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THE EARLY *MAQĀMA* TOWARDS DEFINING A GENRE

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Preliminaries

How to define *maqāma* as a genre? A practical definition of genre, at least in the case of such a heterogenous genre as *maqāma*, seems to arise in a threefold way. First of all, one has to begin with an intuitive hypothesis as to what a *maqāma* is. Secondly, one proceeds to analyse the intuitively selected corpus and to compare it with other texts which might belong to the same or a related genre. Finally, one reaches a more studied definition, which may include a variety of subgenres as well as some which overlap with other genres, and this is unavoidable: authors have always been ready to crossbreed genres by combining elements from two or more genres. This is the procedure that will be attempted in the present paper.¹

In the field of *maqāmas* the choice of an initial corpus falls self evidently on the work of al-Hamadhānī², who was the first to write a number of texts which are easily recognizable as *maqāmas*, which were so called by the author and which were received as such by the audience. Now, we come directly to a very difficult question: are we defining *maqāma* as one individual text (of which in the final form of al-Hamadhānī's collection there are 52) or as a collection? Put in other words, should we discuss the *maqāmas* as we do sonnets (there are sonnets in literature of various periods, in plays, novels, books of poetry, as well as collections including nothing but sonnets) or novels (where we may find verse, emboxed stories, letters and other material which does not in itself belong to the genre of the novel)? This is a

- 1 As will be seen, my attempt to define *maqāmas* differs considerably from that of KILITO (1976) and (1983). Kilito's point of view is more or less theoretical, growing from the genre studies of the *Literaturwissenschaft* of the 70's. Mine is more pragmatic and historically orientated.
- 2 For practical reasons, I am making use of the edition of 'ABDALĤAMĪD and the enumeration of *maqāmas* found there. The missing *maqāma* Shāmiya 25a. usually comes in the manuscripts after no. 25. The edition is very poor and should always be compared with the manuscripts or some of the more reliable editions.

major problem, as even a cursory reading of al-Hamadhānī's work shows: Bishrīya (51), Baghdādhiya (12) and Ḥamdāniya (29) do not necessarily belong to the same genre.

Dealing with the maqāmas as separate texts has one obvious advantage: there have been many authors who have written only a few maqāmas and who have not collected what they have written into a single volume.

On the other hand, proceeding on the basis of the collection, as the contemporary audience also seems to have done, has its own advantages. It enables us, at least initially, to keep the collection of al-Hamadhānī intact, even though we may come to reconsider the status of some pieces later on. It does not seem very practical to start with a vivisection of al-Hamadhānī's collection.

A necessary question is the more general and theoretical one of what a genre is – if there is such a thing as a genre.³ To begin with, I would suggest that, theoretically speaking, there is no such thing; what we have is a group of works of art, each basically unique. Genre is an abstract setting of limits and as such non-existent: drawing an exact line between, say, the novel and the short story is in a way no less absurd than dividing animals exactly into large and small ones. Yet pragmatically speaking, abstractions are often very useful tools, and the concept of genre is without doubt very practical as long as we remember that it is an abstraction.

Besides being an abstraction for the modern literary critic, genre has always been an abstraction used by the writers and, at least unconsciously, by their audience. In the mediaeval literary culture, an author was very conscious of the genre to which his work belonged and he selected his themes and vocabulary accordingly. To take but one example, we may consider Persian lyric poetry vs. romantic epic. It is well known that in most of Persian *ghazal* the character of the 'beloved' is male whereas that of romantic epic is almost always female (an exception being, e.g., Maḥmūd and Ayāz). It is impossible that these in any way reflect reality (lyric poets being homosexual, epic poets heterosexual)⁴; instead, what we have is a conscious

3 For the following discussion, I found JACOBS' *Der deutsche Schelmenroman* (1983) very useful and thought-provoking.

4 The question of the homosexuality of the poets is in itself very interesting, and there certainly have been many genuinely homosexual lyric poets beginning with Abū Nuwās.

choice of material on the part of the author, or put in other words, an acceptance of the expectations of the genre. Thus the abstraction turns into reality.

This also leads to another theoretical starting-point. If the conscious choice of the author and the expectations of the audience are relevant for the genre (*al-a'māl bi'n-niyāt!*), then we have to pay a great deal of attention to what the authors themselves called their work, and how the audience responded. An explicit claim by an author, such as Ibn Sharaf, to be imitating an earlier author (al-Hamadhānī in this case), has to be taken seriously when delineating the concept of maqāma.⁵

The last theoretical point to be discussed is the nature of genre: should we use an organic definition, which grows and develops in time and space, or a more rigoristic definition which remains the same for all times and countries? The latter could be supported by the argument that we, as readers and critics, have all the texts simultaneously under our magnifying glass, and when dissecting the texts we should attempt to apply the same criteria to all the texts irrespective of their age.

Yet I believe that this is not the correct way to proceed; rigorous definitions often seem to be uncomfortably near *rigor mortis*, at least when it comes to literary studies. A definition of genre irrespective of time and space tends to play down the importance of the authors and their first audience. There must have been some reason for as-Suyūṭī to call his works maqāmas, and they obviously were not received with perplexity, but were accepted as being what they were labelled as. Now, if we accept his texts as maqāmas, we might then try to determine a single definition of maqāma which would include his works, but this seems to me a somewhat futile exercise leading to an unnecessarily broad definition; during the first centuries of the genre no one would have thought of the Suyūṭian texts as maqāmas. In the centuries between al-Hamadhānī and as-Suyūṭī the expectations of the audience with respect to maqāmas had changed, and there is no reason why our definition should not grow at the same pace.⁶

5 This has to be distinguished from another, more usual case where the author emphasizes his pious motifs for writing his work. In the latter case, we may often doubt the sincerity of the author and lay the claim aside as mere pretence.

6 In this, the question of genre resembles that of orthodoxy: to throw the extremely practical term of orthodoxy aside – as has been done by some of the more modern

This leads to the complication that we have to take the date of the text into account when discussing the development of the genre, but this seems unavoidable: the context of the text is and has always to be taken into account. Texts do not lead a life irrespective of their environment.

Before taking a closer look at al-Hamadhānī's work, we should briefly mention the *maqām*, the pious and exhortatory speech delivered to the Caliph or some other high official (see also below). It seems obvious that the terms *maqām* and *maqāma* (pl. of both *maqāmāt*) are related and that al-Hamadhānī himself was aware of the connection. The particular reason why he chose to use *maqāma* instead of *maqām* is unclear; grammatically, *maqāma* is the *nomen unitatis* ('a single occasion of standing up') of the more general *maqām* ('the general standing up; place/time of standing up').⁷

In Arabic, the term used to denote the Hamadhānian *maqāma* in exclusion of various religious *maqāmas*⁸ (the pious *maqāma*; the Ṣūfī *maqāma*) seems to have been *maqāma adabiya*, although this is only rarely used (e.g. al-Kutubī, *Fawāt* I:241; as-Suyūṭī, *Bughya* II:67: *maqāmāt adabiya mash-hūra* of Ibn Nāqiyā).

Analysis of al-Hamadhānī's collection

Al-Hamadhānī's collection contains 52 texts called *maqāmas*. In comparing the texts, it becomes obvious that they differ considerably one from another. Before analysing the differences, let us consider the common features in all, or the overwhelming majority of, the *maqāmas*.

scholars of comparative religion and Islam – just because we cannot define it once and for all, does not seem very reasonable. Even though the content of the term may vary in time (the creation of the Qur'ān was an orthodox dogma for a while), it is applicable to certain contents for each period of time, and there is a clear development leading from one orthodoxy to another.

7 The term has recently been studied by BEESTON (1990), p. 126-127.

8 I find it difficult to agree with WILD (1994), who writes (p. 428): "*wa-lahū maqāmāt adabiyya*, was man wohl interpretieren muss: er verfasste Maqāmen des Genre *adab* – im Gegensatz zu didaktischen Maqāmen". – In general, I find it very difficult to see the *maqāmas*, even those of al-Ḥarīrī, as stylistic and lexicographical exercises for didactic purposes.

As far as I can see, there are in fact only two common denominators for all the texts, viz. the use of rhymed prose, *sağʿ*, and a fictive narrator, ʿĪsā ibn Hishām⁹. In addition, fictive protagonists are almost always used, but in a few texts, e.g. aṣ-Ṣaymarīya (42), there are instead (pseudo)-historical characters. Now, we could start building the definition of maqāma on the basis of these features, but the situation is not an uncomplicated one.

First of all, the use of *sağʿ* is not very helpful, as *sağʿ* was very prolifically used in other genres (e.g. *rasāʿil*) in the times of al-Hamadhānī and after him, so it does not help us very much in defining the specific genre of maqāma. Moreover, not only was *sağʿ* used in the maqāmas, but normal (artistic) prose¹⁰ and verse are also found. On the other hand, the use of highly polished *sağʿ* is a sufficient feature to distinguish the maqāmas from popular literature where fictive characters, both human, non-human and supernatural, abound.

The use of a fictive (human) narrator is, on the other hand, a very clear characteristic of maqāma, and a feature very rarely met with in other genres¹¹, but its mechanical character makes it somewhat cumbersome to build the definition of the genre upon it. As we shall see, there are a few pieces already in the collection of al-Hamadhānī where the text itself obviously belongs to a different genre (*risāla*) which, moreover, it historically seems

- 9 It has recently been suggested by some writers, MONROE among others (1983, p. 20ff.), that the initial formula *ḥaddathanā ʿĪsā ibn Hishām qāla* parodies the use of *isnād* in *ḥadīth* studies. This view seems to have gained fairly wide acceptance (e.g. WILD 1994, p. 433-434) but the fact remains that Monroe cannot adduce any hard evidence for his interpretation and it is merely a result of his overall reading of the maqāmas, which is very axiomatic and not too convincing. The maqāmas themselves do not contain anything to hint that the use of a narrator is here intended for parody; a multimembered *isnād* might be so (although see below note 34), but the device of using a narrator is not in itself sufficient proof of any underlying intent for parody. What is more, the habit of indicating one's source(s) had become by al-Hamadhānī's days usual for *adab* studies, too.
- 10 This is a fact which is overlooked extremely often. It is, of course, true that a major part of the maqāmas of al-Hamadhānī are written in *sağʿ* but there are also sometimes long passages of normal artistic prose, e.g. in 24 Mārīstānīya (p. 158-159); 51 Bishrīya (p. 459-462) etc., although they do remain a minority.
- 11 One could think mainly of fables and *Märchen* which are easily discerned by their lack of artistic *sağʿ* – a simpler use of rhymed prose is, though, well attested in, e.g., *Alflayla wa-layla*.

to have been to begin with, and only the mechanically prefixed *ḥaddathanā* *‘Īsā ibn Hishām qāla* (and in some cases the name of the protagonist) connects the text with other maqāmas.

More helpful, to my mind, is the use of openly fictive human protagonists, even if they are not found in all the maqāmas. In most they are, and here the difference with regard to other literature is obvious. Most of the *adab* literature is, as is well known, either historical, pseudo-historical or ahistorical, i.e. the stories are true (though possibly embellished) accounts of historical events and persons, or they claim to be such, or they are taken outside the sphere of history by using general characters, types (a Bedouin; a slave girl etc.). The fact of the protagonists being human defines the genre in contrast to animal tales (e.g. *Kalīla wa-Dimna*) and *munāẓaras*, where animals, flowers and other non-human characters are found. The *Märchen* with their human protagonists, such as those found in *Alf layla wa-layla* are easily distinguished from the maqāmas by their lack of polished *sağ*^c. Also very prominent in the maqāmas is the “realistic” setting, realistic taken in the sense that no supernatural or *gharīb* features are found: the stories are set among ordinary people (beggars, Bedouins, belletrists or whatever) in ordinary cities of *Dār al-islām*.

Further features common to most maqāmas include that of being a humoristic tale, but as we shall shortly see, this holds true for only some of al-Hamadhānī’s maqāmas. Also, the length of the story could be adduced in this context, as well as the features of the travel theme, which usually, though, consists only of a rather superficial mention of the setting of the maqāma, and its episodic character: maqāma collections are usually divided into independent units (maqāmas) which have no links between them, except for the names of the protagonists: we cannot follow any development from one maqāma to the next.

Having studied the common features of the maqāmas we may now turn to their differences, and the question of subgenres in the collection of al-Hamadhānī. An analysis of the individual maqāmas enables us to discern some clearly limited subgenres as well as a “left-over” or residue group. I would suggest the following groups (as will be seen, the groups are partly overlapping and the limits are not always quite clear. In the case of several maqāmas, we could set the boundaries differently):

1. Picaresque and comic maqāmas. This is the largest group and it consists of stories with a humorous plot which often but not always include a picaresque hero (or antihero), picaresque being taken to mean a somewhat comic figure who lives by deception and conmanship. The scene is usually taken from the street life of the lower classes. Incidentally, the hero of the picaresque maqāmas is more or less consistently either (or both) of the twin heroes of al-Hamadhānī, ʿĪsā ibn Hishām and Abū'l-Faṭḥ al-Iskandarī¹². The maqāmas in this group could be compared to the Renaissance *novella*, and they come close to European narrative fiction. I would consider the following maqāmas representative of this group:

- 12 Baghdādhīya: a typical picaresque story with deception.
- 10 Iṣfahānīya: picaresque, religious deception.
- 36 Arminīya: picaresque.
- 22 Maḍīrīya: comic, without picaresque motifs (no conman tricks nor deception).
- 33 Ḥulwānīya: comic.

2. Beggar maqāmas. The group is solely defined by the subject-matter. The group could also be divided between the preceding and the following ones, being humoristic but also showing interest in the jargon of the beggars, which, in the context of the late 10th century at least, has to be taken as part of the philological sphere of interest. An added reason to deal with these maqāmas as a separate group is the reader response of the author's times: his maqāmas are often labelled as *maqāmāt fī l-kudya*¹³. E.g.

- 19 Sāsānīya: the main part is formed by two beggar songs.
- 43 Dīnārīya: serial and mutual insults by beggars.

12 It might be added in passing that I am not quite confident in always reading 'a man from Alexandria' or 'the Alexandrian' as a sobriquet for Abū'l-Faṭḥ, but the question need not be discussed here *in extenso*. Be it enough to draw attention to the fact that it is quite possible, as a hypothesis, to take Abū'l-Faṭḥ only as the final development of this character, and to take the 'man from Alexandria' as an earlier sketch of Abū'l-Faṭḥ, still semi-anonymous.

13 E.g. ath-Thaʿālibī, *Yatīma* IV:257 (400 maqāmas "fī l-kudya wa-ghayrihā"). – Note that the term *kudya* also describes several of the picaresque maqāmas.

3. Philological maqāmas. This group consists of maqāmas centring around eloquent use of words with no or little prominent plot being detectable. The maqāmas dealing with aesthetics and literary criticism form a major part of this group. E.g.

- 29 Ḥamdānīya: purely philological.
- 31 Mighzalīya: philological.
- 25 Maḡā'īya (and 34 Nahīdīya): philological, consisting of food descriptions, a theme very much favoured in the 10th century. Both also contain a comic element.¹⁴
- 15 Ġāḥizīya: aesthetical.
- 28 'Irāqīya: aesthetical.
- 44 Shi'rīya: aesthetical.

Features of the three groups hitherto mentioned are also found combined (e.g. maqāmas 1 and 3 which could best be described as philological maqāmas but which have features of the other two groups) and, as we shall shortly see, this combination becomes the standard for al-Ḥarīrī.

4. Exhortatory maqāma. This “group” consists of only one maqāma (26 Wa'zīya). Counting it as a separate group is a matter of hindsight, but a practical one. If we look at the maqāmas of al-Hamadhānī only, this maqāma would belong to the 5th, residue, group, but it does have links to both earlier (*maqāmāt az-zuhhād*) and later (*az-Zamakhsharī*) texts, which entitles us to consider it as belonging to a separate group.

5. Group of different texts for which no common denominator can be discovered. Only two features connect them with other maqāmas, viz. the use of 'Īsā ibn Hishām as a fictive narrator (and sometimes Abū'l-Faḥ as a character) and being incorporated into the collection by somebody. Thus they are the most problematic group of maqāmas. 40 'Ilmīya and 41 Waṣīya are originally excerpts from al-Hamadhānī's letters (*Rasā'il*, p. 165; p. 393-

14 The same ingredients are also found in the picaresque maqāma 12 Baghdādhīya but in a different ratio. In Baghdādhīya the food descriptions are set within a story of deception.

397), 42 Şaymarīya and 51 Bishrīya are comic stories which have little in common with the other maqāmas, and maqāmas 37-39, 45, and 47-48 are panegyric texts and might as well be considered a sixth subgenre of maqāma.

Analysis of some related works and the later development of the genre

The predecessors and immediate successors of al-Hamadhānī have been studied by me in another article¹⁵ and it is unnecessary to repeat the details here. Suffice it to mention that, besides the “pious maqāms”, such as those in Ibn Qutayba’s *‘Uyūn al-akhbār*, the two traditions which have most influenced al-Hamadhānī are those culminating in the anonymous *Hā’ik al-kalām* and in al-Azdī’s *Hikāyat Abī’l-Qāsim*. No traces of any influence of live theatre can be found in al-Hamadhānī (contra MOREH, *Live Theatre*, p. 105-110), and the influence of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* and other animal tales is possible on a general level but undemonstrable in particulars.

After al-Hamadhānī we find many works called, either by the author himself or by later biographers or copyists, maqāmas (see Appendix for details), as well as works which are close enough to his works to be worth discussing as possible maqāmas.

An interesting case is Ibn Buṭlān’s *Da‘wat al-aṭibbā’* (abbreviated PDP – “The Physicians’ Dinner Party”). The text is not called maqāma except by later biographers (al-Qiftī)¹⁶ but it has some similarities with the maqāmas of al-Hamadhānī (comic plot; travel theme; medical vocabulary which partly matches the philological interests of al-Hamadhānī; fictive characters etc.), though other features are missing or under-represented (*rāwī*; *sağ’* is sparingly used). The work of Ibn Buṭlān is divided into chapters (*bāb*) which are less independent than the different maqāmas in al-Hamadhānī’s collection and remind one more of the bi- or tripartite maqāmas (e.g. 6 Asadīya) where the separate episodes within a maqāma are connected with each other.

15 See HÄMEEN-ANTTILA (forthcoming).

16 Al-Qiftī, *Ta’rikh*, p. 298.

The language of Ibn Buṭlān and the techniques used by him do not show any unequivocal influence from al-Hamadhānī; all the features common to both writers are also found in other fictive works of the 10th century, especially *Ḥāʾik al-kalām* (cross-examination of a professional) and *Ḥikāyat Abī'l-Qāsim* (banquet theme; connection to *bukhl/tufayl* literature)¹⁷. As Ibn Buṭlān was primarily a doctor and philosopher, there is no compelling reason to assume that he knew al-Hamadhānī's work. Yet there remains the later opinion of biographers which is substantiated by a perusal of his work. The common characteristics, even though they are not due to his consciously writing within the same genre, are yet conspicuous enough to allow his work as part of the maqāma genre, although outside the main stream. It should also be noted that he was not imitated by later writers.

Among other possible maqāma writers are al-Ghazālī (*Maqāmāt al-udabā' bayna yaday al-khulafā' wa'l-umarā'*) and az-Zamakhsharī (*Maqāmāt*). The former belongs undoubtedly more to the pious *maqām* tradition than to Hamadhānian maqāma, but the latter is a more complicated case. Az-Zamakhsharī's work probably has a genuine religious overtone; at least the author leads us to understand that he is writing exhortatory texts (p. 7-12). The use of a to some extent fictive character¹⁸ and very ornate prose connects him to al-Hamadhānī, as also does his mastery of *adab*; among az-Zamakhsharī's prolific writings is the famous *adab* collection *Rabī' al-abrār*, as well as the short *Aṭwāq adh-dhahab*, which make it quite obvious that he was at home with what went on in that field. Az-Zamakhsharī could not have been unaware of al-Hamadhānī's work.

What is even more important is that his collection, despite its religious character, does include several philological maqāmas which are definitely not religious, viz. 47-50. These seem to be the earliest examples of what later became a subgenre of maqāmas and what might be called "professional maqāmas", e.g. al-Qalqashandī's *al-Kawākib ad-durrīya*¹⁹. Taking these facts into account, it seems probable that az-Zamakhsharī himself did not

17 See HÄMEEN-ANTTILA (forthcoming).

18 The maqāmas are written as if addressed to Abū'l-Qāsim, i.e. the author himself (see p. 11). Despite the historicity of the addressee, I would be prepared to accept this as a development of the fictive character in other maqāmas.

19 See BOSWORTH (1964).

regard the pious *maqāmāt* and the Hamadhānian *maqāmāt* as two different genres, but merely as two ramifications of one larger genre.

Another writer whom we have to consider is al-Maʿarrī (d. 449), whose prose writings are *sui generis* to the utmost limit. Several of his works (I am thinking especially of *R. al-Ghufrān* and *R. aṣ-Ṣāhil wa 'sh-shāhiġ*; *al-Fuṣūl wa 'l-ghāyāt* could be considered in connection with the exhortatory *maqāma*) contain fictive characters, philological interest and (dry) humour, although other features of *maqāma* are missing, such as *rāwī* and the picaresque hero. *R. aṣ-Ṣāhil* and *R. al-Ghufrān* fall outside the *maqāma* genre due to their supernatural setting (*R. al-Ghufrān*) and non-human characters (*R. aṣ-Ṣāhil*; though see below on as-Suyūṭī) and neither, to my knowledge, has ever been called a *maqāma* by biographers. Thus we have two reasons to exclude them from the genre, although they are both inevitably among the most closely related works.

Ibn Shuhayd's *R. at-Tawābiʿ wa 'z-zawābiʿ* goes naturally with al-Maʿarrī's *R. al-Ghufrān*, but it is interesting to note that Ibn Shuhayd does quote al-Hamadhānī's *maqāmas* in his own work²⁰. Yet the longest quotation comes from a passage defying the view that al-Hamadhānī's prose was superior, and although the quotation is taken from a *maqāma*, it had also found its way into standard descriptions of water²¹. It seems clear that Ibn Shuhayd is just quoting a piece of exemplary prose (to show that he could surpass it) and the quotation does not imply that he was competing within the genre created by al-Hamadhānī.

Ibn Shuhayd was not the only nor even the first Andalusian²² writer influenced by the *maqāmas*. From the point of view of the development of the genre, it is worthy of note that the genre was received in Spain well before al-Ḥarīrī, which seems to be the basic reason why Andalusian *maqāma* differs considerably from that of the Eastern *maqāma*. In the East, al-Ḥarīrī's influence overwhelmed all other branches of Hamadhānian *maqāmas* in the early 6th century, at least for a few centuries, but in Spain and

20 See HÄMEEN-ANTTILA (1994-1995).

21 Ibn Shuhayd, *R. at-Tawābiʿ*, p. 128 = al-Hamadhānī, *Maqāmāt*, p. 136-137. Cf. al-Ḥuṣrī, *Zahr al-ādāb*, p. 235.

22 In the following I am using the term Andalusian with a certain freedom, thus including authors from the cultural sphere of al-Andalus (North Africa, Sicily).

North Africa the older freedom of maqāmas was continued. It seems that the only close imitator of al-Ḥarīrī in Spain, writing in Arabic²³, was al-Ash-tarkuwī (d. 538)²⁴.

From the sphere of Hamadhānian maqāma with its subgenres, the kind most enthusiastically adopted was the philological maqāma and its aesthetical version. The aforementioned Ibn Shuhayd falls within this category, as does Ibn Sharaf (d. 460) with his *Masā'il al-intiqād*, and probably also Ibn Fattūḥ, whose work is quoted in Ibn Bassām's *Dhakhīra* I:786-787. That the quotation comes from a maqāma (or collection of maqāmas) is a well-substantiated guess by DE LA GRANJA (1976, p. 70-71), and the passage does resemble Ibn Sharaf's work very closely.

The panegyric maqāma was continued by Abū Muḥammad ibn Mālik al-Qurṭubī (d. 483) and Abū 'Āmir Ibn Arqam (early 6th c.). Ibn Bassām quotes lengthy passages from the panegyric maqāma – in the singular: there does not seem to have been any division into episodes – of Ibn Mālik in *Dhakhīra* I:741-752, first labelling it a maqāma and then, at the end of the work, a risāla (I:752: *wa-madda Ibn Mālik fī risālatihi hādhihi aṭnāb al-iṭnāb ...*).

The picaresque maqāma was masterfully developed by Abū Ḥafṣ 'Umar ibn ash-Shahīd (late 5th c.) part of whose work is quoted by Ibn Bassām (*Dhakhīra* I:674-685). Ibn ash-Shahīd has both the travel theme and the comic or picaresque plot, and he also added – at least in one of the fragments preserved by Ibn Bassām – a speaking animal, thus making the link with animal fables even more obvious. What many other writers had alluded to in their prologues, Ibn ash-Shahīd made explicit: maqāmas are a genre closely related to animal fables in the eyes of Arab critics.²⁵

In addition to these Andalusian maqāmas from which we have at least fragments preserved, there are several others which we know only by title (see Appendix). After they were introduced into Spain²⁶, the maqāmas of al-

23 In this paper, I am discussing only the Arabic maqāma, not its extensions in Hebrew, Syriac and Persian.

24 See DE LA GRANJA (1976), p. xiii, and EI², art. "maqāma", p. 110b, and, especially, NEMAH (1974), p. 88-92, where a synopsis of the maqāmas of al-Ashtarkuwī is given.

25 This provides a further link to the works of al-Ma'arrī.

26 See also HÄMEEN-ANTTILA (1997).

Ḥarīrī were much admired, but the other subgenres remained alive. An interesting development can be seen in the work of Abū ‘Abdallāh ibn abī’l-Khiṣāl (d. 540)²⁷. Ibn abī’l-Khiṣāl combines the imitation of al-Ḥarīrī (which goes to the extent of using the names of the Ḥarīrian heroes) with the innovation of knitting the different episodes into a single whole, which may hint at his being influenced by the tradition which is manifest in al-Azdi’s *Ḥikāyat Abī’l-Qāsim* and Ibn Buṭlān’s PDP. Thus we find yet another link between different genres of narrative fiction.

The main line of Hamadhānian maqāma was to continue in the East. It seems obvious that the maqāma attributed to Ibn Nubāta as-Sa’dī (d. 405/1014) is either misattributed or purposefully forged and those of ‘Abdal‘azīz ibn Tammām, mentioned by BLACHÈRE and MASNOU (their no. 2), are from a later date (see Appendix). The maqāmas of Ibn Nāqiyā²⁸ (d. 485/1092) are the first to follow very closely those of al-Hamadhānī. Almost all the major features of Hamadhānian picaresque maqāma are found in them although to some extent modified: *rāwī* (always anonymous, e.g. a certain *fātik*, p. 124); a picaresque hero (al-Yashkurī); a travel theme (though only in the suburbs of Baghdad) etc., and their style is unmistakably reminiscent of al-Hamadhānī.

From the point of view of genre, the most interesting of al-Hamadhānī’s followers is a contemporary of al-Ḥarīrī who has hitherto been neglected in maqāma studies, as far as I know, viz. al-Kāmil al-Khwārizmī, who died at about the same time as al-Ḥarīrī. Aṣ-Ṣafadī, *Wāfi* XVII:541-542 tells us about him that

“he lived in the era of al-Ḥarīrī Abū Muḥammad, the author of the *Maqāmāt*. When al-Ḥarīrī managed to antecede him in writing maqāmas, this al-Khwārizmī created (*ikhtara’a*) a *Kitāb ar-riḥal* in which he wrote 16 *riḥlas* in the manner of (*ḥadhā fihā ḥadhw*) the maqāmāt. He dedicated the volume to Hibatallāh ibn al-Faḍl ibn Ṣā’id ibn at-Tilmīdh in 502. Yāqūt related one of the *riḥlas* in his *Mu’ğam al-udabā’*.”²⁹

27 See NEMAH (1974), p. 84-86.

28 The new complete edition (ḤASAN ‘ABBĀS, ed., *Maqāmāt Ibn Nāqiyā*. Al-Iskandarīya 1988) has not been available to me. For this edition, see WILD (1992), and for Ibn Nāqiyā in general, see WILD (1994).

29 The biography is not found in Yāqūt, *Irshād* (ed. MARGOLIOUTH).

He is also mentioned by al-Qiftī, *Inbāh* II:136, who tells us that he came to Baghdād in 510 where he “*rawā shay’an min shi’rihi wa-taşānīfihi*” (regrettably, al-Qiftī does not know of his *K. ar-Riḥal*) whereafter he returned to his country and died a little later. One of his *riḥlas* has been preserved in al-Qalqashandī’s *Ṣubḥ al-a’shā* 14:128-138 (from Ibn Ḥamdūn’s *Tadhkira* VI:401-411)³⁰.

The passage in *al-Wāfi* shows another aspect of genre in mediaeval literature. The analysis of the only extant maqāma of al-Kāmil al-Khwārizmī shows clearly that it belongs to the genre of Hamadhānian maqāma, but even a century after al-Hamadhānī’s death there was still uncertainty as to whether to take *maqāmāt* as a title of a book or a name for a new genre.

Al-Ḥarīrī’s work is well enough known to make any description superfluous. As it happened, al-Ḥarīrī’s maqāmas were to be canonized during his lifetime³¹ and they have remained the classical maqāma collection to the present day. Their fame has, though, proven to be a major obstacle in maqāma studies: consciously or not, most studies on the maqāmas are written from the viewpoint of Ḥarīrian maqāma, which in fact is only a development of the Hamadhānian maqāma in one direction³². Starting from the Ḥarīrian maqāma makes the development of other subgenres of maqāma incomprehensible. The Spanish maqāma, to take but one example, is underrivable from the more monolithic Ḥarīrian maqāma.

Al-Ḥarīrī’s maqāmas lack the variation of the Hamadhānian maqāma, and they can best be described as a coalescence of the three major maqāma subgenres of al-Hamadhānī, viz. picaresque, philological and beggar maqāma. Already in al-Hamadhānī’s work these were sometimes coalesced (e.g.

30 The reference to al-Khwārizmī in EI² art. “maqāma”, p. 108b, is to be corrected accordingly.

31 See HÄMEEN-ANTTILA (1997).

32 Taken to an extreme, this viewpoint would force us to exclude several of the maqāmas of al-Hamadhānī from the genre, which, I would think, is historically unsound. Similar developments can be seen in the studies of the European (Spanish) picaresque novel, where some scholars have excluded the first picaresque novel, the anonymous *Lazarillo de Tormes*, from the genre, because it lacks features that became part and parcel of the later tradition. Knowing that the later authors often had *Lazarillo* before their eyes and that they did imitate this novel, I find it hard to accept such rigorous definitions which place the historical development in a secondary position in preference to theory.

1 Qarīḍīya and 3 Balkhīya) but independent enough to lead to several different traditions.

After al-Ḥarīrī there does not seem to have been much development in the maqāma³³. Although the Ḥarīrian maqāma became the classical model of maqāma, all the earlier ramifications, e.g. the Spanish maqāmas, remained productive. The most conspicuous innovation were the maqāmas of as-Suyūṭī, which often make do without a *rāwī*³⁴, picaresque hero and travel theme and could best be described as essays written in *saġʿ*. They also have non-human protagonists (e.g. flowers in the famous *maqāma ar-Rayāḥīn*)³⁵, and mix different genres without hesitation: the Flower maqāma is closer to *munāẓaras* than to the Hamadhānian maqāma. Had they not been labelled maqāmas by their author and accepted as such by the audience, there would be little reason to include them in the genre of maqāma, and even now they have to be situated in the margins of the genre.

Conclusions

Having reviewed the evidence, we may resume the theoretical discussion of the limits of the genre. In the native tradition, we can see the main line of maqāmas leading from al-Hamadhānī to al-Ḥarīrī and stopping there: the Ḥarīrian maqāma remained the model of Classical maqāma for all later writers. This did not, however, stop other kinds of maqāmas being written; especially in Spain and North Africa the limits of maqāma were drawn far

33 The unsatisfactory number of editions makes, though, the study of the later development of maqāma unavoidably preliminary in character.

34 Only in four maqāmas do we meet with the typical fictive *rāwī* (Hāshim ibn al-Qāsim) and in one (*maqāmat ar-Rayāḥīn*, p. 431-478) we have a multimembered fictive *isnād* (*ḥaddathanā ar-Rayyān ‘an Abī’r-Rayḥān ‘an ...*) with “garden names”. It should be noted that all the maqāmas with the *rāwī* Hāshim ibn al-Qāsim also have the travel theme (al-Asyūṭīya, p. 234ff.; al-Ġīzīya, p. 335ff.; al-Miṣrīya, p. 1112ff.; al-Makkīya, p. 1121ff. – note also the consistently used geographical titles). Most of as-Suyūṭī’s maqāmas begin with a Qur’ānic quotation.

35 Their predecessor in this, Ibn ash-Shahīd, see above, had only inserted a speaking cock within the maqāma telling about human protagonists, thus remaining better within the limits of Hamadhānian maqāma.

outside the main tradition, and it is often difficult to discern between a *maqāma* and a *risāla* in Andalusia.

As a prime example of this we have taken as-Suyūṭī, whose *maqāmat ar-Rayāḥīn* fulfils all of the characteristics of *munāzara* but is yet called by the author himself *maqāma*. In defining the term organically, we are able to retain these – and other – texts called by their authors and audiences *maqāmas* within the limits of the genre without having to add them artificially to the requirements of the early *maqāma*. The following Figure will make my point clear (although I have been unable to include the geographical factor): *see figure next page*.

To resume the individual factors of the limits and their development in time and space:

style: *sağ*^c increases in complexity and becomes the main feature defining the genre.

transmission: through a fictive human *rāwī*.

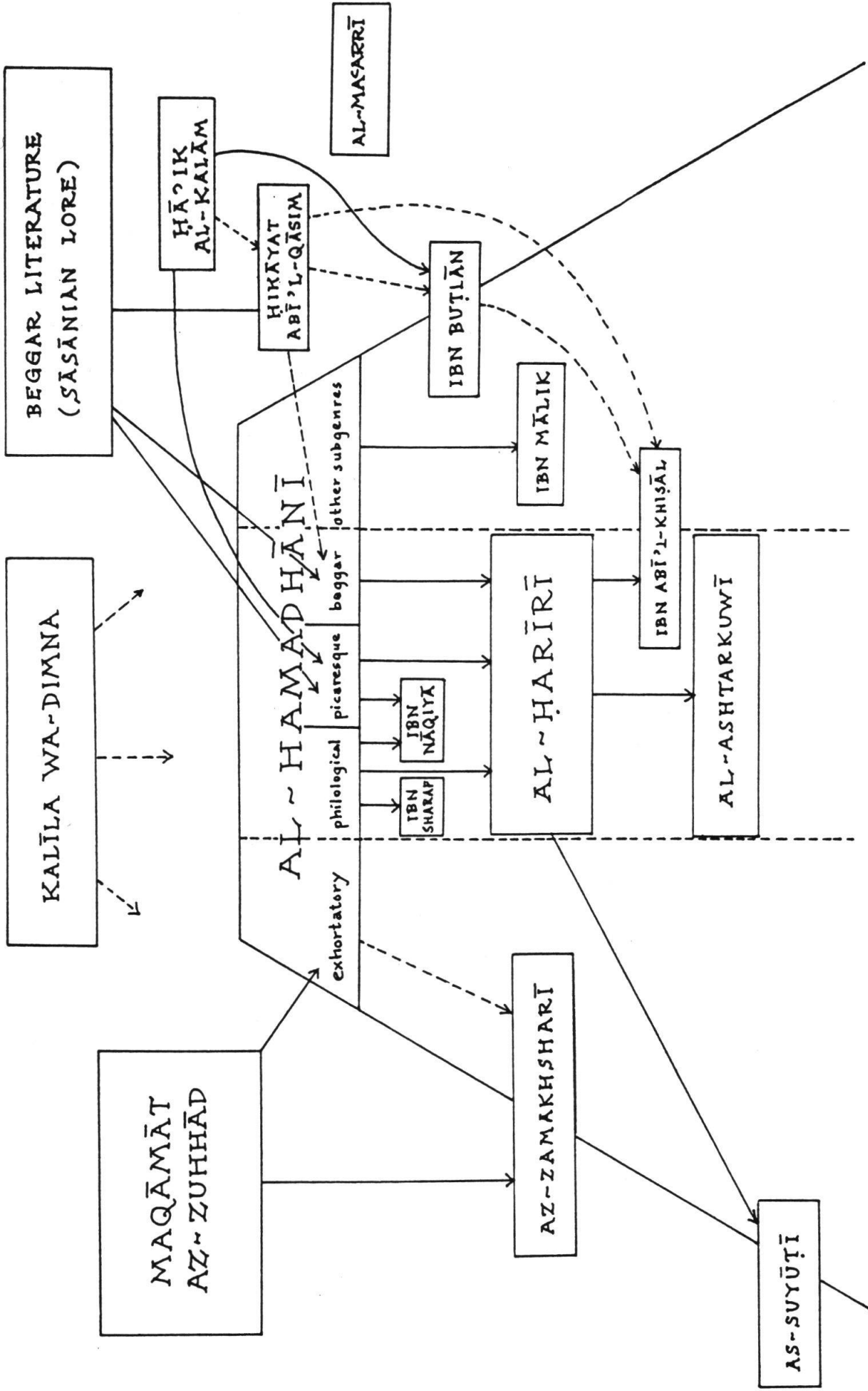
content: the multifaceted Hamadhānian *maqāma* with several subgenres falls victim to a fragmentalization where the main line leads, on the one hand, to the Ḥarīrian picaresque *maqāma*, and, on the other, to an almost complete freedom of content in al-Andalus, which produced non-narrative *maqāmas*. All the subgenres of al-Hamadhānī live on but now separated from each other.

fictionality: fictionality remains one of the most characteristic features of *maqāma*. The protagonists are always human (except in the marginal case of as-Suyūṭī).

travel theme: remains a characteristic.

episodic character: remains in most *maqāmas*. In Ibn Buṭlān's and Ibn abī'l-Khiṣāl's work the narration continues from one episode to the other, and both profit from the same tradition as al-Azdī's *Ḥikāya*, where the narration flows continuously. The three works show a gradual "maqāmization" of the same structure: already *Ḥikāya* resembles the work of al-Hamadhānī – and is probably genetically related to it³⁶ – but PDP adds further *maqāma*-like features and Ibn abī'l-Khiṣāl's

36 See HÄMEEN-ANTTILA (forthcoming).



work is an obvious *maqāma* with its use of the names of al-Ḥarīrī's protagonists.

It remains for us to fix some limits between *maqāmas* and the related genres. The limit between a *risāla* and a *maqāma* is fluid. Already some of the *maqāmas* of al-Hamadhānī are extracts from his letters with a rather superficial addition of the initial formula introducing the narrator 'Īsā ibn Hi-shām. Most of the picaresque *maqāmas* are, though, clearly discernible, but especially in Spain the limit is fluid to the utmost degree. This is especially clear when we are dealing with fragments only, as is the case in most of the material found in Ibn Bassām's *Dhakhīra*. *Maqāmas* are most easily discernible as a collection, where the episodic character and the use of fictive characters and a narrator show that we are dealing with *maqāmas*.

Ṣūfī *maqāmas* are mostly of a clearly distinct genre, dealing with spiritual technicalities rather than narration, but there are some exceptions, mainly in Persian. The most interesting of these is Farīdaddīn 'Aṭṭār's *Manṭiq at-ṭuyūr*, which is also known by the name *Maqāmāt-i ṭuyūr*. In the title, the term *maqāmāt* obviously comes from Ṣūfī usage (i.e. 'The spiritual mansions of the birds'), but the use of episodes, a travel theme and narrative material inserted within the frame story draw the work nearer to the Hamadhānian *maqāma*, although it still remains clearly distinct.

Finally, one might venture to give a preliminary definition/description of Hamadhānian *maqāma* (*al-maqāma al-adabīya*): *Maqāma* is a genre, originating in the late 4th century, of which is typical the use of very polished *sağ*^c, fictive human *rāwī*, fictive human characters, a travel theme, episodic character, and, to a certain extent, the presence of comic elements and/or philological interest. The *maqāma* developed along these lines and the sub-genres were soon divided: the *risāla*-like *maqāma*, where the comic/picaresque element was minimized and often dropped, flourished especially in al-Andalus whereas the picaresque *maqāma* of a low-life setting, with a heavy influence of philological interest, found its apogee in al-Ḥarīrī. The limits of the genre remain open towards some closely related genres, viz. pious *maqām(a)*, *risāla* and *munāzara*.

APPENDIX: List of early maqāma writers (until 550)

Numbers in square brackets “[]” refer to the list of BLACHÈRE-MASNOU (1957), p. 123-129. I have given no references to the better-known authors, and have been very selective in the case of the lesser known.³⁷ Authors of cognate genres are discussed in some but not all cases.

- Badī‘ az-zamān Aḥmad ibn Ḥusayn ibn Yaḥyā al-Hamadhānī (d. 398) [1].
- Abū Naṣr ‘Abdal‘azīz ibn ‘Umar Ibn Nubāta as-Sa‘dī (d. 405) [3].
The *maqāma* attributed to Ibn Nubāta (AHLWARDT 1895, no. 8536, fol. 40b ff.) is unauthentic and the mediaeval sources know nothing about *maqāmas* written by him.
- Abū’l-Ḥasan al-Mukhtār ibn al-Ḥasan ibn ‘Abdūn Ibn Buṭlān (d. 458) [4].
- Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan³⁸ aṭ-Ṭūbā Abū ‘Abdallāh aṣ-Ṣiqillī (d. after 450): al-Qiftī, *Inbāh* III:107; al-Qiftī, *Muḥammadūn*, p. 256.
Aṣ-Ṣiqillī’s work has been lost, but according to al-Qiftī, *Inbāh* III:107, his *maqāmas* “put the *maqāmas* of al-Hamadhānī to shame” which implies that they belong to the Hamadhānian *maqāma*.
- Abū ‘Abdallāh Muḥammad Ibn Sharaf (d. 460).
- Abū Muḥammad ibn Mālīk al-Qurtubī (d. 483): ARIÉ (1968), p. 205; EI² art. “maḳāma”, p. 110a; NEMAH (1974), p. 83; *Dhakhīra* I:741ff.
- Abū’l-Qāsim ‘Abdallāh (‘Abdalbāqī) ibn Muḥammad ibn Ḥusayn Ibn Nāqiyā (d. 485) [5].
- Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-Ghazālī (d. 505) [6].
Al-Ghazālī’s work belongs to the pious *maqāmāt*.
- ‘Abdallāh ibn Muḥammad ibn ‘Alī ibn Muḥammad Abū’l-Qāsim al-Kāmil al-Khwārizmī (d. after 510): aṣ-Ṣafadī, *Wāfi* XVII:541-542; al-Qiftī, *Inbāh* II:136.
- Abū Muḥammad al-Qāsim ibn ‘Alī ibn Muḥammad al-Ḥarīrī (d. 516) [7].
- Shahfīrūz ibn Shu‘ayb ibn ‘Abdassayyid Abū’l-Hayḡā’ al-Iṣbahānī (d. 530): Yāqūt, *Irshād* IV:262; aṣ-Ṣafadī, *Wāfi* XXIV:132; al-Kutubī, *Fawāt al-wafayāt* I:241. Composed in 490 (Yāqūt, *Irshād* IV:262).
- Abū’l-Qāsim Maḥmūd ibn ‘Umar az-Zamakhsharī (d. 538) [8].

37 A full list of *maqāma* authors up to pre-modern times is being prepared by the present writer.

38 In aṣ-Ṣafadī, *Wāfi* XVII:584 al-Ḥusayn.

- Abū’ṭ-Ṭāhir Muḥammad ibn Yūsuf ibn ‘Abdallāh as-Saraqustī Ibn al-Ashtarkuwī (d. 538/1143) [9].
- Abū ‘Abdallāh ibn abī’l-Khiṣāl (d. 540): NEMAH (1974), p. 84-86.

Authors of uncertain date:

- Abū’l-Muṭarrif Ibn Fattūḥ: EI² art. “maḳāma”, p. 110a; DE LA GRANJA (1976), p. 63-77; *Dhakhīra* I:770-787.
- Abū Ḥafṣ ‘Umar ibn ash-Shahīd (late 5th c.): *Dhakhīra* I:674-685; NEMAH (1974), p. 83, DE LA GRANJA (1976), p. 81-118.
- Abū ‘Āmir Ibn Arqam (early 6th c.): EI² art. “maḳāma”, p. 110-111, ARIÉ (1968), p. 206 (from al-Faṭḥ ibn Khāqān, *Qalā'id al-'iqyān*).
- al-wazīr Abū’l-Ḥasan Sallām ibn ‘Abdallāh ibn Sallām al-Bāhilī (6th c.), *K. al-Maqāmāt as-sab‘*: Ibn Khayr, *Fahrasa*, p. 386 and p. 450; EI² art. “maḳāma”, p. 111a, ARIÉ (1968), p. 205.
- ‘Abdal‘azīz ibn Muḥammad al-Qurashī aṭ-Ṭārifi (var. aṭ-Ṭāriqī): Ibn Rashīq, *Unmūdhağ*, p. 138-139 (where other references): *aktharu shtihārihi bi'n-nathr dūna n-naẓm idh kāna (...) wāḥid az-zamān mā bayn tazwīr maqāma wa-taṣḍīr khuṭba ghayr muftari'a ilā r-rasā'il as-sultāniya wa'l-mukātabāt al-ikhwāniya*.
Early 5th century (Ibn Rashīq himself died in the mid-5th century).
- Muḥammad ibn ‘Īsā ibn ‘Iyāḍ al-Qurṭubī al-Lablī: *al-Maqāma al-'Iyāḍiyya al-ghazaliyya*: Ibn al-Abbār, *Takmila*, p. 515.
- a maqāma against al-Baṭalyawsī, attributed to al-Faṭḥ ibn Khāqān (d. 535³⁹), but possibly wrongly: NEMAH (1974), p. 86-87; ARIÉ (1968), p. 206 (d. 576).
- BLACHÈRE-MASNOU, and following them, the article “maḳāma” in EI², mention an early maqāma writer named Abū’l-Aṣba‘ ‘Abdal‘azīz ibn Tammām al-‘Irāqī whom they date to the 10th century. Blachère and Masnou ascribe to him a *Séance sur la Résurrection*, and refer to BROCKELMANN, *GAL* I:524 “medio”. The reference to *GAL* I:524 is faithfully reproduced in art. maḳāma (p. 110a) as if directly taken from *GAL*, but the reference is simply wrong. *GAL* S I:432, instead, mentions a *maqāma fī l-kīmiyā’* (not *l-qiyāma*, which seems to be lurking behind

39 See SCHMIDT (1987), p. 66.

Blachère and Masnou's translation) by Abū'l-Iṣba' 'Abdal'azīz ibn Tammām al-'Irāqī (d. 762). Ismā'īl Bāshā, *Hadīyat al-'arīfīn*, p. 582, credits this author with *Qiṣaṣ fī l-kīmiyā*⁴⁰ and *al-Maqāmāt al-falsafīya wa-tarğumānāt aṣ-ṣūfīya*. H.Kh., p. 1786-1787, does not seem to have known the author of the latter work; the author is identified in a later addition as *Abū'l-Qāsim* 'Abdal'azīz ibn Tammām al-'Irāqī, d. 637. The work (here entitled *al-Maqāmāt al-falsafīya wa't-tarğumānāt aṣ-ṣūfīya*) is described as follows in H.Kh.: “*al-ğāmi'a fī ma'ālim aṭ-ṭabī'i wa'r-riyādī wa'l-ilāhī*”, consisting of 50 *maqāmas*, a thick volume, *rāwī* called Abū'l-Qāsim (the obvious source for the misunderstanding of the *kunya* of the author), the hero Abū 'Abdallāh al-Awwāb, written in 702 [sic], “*wa-kalāmuhu yadullu 'alā annahu rağul miṣrī*”. Thus, the work does belong to the margins of the genre of Hamadhānian *maqāma*, but it is several centuries later than Blachère and Masnou thought.

ABBREVIATIONS

Dhakhīra = IBN BASSĀM, *Dhakhīra*.

EI² art. “*maqāma*” = BROCKELMANN-PELLAT (1986).

GAL = BROCKELMANN, *Geschichte der arabischen Litteratur*.

H.KH. = ḤAĞĞI KHALİFA, *Kashf az-zunūn*.

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ḤAĞĞI KHALİFA, *Kashf az-zunūn 'an asāmī l-kutub wa'l-funūn*. I-II. Ed. ŞEREFETTİN YALTKAYA – Rifat Bilge. [Maarif matbaasi 1941], repr. Bayrūt 1413/1992.

40 This seems to be the same work as *Qaṣīdat* [[Ibn]] Abī l-Iṣba', H.Kh., p. 1329-1330 (cf. also H.Kh., p. 1487, sub *Kashf al-asrār li'l-afhām*), where the title comes directly after some works entitled *Qiṣaṣ*. In any case, the work is not a *maqāma* collection.

- AL-HAMADHĀNĪ, *Rasā'il* = IBR. AL-AHDAB, *Kashf al-ma'ānī wa'l-bayān 'an Rasā'il Badī'azzamān*. Bayrūt 1890.
- AL-HAMADHĀNĪ, *Maqāmāt* = MUḤ. MUḤYİDDİN 'ABDALḤAMĪD, *Sharḥ maqāmāt Badī'azzamān al-Hamadhānī*. Bayrūt s.a.
- AL-ḤUṢRĪ, *Zahr al-ādāb wa-thamar al-albāb*. Ed. ZAKĪ MUBĀRAK and MUḤ. MUḤYİDDİN 'ABDALḤAMĪD. Bayrūt ⁴1972.
- IBN BASSĀM, *adh-Dhakhīra fī maḥāsin ahl al-Ġazīra*. I-IV. Ed. İḤSĀN 'ABBĀS. Ad-Dār al-'arabiya li'l-kitāb, Lībiyā-Tūnis 1399/1979.
- IBN BUTLĀN, *The Physician's Dinner Party*. Ed. F. KLEIN-FRANKE. Wiesbaden 1985.
- IBN ḤAMDŪN, *at-Tadhkira al-ḥamdūniya*. I-X. Ed. İḤSĀN 'ABBĀS and BAKR 'ABBĀS. Bayrūt 1996.
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- IBN NĀQIYĀ, *Maqāmāt = Maqāmāt al-Ḥanafī wa-Ibn Nāqiyā wa-ghayrihimā*. [Ed. O. RESCHER]. Istanbul 1330.
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- IBN SHUHAYD, *Risālat at-Tawābi' wa'z-zawābi'*. Ed. K. AL-BUSTĀNĪ. Dār Ṣādir, Bayrūt 1400/1980.
- ISMĀ'İL BĀSHĀ AL-BAGHDĀDĪ, *Īdāḥ al-maknūn fī dh-dhayl 'alā Kashf az-zunūn*. I-II. Ed. RIFAT BİLGE. [Istanbul 1947], repr. Bayrūt 1413/1992 (as III-IV of Ḥāḡḡī Khalīfa, q.v.).
- AL-KUTUBĪ, *Fawāt al-wafayāt*. I-II. 1283.
- AL-QALQASHANDĪ, *Ṣubḥ al-a'shā*. I-XIV. Al-Qāhira s.a.
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