق فلجا

people. Because al-Saruji suffers from a cold, people feel mercy for him, and he gets a reward.

*Qit'ahs* in the *Maqamat al-Hariri* are sometimes an inspiration, a narrative, a dialogue, or a report. An example of an inspiring *qit'ah* occurs in “*al-Maqamah al-Zabidiyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Zabid”), in which al-Saruji recites the following lines:

O thou, whose wrath is kindled if I withhold my name, not thus a man, who in  
his dealings shows him fair!  
But if thou be not pleased unless it be revealed, then listen: Joseph I am, a  
Joseph, hear!  
Now have I lifted to thee the veil, and if thy wits are sharp, thou knowest, but I  
fancy thou knowest not.<sup>234</sup>

Al-Saruji’s slave gives the narrator, al-Harith, an inspiration—that he is free and not a slave—when al-Harith wants to buy him. Although this situation is a trick by al-Saruji and his son, who is pretending to be a slave, the son says: “Joseph I am, a Joseph, hear,” which means I am a free man like Joseph.

In “*al-Maqamah al-Tanisiyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Tanis”), al-Saruji speaks the following lines:

Drive cark<sup>235</sup> and care away with wine unalloyed, and cheer thy heart, not pining  
with fretful grief,  
And say to him who blames thee for warding off the pang of pain: “Enough of  
thee, get thee gone!”<sup>236</sup>

This is an inspiration that wine soothes what people have suffered, since wine is “warding

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<sup>234</sup>Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 2, p. 64:

يا من تلهب غيظه إذ لم أبح\*\*\*باسمي له ما هكذا من ينصف  
إن كان لا يرضيك إلا كشفه\*\*\*فأصخ له أنا يوسف أنا يوسف  
ولقد كشفت لك الغطاء فإن تكن\*\*\*فطنا عرفت وما إخالك تعرف

<sup>235</sup>Cark is to care or worry.

<sup>236</sup>Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 2, p. 112:

اصرف بصرف الراح عنك الأسي\*\*\*وروح القلب ولا تكتنب  
وقل لمن لامك في ما به\*\*\*تدفع عنك الهم قدك اتنب

off the pang of pain.” The words *drive* (*asrf*),<sup>237</sup> *cheer* (*rawh*),<sup>238</sup> and *not pining with fretful grief* (*la takta 'ib*)<sup>239</sup> suggest that wine drives out life’s pain. Al-Saruji inspires those who blame him for drinking wine to stop blaming him.

This narrative can be clearly seen in all the *maqamat* of the *Maqamat al-Hariri*. The narrative of *qit'ahs* expresses the dialogue and describes the events and their sequences.<sup>240</sup> An example of the narrative in *qit'ahs* occurs in “*al-Maqamah al-Kufiyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Kufa”), in which al-Saruji recites the following lines:

Hail, people of this dwelling,  
 May ye live in the ease of a plenteous life!  
 What have ye for a son of the road, one crushed to the sand,  
 Worn with journeys, stumbling in the night-dark night,  
 Aching in entrails, which enclose nought but hunger?  
 For two days he has not tasted the savor of a meal:  
 In your land there is no refuge for him.  
 And already the van of the drooping darkness has gloomed;  
 And through bewilderment he is in restlessness.  
 Now in this abode is there any one, sweet of spring,  
 Who will say to me, “Throw away thy staff and enter:  
 Rejoice in a cheerful welcome and a ready meal?”

Then came forth to me a lad in a tunic, and answered:

Now by the sanctity of the Shaykh who ordained hospitality,  
 And founded the House of Pilgrimage in the Mother of Cities,  
 We have nought for the night-farer when he visits us  
 But conversation and a lodging in our hall.  
 For how should he entertain whom hinders from sleepfulness  
 Hunger which peels his bones when it assails him?  
 Now what thinkest thou of my tale? What thinkest thou?<sup>241</sup>

<sup>237</sup> اصرف

<sup>238</sup> روح

<sup>239</sup> لا تكتتب

<sup>240</sup>Mus’ad Eid al-‘Atawi, *Al-Muqata’at al-Shi’riyyah fi al-Jahiliyyah wa Sadr al-Islam* [“Qit’ahs (Short Poems) in Pre-Islam and Early Islam”] (Riyadh, Saudi Arabi: Maktabat al-Tawbah, 1993).

<sup>241</sup>Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 1, pp. 129–130:

حييتم يا أهل هذا المنزل \*\*\* وعشتم في خفض عيش خضل  
 ما عندكم لابن سبيلٍ مرمل \*\*\* نضو سري خابط ليل الليل  
 جوي الحشى على الطوى مشتمل \*\*\* ملاً ذاق مذ يومان طعم مأكلي  
 ولا له في أرضكم من موئل \*\*\* وقد دجا جنح الظلام المسيل  
 وهو من الحيرة في تملل \*\*\* فهل بهذا الربيع عذب المنهل

The situation starts with al-Saruji knocking on the door of a house, looking for food. He begins by greeting people in the house and praying for them to live a good life and avoid dealing with *mukdyn* (beggars). After that, he asks for food, since he is traveling and has nothing with him. Because he has not had a meal in two days, he is becoming weak.

The narrative reaches a climax when a young man in a tunic responds in an unexpected way by telling al-Saruji that there is no food.

These two *qit'ahs* describe the situation in high eloquent language in order to show how the beggars use eloquent language to extract food or money from other characters.

Sometimes a *qit'ah* in the *Maqamat al-Hariri* may refer to the corruption of the rulers during al-Hariri's time. An example of this can be found in “*al-Maqamah al-San'aniyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of San'a”), in which al-Saruji recites the following lines:

I don the black robe to seek my meal, and I fix my hook in the hardest prey:  
And of my preaching I make a noose, and steal with it against the chaser and the  
chased.  
Fortune has forced me to make way even to the lion of the thicket by the  
subtlety of my beguiling.  
Yet do I not fear its change, nor does my loin quiver at it:  
Nor does a covetous mind lead me to water at any well that will soil my honor.  
Now if Fortune were just in its decree it would not empower the worthless with  
authority.<sup>242</sup>

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يقول لي: ألق عصاك وادخل \*\*\* وأبشر ببشرٍ وقرى معجل

قال: فيرز إلي جودر، عليه شونر، وقال

وحرمة الشيخ الذي سن القرى \*\*\* وأسس المحجوج في أم القرى  
ما عندنا لطارقٍ إذا عرا \*\*\* سوى الحديث والمناخ في الذرى  
وكيف يقري من نفى عنه الكرى \*\*\* طوى برى أعظمه لما انبرى  
فما ترى فيما ذكرت ما ترى

<sup>242</sup>Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 1, pp. 111–112:

لبست الخميصة أبغي الخبيصة \*\*\* وأنشبت شصي في كل شبيصه  
وصيرت وعظي احبولة \*\*\* أريخ القنيص بها والقنيصه  
والجاني الدهر حتى ولجت \*\*\* بلطف احتيالي على الليث عيصه  
على أنني لم أهب صرفه \*\*\* ولا نبضت لي منه فريصه  
ولا شرعت بي على مورد \*\*\* يدينس عرضي نفس حريصة  
ولو أنصف الدهر في حكمه \*\*\* لما ملك الحكم أهل النقيصه

Al-Saruji blames fortune for what has happened to ordinary people.

In another *qit'ah*, this one in “*al-Maqamah al-Maraghiyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Maragah”), the same ideal appears in the following lines by al-Saruji:

Sure to traverse the lands in poverty is dearer to me than rank:  
For in rulers there is caprice and fault-finding, Oh what fault-finding!  
There is none of them who completes his good work, or who builds up where he  
has laid foundation.  
So let not the glare of the mirage beguile thee; undertake not that which is  
doubtful:  
For how many a dreamer has his dream made joyful; but fear has come upon  
him when he waked?<sup>243</sup>

Al-Saruji doubts the rulers’ loyalty to their subjects, since rulers change their minds quickly, and people should be smart and not be tricked by rulers because the rulers’ anger is strong. People should live with poverty rather than involving themselves with such rulers.

But corruption was found not only among the rulers, but reached the whole community. Honesty was not common during that time, and sincere people who fulfilled their promises were few. This is a highly pessimistic view. However, there is some support for it from al-Hariri himself. In “*al-Maqamah al-Barka’idiyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Barkaid”), al-Saruji speaks the following lines:

There remains not any pure, not any sincere; not a spring, not a helper;  
But of basenesses there is one level; not any is trusty, not any of worth.<sup>244</sup>

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<sup>243</sup>Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 1, pp. 138–139:

لجوب البلاد مع المتربه\*\*\*أحب إلي من المرتبه  
لأن الولاية لهم نبوة\*\*\*ومعتبة يا لها معتبه  
وما فيهم من يرب الصنيع\*\*\*ولا من يشيد ما رتبه  
فلا يخذعك لموع السراب\*\*\*ولا تأت أمرأ إذا ما اشنته  
فكم حاله سره حلمه\*\*\*وأدركه الروح لما انتبه

<sup>244</sup>Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 1, p. 142:

لم يبق صاف ولا مصاف\*\*\*ولا معين ولا معين  
وفي المساوي بدا التساوي\*\*\*فلا أمين ولا ثمين

Philosophical content is an aspect of al-Hariri's writing that has often gone unnoticed because the humorous nature of his stories often obscures his deeper intentions. Al-Hariri describes the human soul with accuracy. An example of a philosophical poem occurs in "*al-Maqamah al-Faradiyyah*" ("The *Maqama* of the Legal"):

Visit him thou lovest in each month only a day, and exceed not that upon him;  
For the beholding of the new moon is but one day in the month, and afterward  
eyes look not on it.<sup>245</sup>

*Qasidahs* (long poems), the second type of poetry in the *Maqamat al-Hariri*, agree with the content of each *maqama*. *Qasidahs* resemble *qit'ahs* in their vitality and effectiveness. However, one of the differences is that *qit'ahs* can be brief and focus on one topic, whereas *qasidahs* can deal with more than one topic. *Qasidahs* resemble letters, stories, or preaching, whereas *qit'ahs* resemble advice and riddles.

An example of a *qasidah* resembling a letter occurs in al-Saruji's *qasidah* to al-Harith and his friend in "*al-Maqamah al-Damiyyah*" ("The *Maqama* of Damietta"):

Whoso attaches his affection to me, I repay him as one who builds on his  
foundation:  
And I mete to a friend as he metes to me, according to the fullness of his meting  
or its defect.  
I make him not a loser! For the worst of men is he whose today falls short of his  
yesterday.  
Whoever seeks fruit of me gets only the fruit of his own planting.  
I seek not to defraud, but I will not come off with the bargain of one who is  
weak in his reason.  
I hold not truth binding on me towards a man who holds it not binding on  
himself.  
There may be some one insincere in love who fancies that I am true in my  
friendship for him, while he is false;  
And knows not in his ignorance that I pay my creditor his debt after its kind.

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<sup>245</sup>Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 1, p. 193:

لا تزر من تحب في كل شهر \*\*\* غير يوم ولا تزده عليه  
فاجتلاء الهلال في الشهر يوم \*\*\* ثم لا تنتظر العيون إليه

Sunder, with the sundering of hate, from one who would make thee a fool, and hold him as one entombed in his grave.  
 And towards him in whose intercourse there is aught doubtful put on the garb of one who shrinks from his intimacy.  
 And hope not for affection from any who sees that thou art in want of his money.<sup>246</sup>

Another example of a *qasidah* resembling a letter can be found in “*al-Maqamah al-Rahabiyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Rahbah”), in which al-Saruji sends a *qasidah* to a governor:

Tell the Governor whom I have left, after my departure, repenting, grieving, biting his hands,  
 That the old man has stolen his money and the young one his heart; and he is scorched in the flame of a double regret.  
 He was generous with his coin (*ayn*)<sup>247</sup> when love blinded his eye (*ayn*),<sup>248</sup> and he has ended with losing either (*ayn*).<sup>249</sup>  
 Calm thy grief, O afflicted, for it profits not to seek the traces after the substance is gone.  
 But if what has befallen thee is terrible to thee as the ill-fate of al-Hosayn is terrible to the Moslems;  
 Yet hast thou gotten in exchange for it understanding and caution; and the wise man, the prudent, wishes for these.  
 So henceforth resist desires, and know that the chasing of gazelles is not easy; No, nor does every bird enter the springe, even though it be surrounded by silver.  
 And how many a one who seeks to make a prey becomes a prey himself, and meets with nought but the shoes of Honayn!  
 Now consider well, and forecast not every thundercloud: many a thundercloud may have in it the bolts of death:  
 And cast down thine eye, that thou mayest rest from a passion by which thou

<sup>246</sup>Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 1, p. 124:

جزيت من أعلق بي وده\*\*\*جزاء من بيني على أسه  
 وكلت للخل كما كان لي\*\*\*على وفاء الكيل أو بخسه  
 ولم أخسره وشر الوري\*\*\*من يومه أخسر من أمسه  
 وكل من يطلب عندي جنى\*\*\*فما له إلا جنى غرسه  
 لا أبتغي الغين ولا أنتني\*\*\*بصفقة المغبون في حسه  
 ولست بالموجب حقاً لمن\*\*\*لا يوجب الحق على نفسه  
 ورب مذاق الهوى خالني\*\*\*أصدقه الود على لبسه  
 وما درى من جهله أنني\*\*\*أقضي غريمي الدين من جنسه  
 فاهجر من استغياك هجر القلى\*\*\*وهبه كالملحد في رسمه  
 والبس لمن في وصله ليسة\*\*\*لباس من يرغب عن أنسه  
 ولا ترجُ الود ممن يرى\*\*\*أنك محتاج إلى فلسه

<sup>247</sup>عين

<sup>248</sup>عين

<sup>249</sup>عين



wouldst clothe thyself with the garment of infamy and disgrace.  
For the trouble of man is the following of the soul's desire; and the seed of  
desire is the longing look of the eye.<sup>250</sup>

A third example of a *qasidah* resembling a letter is found in “*al-Maqamah al-Omaniyyah*”  
 (“The *Maqama* of Oman”), in which al-Saruji writes a *qasidah* to a baby before it is born:

Child to come, list to one who warns thee beforehand, aye! And warning  
belongs to faith's foremost duties.  
Thou art safe now within a home closely guarded, an abode from all misery well  
protected,  
Nought thou seest there to frighten thee on the part of false a friend or a foeman  
frank in his hatred,  
But as soon as thou salliest forth from its shelter thou alight'st in a dwelling  
hurtful and shameful,  
Where the hardship awaiting thee will betide thee drawing tears from thy eyne  
in fast-flowing down-pour.  
So continue thy easeful life and beware of changing things proved with things  
that are all uncertain,  
Being heedful of one who seeks to beguile thee, that he hurl thee the surer in  
sorry torment.  
Now I gave thee, upon my soul, fair advice, but sound advisers how often are  
they suspected?<sup>251</sup>

<sup>250</sup> Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 1, pp. 162–163:

قل لوال غادرته بعد بيني\*\*\*سادماً نادماً بعض اليبدين  
سلب الشيخ ماله وفتاه\*\*\*ليه فاصطلى لظى حسرتين  
جاد بالعين حين أعمى هواه\*\*\*عينه فانثى بلا عينين  
خفض الحزن يا معني فما يج\*\*\*دي طلاب الأثار من بعد عين  
ولئن جل ما عراك كما ج\*\*\*ل لدى المسلمين رزء الحسين  
فقد اعتضت منه فهماً وحزماً\*\*\*ي اللبيب الأريب بيغي ذين  
فاعص من بعدها المطامع واعلم\*\*\*أن صيد الأطباء ليس بهين  
لا ولا كل طائر يلج الفخ\*\*\*خ ولو كان محدقاً باللجين  
ولكم من سعي ليصطاد فاصط\*\*\*يد ولم يلق غير خفي حنين  
فتبصر ولا تشم كل برق\*\*\*رب برق فيه صواعق حين  
واغضض الطرف تسترح من غرام\*\*\*تكتسي فيه ثوب ذل وشين  
فبلاء الفتى اتباع هوى النفس\*\*\*س وبذر الهوى طموح العين

<sup>251</sup> Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 2, p. 99:

أيهذا الجنين إني نصيح\*\*\*لك والنصح من شروط الدين  
أنت مستعصم بكن كنين\*\*\*وقرار من السكون مكين  
ما ترى فيه ما يروعك من إل\*\*\*ف مداح ولا عدو مبين  
فمتى ما برزت منه تحول\*\*\*ت إلى منزل الأذى والهون  
وتراءى لك الشقاء الذي تل\*\*\*قى فتبكي له بدمع هتون  
فاستدم عيشك الرغيد وحاذر\*\*\*أن تبيع المحقوق بالمظنون  
واحترس من مخادع لك يرقب\*\*\*ك ليلقيك في العذاب المهين  
ولعمري لقد نصحت ولكن\*\*\*كم نصيح مشبه بظنين

*Qasidahs* are sometimes stories. One example is the story in “*al-Maqamah al-Kufiyyah*”

(“The *Maqama* of Kufa”), in which al-Saruji recites the following lines:

O people of the mansion, be ye guarded from ill!  
Meet not harm as long as ye live!  
Lo! The night which glooms has driven  
To your abode one disheveled, dust laden,  
A brother of journeying, that has been lengthened, extended,  
Till he has become bent and yellow  
Like the new moon of the horizon when it smiles.  
And now he approaches your court-yard, begging boldly,  
And repairs to you before all people else,  
To seek from you food and a lodging.  
Ye have in him a guest contented, ingenuous,  
One pleased with all, whether sweet or bitter,  
One who will withdraw from you, publishing your bounty.<sup>252</sup>

Another example of a *qasidah* resembling a story is found in “*al-Maqamah al-Ma’arriyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Ma’arras”), in which al-Saruji and his son each recite a *qasidah* to a judge. Al-Saruji’s son starts first, speaking the following lines:

He lent me a needle to darn my rags, which use has worn and blackened  
And its eye broke in my hand by chance, as I drew the thread through it  
But the old man would not forgive me the paying for it when he saw that it was  
spoiled;  
But said, “Give me a needle like it, or a price, after thou hast mended it.”  
And he keeps my kohl pencil by him as a pledge: oh, the shame that he has  
gotten by so doing:

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<sup>252</sup>Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 1, pp. 127–128:

يا أهل ذا المغنى وقيتم شرا  
ولا لقيتم ما بقيتم ضرا  
قد دفع الليل الذي الكفيرا  
إلى ذراكم شعنا مغبرا  
أخا سفار طال واسبطرا  
حتى انتنى محقوقاً مصفرا  
مثل هلال الأفق حين افترا  
وقد عرا فناعكم معترا  
وأمكم دون الأنام طرا  
يبغي قرى منكم ومستقرا  
فدونكم ضيفاً قنوعاً حرا  
يرضى بما اطلولى وما أمرا  
وينثني عنكم ينث البرا

For my eye is dry through giving him this pledge; my hand fails to ransom its  
anointer.  
Now by this statement fathom the depth of my misery and pity one unused to  
bear it.<sup>253</sup>

Then al-Saruji recites the following lines to the judge:

I swear by the holy place of sacrifice, and the devout whom the slope of Mina<sup>254</sup>  
brings together;  
If the time had been my helper, thou wouldst not have seen me taking in pledge  
the pencil which he has pledged to me.  
Nor would I bring myself to seek a substitute for a needle that he had spoiled,  
no nor the price of it.  
But the bow of calamities shoots at me with deadly arrows from here and there:  
And to know my condition is to know his; misery, and distress, and exile, and  
sickness.  
Fortune has put us on a level: I am his like in misery, and he is as I  
He cannot ransom his pencil now that it lies pledged in my hand:  
And, through the narrowness of my own means, it is not within my bounds to  
forgive him his offending.  
Now this is my tale and his: so look upon us, and judge between us, and pity  
us.<sup>255</sup>

A third example of a *qasidah* being a story occurs in “*al-Maqamah al-Shiraziyyah*” (“The  
*Maqama* of Shiraz”), in which al-Saruji recites the following lines:

<sup>253</sup> Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 1, p. 148:

أعارني إبرة لأرفو أظ\*\*\*مأراً عفاها البلا وسودها  
فانخرمت في يدي على خطأ\*\*\*مني لما جذبت مقودها  
فلم ير الشيخ أن يسامحني\*\*\*بأرثها إذ رأى تأودها  
بل قال هات إبرة تماثلها\*\*\*أو قيمة بعد أن تجودها  
واعتاق ميلي رهناً لديه ونا\*\*\*هيك بها سبة تزودها  
فالعين مرهى لرهنه ويدي\*\*\*تقصر عن أن تفك مرودها  
فاسبر بذا الشرح غور مسكنتي\*\*\*وارث لمن لم يكن تعودها

<sup>254</sup> The slope of Mina is a hill in Mecca where pilgrims gather during the hajj.

<sup>255</sup> Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 1, pp. 148–149:

أقسمت بالمشعر الحرام ومن\*\*\*ضم من الناسكين خيف منى  
لو ساعفتني الأيام لم يرني\*\*\*مرتهناً ميله الذي رهنا  
ولا تصديت أبتغي بدلاً\*\*\*من إبرة غالها ولا ثمنا  
لكن فوس الخطوب ترشقتي\*\*\*بمصميات من ها هنا وهنا  
وخبير حالي كخبير حالته\*\*\*ضراً وبؤساً وغربةً وضنى  
قد عدل الدهر بيننا فأنا\*\*\*نظيره في الشقاء وهو أنا  
لا هو يسطيع فك مروده\*\*\*لما غدا في يدي مرتها  
ولا مجالي لضيق ذات يدي\*\*\*فيه اتساع للعفو حين جنى  
فهذه قصتي وقصته\*\*\*فانظر إلينا وبيننا ولنا

I crave Allah's forgiveness, humbling myself, for all the sins whose heavy load burdens me.  
 O folks, how many olden maids kept at home, though in assemblies were their virtues praised about  
 Have I cut down not fearing from any heir that might revenge them on me or claim a fine.  
 And when the sin thereof was laid at my door, I boldly cleared myself and said: fate it was.  
 And never stopped my soul its headlong career in cutting damsels down, and kept going stray,  
 Till hoariness shone on the crown of my head and checked me from performing such evil deeds.  
 So since my temples have turned gray never shed I any more a maiden's blood, old or young.  
 But now I rear, in spite of what may be seen of my condition and of my slacking trade,  
 A less who for a long time has stayed at home sheltered and veiled carefully from air itself.  
 And she in spite of being thus kept recluse, has wooers for her comeliness and pleasingness.  
 But for her outfit, at the least, I can't do without a hundred, though I try as I may,  
 While in my hand there is not one silver coin, the ground is empty and the sky yields no rain.  
 Now is one here to help me that I may wed her amidst the singing-girls' cheering strain,  
 Then let him wash my grief with its proper soap and cleanse my heart from sorrows that worry me,  
 That he may cull my praises, whose fragrancy will only cease to breathe when man prays in vain.<sup>256</sup>

<sup>256</sup> Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 2, p. 73:

أستغفر الله وأعوذ له\*\*\*من فرطات أنقلت ظهريه  
 يا قوم كم من عاتق عانس\*\*\*ممدوحة الأوصاف في الأنديه  
 قتلتها لا أتقي وارثاً\*\*\*يطلب مني قواداً أو ديه  
 وكلما استذنبت في قتلها\*\*\*أحلت بالذنب على الأفضيه  
 ولم تزل نفسي في غيها\*\*\*وقتلها الأباكار مستشريه  
 حتى نهاني الشيب لما بدا\*\*\*في مفرقي عن تلكم المعصيه  
 فلم أرق مذ شاب فودي دمأ\*\*\*من عاتق يوماً ولا مصبيه  
 وها أنا الآن على ما يرى\*\*\*مني ومن حرفتي المكديه  
 أرب بكرأ طال تعنيسها\*\*\*وحجبها حتى عن الأهويه  
 وهي على التعنيس مخطوبه\*\*\*كخطبة الغانية المغنيه  
 وليس يكفيني لتجهيزها\*\*\*على الرضى بالدون إلا ميه  
 واليد لا توكي على درهم\*\*\*والأرض قفر والسما مصحيه  
 فهل معين لي على نقلها\*\*\*مصحوبه بالقينه الملبيه  
 فيغسل الهم بصابونه\*\*\*والقلب من أفكاره المضنيه  
 ويقتني مني الثناء الذي\*\*\*تضوع رياه مع الأدعيه

*Qasidahs* can include preaching with intimidation, enticement, alarm, or excuses. For example, in “*al-Maqamah al-Saweiyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Saweh”), al-Saruji recites the following lines:

O thou who claimest understanding; how long, O brother of delusion, wilt thou marshal sin and blame, and err exceeding error?  
Is not the shame plain to thee? Doth not hoariness warn thee? (and in its counsel there is no doubtfulness); nor hath thy hearing become deaf.  
Is not Death calling thee? Doth he not make thee hear his voice? Dost thou not fear thy passing away, so as to be wary and anxious?  
How long wilt thou be bewildered in carelessness, and walk proudly in vanity, and go eagerly to diversion, as if death were not for all?  
Till when will last thy swerving, and thy delaying to mend habits that unite in thee vices whose every sort shall be collected in thee?  
If thou anger thy Master thou art not disquieted at it; but if thy scheme be bootless thou burnest with vexation.  
If the graving of the yellow one gleam to thee thou art joyful; but if the bier pass by thee thou feignest grief, and there is no grief.  
Thou resistest him who counselleth righteousness; thou art hard in understanding; thou swervest aside: but thou followest the guiding of him who deceiveth, who lieth, who defameth.  
Thou walkest in the desire of thy soul; thou schemest after money; but thou forgettest the darkness of the grave, and rememberest not what is there.  
But if true happiness had looked upon thee, thy own look would not have led thee amiss; nor wouldest thou be saddened when the preaching wipeth away griefs.  
Thou shalt weep blood, not tears, when thou perceivest that no company can protect thee in the Court of Assembling; no kinsman of mother or father.  
It is as though I could see thee when thou goest down to the vault and divest deep; when thy kinsmen have committed thee to a place narrower than a needle’s eye.  
There is the body stretched out that the worms may devour it, until the coffin-wood is bored through and the bones moulder.  
And afterward there is no escape from that review of souls: since *Sirat*<sup>257</sup> is prepared; its bridge is stretched over the fire to every one who cometh thither.  
And how many a guide shall go astray! And how many a great one shall be vile!  
And how many a learned one shall slip and say, “The business surpasseth.”  
Therefore hasten, O simple one, to that by which the bitter is made sweet; for thy life is now near to decay and thou hast not withdrawn thyself from blame.  
And rely not on fortune though it be soft, though it be gay: for so wilt thou be

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<sup>257</sup>*Sirat* is a bridge between Heaven and Hell.

found like one deceived by a viper that spitteth venom.  
 And lower thyself from thy loftiness; for death is meeting thee and reaching at  
 thy collar; and he is one who shrinketh not back when he hath purposed.  
 And avoid proud turning away of the cheek if fortune have prospered thee:  
 bridle thy speech if it would run astray; for how happy is he who bridleth it!  
 And relieve the brother of sorrow, and believe him when he speaketh; and mend  
 thy ragged conduct; for he hath prospered who mendeth it.  
 And plume him whose plumage hath fallen in calamity great or small; and  
 sorrow not at the loss, and be not covetous in amassing.  
 And resist thy base nature, and accustom thy hand to liberality, and listen not to  
 blame for it, and keep thy hand from hoarding.  
 And make provision of good for thy soul, and leave that which will bring on ill,  
 and prepare the ship for thy journey, and dread the deep of the sea.  
 Thus have I given my precepts, friend, and shown as one who showeth clearly:  
 and happy the man who walketh by my doctrines and maketh them his  
 example.<sup>258</sup>

Another example of a preaching *qasidah* occurs in “*al-Maqamah al-Raziyyah*” (“The  
*Maqama* of Rayy al-Mahdiyeh”), in which al-Saruji speaks the following lines:

By the life! mansions and wealth will not avail when the rich man dwells in the  
 ground and abides in it;

<sup>258</sup> Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 1, pp. 165–167:

أيا من يدعي الفهم \*\*\* إلى كم يا أبا الوهم \*\*\* تعبي الذنب والذم \*\*\* وتخطي الخطأ الجم  
 أما بان لك العيب \*\*\* أما أنذرك الشيب \*\*\* وما في نصحه ريب \*\*\* ولا سمعك قد صم  
 أما نادى بك الموت \*\*\* أما أسمعك الصوت \*\*\* أما تخشى من الفوت \*\*\* فتحتاط وتهتم  
 فكم تسدر في السهو \*\*\* وتختال من الزهو \*\*\* وتنصب إلى اللهو \*\*\* كأن الموت ما عم  
 وحتى م تجافيك \*\*\* وإيطاء تلافيك \*\*\* طباعاً جمعت فيك \*\*\* عيوباً شملها انضم  
 إذا أسخطت مولاك \*\*\* فما تقلق من ذاك \*\*\* وإن أخفق مسعاك \*\*\* تلطيت من الهام  
 وإن لاح النقش \*\*\* من الأصفر تهتس \*\*\* وإن مر بك النعش \*\*\* تغاممت ولا عم  
 تعاصي الناصح البر \*\*\* وتعتاص وتزور \*\*\* وتتقاد لمن غر \*\*\* ومن مان ومن نم  
 وتسعى في هوى النفس \*\*\* وتحتال على الفليس \*\*\* وتتسى ظلمة الرمس \*\*\* ولا تذكر ما ثم  
 ولو لاحظك الحظ \*\*\* لما طاح بك اللحظ \*\*\* ولا كنت إذا الوعظ \*\*\* جلا الأحران تغتم  
 ستدري الدم لا الدمع \*\*\* إذا عابنت لا جمع \*\*\* يقي في عرصة الجمع \*\*\* ولا خال ولا عم  
 كأني بك تتحط \*\*\* إلى اللحد وتتغط \*\*\* وقد أسلمك الرهط \*\*\* إلى أضيح من سم  
 هناك الجسم ممدود \*\*\* ليستأكله الدود \*\*\* إلى أن ينخر العود \*\*\* ويمسي العظم قد رم  
 ومن بعد فلا بعد \*\*\* من العرض إذا اعتد \*\*\* صراط جسره مد \*\*\* على النار لمن أم  
 فكم من مرشد ضل \*\*\* ومن ذي عزة ذل \*\*\* وكم من عالم زل \*\*\* وقال الخطب قد طم  
 فبادر أيها الغمر \*\*\* لما يخلو به المر \*\*\* فقد كاد يهي العمر \*\*\* وما أفلعت من دم  
 ولا تركز إلى الدهر \*\*\* وإن لان وإن سر \*\*\* فتلقى كمن اغتر \*\*\* بأفعى تنفت السم  
 وخض من تراقبك \*\*\* فإن الموت \*\*\* لا فيك وسار في تراقبك \*\*\* وما ينكل إن هم  
 وجانب صعر الخد \*\*\* إذا ساعدك الجد \*\*\* وزم اللفظ إن ند \*\*\* فما أسعد من زم  
 ونفس عن أخي البيت \*\*\* وصدقه إذا نث \*\*\* ورم العمل الرث \*\*\* فقد أفلح من رم  
 ورش من ريشه انحص \*\*\* بما عم وما خص \*\*\* ولا تأس على النقص \*\*\* ولا تحرص على اللم  
 وعاد الخلق الرذل \*\*\* وعود كفك البذل \*\*\* ولا تستمع العذل \*\*\* ونزها عن الضم  
 وزود نفسك الخير \*\*\* ودع ما يعقب الضير \*\*\* وهبئ مركب السير \*\*\* وخف من لجة اليم  
 بذأ أوصيت يا صاح \*\*\* وقد بحت كمن باح \*\*\* فطوبى لفتى راح \*\*\* بيأدي يأتي

So be liberal with thy wealth in things pleasing to God, content with what thou  
 gainest of His hire and reward;  
 And anticipate by it the change of Time, for he seizes with his crooked talon and  
 his tooth;  
 And trust not treacherous fortune and its deceit, for how many a lowly one has it  
 marred, how many a noble!  
 But resist the desire of the soul, which no erring one ever obeyed but he fell  
 from his high places.  
 And keep to the fear of God, and the dread of Him, that thou mayest escape  
 from his punishment which is to be feared.  
 Neglect not to call to mind thy sin, but weep for it with tears that shall be like  
 the rain-flood at its pouring;  
 And figure to thy mind Death and his stroke, and the terror of his meeting, and  
 the taste of his wormwood cup!  
 For the end of the dwelling of the living is a pit, to which he shall descend,  
 brought down from his towers.  
 Then well-done! The servant whom the evil of his deed grieves, and who shows  
 amendment before the shutting of his gate.<sup>259</sup>

A third example of a preaching *qasidah* is found in “*al-Maqamah al-Ramliyyah*” (“The  
*Maqama* of Ramlah”), in which al-Saruji recites the following lines:

The Hajj is not thy traveling by day and night, and thy selecting camels and  
 camel-litters,  
 The Hajj is that thou repair to the holy house for the sake of Hajj, not that thou  
 accomplish thy wants thereby.  
 That thou bestride the back of righteousness, taking the check of lust for guide,  
 and truth for high-road.  
 That thou bestow what has been given thee while in thy power, to him who in  
 his need tenders his hand towards thy gift.  
 A pilgrimage with all this fraught is perfect, but if the Hajj is void thereof it  
 proves abortive.  
 For a losing-bargain of dissemblers it suffices that they plant and reap not,  
 having met with toil and exile.

<sup>259</sup>Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 1, pp. 225–226:

لعمرك ما تغني المغاني ولا الغنى \*\*\* إذا سكن المثرى الثرى وثوى به  
 فجد في مرضي الله بالمال راضياً \*\*\* بما تقتني من أجره وثوابه  
 وبادر به صرف الزمان فإنه \*\*\* بمخلبه الأشغى يغول ونابه  
 ولا تأمن الدهر الخؤون ومكره \*\*\* فكم خامل أخنى عليه ونابه  
 وعاص هو النفس الذي ما أطاعه \*\*\* أخو ضلة إلا هو من عقابه  
 وحافظ على تقوى الإله وخوفه \*\*\* لتتجو مما يتقى من عقابه  
 ولا تله عن تذكر ذنبك وإبكه \*\*\* بدمع يضاهي المزن حال مصابه  
 ومثل لعينيك الحمام ووقعه \*\*\* وروعة ملقاه ومطعم صابه  
 وإن قصارى منزل الحي حفرة \*\*\* سينزلها مستنزل لأ عن قبابه  
 فواهاً لعبيد ساءه سوء فعله \*\*\* وأبدي التلافي قبل إغلاق بابيه

And that they go without reward or praise, giving their fame a bait to him who censures and lampoons.  
 Seek then, dear brother, in what sacrifice thou mayest offer up, the face of God, the guardian, going in and out.  
 For lo, no hidden deed shall remain hidden from the Compassionate, whether the servant be sincere or shamming,  
 And steal a march on death by good deeds sent afore: death's sudden summons, when it comes, is not put off;  
 And use humility in frame of mind, such as the nights can, in their turns, not alter, though a crown they gave thee.  
 And watch not every cloud whose lightning flasheth, though it appear to pour a rain of copious shower.  
 Not every caller merits to be heard, how many a whisperer shouted fatal news, And none is wise but he who contents him with a morsel, that makes life's days to folden by degrees;  
 For every mickle<sup>260</sup> comes to be a mite, and meek grows every stiff-necked, rage he as he may!<sup>261</sup>

In “*al-Maqamah al-Tanisiyyah*” (the *Maqama* of Tanis), al-Saruji preaches with intensity about gray hair:

Woe to the man who warned by his hoariness still blindly rushes along on youth's folly bent,  
 And glances back on pleasure's fire longingly when all his limbs already from weakness shake,  
 Who rides the steed of wantonness, which he deems a softer couch than chamberlains ever spread,  
 Not awed by hoary hair which no man of sense sees come without its starry light startling him,

<sup>260</sup> *Mickle* means “much.”

<sup>261</sup> Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 2, pp. 34–35:

ما الحج سيرك تأويباً وإدلاجاً\*\*\* ولا اعتيامك أجمالاً وأحداجاً  
 الحج أن تقصد البيت الحرام علي\*\*\* تجريدك الحج لا تقضي به حاجا  
 وتمنطي كاهل الإنصاف متخذاً\*\*\* ردع الهوى هادياً والحق منهاجا  
 وأن تؤاسي ما أوتيت مقدره\*\*\* من مد كفا إلى جدواك محتاجا  
 فهذه إن حوتها حجة كملت\*\*\* وإن خلا الحج منها كان إخداجا  
 حسب المرانين غبناً أنهم غرسوا\*\*\* وما جنوا ولقوا كذا وإزعاجا  
 وأنهم حرسا أجراً ومحمدة\*\*\* وألحموا عرضهم من عاب أو هاجي  
 أخي فابغ بما تبديه من قرب\*\*\* وجه المهيمن ولاجاً وخراجا  
 فليس تخفى على الرحمن خافية\*\*\* إن أخلص العبد في الطاعات أو داجي  
 وبادر الموت بالحسنى تقدمها\*\*\* فما ينهنه داعي الموت إن فاجا  
 واقن التواضع خلقاً لا تزايله\*\*\* عنك اللبالي ولو ألبسك التاجا  
 ولا تشم كل خال لاح بارقه\*\*\* ولو تراءى هتون السكب ثجاجا  
 ما كل داع بأهل أن يصاخ به\*\*\* كم قد أصم بنعي بعض من ناجي  
 وما اللبيب سوى من بات مقتنعاً\*\*\* ببليغة تدرج الأيام إدراجا  
 فكل كثر إلى قل مغبته\*\*\* وكل نازٍ إلى لينٍ وإن هاجا



Nor to himself forbidding what right forbids, or heading aught that may impair  
fair repute.  
Ay, such a man, away with him if he die, and if he live, he's reck'ed as though  
not alive,  
No good in him: alive he breathes fulsomeness, as though a corpse, ten days  
exhumed after death.  
But hail to him whose honor sheds fragrance sweet, bright in its spotless beauty  
like brodered gown.  
So say to him whom stings the thorn of his sin, pluck out the thorn, poor  
brother, else thou art lost.  
Wipe with sincere repentance out any writ that black misdeeds have left on thy  
book of deeds,  
And deal with men of ev'ry kind pleasantly, winning with courtly ways alike  
fool and sage;  
Feather the free whose plumage fair time has stripped, may he not live who,  
while he can, feathers not.  
Help one oppressed by tyranny if too weak to help thyself, then summon up  
hosts for him,  
And raise him who when he has tripped, calls on thee, haply through him thou  
risest on gathering-day.  
This cup of counsel, drink of it, and bestow on one athirst that which remains in  
the cup.<sup>262</sup>

Al-Hariri prefers to recite *qit'ahs* rather than *qasidahs*, since *qit'ahs* show his contents in both humorous and serious ways. He recites *qit'ahs* in puzzles in which the meaning has one content and focus. Some medieval Arab critics believed that poets should recite *qit'ahs* as well as *qasidahs*. For some topics, such as puzzles and humor, *qit'ahs* are even more critical than *qasidahs*. For other poetic topics, such as excuses, warnings, intimidations, and enticements,

<sup>262</sup>Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 2, pp. 110–111:

يا ويح من أذره شبيهه\*\*\* وهو على غي الصبا منكمش  
يعشو إلى نار الهوى بعدما\*\*\* أصبح من ضعف القوى يرتعش  
ويمتطي اللهو ويعتده\*\*\* أوطأ ما يفترش المفترش  
لم يهب الشيب الذي ما رأى\*\*\* نجومه ذو اللب إلا دهش  
ولا انتهى عما نهاه النهى\*\*\* عنه ولا بالي بعرض خدش  
فذاك إن مات فسحقاً له\*\*\* وإن يعيش عد كان لم يعيش  
لا خير في محيا امرئ نشره\*\*\* كمنشر ميت بعد عشر نبش  
وحبذا من عرضه طيب\*\*\* يروق حسناً مثل برد رقتش  
فقل لمن قد شاكه ذنبه\*\*\* هلكت يا مسكين أو تنتعش  
فأخلص التوبة تطمس بها\*\*\* من الخطايا السود ما قد نقش  
وعاشر الناس بخلق رضى\*\*\* ودار من طاش ومن لم يطش  
ورش جناح الحر إن حصه\*\*\* زمانه لا كان من لم يرش  
وأنجد الموتور ظلماً فإن\*\*\* عجزت عن إنجاده فاستجش  
وانعش إذا ناداك ذو كيوه\*\*\* عساك في الحشر به تنتعش  
وهالك كأس النصح فاشر وجد\*\*\* بفضل الكأس على من عطش

*qasidahs* are more appropriate than *qit'ahs*.

### **The Function of Poetry in the *Maqamat al-Hariri***

The function of poetry in a literary work can differ, depending on time and place. The environment around the poetry may control the function of the poetry and determine the poet's approach. Plato did not give poetry much attention because what poets recite amounts to an illusion. Therefore, according to his societal ideal, poets are not allowed to enter virtuous cities. Aristotle argued that the functions of poetry are imitation and enjoyment. In pre-Islamic (*jahiliyyah*) Arabic literature, the function of poetry was to defend one's tribe and its accomplishments. Also, pre-Islamic poets praised their tribes in the battles in which they fought. In addition, pre-Islamic poets used writing to attack their tribes' enemies.

The importance of poetic function reflects the high regard for poets in their communities. Most pre-Islamic poets had a reputation, and often their people listened to their poems and followed their recitations. The poetry of the pre-Islamic period is respected for its knowledge and wisdom.

In early Islam (610–661 A.D.) and the Umayyad Caliphate (661–750 A.D.), poets continued to offer defenses, but of the religion of Islam rather than of their tribes.

In the Abbasid Caliphate (750–1256 A.D.), the function of poetry was different, depending on its environment and culture. Most poetry in the Abbasid Caliphate was a *madih* (a eulogy or panegyric poem), a *ghazal* (a love poem), or a *ritha'* (an elegiac poem). During that time, most poets went to the Caliph's palace to recite poems in order to earn money. Poetry also had other functions in the Abbasid period. There was the *hija* (a lampoon or insulting poem), the *wasf* (a descriptive poem), the *khamriyyah* (a wine poem), the *fakhr* (a boasting poem), the *hamasah* (a war poem), and the *al-shi'r al-ta'limi* (a didactic poem).

The poetry in the *Maqamat al-Hariri* cannot be separated from the prose narrative, since they both work together to achieve the goals of al-Hariri, who used poetry as a tool to quote characters rather than as a tool to convey beauty. Sometimes he has a character recite poetry to provide glimpses of imagination; but at other times, when he wants to move from one idea to another in a *maqama*, he uses poetry as a transitional device between narrative events. One example of this technique occurs in “*al-Maqamah al-Tabriziyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Tabriz”). In that story, al-Harith ibn Hammam sees al-Saruji and his wife walking to the judge of Tabriz to complain about each other. The judge listens to al-Saruji and agrees with him. Then al-Saruji and his wife proceed to blame each other. Surprised at what he hears, the judge decides to blame *both* of them. Then al-Saruji recites the following lines:

I am the man of Seruj, she my consort, the full moon has none but the sun for equal,  
 Her company and mine are never severed, nor is her cloister distant from my abbot,  
 As naught I water but my own plantation; five nights, however, is it now since morning  
 And eve we wear the sorry garb of hunger, knowing no more what chewing means, or sipping,  
 So that from sheer exhaustion of our life-breath we are like corpses risen from the grave-yard.  
 So, when our patience failed, and ev’ry comfort, we came by dint of want whose touch is painful,  
 To this resort, for good or evil venture, to gain, by hook or crook, some little money.  
 For poverty, when it assails the free-born, leads him to don the shameful cloak of falsehood.  
 This then is my condition, this my lesson, see my today and ask, what was my yestern.  
 And bid them mend my case or send to jail me at will, for in thy hand my weal and woe lies.<sup>263</sup>

<sup>263</sup>Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 2, pp. 105–106:

أنا السروجي وهذي عرسي \*\*\* وليس كفو البدر غير الشمس  
 وما تنافى أنسها وأنسي \*\*\* ولا تناءى دبرها عن قسي  
 ولا عدت سقياي أرض غرسي \*\*\* لكننا منذ ليالٍ خمس  
 نصبح في ثوب الطوي ونمسي \*\*\* لا نعرف المضغ ولا التحسي  
 حتى كأننا لخفوت النفس \*\*\* أشباح موتى نشروا من رمس

When the judge believes al-Saruji, the wife gets angry and recites the following lines:

O folks of Tabriz, ye are blest with a judge who ranks by far ahead of all judges,  
No fault in him save that his gift on a day of bounty is dealt out with short  
measure.  
We came to him so that we might cull the fruit from off his tree that never fails  
yielding.  
He sent away the Shaykh, rejoiced with his gift, and treated with regard and  
distinction,  
But turned me off more disappointed than one who watches for the lightning in  
August,  
As though he knew not that it is I who taught the Shaykh to versify with such  
glibness,  
And that I could if ever I were so willed make him the laughing-stock of all  
Tabriz.<sup>264</sup>

The judge is confused about whom to believe, so he gives each of them a *dinar*. But aware that they want to trick him, he advises them to respect the court.

It would be hard to read “*al-Maqamah al-Tabriziyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Tabriz”) without poetry. Qusay al-Husseini claims that *maqamat* and poetry have a strong relationship. Even more, al-Husseini states that poetry, whether it is a *qit’ah* or *qasidah*, served as a vital structure of *maqamat*.<sup>265</sup>

The second function of al-Hariri’s poetry is to prepare al-Saruji for traveling and justifying

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فحين عز الصبر والتأسي\*\*\*وشقنا الضر الأليم المس  
قمنا لسعد الجد أو للنحس\*\*\*هذا المقام لاجتلاب فلس  
والفقير يلجي الحر حين يرسي\*\*\*إلى التحلي في لباس اللبس  
فهذه حالي وهذا درسي\*\*\*فانظر إلى يومي وسل عن أمس  
وأمر بجبري إن تشا أو حبسي\*\*\*ففي يديك صحي ونكسي

<sup>264</sup>Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 2, p. 106:

يا أهل تبريز-لكم حاكم\*\*\*أوفى على الحكام تبريزا  
ما فيه من عيب سوى أنه\*\*\*يوم الندى قسمته ضيزى  
قصده والشيوخ نبعي جنى\*\*\*عود له ما زال مهزوزا  
فسرح الشيخ وقد نال من\*\*\*جدواه تخصيصاً وتمييزا  
وردني أخيب من شائم\*\*\*برقاً خفا في شهر تموزا  
كأنه لم يدر أنني التي\*\*\*لقتت ذا الشيخ الأراجيزا  
وأني إن شئت غادرتة\*\*\*أضحوكة في أهل تبريزا

<sup>265</sup>Qusay Adnan al-Husseini, *Fan al-Maqamat fi al-Andalus* [“The *Maqama* Genre in al-Andalus”] (Amman, Jordan: Dar al-Fikr li-Tiba’ah wa al-Nashr, 1999).

the trip, which occurs in many of al-Hariri's *maqamat*. In “*al-Maqamah al-Maraghiyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Maraghah”), we encounter the following lines, which illustrate how the poetry performs this function:

Sure to traverse the lands in poverty is dearer to me than rank:  
For in rulers there is caprice and fault-finding, Oh what fault-finding!  
There is none of them who completes his good work, or who builds up where he  
has laid foundation.  
So let not the glare of the mirage beguile thee; undertake not that which is  
doubtful:  
For how many a dreamer has his dream made joyful; but fear has come upon  
him when he waked?<sup>266</sup>

In this *qit'ah*, al-Hariri ends his *maqama* by justifying why al-Saruji is traveling to cities and leaving places, suggesting that he wants to stay away from unjust rulers. He prefers traveling and getting tired to staying with unjust rulers.

In “*al-Maqamah al-Ma'arriyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Ma'arrah”), al-Saruji explains why he is a poor man:

I am the Seruji and this is my son: and the cub at the proving is like the lion.  
Now never has his hand nor mine done wrong in matter of needle or pencil:  
But only fortune, the harming, the hostile, has brought us to this that we came  
forth to beg.  
Of each one whose palm is moist, whose spring is sweet; or each whose palm is  
close, whose hand is fettered;  
By every art, and with every aim: by earnest, if it prosper, and if not, by jest.  
That we may draw forth a drop for our thirsty lost, and consume our life in  
wretched victual,  
And afterward Death is on the watch for us: if he fall not on us today he will fall  
tomorrow.<sup>267</sup>

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<sup>266</sup>Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 1, pp. 138–139:

لجوب البلاد مع المتربه\*\*\*أحب إلي من المرتبه  
لأن الولاية لهم نبوة\*\*\*ومعتبة يا لها معتبه  
وما فيهم من يرب الصنيع\*\*\*ولا من يشيد ما ربه  
فلا يخذ عنك لموع السراب\*\*\*ولا تأتي أمراً إذا ما اشنتبه  
فكم حاله سره حلمه\*\*\*وأدركه الروح لما انتبه

<sup>267</sup>Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 1, p. 150:

أنا السروجي وهذا ولدي\*\*\*والشبل في المخبر مثل الأسد  
وما تعدت يده ولا يدي\*\*\*في إبرة يوماً ولا في مروء

Also, in “*al-Maqamah al-Mecciyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Mecca”), al-Saruji prepares for leaving by mentioning his nostalgia for his hometown of Saruj:

Seruj is my dwelling; but how to make way to it!  
For enemies have encamped in it, and marred it.  
Now by the House to which I have journeyed to lay down my sins in it,  
Nought has pleased my eye since I have left the bounds of Seruj.<sup>268</sup>

In “*al-Maqamah al-Maltiyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Maltiyah”), al-Saruji recites the following lines to remind himself of his hometown:

Each mountain-path is path for me, and ample is my dwelling there,  
Save that for Seruj town my heart is crazed with longing, mad with love.  
She is my virgin land from whence my erewhile youthful breeze has sprung,  
And for her mead so rich of growth above all meads I fondly yearn.  
After from her no sweet is sweet to me, delightful no delight.<sup>269</sup>

In “*al-Maqamah al-Najraniyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Najran”), al-Saruji describes his travels to various places outside of Saruj and expresses his desire to return home:

Seruj the place where my sun rose, the home of my joy and comfort,  
But now bereft of her pleasures, of all my soul took delight in,  
I had to change her for exile, embittering past and present:

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وإنما الدهر المسميء المعتدي\*\*\*مال بنا حتى غدونا نجتدي  
كل ندي الراحة عذب المورد\*\*\*وكل جعد الكف مغلول اليد  
بكل فن وبكل مقصد\*\*\*بالجد إن أجدى وإلا بالدد  
والموت من بعد لنا بالمرصد\*\*\*إن لم يفاج اليوم فاجى في غد

<sup>268</sup>Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 1, p. 185:

سروج داري ولكن\*\*\*كيف السبيل إليها  
وقد أناخ الأعادي\*\*\*بها وأخنوا عليها  
فوالتي سرت أبغي\*\*\*حط الذنوب لديها  
ما راق طرفي شيء\*\*\*مذ غبت عن طرفيها

<sup>269</sup>Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 2, p. 81:

كل شعبي لي شعبي\*\*\*وبه ربي رحب  
غير أني بسروج\*\*\*مستهام القلب صب  
هي أرضي البكر والجو\*\*\*الذي فيه المهيب  
وإلى روضتها الغند\*\*\*اء دون الروض أصبو  
ما حلا لي بعدها حل\*\*\*و لا اعذوب عذب

No biding-place have on earth I, no rest there is for my camel.  
My morn, my eve pass on one day in Nejd, in Syria another,  
I drag my life out with food that dejects the heart, vile and abject,  
No copper-coin own I ever; a coin! From who should I get it!  
Who lives a life such as I live, has bought it at losing bargain.<sup>270</sup>

In “*al-Maqamah al-Shitwiyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Wintry”), al-Saruji talks to his camel,  
asking it to take him to Saruj:

Seruj, my camel, is thy goal, so fare apace, now through the night, now through  
the day, no day and night,  
So that thy hoofs may gladly tread her pastures moist and thou mayst find thee  
thence well off and prosperous,  
And safe of being jaded over hill and dale: ay haste thee on, my precious beast,  
and speed thy pace,  
Crossing the linty mountains, peak by peak, contented with a chance draught  
from the wat’ring pond,  
And not alighting until yonder goal is reached; for I have sworn it, and in  
earnest made my oath.  
By worship due to Mecca’s lofty-pillared house, if thou but bring me safely to  
my native town.  
Thou wilt for aye be held by me instead of child.<sup>271</sup>

<sup>270</sup> Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 2, p. 119:

سروج مطلع شمسي \*\*\*وربع لهوي وأنسي  
لكن حُرمت نعيمي \*\*\*بها ولذة نفسي  
واعترضت عنها اغترابا \*\*\*أمر يومي وأمسي  
ما لي مقر بأرض \*\*\*ولا قرار لعنسي  
يوماً بنجد ويوماً \*\*\*بالشام أضحى وأمسي  
أزجي الزمان بقوت \*\*\*منغص مستخس  
ولا أبيت وعندي \*\*\*فلس ومن لي بفلس  
ومن يعيش مثل عيشي \*\*\*باع الحياة ببخس

<sup>271</sup> Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 2, p. 141:

سروج يا ناق فسيري وخدي  
وأدلجي وأوبي وأسدي  
حتى تطا خفاك مرعاها الندي  
فتنعمي حينئذ وتسعدي  
وتأمني أن تنتهمي وتتجدي  
إيه فتلك النوق جدي واجهدي  
وافري أديم فدفد فدفد  
واقنعني بالنشح عند المورد  
ولا تحطي دون ذلك المقصد  
فقد حلفت حلفة المجتهد  
بحرمة البيت الرفيع العمد  
إنك إن أطلتني في بلدي  
حللت مني بمحل الولد

Some poems in the *Maqamat al-Hariri* have both the prepare-for-leaving topic and the justifying-the-leaving topic. They may also contain wisdom. An example occurs in “*al-Maqamah al-Faradiyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of the Legal”), in which al-Saruji recites the following lines:

Visit him thou lovest in each month only a day, and exceed not that upon  
him  
For the beholding of the new moon is but one day in the month, and  
afterward eyes look not on it.<sup>272</sup>

In “*al-Maqamah al-Raziyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Rayy al-Mahdiyyeh”), al-Saruji speaks the following lines:

Keep to truth, although it scorch thee with the fire of threatening:  
And seek to please God; for most foolish of mankind is he who angers the  
master and pleases the slave.<sup>273</sup>

To justify what has happened in the *maqama*, al-Hariri places the poetry at the end to prepare al-Saruji for traveling; in other words, the protagonist (or the poet) wants to justify his behavior to the readers.

## Trickery in al-Hariri's Poetry

### Introduction

Tricks appear in most *maqamat* of the *Maqamat al-Hariri*, in a variety of forms and techniques. In some instances, the trickster, who is Abu Zayd al-Saruji, writes and speaks

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<sup>272</sup>Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 1, p. 193:

لا تزر من تحب في كل شهر \*\*\* غير يوم ولا تزد عليه  
فاجتلاء الهلال في الشهر يوم \*\*\* ثم لا تنظر العيون إليه

<sup>273</sup>Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 1, p. 228:

عليك بالصدق ولو أنه \*\*\* أحرقك الصدق بنار الوعيد  
وابغ رضى الله فأغبي الورى \*\*\* من أسخط المولى وأرضى العبيد



poetry as a vehicle to trick the audience. Al-Saruji tricks other characters with both prose and poetry, but the present writer will only focus on the poetry.

Al-Saruji's tricks come in dramatic ways that differ, depending on the context of each *maqama*. Typically, al-Hariri describes the lives of *mukdyn* (beggars) who hope to receive a reward, which is usually money, food, or clothing. Al-Hariri uses the *mukdyn* to describe his thoughts about the injustices of society, including extreme poverty. The author was a rich man, but many people during his time were miserable, and al-Hariri was good at mimicking the *mukdyn* life and tricks. He wanted to demonstrate his intelligence by tricking people, and in part he was a talented poet precisely because he could use the formal features of poetry to pull off elaborate verbal and logical stunts.

Al-Saruji's tricks succeed largely because of his excellent linguistic and rhetorical abilities. There are three types of poetic tricks in the *Maqamat al-Hariri*: (1) disability tricks; (2) preaching tricks; and (3) dramatic tricks.

### **Disability Tricks in the *Maqamat al-Hariri***

These tricks have to do with three kinds of disability: blindness, hemiparesis (muscular weakness or paralysis on one side of the body), and lameness. When al-Saruji mimics these three disabilities, he uses poetry to trick people, and always gets what he wants. Two centuries before al-Hariri, al-Jahiz wrote *al-Bursan wa al-Urjan wa al-Umiyan wa al-Hulan* ("Leper, Lameness, Blindness, and Squint"), in which he criticized some *mukdyn* fathers who taught their children to beg by pretending to be blind, lame, or disabled. Some of those *mukdyn* fathers actually cut off their children's hands or legs so that people would have mercy on them and give them money, which infuriated al-Jahiz.

Al-Saruji pretends to be blind in several *maqamat* in order to fool the people around him.

One example occurs in “*al-Maqamah al-Barkaidiyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Barkaid”). Once al-Harith ibn Hammam realizes that he is being tricked, al-Saruji responds:

Since Time (and he is the father of mankind) makes himself blind to the right in his purposes and aims,  
I too have assumed blindness, so as to be called a brother of it; what wonder that one should match himself with his father!<sup>274</sup>

The second poetic disability, hemiparesis, occurs in “*al-Maqamah al-Tiflisiyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Tiflis”), when al-Saruji claims to have suffered a stroke. At the end of this *maqama*, people donate money to him. After al-Harith discovers this trickery, al-Saruji immediately recites the following lines:

I show me in rags, so that people may say, a wretch that forbears with the hardships of times.  
I feign to the world to be palsied of face, for often my hearth thus obtaineth its wish;  
Ay, but for my raggedness find I compassion, and but for the palsy I meet with my wants.<sup>275</sup>

An example of the third disability, lameness, occurs in “*al-Maqamah al-Dinariyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Kaylan”), in which al-Saruji is totally unashamed of acting lame:

I have feigned to be lame, not from love of lameness, but that I may knock at the gate of relief.  
For my cord is thrown on my neck, and I go as one who ranges freely.  
Now if men blame me I say, “Excuse me: Sure there is no guilt on the lame.”<sup>276</sup>

<sup>274</sup>Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 1, p. 144:

ولما تعامى الدهر وهو أبو الورى\*\*\*عن الرشد في أنحائه ومقاصده  
تعاميت حتى قيل إني أخو عمى\*\*\*ولا غرو أن يحذو الفتى حذو والده

<sup>275</sup>Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 2, p. 62:

ظهرت برت لكيما يقال\*\*\*فقير يزجي الزمان المزجي  
وأظهرت للناس أن قد فلتجت\*\*\*فكم نال قلبي به ما نرجي  
ولولا الرثاة لم يرث لي\*\*\*ولولا التفالج لم ألق فلجا

<sup>276</sup>Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 1, p. 21:

تعارجت لا رغبة في العرج\*\*\*ولكن لأقرع باب الفرج  
وألقي حبلي على غاربي\*\*\*وأسلك مسلك من قد مرج  
فإن لآمني القوم قلت اعذروا\*\*\*فليس على أعرج من حرج

### Preaching Tricks in the *Maqamat al-Hariri*

Preaching takes various forms in the *Maqamat al-Hariri*. Some of al-Saruji's preaching is for God, but most of his preaching is intended to trick other characters in order to earn a reward. Although al-Saruji's preaching poems are meant to trick audiences and get their money or food, al-Hariri's preaching poems are actually sincere. Most critics believe that *kudya* (begging) is one of the major goals of al-Hariri's *maqamat*. However, the present writer believes that preaching, whether in prose or poetry, is the author's main focus, along with the use of eloquent language.

*Kudya* is a vehicle to deliver both sincere preaching messages and eloquence. Preaching is more effective when it is indirect, as al-Hariri's preaching is when he presents it as a form of begging. Ahmad al-Hussein believes that preaching in Islam was sincere until a group of Sassani<sup>277</sup> during the Abbasid Caliphate started to trick people by preaching to get a reward.<sup>278</sup>

Al-Saruji's preaching tricks take place in mosques, markets, cemeteries, and other settings. In "*al-Maqamah al-Saweiyah*" ("The *Maqama* of Saweh"), al-Saruji stands at graves and preaches to people that the graves will be their fate. He then asks them to donate money to him for the quality of his preaching. After he receives the money, al-Harith recites the following lines:

How many, Abu Zayd, will be the varieties of thy cunning to drive the prey to  
thy net? and wilt thou not care who censures?<sup>279</sup>

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<sup>277</sup>*Sassani*, which means "beggar" in Arabic, refers here to Sassan, who was a Persian prince. His family, the Sassanian Dynasty, ruled for more than three hundred years (224–651 A.D.). This prince was sad because his sister was a leader, not him. Therefore, he decided to go to the desert and herd sheep, which led people to satirize him, and made begging belong to him. Ali Abdulmonem Abdulhamid, *Al-Namudhaj al-Insani fi 'Adab al-Maqamah* ["Human Model in the *Maqama* Genre"] (Beirut, Lebanon: Maktabat Beirut, 1994).

<sup>278</sup>The Abbasid Caliphate lasted from the eighth to the thirteenth century A.D.

<sup>279</sup>Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 1, p. 167:

Without shame, he [al-Saruji] performs instantly:

Look well, and leave thy blaming; for, tell me, hast thou ever known a time  
when a man would not win of the world when the game was in his hands?<sup>280</sup>

In “*al-Maqamah al-Tanisiyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Tanis”), al-Saruji’s son participates with his father in tricking people through preaching. Once al-Saruji gathers the audience in the mosque and starts preaching to them, the boy stands up to ask for help. Al-Saruji then asks people in the mosque to help the poor boy. When the audience gives the boy money, al-Saruji leaves the mosque with his son and turns to al-Harith ibn Hammam, asking him to join them in drinking wine, which infuriates al-Harith.

Another example of poetic preaching tricks occurs in “*al-Maqamah al-Baghdadiyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Baghdad”), in which al-Saruji recites the following lines to al-Harith:

Oh! Would I knew whether the time had gotten a knowledge of my power:  
Whether it had learnt or learnt not the real truth how deep I go in deceiving:  
How many of its sons I have won by my wile and my fraud:  
How oft I have sallied forth upon them in my known form and in disguise;  
To catch one set by preaching, and the other by poetry.  
To excite one mind by vinegar, and another by wine;  
Being at one time Sakhr,<sup>281</sup> at another time the sister of Sakhr.  
Now if I had followed the frequented path all the length of my life,  
My fire and my portion would have failed, my need and my loss would have  
lasted.  
So say to him who blames, “This is my excuse—take it.”<sup>282</sup>

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إلى كم يا أبا زيد  
أفانيك في الكيد  
لينحاش لك الصيد  
ولا تعباً بمن ذم

<sup>280</sup>Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 1, p. 167:

تبصر ودع اللوم  
وقل لي هل ترى اليوم  
فتى لا يقمر القوم  
متى ما دسته تم

<sup>281</sup>Sakhr ibn ‘Amr was a pre-Islamic hero, who was the brother of the famous female poet al-Khansa.

<sup>282</sup>Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 1, p. 180:

يا ليت شعري أدهري\*\*\*أحاط علماً بقدري  
وهل درى كنه غوري\*\*\*في الخدع أم ليس يدري

## Dramatic Tricks in the *Maqamat al-Hariri*

Neuwirth disagrees with Kilito that the *maqama* is a narrative text, contending that the *maqama* is a dramatic text that has both protagonists and a poetical shape.<sup>283</sup> Al-Saruji's dramatic tricks always involve him disguising himself with a mask to trick people into giving him money. For example, in "*al-Maqamah al-Baghdadiyyah*" ("The *Maqama* of Baghdad"), al-Saruji disguises himself as a poor old woman with children, and recites the following lines about her situation:

I complain to God, with the complaining of the sick, against the trouble of the unjust, the hateful time.  
O friends, I am of people who prospered a long time, while the eyelid of fortune was cast down before them:  
Their glory there was none to forbid, and their fame was spread abroad among men.  
When foraging failed in the ashy year, they were a goodly meadow:  
Their fires were kindled to the travelers, and they fed the guest with fresh meat:  
Their neighbor passed not his night in hunger, nor through fear did he say,  
"Choking hinders me."  
But the changes of destruction have made their seas of bounty to sink away from them, which I thought not would ever sink.  
That on which I carry is now my back, after being my beast, and my home is in the hollow, after being on the height.  
My little ones fail not to mourn their misery, of which there is some flash every day.  
When the pious man prays to his Lord by night, they also call Him with gushing tears.  
O Thou who feedest the young raven in the nest, and settest the bone which is

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كم قد قمرت بنيه\*\*\*بحيلاتي وبمكري  
وكم برزت بعرفي\*\*\*عليهم وينكري  
أصطاد قوماً بو عطي\*\*\*وأخريين بشعري  
وأستقز بخل\*\*\*وعقلاً وعقلاً بخمر  
وتارة أنا صخر\*\*\*وتارة أخت صخر  
ولو سلكت سبيلاً\*\*\*مألوفة طول عمري  
لخاب قدحي وقدخي\*\*\*ودام عسري وخسري  
فقل لمن لام هذا\*\*\*عزري فدونك عزري

<sup>283</sup> Angelika Neuwirth, "Adab Standing Trial: Whose Norms Should Rule Society? The Case of al-Hariri's 'al-Maqamah al-Ramliyah,'" in *Ibrahim al-Sa'afin Fi Mihrah al-Ma'rifah*. (Beirut, Lebanon: 1997), pp. 205–224.

broken, and again broken:  
 Appoint to us, O God, one whose honor is pure and washed from the filth of  
 blame;  
 Who will quench for us the fire of hunger, though only with a mess of the sour  
 milk or the buttermilk?  
 Now is there any who will remove what is come upon us, and make prize of  
 thanks long and large?  
 For, by Him to whom the forelocks shall bow down in the day when the faces of  
 the assemblage shall be black and white.  
 Were it not for these, my cheek would not expose itself, nor would I assay to the  
 stringing of verse.<sup>284</sup>

Listening to this recitation, people take mercy on the poor old woman (actually Saruji) and donate their money, proving the effectiveness of these begging techniques for tricking the listeners. These moments exemplify the larger goals of entertaining, teaching, and fooling the listeners.

In “*al-Maqamah al-Zabidiyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Zabid”), al-Saruji sells his son as a slave to trick the narrator, al-Harith ibn Hammam. Al-Saruji recites the following line to sell his son as a slave:

Who buys from me a lad who proves deft at his work, and is in make and manners surpassingly fair?<sup>285</sup>

<sup>284</sup>Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 1, pp. 178–179:

أشكو إلى الله استكاء المريض \*\*\* ريب الزمان المتعدي البغيض  
 يا قوم إني من أناس غنوا \*\*\* دهرأ وجفن الدهر عنهم غضبيض  
 فخارهم ليس له دافع \*\*\* وصيتهم بين الورى مستقيض  
 كانوا إذا ما نجعة أعورت \*\*\* في السنة الشهباء روضاً أريض  
 تشب للسايرين نيرانهم \*\*\* ويظعمون الصيف لهما غريض  
 ما بات جار لهم ساغياً \*\*\* ولا لروع قال حال الجريض  
 فغيضت منهم صروف الردى \*\*\* بحار جود لم نخلها تغيض  
 وأودعت منهم بطون الثرى \*\*\* أسد التحامي وأساة المريض  
 فمحملي بعد المطايا المطا \*\*\* وموطني بعد البقاع الحضيض  
 وأفرخي ما تأتلي تشكي \*\*\* بؤساً له في كل يوم وميض  
 إذا دعا القانت في ليله \*\*\* مولاه نادوه بدمع بغيض  
 يا رازق النعاب في عشه \*\*\* وجابر العظم الكبير المهيض  
 أتحن لنا اللهم من عرضه \*\*\* من دنس الذم نقي وحبيض  
 يطفئ نار الجوع عنا ولو \*\*\* بمذقه من حازر أو مخيض  
 فالذي تعنو النواصي له \*\*\* يوم وجوه الجمع سود وبيض  
 لولا هم لم تبد لي صفحة \*\*\* ولا تصدبت لنظم القريض

<sup>285</sup>Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 2, p. 64:

من يشتري مني غلاماً صنعا

Al-Saruji's son, who pretends to be a slave, continues his father's tricks by reciting the following lines to al-Harith:

O thou, whose wrath is kindled if I withhold my name, not thus a man, who in his dealings shows him fair!  
But if thou be not pleased unless it be revealed, then listen: Joseph I am, am Joseph, hear!  
Now have I lifted to thee the veil, and if thy wits are sharp, thou knowest, but I fancy thou knowest not.<sup>286</sup>

Once al-Harith pays al-Saruji for his son, the son refuses to be sold, stating that he is a free man, and that a free man cannot be sold. Nevertheless, al-Saruji keeps the money.

In “*al-Maqamah al-Karjiyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Kerej”), al-Saruji hopes to find winter clothing to get warm, when he speaks the following lines:

Well done he who has clothed me with a fur coat, which shall be my protection from shivering!  
He has clothed me with it, preserving my heart's blood; may he be preserved from the harm of men and Jinn!  
Today he shall deck himself with my praise; tomorrow he shall be decked with the silk of paradise.<sup>287</sup>

Another example of dramatic tricks occurs when al-Saruji and his wife trick the judge in “*al-Maqamah al-Ramliyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Ramlah”). Al-Saruji's wife recites the following lines:

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في خلقه وخلقه قد يرعا

<sup>286</sup>Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 2, p. 65:

يا من تلهب غيظه إذ لم أبح\*\*\*باسمي له ما هكذا من ينصف  
إن كان لا يرضيك إلا كشفه\*\*\*فأصخ له أنا يوسف أنا يوسف  
ولقد كشفت لك العطاء فإن تكن\*\*\*فطنا عرفت وما إخالك تعرف

<sup>287</sup>Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 1, p. 256:

لله من ألبسني فروة\*\*\*أضحت من الرعدة لي جنة  
ألبسنيها واقباً مهجتي\*\*\*وفي شر الإنس والجنة  
سيكتسي اليوم ثنائي وفي\*\*\*غدي سيكسى سندس الجنة

O Kadi<sup>288</sup> of Ramlah, in whose hands there is for us the date or else the hot  
 cinder-coal,  
 To thee complain I of my mate's cruelty, who pays his pilgrim's duty but once a  
 while:  
 Would that, when his devotion has come to end, and eased his back is after his  
 pebble-throw,  
 He followed Abu Yusuf's<sup>289</sup> wise rule and went to join the lesser with the chief  
 pilgrimage.  
 This is his way in spite of that, since he first took me to him I never crossed him  
 in aught.  
 So bid him show me henceforth sweet kindness, or make him drink the bitter  
 draught of divorce,  
 Before he puts from him the last shred of shame, obedient to old Abu 'l-  
 Murrah's hest.<sup>290</sup>

When the judge asks al-Saruji to speak, al-Saruji recites the following lines:

Listen, thou when no blame may reach, to the speech of one who clears himself  
 of doubts cast on him:  
 By Allah, not from hatred turn I from her, nor has my heart's love for my spouse  
 died away,  
 But fortune's fitful freak has come over us, ruthlessly robbing us of both pearl  
 and bead.  
 So my abode is empty, as unadorned her neck you see by shell or gold  
 ornament.  
 Erewhile my views on love and his creed and cult were those professed so  
 staunchly by 'Uzrah's tribe,  
 But since fell fortune fled I left dolls alone, like one who vows chastity for  
 caution's sake,  
 And not from grudge held I aloof from my field, only from fear to see the seed  
 spring in halm.<sup>291</sup>  
 So blame not one who is such plight finds himself, rather be kind to him and  
 bear with his talk.<sup>292</sup>

<sup>288</sup> A *kadi* was a judge.

<sup>289</sup> Abu Yusuf (731–798 A.D.) was a famous judge in Baghdad.

<sup>290</sup> Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 2, p. 142:

يا قاضي الرملة يا ذا الذي \*\*\* في يده الثمرة والجمرة  
 إليك أشكو جور بعلي الذي \*\*\* لم يحجج البيت سوى مره  
 وليته لما قضى نسكه \*\*\* وخف ظهرا إذ رمى الجمرة  
 كان على رأي أبي يوسف \*\*\* في صلة الحجة بالعمرة  
 هذا على أني مذ ضمنني \*\*\* إليه لم أعص له أمره  
 فمره إما ألفة حلوة \*\*\* بترضي وإما فرقة مره  
 من قبل أن أطلع ثوب الحيا \*\*\* في طاعة الشيخ أبي مره

<sup>291</sup> Halm are stems or stalks collectively, as of grain, peas, beans, or hops.

<sup>292</sup> Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 2, p. 143:



The judge decides to give al-Saruji and his wife money to help them in their life. After al-Saruji and his wife leave the court, the judge expresses his admiration for al-Saruji and his wife's speech. When the judge asks the audience if they know al-Saruji's name, a member of the audience says admiringly that he is Abu Zayd al-Saruji, who together with his wife tricks people. When the judge realizes he has been tricked, he gets angry. Neuwirth observes that al-Saruji and his wife are smart and gifted and trick the judge through poetry.<sup>293</sup>

Table 3, below, displays the names of al-Saruji's family members who help him to trick other characters:

Table 3. Al-Saruji and His Family Members Who Trick Characters

His Wife	His Son	An Old Woman	His Female Slave
" <i>al-Maqama al-Kufiyyah</i> " ("The <i>Maqama</i> of Kufa")	" <i>al-Maqama al-Dimiettiyyah</i> " ("The <i>Maqama</i> of Damietta")	" <i>al-Maqamah al-Barkaidiyyah</i> " ("The <i>Maqama</i> of Barkaid")	" <i>al-Maqamah al-Sinjariyyah</i> " ("The <i>Maqama</i> of Sinjar")
" <i>al-Maqama al-Iskandariyyah</i> " ("The <i>Maqama</i> of Alexandria")	" <i>al-Maqama al-Kufiyyah</i> " ("The <i>Maqama</i> of Kufa")		
" <i>al-Maqamah al-Tabriziyyah</i> " ("The <i>Maqama</i> of Tabriz")	" <i>al-Maqama al-Ma'arriyyah</i> " ("The <i>Maqama</i> of Ma'arrah")		
" <i>al-Maqamah al-Ramliyyah</i> " ("The <i>Maqama</i>	" <i>al-Maqama al-Rahbiyyah</i> " ("The <i>Maqama</i>		

اسمع عداك الذم قول امرئ\*\*\*بوضح في ما رابها عذره  
والله ما أعرضت عنها قلى\*\*\*ولا هوى قلبي قضى نذره  
وإنما الدهر عدا صرفه\*\*\*فابتزنا الدرّة والذره  
فمنزلي قفر كما جيدها\*\*\*عطل من الجزعة والشذره  
وكنت من قبل أرى في الهوى\*\*\*ودينه رأي بني عذره  
فمذ نبا الدهر هجرت الدمى\*\*\*هجران عف أخذ حذره  
وملت عن حرثي لا رغبة\*\*\*عنه ولكن أتقي بذره  
فلا تلم من هذه حاله\*\*\*واعطف عليه واحتمل هنره

<sup>293</sup> Angelika Neuwirth, "Woman's Wit and Juridical Discourse: A 'Forensic Maqama' by the Classical Arabic Scholar al-Hariri," *Figurationen*, 2005, 23–36.

of Ramlah”)	of Rahbah”) “ <i>al-Maqama al-Makkiyyah</i> ” (“The <i>Maqama</i> of Mecca”) “ <i>al-Maqama al-Nasibiyyah</i> ” (“The <i>Maqama</i> of Nasibin”) “ <i>al-Maqama al-Wasitiyyah</i> ” (“The <i>Maqama</i> of Wasit”) “ <i>al-Maqamah al-Zabidiyyah</i> ” (“The <i>Maqama</i> of Zabid”) “ <i>al-Maqamah al-Tanisiyyah</i> ” (“The <i>Maqama</i> of Tanis”) “ <i>al-Maqamah al-Hajriyyah</i> ” (“The <i>Maqama</i> of Hajr”) “ <i>al-Maqamah al-Sassaniyyah</i> ” (“The <i>Maqama</i> of Sassan”)		
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Table 4, below, displays examples of al-Saruji tricking elite characters, including a governor and a judge.

Table 4. Al-Saruji Tricks a Governor and a Judge

A Governor	A Judge
“ <i>al-Maqama al-Rahabiyyah</i> ” (“The <i>Maqama</i> of Rabah”) “ <i>al-Maqamah al-Shi’riyyah</i> ” (“The <i>Maqama</i> of Precinct”)	“ <i>al-Maqama al-Ma’arriyah</i> ” (“The <i>Maqama</i> of Ma’arras”) “ <i>al-Maqama al-Iskandariyyah</i> ” (“The <i>Maqama</i> of Alexandria”) “ <i>al-Maqamah al-Zabidiyyah</i> ” (“The <i>Maqama</i> of Zabid”)

	<p>“<i>al-Maqamah al-Sa’diyyah</i>” (“The <i>Maqama</i> of Sa’dah”)  “<i>al-Maqamah al-Tabriziyyah</i>” (“The <i>Maqama</i> of Tabriz”)  “<i>al-Maqamah al-Ramliyyah</i>” (“The <i>Maqama</i> of Ramlah”)</p>
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Al-Saruji needs his wife or son to help him trick the judge, since both his wife and son are excellent tricksters.

Al-Hariri includes a trick *maqama* in most of his *maqamat*. Usually, the narrator or other characters discover after the fact that they have been tricked by al-Saruji. Not only does al-Saruji trick the characters, but he also sometimes employs his wife and son to help him trick the audience. The trick poems are among the most important characteristics of the *Maqamat al-Hariri*.

#### **Placement of Poetry in the *Maqamat al-Hariri***

Poetry in the *Maqamat al-Hariri* is typically placed in multiple locations throughout the text: in the beginning of a *maqama*, in the middle of a *maqama*, just before the end of a *maqama*, and at the end of a *maqama*, as is shown in Table 5, below:

Table 5. Placement of Poetry in the *Maqamat al-Hariri*

The beginning of a <i>maqama</i>	The middle of a <i>maqama</i>	Just before the end of a <i>maqama</i>	The end of a <i>maqama</i>
7 times (7.8%)	76 times (84.4%)	3 times (3.3%)	4 times (4.4%)

As Table 5 reveals, most of the poetry is recited in the middle of the *maqamat*, a compositional tactic used by many writers who followed al-Hariri. As a result, if the poetry were removed from his *maqamat*, the concept and meaning of each *maqama* would be vague

and difficult to fully understand.

Al-Hariri wrote 1,161 verses in total. To determine the average number of verses in each *maqama*, we can use the following calculation:

$$1,161 \text{ verses} \div 50 \text{ } maqamat = 23.22 \text{ verses for each } maqama$$

In addition, the *maqamat* of the *Maqamat al-Hariri* do not all have the same length. In fact, each *maqama* typically ranges between two and ten pages. The long *maqamat*, which range between seven and thirteen pages long, include:

- “*al-Maqamah al-Bakriyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Bakriyah”)
- “*al-Maqamah al-Basriyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Basra”)
- “*al-Maqamah al-Dimashqiyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Damascus”)
- “*al-Maqamah al-Faradiyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of the Legal”)
- “*al-Maqamah al-Furatiyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of the Euphrates”)
- “*al-Maqamah al-Hajriyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Hajr”)
- “*al-Maqamah al-Halabiyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Aleppo”)
- “*al-Maqamah al-Haramiyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Haramiyeh”)
- “*al-Maqamah al-Maghribiyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of the West”)
- “*al-Maqamah al-Maraghiyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Maraghah”)
- “*al-Maqamah al-Najraniyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Najran”)
- “*al-Maqamah al-Ramliyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Ramlah”)
- “*al-Maqamah al-Sa’diyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Sa’dah”)
- “*al-Maqamah al-Sassaniyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Sassan”)
- “*al-Maqamah al-Shi’riyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Precinct”)
- “*al-Maqamah al-Shitwiyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Wintry”)
- “*al-Maqamah al-Sinjariyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Sinar”)
- “*al-Maqamah al-Suriyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Sur”)
- “*al-Maqamah al-Zabidiyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Zabid”)

The average-length *maqamat*, which range between five and six pages long, include:

- “*al-Maqamah al-Baghdadiyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Baghdad”)
- “*al-Maqamah al-Barka’idiyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Barkaid”)
- “*al-Maqamah al-Damiettiyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Damietta”)
- “*al-Maqamah al-Dinariyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Kaylan”)

“*al-Maqamah al-Gahgariyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of the Reversed”)  
 “*al-Maqamah al-Holwaniyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Holwan”)  
 “*al-Maqamah al-Karjiyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Kerej”)  
 “*al-Maqamah al-Kufiyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Kufa”)  
 “*al-Maqamah al-Ma’arriyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Ma’arrh”)  
 “*al-Maqamah al-Mecciyaah*” (“The *Maqama* of Mecca”)  
 “*al-Maqamah al-Nasibiyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Nasibin”)  
 “*al-Maqamah al-Omaniyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Oman”)  
 “*al-Maqamah al-Raziyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Rayy al-Mahdiyeh”)  
 “*al-Maqamah al-Samargandiyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Samarcand”)  
 “*al-Maqamah al-San’aniyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of San’a”)  
 “*al-Maqamah al-Saweiyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Saweh”)  
 “*al-Maqamah al-Tabriziyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Tabriz”)  
 “*al-Maqamah al-Tibbiyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Taybeh”)  
 “*al-Maqamah al-Wabariyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of the Tent-dwellers”)  
 “*al-Maqamah al-Wasittiyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Rayy al-Wasit”)

The short *maqamat*, which are five or fewer pages long, include:

“*al-Maqamah al-Farigiyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Mayyafrikin”)  
 “*al-Maqamah al-Iskndriyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Alexandria”)  
 “*al-Maqamah al-Maltiyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Maltiyah”)  
 “*al-Maqamah al-Marwiyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Merv”)  
 “*al-Maqamah al-Raqta*” (“The *Maqama* of the Address”)  
 “*al-Maqamah al-Shiraziyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Shiraz”)  
 “*al-Maqamah al-Taflisiyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Tiflis”)  
 “*al-Maqamah al-Tanisiyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Tanis”)

Al-Hariri has al-Saruji recite poems in the long *maqamat* more often than in the average-length and short *maqamat*. However, sometimes a *maqama* is long, but has only a few verses. For example, al-Saruji recites five verses in “*al-Maqamah al-Sassaniyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Sassan”) and eight verses in “*al-Maqamah al-Bakriyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Bakriyah”), but these two *maqamat* are long because of how many lines the verses contain. On the other hand, al-Saruji recites thirty-three verses in “*al-Maqamah al-Iskndriyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Alexandria”), but it is short because the verses contain few lines.

“*Al-Maqamah al-Halabiyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Aleppo”) is the *maqama* that contains the

highest number of verses—65 in all. In contrast, both “*al-Maqamah al-Sasaniyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Sasan”) and “*al-Maqama al-Gahgariyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of the Reversed”) contain only five verses each. Table 6, below, shows the four *maqamat* with the most verses:

Table 6. Number of Verses per *Maqama*

<i>Maqama</i>	Number of Verses
“ <i>Al-Halabiyyah</i> ” (“Aleppo”)	65
“ <i>Al-Shatwiyyah</i> ” (“The Wintry”)	61
“ <i>Al-Saweiyah</i> ” (“Saweh”)	52
“ <i>Al-Basriyyah</i> ” (“Basra”)	52

The *maqamat* that focus primarily on education usually contain several verses, whereas the *maqamat* that give advice usually contain only a few verses. Table 7, below, shows the four *maqamat* with the fewest verses:

Table 7. Number of *Maqama* with the Fewest Verses

<i>Maqama</i>	Number of verses
“ <i>Al-Gahgariyyah</i> ” (“The Reversed”)	5
“ <i>Al-Sasaniyyah</i> ” (“Sasan”)	5
“ <i>Al-Samargandiyyah</i> ” (“Samarqand”)	7
“ <i>Al-Bakriyyah</i> ” (“al-Bakriyah”)	8

In sum, poetry in the *Maqamat al-Hariri* reveals details about *maqamat* and summarizes their concept. Also, poetry helps to support the prose, as in “*al-Maqamah al-Qati’yyah*” (“The *Maqama* of the Portion”), in which the poetry comments on grammatical issues.

### Al-Hariri’s Poetic Themes

In this section, the present writer will examine the poetic themes in the *Maqamat al-Hariri*

in order to illustrate the poet's consistently excellent skills.

Depending on the situation, al-Saruji performs the role of an eloquent preacher, an excellent teacher, a good speaker, or a beggar-trickster. The poetic themes of the *Maqamat al-Hariri* are similar to the prose themes of the *Maqamat al-Hariri*. The main theme in the *Maqamat al-Hariri* is begging (*kudya*), which al-Hariri deals with in several ways. The next most important themes are preaching and teaching.

### The *Kudya* Theme

In the *kudya* theme, the poetic subjects include complaints about time and life, asking for help, and tricking the audience. One example of the *kudya* theme occurs in “*al-Maqamah al-Dinariyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Kaylan”), in which al-Saruji recites two poems to satirize and praise the *dinar*, speaking the following lines:

Ruin on it for a deceiver and insincere,  
The yellow one with two faces like a hypocrite!  
It shows forth with two qualities to the eye of him that looks on it,  
The adornment of the loved one the color of the lover.<sup>294</sup>

Al-Saruji also praises the *dinar* in the following lines in the same *maqama*:

How noble is that yellow one, whose yellowness is pure.  
Which traverses the regions, and whose journeying is afar.  
Told abroad are its fame and repute:  
Its lines are set as the secret sign of wealth.<sup>295</sup>

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<sup>294</sup>Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 1, p. 120:

تبا له من خادع مماذق  
أصفر ذي وجهين كالمنافق  
يبدو بوصفين لعين الرامق  
زينة معشوق ولون عاشق

<sup>295</sup>Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 1, p. 119:

أكرم به أصفر راقته  
جواب أفاق ترامت سفرته  
مأثورة سمعته وشهرته  
قد أودعت سر الغنى أسرته

An example of the *kudya* theme using the complaint of time occurs in “*al-Maqamah al-Taflisiyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Tiflis”), in which al-Saruji recites the following lines:

I cry to the Compassionate, be praise to Him, for fortune’s fickleness and hostile rancor,  
And for calamities that have shattered my rock, and overthrown my frame and its foundations,  
Have broken down my stem, and woe to him, whose boughs adversities pull down and break,  
My dwelling they have wasted even as to banish from the wasted spot the rats themselves;  
They left me bewildered and dazed, to bear the brunt of poverty and all its pangs,  
While heretofore I was a lord of wealth, who trailed his sleeves along in luxury,  
Whose leaves the supplicants beat freely down, whose hospitable fires night-farers praised;  
But who is now, as though the world, that casts the evil eye on him, had never smiled on him,  
From whom he turns who was his visitor, and whom he scorns to know who sought his gift.  
So if a good man mourns the evil plight he sees an old man in, betrayed by fortune,  
Then let him ease the sorrow that afflicts him, and mend the state that puts him thus to shame.<sup>296</sup>

An example of the *kudya* theme asking for help appears in “*al-Maqamah al-Mecciyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Mecca”), in which al-Saruji speaks the following lines:

O ye Lords, whose dwellings are built up on high places!

لولا التقى لقلت جلّت قدرته

<sup>296</sup>Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 2, pp. 59–60:

أشكو إلى الرحمن سبحانه\*\*\*تقلب الدهر وعدوانه  
وحادثات فرعت مروتي\*\*\*وقوضت مجدي وبنياته  
واهتصرت عودي ويا ويل من\*\*\*تهتصر الأحداث أغصانه  
وأمحلت ربي حتى جلّت\*\*\*من ربي المحل جردانه  
وغارتني حائراً بانراً\*\*\*أكابد الفقر وأشجانه  
من بعد ما كنت أفا ثروة\*\*\*يسحب في النعمة أردانه  
بختبب العافون أوراقيه\*\*\*ويحمد السارون نيرانه  
فأصبح اليوم كأن له زائراً\*\*\*وعاف عافي العرف عرفانه  
فهل فتى يحزنه ما يرى\*\*\*من ضر شيخ دهره خانه  
فيفرج الهم الذي همه\*\*\*ويصلح الشأن الذي شأنه



Who, when danger befalls, take stand to ward of stratagem;  
 To whom is easy the bestowing of stored up treasures;  
 I desire of you a piece of roast, and a loaf, and a pudding:  
 But if that be too dear, then let it be cracknels,<sup>297</sup> in which shall be hidden some  
 roast lamb;  
 Or if there be neither this nor that, then my fill of *therid*.<sup>298</sup>  
 But if these deny themselves altogether, then mere dates with their sauce.  
 Bring forth what is easy for you, even though it be but shreds of dried meat;  
 And make it ready quickly, for my soul is longing for what is ready.  
 For there is no doing without provision for my far journey;  
 And ye are the best of kindred to be called on in necessity;  
 Your hands every day are full of new bounties;  
 Your palms bestow all useful gifts.  
 Now my wish will limit itself within the folds of that which ye shall give,  
 Through me may reward be gotten; and estimable is the consequence of  
 relieving my sorrow;  
 And mine are young offsprings of the wit which put to shame every poem.<sup>299</sup>

An example of the *kudya* theme using trickery occurs in “*al-Maqamah al-Haramiyyah*”

(“The *Maqama* of Haramiyeh”), in which al-Saruji, advising his son to trick people, recites the following lines:

Live by deceit, for we live in times whose sons resemble the forest lions.  
 Set aflow the rills of wile so that the mill life may briskly turn round.  
 And hunt for eagles; if the chase should fail, content thyself with a tuft of  
 feathers;

<sup>297</sup>Cracknels are brittle biscuits.

<sup>298</sup>*Therid* is bread in a soup.

<sup>299</sup>Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 1, p. 184:

يا سادة في المعالي \*\*\* لهم مبان مشيده  
 ومن اذا ناب خطب \*\*\* قاموا بدفع المكيد  
 ومن يهون عليهم \*\*\* بئذ الكنوز العتيد  
 اريد منكم شواء \*\*\* وجر دقا وعصيده  
 فان غلا فرقاق \*\*\* به توارى الشهيد  
 او لم يكن ذا ولا ذا \*\*\* فشبعة من ثريده  
 فان تعذرن طرا \*\*\* فعجوة ونهيد  
 فاحضروا ما تسنى \*\*\* ولو شطى من قديده  
 وروجوه فنفسى \*\*\* لما يروح مريده  
 والزا لا بد منه \*\*\* لرحلة لي بعيدة  
 وانتم خير رهط \*\*\* تدعون عند الشديده  
 ايديكم كل يوم \*\*\* لها اباد جديده  
 وراحمك واصلات \*\*\* تشمل الصلات المفيده  
 وبغيتي في مطاوي \*\*\* ما ترفدون زهيد  
 وفي اجر وعقبى \*\*\* تتفيس كربى حميد  
 ولي نتائج فكر \*\*\* يفضحن كل قصيده

Try to cull the fruit; if the fruit escape thee, be satisfied with the leaves remaining;  
And ease thy heart from distracting thoughts at the frowns of fickle and adverse fortune,  
For the ceaseless change of vicissitudes proclaims the doom of our life's unstableness.<sup>300</sup>

## The Preaching Theme

The second prominent poetic motif in the *Maqamat al-Hariri* is preaching. An example of preaching occurs in “*al-Maqamah al-Raziyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Rayy al-Mahdiyeh”), in which al-Saruji preaches the following lines to the governor:

Wonderful! a man hoping to attain to rule; and then when he attains to his desire he wrongs;  
He weaves warp and woof in tyrannies; now lapping at their well, now bidding others to lap.  
Nor cares he, when he is following his desires in them, whether he maintains his religion or destroys it:  
Oh woe to him! if he knew well that there is no state but changes, surely he would not transgress;  
Of if he saw clearly what is the repentance of him who inclines his hearing to the lie of informers, he would not incline it.  
But obey thou him in whose hand is the leading-cord; cast down thine eye if he neglect observance or speak vainly:  
And graze on bitter pasture when he calls thee to the grazing on it, and water at the salt well when he forbids thee the sweet.  
And bear his injury even though its touch afflicts thee, and pours out the flow of thy tears, nay, exhausts it;  
For fortune shall give thee the laugh of him when it departs from him, and kindles for the ambush against him the fire of war.  
And it shall bring down on him exultation, when he appears vacant of his office, emptied of it;  
And thou shalt be pitiful to him when his cheek lies soiled on the dust of shame.  
This is his fate: and then surely he shall one day stand in the place where even the master of eloquence shall be found a lisper:

<sup>300</sup>Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 2, p. 169:

عش بالخداع فأنت في \*\*\*دهر بنوه كأسد بيشه  
وأدر قناة المكر حتـ \*\*\*سى تستدير رحي المعيشه  
وصد النسور فإن تعذ \*\*\*ر صيدها فاقنع بريشه  
واجن الثمار فإن تفتـ \*\*\*ك فرض نفسك بالحشيشه  
وأرح فؤادك إن نبا \*\*\*دهر من الفكر المطيشه  
فتغاير الأحداث يؤ \*\*\*نن باستحالة كل عيشه

And he shall be gathered to judgment viler than the toad-stool of the plain; he shall be reckoned with for his shortcoming and excess:  
 And he shall be chastised for that which he has committed, and for him whom he has chosen; he shall be demanded of for what he sipped and what he supped.  
 And he shall be reckoned exactly with concerning small things as he was wont to do with mankind, but more thoroughly.  
 So that he shall bite his hand at his governing, and wish that he had not sought from it what he sought.<sup>301</sup>

## The Teaching Theme

Scholars and students study al-Hariri's educational poems, which often take the form of sermons, riddles, or other puzzles. The poems are also meant to entertain the reader with humor. An example occurs in “*al-Maqamah al-Maltiyyah*” (“The Maqama of Maltiyah”), in which riddles are presented to the reader, who is invited to discover the answers. Such riddles and their answers are intended to convey valuable knowledge. For example, al-Saruji recites the following lines:

O thou who solvest what is intricate of riddles and enigmas,  
 Reveal to me that which resembles to “take a thousand gold coins.”<sup>302</sup>

Al-Saruji also speaks the following lines in the same *maqama*:

<sup>301</sup>Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 1, pp. 226–227:

عجياً لراج أن ينال ولاية\*\*\*حتى إذا ما نال بغيته بغي  
 بسدي ويلحم في المظالم والغا\*\*\*في وردها طوراً وطوراً مولعا  
 ما إن يبالي حين يتبع الهوى\*\*\*فيها أصلح دينه أم أولغا  
 يا ويحه لو كان يوقن أنه\*\*\*ما حالة إلا تحول لما طغا  
 أو لو تبين ما ندامة من صغا\*\*\*سمعاً إلى إفك الوشاة لما صغا  
 فانقد لمن أضحى الزمام بكفه\*\*\*وتغاض إن ألغى الرعاية أو لغا  
 وارع المرار إذا دعاك لرعيه\*\*\*ورد الأجاج إذا حاك السيغا  
 واحمل أذاة ولو أمضك مسه\*\*\*وأسال غرب الدمع منك وأفرغا  
 فليضحك الدهر منه إذا نيا\*\*\*عنه وشب لكيدته نار الوغى  
 ولينزلن به السمات إذا بدا\*\*\*متخلياً من شغله متقرغا  
 ولتأوين له إذا ما خده\*\*\*أضحى على ترب الهوان ممرغا  
 هذا له ولسوف يوقف موقفاً\*\*\*فيه يرى رب الفصاحة الثغا  
 وليحشرن أذل من ققع الغلا\*\*\*ويحاسين على النقيصة والشغا

<sup>302</sup>Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 2, p. 78:

أيا مستتبط الغامض\*\*\*من لغز وإضمار  
 ألا اكشف لي ما مثل\*\*\*تناول ألف دينار

O thou, the children of whose thought resemble coin of ready course,  
What is like saying to a man pliest with riddles: “he met a gift”?<sup>303</sup>

In order to teach poetry, al-Hariri uses word plays, such as in “*al-Maqamah al-Shitwiyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Wintry”), in which al-Saruji reads the text from right to left and from left to right. In “*al-Maqamah al-Raqta*” (“The *Maqama* of the Address”), he writes poems in *tajnis* (paronomasia). In “*al-Maqamah al-Halabiyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Aleppo”), al-Saruji recites verses with two words written in the same letters in Arabic, but each word has a different meaning. The purpose of such word play is to teach students about poetry while demonstrating al-Hariri’s linguistic abilities. An example of *tajnis* (paronomasia) occurs in the following lines:

Zaynab’s<sup>304</sup> stature, erect and lithe, kills beholders, and a bane is her rounded bosom to lovers,  
Helping hosts are her neck to her, and her grace, and languid eyes that dart glances of deadly sharpness,  
Proudly bearing herself she swayed full-blown power, now my foe, now with glowing cheeks drawing nigh me  
In the morn or at night, to leave me again in sore distress at the cruelty of her doings,  
Then she came, may I be her ransom, and cooed, and with her greeting appeased her lovelorn and loved one.<sup>305</sup>

While the educational goal of this passage is obvious in Arabic, it is less obvious in this inelegant English translation. Al-Hariri wanted to show his linguistic and eloquent abilities, as

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<sup>303</sup>Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 2, p. 77:

يا من نتائج فكره\*\*\*مثل النقود الجائزه  
ما مثل قولك للذي\*\*\*حاجيت صادف جائزه

<sup>304</sup>Zaynab is a girl’s name.

<sup>305</sup>Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 1, pp. 150–151:

زينب زينب بقد بقده\*\*\*وتلاه ويلاه نهدي  
جندها جدها وظرف وظرف\*\*\*ناعس ناعس بحد بحد  
قدرها قدرها وتاهت وتاهت\*\*\*واعنتد واعنتد بحد بحد  
فارقتني فارقتني وشطت وشطت\*\*\*وسطت ثم نم وجد وجد  
فدنت فدنت وحننت وحننت\*\*\*مغضباً مغضباً بود بود

poets and writers of that era and culture wanted to present their linguistic and eloquent abilities to their audiences.<sup>306</sup> To conclude, the main three poetic themes of the *Maqamat al-Hariri* are: *kudya*, preaching, and teaching.

### **How al-Hariri Alternates Poetic Exchanges Between the Protagonist and the Narrator**

The narrator of the *Maqamat al-Hariri*, al-Harith ibn Hammam, meets the protagonist, Abu Zayd al-Saruji, in each *maqama*. There are three exchanges between the narrator and the protagonist: alternations between encounters and partings; alternations between happiness and sadness; and alternations between disguise and disclosure.

### **Alternations Between Encounters and Partings**

In the beginning of some *maqamat* in the *Maqamat al-Hariri*, the narrator meets the protagonist and hears the protagonist's eloquent speech, which might include preaching, arguing with his wife or son, challenging other characters, or reciting poems. The first encounter between the narrator and the protagonist appears in the first *maqama*, "*al-Maqamah al-San'aniyyah*" ("The *Maqama* of San'a"), with the lines, "This is Abu Zayd, of Saruj, the Light of Foreigners, the Crown of the Learned."<sup>307</sup> Parting appears in the last *maqama*, "*al-Maqamah al-Basriyyah*" ("The *Maqama* of Basra"), in which the protagonist repents and advises the narrator, "Keep death before thy eye, and this is the parting between me and thee."<sup>308</sup>

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<sup>306</sup>Shawqi Daif, *Al-Maqamah* ["The *Maqama*"] (Cairo, Egypt: Dar Al-Ma'arf, 1954).

<sup>307</sup>Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 1, p. 112:

هذا أبو زيد السروجي، سراج الغرباء، وتاج الأدباء

<sup>308</sup>Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 2, p. 185:

اجعل الموت نصب عينيك، وهذا فراق بيني وبينك

## Alternations Between Happiness and Sadness

Al-Hariri created a happy and a sad relationship between the narrator and the protagonist. The narrator is always happy when he meets the protagonist, and he is always sad when the protagonist leaves him. In “*al-Maqamah al-Nasibiyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Nasibin”), the narrator is happy when he sees the protagonist. “I found that my campaign had now gathered a booty,” he says, “and my single lot had become two-fold; and I ceased not to follow his shadow wherever he sped, and to glean his utterance as often as he spoke.”<sup>309</sup> In “*al-Maqamah al-Faradiyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of the Legal”), the narrator expresses his admiration for the protagonist: “Charming is this ordained meeting with thee to my glad heart.”<sup>310</sup>

On the other hand, the narrator feels sad and pained when the protagonist leaves him. For example, the narrator in “*al-Maqamah al-Kufiyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Kufa”) says, “Then he took leave of me and passed away, and set coals of the *ghada* in my breast.”<sup>311</sup> At the end of “*al-Maqamah al-Faradiyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of the Legal”), the narrator describes the parting of the protagonist: “Then I took leave of him with a heart bleeding of its wound, and wished that my night had been tardy of its morn.”<sup>312</sup>

The narrator’s twin feelings of happiness and sadness occur because the narrator admires the protagonist, since both of them like literature and literary scholars, and since the narrator sometimes helps the protagonist to trick the audience.

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<sup>309</sup>Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 1, p. 216:

فوجدت بها جهادي، قد حاز مغنماً، وقدحي الفذ قد صار توأمأ، ولم أزل أتبع ظله، أينما اتبعث والتقط لفظه كلما نفث

<sup>310</sup>Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 1, p. 193:

فقلت له: أحبب بلقائك المتاح، إلى قلبي المرتاح

<sup>311</sup>*Ghada* is a kind of wood used as kindling to start fires. Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 1, p. 132:

ثم إنه ودعني ومضى، وأودع قلبي جمر الغضا

<sup>312</sup>Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 1, p. 193:

فودعته بقلب دامي القرح، ووددت لو أن ليلتي بطيئة الصبح

## Alternations Between Disguise and Disclosure

The narrator sometimes recognizes the protagonist in the beginning of a *maqama*, but at other times he does not, since the protagonist is in disguise and conceals himself. The narrator recognizes the disguised protagonist in various ways: by his face; by remembering other *mukdyn* (beggars); by asking the protagonist his identity; or by following the protagonist after his tricks.

The protagonist discloses himself to the narrator in both prose and poetry. In poetry, he uses 473 verses as a disguised character and 523 verses as a disclosed character. He discloses his identity in the following *maqamat*:

- “*al-Maqamah al-Basriyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Basra”)
- “*al-Maqamah al-Furatiyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of the Euphrates”)
- “*al-Maqamah al-Gahgariyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of the Reversed”)
- “*al-Maqamah al-Halabiyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Aleppo”)
- “*al-Maqamah al-Haramiyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Haramiyeh”)
- “*al-Maqamah al-Iskndriyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Alexandria”)
- “*al-Maqamah al-Marwiyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Merv”)
- “*al-Maqamah al-Nasibiyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Nasibin”)
- “*al-Maqamah al-Omaniyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Oman”)
- “*al-Maqamah al-Raqta*” (“The *Maqama* of the Address”)
- “*al-Maqamah al-Samargandiyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Samarcand”)
- “*al-Maqamah al-Sassaniyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Sassan”)
- “*al-Maqamah al-Shiraziyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Shiraz”)
- “*al-Maqamah al-Sinjariyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Sinar”)
- “*al-Maqamah al-Suriyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Sur”)
- “*al-Maqamah al-Tabriziyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Tabriz”)
- “*al-Maqamah al-Wabariyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of the Tent-dwellers”)
- “*al-Maqamah al-Wasittiyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of al-Wasit”)

In the rest of the *maqamat*, the protagonist disguises himself throughout.

When al-Harith recognizes him, al-Saruji justifies why he tricks people. He also recites advice, which becomes one of the signs that allow al-Harith to recognize al-Saruji, as in “*al-Maqamah al-Holwaniyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Holwan”), in which al-Saruji recites the

following lines to al-Harith:

But be patient if it hounds calamities against thee, and drives them on.  
For there is no disgrace on the pure gold when it is turned about in the fire.<sup>313</sup>

Another example of recited advice poetry occurs when al-Harith discovers al-Saruji's real identity, is in "*al-Maqamah al-Kufiyyah*" ("The *Maqama* of Kufa"), in which al-Saruji recites the following line:

So allow my excuse; nay, pardon me, if I have done wrong or crime.<sup>314</sup>

### **The Poetic Language of the *Maqamat al-Hariri***

The present writer will now examine the features of the poetic language used in the *Maqamat al-Hariri*. Poetic language includes a poet's choice of words and phrases, as well as the creative structures used by the poet to express ideas and meanings. Through poetic language, the poet expresses his or her own poetic experience.<sup>315</sup>

In this section, the writer will examine how poetic language in the *Maqamat al-Hariri* relates to al-Hariri's literary themes. One feature of the poetry is that the language alludes to the *Qur'an*, since the *Qur'an* is considered to be the highest level of Arabic linguistic expression. For example, at the end of "*al-Maqamah al-Dinariyya*" ("The *Maqama* of Kaylan"), al-Saruji recites the following line:

Now if men blame me I say: Excuse me: sure there is no guilt on the lame.<sup>316</sup>

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<sup>313</sup>Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 1, p. 117:

واصبر إذا هو أضرى\*\*\*تيك الخطوب وألب  
فما على التبر عار\*\*\*في النار حين يقلب

<sup>314</sup>Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 1, p. 132:

فمهد العذر أو فسامح\*\*\*إن كنت أجرمت أو جنيت

<sup>315</sup>Muhammad Fattouh Ahmed, *Shi'r al-Mutanabbi: Qra'h Ukhray* ["Al-Mutanabbi's Poetry: Another Reading"] (Cairo, Egypt: Dar al-Ma'arf, 1988).

<sup>316</sup>Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 1, p. 121:



The phrase *there is no guilt on the lame* comes directly from the *Qur'an*, Sura *al-Nur*, verse 60. Another example of al-Hariri's poetic language that alludes to the *Qur'an* occurs in "*al-Maqamah al-Rahabiyyah*" ("The *Maqama* of Rahbah"), in which al-Saruji's son recites the following line:

Tell the Governor whom I have left, after my departure, repenting, grieving,  
biting his hands.<sup>317</sup>

Al-Hariri alludes to Sura *al-Furqan*, verse 27 in the *Qur'an*: "And the Day the wrongdoer will bite on his hands [in regret]."

A third example appears in "*al-Maqamah al-Basriyyah*" ("The *Maqama* of Basra"), in which al-Saruji recites the following line:

Would that I had been afore forgotten, and never gathered what, alas, I  
gathered.<sup>318</sup>

Al-Hariri is referencing Sura *Maryam*, verse 23, in the *Qur'an*: "I wish I had died before this and was in oblivion, forgotten."

Moreover, al-Hariri alludes to other Arab poets. For example, in "*al-Maqamah al-Zabidiyyah*" ("The *Maqama* of Zabid"), al-Saruji's son recites the following line:

And boldly sing I out: trading on me, my worth was lost to them, and what a  
worth!<sup>319</sup>

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فإن لآمني القوم قلت اعذروا\*\*\*فليس على أعرج من حرج

<sup>317</sup>Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 1, p. 162:

قل لوإل غادرته بعد بيبي\*\*\*سادماً نادماً بعض اليدين

<sup>318</sup>Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 2, p. 180:

فليتتي كنت قبل هذا\*\*\*نسياً ولم أجن ما جنبت

<sup>319</sup>Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 2, p. 66:

على أني سأشدد عند بيعي\*\*\*أضاعوني وأي فتى أضاعوا

The words *my worth was lost to them, and what a worth* allude to al-‘Arji, an Arab poet in the Umayyad period of the eighth century. Moreover, one of the features of al-Hariri’s poetic language is *kudya* vocabulary, food vocabulary, preaching vocabulary, and riddles and word play.

Since one of the main themes of the *Maqamat al-Hariri* is *kudya*, al-Hariri’s poetry features the vocabulary, tricks, and behaviors of *mukdyn* (beggars), who are always seeking tricks to get what they want. Al-Saruji plays various roles in order to trick other characters. An example of the *kudya* vocabulary occurs in “*al-Maqamah al-Barka’idiyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Barkaid”), in which al-Saruji speaks the following lines:

Sure I have become crushed with pains and fears;  
 Tried by the proud one, the crafty, the assailer,  
 By the traitor among my brethren, who hates me for my need,  
 By jading from those who work to undo my toils.  
 How oft do I burn through spites and penury and wandering;  
 How oft do I tramp in shabby garb, thought of by none.  
 Oh, would that fortune when it wronged me had slain my babes!  
 For were not my cubs torments to me and ills,  
 I would not have addressed my hopes to kin or lord:  
 Nor would I draw my skirts along the track of abasement.  
 For my garret would be more seemly for me, and my rags more honorable.  
 Now is there a generous man who will see that the lightening of my loads must  
 be by a *dinar*;  
 Or will quench the heat of my anxiety by a shirt and trousers?<sup>320</sup>

<sup>320</sup>Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 1, p. 141:

لقد أصبحت موقوداً\*\*\*بأوجاع وأوجال  
 ومنواً بمختال\*\*\*ومحتالٍ ومغتال  
 وخوان من الإخوة\*\*\*ن قال لي لإقلاي  
 وإعمال من العما\*\*\*ل في تضليع أعمالي  
 فكم أصلي بأذخال\*\*\*وإمحالٍ وترحالٍ  
 وكم أخطر في بالٍ\*\*\*ولا أخطر في بالٍ  
 فليت الدهر لما جار\*\*\*ر أطفأ لي أطفالي  
 فلولا أن أشبأ\*\*\*لي أغلالٍ وأعلالي  
 لما جهزت أمالي\*\*\*إلى آلٍ ولا والي  
 ولا جررت أذبالي\*\*\*على مسحب إذلالٍ  
 فمحرابي أحرى بي\*\*\*وأسمالي أسمى لي  
 فهل حر يرى تخـ\*\*\*فيف أنقالي بمثال  
 ويظفي حر بلبالي\*\*\*بسربالٍ وسروالٍ

Another example of *kudya* vocabulary occurs in “*al-Maqamah al-Iskandriyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Alexandria”), in which al-Saruji recites the following lines:

The stretch of my arm is straightened through the straightness of my hand’s means; cares and grief assail me.  
And my fortune, the blameworthy, has led me to paths of that which honor deems base.<sup>321</sup>

The society of al-Hariri’s time is reflected in the poetry through the use of particular words and phrases, including *the lightening of my loads; will quench the heat of my anxiety; the stretch of my arm is straightened; straightness of my hands; cares and grief assail me; and honor deems base.*

In addition to *kudya* vocabulary in which a *mukdy* asks to get money, food, or clothes, al-Hariri often uses food vocabulary and imagery. For example, in “*al-Maqamah al-Mecciyaah*” (“The *Maqama* of Mecca”), al-Saruji recites the following food metaphor:

I desire of you a piece of roast, and a loaf, and a pudding:  
But if that be too dear, then let it be cracknels, in which shall be hidden some roast lamb:  
Or if there be neither this nor that, then my fill of *tharid*.<sup>322</sup>  
But if these deny themselves altogether, then mere dates with their sauce.  
Bring forth what is easy for you, even though it be but shreds of dried meat.<sup>323</sup>

Another example of food vocabulary occurs in “*al-Maqamah al-Baghdadiyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Baghdad”), in which al-Saruji speaks the following line:

<sup>321</sup>Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 1, p. 155:

وضاق ذرعي لضيق ذات يدي\*\*\*وساورتني الهموم والكره  
وقادني دهر ي المليم إلى\*\*\*سلوك ما يستشينه الحسب

<sup>322</sup>Tharid is bread in soup.

<sup>323</sup>Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 1, p. 184:

أريد منكم شواء\*\*\*وجردناً وعصيده  
فإن غلا فرقاق\*\*\*به توارى الشهيد  
أو لم يكن ذا ولا ذا\*\*\*فشبعة من ثريده  
فإن تعذرن طراً\*\*\*ففعجوة ونهيدة  
فأحضروا ما تسنى\*\*\*ولو شظي من قديده

Who will quench for us the fire of hunger, though only with mess of the sour milk or the butter milk?<sup>324</sup>

A separate feature of al-Hariri's poetry is his focus on lexical education, riddles, and word plays, including linguistic and jurisprudential issues. One example of this focus can be found in "al-Maqamah al-Halabiyyah" ("The *Maqama* of Aleppo"), in which al-Saruji discourses on the letter *sad*:

With *Sad* is written *qabast* "I took with the finger-tips," and *asikh* "be listening that thou may'st receive the news."  
And *basagt* "I spat," and *simakh* "the ear," and *sanjah* "cymbal." And *qass* and *sadr* "the breast," *iqtass* "he traced."  
*Bakhast* "I gouged his eye," and *fursah* "the proper time," and *farisah* "muscles beneath the arm that quake in fear."  
And *qasartu* Hindan "I guarded Hind," *fishu* 'n-nasara "paschal feast of the Christians who look out for it."  
And *qarast* "I pinched," and the wine is *qaisah*, "tart of taste," when it pricks the tongue, and all this is orthography."<sup>325</sup>

In the same *maqama*, al-Saruji also muses on the letter *sin*:

If so thou wilt write with *sin*, the words I will tell to thee, and if thou wilt, let them be correctly written with *sad*:  
*Maghs* "gripes," and *faqs* "breeding young," *mustar* "new wine," *mummalis* "Slipped from the hand," *saligh* "shedding teeth," *sirat* "path of truth,"  
*Saqab* "approach," *samighan* "the corners twain of the mouth,"  
*Saqr* "hawk," *sawiq* "wheat in broth," *mislaq* "glib-tongued": thus they teach.<sup>326</sup>

<sup>324</sup>Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 1, p. 179:

يطفي نار الجوع عنا ولو \*\*\*بمذقة من حارز أو مخيض

<sup>325</sup>Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 2, p. 152:

بالصاد يكتب قد قبصت دراهماً \*\*\*بأناملي وأصخ لتستمع الخبر  
وبصقت أبصق والصماخ وشنجة \*\*\*والقص وهو الصدر واقتص الأثر  
وبخصت مقلته وهدى فرصة \*\*\*قد أرعدت منه الفريضة للخور  
وقصرت هنداً أي حبست وقد دنا \*\*\*فصح النصارى وهو عيد منتظر  
وقرصته والخمر قارصة إذا \*\*\*حذت اللسان وكل هذا مستطر

<sup>326</sup>Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 2, p. 152:

إن شئت بالسين فاكتب ما أبينه \*\*\*وإن تشأ فهو بالصادات يكتب  
مغس وفقس ومسطار ومملى \*\*\*وسالغ وسراط الحق والسقب  
والسامغان وسقر والسويق ومس \*\*\*لاق وعن كل هذا تفصح الكتب

One of the features of al-Hariri's poetic language is a preaching vocabulary, including remembering God, remembering death, avoiding sins, and repenting to God. Some poets during the Abbasid Caliphate, including Abu al-'Atahiya (748–826 A.D.), focused mainly on preaching poetry.

There are several grammatical styles of poetic preaching in the *Maqamat al-Hariri*, including imperative, prohibitive, and interrogative. Most of the poetic preaching is imperative and prohibitive. An example of imperative and prohibitive preaching vocabulary is found in “*al-Maqamah al-Hajriyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Hajr”), in which al-Saruji preaches the following lines:

Be upright, my dear son, for the straight tree will spread its roots, whereas,  
 when it grows crooked it speedily pines away,  
 Obey not abasing greed, but behave as a man who bears in silence the pangs of  
 hunger, that gnaw at his vital parts;  
 And battle against lust that destroys thee, for many who had soared to the stars,  
 enslaved by lust, fell and came to grief.  
 Be helpful to thy kinsfolk, for shameful it is to see the pinch of distress in those  
 depending upon the free.  
 And keep to the friend who when the times turn their back on thee, betrays not,  
 but proves faithful, when matters go wrong with thee.  
 And pardon if thou art strong, for no good is in a man who needlessly wounds,  
 when power of wounding is in his grasp  
 And guard thee of complaining, thou hearest no man of sense complain, but the  
 fool, who snarls and growls while he checks himself.<sup>327</sup>

The verbs *be upright* (*astaqam*), *obey not* (*la tuti*), *battle against* (*'as*), *be helpful* (*'as 'if*), *keep* (*hafiz*), *pardon* (*asfah*), and *guard* (*'iak*) are imperative and prohibitive.

<sup>327</sup>Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 2, p. 159:

بني استقم فالعود تنمي عروقه\*\*\*قويماً ويعشاه إذا ما التوى النوى  
 ولا تطع الحرص المنزل وكن فتى\*\*\*إذا التهبت أحشاؤه بالطوى الطوى  
 وعاص الهوى المردي فكم من محلق\*\*\*إلى النجم لما أن أطاخ الهوى هوى  
 وأسعف نوي القربى فيقبح أن يرى\*\*\*على من إلى الحر اللباب انضوى ضوى  
 وحافظ على من لا يخون إذا نبا\*\*\*زمان ومن يرعى إذا ما النوى نوى  
 وإن تقندر فاصفح فلا خير من امرئ\*\*\*إذا اعتلقت أظفاره بالشوى شوى  
 وإياك والشكوى فلم تر ذا نهى\*\*\*شكا بل أخو الجهل الذي ما ارعوى عوى

Another style of poetic preaching in the *Maqamat al-Hariri* is the interrogative. For example, in “*al-Maqamah al-Baghdadiyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Baghdad”), al-Sarūji speaks the following line:

Now is there any who will remove what is come upon us, and make prize of  
thanks long and large?<sup>328</sup>

In addition, *Badi’* poetry was the new style of poetry in the Abbasid Empire (8th–13th centuries A.D.), which was different from the pre-Islamic (*Jahiliyah*) poetry style. *Badi’* poets were no longer Bedouin warriors and lovers, but instead the poets of the Caliphal court. Abbasid *badi’* poets reflected the urban Islamic culture of their era.<sup>329</sup> Within the Abbasid Empire, there was a debate among medieval Arab critics about whether poets must follow the *Jahiliyah* structure of poetry or employ the new style of *badi’*.

Al-Jahiz was one of the earliest critics to discuss the topic of *badi’* poetry, which he did in his book *Kitab al-Bayan wa al-Tabyin* (“The Book of Eloquence and Demonstration”). He did not define the term *badi’* (“new”). However, from his comments to *badi’* poets, it is clear that he was familiar with the genre. Al-Jahiz insisted that *badi’* could only be written in Arabic.

Al-Jahiz contended that *badi’* was a new style of poetry, but not new to the Arabic language. What he meant by *badi’* poetry was the use of metaphor or metonymy and rhetorical embellishments. Al-Jahiz recommended the works of Bashār ibn Burd (714–783 A.D.), a poet whom he considered one of the creators of *badi’* poetry. In the debate regarding whether it is better for a poet to be gifted or to write in the *badi’* style, al-Jahiz believed that a poet can combine both qualities, and he cited Bashār as a perfect example of such a poet. Therefore, al-

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<sup>328</sup>Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 1, p. 179:

فهل فتى يكشف ما نابهم\*\*\*ويغنم الشكر الطويل العريض

<sup>329</sup>Suzanne Pinckney Stetkevych, “Toward a Redefinition of *Badi’* Poetry,” in Suzanne Pinckney Stetkevych, ed., *Early Islamic Poetry and Poetics* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2009), pp. 375–403.

Jahiz believed that *badi'* poetry was both natural and artificial.

Al-Hariri used various rhetorical embellishments and ornate styles, including *tawriya* (double-entendre), *tibaq* (antithesis), and *tajnis* (paronomasia). Most likely, al-Hariri used various rhetorical embellishments and ornate styles, in part, because they were common among writers and poets of his time.

An example of a *tawriya* (double-entendre) occurs in “*al-Maqamah al-Shiraziyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Shiraz”), in which al-Saruji recites the following lines:

I crave Allah’s forgiveness, humbling myself, for all the sins whose heavy load  
burdens me.  
O folks, how many olden maids kept at home, though in assemblies were their  
virtues praised about  
Have I cut down not fearing from any heir that might revenge them on me or  
claim a fine.  
And when the sin thereof was laid at my door, I boldly cleared myself and said:  
fate it was.  
And never stopped my soul its headlong career in cutting damsels down, and  
kept going stray,  
Till hoariness shone on the crown of my head and checked me from performing  
such evil deeds.  
So since my temples have turned gray never shed I any more a maiden’s blood,  
old or young.  
But now I rear, in spite of what may be seen of my condition and of my slacking  
trade,  
A lass who for a long time has stayed at home sheltered and veiled carefully  
from air itself.  
And she in spite of being thus kept recluse, has wooers for her comeliness and  
pleasingness.  
But for her outfit, at the least, I can’t do without a hundred, though I try as I  
may,  
While in my hand there is not one silver coin, the ground is empty and the sky  
yields no rain.  
Now is one here to help me that I may wed her amidst the singing-girls’  
cheering strain,  
Then let him wash my grief with its proper soap and cleanse my heart from  
sorrows that worry me,  
That he may cull my praises, whose fragrancy will only cease to breathe when  
man prays in vain.<sup>330</sup>

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<sup>330</sup>Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 2, p. 73:

Al-Saruji admits that he “kills” girls, and he repents when he gets old, knowing that he will leave his life soon. The audience is surprised that al-Saruji admits his sins in front of them. At the end of the poem, al-Saruji admits that his “murder” is not a real killing. What al-Saruji did in this poem is use a word with two meanings: “kill” and “deflower.” The audience members think al-Saruji means “kill,” but he is actually using the other meaning. Al-Saruji prepares wine, about which he speaks the following lines at the end of the *maqama*:

“Cutting down” means with one like me “thinning the wine,” not, O friend, with the lance or sword killing a man.  
 And the maid, kept at home with me, means the daughter of the grape-tree, not virgin of high descent [extraction].  
 And to wed her to cup and flask was the errand, which thou saw’st me intent upon when I joined you.  
 Understand then what I have said, and decide on kind forbearance, if so thy will, or rebuking.<sup>331</sup>

Al-Saruji did not use the most common meaning of *qatalu* (“killing girls”), but instead meant the other, less-known meaning (“preparing wine”).

The second rhetorical embellishment is *tibaq* (antithesis), which is ornate writing of prose

أستغفر الله وأعوذ له\*\*\*من فرطات أنقلت ظهريه  
 يا قوم كم من عاتق عانس\*\*\*ممدوحة الأوصاف في الأنديه  
 قتلتها لا أتقي وارثاً\*\*\*يطلب مني قواداً أو ديه  
 وكلما استنذبت في قتلها\*\*\*أحلت بالذنب على الأفضيه  
 ولم تزل نفسي في غيها\*\*\*وقتلها الأباكار مستشريه  
 حتى نهاني الشيب لما بدا\*\*\*في مفرقي عن تلكم المعصيه  
 فلم أرق مذ شاب فودي دماً\*\*\*من عاتق يوماً ولا مصبيه  
 وها أنا الآن على ما يرى\*\*\*مني ومن حرقتي المكديه  
 أرب بكرة طال تعنيسها\*\*\*وحجبها حتى عن الأهويه  
 وهي على التعنيس مخطوبة\*\*\*كخطبة الغانية المغنيه  
 وليس يكفيني لتجهيزها\*\*\*على الرضى بالدون إلا ميه  
 واليد لا توكي على درهم\*\*\*والأرض قفر والسما مصليه  
 فهل معين لي على نقلها\*\*\*مصحوبة بالقينة الملبيه  
 فيغسل لهم يصابونه\*\*\*والقلب من أفكاره المضنيه  
 ويقتني مني الثناء الذي\*\*\*تضوع رياه مع الأدعيه

<sup>331</sup> Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 2, p. 74:

قتل مثلي يا صاح مزج المدام\*\*\*ليس قتلي بلذم أو حسام  
 والتي عنست هي البكر بنت الـ\*\*\*كرم لا البكر من بنات الكرام  
 ولتجهيزها إلى الكأس والطا\*\*\*س قيامي الذي ترى ومقامي  
 فتفهم ما قلته وتحكم\*\*\*في التغاضي إن شئت أو في الملام



and poetry and presenting contradictions in words and meanings. An example of *tibaq* occurs in “*al-Maqamah al-Ramliyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Ramlah”), in which al-Saruji recites the following line, opposing mickles to mites and meekness to rage:

For every mickle comes to be a mite, and meek grows every stiff-necked, rage  
he as he may!<sup>332</sup>

Another example of *tibaq* is found in “*al-Maqamah al-Shi’riyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of the Precinct”), in which al-Saruji speaks the following line:

Be thou obedient when he revolts; be thou lowly when he magnifies himself;  
draw near to him when he goes from thee.<sup>333</sup>

A third example of *tibaq* appears in “*al-Maqamah al-Baghdadiyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Baghdad”), in which al-Saruji recites the following line:

For, by Him to whom the forelocks shall bow down in the day when the faces of  
the assemblage shall be black and white.<sup>334</sup>

In the same *maqama*, al-Saruji speaks the following line:

How oft I have sallied forth upon them in my known form and in disguise.<sup>335</sup>

The third rhetorical embellishment is *tajnis* (paronomasia), which is considered to be the first rhetorical embellishment that al-Hariri used in many of his *maqamat*. For example, in “*al-*

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<sup>332</sup>Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 2, p. 35:

فكل كثر إلى قل مغبته\*\*\*وكل نازٍ إلى لينٍ وإن هاجا

<sup>333</sup>Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 1, p. 240:

وأطعه إن عاصى وهن\*\*\*إن عز وادن إذا شحط

<sup>334</sup>Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 1, p. 179:

فوالذي تغنو النواصي له\*\*\*يوم وجوه الجمع سود وبيض

<sup>335</sup>Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 1, p. 180:

وكم برزت بعرف\*\*\*عليهم وينكر

*Maqamah al-Saweiyah* (“The *Maqama* of Saweh”), al-Hariri writes a poem in fifty verses, in which each line contains *tajnis*:

Is not the shame plain to thee? Doth not hoariness warn thee? (and in its counsel there is no doubtfulness); nor hath thy hearing become deaf.  
Is not Death calling thee? Doth he not make thee hear his voice? Dost thou not fear thy passing away, so as to be wary and anxious?  
How long wilt thou be bewildered in carelessness, and walk proudly in vanity, and go eagerly to diversion, as if death were not for all?<sup>336</sup>

The *tajnis* is between ‘*ayb* (“shame”) and ‘*shayb* (“gray hair/getting old”); ‘*maut* (“death”) and ‘*saut* (“voice”); and ‘*zahu* (“vanity”) and ‘*lahu* (“diversion”).

Another example of *tajnis* occurs in “*al-Maqamah al-Dimashqiyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Damascus”), in which al-Saruji recites the following line:

And leave thy father if he refuse thee, and spread thy nets and hunt who comes by thee.<sup>337</sup>

The *tajnis* is between the first ‘*abak* (“your father”) and the second ‘*abak* (“refuse”).

A third example of *tajnis* occurs in “*al-Maqamah al-Halabiyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Aleppo”), in which al-Saruji speaks the following lines:

Make thee a mark, whose traces show fair to sight, give thanks for gifts, though trifling as sesame seed,  
And shun deceitfulness with all might and main, that thou mayst gain thee lordship and weight with men.<sup>338</sup>

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<sup>336</sup>Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 1, pp. 165–166:

أما بان لك العيب\*\*\*أما أنذرك الشيب\*\*\*وما في نصحه ريب\*\*\*ولا سمعك قد صم  
أما نادى بك الموت\*\*\*أما أسمعك الصوت\*\*\*أما تخشى من الفوت\*\*\*فتحتاط وتهتم  
فكم تسدر في السهو\*\*\*وتختال من الزهو\*\*\*وتنصب إلى اللهو\*\*\*كأن الموت ما عم

<sup>337</sup>Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 1, p. 174:

وفارق أباك إذا ما أباك\*\*\*ومد الشباك وصد من سنح

<sup>338</sup>Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 2, p. 151:

سم سمة تحسن آثارها\*\*\*واشكر لمن أعطى ولو سمسمه  
والمكر مهما اسطعت لا تأته\*\*\*لتقتني السؤدد والمكرمه

The *tajnis* is between *sim simah* (“make thee a mark”) and *simsimah* (“sesame seed”), and also between *al-makr mahma* (“deceitfulness”) and *al-makramh* (“weight with men”).

In sum, al-Hariri complicates the poetic language of his *maqamat* by using various rhetorical embellishments and ornate styles, word plays, and riddles. Of course, he was a linguistic scholar, and, like other writers and poets of his time, he favored such rhetorical embellishments. His works also present the lives of *mukdyn*, often reflecting their real-life situations. Al-Hariri preached in poetry, and his audiences believed him. He made his *maqamat* a perfect example of teaching to both teachers and students, which suggests that the *Maqamat al-Hariri* may have been used for lexical education.

### **Meters and Rhymes in the *Maqamat al-Hariri***

Meters (*bahr*, s.; *buhur*, pl.) and rhymes (*qafiah*, s.; *qawafi*, pl.) are important to classical Arabic poetry. Qudama ibn Ja’far (873–948 A.D.) noted that Arabic poetry consists of rhymes, meters, and meanings. Most classical and medieval critics agreed with that assessment.

Meter is important to poetic expression, for the quality of a poem is partly determined by whether or not a poet recites the correct meter. Al-Khalil ibn Ahmad al-Farahidi (718–791 A.D.) pioneered the early development of ‘*arud* (the study of prosody). Al-Farahidi contended that some poets did not use Arabic poetry meters because Arabs lived together with non-Arabs after the rise of Islam.

Al-Farahidi described fifteen types of Arabic meter: (1) *tawil* (long); (2) *madid* (protracted); (3) *basit* (spread out); (4) *kamil* (complete); (5) *wafir* (abundant); (6) *hazaj* (trilling); (7) *rajaz* (trembling); (8) *ramal* (trotting); (9) *sari’* (swift); (10) *munsarih* (quick-paced); (11) *khafif* (light); (12) *mudari’* (similar); (13) *tadab* (untrained); (14) *mujtathth* (cut-off); and (15) *mutaqarib* (nearing). Al-khflash al-Akbar (d. 793 A.D.) described a sixteenth type

of Arabic meter: *mutadarik* (overtaking).<sup>339</sup>

The poetry in the *Maqamat al-Hariri* has meters that resemble those of classical Arabic poetry. In his *maqamat*, al-Hariri recites his poetry through the voice of the protagonist, al-Saruji, as well as the voices of his wife, son, students, and narrator. However, most of the poetry is recited by al-Saruji. Al-Hariri wrote 1,161 verses for his *maqamat*. Table 8, below, lists the number of verses recited by al-Saruji, al-Harith, and all the other characters combined.

Table 8. Number of Verses per Character

Abu Zayd al-Saruji	Al-Harith ibn Hammam	Others
1,006 verses	13 verses	142 verses

Table 9, below, divides al-Hariri's use of Arabic meters into two sections: al-Saruji's poetry and the poetry of all the other characters.

Table 9. Meters Recited by the *Maqamat al-Hariri* Characters

<i>Buhur</i> (Meters)	Al-Saruji's Meters Recited	Other Characters' Meters Recited
<i>kamil</i> (complete)	25 times	4 times
<i>rajaz</i> (trembling)	23 times	3 times
<i>sari'</i> (swift)	17 times	5 times
<i>khafif</i> (light)	14 times	3 times
<i>tawil</i> (long)	11 times	4 times
<i>mutaqarib</i> (nearing)	11 times	0 times
<i>munsarih</i> (quick-paced)	9 times	2 times
<i>mujtathth</i> (cut-off)	9 times	1 time
<i>hazaj</i> (trilling)	6 times	1 time
<i>ramal</i> (trotting)	6 times	0 times
<i>wafir</i> (abundant)	3 times	3 times
<i>basit</i> (spread out)	0 times	4 times

Al-Hariri used Arabic meters that poets commonly used during his time, and he used

<sup>339</sup>Ali Abdulredha, *Musiqā al-Shi'r al-Arabi: Qadimuhu wa Hadithu* ["Classical and Modern Arabic Poetry Music"] (Amman, Jordan: Dar al-Shuruq, 1997).

meters that are good for singing. Ali al-Jundi<sup>340</sup> notes that the *kamil* (complete) meter can be sung while the listeners dance.

There is a harmony between the two types of poetry (*qit'ah* and *qasidah*) and the meters in the *Maqamat al-Hariri*. Since al-Hariri wrote *qit'ah* in two-thirds of his poetry, he tended to use short meters. Moreover, the major theme of the *Maqamat al-Hariri* is *kudya*, in which the *mukdy* al-Saruji needs a fast way to affect other characters and get what he wants. Therefore, al-Saruji recites poems in meters that suit his needs.

Al-Hariri used four meters in total: *madid* (protracted); *mudari'* (similar); *muqtadab* (untrained); and *mutadarik* (overtaking). Al-Saruji recites the meter *ramal* (trotting) only one time, since some Arab critics believed this meter was for sad poetry, whereas al-Saruji is not a sad character<sup>341</sup>; rather, he recites poetry to trick his audience.

In terms of rhyme, the last word of a line in poetry is more important than the rest of the line in Arabic poetry,<sup>342</sup> as Ibn Rashiq al-Qairwani (999–1063 A.D.) noted.<sup>343</sup> Because of the importance of rhyme in Arabic poetry, some poems are called by their rhymes, such as *Lamiyyat al-'Arab* (“the L song of the Arabs”) by al-Shanfara, a pre-Islamic poet who died in the sixth century A.D.

Until the Abbasid Caliphate, every poem had only one rhyme. During that Caliphate, rhymes expanded to various forms, including *muwashshah* (girdled), which is a type of traditional strophic poetry by Arab Muslims in al-Andalus that dates from the tenth century A.D.<sup>344</sup> Some Arab critics described these new forms as unpoetic, since they believed that the

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<sup>340</sup>Ali al-Jundi, *Al-Shu'ara' wa Inshad al-Shi'r* [“Poets and Sing Poetry”] (Cairo, Egypt: 1969).

<sup>341</sup>Nassima al-Ghaith, *Min al-Mubdi' ila al-Nas* [“From the Writer to the Text”] (Cairo, Egypt: Dar Qiba' li al-Tiba'ah wa al-Nashr, 2001).

<sup>342</sup>Abu al-Hassan Saeed ibn Mas'adah al-Akhfash, *Kitab al-Qawafi* [“The Book of Rhymes”], ed. Azza Hassan (Damascus, Syria: Matbu'at 'Ihia' al-Turath al-Qadim, 1970).

<sup>343</sup>Ibn Rashiq al-Qairwani, *Al-'Umdah*.

<sup>344</sup>Otto Zwartjes, *The Muwashshah and the Kharja: An Introduction* (Amsterdam, Netherlands: University of Amsterdam, 2006).

technique of one rhyme per poem was an important convention that showed the talent of the poet and distinguished poetry from prose.<sup>345</sup>

For his rhymes, Al-Hariri used all Arabic letters (*rawi*) except *dhal* (*dh*). By using all twenty-seven letters of Arabic, al-Hariri displayed his poetic abilities, since repeating the same rhyming letters can bore readers. Table 10, below, lists the letters that rhyme in the *Maqamat al-Hariri*.

Table 10. Rhyming Letters for the Characters in the *Maqamat al-Hariri*

Rhyming Letters	Abu Zayd al-Saruji	Al-Harith ibn Hammam	Other Characters
<i>hamza</i> (‘)	1	0	0
<i>ba’</i> (b)	21	0	0
<i>ta’</i> (t)	6	0	2
<i>tha’</i> (th)	2	0	0
<i>jim</i> (j)	4	0	0
<i>ha’</i> (h)	3	0	2
<i>kha’</i> (kh)	1	0	0
<i>dal</i> (d)	12	1	5
<i>dhal</i> (dh)	0	0	0
<i>ra’</i> (r)	16	0	3
<i>zay</i> (z)	8	1	2
<i>sin</i> (s)	8	1	2
<i>shin</i> (sh)	3	0	0
<i>sad</i> (s)	2	0	0
<i>dhad</i> (dh)	2	0	0
<i>ta’</i> (t)	1	0	0
<i>za’</i> (z)	1	0	1
<i>‘ayn</i> (‘)	10	0	1
<i>ghayn</i> (gh)	1	0	0
<i>fa’</i> (f)	6	0	3
<i>qaf</i> (q)	4	0	1
<i>kaf</i> (k)	5	0	0
<i>lam</i> (l)	17	1	4
<i>mim</i> (m)	14	1	1
<i>nun</i> (n)	12	0	1
<i>ha’</i> (h)	7	0	0

<sup>345</sup>Abdulfattah Lakrad, “Mukawnat al-Bunyah al-Iqa’iyyah fi al-Qasidah al-‘Arabiah al-Qadimah” [“The Components of the Rhythmic Structures in Classical Arabic Poetry”], *Hawliat Kuliyyat al-‘Adab wa al-Ulum al-‘Ijtima’iyyah Majles al-Nashr al-‘Ilmi* (2008).

<i>was</i> (w)	3	0	0
<i>ya'</i> (i/y)	4	1	1

As we see in Table 10, al-Hariri preferred to recite poems with the rhyming letters *lam* (l), *ba'* (b), *ra'* (r), *dal* (d), and *mim* (m). These five rhyming letters are beautiful voice tunes in Arabic poetry, which al-Saruji needs to trick other characters. On the other hand, al-Saruji recites poems only once with the rhyming letters *hamza* (‘), *kha'* (kh), *ta'* (t), and *ghayn* (gh). Ibrahim Aneis notes that al-Hariri recited more or fewer poems with particular rhyming letters not only because they are easy or have a strong sound, but also because they imitate the number of rhyming letter words in Arabic poetry. Aneis gives an example of the letter *dal* (d), which Arabic poets frequently recite in their poems, although ordinary people do not typically use it.<sup>346</sup>

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<sup>346</sup>Ibrahim Aneis, *Musiqa al-Shi'r* [“Poetry Music”] (Cairo, Egypt: Maktabat al-Anglo al-Masriyyah, 1970).

## Chapter 3. Community Issues in al-Hariri's Poems

### Introduction

The *Maqamat al-Hariri* has two main focuses: *kudya* (begging) and *wa'z* (preaching). Al-Hariri chose both to address the political, social, religious, and economic issues of his time. Although the political systems were weak in the tenth-century Islamic world, new literary genres appeared, including the *maqama* genre. Political events of al-Hariri's time, which appear in some of his *maqamat*, include the Christian Crusades against the Muslims. Al-Hariri also dealt with two of the main social topics of his day: drinking wine and homosexuality. Furthermore, al-Hariri preached to different audiences: (1) rulers, ordinary people, and himself; (2) individuals concerned with death; and (3) seniors.

The last ten *maqamat* that al-Hariri wrote represent the psychological aspects of his poetry, which may relate to criticism he received in Baghdad that led him to prove his eloquence and linguistic ability.

Al-Hariri addressed the issues of the society of his day in a realistic manner. Since realistic literature is related to religious, economic, and political factors, al-Hariri displayed a preference for discussing the events and facts of his society through the *kudya* form. By interacting with the literature of his time, al-Hariri expressed his own vision and, in so doing, revealed how close he was to the issues of the society in which he lived. He expressed his thoughts in the context of the *maqama* genre, including both poetry and prose. *Kudya* is not only revealed through ordinary people, but even more so when it affects writers and poets.



## Political Highlights of the Abbasid Caliphate

The study of psychological, religious, and social factors in the context of the time and place of the poetry of the *Maqamat al-Hariri* naturally leads to a discussion of the social and political life in its various forms. This also helps us to understand al-Hariri's decisions with respect to including certain factors in his poetry and prose.

Abbasid Caliphs ruled the Islamic world for five centuries, during which there were many political and social events, which have led some historians to divide the Abbasid period according to the dominant political and social characteristics of each era.<sup>347</sup> Some historians consider the Abbasid Caliphate one unbroken period, whereas others divide it into four separate eras.

Among the latter group of historians, the first Abbasid era is considered to coincide roughly with the period between the establishment of the Abbasid Caliphate and the succession of al-Mutawakkil (822–861 A.D.). This was an era of seven powerful Caliphs, including al-Mansur (714–775 A.D.) and Harun al-Rashid (766–809 A.D.).

The second Abbasid era spans the period between the al-Mutawakkil Caliphate and the establishment of the Buyid Dynasty (934–1062 A.D.). The Turks ruled over the Abbasid Caliphs, including al-Mutawakkil. The Caliphs of this period became weaker than the Caliphs in the first period.

The third Abbasid era extends from the establishment of the Buyid Dynasty to the fall of Baghdad to the Seljuk Empire (1037–1194 A.D.). During this era, there was political, social, and economic deterioration.

The fourth Abbasid era lasted from the fall of Baghdad to the Seljuk Empire in 1037 A.D. to the fall of Baghdad to the Mongols in 1258 A.D. Historians regard this as a weak period when

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<sup>347</sup>The Abbasid Caliphate lasted from the eighth to the thirteenth century A.D.

Caliphs only had the name and did not actually rule.

The Abbasid Caliphate was strong in the beginning, but weak by the end.<sup>348</sup> This reality is important for understanding the *maqamat* genre in general and the poetry of the *Maqamat al-Hariri* in particular.

The Abbasid Caliph ruled the empire at the beginning of the Abbasid Caliphate, but was only a figurehead by the end, under the control of the Caliph's soldiers and princes. Two states shared power from the middle of the tenth century to the end of the eleventh century: the Buyid Dynasty and the Seljuk Empire.

During this era, the influence of the Buyid Dynasty mixed with the influence of the Seljuk Empire. The Buyid Dynasty tended to be Shi'a<sup>349</sup> and was supported by the Persians, whereas the Seljuk Empire tended to be Sunni<sup>350</sup> and was supported by people of Turkish ethnicity. The two rules were quite different, but they both mistreated the Caliphs because they wanted total control over the laws. In his book *Shadharat al-Dhahab fi Akhbar man Dhahab*, Ibn al-Imad al-Hanbali (1623–1679 A.D.)<sup>351</sup> tells a sad story in which Baha' al-Dawla (971–1012 A.D.), who is a Buyid leader, turns against the Abbasid Caliph al-Ta'i (932–1003 A.D.) by tearing out his eyes and cutting off one of his ears. In addition, al-Suyuti (1445–1505 A.D.), in his book *Tarikh al-Khalafa'* ("The History of Caliphate"),<sup>352</sup> tells stories of various mistreatments of the Caliphs by the foreign rulers.

These mistreatments led to political corruption by the leaders and an overall weakness of

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<sup>348</sup>Mohammed Khafaji, *Al-Hyat al-Adabiyyah fi al-Asr al-Abbasi* ["Literary Life in the Abbasid Era"] (Alexandria, Egypt: al-Wafa Publisher, 2004).

<sup>349</sup>Shi'a is one of the two main groups of Islam. Shi'ites believe that Ali ibn Abi Talib (601–661 A.D.) was the Prophet Muhammad's successor.

<sup>350</sup>Sunni is the other main group of Islam. Sunnis, who constitute the largest denomination of Islam, believe that Abu Bakr (573–634 A.D.) was the first Caliph after the death of the Prophet Muhammad.

<sup>351</sup>Ibn al-Imad al-Hanbali, *Shadharat al-Dhahab fi Akhbar man Dhahab* (Beirut, Lebanon: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, n.d.)

<sup>352</sup>Jalal al-Din al-Suyuti, *Tarikh al-Khalafa'* ["The History of Caliphate"] (Beirut, Lebanon: Dar Sader, 1997).

the Caliphate. Therefore, the relationship between the leader and his people was fraught with instability. However, when the people became rebellious, the leaders did not take them seriously, since they did not want to destroy the land, thereby dismantling the entire Caliphate. Ignored by the Caliphate leadership, some people responded by forming gangs that committed crimes and perpetrated injustices against the public, who had to live under a reign of terror. For example, the gangs demanded that the public pay taxes in order to live safely, and the public regarded this as extortion. Some individuals became thieves in order to steal back what the leaders had stolen from them. While the police initially tried to control the thievery, they eventually joined with the bands of thieves in rebellion. Thus, the thieves achieved a higher societal status through their boldness and violence, daring to steal higher positions of employment without fear of the state.

### **Social Descriptions**

Pakzad and Panahi state that the *Maqamat al-Hariri* not only possesses stylistic beauty and educational qualities, but also provides a window into the social life of the Arab world during the Middle Ages.<sup>353</sup> In the previous political section, readers can see clearly that the ruling class was weak and unable to control the public, which raises the question of how people could live in such a difficult political climate. The public was confused because of its lack of safety and stability. Most people were very poor. Misrule led to the uneven distribution of wealth among the upper and lower classes. It is hard to find a middle class during this time.<sup>354</sup> Al-Imad al-Hanbli in *Shadharat al-Dhahab* writes that when Fakhr al-Dawla (952–997 A.D.), who was a Buyid ruler, died, he left behind a lot of money, silver, and jewels, but his people were poor.

<sup>353</sup>Zahra Pakzad and Mahboube Panahi, “Social Criticism in Hariri’s *Maqamat* with a Focus on al-Wasiti’s Miniature Paintings,” *Asian Social Science*, vol. 12, no. 12, 2016, 82–89.

<sup>354</sup>In *al-Asr al-Abbasi al-Thani* (Cairo, Egypt: Dar al-Ma’arf, 1980), Shawqi Daif states that there were three classes during the Abbasid Caliphate: the higher, middle, and lower classes. However, the middle class had a little wealth as the lower class, since the higher class owned all the property.

This was not the fault of Fakhr al-Dawla alone; most rulers at that time chose to spend lavishly while their people suffered, eating dead animals and cadavers. Goods were expensive, and people became sick due to malnutrition, from which many of them died, as Ibn al-Athir (1160–1233 A.D.) describes in his book *al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh* (“The Complete History”).<sup>355</sup>

During this painful period, there were many beggars (*ahl al-kudya*, or *mukdyn*). Abdel Hady Harb notes that there were *mukdyn* in public during the pre-Islamic period, but the difference is that during the Abbasid Caliphate the *mukdyn* were scholars, authors, and thinkers.<sup>356</sup> *Mukdyn* asked people for money or food in exchange for knowledge. Although the beggars were poor, they were dangerous because they did not care about customs, laws, traditions, or religion. Al-Tabari (839–923 A.D.) states that beggars in Baghdad hurt and robbed people and often became bandits. They also kidnapped women and children. When they asked people for money, they usually killed them if they did not get it.<sup>357</sup>

Although the corruption of the political and social systems led to the appearance of beggars, Abdel Hady Harb states there was another reason for their appearance: Arabs lived with non-Arabs in different areas, including Persia, Turkey, and Iraq, so blood and ideas were mixed during this era. Arabs did not like to ask others for money or food out of fear of losing their dignity, but they learned how to beg from these other people.

*Maqamat* in general and the *Maqamat al-Hariri* in particular were representations of the political and social life during that time, and they constitute important documentary evidence of how people lived and thought during that era.

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<sup>355</sup>Ali ‘Izz al-Din ibn al-Athir al-Jazari, *Al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh* [“The Complete History”] edited Omar Abdelsalam Tadmoury (Damascus, Syria: Dar al-Kitab al-Arabi, n.d.).

<sup>356</sup>Abdel Hady Harb, *Musu’at Adab al-Ihtiyal* [“Encyclopedia of Trickster Literature”] (Damascus: Syria: Dar al-Takwin, 2008).

<sup>357</sup>Ibn Jarir al-Tabari, *Tarikh al-Umam wa al-Muluk* [“History of the Nations and Kings”] edited Muhammad Abu al-Fadl Ibrahim (Beirut, Lebanon: 1967).

## ***Kudya* (Begging)**

Some Arab scholars, such as Harb, Abdul Ghani, and al-Hussein, have defined *kudya* as asking people for money or food by using dramatic movements and behaviors, including juggling and acting as impostors.<sup>358</sup> Harb believes that *kudya* can be found in any community in which wealth is not equitably divided. Although *Kudya* existed before al-Hariri's time, it flourished during the writing of the *maqamat*, especially the *Maqamat al-Hariri*.

The *Kudya* role in the *Maqamat al-Hariri* was played by Abu Zayd al-Saruji, the protagonist of the *maqamat*. However, he sometimes requires help in the *maqamat*, including from his wife and sons, especially when he wants to trick other characters.

Al-Saruji complains about the time in which he lives, hoping that people will reward him with food or money.<sup>359</sup> He cries about the injustice of his era, which humiliated him. In “*al-Maqamah al-Kherejyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Kerej”), he speaks as follows:

O people, nothing can announce to you my poverty  
More truly than this, my nakedness in the season of cold.  
So from my outward misery, judge ye  
The inward of my condition, and what is hidden of my state.  
And beware a change in the truce of fortune:  
For know that once I was illustrious in rank,  
I have command of plenty, and of a blade that severed;  
My yellow coins served my friends, my lances destroyed my foes;  
My humped camels mourned the morning that I made the feast.  
But afterward the time bared the swords of perfidy,  
And spread forth the squadrons of dark afflictions,  
And ceased not to tear and wear me;  
Until my habitation was razed, and my milk-flow decayed,  
And my price and my song went down among men,  
And I became the lean beast of poverty and need,  
Naked of back, stripped of my covering,

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<sup>358</sup>See Abdel Hady Harb, *Musu'at Adab al-Ihtiyal*, Hassan Abdul Ghani, *Dhaherat al-Kudya fi al-Adab al-Arabi* [“*Kudya* Phenomenon in Arabic Literature”] (Cairo, Egypt: Maktabat al-Zahra', 1991), and Ahmad al-Hussein, *Adab al-Kudya fi al-Asr al-Abbasi* [“*Kudya* Literature in the Abbasid Era”] (Damascus, Syria: Dar Batra, 1999).

<sup>359</sup>Jaakko Hameen-Anttila, *Maqama: A History of a Genre*. Helsinki, Finland: University of Helsinki Press, 2002.

As though I were a spindle in nakedness.  
No warming is mine in Sinn and Sinnabar,  
Save to stand in the sun, or get a heat at the coals.  
Now is there any who is a deep sea of bounty, lord of an ample robe,  
Who will cloak me either with embroidered garment or ragged coat,  
Seeking the face of God, and not my thanks?<sup>360</sup>

The *mukdy*'s fear about how to feed his children is obvious in al-Saruji's poetry. He recites the following lines in "*al-Maqamah al-Dimashgiyyah*" ("The *Maqama* of Damascus"):

I am the novelty of the time, the wonder of nations;  
I am the wily one, who plays his wiles among Arabs and foreigners;  
But not the less a brother of need, whom fortune vexes and wrongs,  
And the father of children who lie out like meat on the tray:  
Now the brother of want, who has a household, is not blamed if he be wily.<sup>361</sup>

Al-Saruji wants to get a reward by asking people to help him take care of his children. In "*al-Maqamah al-Baghdadiyyah*" ("The *Maqama* of Baghdad"), he speaks as follows:

I complain to God, with the complaining of the sick, against the trouble of the unjust, the hateful time.  
O friends, I am of people who prospered a long time, while the eyelid of fortune

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<sup>360</sup>Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, trans Thomas Chenery (Edinburgh, Scotland: Williams and Norgate, 1867), vol. 1, p. 254:

يا قوم لا بينبئكم عن فقري\*\*\*أصدق من عربي أو ان القر  
فاعتبروا بما بدا من ضري\*\*\*باطن حالي وخفي أمري  
وحاذروا انقلاب سلم الدهر\*\*\*فإنني كنت نبيه القدر  
أوي إلى وفر وحد يفري\*\*\*تفيد صفري وتبيد سمري  
وتشكي كومي غداة أقري\*\*\*فجرد الدهر سيوف الغدر  
وشن غارات الرزايا الغبر\*\*\*ولم يزل يسحتني ويبري  
حتى عفت داري وغاض دري\*\*\*وبار سعري في الوري وشعري  
وصرت نضو فاقة وعسر\*\*\*عاري المطا مجردا من قشري  
كأنني المغزل في التعري\*\*\*لا دفء لي في الصن والصنبر  
غير التضحي واصطلاء الجمر\*\*\*فهل خضم ذو رداء غمر  
يسترنني بمطرف أو طمر\*\*\*طلاب وجه الله لا لشكري

<sup>361</sup>Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 1, pp. 174–175:

أنا أطروفة الزما\*\*\*ن وأعجوبة الأمم  
وأنا الحول الذي احد\*\*\*تال في العرب والعجم  
غير أني ابن حاجة\*\*\*هاضه الدهر فاهتضم  
وأبو صبية بدوا\*\*\*مثل لحم على وضم  
وأخو العيلة المعيب\*\*\*ل إذا احتال لم يلم

was cast down before them:  
 Their glory there was none to forbid, and their fame was spread abroad among men.  
 When foraging failed in the ashy year they were a goodly meadow:  
 Their fires were kindled to the travelers, and they fed the guest with fresh meat:  
 Their neighbor passed not his night in hunger nor through fear did he say,  
 “Choking hinders me.”  
 But the changes of destruction have made their seas of bounty to sink away from them, which I thought not would ever sink:  
 And put away from among them, into the bowels of the earth, those that were lions of guarding, healers of the sick.  
 That on which I carry is now my back, after being my beast, and my home is in the hollow, after being on the height.  
 My little ones fail not to mourn their misery, of which there is some flash every day.  
 When the pious man prays to his Lord by night, they also call Him with gushing tears.  
 O Thou who feedest the young raven in the nest, and settest the bone which is broken, and again broken;  
 Appoint to us, O God, one whose honor is pure and washed from the filth of blame;  
 Who will quench for us the fire of hunger, though only with a mess of the sour milk or the butter milk.  
 Now is there any who will remove what is come upon us, and make prize of thanks long and large?  
 For, by Him to whom the forelocks shall bow down in the day when the faces of the assemblage shall be black and white.  
 Were it not for these, my cheek would not expose itself, nor would I assay to the stringing of verse.<sup>362</sup>

<sup>362</sup>Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 1, pp. 178–179:

أشكو إلى الله اشتكاء المريض\*\*\*ريب الزمان المتعدي البغيض  
 يا قوم إني من أناس غنوا\*\*\*دهراً وجفن الدهر عنهم غضيض  
 فخارهم ليس له دافع\*\*\*وصيتهم بين الوري مستقيض  
 كانوا إذا ما نجعة أعوزت\*\*\*في السنة الشهباء روضاً أريض  
 تشب للسارين نيرانهم\*\*\*ويطعمون الضيف لحماً غريض  
 ما بات جار لهم ساغياً\*\*\*ولا لروع قال حال الجريض  
 فغيضت منهم صروف الردى\*\*\*بحار جود لم نخلها تغيض  
 وأودعت منهم بطون الثرى\*\*\*أسد التحامي وأساة المريض  
 فمحملي بعد المطايا المطا\*\*\*ومطني بعد النفاع الحضيض  
 وأفرخي ما تاتلي تشنكي\*\*\*بؤساً له في كل يوم وميض  
 إذا دعا القانت في ليله\*\*\*مولاه نادوه بدمع يفيض  
 يا رازق النعاب في عشه\*\*\*وجابر العظم الكسير المهيض  
 أتج لنا اللهم من عرضه\*\*\*من دنس الذم نقي رحيض  
 يطفئ نار الجوع عنا ولو\*\*\*بمذقة من حازر أو مخيض  
 فهل فتى يكشف ما نابهم\*\*\*ويغنم الشكر الطويل العريض  
 فالذي يعنو النواصي له\*\*\*يوم وجوه الجمع سود وبيض  
 لولاهم لم تبد لي صفحة\*\*\*ولا تصدبت لنظم القريض

The *mukdy* has three claims he wants from his *kudya*: (1) food, (2) clothing, and (3) shelter.<sup>363</sup> In his poetry and prose, al-Saruji asks about these items frequently, sometimes painfully and sometimes comically, as when he talks about his feeling of hunger being like a burning fire in his belly and his children's bellies:

Who will quench for us the fire of hunger, though only with a mess of the sour  
milk or the butter milk<sup>364</sup>

The second item that the *mukdy* wants, and which al-Saruji fights to get, is clothing, or at least something to cover his body and protect him from the cold winter. In “*al-Maqamah al-Kherejiyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Kerej”), al-Saruji recites the following lines:

Well done he who has clothed me with a fur coat, which shall be my protection  
from shivering!  
He has clothed me with it, preserving my heart's blood; may he be preserved  
from the harm of men and Jinn!  
Today he shall deck himself with my praise; tomorrow he shall be decked with  
the silk of paradise.<sup>365</sup>

In the same *maqama*, al-Saruji proves his poverty by not wearing *any* clothes:

No warming is mine in Sinn and Sinnabar.<sup>366</sup>

Abdul Ghani thinks that the *mukdy* suffers to get clothes, just as he suffers to get food, and his clothes are usually stained, ripped, and ragged.

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<sup>363</sup> Abdul Ghani, *Kudya Phenomena*.

<sup>364</sup> Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 1, p. 179:

يطفى نار الجوع عنا ولو \*\*\*بمذقة من حازر أو مخيض

<sup>365</sup> Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 1, p. 256:

لله من ألبسني فروة \*\*\*أضحت من الرعدة لي جنه  
ألبسنيها واقياً مهجتي \*\*\*وفي شر الإنس والجن  
سيكتسي اليوم ثنائي وفي \*\*\*غد سيكسى سندس الجنه

<sup>366</sup> Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 1, p. 254:

كأنني المغزل في التعري \*\*\*لا دفء لي في الصن والصنبر



The third item that the *mukdy* seeks is shelter, since he is homeless thanks to wars or poverty. Al-Saruji justifies his travels, which are necessitated by homelessness, in “*al-Maqamah al-Wabariyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of the Tent-dwellers”):

Say to him, who would look into the inward state of my affair, thou shalt meet at my hands with all honor and regard.  
I am roving from land to land, a night-traveler from one trackless desert to the other.  
The chase yields me food, the sandal is my riding-beast, all my equipment the wallet and the ferruled staff.  
If I chance to alight in a city, my abode is the garret of the hostelry, and my boon-companion a scroll.  
There is nothing mine, that I miss when it is gone, or fret about when the vicissitudes [wiles] of time rob me thereof;  
Save that I pass my night free from concern, and my mind has severed partnership with sorrow.  
I sleep at night the fill of my eyelids and my heart is cool of burning grief and anxiety;  
I reckon not from what cup I sip, and sip again, or what is the sweetness that comes from the bitter-sweet;  
No, not I, though I allow me not abasement to become an easy road to bounties;  
For if an object of desire dons the raiment of shame, out on him who courts a gift,  
And whenever a wretch inclines to baseness, my nature shrinks from his fashion and inclining.  
Death for me, no base deed, mount the bier liefer, than embark in villainy.<sup>367</sup>

Al-Saruji refers to the Christian Crusades against the Muslims, especially in his homeland of Saruj. For example, in “*al-Maqamah al-Meccayyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Mecca”), al-Saruji

<sup>367</sup> Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 2, p. 4:

قل لمستطلع دخيلة أمري\*\*\*ك عندني كرامة وعزازه  
أنا ما بين جوب أرض فأرض\*\*\*وسرى في مفازة فمفازة  
زادي الصيد والمطية نعلي\*\*\*وجهازي الجراب والعكازه  
فإذا ما هبطت مصراً فبيتي\*\*\*غرفة الخان والنديم جزازه  
ليس لي ما أساء إن فاتت أو أحزن\*\*\*إن حاول الزمان ابتزازة  
غير أني أبيت خلواً من الهم\*\*\*ونقسي عن الأسى منجازه  
أرقد الليل ملء جفني وقلبي\*\*\*بارد من حرارة وحزازه  
لا أبالي من أي كأس تفوقت\*\*\*ولا ما حلوة من مزازه  
لا ولا أستجيز أن أجعل الذل\*\*\*مجازاً إلى تسني إجازة  
وإذا مطلب كسا حلة العا\*\*\*ر فيعداً لمن يروم نجازة  
ومتى اهتز للدناءة نكس\*\*\*عاف طبعي طباعه واهتزازة  
فالمنايا ولا الدنيايا وخير\*\*\*من ركوب الخنا ركوب الجنازة

recites the following political lines:

Seruj is my dwelling; but how to make way to it!  
For enemies have encamped in it, and marred it.  
Now by the House to which I have journeyed to lay down my sins in it,  
Nought has pleased my eye since I have left the bounds of Seruj.<sup>368</sup>

Al-Hariri often recites poems through the mouth of his protagonist, Abu Zayd al-Saruji. In describing this class of *mukdyn*, he conveys an image of people's lives that mimics his own personal reality. Although al-Hariri was not himself a *mukdy*, readers of his *maqamat* can perceive the realism and honesty of his work.

### Commentary on Immorality

Immorality, or the perception of immorality, was another hallmark of al-Hariri's works. Among Islamic cities, Baghdad was particularly notorious for being a place of immorality and sinfulness during al-Hariri's time. Several famous poets were regarded as specialists on the topic of immorality, including Bashir ibn Burd (714–784 A.D.) and Abu Nuwas (756–814 A.D.). Their favorite topics included drinking wine and homosexuality. Al-Hariri recites poems about some of these topics in his *maqamat*, typically in a funny way that avoids pornographic descriptions, since he considered himself a religious scholar. These poems serve as a form of documentation of the Islamic community and its ethical beliefs during al-Hariri's time.

### Drinking Wine

Shawqi Daif discusses the spread of wine-drinking during the Abbasid Caliphate. Evidently, even the Caliphs drank wine and invited guests to drink with them. Therefore, some

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<sup>368</sup>Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 1, p. 155:

سروج داري ولكن\*\*\*كيف السبيل إليها  
وقد أناخ الأعداء\*\*\*بها وأخنوا عليها  
فوالتي سرت أبغي\*\*\*حط الذنوب لديها  
ما راق طرفي شيء\*\*\*مذ غبت عن طرفيها

religious scholars in Iraq started to allow drinking certain kinds of wine, including date wine, raisin wine, honey wine, and fig wine, which led more people to start drinking these type of wines. In “*al-Maqamah al-Dimashgiyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Damascus”), al-Saruji asserts that one of the purposes of his travels is to attain sensory pleasure, including through drinking wine:

I cling to journeying, I cross deserts, I loathe pride that I may cull joy:  
And I plunge into floods, and tame steeds that I may draw the trains of pleasure  
and delight.  
And I throw away staidness, and sell my land, for the sipping of wine, for the  
quaffing of cups.  
And were it not for longing after the drinking of wine my mouth would not utter  
its elegancies;  
Nor would my craft have lured the travellers to the land of Irak, through my  
carrying of rosaries.  
Now be not angry, nor cry aloud, nor chide, for my excuse is plain:  
And wonder not at an old man who settles himself in a well-filled house by a  
wine cask that is brimming.  
For truly wine strengthens the bones and heals sickness and drives away grief  
And the purest of joy is when the grave man throws off the veils of shame and  
flings them aside:  
And the sweetest of passion is when the love-crazed ceases from the concealing  
of his love, and shows it openly.  
Then avow thy love and cool thy heart: or else the fire-staff of thy grief will rub  
a spark on it;  
And heal thy wounds, and draw out thy cares by the daughter of the vine, her  
the desired:  
And assign to thy evening draught a cup-bearer who will stir the torment of  
desire when she gazes;  
And a singer who will raise such a voice that the mountains of iron shall thrill at  
it when she chants.  
And rebel against the adviser who will not permit thee to approach a beauty  
when she consents.  
And range in thy cunning even to perverseness; and care not what is said of  
thee, and catch what suits thee:  
And leave thy father if he refuse thee, and spread thy nets and hunt who comes  
by thee.  
But be sincere with thy friend, and avoid the niggardly, and bestow kindness,  
and be constant in gifts;  
And take refuge in repentance before thy departure; for whoso knocks at the

door of the Merciful causes it to open.<sup>369</sup>

Al-Saruji believes that drinking wine is a relief to the soul and a strengthener of the body. Given these supposed benefits, he makes drinking wine one of his most important aims. He continues to explain this philosophy in “*al-Maqamah al-Tanisiyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Tanis”):

Drive cask and care away with wine unalloyed, and cheer thy heart, not pining  
with fretful grief,  
And say to him who blames thee for warding off the pang of pain: “Enough of  
thee, get thee gone!”<sup>370</sup>

This is an inspiration that wine soothes what people have suffered, since wine is “warding off the pang of pain.” The words *drive* (*asrf*),<sup>371</sup> *cheer* (*rawh*),<sup>372</sup> and *not pining with fretful grief* (*la takta 'ib*)<sup>373</sup> suggest that wine drives out life’s pain. Al-Saruji inspires those who blame him for drinking wine to stop blaming him.

Al-Hariri presents his own community in his *maqamat*, and his poetry reflects the reality of

<sup>369</sup>Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 1, pp. 173-174:

لزمتم السفار وجببت الفقار \*\*\* وعفت النفار لأجني الفرح  
وخضبت السيول ورضت الخيول \*\*\* لجر ذبول الصبا والمرح  
ومطت الوقار وبعثت العقار \*\*\* لحسو العقار ورشف القدح  
ولو لا الطماح إلى شرب راح \*\*\* لما كان باح فمي بالملح  
ولا كان ساق دهاني الرفاق \*\*\* لأرض العراق بحمل السبح  
فلا تغضين ولا تصخين \*\*\* ولا تعبين فعذري وضح  
ولا تعجين لشيخ أين \*\*\* بمغنى أغن وذن طفح  
فإن المدام تقوي العظام \*\*\* وتشفي السقام وتنفي الترح  
وأصفي السرور إذا ما الوقور \*\*\* أماط ستور الحيا واطرح  
وأحلى الغرام إذا المستهام \*\*\* أزال اكتتام الهوى وافتضح  
فبح بهواك وبرد حشاك \*\*\* فز ند أساك به قد قدح  
وداو الكلوم وسل الهموم \*\*\* بينت الكروم التي تقترح  
وخص الغبوق بساق يسوق \*\*\* بلاء المشوق إذا ما طمح  
وشاد يشيد بصوت تميد \*\*\* جبال الحديد له إن صدح  
وعاص النصيح الذي لا يبيح \*\*\* وصال المليح إذا ما سمح  
وجل في المحال ولو بالمحال \*\*\* ودع ما ييقال وخذ ما صلح

<sup>370</sup>Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 2, p. 112:

اصرف بصرف الراح عنك الأسى \*\*\* وروح القلب ولا تكتنب  
وقل لمن لامك في ما به \*\*\* فدفع عنك الهم قدك آتنب

<sup>371</sup>اصرف

<sup>372</sup>روح

<sup>373</sup>لا تكتنب

their lives in some detail.

### Homosexuality

Although *kudya* is the main focus of the *Maqamat al-Hariri*, immoral topics are frequently discussed, including the topic of homosexuality. Awareness of homosexuality came to Muslims during the Abbasid Caliphate from overlapping outside civilizations. In “*al-Maqamah al-Rahabiyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Rabah”), al-Saruji goes to a homosexual judge who is attracted to al-Saruji’s young son:

Tell the Governor whom I have left, after my departure, repenting, grieving,  
biting his hands,  
That the old man has stolen his money and the young one his heart; and he is  
scorched in the flame of a double regret.  
He was generous with his coin (عين) when love blinded his eye (عين), and he  
has ended with losing either (عين).  
Calm thy grief, O afflicted, for it profits not to seek the traces after the  
substance is gone.  
But if what has befallen thee is terrible to thee as the ill-fate of Al-Hosayn is  
terrible to the Moslems;  
Yet hast thou gotten in exchange for it understanding and caution; and the wise  
man, the prudent, wishes for these.  
So henceforth resist desires, and know that the chasing of gazelles is not easy;  
No, nor does every bird enter the springe, even though it be surrounded by  
silver.  
And how many a one who seeks to make a prey becomes a prey himself, and  
meets with nought but the shoes of Honayn!  
Now consider well, and forecast not every thundercloud: many a thundercloud  
may have in it the bolts of death:  
And cast down thine eye, that thou mayest rest from a passion by which thou  
wouldest clothe thyself with the garment of infamy and disgrace.  
For the trouble of man is the flowing of the soul’s desire; and the seed of desire  
is the longing look of the eye.<sup>374</sup>

<sup>374</sup>Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 1, pp. 161–163:

قل لو ال غادرته بعد بيني\*\*\*سادماً نادماً بعض اليبدين  
سلب الشيخ ماله وفتاه\*\*\*ليه فاصطلى لظى حسرتين  
جاد بالعين حين أعمى هواه\*\*\*عينه فاننتى بلا عينين  
خفض الحزن يا معنى فما يجـ\*\*\*دي طلاب الأثار من بعد عين  
ولئن جل ما عراك كما جـ\*\*\*يل لدى المسلمين رزء الحسين  
فقد اعتضت منه فهماً وحزماً\*\*\*والليبب الأريب بيغي ذين  
فاعص من بعدها المطامع واعلم\*\*\*أن صيد الظباء ليس بهين  
لا ولا كل طائر يلج الفخـ\*\*\*خ ول كان محدقاً باللجين

Homosexuality is not only found among common people, but also among the elite and higher classes.

### Religious Content and Context

The Abbasid Caliphate contained many contradictions, including good and evil, and wealth and poverty. Therefore, there was a mix of people who drank wine, engaged in homosexuality, and led deeply religious lives. The mixing of Arab customs with other foreign customs, including Persian and Turkish traditions, was the major reason for some of society's issues during al-Hariri's time. Also, there were some rich people among the higher classes who were possibly corrupted by their wealth, leading them to abandon religion and engage in wine-drinking and homosexuality. Such a lifestyle led some people in the opposite direction, *zuhd* (asceticism), where they found a safer mode of living. According to Ahmad Amin, people choose asceticism because they believe that life is unfair, they fail to find anything to love, and they fear hell and Judgment Day.<sup>375</sup> In addition, Young thinks that the religious content, including preaching, is one of the two main focuses of the writer of the *maqama* genre.<sup>376</sup>

Al-Hariri included a significant amount of preaching in his *maqamat*; and in some cases, he used preaching as an organizing device for the poetry. Six *maqamat* out of fifty focus on preaching: (1) *maqama* #1, “*al-Maqamah al-San’aniyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of San’a”); (2) *maqama* #11, “*al-Maqamah al-Saweiyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Saweh”); (3) *maqama* #21, “*al-Maqamah al-Raziyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Rayy al-Mahdiyeh”); (4) *maqama* #31, “*al-*

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ولكم من سعى ليصطاد فاصط\*\*\*يد ولم يلقَ غير خفي حنين  
فتبصر ولا تشم كل برق\*\*\*رب برق فيه صواعق حين  
واغضض الطرف تسترح من غرام\*\*\*تكتسي فيه ثوب ذل وشين  
فبلاء الفتى اتباع هوى النفس\*\*\*س وبدر الهوى طموح العين

<sup>375</sup>Ahmad Amin, *Dhuha al-Islam* [“The Morning of Islam”] (Beirut, Lebanon: Dar al-Kitab al-Arabi, 2005).

<sup>376</sup>Douglas C. Young, *Rogues and Genres: Generic Transformation in the Spanish Picaresque and Arabic Maqama*. Newark, DE: Juan de la Cuesta-Hispanic Monographs, 2004.

*Maqamah al-Ramliyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Ramlah”); (5) *maqama* #41 “*al-Maqamah al-Tanisiyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Tunisia”); and (6) *maqama* #50, “*al-Maqamah al-Basriyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Basra”). The author carefully organized the *maqamat*, dividing them into five parts. Furthermore, each part includes ten *maqamat*, beginning with a preaching *maqama*.<sup>377</sup>

This list does not imply that preaching is limited to these six *maqamat*. Preaching can be found in other *maqamat* as well, but these six contain specific preaching poems. Preaching prose can be found in other *maqamat*, whether the aim of the *maqama* is trickery, mockery, or didacticism.

Preaching is one of the literary styles that al-Hariri uses in his *maqamat*. Such preaching may partly be a reflection of his personal religious beliefs, suggesting his own religious vision for society. Additionally, many of his *maqamat* should be considered part of the didactic genre. Like many writers of his time, al-Hariri believed that people need preachers to help them return to religious practices. Like other preachers of his day, al-Hariri reminded people of Judgment Day, while emphasizing that each person must choose his or her own path. Some people only want to get a reward, while others are truly religious.<sup>378</sup> Al-Saruji addressed his preaching to various audiences: (1) the ruler, the people, and himself; (2) persons concerned with death; and (3) seniors.

### **Preaching to the Ruler, the People, and Himself**

In “*al-Maqamah al-Raziyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Rayy al-Mahdiyyeh”), al-Harith sees al-Saruji preaching to a crowd and listens to him. Al-Saruji then turns to the ruler and reminds

<sup>377</sup>Shawqi Daif, *Al-Maqamah* [“The *Maqama*”] Cairo, Egypt: Al-Ma’arf House, 1954, and Abdelfattah Kilito, *Al-Maqamat: Al-Sard wa al-Ansaq al-Thaqafiyah* [“The *Maqamat*: The Narration and Cultural Patterns”], trans Abdulkabir al-Sharqawi (Casablanca, Morocco: Toubkal Publishing Press, 2001).

<sup>378</sup>Youssef Noor Awadh, *Fan al-Maqamat bin al-Mashriq wa al-Maghrib* [“*Maqamat* Genre between the East and the West”] (Amman, Jordan: Maktabat al-Talib al-Jami’I, 1986).

him that people have rights, encouraging him to judge with justice:

Wonderful! a man hoping to attain to rule; and then when he attains to his desire  
he wrongs;  
He weaves warp and woof in tyrannies; now lapping at their well, now bidding  
others to lap.  
Nor cares he, when he is following his desires in them, whether he maintains his  
religion or destroys it:  
Oh woe to him! If he knew well that there is no state but changes, surely he  
would not transgress;  
Oh if he saw clearly what is the repentance of him who inclines his hearing to  
the lie of informers, he would not incline it.  
But obey thou him in whose hand is the leading-cord; cast down thine eye if he  
neglect observance or speak vainly:  
And graze on bitter pasture when he calls thee to the grazing on it, and water at  
the salt well when he forbids thee the sweet.  
And bear his injury even though its touch afflicts thee, and pours out the flow of  
thy tears, nay exhausts it;  
For fortune shall give thee the laugh of him when it departs from him, and  
kindles for the ambush against him the fire of war.  
And it shall bring down on him exultation, when appears vacant of his office,  
emptied of it;  
And thou shalt be pitiful to him when his cheek lies soiled on the dust of shame.  
This is his fate: and then surely he shall one day stand in the place where even  
the master of eloquence shall be found a lisper:  
And he shall be gathered to judgment viler than the toad-stool of the plain; he  
shall be reckoned with for his shortcoming and excess:  
And he shall be chastised for that which he has committed, and for him whom  
he has chosen; he shall be demanded of for what he sipped and what he  
supped.  
And he shall be reckoned exactly with concerning small things, as he was wont  
to do with mankind, but more thoroughly.  
So that he shall bite his hand at his governing, and wish that he had not sought  
from it what he sought.<sup>379</sup>

<sup>379</sup> Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 1, pp. 226–227:

عجباً لراج أن ينال ولاية\*\*\*حتى إذا ما نال بغيته بغي  
يسدى ويلحم في المظالم والغا\*\*\*في وردها طوراً وطوراً مولعا  
ما إن يبالي حين يتبع الهوى\*\*\*فيها أصلح دينه أم أوتغا  
يا ويحه لو كان يوقن أنه\*\*\*ما حالة ألا تحول لما طغى  
أو لو تبين ما ندامة من صغا\*\*\*سمعا إلى إفك الوشاة لما صغا  
فانقد لمن أضحى الزمام بكفه\*\*\*وتغاض إن ألغى الرعاية أو لغا  
وارع المرار إذا دعاك لرعيه\*\*\*وردد الأجاج إذا حماك السبغا  
واحمل أذاه ولو أمضك مسه\*\*\*وأسال غرب الدمع منك وأفرغا  
فليضحكك الدهر منه إذا نيا\*\*\*عنه وشب لكيد نار الوغى  
ولينزلن به الشمام إذا بدا\*\*\*متخليا من شغله متقرغا  
ولتاوين له إذا ما خده\*\*\*أضحى على ترب الهوان ممرغا  
هذا له ولسوف يوقف موقفا\*\*\*فيه يرى رب الفصاحة أنثغا



When al-Saruji preaches to the rulers in “*al-Maqamah al-San’aniyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of San’a”), he recites the following lines:

Woe to him who seeks the world, and turns to it his careering:  
And recovers not from his greediness for it, and the excess of his love.  
Oh, if he were wise, but a drop of what he seeks would content him.<sup>380</sup>

In the previous lines, al-Saruji criticizes the rulers and people who only think about money. Al-Saruji denies their acts and solaces himself by reasoning that people only need a little money to live.

Moreover, al-Saruji preaches the importance of taking care of the human soul, since human acts start from there. In *Sura al-Shams* in the Qur’an, it is written: “By the soul that is well created, and was given the choice between right and wrong” (Surat 91, verse 7–8). Al-Saruji recites the following lines in “*al-Maqamah al-Ramliyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Ramlah”):

He who visits on the back of beasts is not like him who runs on foot,  
No, nor is the servant who obeys like him riots amongst servants.  
How, O people, should the toil be like, of him who builds and who pulls down!  
Sinners soon will have to call the mourning-women of repentance,  
While the seeker of approach to God says, “Hail to him who has done service.”  
Send then forward, I beseech thee, soul, deeds of acceptance with the Lords of  
old,  
Scorn the tinsel of this earthly life, for its existence is but naught,  
And remind thee of the throw of death, when unawares his stroke befalls,  
And bewail thy work of shame, forth shedding tears of blood for it,  
Curing it with sore repentance, before the hide all through is rotten.  
May then be, that Allah guard thee, against the fire that blazes fiercely,  
On the day when sin is cancelled no more, tardy repentance vain.<sup>381</sup>

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وليحشرن أدل من فقع الفلا\*\*\*ويحاسين على النقيصة والشغا  
ويؤاخذن بما اجتنبى ومن اجتنبى\*\*\*ويطالبن بما احتسى وبما ارتغى  
ويناقشن على الدقائق مثل ما\*\*\*قد كان يصنع بالورى بل أبلغا

<sup>380</sup> Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 1, pp. 110–111:

تباً لطالب دنيا\*\*\*تتى إليها انصبابه  
ما يستفبق غراماً\*\*\*بها وفرط صبابه  
ولو درى لكفاه\*\*\*مما يروم صبابه

<sup>381</sup> Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 2, p. 36:

Al-Saruji reminds the human soul of its fate, warning that it should do good work and stay away from life's pleasures. It must cry when it does a bad act, and God may then accept its repentance. In addition, al-Saruji preaches about the human soul, asking what happened to those who did not choose the right path. He speaks the following lines in “*al-Maqamah al-Basriyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Basra”):

Good-bye, my soul, to memories  
of vernal camps, and tryste therein,  
And fond farewell to trav'ler fair,  
yea, bid good-bye to them for aye,  
Bewail the time that passed away,  
    when thou hast blackened pages bright,  
And never ceased to steep thyself  
in deeds of shame and heinousness.  
How oft the night was spent by thee  
in sins that none afore has dared,  
From lust, indulged without restraint  
on wanton couch, in chamber stil  
How often spedst thou on thy steps  
to unheard-of depravity,  
And brokest repentance, slowly vowed,  
in swift forgetting sport and play;  
How often madest thou bold, O slave,  
against the Lord of heavens high,  
Not heeding Him and proving false,  
ay, false to thy pretended faith;  
How often flungst thou, like a shoe  
outworn, aside His stern command,  
Ungrateful for His benefits

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ليس من زار راكباً\*\*\*مثل ساع على تلقدك  
لا ولا خادم أطا\*\*\*ع كعاص من الخدم  
كيف يا قوم يستوي\*\*\*سعي بان ومن هدم  
سيعقيم المفروطو\*\*\*ن غدا ماتم الندم  
ويقول الذي تقه\*\*\*رب طوبى لمن خدم  
ويك يا نفس قدمي\*\*\*صالحا عند ذي القدم  
وازدري زخرف الحيا\*\*\*ة فوجدانه عدم  
واذكري مصرع الحما\*\*\*م إذا خطبه صدم  
واندبي فعلك القبي\*\*\*ح وسحي له بدم  
وادبغيه بتوبة\*\*\*قيل أن يحلم الأدم  
فعسى الله أن يقب\*\*\*ك السعير الذي احتدم  
يوم لا عثرة تقا\*\*\*ل ولا ينفع السدم

and reckless of His tardy wrath,  
How often, running pleasure's course,  
and glibly speaking lies prepense,  
Wast thou neglecting carelessly  
the duties of His covenant.  
So don the garb of penitence,  
and shower tears of blood, before  
Thy foot commits a fatal slip,  
before thy fall has come to pass;  
Humbly confess thy sins and fly  
for refuge where the guilty flies;  
Resist thy lewd propensities  
and turn from them with purpose firm.  
How long in thoughtlessness and sloth  
wilt thou let drift life's better part,  
To what brings loss as only gain,  
and never check'st thy mad career.  
Perceivest thou not the mingled hue  
that streaks with hoary lines thy head,  
Yet he whose ringlets blend with grey  
is warned of his approaching death.  
Woe thee, my soul, redemption seek,  
obey, be true, be well advised,  
Take warning from those gone before,  
in generations passed away,  
And fear the stealing on of fate,  
be wary, lest thou be deceived.  
Walk in the path of rectitude,  
for swift, remember, comes thy doom:  
To-morrow will thy dwelling be  
the bottom of a lonely grave,  
Alas, that house of sore dismay,  
that station, waste, disconsolate,  
That goal of pilgrims of long syne,  
of countless pilgrims yet to come,  
A house whose inmate will be seen  
encompassed, after ample space,  
Within the bond of cubits three,  
to hold him in their narrow grip.  
Who there alighte, it matters not  
if he a wit be, or a fool,  
If poor, or if possessed of all  
the riches of a Tobba king.  
And after it the roll-call comes,  
that musters timid wight, and bold,  
And teacher and disciple, and

the ruler and the ruled alike.  
 Then O the bliss of him that fears  
 his Lord, and earns the thrall's reward,  
 Safe from the dread account and from  
 the terrors of that awful day.  
 But O the loss of those who have  
 sinned and transgressed beyond all bounds,  
 And kindled discord's blazing fire,  
 for sake of worldly goods and joys.  
 O Thou, in whom my trust is placed,  
 how grows my fear with every day,  
 For all the slips and falls that fill  
 my ill-spent life with guilt and crime.  
 But, Lord, forgive Thy erring slave,  
 yield mercy to his welling tears  
 For the most merciful art Thou,  
 and Best to whom are prayers raised.<sup>382</sup>

<sup>382</sup>Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 2, pp. 183–185:

خل انكار الأربع\*\*\*والمعهد المرتبع  
 و الطاعن المودع\*\*\*وعد عنه ودع  
 واندب زماناً سلف\*\*\*سودت فيه الصحفا  
 ولم تزل معتكفا\*\*\*على القبيح الشنع  
 كم ليلة أودعتها\*\*\*مأتماً أودعتها  
 لشهوة أطعتها\*\*\*في مرقد ومضجع  
 وكم خطى حثنتها\*\*\*في خزبة أحدثتها  
 وتوبة نكثتها\*\*\*لملعب ومرتع  
 وكم تجرأت على\*\*\*رب السموات العلى  
 ولم تراقبه ولا\*\*\*صدقته في ما تدعي  
 وكم غمصت بره\*\*\*وكم أمنت مكره  
 وكم نبذت أمره\*\*\*نبذ الحذا المرقع  
 وكم ركضت في اللعب\*\*\*وفهت عمدا بالكذب  
 ولم تراع ما يجب\*\*\*من عهده المتبع  
 فاليس شعار الندم\*\*\*واسكب شأبيب الدم  
 قبل زوال القدم\*\*\*وقبل سوء المصرع  
 واخضع خضوع المعترف\*\*\*ولذ ملاذ المقترف  
 واعص هواك وانحرف\*\*\*عنه انحراف المقلع  
 إلام تسهو وتني\*\*\*ومعظم العمر فني  
 في ما يضر المقتني\*\*\*ولست بالمرتدع  
 أما ترى الشيب وخط\*\*\*وخط في الرأس خطط  
 ومن يلح وخط الشمط\*\*\*يفوده فقد نعي  
 وبحك يا نفس احرصي\*\*\*على ارتياد المخلص  
 وطاوعي وأخلصي\*\*\*واستمعي النصيح وعي  
 واعتبري بمن مضى\*\*\*من القرون وانقضى  
 واخشى مفاجأة القضا\*\*\*وحاذري أن تخدعي  
 وانتهجي سبل الهدى\*\*\*وانكري وشك الردى  
 وأن مثواك غدا\*\*\*في قصر لحد بلقع  
 أها له بيت البلى\*\*\*والمنزل القفر الخلا  
 ومورد السفر الألى\*\*\*واللاحق المتبع  
 بيت يرى من أودعه\*\*\*قد ضمه واستودعه  
 بعد الفضاء والسعه\*\*\*قيد ثلاث أزرع  
 لا فرق أن يحله\*\*\*داهية أو أبله  
 أو معسر أو من له\*\*\*ملك كملك بتع

## Preaching to Those Concerned with Death

Al-Hariri has many verses in his *maqamat*, including both *qasidahs* (long poems) and *qit'ahs* (short poems) about death. He reminds people that their lives will inevitably end. When they are dead, others will take what they have left. In “*al-Maqamah al-Ramliyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Ramlah”), al-Saruji recites the following lines:

Seek then, dear brother, in what sacrifice thou mayest offer up, the face of God,  
the guardian, going in and out.  
For, lo, no hidden deed shall remain hidden from the compassionate, whether  
the servant be sincere or shamming,  
And steal a march of death by good deeds sent afore: death's sudden summons,  
when it comes, is not put off.<sup>383</sup>

Al-Saruji wants everyone to be ready for death, which can partly be accomplished by doing good and helping the oppressed. He asserts the value of praying often to get God's mercy and enter heaven. Al-Saruji reminds the reader of the inescapable reality of death in “*al-Maqamah al-Raziyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Rayy al-Mahdiyeh”):

And figure to thy mind Death and his stroke, and the terror of his meeting, and  
the taste of his wormwood cup!  
For the end of the dwelling of the living is a pit, to which he shall descend,  
brought down from his towers.  
Then well-done! The servant whom the evil of his deed grieves, and who shows

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وبعد العرض الذي\*\*\*يحوي الحيي والبذي  
والمبتدي والمحتدي\*\*\*ومن رعى ومن رعي  
فيا مفاز المتقي\*\*\*وربح عبد قد وقي  
سوء الحساب الموبق\*\*\*وهول يوم الفزع  
ويا خسار من يغي\*\*\*ومن تعدى وطغى  
وشب نيران الوغى\*\*\*لمطعم أو مطمع  
يا من عليه المتكل\*\*\*قد زاد ما بي من وجل  
لما اجترحت من زلل\*\*\*في عمري المضيع  
فاغفر لعبد مجترم\*\*\*وارحم بكاء المنسجم  
فأنت أولى من رحم\*\*\*وخير مدعو دعي

<sup>383</sup>Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 2, p. 34:

أخي فابغ أجراً ومحمدة\*\*\*والحموا عرضهم من عاب أو هاجى  
فليس تخفى على الرحمن خافية\*\*\*إن أخلص العبد في الطاعات أو داجى  
وبادر الموت بالحسنى تقدمها\*\*\*فما ينهنه داعي الموت إن فاجا

amendment before the shutting of his gate.<sup>384</sup>

In “*al-Maqamah al-Saweiyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Saweh”), al-Saruji reminds someone of the death that we all must face, warning that we must repent before we die:

Is not Death calling thee? Doth he not make thee bear his voice? Dost thou not  
fear thy passing away, so as to be wary and anxious?  
How long wilt thou be bewildered in carelessness, and walk proudly in vanity,  
and go eagerly to diversion, as if death were not for all?<sup>385</sup>

In “*al-Maqamah al-Samargandiyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Samarcand”), al-Saruji describes death as a character who swears to follow through and does not break his oath:

Know thou that death is going round, and the moon-haloes circle above all  
created beings.  
Swearing that they will not cease chasing them, as long as morn and even turn  
and re-turn.  
How then mayest thou hope to escape from a net, from which neither Kisra  
escaped, nor Dara.<sup>386</sup>

### Preaching to Seniors

Al-Saruji calls to a character by his gray hair, warning him of the end of his life and what he will face:

Is not the shame plain to thee? Doth not hoariness warn thee? (and in its counsel

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<sup>384</sup> Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 1, pp. 225–226:

ومثل لعينيك الحمام ووقعه\*\*\*وروعة ملقاه ومطعم صابه  
وإن قصارى منزل الحي حفرة\*\*\*سينزلها مستنزل لأ عن قبابه  
فواها لعبد ساءه سوء فعله\*\*\*وأبدى التلافي قبل إغلاق بابيه

<sup>385</sup> Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 1, pp. 165–166:

أما نادى بك الموت\*\*\*أما أسمعك الصوت\*\*\*أما تخشى من الفوت\*\*\*فتحتاظ وتهتم  
فكم تسدر في السهو\*\*\*وتختال من الزهو\*\*\*وتتصب إلى اللهو\*\*\*كأن الموت ما عم

<sup>386</sup> Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 2, p. 13:

واعلم بأن المنون جائلة\*\*\*وقد أدارت على الورى دارا  
وأقسمت لا تزال قانصة\*\*\*ما كر عصرا المحيا وما دارا  
فكيف ترجى النجاة من شرك\*\*\*لم ينج منه كسرى ولا دارا

there is no doubtfulness); nor hath thy hearing become deaf.<sup>387</sup>

In “*al-Maqamah al-Tanisiyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Tanis”), al-Saruji preaches with intensity about gray hair:

Woe to the man who warned by his hoariness still blindly rushes along on  
youth’s folly bent,  
And glances back on pleasure’s fire longingly when all his limbs already from  
weakness shake,  
Who rides the steed of wantonness, which he deems a softer couch than  
chamberlains ever spread,  
Not awed by hoary hair which no man of sense sees come without its starry light  
startling him,  
Nor to himself forbidding what right forbids, or heading aught that may impair  
fair repute.  
Ay, such a man, away with him if he die, and if he live, he’s reck’ed as though  
not alive,  
No good in him: alive he breathes fulsomeness, as though a corpse, ten days  
exhumed after death.  
But hail to him whose honour sheds fragrance sweet, bright in its spotless beauty  
like brodered gown.  
So say to him whom stings the thorn of his sin, pluck out the thorn, poor brother,  
else thou art lost.  
Wipe with sincere repentance out any writ that black misdeeds have left on thy  
book of deeds,  
And deal with men of ev’ry kind pleasantly, winning with courtly ways alike fool  
and sage;  
Feather the free whose plumage fair time has stripped, may he not live who,  
while he can, feathers not.  
Help one oppressed by tyranny if too weak to help thyself, then summon up  
hosts for him,  
And raise him who when he has tripped, calls on thee, haply through him thou  
risest on gathering-day.  
This cup of counsel, drink of it, and bestow on one athirst that which remains in  
the cup.<sup>388</sup>

<sup>387</sup>Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 1, p. 165:

أما بان لك العيب\*\*\*أما أنذرك الشيب\*\*\*وما في نصحه ريب\*\*\*ولا سمعك قد صم

<sup>388</sup>Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 2, pp. 110–111:

يا ويح من أنذره شيبه\*\*\*وهو على غي الصبا منكش  
يعشو إلى نار الهوى بعدما\*\*\*أصبح من ضعف القوى يرتعش  
ويمتطي الهوى ويعتده\*\*\*أوطأ ما يفترش المفترش  
لم يهب الشيب الذي ما رأى\*\*\*نجومه ذو اللب إلا دهش  
ولا انتهى عما نهاه النهى\*\*\*عنه ولا بالي بعرض خدش

Al-Saruji blames older people who do what they want and fail to think about the Day of Judgment. If a person continues to live that way, he or she will die badly, since older people should live with poise and dignity. According to al-Saruji, gray hair must rule and be the basis for authority; he who is mature and has piety in his heart should obey a person with gray hair. In “*al-Maqamah al-Qati’iyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of the Portion”), al-Saruji recites the following lines:

Gray hair forbids me that wherein are my joys; how then should I bring together  
the wine and my hands’ palms?  
Is the morning draught of the old wine lawful, now that the hoariness of my  
head lights up my morning?  
I swear that wine shall never again blend with me as long as my breath cleaves  
to my body, and my words to my speech;  
That my hand shall not deck itself with the cups of must; that I will not turn  
round my lot among the goblets;  
That I will not set my thought to the mixed drink; that I will not go joyfully to  
the wine;  
That I will not gather myself to the wine cooled of the north wind; that I will  
choose no companion, save the sober.  
Hoariness blots out my merriment when he writes upon my head; hated be he  
for a blotting scribe!  
He shines forth to blame my turning the reins to pleasure; away with him for  
one who shines forth but to blame!  
Now were I wanton while my temple is hoary, then would my lamp be put out  
among the lamps of Ghassan,  
A people whose disposition is the honouring of their guests; and gray hair is a  
guest to whom honour is due, my friend.<sup>389</sup>

فذاك إن مات فسحقاً له\*\*\* وإن يعيش عد كأن لم يعيش  
لا خير في محيا امرئ نشره\*\*\* كنشر ميت بعد عشر نبش  
وحبذا من عرضه طيب\*\*\* يروق حسناً مثل برد رقتش  
فقل لمن قد شاكه ذنبه\*\*\* هلكت يا مسكين أو تنتقتش  
فأخلص التوبة تطمس بها\*\*\* من الخطايا السود ما قد نقش  
وعاشر الناس بخلق رضى\*\*\* ودار من طاش ومن لم يطش  
ورش جناح الحر إن حصه\*\*\* زمانه لا كان من لم يرش  
وأنجد الموتور ظلماً فإن\*\*\* عجزت عن إنجاده فاستجش  
واتعش إذا ناداك ذو كيوه\*\*\* عساك في الحشر به تنتعش  
وهالك كأس النصح فاشتر وجد\*\*\* بفضل الكأس على من عطش

<sup>389</sup> Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 1, p. 248:

نهاني الشيب عما فيه أفرأحي\*\*\* فكيف أجمع بين الراح والراح  
وهل يجوز اصطحابي من معتقة\*\*\* وقد أثار مشيب الرأس إصباحي



Al-Saruji thinks that anyone who gets old and has gray hair should work to earn life after death, which is the main aim of preachers. In the following lines in “*al-Maqamah al-Saweiyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Saweh”), al-Saruji gathers all his preaching themes in a single *qasidah*. He blames the soul after seeing gray hair, and asks it to prepare for the Judgment Day by faith and doing good:

O thou who claimest understanding; how long, O brother of delusion, wilt thou marshal sin and blame, and err exceeding error?  
Is not the shame plain to thee? Doth not hoariness warn thee? (and in its counsel there is no doubtfulness); nor hath thy hearing become deaf.  
Is not Death calling thee? Doth he not make thee hear his voice? Dost thou not fear thy passing away, so as to be wary and anxious?  
How long wilt thou be bewildered in carelessness, and walk proudly in vanity, and go eagerly to diversion, as if death were not for all?  
Till when will last thy swerving, and thy delaying to mend habits that unite in thee vices whose every sort shall be collected in thee?  
If thou anger thy Master thou art not disquieted at it; but if thy scheme be bootless thou burnest with vexation,  
If the graving of the yellow one gleam to thee thou art joyful; but if the bier pass by thee thou feignest grief, and there is no grief.  
Thou resistest him who counselleth righteousness; thou art hard in understanding; thou swervest aside: but thou followest the guiding of him who deceiveth, who lieth, who defameth.  
Thou walkest in the desire of thy soul; thou schemest after money; but thou forgettest the darkness of the grave, and rememberest not what is there.  
But if true happiness had looked upon thee, thy own look would not have led thee amiss; nor wouldest thou be saddened when the preaching wipeth away griefs.  
Thou shalt weep blood, not tears, when thou perceives that no company can protect thee in the Court of Assembling; no kinsman of mother of father.  
It is as though I could see thee when thou goest down to the vault and divest deep; when thy kinsmen have committed thee to a place narrower than a

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أليت لا خمررتني الخمر ما علفت\*\*\*روحي بجسمي والفاظي بإفصاحي  
ولا اكتست لي بكاسات السلاف يد\*\*\*ولا أجلت قداحي بين أقداح  
ولا صرفت إلى صرف مشعشة\*\*\*همي ولا رحت مرتاحاً إلى راح  
ولا نظمت على مشمولة أبدأ\*\*\*شملي ولا اخترت ندماناً سوى الصاحي  
محا المشيت مراحي حين خط على\*\*\*رأسي فأبغض به من كاتب ماح  
ولاح يلحى على جري العنان إلى\*\*\*ملهي فسحقاً له من لائح لاح  
ولو لهوت وقودي شائب لخباء\*\*\*بين المصابيح من غسان مصباحي  
قوم سجايهم توقيير ضيفهم\*\*\*والشيب ضيف له التوقيير يا صاح

needle's eye.

There is the body stretched out that the worms may devour it, until the coffin-wood is bored through and the bones moulder.

And afterward there is no escape from that review of souls: since Sirat is prepared; its bridge is stretched over the fire to every one who cometh thither.

And how many a guide shall go astray! and how many a great one shall be vile! and how many a learned one shall slip and say "The business surpasseth."

Therefore hasten, O simple one, to that by which the bitter is made sweet; for thy life is now near to decay and thou hast not withdrawn thyself from blame.

And rely not on fortune though it be soft, though it be gay: for so wilt thou be found like one deceived by a viper that spitteth venom.

And lower thyself from thy loftiness; for death is meeting thee and reaching at thy collar; and he is one who shrinketh not back when he hath purposed.

And avoid proud turning away of the cheek if fortune have prospered thee: bridle thy speech if it would run astray; for how happy is he who bridleth it!

And relieve the brother of sorrow, and believe him when he speaketh; and mend thy ragged conduct; for he hath prospered who mendeth it.

And plume him whose plumage hath fallen in calamity great or small; and sorrow not at the loss, and be not covetous in amassing.

And resist thy base nature, and accustom thy hand to liberality, and listen not to blame for it, and keep thy hand from hoarding.

And make provision of good for thy soul, and leave that which will bring on ill, and prepare the ship for thy journey, and dread the deep of the sea.

Thus have I given my precepts, friend, and shown as one who showeth clearly: and happy the man who walketh by my doctrines and maketh them his example.<sup>390</sup>

<sup>390</sup>Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 1, pp. 165–167:

أيا من يدعي الفهم \*\*\* إلى كم يا أبا الفهم \*\*\* تعبي الذنب والذم \*\*\* وتخطي الخطأ الجم  
أما بان لك العيب \*\*\* أما أنذرك الشيب \*\*\* وما في نصحه ريب \*\*\* ولا سمعك قد صم  
أما نادى بك الموت \*\*\* أما أسمعك الصوت \*\*\* أما تخشى من الفوت \*\*\* فتحتاط وتهتم  
فكم تسدر في السهو \*\*\* وتختال من الزهو \*\*\* وتتصب إلى اللهو \*\*\* كأن الموت ما عم  
وحتى م تجافيك \*\*\* وإبطاء تلافيك \*\*\* طباعاً جمعت فيك \*\*\* عيوباً ص شملها انضم  
إذا أسخطت مولاك \*\*\* فما تفلق من ذاك \*\*\* وإن أخفق مسعاك \*\*\* تلظيت من الهم  
وإن لاح النشق \*\*\* من الأصفر تهتس \*\*\* وإن مر بك النعش \*\*\* تغامت ولا غم  
تعاصي الناصح البر \*\*\* وتعتاص وتزور \*\*\* وتتقاد لمن غر \*\*\* ومن مان ومن نم  
وتسعى في هوى النفس \*\*\* وتحتال على الفليس \*\*\* وتتسى ظلمة الرمس \*\*\* ولا تذكر ما ثم  
ولو لاحظك الحظ \*\*\* لما طاح بك اللحظ \*\*\* ولا كنت إذا الوعظ \*\*\* جلا الأحران تغتم  
سندري الدم لا النعم \*\*\* إذا عاينت لا جمع \*\*\* بقي في عرصة الجمع \*\*\* ولا خال ولا عم  
كانني بك تتخط \*\*\* إلى اللحد وتتغط \*\*\* وقد أسلمك الرهط \*\*\* إلى أضييق من سم  
هناك الجسم ممدود \*\*\* ليستأكله النود \*\*\* إلى أن ينخر العود \*\*\* ويمسي العظم قد رم  
ومن بعد فلا بد \*\*\* من العرض إذا اعتد \*\*\* صراط جسره مد \*\*\* على النار لمن أم  
فكم من مرشد ضل \*\*\* ومن ذي عزة ذل \*\*\* وكم من عالم زل \*\*\* وقال الخطب قد طم  
فيادر أيها الغمر \*\*\* لما يحلو به المر \*\*\* فقد كاد يهي العمر \*\*\* وما أفلعت عن ذم  
ولا تركن إلى الدهر \*\*\* وإن لان وإن سر \*\*\* فتلقى كمن اعتر \*\*\* بأفعى تنفث السم  
وحفض من تراقبك \*\*\* فإن الموت لاقبك \*\*\* وسار في تراقبك \*\*\* وما ينكل إن هم  
وجانب صعر الخد \*\*\* إذا ساعدك الجد \*\*\* وزم اللفظ إن ند \*\*\* فما أسعد من زم

## Psychological Aspects of the *Maqamat al-Hariri*

The psychological aspects of the poetry in the *Maqamat al-Hariri* are usually related to begging (*kudya*) and the disadvantages and complaints of time. The complaints of time are the psychological dimension of the *Maqamat al-Hariri* that are included in both the poetry and the prose. Al-Saruji loves to travel, and *kudya* and complaints of time are connected to each other. These complaints do not have one form, but take various forms according to the psychological pain experienced by al-Saruji. A notable example can be found in “*al-Maqamah al-Holwaniyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Holwan”), where al-Saruji recites the following lines:

The stroke of calamities makes us hoary, and fortune to men is a changer.  
If it yields today to any, tomorrow it overcomes him.  
Trust not the gleam of its lightning, for it is a deceitful gleam.  
But be patient if it hounds calamities against thee, and drives them on.  
For there is no disgrace on the pure gold when it is turned about in the fire.<sup>391</sup>

These complaints in the *Maqamat al-Hariri* are not easy to live with, because they come from a *mukdy* experience of deprivation and different classes of society. The poor cannot find anything to eat or drink. The *mukdy* knows that his fight against time is lost before it starts. Therefore, he decides to act strongly to get things from others.

The complaints of rulers can be linked to the complaints of time, but in a different form. Al-Hariri believes that time and rulers have a common enemy, which is injustice. In “*al-Maqamah al-Raziyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Rayy al-Mahdiyyeh”), al-Saruji is angry because the

ونفس عن أخي البئث \*\*\* وصدقه إذا نث \*\*\* ورم العمل الرث \*\*\* فقد أفلح من رم  
ورش من ريشه انحص \*\*\* بما عمر وما خص \*\*\* ولا تأس على النقص \*\*\* ولا تحرص على اللم  
وعاد الخلق الرذل \*\*\* وعود كفك البذل \*\*\* ولا تستمع العذل \*\*\* ونزهها عن الضم  
وزود نفسك الخير \*\*\* ودع ما يعقب الضير \*\*\* وهى مركب السير \*\*\* وخف من لجة اليم  
بذا أوصيت يا صاح \*\*\* وقد بحث كمن باح \*\*\* فطوبى لفتى راح \*\*\* بادابي بأتم

<sup>391</sup>Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 1, p. 117:

وقع الشوائب شبيب \*\*\* والدهر بالناس قلب  
إن دان يوماً لشخص \*\*\* ففى غد يتغلب  
فلا تتق بوميض \*\*\* من برقه فهو خلب  
واصبر إذا هو أضرى \*\*\* بك الخطوب وألب  
فما على التبر عار \*\*\* فى النار حين يقلب

ruler does not care about people and does not respect their rights:

Wonderful! a man hoping to attain to rule; and then when he attains to his desire  
he wrongs;  
He weaves warp and woof in tyrannies; now lapping at their well, now bidding  
others to lap.  
Nor cares he, when he is following his desires in them, whether he maintains his  
religion or destroys it.<sup>392</sup>

Al-Saruji continues to blame the ruler, reminding him that fortune will judge him:

For fortune shall give thee the laugh of him when it departs from him, and  
kindles for the ambush against him the fire of war.  
And it shall bring down on him exultation, when appears vacant of his office,  
emptied of it.<sup>393</sup>

Because of this anger against rulers, al-Saruji decides to stay away from those who do not appreciate and respect literature, authors, and poets. In “*al-Maqamah al-Maraghiyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Maraghah”), al-Saruji recites the following lines:

Sure to traverse the lands in poverty is dearer to me than rank:  
For in rulers there is caprice and fault-finding, Oh what fault-finding!  
There is none of them who completes his good work, or who builds up where he  
has laid foundation.  
So let not the glare of the mirage beguile thee; undertake not that which is  
doubtful:  
For how many a dreamer has his dream made joyful; but fear has come upon  
him when he waked.<sup>394</sup>

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<sup>392</sup>Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 1, p. 226:

عجباً لراج أن ينال ولاية\*\*\*حتى إذا ما نال بغيته بغي  
يسدى ويلحم في المظالم والغا\*\*\*في وردها طوراً وطوراً مولعا  
ما إن يبالي حين يتبع الهوى\*\*\*فيها أصلح دينه أم أوتغا

<sup>393</sup>Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 1, p. 226:

فليضحكك الدهر منه إذا نيا\*\*\*عنه وشب لكيدته نار الوغى  
ولينزلن به الشمات إذا بدا\*\*\*متخلياً من شغله متقرغاً

<sup>394</sup>Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 1, p. 139:

لجوب البلاد مع المتربه\*\*\*أحب إلي من المرتبه  
لأن الولاية لهم نبوة\*\*\*ومعتبة يالها معتبه  
وما فيهم من يرب الصنيع\*\*\*ولا من يشيد ما رتبه  
فلا يخذعك لموع السراب\*\*\*ولا تأت أمراً إذا ما اشتبه  
فكم حاله سره حلمه\*\*\*وأدركه الروع لما انتبه

The psychological aspects of the poetry in the *Maqamat al-Hariri*, which are sometimes high and sometimes low, can be found in ten *maqamat*. Where can readers find the psychological aspects in these ten *maqamat*? How do these ten *maqamat* relate to psychology? Yaqut al-Hamawi (1179–1229 A.D.) and Ibn Khallikan (1211–1282 A.D.) both note that some people in Baghdad claimed that al-Hariri did not write his *maqamat*, but that he stole them from another writer from Morocco.<sup>395</sup> When critics asked al-Saruji to reproduce writing in the style of his *maqamat*, at first he could not. Then he returned sadly to Basrah, where he wrote ten more *maqamat*. When he returned to Baghdad to show his *maqamat* to critics and poets, they finally agreed that he had written his original forty *maqamat*.<sup>396</sup> Those ten *maqamat*, which he added to his previous forty, represent the psychological aspects of his *maqamat*, suggesting how authors' works can be a mirror of their lives and their psychological concerns.

When al-Hariri could not write even one *maqama* in Baghdad, he was faced by skepticism from literary scholars. That caused him much pain and many sleepless nights, as he indicated in “*al-Maqamah al-Qahqariyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of the Reversed”):

Time hath drawn his sword upon me to fright me, and hath sharpened his blade;  
 And hath stolen away from mine eyelid its slumber, like an adversary; and hath  
 made it tear flow down;  
 And caused me to roam the world; to go about its east, to traverse its west:  
 And day after day there is for me in each valley but a single rising and setting.  
 And so the exile's figure is changed and his destination is afar.<sup>397</sup>

<sup>395</sup>Yaqut al-Hamawi, *Mu'jam al-Udaba', Irshad al-Arib ila Ma'rifat al-Adib* [“Literary Encyclopedia, Expert Guide to Literature”] (Beirut: Lebanon, Mu'ssasat al-Ma'arf, 1999); Ibn Khallikan, *Wafayat al-A'yan wa Anba' Abna' al-Zaman* [“Lives of Eminent Men and the Sons of Epoch”] (Beirut: Lebanon, Dar al-Thaqafa, 1994).

<sup>396</sup>Rina Drory, *Models and Contacts: Arabic Literature and Its Impact on Medieval Jewish Culture*. Danvers, MA: Brill, 2000; and Hameen-Anttila, *Maqama: A History of a Genre*.

<sup>397</sup>Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 1, p. 204:

سل الزمان علي عضبه\*\*\*ليروني وأحد غربه  
 واستل من جفني كرا\*\*\*مراغماً وأسأل غربه  
 وأجاني في الأفق أطل\*\*\*ري شرقه وأجوب غربه  
 وكذا المغرب شخصه\*\*\*متغرب ونواه غربه

In “*al-Maqamah al-Shitwiyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of the Wintry”), al-Hariri defends himself against the accusations he faced in Baghdad, stating that he was not lying:

Marvels I know, seen by me, and told without any lie, for not in vain am I called  
the father of wonderment.<sup>398</sup>

Al-Hariri goes beyond that, showing his pride and ability in both language and literature in “*al-Maqamah al-Iskndriyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Alexandria”):

And study is my business; to dive deep in learning is my pursuit; and oh! How  
excellent a seeking.  
And my capital is the magic of speech, out of which are moulded both verse and  
prose.  
I dive into the deep of eloquence, and from it I choose the pearls and select  
them:  
I cull of speech the ripe fruit and the new: while another gathers but firing of the  
wood:  
I take the phrase of silver, and when I have moulded it men say that it is gold.<sup>399</sup>

Al-Saruji wrote the following lines for “*al-Maqamah al-Marwiyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Merv”):

Know who has gained a portion by plodding dullness, or who owes rank to  
virtues of those before him.  
That my earnings are due to worth, not to meddling, and my station to power of  
speech, not to kings’ grace.<sup>400</sup>

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<sup>398</sup> Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 2, p. 134:

عندي أعاجيب أرويهها بلا كذب\*\*\* عن العيان فكنوني أبا العجب

<sup>399</sup> Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 1, p. 154:

وشغلي الدرس والتبحر في ال\*\*\*علم طلاي وحبذا الطلب  
ورأس مالي سحر الكلام الذي\*\*\*منه بصاغ القريض والخطب  
أغوص في لجة البيان فأخذ\*\*\*تار اللآلي منها وأنتخب  
وأجتني البائع الجني من ال\*\*\*قول وغيري للعود يحتطب  
وأخذ اللفظ فضة فإذا\*\*\*ما صغته قيل إنه ذهب

<sup>400</sup> Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 2, p. 92:

من يكن نال بالحمافة حظا\*\*\*أو سما قدره لطيب الأصول  
فيفضلي انتفعت لا بفضولي\*\*\*وبقولي ارتفعت لا بقبولي

Al-Hariri goes on to say that he will not talk to these idiotic people, because he has proper morals, and his patience will defend him against them. In “*al-Maqamah al-Hajariyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Hajr”), he recites the following lines:

Quench by thy mercy the fire of anger that recklessly a churl has kindled in thee, and pardon his trespass,  
For mercy is far the best of jewels that grace the wise, and sweetest fruit, culled by man, is ready forgiveness.<sup>401</sup>

Who is the churl? Is al-Hariri referring to people who did not believe that he had authored the *maqamat*? What act needs to be forgiven? Forgiveness could have occurred when al-Hariri went to Basrah and wrote ten *maqamat*. Therefore, he had to ask people to forgive him because he could not write a *maqama* in Baghdad.

Al-Hariri showed his ability and knowledge in three *maqamat* that are centered around a common idea. In “*al-Maqamah al-Dimashgiyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Damascus”), he declares:

I am the novelty of the time, the wonder of nations;  
I am the wily one, plays his wiles among Arabs and foreigners.<sup>402</sup>

In the second verse in “*al-Maqamah al-Tibbiyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Taybeh”), he speaks the following line:

In the world I am a pattern, point of sight [*Kiblah*] for folk of wisdom.<sup>403</sup>

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<sup>401</sup> Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 2, p. 160:

أحمد بحلمك ما يذكىه ذو سفه\*\*\*من نار غيظك واصفح إن جنى جان  
فالحلم أفضل ما ازدان اللبيب به\*\*\*والأخذ بالعفو ألقى ما جنى جان

<sup>402</sup> Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 1, p. 174:

أنا أطروفة الزما\*\*\*ن وأعجوبة الأمم  
وأنا الحول الذي احد\*\*\*تال في العرب والعجم

<sup>403</sup> Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 2, p. 56:

أنا في العالم مثله\*\*\*ولأهل العلم قبله

In the third verse in “*al-Maqamah al-Raziyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Rayy al-Mahdiyeh”), he recites the following line:

I am he whom thou knowest, Harith,  
The talker with kings, the wit, the intimate.<sup>404</sup>

In these three examples, he repeats the phrase *I am*, sometimes as a sign of wisdom, sometimes as a novelty of time and a wonder of nations that no one can equal. Sometimes the phrase represents who Harith knows, which might include the narrator of his *maqamat*, al-Harith ibn Hammam, or people in Baghdad who said that al-Hariri stole his *maqamat* from someone and doubted his knowledge and eloquence.

Al-Hariri did not forget what happened to him in Baghdad, as may be seen in his line in “*al-Maqamah al-Sa’diyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Sa’dah”):

Sit not content with distress and suffering hunger’s pangs, that people may say he  
is high-minded and patience full.<sup>405</sup>

Perhaps “high-minded and patience full” is al-Hariri’s way of justifying his return from Baghdad to Basrah and his failure to write a *maqama* in Baghdad. The situation was the result of his critics’ envy, as is suggested by the following line in “*al-Maqamah al-Halbiyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Aleppo”):

Make ready for thy enviers’ weapons sharp, but kindly deal with him who sets  
hope in thee.<sup>406</sup>

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<sup>404</sup> Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 1, p. 223:

أنا الذي تعرفه يا حارث\*\*\*حدث ملوك فكه منافث

<sup>405</sup> Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 2, p. 86:

لا تقعدن على ضرر ومسغبة\*\*\*لكي يقال عزيز النفس مصطبر

<sup>406</sup> Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 2, p. 148:

أعدد لحسادك حد السلاح\*\*\*وأورد الأمل ورد السماح



Al-Hariri's last ten *maqamat* represent the psychological aspects of poetry in the *Maqamat al-Hariri*: (1) *maqama* #17, “*al-Maqamah al-Qahqariyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of the Reversed”); (2) *maqama* #44, “*al-Maqamah al-Shitwiyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of the Wintry”); (3) *maqama* #9, “*al-Maqamah al-Iskndriyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Alexandria”); (4) *maqama* #38, “*al-Maqamah al-Marwiyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Merv”); (5) *maqama* #47, “*al-Maqamah al-Hajariyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Hajr”); (6) *maqama* #12, “*al-Maqamah al-Dimashgiyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Damascus”); (7) *maqama* #32, “*al-Maqamah al-Tibbiyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Taybeh”); (8) *maqama* #21, “*al-Maqamah al-Raziyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Rayy al-Mahdiyeh”); (9) *maqama* #37, “*al-Maqamah al-Sa'diyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Sa'dah”); and (10) *maqama* #46, “*al-Maqamah al-Halbiyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Aleppo”). Al-Hariri wrote these ten *maqamat* after some people did not believe he was the author of his *maqamat*. They doubted his eloquence and language ability, which hurt him. There are four reasons that may support this claim.

First, al-Hariri states that the first *maqama* he wrote was “*al-Maqamah al-Haramiyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Haramiyeh”), which is number 48 in his *maqamat*, which means that his *maqamat* were not written sequentially.

Second, al-Hariri says in his preface of his *maqamat*:

And that thou wilt help us by thy guidance to conceive, and enable us by thy assistance to express; That thou wilt guard us from error in narration, and turn us from unseemliness in jesting; That we may secure from slanders of the tongue; that we may be free from the ill of tinsel speech; That we walk not in the road of sin, nor stand in the place of repentance: That we be not pursued by suit or censure, nor need to flee from hastiness to excuse.<sup>407</sup>

Al-Hariri may be referring here to what happened to him in Baghdad when some people

<sup>407</sup>Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 1, p. 104:

وأن تسعدنا بالهداية إلى الدراية، وتعضدنا بالإعانة على الإنابة، وتعصمنا من الغواية في الرواية، وتصرفنا عن السفاهة في الفكاهة، حتى نأمن حصائد الألسنة، ونكفي غوائل الزخرفة، فلا نرد مورد مأثمة، ولا نقف موقف مندمة.

argued against publishing his *maqamat*. Part of his preface shows how al-Hariri was hurting after what happened in Baghdad, which encouraged him to add ten more *maqamat*, bringing the total to fifty.

In another part of his preface, al-Hariri says:

Moreover, since deeds depend on intentions, and in these lies the effectiveness of religious obligations, what fault is there in one who composes stories for instruction not for display, and whose purpose in them is the education and not the fablings? Nay, is he not in the position of one who assents to doctrine, and guides to right path?

Yet am I content if I may carry my caprice, and then be quit of it, without any debt against me or to me.<sup>408</sup>

Third, al-Hariri's poetry in these ten *maqamat* demonstrates a high degree of discontent with others, which may be a sign that relates indirectly to what happened to him when people accused him of plagiarism for his first forty *maqamat*. Al-Hariri's verses in the psychological aspects section could match what happened to him from the beginning to the end. When critics accused him of lying, he defended himself by saying that he "told without any lie."<sup>409</sup> When they doubted his knowledge and eloquence, he responded, "point of sight [*kiblah*] for folk of wisdom,"<sup>410</sup> meaning that people come to him for wisdom. Thus, he defended himself against every charge, and showed his ability to write more.

In addition, al-Hariri wrote riddles and unfamiliar words and phrases to educate his readers in these three *maqamat*. In "*al-Maqamah al-Shitwiyyah*" ("The *Maqama* of the Wintry"), al-Saruji recites forty-nine verses of riddles to show his literary ability. For example, he speaks

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<sup>408</sup>Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 1, p. 107:

ثم إذا كانت الأعمال بالنيات، وبها انعقاد العقود الدينيات، فأى حرج على من أنشأ ملحاً للتبويه لا للتمويه، ونحا بها منحى التهذيب لا الأكاذيب،  
وهل هو في ذلك إلا بمنزلة من انتدب لتعليم، أو هدى إلى صراط مستقيم  
على أنني راضٍ بأن أحمل الهوى\*\*\*وأخلص منه لا علي ولا ليا

<sup>409</sup>Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 2, p. 134.

<sup>410</sup>Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 2, p. 56.

the following lines:

Folks have I seen, O my folk, that on a crone's justice are fed; not, notice well,  
mean I though the daughter of grapes by her  
(*sha'ibun ghria mukhfin li 'l-mashib*, one hoary who conceals not the hoariness,  
and also "one who mixes milk [with water] and makes no secret of the milk  
thus mixed.").<sup>411</sup>

In "*al-Maqamah al-Halbiyyah*" ("The *Maqama* of Aleppo"), al-Saruji discourses on the letters *dad* (ض) and *za'* (ظ), mentioning that all the Arabic words in the *maqama* start with the letter *za'*; all nineteen lines contain the letter *za'*, including the following lines:

Thou who askest about the two letters *Zad* and *Za*, in order to make no error in writing:  
Let suffice thee to know by heart those in *Za*, so hear them like a man wide awake and retain them,  
Namely *zamyā*, "with blackish lips," *al-mazalim*, "plaints for justice," *izlam*, "producing obscureness,"  
*Zalm*, "the whiteness of teeth," *zuba*, "points of weapons," *al-iahaz*, "the eye-corner next to the temples,"  
And *aza*, "kind of lizards" and *az-zalim*, "male of the ostrich," or "wronged," and also "the wronger,"  
*Zabyun*, "antelope," *shaizam*, "tall," *zill*, "a shadow," and *laza*, "blaze," *shiuaz*, "a flame burning smokeless,"  
*At-tazanni*, "opinion," *al-lafz*, "the word," and *nam*, "a poem," and *at-taqriz*, "panegyric,"  
*Qaiz*, "the summer," *zuma*, "athirst," and *lamaz*, "taste on the tip of the tongue," *hiza*, "shares of fortune,"  
*An-nazir*, "what resembles," *zir*, "foster-mother," *jahiz*, "goggline," *an-nazirun*, "the beholders,"  
And *tashazzi*, "a splitting up," *zilf*, "the hoof of ruminants," and *iqaz*, "awaking a sleeper,"  
*Azm*, "a bone," and *zumbub*, "the bone of the hip," and *ash-shaza*, "bone of arm or leg," *zahr*, "the backside,"  
*Ash-shizaz*, "yoke for carrying," *hafizum*, "those who preserve," *ihfaz*, "provoking to anger,"  
*Al-hazirai*, "the lofts for dates," *al-mazannah*, "likely place where a thing is found," *zinnah*, "notion,"

<sup>411</sup> Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 2, pp. 134–135:

رأيت يا قوم أقواماً غداؤهم\*\*\*بول العجوز وما أعني ابنة العنبر  
لين البقرة، والعجوز أيضاً من أسماء الخمر (يوم العجوز)

*Kazimun*, “folks in silent wrath,” *al-wazifai*, “daily rations,” *mughiaz*, “enraged,”  
*kizzah*, “surfeit.”<sup>412</sup>

This poem represents what al-Hariri states in his preface: that education is his main focus, “and whose purpose in them is the education and not the fablings?”<sup>413</sup> Finally, in “*al-Maqamah al-Tibbiyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Taybeh”), al-Hariri wants to show his eloquent linguistic and literary ability.

In sum, al-Hariri’s final ten *maqamat* are linked to the psychological aspects of poetry and the details of his autobiography.

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<sup>412</sup>Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 2, pp. 153–154:

أيها السائل عن الضاد والظا\*\*\*ء لكيلا تضله الألفاظ  
إن حفظ الظاءات يغنيك فاسمعها\*\*\*استماع امرئ له استيقاظ  
هي ظمياء والمظالم والإظ\*\*\*لام والظلم والظبي واللاحاظ  
والعظا والظليم والظبي والشبي\*\*\*ظم والظل والظي والشواظ  
والتنظني واللفظ والنظم والتق\*\*\*ربط والقيظ والظما واللماظ  
والحظا والتنظير والظنر والجا\*\*\*حظ والناظرون والإيقاظ  
والتنشطي والظلف والعظم والظن\*\*\*يوب والظهر والشظا والشظاظ  
والأظافير والمظفر والمد\*\*\*ظور والحافظون والإحفاظ  
والحظيرات والمظنة والظن\*\*\*ة والكاظمون والمغتاظ

<sup>413</sup>Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 1, p. 107.

## Chapter 4. Al-Hariri's Superiority over Other Poets

### Introduction

Al-Hariri was a master of Arabic language and literature, and his *maqamat* are considered to be among the best works of Arabic narrative. His *maqamat* have rich vocabularies and artistic formulations, while his poetry is notable for its linguistic ornamentation, rhetorical intelligence, and considerable culture. Ahmed Amin believes that one of al-Hariri's goals of writing his *maqamat* was to show his linguistic ability and demonstrate what his competitors could not do.<sup>414</sup>

Al-Hariri used various methods to demonstrate his rhetorical superiority in his *maqamat*, referring throughout to his linguistic and rhetorical abilities. His poetry is arguably superior to that of many of the notable classical Arab poets who preceded him, including al-Hamadhani, and is superior to the poetry of his contemporaries as well.

### Al-Hariri's Superiority over Classical Arab Poets

In "*al-Maqamah al-Holwaniyyah*" ("The *Maqama* of Holwan"), the story occurs in a learned setting when al-Saruji asks:

"What is the book into which thou lookest?" He said, "The poems of Abu 'Obadeh; him of whose excellence men bear witness." He said, "In what thou hast seen hast thou hit on any fine thing which thou admires?" He said, "Yes; the line:

As though she smiled from strung pearls or hailstones, or chamomile flowers.<sup>415</sup>

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<sup>414</sup>Ahmed Amin, *Fan al-Maqama bin al-Badi' wa al-Hariri wa al-Suyuti* ["The *Maqama* Genre Between al-Hamadhan, al-Hariri, and al-Suyuti"] (n.p.: 1991).

<sup>415</sup>This verse is by al-Buhturi (820–897A.D.). Al-Buhturi, *Diwan al-Buhturi* ["Al-Buhturi's Book of Poetry"], edited by Mohammed al-Tongai (Beirut, Lebanon: Dar al-Kitab al-Arabi, 2004), p. 223.

For it is original in the use of similitude which it contains.” He said to him, “Here is a wonder! Here is a lack of taste, Sir, thou hast taken for fat what is only swollen, thou hast blown on that which is no fuel: Where art thou in comparison with the rare verse which unites the similitudes of the teeth?

My life a ransom for those teeth whose beauty charms, and which a purity adorns sufficing thee for all other.

She parts her lips from fresh pearls, and from hail-stones, and from chamomile flowers, and from the palm shoot, and from bubbles.

Then each one approved the couplet and admired it, and bade him repeat it and dictate it. And he was asked, “Whose is this verse, and is its author living or dead?” He said, “By Allah, right is most worthy to be followed, and truth is most fitting to be listened to: Know, friends, that it is his who talks with you today.”

Until someone asks al-Saruji to recite a verse:

Then hastened one who was there and said: “I know a verse such that there is no weaving on its beam, such that no genius can supply one after its image. Now, if thou wish to draw our hearts to thee, compose after this style:

She rained pearls from the daffodil, and watered the rose, and bit upon the *‘unnab* with hailstone.

And it was but the glance of an eye, or less, before he recited rarely:

I asked her when she met me to put off her crimson veil, and to endow my hearing with the sweetest of tidings:  
And she removed the ruddy light which covered the brightness of her moon, and she dropped pearls from a perfumed ring.

Then all present were astonished at his readiness, and acknowledged his honesty. And when he perceived that they approved his diction, and were hastening into the path of honouring him, He looked down the twinkling of an eye; then he said, “Here are two other verses for you,” and recited:

She came on the day when departure afflicted, in black robes, biting her fingers like one regretful, confounded:

And night lowered on her morn, and a branch supported them both, and she bit into crystal with pearls.

Then did the company set high his value, and deem that his steady rain was a plenteous one; And they made pleasant their converse with him, and gave him

goodly clothing.<sup>416</sup>

There was a debate among medieval Arab critics regarding classical and contemporary poets. Some critics preferred classical Arab poets, while others believed that contemporary Arab poets could write poems that were just as good. Al-Jahiz (776–868 A.D.) discussed the topic of classical versus contemporary poets in his two books, *Kitab al-Hayawan* (“The Book of the Animals”) and *Kitab al-Bayan wa al-Tabyin* (“The Book of Eloquence and Exposition”).<sup>417</sup> He favored the classical Arab poets because their vocabulary was clear and rich. He preferred Imru’ al-Qais (501–565 A.D.), al-Nabigha (535–604 A.D.), al-A’sha (570–625 A.D.), and other classical poets because their literary style was strong. However, he claimed that contemporary Arab poets also wrote good poems. Therefore, he did not judge poets by their era, but rather looked to the poetry itself to determine its worth. Al-Jahiz praised contemporary Arab poets in his time, including Bashra ibn Burd (714–784 A.D.), Abu Nuwas (756–814 A.D.), and Muslim ibn al-Walid (753–823 A.D.). However, al-Jahiz ignored Abu

<sup>416</sup>Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 1, pp. 114–116:

ما الكتاب الذي تنتظر فيه؟ فقال: ديوان أبي عباد، المشهور له بالإجادة، فقال: وهل عثرت له فيما لمحتة على بديع استملحته؟ قال: نعم. قوله  
كأنما تبسم عن لؤلؤ\*\*\*منضد أو برد أو أقاح  
فإنه أبداع في التشبيه المودع فيه. فقال له: يا للعجب! ولضيعة الأدب! لقد استسمنت يا هذا ذا ورم، ونفخت في غير ضرر، أين أنت من البيت  
النذر؟ الجامع مشبهات الشعر. وأنشد

نفسى الفداء لثغر راق ميسمه\*\*\*وزانه شنب ناهيك من شنب  
يفتر عن لؤلؤ رطب وعن برد\*\*\*وعن أقاح وعن طلع وعن حبيب  
فاستجاده من حضر واستحلاه، واستعاده منه واستعلاه. وسئل لمن هذا البيت؟ وهل حي قائله أو ميت؟ فقال: إيم الله. للحق أحق أن يتبع، وللصدق  
حقيق بأن يستمع. إنه يا قوم لنجيك مذ... فابتدر أحد من حضر، وقال: أعرف بيتاً لم ينسج على منواله ولا سمحت قريحته بمثاله. فإن أثرت اختلاب  
القلوب، فانظم على هذا الأسلوب. وأنشد  
فأمطرت لؤلؤاً من نرجس وسقت\*\*\*ورداً وعضت على العناب بالبرد  
:فلم يكن إلا كالمح البصر، أو هو أقرب، حتى أنشد فأعرب  
سألته حين زارت نضو برقعها ال\*\*\*قاني وإيداع سمعي أطيب الخبر  
فزحزت شفقاً غشى سنا قمر\*\*\*وساقت لؤلؤاً من خاتم عطر  
فحار الحاضرون لبدايته، واعترفوا بنزاهته فلما أنس استناسهم بكلامه، وانصبأهم إلى شعب إكرامه. أطرق كطرفة العين، ثم قال: ودونكم  
يبين آخرين. وأنشد

وأقبلت يوم جد البين في حلل\*\*\*سود تعض بنان النادم الحصر  
فلاح ليل على صبح أفلهما\*\*\*غصن وضرست البلور بالدر

فحينئذ استسنى القوم قيمته، واستغزروا ديمته وأجملو عشرته وجملوا قشرته

<sup>417</sup>Montgomery translated this latter book as *The Treatise of Clarity and Clarification*. Some other translations of the title include *The Book of Eloquence and Demonstration*, *The Book of Elucidation and Explanation*, and *The Book of Lucid Style and Elucidation*. James E. Montgomery, “Al-Jahiz’s *Kitab al-Bayan wa al-Tabyin*,” in Julia Brary, ed., *Writing and Representation in Medieval Islam: Islam Horizons*. London and New York: Routledge, 2006, 91–152.

Tammam (805–845 A.D.) because al-Jahiz preferred form over meaning, whereas Abu Tammam preferred meaning over form.

Al-Hariri believed that his contemporary poets, including himself, were better than classical poets, since classical poets repeated their meanings over and over and did not create new metaphors and rhymed prose:

Have ye forgotten, ye skillful in testing, ye sages of oozing and binding, How much new springs have given forth; how the colt has surpassed the full-grown steed; In refined expressions, and delightful metaphors, and ornate addresses, and admired cadences? And, if any one here will look diligently, is there in the ancients aught but ideas whose paths are worn, whose ranges are restricted; which have been handed down from them through the priority of their birth, not from any superiority in him who draws first at the well over him who comes after? Now truly know I one who when he composes colours richly; and when he expresses, embellishes; and when he is lengthy, finds golden thoughts; and when he is brief, baffles his imitator; and when he improvises, astonishes; and when he creates, cuts the envious.<sup>418</sup>

This is similar to what al-Jahiz stated:

Meanings are strewn about in the street (*al-ma'ani matruha fi al-tariq*), such that both the Arab and the non-Arab know them, and both the townspeople and the Bedouin know them.<sup>419</sup>

It seems that al-Hariri wanted to show off his linguistic and rhetorical abilities, which led him to criticize al-Buhturi. Al-Hariri knew that al-Buhturi was one of the greatest poets in Arabic literature, but he quotes a verse by al-Buhturi to show his superiority over him in particular, and over classical poets in general. Al-Hariri criticized classical poets through his

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<sup>418</sup>Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 1, p. 134:

أنسيتم يا جهابذة النقد، وموايذة الحل والعقد، ما أبرزته طوارف القرائح، وبرز فيه الجذع على القارح، من العبارات المهذبة، والاستعارات المستعذبة، والرسائل الموشحة، والأساجيع المستملحة!؟ وهل للقدماء إذا أنعم النظر، من حضر غير المعاني المطروقة الموارد، المعقولة الشوارد، المأثورة عنهم لتقدم الموالد، لا لتقدم الصادر على الوارد. وإني لأعرف الآن من إذا أنشأ وشى، وإذا عبر حبر، وإن أسهب أذهب، وإذا أوجز أعجز، وإن بده شده، ومتى اخترع خرع

<sup>419</sup>Al-Jahiz, *Kitab al-Hayawan* ["Book of Animals"], ed. by 'Abd al-Salam Muhammad Harun (Cairo: Mustafa al-Babi al-Halabi, 1965), vol. 3, p. 131.



protagonist, al-Saruji, on the grounds that they were not creative and failed to continuously improve their poetry.

### **Al-Hariri's Superiority over al-Hamadhani**

Al-Hariri believed that he was a better poet than al-Hamadhani and wanted to show his superiority, even though he claimed in his preface that he would not reach the level of Badi' al-Hamadhani in the *maqama* genre:

Then suggested to me one whose suggestion is as a decree, and obedience to whom is as a prize, That I should compose Assemblies, following in them the method of Badi' (although the lame steed attains not to outrun like the stout one).<sup>420</sup>

Al-Hariri also wrote:

Yet I acknowledge withal that Badi' (God shew him mercy) is a mighty passer of goals, a worker of wonders; And that he who assays after him to the composition of an Assembly, even though he be gifted with the eloquence of Kodameh, Does but scoop up of his overflow, and travels that path only by his guidance.<sup>421</sup>

In many respects, this modesty on al-Hariri's part is false. Throughout his work, he has al-Saruji recite prose and poetry that is specifically calculated to show his superiority over al-Hamadhani. In "*al-Maqamah al-Hajriyyah*" ("The *Maqama* of Hajr"), al-Saruji recites the following lines:

To blend the serious with the sportive humour? If al-Iskandari has been before me,

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<sup>420</sup> Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 1, p. 104:

فأشار من إشارته حكم، وطاعته غنم إلى أن أنشئ مقامات أتلو فيها تلو البديع، وإن لم يدرك الظالع شأو الضليع

<sup>421</sup> Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 1, p. 106:

هذا مع اعترافي بأن البديع رحمه الله سباق غايات، وصاحب آيات، وأن المتصدي بعده لإنشاء مقامة، ولو أوتي بلاغة قدامة، لا يغترف إلا من فضالت، ولا يسري ذلك المسرى إلا بدلالته

The dew precedes the shower, but the shower excels the dew in fructifying bounty.<sup>422</sup>

Al-Iskandari is the protagonist of the *Maqamat al-Hamadhani*. Therefore, al-Saruji is saying that he is better than al-Iskandari, a formulation which suggests that al-Hariri is better than al-Hamadhani. Al-Hamadhani was the first creative force of the *maqamat* genre, and anyone who tried to challenge the *Maqamat al-Hamadhani* would have faced two contradictions: first, the writer of the *maqamat* would need to imitate al-Hamadhani's *maqamat* model and structure; but second, the writer of the *maqamat* would need to create his own model and show his ability and creativity in the *maqamat* genre.<sup>423</sup> Although al-Hariri followed al-Hamadhani's model for the *maqamat* genre, the *Maqamat al-Hariri* includes both introductions and conclusions, both of which the *Maqamat al-Hamadhani* lack. Also, each *maqama* of the *Maqamat al-Hariri* has both a number and a title.<sup>424</sup> This organizing of the *Maqamat al-Hariri* was intended to show its superiority over the *Maqamat al-Hamadhani*.

Some of the titles of the *Maqamat al-Hamadhani* and the *Maqamat al-Hariri* are similar. Al-Hamadhani chose cities in Iraq and Iran to name some of his *maqamat*, whereas al-Hariri went beyond nearby regions to include Egypt, Syria, and the Arabian Peninsula. There are eight common titles that both al-Hamadhani and al-Hariri chose for their *maqamat*:

1. “*al-Maqamah al-Holwaniyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Holwan”)
2. “*al-Maqamah al-Dinariyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Kaylan”)
3. “*al-Maqamah al-Kufiyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Kufa”)
4. “*al-Maqamah al-Baghdadiyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Baghdad”)
5. “*al-Maqamah al-Shi’riyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Precinct”)

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<sup>422</sup>Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 2, p. 162:

ويعجن الجد بماء الهزل\*\*\*إن يكن الإسكندري قبلي  
فالطل قد يبدو أمام الويل\*\*\*والفضل للوايل لا للطل

<sup>423</sup>Ismail Youssef, *Al-Maqamat Maqrabah fi al-Tahwat wa al-Tabani wa al-Tajawuz* [“Maqamat Approach in Transformation and Adoption”] (Damascus, Syria: Manshurat Ithaad Kutab al-Arab, 2008).

<sup>424</sup>Abdelfattah Kilito, *Al-Maqamat: Al-Sard wa al-Ansaq al-Thaqafiyah* [“The Maqamat: The Narration and Cultural Patterns”], trans. Abdulkabir al-Sharqawi (Casablanca, Morocco: Toubkal Publishing Press, 2001).

6. “*al-Maqamah al-Shiraziyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Shiraz”)
7. “*al-Maqamah al-Sassaniyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Sassan”)
8. “*al-Maqamah al-Basriyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Basra”)

By examining these eight *maqamat* in both the *Maqamat al-Hamadhani* and the *Maqamat al-Hariri*, we can observe the characteristics of each one.<sup>425</sup>

### ***Al-Maqamah al-Holwaniyyah* (“The *Maqama* of Holwan”)**

Al-Hamadhani and al-Hariri wrote *maqamat* with the same title, “*al-Maqamah al-Holwaniyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Holwan”). However, each *maqama* has its own theme.

“*Al-Maqamah al-Holwaniyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Holwan”) by al-Hamadhani contains comical scenes, such as when ‘Isa ibn Hisham goes to a barber in Holwan to receive a haircut. The barber starts cutting his hair, but then leaves before finishing the job. Another barber comes and begins to complete ‘Isa’s haircut. Then the first barber returns. The two barbers fight each other and appeal to the owner of the barbershop, who requires them to bring ‘Isa to ask him who is the correct barber. ‘Isa leaves the barbershop and recites the following lines:

I make a firm promise to God in a binding vow,  
I will not shave my head as long as I live, even though I suffer  
inconvenience.<sup>426</sup>

This *maqama* shows how al-Hamadhani skillfully describes what happens to ‘Isa in a humorous manner, using his linguistic ability to make the passage suitable to the *maqama*. The joke of this story is good.

In al-Hariri’s “*al-Maqamah al-Holwaniyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Holwan”), the author

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<sup>425</sup>Mamoun Mohy al-Din al-Jinan, *Al-Hariri: Sahib al-Maqamat* [“Al-Hariri: The writer of *Maqamat*”] (Beirut, Lebanon: Dar al-Kitab al-Arabi, 1994).

<sup>426</sup>Al-Hamadhani, *The Maqamat of Badi’ al-Zaman al-Hamadhani*, p. 107:

أنا أعطي الله عهداً\*\*\*محكماً في النذر عقداً  
لا حلقت الرأس ما عهدت\*\*\*ت ولو لاقبت جهداً

displays his linguistic and literary abilities to demonstrate his superiority over classical Arab poets, as when al-Saruji hears al-Buhturi's (820–897 A.D.) verse:

As though she smiled from strung pearls or hailstones, or chamomile flowers.<sup>427</sup>

Al-Saruji then recites the following line to display his superiority over al-Buhturi:

My life a ransom for those teeth whose beauty charms, and which a purity adorns  
sufficing thee for all other.  
She parts her lips from fresh pearls, and from hail-stones, and from chamomile  
flowers, and from the palm shoot, and from bubbles.<sup>428</sup>

In addition, al-Saruji asks the audience to test his linguistic and literary abilities. Therefore, someone asks him to recite a verse resembling the following:

She rained pearls from the daffodil, and watered the rose, and bit upon the  
'unnab [a red fruit] with hailstone.<sup>429</sup>

Al-Saruji responds with the following lines:

I asked her when she met me to put off her crimson veil, and to endow my  
hearing with the sweetest of tidings:  
And she removed the ruddy light which covered the brightness of her moon, and  
she dropped pearls from a perfumed ring.<sup>430</sup>

Al-Hamadhani recites two verses in “*al-Maqamah al-Holwaniyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of

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<sup>427</sup>Al-Hamadhani, *The Maqamat of Badi' al-Zaman al-Hamadhani*, p. 115:

كأنما تبسم عن لؤلؤ\*\*\*منضد أو برد أو أقاحا

<sup>428</sup>Al-Hamadhani, *The Maqamat of Badi' al-Zaman al-Hamadhani*, p. 115:

نفسى الفداء لتغر راق ميسمه\*\*\*وزانه شنب ناهيك من شنب  
يفتر عن لؤلؤ رطب وعن برد\*\*\*وعن أقاح وعن طلع وعن حبا

<sup>429</sup>Al-Hamadhani, *The Maqamat of Badi' al-Zaman al-Hamadhani*, p. 116:

كأنما تبسم عن لؤلؤ\*\*\*منضد أو برد أو أقاح

<sup>430</sup>Al-Hamadhani, *The Maqamat of Badi' al-Zaman al-Hamadhani*, p. 116:

وأقبلت يوم جد البين في حلل\*\*\*سود تعض بنان النادم الحصر  
فلاح ليل على صبح أفلهما\*\*\*غصن وضرست البلور بالدرر

Holwan”), whereas al-Hariri recites fifteen verses in “*al-Maqamah al-Holwaniyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Holwan”), an increase meant to show his superiority over al-Hamadhani.

### ***Al-Maqamah al-Dinariyyah* (“The *Maqama* of Kaylan”)**

The story of “*al-Maqamah al-Dinariyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Kaylan”) in the *Maqamat al-Hamadhani* is that the narrator, ‘Isa ibn Hisham, sees two beggars asking him for money, and in return he asks each beggar to satire the other, with the promise that the better satirist will receive a *dinar*. The speech, therefore, is one of the author’s eloquent satires. One of the two men is al-Iskandari, the protagonist of the *Maqamat al-Hamadhani*, who says to his competition in prose:

O cold of the old woman<sup>431</sup>! O sultriness of Tammuz<sup>432</sup>! O filth of the goblet<sup>433</sup>! O non-current dirhem!<sup>434</sup> O conversation of the singers<sup>435</sup>! O unfortunate year! O unlucky star! O oppression of the nightmare! O sick headache! O ummu Hubein!<sup>436</sup> O ophthalmia! O morning of separation! O estrangement of friends! O hour of death! O scene of the martyrdom of al-Husain! O burden of debt! O mark of infamy! O ill-starred messenger! O banished for his meanness! O porridge of garlic! O dessert of the Zaqqu<sup>437</sup>! O Refuser to lend the things of the house! O year of the bubonic plague! O rebellious slave! O damnatory clause! O oft-repeated speech! O worse than (till) in various constructions! O worm of the privy! O furred garment in the summer-quarters! O fetid breath of the hawks! O

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<sup>431</sup>“O cold of the old woman”: That is, the four last days of February and three first days of March, thus called because they are the latter part of winter. Al-Hamadhani, *The Maqamat of Badi’ al-Zaman al-Hamadhani with Introduction and Notes*, trans. W. J. Prendergast (London and Dublin: Curzon Press, 1973), p. 228.

<sup>432</sup>Tammuz: The Syrian month sacred in ancient times to the god of that name, corresponding to July. This god is mentioned in Ezekiel 8:14. Al-Hamadhani, *The Maqamat of Badi’ al-Zaman al-Hamadhani*, p. 228.

<sup>433</sup>Al-Kus: A water-bottle, a goblet, Arabicized from the Persian. Al-Hamadhani, *The Maqamat of Badi’ al-Zaman al-Hamadhani*, p. 228.

<sup>434</sup>Dirhems are a form of currency is several Arab states.

<sup>435</sup>Conversation of the singers: Obviously, it is the singing of the singers and not their conversation that people want to hear. Al-Hamadhani, *The Maqamat of Badi’ al-Zaman al-Hamadhani*, p. 228.

<sup>436</sup>Ummu Hubein: A species of stinking lizard. Al-Hamadhani, *The Maqamat of Badi’ al-Zaman al-Hamadhani*, p. 228.

<sup>437</sup>Zaqqu: A certain kind of tree that has small leaves and is evil-smelling and bitter. It is found in Tehameh. It is also the name of the infernal tree whose fruit is the food of the people of hell. Al-Hamadhani, *The Maqamat of Badi’ al-Zaman al-Hamadhani*, p. 228.

peg of the tent<sup>438</sup>! O prop<sup>439</sup> of the pot! O non-recurring Wednesday!<sup>440</sup> O avarice of the vanquished at dice! O grumbling of the tongue! O lotium spadonis! O eating of the blind! O intercession of the naked!<sup>441</sup> O Saturday of the children!<sup>442</sup> O letter of condolence!<sup>443</sup> O pool of impurities! O stinginess of the man of Ahwaz!<sup>444</sup> O garrulousness of the man of Rayy!<sup>445</sup> By Heavens! If thou wert to place one of thy feet on Arwand<sup>446</sup> and the other on Demawand,<sup>447</sup> take in thy hand the rainbow and card the clouds in the garments of the angels, thou wouldst only be a wool-carder!<sup>448</sup>

The other man responds in prose:

O trainer of monkeys! O felt of the Jews! O fetid breath of the lions! O non-entity in existence! O dog in strife! O monkey on the carpet! O pumpkin with pulse!<sup>449</sup> O less than nothing! O fumes of naphtha!<sup>450</sup> O stench of the armpit! O decline of power! O halo of death! O viler than one to whom clings the disgrace of divorce and refuses to return the marriage dowry! O mud of the road! O water

<sup>438</sup>O peg of the tent: more disheveled than a tent peg. Al-Hamadhani, *The Maqamat of Badi' al-Zaman al-Hamadhani*, p. 229.

<sup>439</sup>Prop: literally, the handle of the upper millstone. Al-Hamadhani, *The Maqamat of Badi' al-Zaman al-Hamadhani*, p. 229.

<sup>440</sup>Non-recurring Wednesday: The unlucky Wednesdays of the month, to which this is an allusion, are those which have the number four, e.g., the fourth, fourteenth, or twenty-fourth of the month; or the fourth Wednesday before the end of the month. Al-Hamadhani, *The Maqamat of Badi' al-Zaman al-Hamadhani*, p. 229.

<sup>441</sup>O intercession of the naked: That is, one who is so utterly destitute that he needs to ask for himself, not for others. Al-Hamadhani, *The Maqamat of Badi' al-Zaman al-Hamadhani*, p. 229.

<sup>442</sup>O Saturday of children: Succeeding the holiday on Friday. Al-Hamadhani, *The Maqamat of Badi' al-Zaman al-Hamadhani*, p. 229.

<sup>443</sup>O letter of condolence! Because it is supposed to be a very difficult thing to write if the deceased is not a near relative, or because it is a painful thing for one who is bereaved to read. Al-Hamadhani, *The Maqamat of Badi' al-Zaman al-Hamadhani*, p. 229.

<sup>444</sup>Stinginess of the man of Ahwaz: The people of Ahwaz were notorious for their avarice, stupidity, and the vileness of their inclinations. Al-Hamadhani, *The Maqamat of Badi' al-Zaman al-Hamadhani*, p. 229.

<sup>445</sup>Garrulousness of the man of Rayy: The word also means meddlesomeness, or immoderation of any kind. Al-Hamadhani, *The Maqamat of Badi' al-Zaman al-Hamadhani*, p. 229.

<sup>446</sup>Arwand or Elwand, the Orontes of the ancients, at the foot of which lies the town of Hamadhan. Al-Hamadhani, *The Maqamat of Badi' al-Zaman al-Hamadhani*, p. 229.

<sup>447</sup>Demawand: A mountain north of Teheran. The man's feet would thus be more than two hundred miles apart! Al-Hamadhani, *The Maqamat of Badi' al-Zaman al-Hamadhani*, p. 229.

<sup>448</sup>Al-Hamadhani, *The Maqamat of Badi' al-Zaman al-Hamadhani*, p. 129:

يا برد العجوز، يا كربة تموز، يا وسخ الكوز، يا درهما لا يجوز، يا حديث المغنين، يا سنة البوس، يا كوكب النحوس، يا وطء الكابوس، يا تخمة الرؤوس، يا أم حنين، يا رمد العين، يا غداة البين، يا فراق المحبين، يا ساعة الحين، يا مقتل الحسين، يا ثقل الدين، يا سمة الشين، يا بريد الشوم، يا بطريد اللوم، يا ثريد الثوم، يا بادية الزقوم، يا منع ما كنت إلا حلاجاً

<sup>449</sup>Pulse: Arabicized from the Persian Sankrit masha, peas. *The Maqamat of Badi' al-Zaman al-Hamadhani*, p. 229.

<sup>450</sup>O fumes of naphtha: Apparently a genuine Arabic word, from "it (water) welled forth, and what oozes or exudes from a mountain as though it were sweat from the sides of the rock." *The Maqamat of Badi' al-Zaman al-Hamadhani*, p. 229.

taken in the state of fasting!<sup>451</sup> O shaker of the bone!<sup>452</sup> O accelerator of digestion! O tartar of the teeth! O filth of the ears! O tougher than the rope of coconut fiber! O less than a fals!<sup>453</sup> O more traitorous than a tear! O more rebellious than a needle! O direction of the boot! O landing-place of the palms! O the word “would that”! O leaking of the house! O such and such!<sup>454</sup> By Heavens! Wert thou to place thy seant on the stars and extend thy feet to limits of the world, take Sirius as a boot and the Pleiades as a raiment, and wert to make the sky a loom, weave the air into a coat, make its woof with the Flying Vulture and weave it with the revolving sphere, thou wouldest be but a weaver!<sup>455456</sup>

Then ‘Isa ibn Hisham says:

By Heavens! I did not know which of the two I should prefer, for nought proceeded from them save marvelous language, wonderful aptness, and intense enmity. So I left the *dinar* before them undivided, and I know not what Time did with them.<sup>457</sup>

On the other hand, the story of “*al-Maqamah al-Dinariyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Kaylan”) in the *Maqamat al-Hariri* is that the narrator, al-Harith ibn Hammam, sees a poor man who needs money, so al-Harith asks the poor man to praise the *dinar* in poetry in order to receive the charity. The poor man responds with the following lines of poetry:

How noble is that yellow one, whose yellowness is pure.  
Which traverses the regions, and whose journeying is afar.

<sup>451</sup>In a state of fasting: Anything eaten or drunk in a state of fasting. *The Maqamat of Badi’ al-Zaman al-Hamadhani*, p. 230.

<sup>452</sup>Shaker of the bone: That is, ague. *The Maqamat of Badi’ al-Zaman al-Hamadhani*, p. 230.

<sup>453</sup>A fals: A small copper coin, the forty-eighth part of a dirhem; i.e., about half a farthing. A loan word from Aramaic. *The Maqamat of Badi’ al-Zaman al-Hamadhani*, p. 230.

<sup>454</sup>O such and such: Or “so and so,” referring to something too gross to mention. *The Maqamat of Badi’ al-Zaman al-Hamadhani*, p. 230.

<sup>455</sup>A weaver: The vocation of the weaver appears to have been regarded by the Arabs as a degrading one. *The Maqamat of Badi’ al-Zaman al-Hamadhani*, p. 230.

<sup>456</sup>Al-Hamadhani, *The Maqamat of Badi’ al-Zaman al-Hamadhani*, p. 130:

يا قراد القروء، يا ليود اليهود، يا نكهة الأسود، يا عدماً في وجود، يا كلباً في الهراش، يا قرداً في الفراش، يا قرعية بماش، يا أقل من لاش، يا دخان النفط، يا صنان الإبط، يا زوال المل، يا هلال الهلك، يا أخبث ممن بآء بذل الطلاق، ومنع الصداق، يا وحل الطريق، يا ماء على الريق، يا محرك العظم، يا معجل الهضم، يا قلع الأسنان، يا وسخ الأذان، يا أجر من فلس، يا أقل من فلس، يا أفصح من عبرة، يا أبغى من إبرة، يا مهيب الخف، يا مدرجة الأكف، يا كلمة ليت، يا وكف البيت، يا كيت وكيت، والله لو ضعت استنك على النجوم، ودليت رجلك في التخوم، واتخذت الشعرى خفاً، والثرى رفاً، وجعلت السماء منوالاً وحكت الهواء سربالاً، فسديته بالنسر الطائر، وأحمته بالفلك الدائر، ما كنت إلا حائكاً

<sup>457</sup>Al-Hamadhani, *The Maqamat of Badi’ al-Zaman al-Hamadhani*, p. 130:

فوالله ما علمت أي الرجلين أوثر وما منهما إلا بديع الكلام، عجيب المقام، ألد الخصام، فتركتهما، والدينار مشاع بينهما، وانصرفت وما أدري ما صنع الدهر بهما

Told abroad are its fame and repute:  
 Its lines are set as the secret sign of wealth;  
 Its march is coupled with the success of endeavors;  
 Its bright look is loved by mankind;  
 As though its ore had been molten of their hearts.  
 By its aid whoever has gotten it in his purse assails boldly,  
 Though kindred be perished, or tardy to help.  
 Oh, charming are its purity and brightness;  
 Charming are its sufficiency and help.  
 How many a ruler is there whose rule has been perfected by it!  
 How many a sumptuous one is there whose grief, but for it, would be endless!  
 How many a host of cares has one charge of it put to flight!  
 How many a full moon has a sum of it brought down!  
 How many a one burning with rage, whose coal is flaming,  
 Has it been secretly whispered to, and then his anger has softened.  
 How many a prisoner, whom his kin had yielded,  
 Has it delivered, so that his gladness has been unmingled,  
 Now by the Truth of the Lord whose creation brought it forth,  
 Were it not for his fear, I should say its power is supreme.<sup>458</sup>

Al-Harith gives the poor man the *dinar*, and then asks the poor man to satirize the *dinar* in poetry in order to get another one. The poor man says the following lines:

Ruin on it for a deceiver and insincere,  
 The yellow one with two faces like a hypocrite!

<sup>458</sup> Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 1, p. 119:

أكرم به أصفى رافت صفرته  
 جواب آفاق نر امت سفرته  
 مأثورة سمعته وشهرته  
 قد أودعت سر الغنى أسرته  
 وقارنت نجح المساعي خطرته  
 وحببت إلى الأنام غرته  
 كأنما من القلوب نقرته  
 به بصول من حوته صرته  
 وإن تغانت أو توانت عترته  
 يا حبذا نضاره ونصرته  
 وحبذا مغناته ونصرته  
 كم أمر به استنبتت إمرته  
 ومترف لولاه دامت حسرته  
 وجيش هم هزمته كرتة  
 وبدر ثم أنزلته بدرته  
 ومستشيط تنلطي جمرته  
 أسر نجواه فلانت شرته  
 وكم أسير أسلمته أسرته  
 أنقذه حتى صفت مسرته  
 وحق مولى أبدعته فطرته  
 لولا التقى لقلت جلنت قدرته



It shows forth with two qualities to the eye of him that looks on it,  
The adornment of the loved one, the color of the lover.  
Affection for it, think they who judge truly,  
Tempt men to commit that which shall anger their Maker.  
But for it no thief's right hand were cut off;  
Nor would tyranny be displayed by the impious;  
Nor would the niggard shrink from the night-farer;  
Nor would men call to God from the envious who casts at them.  
Moreover, the worst quality that it possesses,  
Is that it helps thee not in straits,  
Save by fleeing from thee like a runaway slave.  
Well done he who casts it away from a hill-top,  
And who, when it whispers to him with the whispering of a lover,  
Says to it in the words of the truth-speaking, the veracious,  
"I have no mind for intimacy with thee, begone!"<sup>459</sup>

When al-Harith gives the poor man another *dinar*, he discovers that the beggar is the protagonist, Abu Zayd al-Saruji.

Al-Hamadhani and al-Hariri wrote about the same title and content. In the *Maqamat al-Hamadhani*, two men satirize each other in prose for a *dinar*, and one of them is al-Iskandari. On the other hand, a man is praising and satirizing a *dinar* in poetry to reward two *dinars* in the *Maqamat al-Hariri*. Al-Hariri wants to change some of al-Hamadhani's concepts, including the idea that al-Hariri writes his own poetry in each *maqama*, whereas al-Hamadhani did not.

<sup>459</sup>Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 1, p. 120:

تَبَّأَ لَهُ مِنْ خَادِعٍ مِمَّا ذُقَ  
أَصْفَرُ ذِي وَجْهَيْنِ كَالْمَنَافِقِ  
يَبْدُو بِوَصْفَيْنِ لِعَيْنِ الرَّامِقِ  
زِينَةُ مَعْشُوقٍ وَلَوْنُ عَاشِقِ  
وَحِبِّهِ عِنْدَ ذَوِي الْحَفَائِقِ  
يَدْعُو إِلَى ارْتِكَابِ سَخَطِ الْخَالِقِ  
لَوْلَاهُ لَمْ تَقْطَعْ بِيَمِينِ سَارِقِ  
وَلَا بَدَتْ مَظْلَمَةٌ مِنْ فَاسِقِ  
وَلَا أَشْمَأَزَ بَاخِلٌ مِنْ طَارِقِ  
وَلَا شَكَا الْمَمْطُولُ مَطْلَ الْعَانِقِ  
وَلَا أَسْتَعِيذُ مِنْ حَسُودِ رَاشِقِ  
وَشَرُّ مَا فِيهِ مِنَ الْخِلَافِقِ  
أَنْ لَيْسَ بِيَعْنِي عَنْكَ فِي الْمَضَائِقِ  
إِلَّا إِذَا فَرَّارِ الْأَبْقِ  
وَأَهْأَ لَمَنْ يَقْذِفُهُ مِنْ حَالِقِ  
وَمَنْ إِذَا نَاجَاهُ نَجْوَى الرَّامِقِ  
قَالَ لَهُ قَوْلَ الْمُحَقِّقِ الصَّادِقِ  
لَا رَأْيَ فِي وَصْلِكَ لِي فَفَارِقِ

Thus, al-Hariri writes about the same topic as al-Hamadhani chose, but he selects poetry to highlight one of his innovations to the *maqama* genre. As a result, critics suggest that al-Hariri is superior to al-Hamadhani in this *maqama*.

### ***Al-Maqamah al-Kufiyyah* (“The *Maqama* of Kufa”)**

In “*al-Maqamah al-Kufiyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Kufa”), al-Hamadhani and al-Hariri write about the same topic and concept, which implies that al-Hariri builds his *maqama* upon al-Hamadhani’s *maqama*.

In al-Hamadhani’s “*al-Maqamah al-Kufiyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Kufa”), the author writes that ‘Isa ibn Hisham traveled to Kufa, where someone knocked on ‘Isa’s door, asking for food. ‘Isa likes the eloquent speech of the stranger, so he opens the door and finds that the stranger is al-Iskandari, who then recites the following lines:

Let not my demanding deceive thee,  
I am in a state of affluence so great that the pocket of joy would tear,  
I could, if I wished, have ceilings of gold.<sup>460</sup>

Al-Hariri, in “*al-Maqamah al-Kufiyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Kufa”), puts forward the same concept, but the text is different. In this instance, al-Hariri is hanging out with his friends at night when al-Saruji knocks on the door and recites the following lines:

O people of the mansion, be ye guarded from ill!  
Meet not harm as long as ye live!  
Lo! The night which glooms has driven  
To your abode one disheveled, dust laden,  
A brother of journeying, that has been lengthened, extended,  
Till he has become bent and yellow

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<sup>460</sup>Al-Hamadhani, *The Maqamat of Badi’ al-Zaman al-Hamadhani*, p. 39:

لا يغرنك الذي\*\*\*أنا فيه من الطلب  
أنا في ثروة تشف\*\*\*ق لها بردة الطرب  
أنا لو شئت لاتخذ\*\*\*ت سقوفاً من الذهب

Like the new moon of the horizon when it smiles.  
And now he approaches your court-yard, begging boldly,  
And repairs to you before all people else,  
To seek from you food and a lodging.  
Ye have in him a guest contented, ingenuous,  
One pleased with all, whether sweet or bitter,  
One who will withdraw from you, publishing your bounty.<sup>461</sup>

Al-Harith and his companions open the door to the stranger and discover that he is al-

Saruji. When they ask him to tell them one of his marvelous personal stories, he tells them that he is hungry and recites the following lines:

Hail, people of this dwelling,  
May ye live in the ease of a plenteous life! What have ye for a son of the road,  
one crushed to the sand,  
Worn with journeys, stumbling in the night-dark night,  
Aching in entrails, which enclose nought but hunger?  
For two days he has not tasted the savor of a meal:  
In your land there is no refuge for him  
And already the van of the drooping darkness has gloomed  
And through bewilderment he is in restlessness.  
Now in this abode is there any one, sweet of spring,  
Who will say to me, "Throw away thy staff and enter:  
Rejoice in a cheerful welcome and a ready meal?"<sup>462</sup>

<sup>461</sup>Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 1, pp. 127–128:

يا أهل ذا المعنى وقبتم شرا  
ولا لقبتم ما بقبتم ضرا  
قد دفع الليل الذي اكفرهرا  
إلى ذراكم شعنا مغبرا  
أخا سفار طال وإسبطرا  
حتى انتنى محقوقا مصفرا  
مثل هلال الأفق حين افترا  
وقد عرا فناءكم معترا  
وأمكم دون الأنام طرا  
بيغي قرى منكم ومستقرا  
فدونكم ضيفا قنوعا حرا  
يرضى بما احلولى وما أمرا  
وينتني عنكم ينث البرا

<sup>462</sup>Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 1, pp. 129–130:

حيينتم يا أهل هذا المنزل \*\*\* وعشتم في خفض عيش خضل  
ما عندكم لابن سبيل مرمل \*\*\* نضو سرى خابط ليل أليل  
جوي الحشى على الطوى مشتمل \*\*\* ما ذاق مذ يومان طعم مائل  
ولا له في أرضكم من موئل \*\*\* وقد دجا جنح الظلام المسبل  
وهو من الحيرة في تململ \*\*\* فهل بهذا الربيع عذب المنهل  
يقول لي ألق عصالك وادخل \*\*\* وابشر ببشرٍ وقرى معجل

A young man responds to al-Sarujī with the following lines:

Now by the sanctity of the Shaykh who ordained hospitality,  
And founded the House of Pilgrimage in the Mother of cities,  
We have nought for the night-farer when he visits us  
But conversation and a lodging in our hall.  
For how should he entertain whom hinders from sleepfulness  
Hunger which peels his bones when it assails him?  
Now what thinkest thou of my tale? What thinkest thou?<sup>463</sup>

Al-Sarujī discovers that this young man is his own son, but al-Sarujī does not have money to help him. Therefore, he does not tell his son that he is his father. Al-Harith and his companions are sad, so they decide to help al-Sarujī by giving him money. Al-Sarujī and al-Harith leave the house, at which point al-Sarujī admits to al-Harith that he does not have a son, and he tricked him. Al-Sarujī then recites the following lines:

O thou who didst fancy the mirage to be water when I quoted to thee what I  
quoted!  
I thought not that my guile would be hidden, or that it would be doubtful what I  
meant.  
By All, I have no Barraḥ for a spouse; I have no son from whom to take a bye-  
name.  
Nothing is mine but divers kinds of magic, in which I am original and copy no  
one:  
They are such as Al Asmaʿi<sup>464</sup> tells not of in what he has told; such as Al  
Komayt<sup>465</sup> never wove.  
These I use when I will reach whatever my hand would pluck:  
And were I to abandon them, changed would be my state, nor should I gain what  
I now gain.

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<sup>463</sup>Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 1, p. 130:

وحرمة الشيخ الذي سن القرى  
وأسس المحجوج في أم القرى  
ما عندنا لطارق إذا عرا  
سوى الحديث والمناخ في الذرى  
وكيف يقري من نفى عنه الكرى  
طوى برى أعظمه لما انبرى  
فما ترى فيما ذكرت ما ترى

<sup>464</sup>Al-Asmaʿi (740–828 A.D.) was a philologist and grammarian in Basra, Iraq.

<sup>465</sup>Al-Kumayt ibn Zayd al-Asadi (d. 743 A.D.) was a poet in Kufa, Iraq.

So allow my excuse; nay, pardon me, if I have done wrong or crime.<sup>466</sup>

Al-Hariri wrote a longer *maqama* than al-Hamadhani and included more poetry to show his superior skill.

### ***Al-Maqamah al-Baghdadiyyah* (“The *Maqama* of Baghdad”)**

Al-Hamadhani and al-Hariri wrote a *maqama* with the same title, “*al-Maqamah al-Baghdadiyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Baghdad”). However, each one has its own theme.

Food and drink are the very sustenance of life. If we cannot eat and drink, we cannot live; we would perish. Food nourishes, provides energy, and enables survival. It gives vitality. In *God’s Banquet*, Van Gelder tells us that in the ordinary life of people, words cannot replace the value of food: “First comes food, then poetry and piety.”<sup>467</sup> Food is primary to the sustenance of life. Van Gelder cites an Arabic proverb that expresses this maxim well: “I was too busy with barley and wheat to bother about poetry and piety.”<sup>468</sup>

Al-Hamadhani in “*al-Maqamah al-Baghdadiyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Baghdad”) offers a good example of how the trickster, al-Iskandari, outwits a person to eat, and thus sustain himself and his life. In the story, al-Iskandari relates that he is looking for food (dates), but has no money to buy them. He journeys into the city and comes across a rustic man whom he manages to convince that he is an old friend who knew the man’s father personally. He then

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<sup>466</sup>Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 1, p. 132:

يا من تظنى السراب ماء\*\*\*لما رويت الذي رويت  
ما خلت أن يستسر مكري\*\*\*وأن يخيل الذي عنيت  
والله ما برة بعربي\*\*\*ولا لي ابن به اكتنيت  
وإنما لي فنون سحر\*\*\*أبدعت فيها وما اقتنيت  
لما يحكها الأصمعي فيما\*\*\*حكى ولا حاكها الكميت  
تخذتها وصلة إلى ما\*\*\*تجنیه كفي متى اشتريت  
ولو تعافيتها لحالت\*\*\*حالي ولما أحو ما حويت  
فمهد العذر أو فسامح\*\*\*إن كنت أكرمت أو جنيت

<sup>467</sup>Geert Jan Van Gelder, *God’s Banquet: Food in Classical Arabic Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), p. 57.

<sup>468</sup>Van Gelder, *God’s Banquet*, p. 57.

exhorts the rustic to go to the market so that they can enjoy some roasted meat. But he does so in a way that suggests he will pay the food bill, as he takes a controlling role in ordering the food from the meat seller:

Put aside for Abu Zaid a portion from this friend meat and then weigh him some of this sweetmeat. Take some of those plates and place upon them some of these wafer-cakes and sprinkle upon them some juice of the Summak berry, in order that Abu Zaid may eat and relish it.<sup>469</sup>

After eating, Abu Zaid uses the excuse that they need water to wash down the meal to escape paying. He watches from a distance as Abu Zaid is not only stuck with paying the food bill, but is also struck by a blow and chastised by the seller of fried meat. The envoi of the story, emphasizing this theme of the basic human need for self-preservation, is:

To obtain thy livelihood, make use of every means;  
Do not be satisfied with any condition,  
But be equal to any enormity;  
For man becomes incapable, there is no doubt about it.<sup>470</sup>

Al-Hamadhani's *maqama* is funny and comedic. The description of food and sweets is good.

A parallel to this theme is found in the African American tales of Br'er Rabbit, in which Br'er Rabbit performs tricks to secure food, shelter, or his life by duping more powerful animals. In those stories, his master, Master John, also makes Br'er Rabbit what Jeanne Rosier Smith calls a "folk hero whose behavior became a model for survival."<sup>471</sup>

Al-Hariri followed al-Hamadhani in the title and begging theme of "*al-Maqamah al-*

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<sup>469</sup>Al-Hamadhani, *The Maqamat of Badi' al-Zaman al-Hamadhani*, p. 55.

<sup>470</sup>Al-Hamadhani, *The Maqamat of Badi' al-Zaman al-Hamadhani*, p. 56:

أعمل لرزقك كل آله\*\*\*لا تقعدن بكل حاله  
وانهض بكل عزيمة\*\*\*فالمرء يعجز لا محالة

<sup>471</sup>Jeanne Rosier Smith, *Writing Tricksters: Mythic Gambols in American Ethnic Fiction* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1997), p. 113.

*Baghdadiyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Baghdad”), but his story concerns an old woman who speaks eloquently to a literary audience, including al-Harith ibn Hammam. When the audience asks the old woman to continue speaking, she recites the following lines to describe her tough life:

I complain to God, with the complaining of the sick, against the trouble of the unjust, the hateful time.  
O friends, I am of people who prospered a long time, while the eyelid of fortune was cast down before them:  
Their glory there was none to forbid, and their fame was spread abroad among men.  
When foraging failed in the ashy year they were a goodly meadow:  
Their fires were kindled to the travelers, and they fed the guest with fresh meat:  
Their neighbor passed not his night in hunger, nor through fear did he say,  
“Choking hinders me.”  
But the changes of destruction have made their seas of bounty to sink away from them, which I thought not would ever sink:  
And put away from among them, into the bowels of the earth, those that were lions of guarding, healers of the sick.  
That on which I carry is now my back, after being my beast, and my home is in the hollow, after being on the height.  
My little ones fail not to mourn their misery, of which there is some flash every day.  
When the pious man prays to his Lord by night, they also call Him with gushing tears.  
O thou who feedest the young raven in the nest, and settest the bone which is broken, and again broken;  
Appoint to us, O God, one whose honor is pure and washed from the filth of blame;  
Who will quench for us the fire of hunger, though only with a mess of the sour milk or the butter milk.  
Now is there any who will remove what is come upon us, and make prize of thanks long and large?  
For, by Him to whom the forelocks shall bow down in the day when the faces of the assemblage shall be black and white,  
Were it not for these, my cheek would not expose itself, nor would I assay to the stringing of verse.<sup>472</sup>

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<sup>472</sup>Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 1, pp. 178–179:

أشكو إلى الله اشتكاء المريض\*\*\*ريب الزمان المتعدي البغيض  
يا قوم إني من أناس غنوا\*\*\*دهراً وجفن الدهر عنهم غضيض  
فخارهم ليس له دافع\*\*\*وصيتهم بين الورى مستقيض  
كانوا إذا ما نجعة أعوزت\*\*\*في السنة الشهباء روضاً أريض  
تشب للسايرين نيرانهم\*\*\*ويطعمون الضيف لحماً غريض

The audience gives the old woman money, and she leaves. Meanwhile, al-Harith follows her and discovers that the old woman is al-Saruji acting as an old woman to trick the literary scholars. Therefore, al-Harith gets angry with al-Saruji, who lies down and speaks the following lines:

Oh! Would I knew whether the time had gotten a knowledge of my power:  
 Whether it had learnt of learnt not the real truth how deep I go in deceiving;  
 How many of its sons I have won of by my wife and my fraud:  
 How oft I have sallied forth upon them in my known form and in disguise;  
 To catch one set by preaching, and other by poetry;  
 To excite one mind by vinegar, and another by wine;  
 Being at one time Sakhr, at another time the sister of Sakhr,  
 Now if I had followed the frequented path all the length of my life,  
 My fire and my portion would have failed, my need and my loss would have  
 lasted.  
 So say to him who blames, “This is my excuse—take it.”<sup>473</sup>

“*Al-Maqamah al-Baghdadiyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Baghdad”) by al-Hamadhani is different from “*al-Maqamah al-Baghdadiyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Baghdad”) by al-Hariri.

ما بات جار لهم ساعياً\*\*\*ولا لروع قال حال الجريض  
 فغبيضت منهم صروف الردى\*\*\*بحار جود لما نخلها تغبيض  
 وأودعت منهم بطون الثرى\*\*\*أسد التحامي وأساءة المريض  
 فمحملي بعد المطايا المطا\*\*\*وموطي بعد البفاع الحضيض  
 وأفرخي ما تأتلي تشنكي\*\*\*بؤسا له في كل يوم ومبيض  
 إذا دعا القانت في ليله\*\*\*مولاه نادوه بدمع بفيض  
 يا رازق النعاب في عشه\*\*\*وجابر العظم الكسير المهيبض  
 أنحلنا اللهم من عرضه\*\*\*من دنس الذم نقي رحيض  
 يطفئ نار الجوع عنا ولو\*\*\*بمذقة من حازر أو مخييض  
 فهل فتى يكشف ما نابهم\*\*\*ويغنم الشكر الطويل العريض  
 فوالذي تعنو النواصي له\*\*\*يوم وجوه الجمع سود وببيض  
 لولا هم لم تبد لي صفحة\*\*\*ولا تصديت لنظم القريض

<sup>473</sup> Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 1, p. 180:

يا ليت شعري أدهري\*\*\*أحاط علماً بقدري  
 وهل درى كنه غوري\*\*\*في الخدع أم ليس يدري  
 كم قد قمرت بنيه\*\*\*بحيلتي وبمكري  
 وكم برزت بعرف\*\*\*عليهم وبنكر  
 أصطاد قوماً بوعظ\*\*\*وأخرين بشعر  
 وأستقز بخل\*\*\*وعقلاً وعقلاً بخمر  
 وتارة أنا صخر\*\*\*وتارة أخت صخر  
 ولو سلكت سبيلاً\*\*\*مألوفاً طول عمري  
 لأخاب قدحي وقدحي\*\*\*ودام عسري وخسري  
 فقل لمن لام هذا\*\*\*عذري فدونك عذري



Both *maqamat*, however, are begging stories, of which al-Hamadhani and al-Hariri were masters.

### ***Al-Maqamah al-Shi'riyyah* (“The *Maqama* of the Precinct”)**

Both al-Hamadhani and al-Hariri wrote a *maqama* entitled “*al-Maqamah al-Shi'riyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of the Precinct”), which is about riddles. Al-Hamadhani’s version starts with ‘Isa ibn Hisham sitting with a group of people and discussing poetry, as a young man stands and listens to them. They ask the young man to sit down, but he declines. When the young man eventually sits down, he asks them questions and riddles regarding Arabic poetry. However, they do not know the answers, as ‘Isa narrates:

Then he said: “Choose five of these problems so that I may explain them, and do ye exert yourselves a few days in finding out the rest. It may be that your vessel will sweat, and your minds be generous. Then, if ye fail, let us have a fresh reunion in order that I may explain the remainder.”

And among those we selected was the verse which is unseemly in original intent, but can be made proper by punctuation. So we asked him concerning it, and he said: “It is the verse of Abu Nuwas:

And we passed the night, God regarding us as the vilest company, trailing the skirts of wickedness, and no boast.”

We asked: “And the verse whose dissolving is binding up and the whole of it is paid down?” He replied: “It is the verse of Al ‘Aasha:<sup>474</sup>

All our *dirhems* are good, so delay us not by testing them.”

And the paraphrase of that would be to say: “Our *dirhems* are good, all of them, so delay us not by testing them.” Now the meter is not destroyed by this paraphrase. We asked: “And the verse half of which is prolongation and half rejection?” He replied: “It is the verse of al-Bakri:

A genuine *dinar* came to thee short of sixty fals,  
From the most generous of men, except as regards origin, development, and  
personality.’

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<sup>474</sup>Al-‘Aasha (570–625 A.D.) was a pre-Islamic poet from Riyadh, Najd in Saudi Arabia.

We asked: “And the verse that the sheep eat when they please?” He said: “It is the verse of the poet:

May separation be cut off! May separation be severed!  
I perceive separation to be a great severer of friends.”

We asked: “And the verse which extends till it reaches six pounds?” He replied: “It is the verse of Ibn al-Rumi:<sup>475</sup>

When he gives, he makes not his gift an obligation, and he says to my soul,  
O soul respite me.

Said ‘Isa ibn Hisham: “Then we knew that the problems were not destitute of beauty. So we tried hard and we found out some, and obtained information about the others. Then I recited after him, while he was running quickly away:

Men differ in excellence and some resemble others.  
But for him I should have been like Radwa in length, depth, and breadth.”<sup>476</sup>

Al-Hariri’s “*al-Maqamah al-Shi’riyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of the Precinct”) is about al-Harith arriving in Baghdad. Al-Harith goes to the office of the city governor, where he finds an eloquent old man complaining that his son was plagiarizing his father’s poetry. The son denies that. The city governor then asks both the old man and the son to read their two poems. The old man recites the following lines:

<sup>475</sup>Ibn al-Rumi (836–896 A.D.) was a poet in the Abbasid Caliphate.

<sup>476</sup>Radwa is a mountain near Medina in Saudi Arabia. Al-Hamadhani, *The Maqamat of Badi’ al-Zaman al-Hamadhani*, pp. 131–133:

فقال: اختاروا من هذه المسائل خمساً لأفسرها واجتهدوا في الباقي أياماً فلعن إناؤكم يرشح، ولعل خاطركم يسمح، ثم إن عجزتم فاستأنفوا التلاقي  
لأفسر الباقي. وكان مما اخترنا البيت الذي سمح وضعه، وحسن قطعه، فسألناه عنه، فقال: هو قول أبي نواس  
فبنتنا يرانا الله شر عصابة\*\*\*تجرر أذيال الفسوق ولا فخر  
قلنا: فالبيت الذي حله عقد، وكله نقد، فقال قول الأعشى

دراهمنا كلها جيد\*\*\*فلا تحبسنا بتتقادها  
وحله أن يقال: دراهمنا جيد كلها، ولا يخرج بهذا الحل عن وزنه، قلنا: فالبيت الذي نصفه مد، ونصف رد، قال: قول البكري  
أتاك دينار صدق\*\*\*ينقص ستين فلسا  
من أكرم الناس إلا\*\*\*أصلاً وفرعاً ونفسا

قلنا: فالبيت الذي يأكله الشاء، متى شاء. قال: بيت القائل  
فما للنوى جد النوى قطع النوى\*\*\*رأيت النوى قطاعة للقرائن  
قلنا: فالبيت الذي طال، حتى بلغ ستة أرتال. قال: بيت ابن الرومي

إذا من لم يمنن بمن يمنه\*\*\*وقال لنفسه أيها النفس أمهلي  
قال عيسى بن هشام: فعلنا أن المسائل ليست عواطل، واجتهدنا. فبعضها وجدنا، وبعضها استقدنا. فقلت على أثره وهو عاذٍ  
تفاوت الناس فضلاً\*\*\*وأشبه البعض بعضا  
لولا ه كنت كرضوى\*\*\*طولاً وعمقاً و عرضاً

O thou who courtest the base world, know that it is a net of destruction, a pool of impurities;  
 A habitation which, when it makes thee laugh today, makes thee weep tomorrow: away with such a habitation!  
 When its clouds overshadow no thirst is refreshed by them; for they are a dry cloud that deceives.  
 Its forays cease not, nor its prisoner ransomed even by the mightiest of stakes. Towards how many a one made wanton by false confidence in it, until he has shown himself contumacious, one overstepping his power,  
 Has it turned the back of the shield, and made its blades to lap of his blood, and leaped to the taking of revenge!  
 So keep guard on thy life, lest it pass away lost in the world, left astray without any protection.  
 And cut the bonds of thy love for the world and thy seeking of it; so shalt thou find right guidance and comfort of the inner parts.  
 And when it makes a truce from its stratagem, be thou on thy watch against the warring of enemies, and the assault of treacherous:  
 And know that its calamities come suddenly, even though the goal be far, and the journeys of the fates be tardy.<sup>477</sup>

The old man's son speaks the following lines:

O thou who courtest the base world, know that it is a net of destruction,  
 A habitation which, when it makes thee laugh today, makes thee weep tomorrow;  
 When its clouds overshadow no thirst is refreshed by them.  
 Its forays cease not, nor its prisoner ransomed.  
 Towards how many a one made wanton by false confidence in it, until he has shown himself contumacious,  
 Has it turned the back of the shield, and made its blades to lap of his blood!  
 So keep guard on thy life, lest it pass away lost in the world, left astray;  
 And cut the bonds of thy love for the world and thy seeking of it; so shalt thou find right guidance.  
 And when it makes a truce from its stratagem, be thou on thy watch against the warring of enemies:

<sup>477</sup> Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 1, pp. 236–237:

يا خاطب الدنيا الدنيا الدنيا إنها\*\*\*شرك الردى وقرارة الأكدار  
 دار متى ما أضحكك في يومها\*\*\*أبكت غداً بعداً لها من دار  
 وإذا أظلمت سحابها لم ينتفع\*\*\*منه صدى لجهامه الغرار  
 غاراتها ما تنقضي وأسيرها\*\*\*لا يفندي بجلائل الأخطار  
 كم مزدي بغرورها حتى بدا\*\*\*متمرداً متجاوز المقدار  
 قابلت له ظهر المجن وأولغت\*\*\*فيه المدى ونزت لأخذ الثار  
 فاربأ بعمرك أن يمر مضيقاً\*\*\*فيها سدى من غير ما استظهار  
 واقع علائق حبيها وطلابها\*\*\*تلق الهدى ورفاهة الأسرار  
 وارقب إذا ما سالمت من كيدها\*\*\*حرب العدى وتوثب الغدار  
 واعلم بأن خطوبها تقجا ولو\*\*\*طال المدى وونت سري الأقدار

And know that its calamities come suddenly, even though the goal be far.<sup>478</sup>

The governor turns to the old man's son and blames him for plagiarizing his father's poetry.

The son defends himself, saying there is a chance that the two poems draw from the same source. The governor acknowledges the point, and decides to ask both the old man and his son to recite a ten-verse poem in *tajnis* (paronomasia).<sup>479</sup> The old man and the son recite the following lines together:

*Old Man.* There is a ruddy-lipped one who has compassed my enslaving by the delicacy of her utterance, and left me the companion of sleeplessness through her perfidy.

*Youth.* She has assayed to slay me by her aversion: truly I am in her bond, since she has gotten my heart altogether.

*Old Man.* I give faith to her falsehood for fear of her turning from me; I am content to listen to her folly through dread that she should fly me.

*Youth.* I deem her tormenting to be sweet; and as often as she renews my torment the love of being kindly to her is renewed in me.

*Old Man.* She is forgetful of duty, and to forget is a fault; she angers my heart—the heart which guards her secret.

*Youth.* What is most wonderful in her is the glorying of her vanity; yet do I make too much of her for me to speak to hear of her pride.

*Old Man.* From me she has praise sweet of fragrance; but my lot from her is a folding up of love after its out-spreading.

*Youth.* Oh! If she were just she would not be fault-finding; but she wrongs me; another, and not I, gathers the dew of her mouth.

*Old Man.* Were it not for her graceful motion, I would turn my rein in haste to another, the light of whose full moon I might look upon.

*Youth.* But notwithstanding the discordance between her and me, I hold the

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<sup>478</sup> Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 1, p. 237:

يا خاطب الدنيا الدنيءة إنها شرك الردى  
دار متى ما أضحكك في يومها أبكت غدا  
وإذا أظل أصحابها لم ينتفع منه صدى  
غاراتها ما تنقضي وأسيرها لا يفدى  
كم مزدى بغرورها حتى بدا متمردا  
قلبت له ظهر المجد من أولغت فيه المدى  
فاربأ بعمر ك أن يمر مضيعة فيها سدى  
واقع علائق حبه وطلابها تلق الهدى  
وارقب إذا ما سالمت من كيدها حرب العدى  
واعلم بأن خطوبها تقجا ولو طال المدى

<sup>479</sup> Paronomasia is the use of a word in different senses or the use of words similar in sound for effect, as humor or ambiguity.

bitter as sweet through my docility to her command.<sup>480</sup>

The governor is impressed by the old man and his son's intelligence, and he believes that the old man and his son are geniuses. The governor asks the old man to take care of his son, but the old man becomes angry. The son reminds his father of a poem that his father once recited:

Pardon thy brother when he mingles his right aiming with error;  
And shrink from rebuking him if he swerve or decline;  
Keep to thy kind dealing towards him whether he thank the kindness or slight it:  
Be thou obedient when he revolts; be thou lowly when he magnifies himself;  
draw near to him when he goes from thee:  
Keep faith with him even though he fail in what thou and he have stipulated;  
And know that if thou seek a perfect man, thou desirest beyond bounds.  
Who is there who has never done ill? Who is there whose deed is always fair?  
Dost thou not see the loved and the hated linked together in one class,  
As the thorn comes forth on the branches with the fruit that is gathered.  
And the delight of long life, lo! There mingles with it the trouble of hoariness.  
If thou examine well the sons of the time, thou wilt find the most of them but  
refuse.<sup>481</sup>

<sup>480</sup> Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 1, p. 239:

وأحوى حوى رقي برقة ثغره\*\*\*و غادرني إلف السهاد بغدره  
تصدى لقتلي بالصدود وإني\*\*\*ل في أسره مذ حاز قلبي بأسره  
أصدق منه الزور خوف ازوراره\*\*\*وأرضى استماع الهجر خشية هجره  
وأستعذب التعذيب منه وكلما\*\*\*أجد عذابي جد بي حب بره  
تناسى ذمامي والتناسي مذمة\*\*\*وأحفظ قلبي وهو حافظ سره  
وأعجب ما فيه التباهي بعجبه\*\*\*وأكبره عن أن أفوه بكبره  
له مني المدح الذي طاب نشره\*\*\*ولي منه طي الود من بعد نشره  
ولو كان عدلاً ما تجنى وقد جنى\*\*\*علي وغيري يجتني رشف ثغره  
ولولا تثنيه تثيت أعنتي\*\*\*يداراً إلى من أجتلي نور بدره  
وإني على تصريف أمري وأمره\*\*\*أرى المر حلواً في انقيادي لأمره

<sup>481</sup> Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 1, p. 240:

سامح أخاك إذا خلط\*\*\*منه الإصابة بالغلط  
وتجاف عن تعنيفه\*\*\*إن زاغ يوماً أو قسط  
واحفظ صنيعك عنده\*\*\*شكر الصنيعة أم غمط  
وأطلعته إن عاصى وهن\*\*\*إن عز وادن إذا شحط  
واقن الوفاء ولو أخذ\*\*\*ل بما اشترطت وما شرط  
واعلم بأنك إن طلب\*\*\*ت مهذباً رمت الشطط  
من ذا الذي ما ساء قـ\*\*\*ط ومن له الحسنى فقط  
أو ما ترى المحبوب والـ\*\*\*مكروه لزا في نمط  
كالشوك يبدو في الغصو\*\*\*ن مع الجني الملتقط  
ولذاذة العمر الطويـ\*\*\*ل يشويها نغص الشمط  
ولو انتقدت بني الزما\*\*\*ن وحدت أكثرهم سقط  
رضت البلاغة والبراءة\*\*\*ع والشجاعة والخبط  
فوجدت أحسن ما يرى\*\*\*سبر العلوم معاً فقط

The governor gives the old man and his son money as a reward, and they leave. When al-Harith finally reveals that the old man is al-Saruji, the governor asks al-Harith about the old man. Al-Harith tells the governor that the old man and his son are tricksters, causing the governor to become angry and vow that he will punish them when he catches them.

Moustafa al-Shakk'ah believes that the concept of “*al-Maqamah al-Shi'riyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of the Precinct”) was originated by al-Hamadhani, and that al-Hariri followed al-Hamadhani.<sup>482</sup> However, al-Shakk'ah thinks that al-Hariri's *maqama* was more fun and comedic, and it is closer to the complete story than al-Hamadhani's *maqama*. Since al-Hariri uses wordplay in this *maqama*, al-Shakk'ah believes that al-Hariri is a linguistic scholar, whereas al-Hamadhani is a literary scholar.

#### ***Al-Maqamah al-Shiraziyyah* (“The *Maqama* of Shiraz”)**

The concept of “*al-Maqamah al-Shiraziyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Shiraz”) is the same in both the *Maqamat al-Hamadhani* and the *Maqamat al-Hariri*. In the *Maqamat al-Hamadhani*, when 'Isa ibn Hisham meets al-Iskandari, he does not recognize him, although they had met before. When al-Iskandari leaves, 'Isa says:

I regretted separating from him after the mountain and its ruggedness took possession of me, and the vale and its depth seized him. By Heavens! Separation from him left me desiring him, and he left me suffering from his absence after him. Now when I parted from him, he was a man of wealth and beauty, of goodly appearance and perfection. Well, Time dealt us its blows, but I pictured him to myself at all times, and called him to mind every moment, and I did not think Time would help me to him or through him.<sup>483</sup>

When 'Isa meets al-Iskandari in Shiraz, he says:

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<sup>482</sup>Moustafa al-Shakk'ah, *Badi' al-Zaman al-Hamadhani* (Beirut, Lebanon: Dar 'Alam al-Kutub, 1983).

<sup>483</sup>Al-Hamadhani, *The Maqamat of Badi' al-Zaman al-Hamadhani*, p. 103:

وندمت على مفارقته بعد أن ملكني الجبل وحننه. وأخذ الغور وبطنه. فوالله لقد تركني فراقه وأنا أشتاقه. وغادرتني بعده أقاسي بعده. وكنت فارقتة ذا شارة وجمال وهينة وكمال. وضرب الدهر بنا ضروره. وأنا أتمنله في كل وقت. وأتذكره في كل لمحة. ولا أظن أن الدهر يسعدني به ويسعفني فيه.

Suddenly there appeared before me an old man, whose countenance poverty had marred,<sup>484</sup> whose luster Time had entirely exhausted, whose erectness<sup>485</sup> disease had bent, and whose nails destitution had clipped; with a face more wretched than his actual state, and a garb more dreadful than his condition, with dry gums and parched lips, muddy feet, with a blistered hand, with canine teeth that misfortune had destroyed, and a bitter existence. And he saluted me. My eye disdained him, but I returned his greeting.<sup>486</sup>

Al-Hariri wrote about the same concept as al-Hamadhani in “*al-Maqamah al-Shiraziyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Shiraz”), where al-Harith does not know al-Saruji except for al-Saruji’s eloquent language, and then al-Saruji recites the following lines in which the audience has mercy on him and gives him money:

I crave Allah’s forgiveness, humbling myself, for all the sins whose heavy load burdens me.  
 O folks, how many olden maids kept at home, though in assemblies were their virtues praised about  
 Have I cut down not fearing from any heir that might revenge them on me or claim a fine.  
 And when the sin thereof was laid at my door, I boldly cleared myself and said: fate it was.  
 And never stopped my soul its headlong career in cutting damsels down, and kept going stray,  
 Till hoariness shone on the crown of my head and checked me from performing such evil deeds.  
 So since my temples have turned grey, never shed I any more a maiden’s blood, old or young.  
 But now I rear, in spite of what may be seen of my condition and of my slacking trade,  
 A less who for a long time has stayed at home sheltered and veiled carefully from air itself.  
 And she in spite of being thus kept recluse, has wooers for her comeliness and pleasingness.  
 But for her outfit, at the least, I can’t do without a hundred, though I try as I may,

<sup>484</sup>“Had marred”: Literally, had covered with dust. Al-Hamadhani, *The Maqamat of Badi’ al-Zaman al-Hamadhani*, p. 210.

<sup>485</sup>Whose erectness: Literally, whose lance, which is a figure for straightness. Al-Hamadhani, *The Maqamat of Badi’ al-Zaman al-Hamadhani*, p. 210.

<sup>486</sup>Al-Hamadhani, *The Maqamat of Badi’ al-Zaman al-Hamadhani*, p. 103:

إذ دخل كهل قد غير في وجهه الفقر، وانتزف ماء الدهر، وأمال قناته السقم، وقلم أظفاره العدم بوجه أكسف من باله، وزى أوحش من حاله، ولثة نشفة، وشفة قشفة، ورجل وحلة، ويد مجلة، وأنياب قد جرعها الضر، والعيش المر، وسلم فازدرته عيني لكنني أجبته.

While in my hand there is not one silver coin, the ground is empty and the sky yields no rain.  
 Now is one here to help me that I may wed her amidst the singing-girls' cheering strain,  
 Then let him wash my grief with its proper soap and cleanse my heart from sorrows that worry me,  
 That he may cull my praises, whose fragrancy will only cease to breathe when man prays in vain.<sup>487</sup>

Al-Hamadani and al-Hariri chose the same title and content. Al-Hariri wanted to show his superiority over al-Hamadani by writing poetry in this particular *maqama*, so the readers could see that al-Hariri added some innovative structures to the *maqama* genre.

### ***Al-Maqamah al-Sassaniyyah* (“The *Maqama* of Sassan”)**

In the *Maqamat al-Hamadani*, ‘Isa ibn Hisham in “*al-Maqamah al-Sassaniyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Sassan”) travels to Damascus to live. One day, ‘Isa is standing in front of a house door where a group of Sassani<sup>488</sup> people and their leader are. Their leader sings poetry, or sometimes one of them sings, and they repeat after him. An example of these poems includes the following lines, recited by the leader:

<sup>487</sup>Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 2, p. 73:

أستغفر الله وأعوذ له\*\*\*من فرطات أنقلت ظهريه  
 يا قوم كم من عاتق عانس\*\*\*ممدوحة الأوصاف في الأنديه  
 قتلتها لا أتقي وارثاً\*\*\*يطلب مني قواداً أو ديه  
 وكلما استذنبت في قتلها\*\*\*أحلت بالذنب على الأفضيه  
 ولم تزل نفسي في غيها\*\*\*وقتلها الأيكار مستشريه  
 حتى نهاني الشيب لما بدا\*\*\*في مفريقي عن تلكم المعصيه  
 فلم أرق مذ شاب فودي دماً\*\*\*من عاتق يوماً ولا مصبيه  
 وها أنا الآن على ما يرى\*\*\*مني ومن حرفتي المكديه  
 أرب بكرأ طال تعنيسها\*\*\*وحجبها حتى عن الأهويه  
 وهي على التعنيس مخطوبة\*\*\*كخطبة الغانية المغنيه  
 وليس يكفيني لتجهيزها\*\*\*على الرضى بالدون إلا ميه  
 واليد لا توكي على درهم\*\*\*والأرض قفر والنما مصحيه  
 فهل معين لي على نقلها\*\*\*مصحوبة بالقينة الملبيه  
 فيغسل لهم يصابونه\*\*\*والقلب من أفكاره المضنيه  
 ويقتني مني الثناء الذي\*\*\*تضوع رياه مع الأدعيه

<sup>488</sup>*Sassani*, which means “beggar” in Arabic, refers here to Sassan, who was a Persian prince. His family, the Sassanian Dynasty, ruled for more than three hundred years (224–651 A.D.). This prince was sad because his sister was a leader, not him. Therefore, he decided to go to the desert and herd sheep, which led people to satirize him, and made begging belong to him. Ali Abdulmonem Abdulhamid, *Al-Namudhaj al-Insani fi ‘Adab al-Maqamah* [“Human Model in the *Maqama* Genre”] (Beirut, Lebanon: Maktabat Beirut, 1994).



I desire from thee a white cake upon a clean table.  
 I desire coarse salt, I want plucked greens.  
 I desire fresh meat, I want some sour vinegar.  
 I desire a sucking kid, I want a young ram.  
 I desire water with ice, filled in a rare vessel.  
 I desire a vat of wine from which I may get up drunk,  
 And a cheerful cup-bearer, congenial to the minds.  
 I desire from thee a shirt, a coat, and a turban.  
 I desire thick sandals, with which I may visit the privy.  
 I desire a comb and a razor, I want a vessel and a bath glove,  
 O what an excellent guest am I! and what a charming host art thou!  
 I will be content with this from thee, and I do not wish to impose.<sup>489</sup>

Another character recites the following lines:

O excellent one! Who hath appeared,  
 As if in stature he were a branch.  
 My tooth desires meat,  
 Therefore coat it with bread.  
 And bestow something upon me and give it now down,  
 Drop thy hand from thy waist and undo the purse's knot,  
 And put both thy hands under both thy arms for me designedly.<sup>490</sup>

In the *Maqamat al-Hariri*, al-Sarujī in “*al-Maqamah al-Sassaniyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Sassan”) is an old man who is asked for advice on what to do in life. According to al-Sarujī,

<sup>489</sup>Al-Hamadhani, *The Maqamat of Badi' al-Zaman al-Hamadhani*, p. 69:

أريد منك رغيفاً\*\*يعلو خواتماً نظيفاً  
 أريد منك ملحاً\*\*أريد بقلأ قطيفاً  
 أريد لحمأ غريضاً\*\*أريد خلأ تقيفاً  
 أريد جدبأ رضيعاً\*\*أريد سخلاً خروفأ  
 أريد ماء بثلج\*\*يعشى إناء طريفأ  
 أريد دن مدام\*\*أقوم عنه نزيفاً  
 وساقبأ مستهشأ\*\*على القلوب خفيفأ  
 أريد منك قميصاً\*\*وجبةً ونصيفأ  
 أريد نعلأ كثيفاً\*\*بهلأ أزور الكنيفأ  
 أريد مشطأ وموسى\*\*أريد سطلأ وليفاً  
 يا حيدأ أنا ضيفاً\*\*لكم وأنت مضيفأ  
 رضيت منك بهذا\*\*ولم أرد أن أحيفأ

<sup>490</sup>Al-Hamadhani, *The Maqamat of Badi' al-Zaman al-Hamadhani*, pp. 69–70:

يا فاضلاً قد نيدى\*\*كأنه الغصن قدأ  
 قد اشتهى اللحم ضرسي\*\*فاجلده بالخبز جلدأ  
 وامنن علي بشيء\*\*وأجعله للوقت نقداً  
 أطلق من اليد خصرأ\*\*واحلل من الكيس عقداً  
 واضمم يديك لأجلي\*\*إلى جناحك عمداً

there are four possible careers: ministry, commerce, husbandry, and handicraft. Al-Saruji, who did all four, realized that people would be tired after doing all four careers. Therefore, he advises his son to be a *mukdy* (beggar), so he will get a lot of money and will not be tired. Al-Saruji praises *kudya* (begging) in prose throughout the *maqama*, except at the end of the *maqama*, where he speaks the following lines:

There is, my son, a bequest for thee, such as none afore was bequeathed yet,  
One bright and fraught with the essence of choice rules and maxims that guide  
aright.

I selected them as a counsellor sincere and earnest in his advice,  
So act according to what I teach, as a wise and well-conducted wight,  
That admiringly all people say: "This in truth is yonder lion's whelp."<sup>491</sup>

The present writer will not discuss the advice that al-Saruji gives in prose, since the focus of this dissertation is al-Hariri's poetry. When Moustafa al-Shakk'ah<sup>492</sup> examines these two *maqamat*, he concludes that al-Hamadhani's two poems in this *maqama* are humorous, whereas al-Hariri only puts words together to repeat meanings. Therefore, al-Hamadhani is superior to al-Hariri in this *maqama*.

### ***Al-Maqamah al-Basriyyah* ("The *Maqama* of Basra")**

The story of "*al-Maqamah al-Basriyyah*" ("The *Maqama* of Basra") in the *Maqamat al-Hamadhani* starts with 'Isa ibn Hisham traveling to Basra with his friends when he is rich. On their way, they meet a poor man, al-Iskandari, in Mirbad. Al-Iskandari uses poetry to explain how his family makes him suffer:

<sup>491</sup>Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 2, p. 174:

خذها إليك وصية\*\*\*لم يوصها قبلي أحد  
غراء حاوية خلا\*\*\*صات المعاني والزيد  
نقحتها تنقيح من\*\*\*محض النصيحة واجتهد  
فاعمل بما مثلته\*\*\*عمل اللبيب أخي الرشيد  
حتى يقول الناس هـ\*\*\*ذا الشبل من ذلك الأسد

<sup>492</sup>Moustafa al-Shakk'ah, *Badi' al-Zaman al-Hamadhani*.

As if they were serpents in an arid land,  
Whose venom would be fatal were they to bite.  
When we tarry they send me out to earn,  
And when we travel they ride on me.<sup>493</sup>

Al-Iskandari also describes what he is facing in the following lines:

Who roams and roams and then returns,  
To stay with chicks whose sight is made keen,  
Whose covering is old, whose hair is matted and dusty so that they are ever  
ravenous and lank-bellied.<sup>494</sup>

Then al-Iskandari continues to speak the following lines:

And poverty in the day of the mean,  
Is ever generous man's badge.  
The generous incline towards the mean,  
And this is one of the signs of the last day.<sup>495</sup>

“*Al-Maqamah al-Basriyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Basra”) is the last and longest *maqama* of the *Maqamat al-Hariri*. Feeling worried, al-Harith goes to the mosque of Basra to listen to one of the preachers. While he is there, he meets the protagonist, al-Saruji, who preaches to the people in prose, asking them to repent. Then he recites the following lines:

Allah's forgiveness, I crave for sins that, woe me, I have wantonly committed.  
How oft I have plunged in seas of error, and morn and eve walked in paths of  
folly,  
How oft I have followed passion's promptings, been arrogant, greedy and  
deceitful,

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<sup>493</sup>Al-Hamadhani, *The Maqamat of Badi' al-Zaman al-Hamadhani*, p. 57:

كأنهم حيات أرض محلة\*\*\*فلو يعضون لذكى سمهم  
إذا نزلنا أرسلوني كاسباً\*\*\*وان رحلنا ركبوني كلهم

<sup>494</sup>Al-Hamadhani, *The Maqamat of Badi' al-Zaman al-Hamadhani*, p. 58:

يطوف ما يطوف ثم يأوي\*\*\*إلى زغب محددة العيون  
كساهن البلى شعناً فتمسي\*\*\*جياح الناب ضامرة البطون

<sup>495</sup>Al-Hamadhani, *The Maqamat of Badi' al-Zaman al-Hamadhani*, p. 58:

والفقر في زمن الننا\*\*\*م لكل ذي كرم علامه  
رعب الكرام إلى الننا\*\*\*م وتلك أشرط القيامة

How oft I have spurned the curb in rushing headlong and unchecked to fell  
 rebellion,  
 How oft I have reached the bounds of trespass, and never ceased from careering  
 onwards.  
 Would that I had been afore forgotten, and never gathered what, alas, I gathered,  
 For better far death to him who sinneth, than to pursue such a course as I sped!  
 But, O my Lord, grant to me forgiveness: Thy Mercy is greater than my  
 trespass.<sup>496</sup>

The story continues as al-Saruji travels to his hometown of Saruj. Al-Harith then travels to Saruj to see whether al-Saruji's repentance was sincere or not, and finds al-Saruji worshipping God and speaking the following lines:

Good-bye, my soul, to memories  
 of vernal camps, and tryste therein,  
 And fond farewell to trav'ler fair,  
 yea, bid good-bye to them for aye,  
 Bewail the time that passed away,  
 when thou hast blackened pages bright,  
 And never ceased to steep thyself  
 in deeds of shame and heinousness.  
 How oft the night was spent by thee  
 in sins that none afore has dared,  
 From lust, indulged without restraint  
 on wanton couch, in chamber still  
 How often spedst thou on thy steps  
 to unheard-of depravity,  
 And brokest repentance, slowly vowed,  
 in swift forgetting sport and play;  
 How often madest thou bold, O slave,  
 against the Lord of heavens high,  
 Not heeding Him and proving false,  
 ay, false to thy pretended faith;  
 How often flungst thou, like a shoe

<sup>496</sup>Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 2, p. 180:

أستغفر الله من ذنوب\*\*\*أفرطت فيهن واعتديت  
 كم خضبت بحر الضلال جهلاً\*\*\*وزرحت في الغي واعتديت  
 وكم أطعت الهوى اغراراً\*\*\*واختلت واغثلت واقتربت  
 وكم خلعت العذار ركضاً\*\*\*إلى المعاصي وما ونيت  
 وكم تناهيت في التخطي\*\*\*إلى الخطايا وما انتهيت  
 فليبتني كنت قبل هذا\*\*\*نسبياً ولم أجن ما جنيت  
 فالموت للمجرمين خير\*\*\*من المساعي التي سعيت  
 يا رب عفواً فأنت أهل\*\*\*للعفو عني وإن عصيت

outworn, aside His stern command,  
 Ungrateful for His benefits  
 and reckless of His tardy wrath,  
 How often, running pleasure's course,  
 and glibly speaking lies prepense,  
 Wast thou neglecting carelessly  
 the duties of His covenant.  
 So don the garb of penitence,  
 and shower tears of blood, before  
 Thy foot commits a fatal slip,  
 before thy fall has come to pass;  
 Humbly confess thy sins and fly  
 for refuge where the guilty flies;  
 Resist thy lewd propensities  
 and turn from them with purpose firm.  
 How long in thoughtlessness and sloth  
 wilt thou let drift life's better part,  
 To what brings loss as only gain,  
 and never check'st thy mad career.  
 Perceivest thou not the mingled hue  
 that streaks with hoary lines thy head,  
 Yet he whose ringlets blend with gray  
 is warned of his approaching death.  
 Woe thee, my soul, redemption seek,  
 obey, be true, be well advised,  
 Take warning from those gone before,  
 in generations passed away,  
 And fear the stealing on of fate,  
 be wary, lest thou be deceived.  
 Walk in the path of rectitude,  
 for swift, remember, comes thy doom:  
 To-morrow will thy dwelling be  
 the bottom of a lonely grave,  
 Alas, that house of sore dismay,  
 that station, waste, disconsolate,  
 That goal of pilgrims of long syne,  
 of countless pilgrims yet to come,  
 A house whose inmate will be seen  
 encompassed, after ample space,  
 Within the bond of cubits three,  
 to hold him in their narrow grip.  
 Who there alight, it matters not  
 if he a wit be, or a fool,  
 If poor, or if possessed of all  
 the riches of a Tobba king.<sup>497</sup>

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<sup>497</sup>Tobba was an ancient nation mentioned in the Qur'an.

And after it the roll-call comes,  
that musters timid wight, and bold,  
And teacher and disciple, and  
the ruler and the ruled alike.  
Then O the bliss of him that fears  
his Lord, and earns the thrall's reward,  
Safe from the dread account and from  
the terrors of that awful day.  
But O the loss of those who have  
sinned and transgressed beyond all bounds,  
And kindled discord's blazing fire,  
for sake of worldly goods and joys.  
O Thou, in whom my trust is placed,  
how grows my fear with every day,  
For all the slips and falls that fill  
my ill-spent life with guilt and crime.  
But, Lord, forgive Thy erring slave,  
yield mercy to his welling tears  
For the most merciful art Thou,  
and Best to whom are prayers raised.<sup>498</sup>

<sup>498</sup> Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 2, pp. 183–185:

خل انكار الأربع\*\*\* والمعهد المرتبع  
والظاعن المودع\*\*\* وعد عنه ودع  
واندب زماناً سلف\*\*\* سودت فيه الصحفا  
ولم تزل معتكفا\*\*\* على القبيح الشنع  
كم ليلة أودعتها\*\*\* ماثماً أبذعتها  
لشهوة أطعتها\*\*\* في مرقد ومضجع  
وكم خطى حثنتها\*\*\* في خزبة أحدثتها  
وتوبة نكتتها\*\*\* لملعب ومرتع  
وكم تجرات على\*\*\* رب السموات العلى  
ولم تراقبه ولا\*\*\* صدقت في ما تدعي  
وكم غمصت بره\*\*\* وكم أمنت مكره  
وكم نبذت أمره\*\*\* نبيذ الحذا المرقع  
وكم ركضت في اللعب\*\*\* وفهت عمداً بالكذب  
ولم تراع ما يجب\*\*\* من عهده المتبع  
فالبس شعار الندم\*\*\* واسكب شأبيب الدم  
قبل زوال القدم\*\*\* وقيل سوء المصرع  
واخضع خضوع المعترف\*\*\* ولذ ملاذ المقترف  
واعص هواك وانحرف\*\*\* عنه انحراف المقلع  
إلام تسهو وتني\*\*\* ومعظم العمر فني  
في ما يضر المقتني\*\*\* ولست بالمرتدع  
أما ترى الشيب وخط\*\*\* وخط في الرأس خطط  
ومن يلح وخط الشمط\*\*\* بفوده فقد نعي  
ويحك يا نفس احرصي\*\*\* على ارتياد المخلص  
وطاوعي وأخلصي\*\*\* واستمعي النصح وعي  
واعتربي بمن مضى\*\*\* من القرون وانقضى  
واختشي مفاجاة القضا\*\*\* وحاذري أن تخدعي  
وانتهجي سبل الهدى\*\*\* واذكري وشك الردى  
وأن مثواك غدا\*\*\* في قصر لحد بلقع  
أها له بيت البلى\*\*\* والمنزل القفر الخلا  
ومورد السفر الألى\*\*\* واللاحق المتبع

James Monroe notes that al-Hariri ends his *maqamat* in an optimistic way when his protagonist, al-Saruji, repents in the last *maqama*, “*al-Maqamah al-Basriyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Basra”), while al-Hamadhani’s protagonist does not repent at the end. Monroe links al-Hariri’s ending to the author’s religious background as a Sunni.<sup>499</sup> According to Sunni doctrine, God accepts any human being into heaven if he or she repents before dying. However, Monroe doubts the authenticity of al-Saruji’s repentance, claiming that al-Hariri deliberately left the matter ambivalent.<sup>500</sup>

On the other hand, Hameen-Anttila believes that al-Saruji’s repentance is genuine.<sup>501</sup> The present writer agrees with Hameen-Anttila because al-Saruji indicates in *maqama* #48, “*al-Maqamah al-Haramiyyah*” (“The *Maqamah* of Haramiyeh”), that he thinks he will die soon.

The story of al-Hamadhani’s “*al-Maqamah* of Basra” begins with ‘Isa ibn Hisham going to Mirbad, whereas al-Hariri’s “*al-Maqamah al-Basriyyah*” begins with al-Harith going to Basra. Moustafa al-Shakk’ah notes that the difference between al-Hamadhani and al-Hariri in this *maqama* is that al-Iskandari is a *mukdy* (beggar), whereas al-Saruji is not.<sup>502</sup> Al-Saruji is a *mukdy* in all the *maqamat* of the *Maqamat al-Hariri* except for a few, including this last one.

بيت يرى من أودعه\*\*\*قد ضمه واستودعه  
بعد الفضاء والسعه\*\*\*قيد ثلاث أذرع  
لا فرق أن يحله\*\*\*داهية أو أبله  
أو معسر أو من له\*\*\*ملك كملك يتع  
وبعد العرض الذي\*\*\*يحوي الحبي والبذي  
والمبتدي والمحتدي\*\*\*ومن رعى ومن رعي  
فيا مفاز المتقي\*\*\*وربح عبد قد وقى  
سوء الحساب الموبق\*\*\*وهول يوم الفزع  
ويا خسار من يغى\*\*\*ومن تعدى وطغى  
وشب نيران الوغى\*\*\*لمطعم أو مطعم  
يا من عليه المتكل\*\*\*قد زاد ما بي من وجل  
لما اجترحت من زلل\*\*\*في عمري المضيع  
فاغفر لعبد مجترم\*\*\*وارحم بكاء المنسجم  
فأنت أولى من رحم\*\*\*وخير مدعو دعي

<sup>499</sup>Sunni is the largest group of Islam, and they follow the behavior of the prophet Muhammad.

<sup>500</sup>Monroe, *The Art of Badi az-Zaman al-Hamadhani*.

<sup>501</sup>Hameen-Anttila, *Maqama*.

<sup>502</sup>Al-Shakk’ah, *Badi’ al-Zaman al-Hamadhani*.

Since al-Hamadhani satirizes Basra in his *maqamat*, al-Hariri wants to praise his city, Basra, by mentioning that al-Saruji repents there.

## Conclusion

Although al-Hariri states in the preface of his *maqamat* that he will follow the *Maqamat al-Hamadhani*'s structure, he concludes his preface with two verses:

If before it mourned, I had mourned my love for Su'da,<sup>503</sup> then should I have  
healed my soul, nor had afterwards to repent.  
But it mourned before me, and its mourning excited mine, and I said, "The  
superiority is to the one that is first."<sup>504</sup>

In the introduction of his famous commentary on the *Maqamat al-Hariri*, al-Sharishi contends that al-Hariri is better than al-Hamadhani at writing *maqamat*, stating:

The *Maqamat al-Hariri* was more comprehensive, elaborate, and complete. Therefore, these *maqamat* excelled the *Maqamat al-Hamadhani*.<sup>505</sup>

Al-Hamadhani died at the age of 40, a really young age for a writer and poet. Therefore, he did not have enough time to revise his *maqamat* as al-Hariri did.<sup>506</sup>

## Al-Hariri's Superiority over His Contemporary Poets

Al-Hariri uses his protagonist, al-Saruji, to show his superiority over contemporary poets.

The claims of superiority are rooted in al-Saruji's use of eloquent language. An example of this

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<sup>503</sup>Su'da is a girl's name.

<sup>504</sup>Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 1, p. 106:

فلو قبل ميكاها بكيت صباية\*\*\*بسعدى شفيت النفس قبل التندم  
ولكن بكت قبلي، فهيج لي البكا\*\*\*بكاها، فقلت الفضل للمتقدم

<sup>505</sup>Abu al-Abbas Ahmed ibn Abdulmomen al-Qaisi al-Sharishi, *Sharh Maqamat al-Hariri* ["Commentary on *Maqamat al-Hariri*"], edited by Mohammed Abu el-Fadl Ibrahim (Beirut, Lebanon: al-Maktabah al-'Asriyyah, 1992), vol. 2, p. 219.

جاءت مقامات الحريري أحفل وأجزل وأكمل، فلذلك فضلت البديعية

<sup>506</sup>Beeston, "Al-Hamadhani, al-Hariri and the Maqamat Genre."



supposed superiority occurs in “*al-Maqamah al-Dinariyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Kaylan”), in which al-Saruji recites a poem to praise the *dinar*, and then recites another poem to satirize the *dinar*. Al-Hariri’s linguistic ability is not only exhibited in his praise and satirizing of the *dinar*, but also in the eloquence with which he describes in prose the positives and negatives of marriage for two types of women in “*al-Maqamah al-Bakriyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Bakriyah”): the woman who is married and the woman who has never married. His goal in the passage is to show his superiority over other poets of his era.

In “*al-Maqamah al-Furatiyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Euphrates”), al-Saruji sometimes praises writers and satirizes accountants, while at other times he praises accountants and satirizes writers, which shows both his linguistic and logical abilities. By stating an idea and then presenting its opposite, al-Hariri is demonstrating to his readers the rich vocabulary and skills promised in the work’s preface.

On the other hand, al-Saruji is eloquent in his poetic conversations with his son, his wife, and other characters. An example of the poetic conversation between al-Saruji and his son occurs in “*al-Maqamah al-Ma’arriyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Ma’arrah”), in which al-Saruji’s son recites the following lines:

He lent me a needle to darn my rags, which use has worn and blackened:  
And its eye broke in my hand by chance, as I drew the thread through it.  
But the old man would not forgive me the paying for it when he saw that it was  
spoiled;  
But said, “Give me a needle like it, or a price, after thou hast mended it.”  
And he keeps my kohl pencil by him as a pledge: oh, the shame that he has gotten  
by so doing:  
For my eye is dry through giving him this pledge; my hand fails to ransom its  
anointer.  
Now by this statement fathom the depth of my misery and pity one unused to bear  
it.<sup>507</sup>

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<sup>507</sup>Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 1, p. 148:

أعارني إبرة لأرفو أط\*\*\*مأراً عفاها البلا وسودها

Al-Saruji responds to him with the following lines:

I swear by the holy place of sacrifice, and the devout whom the slope of Mina<sup>508</sup>  
brings together;  
If time had been my helper, thou wouldst not have seen me taking in pledge the  
pencil which he has pledged to me.  
Nor would I bring myself to seek a substitute for a needle that he spoiled, no nor  
the price of it.  
But the bow of calamities shoots at me with deadly arrows from here and there:  
And to know my condition is to know his; misery, and distress, and exile, and  
sickness.  
Fortune has put us on a level: I am his like in misery, and he is as I.  
He cannot ransom his pencil now that it lies pledged in my hand:  
And, through the narrowness of my own means, it is not within my bounds to  
forgive him his offending.  
Now this is my tale and his: so look upon us, and judge between us, and pity us.<sup>509</sup>

Another example of a poetic conversation between the narrator and the protagonist occurs  
in “*al-Maqamah al-Saweiyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Saweh”), in which al-Harith ibn Hammam  
discovers al-Saruji’s trick, and al-Harith recites the following lines to al-Saruji:

How many, Abu Zayd, will be the varieties of thy cunning to drive the prey to thy  
net? And wilt thou not care who censures?<sup>510</sup>

فانخرمت في يدي على خطا<sup>508</sup>مني لما جذبت مقودها  
فلم ير الشيخ في أن يسامحني<sup>509</sup> بأرشها إذ رأى تأودها  
بل قال هات إبرة تماثلها<sup>510</sup> أو قيمة بعد أن تجودها  
واعتاق ميلي رهناً لديه ونا<sup>511</sup>هيك بها سبة تزودها  
فالعين مرهى لرهنه ويدي<sup>512</sup> تقصر عن أن تفك مرودها  
فاسبر بذا الشرح غور مسكنتي<sup>513</sup> وارث لمن لم يكن تعودها

<sup>508</sup>Mina is a neighborhood in Mecca, where worshipers gather for the *Hajj*.

<sup>509</sup>Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 1, pp. 148–149:

أقسمت بالمشعر الحرام ومن<sup>514</sup>ضم من الناسكين خيف منى  
لو ساعفتني الأيام لم يرني<sup>515</sup>مرتهناً ميله الذي رهنا  
ولا تصديت أبغى بدلاً<sup>516</sup>من إبرة غالها ولا ثمنا  
لكن قوس الخطوب ترشقتني<sup>517</sup>بمصميات من ها هنا وهنا  
وخبير حالي كخبير حالته<sup>518</sup>ضراً وبؤساً وغربة وضنى  
قد عد الدهر بيننا فأنا<sup>519</sup>نظيره في الشقاء وهو أنا  
لا هو يستطع فك مروده<sup>520</sup>لما عدا في يدي مرتهناً  
ولا مجالي لضيق ذات يدي<sup>521</sup>فيه اتساع للعفو حين جنى  
فهذه قصتي وقصته<sup>522</sup>فانظر إلينا وبيننا ولنا

<sup>510</sup>Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 1, p. 167:

إلى كم يا أبا زيد

Al-Saruji responds with the following lines:

Look well, and leave thy blaming;  
for, tell me, hast thou ever known a time  
when a man would not win of the world  
when the game was in his hands?<sup>511</sup>

A third example of a poetic conversation between al-Saruji and his son occurs in “*al-Maqamah al-Zabidiyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Zabid”), in which al-Saruji sells his son as a slave to trick the narrator, al-Harith ibn Hammam. Al-Saruji recites the following lines to sell his son as a slave:

Who buys from me a lad who proves deft at his work, and is in make and manners  
surpassingly fair?  
Equal to any task thou mayest lay upon him, who speeds thee when he speaks,  
and spoken to attends;  
Who if thou stumble says to thee: “Rise to thy feet.” And if thou bid him: “Enter  
the fire,” he enters it.  
Who when thou wilt, if but a day, associates thee, and is contented but with a  
scrap, if such thy wish?  
Although he have his wits collected, when he talks, he neither tells a lie nor  
claims more than his due.  
He yields not to the call of any wish of his, nor lets a secret, trusted with him, get  
out of keep.  
And oftentimes he makes one wonder at his skill, excelling both in prose and  
verse-stringing alike,  
And were it not, by God, for life’s straitening stress, and little ones that sadly want  
clothing and food:  
I would not sell him for the realms that Kisra rules.<sup>512</sup>

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أفانينك في الكيد  
لينحاش لك الصيد  
ولا تعباً بمن ذم

<sup>511</sup>Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 1, p. 167:

تبصر ودع اللوم  
وقل لي هل ترى اليوم  
فتى لا يقمر القوم  
متى ما دسته تم

<sup>512</sup>Kisra was a Persian king. Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 2, p. 64:

من يشتري مني غلاماً صنعا  
في خلقه وخلقته قد يرعا

Al-Saruji's son, who pretends to be a slave, replies with the following lines:

Allah confound thee! Is it right to sell one such as me to fill the hungry bellies,  
And is it walking in the path of justice, to make me bear what cannot be endured?  
To try me sore with terror after terror, though one like me, if tried, cannot be  
frightened?  
Yet hast thou probed me and experienced from me good counsels, unalloyed with  
any falsehood.  
How often hast thou set me as a net for game, and I brought home prey captured  
in my snares;  
And hast imposed on me tasks difficult that were obeyed, though I might have  
refused them.  
How many a battle that I had to fight in, how many a booty, and I had no share.  
And never, all my days, did I a sin, which, if thou break'st with me, could be  
revealed [unveiled],  
Nor couldst thou stumble on a fault of mine, praise be to God, to hide it, or  
proclaim it.  
How canst thou cast me off then so light-heartedly, as skillful women cast away  
their shreds?  
And why allow thy soul thee to enslave me, and offer me for sale as goods are  
sold?  
Wouldst thou not shield my honor, as I shield thy own concerns the day when  
parting grieves us,  
And say to him who bartered for me: "This is Sakabi,<sup>513</sup> neither to buy nor  
borrow"?"  
Now, I am not, forsooth, below that horse, but far above thy nature is their nature.  
And boldly sing I out: trading on me, my worth was lost to them, and what a  
worth!<sup>514</sup>

بكل ما نطت به مضطعاً  
يشفيك إن قال وإن قلت وعى  
وإن صبك عثرة يقل لعا  
وإن تسمه السعي في النار سعى  
وإن تصاحبه ولو يوماً رعى  
وإن تقنعه بظلف قنعا  
وهو على الكيس الذي قد جمعا  
ما فاه قط كاذباً ولا ادعى  
ولا أجاب مطمئناً حين دعا  
ولا استجاز نث سر أودعا  
وطالما أبدع في ما صنعا  
وفاق في النثر وفي النظم معا  
والله لولا ضنك عيش صدعا  
وصبيبة أضحوا عراة جوعا  
ما بعته بملك كسرى أجمعا

<sup>513</sup>Sakabi was the name of a famous horse that belonged to a man who refused to sell it, using the words *neither to buy nor borrow*. Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 2, pp. 214–215.

<sup>514</sup>Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 2, p. 66:

An example of a poetic conversation between the protagonist and a judge occurs in “*al-Maqamah al-Bakriyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Bakriyah”), in which al-Saruji recites the following lines to a judge:

I swear it by the ancient house, the worshipful, and those who circumambulate the holy fane,  
Thou art a good man to appeal for justice to the best of Kadis<sup>515</sup> judging amongst Arab tribes,  
So live as long as camels speed the pilgrims on.<sup>516</sup>

The judge responds to al-Saruji with the following lines:

Allah reward thee for thy thanks, dear nephew mine, though I exact no thanks as ever due to me,  
For worst of men is he who wrongs, when made a judge, and who, when made trustee of aught, betrays his trust,  
These twain I reckon with the dog alike in worth.<sup>517</sup>

لحاك الله هل مثلي يباع\*\*\*لكيما تشبع الكرش الجياع  
وهل في شرعة الإنصاف أني\*\*\*أكلف خطة لا تستطاع  
وأن أبلى بروع بعد روع\*\*\*ومثلي حين يبلى لا يراغ  
أما جربنتي فخيرت مني\*\*\*نصائح لم يمازجها خداع  
وكم أروصدنتي شركاً لصيد\*\*\*فعدت وفي حبالتي السباع  
ونظنت بي المصاعب فاستفادت\*\*\*مطاوعة وكان بها امتناع  
وأني كريمة لم أبل فيها\*\*\*وغنم لم يكن لي فيها باع  
وما أبدت لي الأيام جرماً\*\*\*فيكشف في مصارمتي القناع  
ولم تعثر بحمد الله مني\*\*\*على عيب يكتم أو يذاع  
فأني ساغ عندك نبيذ عهدي\*\*\*كما نبيذ برابيتها الصناع  
ولم سحمت قرونك بامتهاني\*\*\*أن أشري كما يشرى المتاع  
وهلا صنت عرضي عنه صوني\*\*\*حديثك يوم جد بنا الوداع  
وقلت لمن يساوم في هذا\*\*\*سكاب فما يعار ولا يباع  
فما أنا دون ذلك الطرف لكن\*\*\*طبائعك فوقها تلك الطباع  
على أني سأشدد عند بيعي\*\*\*أضاعوني وأي فتى أضاعوا

<sup>515</sup>A *kadi* is a judge.

<sup>516</sup>Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 2, pp. 124–125:

أقسم بالبيت العتيق ذي الحرم  
والطائفين العاكفين في الحرم  
إنك نعم من إليه يحتكم  
وخير قاضٍ في الأعراب حكم  
فاسلم ودم دوم النعم والنعم

<sup>517</sup>Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 2, p. 125:

جزيت عن شكرك خيراً يا ابن عم  
إذا لست أستوجب شكراً يلتزم  
شر الأنام من إذا استقضي ظلم

In addition, al-Hariri attempts to show his superiority over contemporary poets through his poetic letters. An example of his poetic letters can be found in “*al-Maqamah al-Omaniyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Oman”), in which the wife of the ruler of an island cannot give birth to her child. The ruler is afraid that his wife and child might get hurt. Al-Saruji places the following lines in a letter to help the ruler’s wife give birth:

Child to come, list to one who warns thee beforehand, aye! And warning belongs  
to faith’s foremost duties.  
Thou art safe now within a home closely guarded, an abode from all misery well  
protected,  
Nought thou seest there to frighten thee on the part of false a friend or a foeman  
frank in his hatred,  
But as soon as thou salliest forth from its shelter thou alight’st in a dwelling  
hurtful and shameful,  
Where the hardship awaiting thee will betide thee, drawing tears from thy eyne in  
fast-flowing down-pour.  
So continue thy easeful life and beware of changing things proved with things that  
are all uncertain,  
Being heedful of one who seeks to beguile thee, that he hurl thee the surer in sorry  
torment.  
Now I gave thee, upon my soul, fair advice, but sound advisers how often are they  
suspected.<sup>518</sup>

Al-Hariri uses various rhetorical embellishments and ornate styles, including *tajnis* (paronomasia), *tibaq* (antithesis), *tawriya* (double-entendre), *isti’ara* (metaphor), *tamthil* (analogy), and *kinaya* (indirect expression), all of which were commonly used by poets during that time. Shawqi Daif believes that al-Hariri used playing with words and rhetorical

ثم من استرعي فلم يرع الحرم  
فدان والكلب سواء في القيم

<sup>518</sup>Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 2, p. 99:

أيهذا الجنين إني نصيح\*\*\*لك والنصح من شروط الدين  
أنت مستعصم بكن كنين\*\*\*وقرار من السكون مكين  
ما ترى فيه ما يروعك من إل\*\*\*ف مداح ولا عدو مبين  
فمتى ما برزت الشقاء الذي تل\*\*\*قى فتبكي له بدمع هتون  
فاستدم عيشك الرغيد وحادر\*\*\*أن تبيع المحقوق بالمظنون  
واحترس من مخادع لك يرقب\*\*\*ك ليلقيك في العذاب المهين  
ولعمري لقد نصحت ولكن\*\*\*كم نصيح مشبه بظنين

embellishments in twelve *maqamat*. An example of the author’s playful use of styles, riddles, and unfamiliar words and phrases to educate his readers can be seen in “*al-Maqamah al-Maghribiyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of the West”), in which each line of the *qit’ah* (short poem) can be read from the beginning to the end, and from the end to the beginning, with the meaning unchanged:

Bestow on the needy when he comes to thee, and show regard even when a man injures thee.  
 Have dealings with him that is noble, but put after from thee the base.  
 Withdraw from the side of the unjust, the mischievous, when he sits by thee.  
 When contention rouses itself, put it off from thee, and cast it away when it confirms itself.  
 Be still, and thou shalt grow strong; for it may be that time that was perverse to thee shall aid thee.<sup>519</sup>

Al-Saruji writes in the Arabic way, from right to left, but creates a way to read Arabic from left to right. These playful uses of style are designed to show al-Hariri’s superiority over contemporary poets.

Another manifestation of al-Hariri’s playful style occurs when some words have a dot letter next to a non-dot letter. One example appears in “*al-Maqamah al-Raqta*” (“The *Maqama* of the Address”), in which al-Saruji recites the following lines:

The ruler, the intelligent; surpassing, excelling; understanding, ingenious;  
 impatient of baseness, loathing it;  
 Replacing, consuming; distinguished, incomparable; illustrious, virtuous; quick-witted, fastidious;  
 Marvellous when he discourses; able when the stir of ill befalls, and the dreaded calamity grows mighty.<sup>520</sup>

<sup>519</sup>Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 1, p. 197:

أس أرماً إذا عرأ\*\*\*وارع إذا المرء أسا  
 أسند أأا نأهأة\*\*\*أبن إأاء دنسا  
 أسل أناأ أاشم\*\*\*مشأاب إن ألسا  
 أسر إذا هب مرا\*\*\*وارم به إذا رسا  
 أسكن تقو فعسى\*\*\*يسعف وقت نكسا

<sup>520</sup>Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 1, p. 262:

Al-Hariri goes even further when he places a word with all of its letters dotted next to a word with all of its letters undotted, as in “*al-Maqamah al-Maraghiyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Maraghah”), in which al-Saruji recites the following lines:

Sure to traverse the lands in poverty is dearer to me than rank:  
For in rulers there is caprice and fault-finding, Oh what fault-finding!  
There is none of them who completes his good work, or who builds up where he  
has laid foundation.  
So let not the glare of the mirage beguile thee; undertake not that which is  
doubtful:  
For how many a dreamer has his dream made joyful; but fear has come upon him  
when he waked.<sup>521</sup>

Al-Hariri wants to show his superiority over his contemporary poets by describing true marvels, as in “*al-Maqamah al-Shitwiyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of the Wintry”), in which al-Saruji recites the following lines:

Marvels I know, seen by me, and told without any lie, for not in vain am I called  
the father of wonderment.<sup>522</sup>

Another way that al-Hariri attempts to show his superiority over contemporary poets is in the playful use of styles and unfamiliar words and phrases to educate his readers, since his contemporary poets admired the playful use of riddles, styles, and unfamiliar words and

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سید قلب سبوق میر \*\*\*فطن مغرب عزوف عیوف  
مخلف متلف أعر فريد\*\*\*نايه فاضل ذكي أنوف  
مفلق إن أبان طب إذا نا\*\*\*ب هياج وجل خطب مخوف

<sup>521</sup> Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 1, p. 139:

لجوب البلاد مع المتربه\*\*\*أحب إلي من المرتبه  
لأن الولاية لهم نبوة\*\*\*ومعتبة يا لها معتبه  
وما فيهم من يرب الصنيع\*\*\*ولا من يشيد ما رتبه  
فلا يخذ عنك لموع السراب\*\*\*ولا تأت أمرأ إذا ما اشتبه  
فكم حاله سره حلمه\*\*\*وأدرکه الروح لما انتبه

<sup>522</sup> Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 2, p. 134:

عندي أعاجيب أرويهها بلا كذب\*\*\*عن العيان فكنوني أبا العجب



phrases to demonstrate their erudition. Katsumata thinks that al-Hariri's language is rich, but it is difficult to understand.<sup>523</sup> In "*al-Maqamah al-Najraniyyah*" ("The *Maqama* of Najran"), al-Saruji puts forth ten poetic riddles, to which the answers are: (1) a ventilating-fan of canvas (*punkah*); (2) a rope of palm-fiber; (3) a reed-pen; (4) a kohl-pencil; (5) a water-wheel; (6) a cooling-vessel; (7) a finger-nail; (8) a sulfur-match; (9) milk of the vine-tree; and (10) a goldsmith's balance. The first five riddles are:

He said: "Listen, may ye be preserved of levity, and given your fill of life's enjoyment," and he indited riddling upon a ventilating-fan of canvas (*punkah*):

A maiden I know, brisk, full of speed in her ministry, returning the same track that she went by when starting off:

A driver she has, kinsman of hers, who is urging her, but while he thus is speeding her on, is her helpmate, too.

In summer she is seen dew-besprinkled and moist and fresh, when summer is gone, her body shows flabby and loose and dry.

Then he said: "Here is another for you, O ye lords of excellence, and centers of intellect," and indited riddling upon the rope of palm-fibre:

A son there is of a mother fair, whose root has sprung from her lofty plant:  
He hugs her neck, though for some time, she has erewhile discarded him:  
He who reaps her beauty ascends by means of him and none forbids and blames.

Then he said: "Here is another for you, hidden of signification and fraught with obscurity," and indited riddling upon the reed-pen:

One split in his head it is through whom "the writ" is known, as honored recording angels take their pride in him;

When given to drink he craves for more, as though athirst, and settles to rest when thirstiness takes hold of him;

And scatters tears about him when ye bid him run, but tears that sparkle with the brightness of a smile.

Then he said: "Take this one also, clear of indication, and perspicuous of expression," and indited riddling upon the kohl-pencil:

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<sup>523</sup>Naoya Katsumata, "The Style of the Maqama: Arabic, Persian, Hebrew, Syriac," *Middle Eastern Literatures*, vol. 5, no. 2 (2002), 117-137.

What groom is it who weds, both in secret and openly, two sisters, and no offence at his wedlock is ever found?

When waiting on one, he waits as well on the other eke: if husbands are partial, no such bias is seen in him;

His attentions increase as the sweethearts are growing grey, and so does his largess: what a rare thing in married men!

Then he said: “Again this one, O ye men of understanding and standards of learning,” and indited riddling upon the water-wheel:

One restless, although firmly fixed, bestowing gifts, not working mischief,  
Now plunging, now uprising again, a marvel how he sinks and soars:  
He pours down tears as one oppressed, yet is his fierceness to be feared:  
For then he brings destruction on, although his inmost heart is pure.<sup>524</sup>

Al-Hariri not only described riddles, but also asked and answered them. The chief vehicle for the superiority of al-Hariri’s poetry over that of his contemporary poets is again al-Saruji asking and answering riddles. In “*al-Maqamah al-Faradiyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of the Legal”), someone asks al-Saruji a riddle regarding a legal issue:

Ho the learned, the lawyer, who surpasses in acuteness, and there is none like

<sup>524</sup>Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 2, pp. 115–117:

ثم قال: اسمعوا وقيتم الطيش، ومليتم العيش، وأنشد ملغزاً في مروحة الخيش  
وجارية في سيرها مشمعة\*\*\*ولكن على إثر المسير قفولها  
لها سائق من جنسها يستحها\*\*\*على أنه في الاحتاث رسيها  
ترى في أوان القبط تتظف بالندى\*\*\*ويبدو إذا ولى المصيف قحولها  
ثم قال: وهاكم يا أولي الفضل، ومراكز العقل، وأنشد ملغزاً في حابول النخل  
ومنتسب إلى أم\*\*\*تنتشا أصله منها  
يعانقها وقد كانت\*\*\*نفته برهة عنها  
به يتوصل الجاني\*\*\*ولا يلحى ولا ينهى  
ثم قال: ودونكم الخفية العلم، المعنكرة الظلم، وأنشد ملغزاً في القلم  
ومأموم به عرف الإمام\*\*\*كما باهت بصحبته الكرام  
له إذ يرتوي طيشان صاد\*\*\*ويسكن حين يعروه الأوام  
ويذري حين يستسعي دمو عاً\*\*\*يرقن كما يروق الابتسام  
ثم قال: وعليكم بالواضحة الدلي، الفاضحة ما قيل، وأنشد ملغزاً في الميل  
وما ناكح أختين جهراً وخفية\*\*\*وليس عليه في النكاح سبيل  
متى يغش هذي يغش في الحال هذه\*\*\*وإن مال بعل لم تجد يميل  
يزدهما عند المشيب تعهداً\*\*\*وبراً وهذا في البعول قليل  
ثم قال: وهذه يا أولي الألباب، معيار الأداب، وأنشد ملغزاً في الدولاب  
وجاف وهو موصول\*\*\*وصول ليس بالجافي  
غريق بارز فاعجب\*\*\*له من راسب طاف  
يسح دموع مهضوم\*\*\*ويهضم هضم متلاف  
وتخشى منه حدته\*\*\*ولكن قلبه صاف

thee!  
 Give me a decision on a case which every judge shuns, at which every lawyer is  
 bewildered:  
 A man died, leaving a brother, both by father and mother, who was a Moslem,  
 free, pious:  
 And the deceased had a wife who had, O Doctor, a brother, really her own,  
 without equivocation:  
 She got her legal share, and her brother took what was left of the inheritance  
 instead of the deceased's brother.  
 Now relieve us by the answer to what we ask: this is an ordinance of law, no fault  
 can be found in it.<sup>525</sup>

Al-Saruji responds in the same meter and rhyme, thereby setting up a comparison that will  
 ultimately underscore the poetic superiority of al-Hariri:

Say to him who riddles questions that I am the discloser of their secret which he  
 hides.  
 Know that the deceased, in whose case the law preferred the brother of his spouse  
 to the son of his father,  
 Was a man who, of his free consent, gave his son in marriage to his own mother-  
 in-law: nothing strange in it.  
 Then the son died, but she was already pregnant by him, and gave birth to a son  
 like him:  
 And he was the son's son without dispute, and brother of the grandfather's spouse  
 without equivocation.  
 But the son of the true-born son is nearer to the grandfather, and takes precedence  
 in the inheritance over the brother:  
 And therefore, when he died, the eighth of the inheritance was adjudged to the  
 wife for her to take possession:  
 And the grandson, who was really her brother by her mother, took the rest:  
 And the full brother was left out of the inheritance, and we say thou hast only to  
 bewail him.  
 This is my decision, which every judge who judges will pattern by, every  
 lawyer.<sup>526</sup>

<sup>525</sup>Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 1, pp. 189–190:

أيها العالم الفقيه الذي فاق ذكاء فما له من شبيهه  
 أفتنا في قضية حا عنها كل قاض و حار كل فقيه  
 رجل مات عن أخ مسلم حاق برقي من أمه وأبيه  
 وله زوجة لها أيها الحب ر أخ خالص بلا تمويه  
 فحوت فرضها وحاز أخوها ما تبقى بالإرث دون أخيه  
 فاشفنا بالجواب عما سألنا فهو نص لا خلف يوجد فيه

<sup>526</sup>Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 1, p. 192:

قل لمن يلغز المسائل إني كاشف سرها الذي تخفيه  
 إن ذا الميت الذي قدم الشر ع أخا عرسه على ابن أبيه  
 رجل زوج ابنه عن رضاه بحماة له ولا غرو فيه

In “*al-Maqamah al-Maltiyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Maltiyah”), al-Saruji presents twenty riddles in poetry to demonstrate his skill to contemporary poets. The first five riddles are:

Then he turned to the foremost of the people, and said:

O thou who excels in sharpness, who strikes the fire-sticks of merit,<sup>527</sup>  
What is it that likens saying: “Hunger is cheered by provisions?”

Then he smiled to the second, and indited:

O man of surpassing honor, unsullied by baseness,  
What is as if one in riddling would say, “a back looked askance at”?

Then he glanced at the third, saying:

O thou, the children of whose thought resemble coin of ready course,  
What is like saying to a man thou pliest with riddles: “He met a gift”?

Then he stretched his neck towards the fourth, and said:

O thou who solvest what is intricate of riddles and enigmas,  
Reveal to me that which resembles to “take a thousand gold coins.”

Then he cast his eye upon the fifth, and said:

O such an one of shrewdest wit, endowed with brightest sagacity,  
What resembles “He neglects adornment”? If rightly guided be quick and tell.<sup>528</sup>

ثم مات ابنه وقد علقت من\*\*\*ه فجاءت بابن يسر ذويه  
فهو ابن ابنه بغير مرء\*\*\*وأخو عرسه بلا تمويه  
وابن الابن الصريح أدنى إلى الجـ\*\*\*د وأولى بإرثه من أخيه  
فلذا حين مات أوجب للزو\*\*\*جة ثمن التراث تستوفيه  
وحوى ابن ابنه الذي هو في الأصد\*\*\*ل أخوها من أمها باقيه  
وتخلى الأخ الشقيق من الإر\*\*\*ث وقلنا يكفيك أن تنكيه  
هاك مني الفتيا التي يحتديها\*\*\*كل قاضٍ يقضي وكل فقيه

<sup>527</sup>Fire-sticks of merit are valuable guns.

<sup>528</sup>Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 2, pp. 77–78:

يا من سما بذكاء\*\*\*في الفضل واري الزناد  
ماذا يماثل قولي\*\*\*جوع أمد بزداد

يا ذا الذي فاق فضلا\*\*\*ولم يدينسه شين  
ما مثل قول المحاجي\*\*\*ظهر أصابته عين

يا من نتائج فكره\*\*\*مثل النقود الجائزه  
ما مثل قولك للذي\*\*\*حاجبت صادف جائزه

ثم قابل ناطورة القوم، وقال:

ثم ضحك إلى الثاني، وأنتشد:

ثم لحظ الثالث، وأنشأ يقول:

Poets during al-Hariri's time enjoyed poetic riddles and often studied them. This popularity may have led al-Hariri to write many riddle verses in his *maqamat*.

In "*al-Maqamah al-Shitwiyyah*" ("The *Maqama* of Wintry"), al-Hariri wrote many riddle verses, which inspired some commentators to call this *maqama* "*al-Maqamah al-Lughziyyah*" ("The *Maqama* of Riddles"). The *maqama* contains sixty riddle verses in total, including the following:

Folks have I seen, O my folk, that on a crone's juice are fed; not, notice well,  
mean I though the daughter of grapes by her.  
And Arabs, at famine's time, who relished as dainty food, a roasted rag, and  
allayed indeed therewith hunger's pangs;  
And powerful men I saw, who said when things went amiss, or when they did  
carelessly their work: "It was fuel's fault";  
And scribes whose hands never wrote a letter in all their lives, and who read not  
any more aught of what is writ in books;  
And people who in their flight in eagle's wake sped along, although they were  
heavily arrayed in helmet and steel;  
And gathered folks, men of worth, to whom appeared suddenly a noble dame and  
they turned away, to flee far from her;  
And eke a troop, who for sure have never seen Mecca's fane and yet had made  
pilgrimage on camel's back without doubt;  
And women-folks faring from Aleppo all through the night who came to  
Kazimah-town at morn without weariness.  
And people from Kazimah who faring forth during night found in Aleppo  
themselves about the time morning dawned.  
A youth I saw who for sure had never touched lady fair, and yet he had progeny to  
keep alive name and race.<sup>529</sup>

ثم أتلع إلى الرابع، وقال:

أيا مستتبببب الغامض\*\*\*من لغز وإضمار  
ألا اكشف لي في ما مثل\*\*\*تتاوول ألف دينار

ثم رمى الخامس ببصره، وقال:

يا أيهذا الألمعيب\*\*\*بي أخو الذكاء المنجلي  
ما مثل أهمل حلية\*\*\*بين هديت وعجل

<sup>529</sup>Al-Hariri, *Assemblies of al-Hariri*, vol. 2, pp. 134-135:

رأيت يا قوم أقواماً غداؤهم\*\*\*بول العجوز وما أعني ابنة العنب  
لبن البقرة، والعجوز أيضاً من أسماء الخمر (بول العجوز)  
ومسنتين من الأعراب قوتهم\*\*\*أن يشنوا خرقه تغني من السغب  
القطعة من الجراد (الخرقة)  
وقادرين متى ما ساء صنعهم\*\*\*أو قصرُوا فيه قالوا الذنب للحطب  
الطابخ في القدر والقدير المطبوخ فيها (القادر)

Al-Saruji is not merely presenting his riddles in poetry to an audience that cannot solve them. He is also expressing pride that he is the only one who can solve his riddles, and that very few people reach his high level of knowledge, which includes both his eloquence and intellectual superiority.

Al-Hariri acquired a substantial amount of knowledge, and his talent was both literary and linguistic. In some works, he showed his pride indirectly through the mouth of his protagonist, Abu Zayd al-Saruji, who knows all Arabic rhetorical topics and presents them in riddle games to show his articulateness and scholarly superiority.

Al-Hariri showed his superiority over his contemporary poets in five ways: (1) praise and satire; (2) poetic conversation; (3) poetic letters; (4) playful use of styles and unfamiliar words and phrases; and (5) riddles.

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وكاتبين وما خطت أناملهم\*\*\*حرفاً ولا قرؤوا ما خط في الكتب  
:الخرازون. يقال: كتب السقاء والمزادة إذا خرزهما وكتب البغلة أو الناقة إذا جمع بين شفرئها وخاطهما قال الشاعر (الكاتبون)  
لا تأمنن فزارياً خلوت به\*\*\*على قلو صك واكتبها بأسيار  
وتابعين عقاباً في مسيرهم\*\*\*على تكمئهم في البيض والبلب  
الراية، وكانت راية النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم تسمى العقاب (العقاب)  
ومنتدين ذوي نيل بدت لهم\*\*\*نبيلة فانتثوا منها إلى الهرب  
الجيفة، ومنه تتبل البعير إذا مات وأروح يعني نثن (النبيلة)  
وعصبة لم تر البيت العتيق وقد\*\*\*حجت جثياً بلا شك على الركب  
معنى (حجت جثياً) أي: غلبت بالحجة مجادلين جاثين على الركب وجثي جمع جاثٍ  
ونسوة بعد ما أدلجن من حلب\*\*\*صبحن كاظمة من غير ما تعب  
في هذا الموضع من كظم الغيظ (كاظمة)  
ومدلجين سروا من أرض كاظمة\*\*\*فأصبحوا حين لاح الصبح في حلب  
أي: أصبحوا يحلبون اللبن (في حلب)  
ويافعاً لم يلامس قط غانية\*\*\*شاهدته وله نسل من العقب  
ههنا العدو، قال تعالى: (وهم من كل حذب ينسلون)، والعقب: مؤخر القدم (النسل)

## Conclusion

Scholars and students of Arabic literature and language continue to study the *Maqamat al-Hariri*. Throughout history, many scholars have written commentaries on al-Hariri's *maqamat*, while *maqama* writers have often written in the al-Hariri style. Al-Hariri's poetry serves as an important source of knowledge about life and language during his time, since he wrote about real people in a persuasive and eloquent style.

Al-Hariri frequently presented his own poetry in his *maqamat*. By reciting his own poetry in each *maqama*, and by quoting from other poets only four verses in his entire *maqamat*, he transformed how poetry was used in the *maqama* genre. In order to be a writer of *maqamat*, according to al-Hariri, the writer must also be a poet who recites his own poetry in each *maqama*.

Al-Hariri wrote two main types of poetry: *qit'ahs*, which account for two-thirds of his poems; and *qasidahs*, which account for the remaining third.

The function of poetry in the *Maqamat al-Hariri* is to move from one idea to another and prepare al-Saruji for traveling and justifying the trip.

“*Al-Maqamah al-Halabiyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Aleppo”) has a vast number of verses—sixty-five in all—whereas “*al-Maqamah al-Sasaniyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Sasan”) and “*al-Maqamah al-Gahgariyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of the Reversed”) have only five verses each.

Common poetic forms during the Abbasid Caliphate included didactic poetry, preaching poetry, and drinking wine poetry. Readers could find all of these forms in al-Hariri's poetry. For example, didactic poetry appears in “*al-Maqamah al-Halabiyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of the Parable”); drinking wine poetry appears in “*al-Maqamah al-Tanisiyyah*” (“The *Maqama* of Tanis”); and preaching poetry appears in “*al-Maqamah al-Saweiyah*” (“The *Maqama* of

Saweh”). Thus, in some respects al-Hariri’s poetry was similar to other poetry of his time.

In his rhymes, al-Hariri used all the Arabic letters except *dhal* (dh). For rhyming, he frequently used the letters *lam* (l), *ba’* (b), *ra’* (r), *dal* (d), and *mim* (m), and sometimes the letters *hamza* (‘), *kha’* (kh), *ta’* (t), and *ghayn* (gh).

In linguistic terms, al-Hariri used various rhetorical embellishments and ornate styles, including *tawriya* (double-entendre), *tibaq* (antithesis), and *tajnis* (paronomasia)—again reflecting the common usage of writers and poets during the Abbasid Caliphate.

Al-Hariri’s poetry treated social, political, religious, and psychological topics that reflected the life and conditions of his time. In the social sphere, he depicted the lives of *mukdyn* (beggars), including their acts, characteristics, poems, and tricks. Al-Hariri also dealt with two of the main social topics of his day: drinking wine and homosexuality.

Political events of al-Hariri’s time that appear in some of his *maqamat* include the Christian Crusades against the Muslims.

In terms of religion, he preached to different audiences: rulers, ordinary people, individuals concerned with death, seniors, and himself.

In terms of the psychological aspects of his work, al-Hariri was not satisfied with the life of his time, particularly the widespread poverty and how that affected people’s minds and characters.

Ideas for future study of al-Hariri’s *maqamat* include giving more attention to the poetry in the *maqamat* and to the literature of contemporary impoverished writers and poets, including the *mukdyn* (beggars).



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