

Drory, Rina 1998. Entries in Meisami, Julie Scott & Paul Starkey, eds. 1998. Encyclopedia of Arabic literature. 2 vols. London & New York: Routledge.

- dialogue in literature, medieval
- fiction, medieval
- al-Hariri (446-516/1054-1122)
- Hebrew literature, relations with Arabic
- Ibn Naqiya (410-85/1020-92)
- khurafa (pi. khurafat)
- maqama (pi. maqamat)
- Sa'adia Gaon (269-331/882-942)

dialogue in literature, medieval

In classical Arabic literature, this is the standard structure upon which a prose text is usually founded (*ḥadīth* structure). Originating in a society which basically produced and preserved its literature orally, the overbearing and most authoritative model for the classical Arabic text was that of an utterance (*qawl*) or an exchange of utterances presented as quoted from the mouth of a distinguished figure or figures, usually mentioned by name. In oral tradition proper, which keeps no record of its texts other than in the memory of professionals, a text cannot be recognized as such and gain legitimacy unless introduced as a quotation of spoken words. This is unlike the situation of written literature proper, in which a text gains its ontological status merely by being written down, independently of its producer or transmitters. In the oral tradition, the credibility of the text even if committed to writing is established through the authority of the speaker and the transmission chain. Whether full or reduced to even a short formula like *qīla* 'it is related that', the transmission chain consequently becomes an index indicating 'text-ness', the official status of a text, or simply its beginning. The initial oral context of the classical Arabic model for prose texts, as well as its subordination to religious ideology which claimed the absolute historicity of the text (namely, its being 'authentic', i.e. non-fictional), thus jointly account for the dominance of dialogue, rather than narration, in the canonized literary repertoire of prose writing (e.g. *adab* – in popular, more fiction-orientated literature, the situation could be different).

So well established was the association of

dialogue with authenticity that dialogue became the marked characteristic feature of the 'authentic' or 'realistic' text. Even in poetry – which was always regarded as a 'noble lie' and was traditionally associated with fiction and with embellishing reality rather than with 'realism' and 'authenticity' – when a demand for 'realistic' impression emerged (usually for humoristic purposes), this function was mainly fulfilled through dialogue. For instance, some of **Abū Nuwās's** wine poems, in which he aimed at truthfully conveying the frivolous atmosphere of wine-drinking in the taverns rather than developing metaphorical descriptions of wine, are constructed almost solely on a dialogue between a band of boon companions and the owner of the tavern, with almost no mention of any reality-items. The mere structure of dialogue (with all the constraints of metrics and line length imposed upon a poetic dialogue), rather than any attempt to imitate actual speech – not a vernacular dialogue, nor even a 'third language' one (cf. Somekh, 1981) – was enough in this case to create a realistic impression.

Further reading

- Drory, R., 'The function of dialogue in prose and poetry: the case of Abū Nuwās', in *Studies in Arabic and Comparative Poetics*, Wiesbaden (forthcoming).
- Somekh, S., 'The concept of "third language" and its impact on modern Arabic poetry', *JAL* 12 (1981), 74–86.

R. DRORY

See also: fiction, medieval; truth and poetry

fiction, medieval

Canonical Arabic literature (CAL) is basically rejective of fiction. Like other literatures (such as ancient Hebrew) that developed out of religious motivations, CAL claims to make absolute, definitive statements on the course of history, and to derive from them mandatory behavioral edicts. It is therefore necessary that the reader or listener believe the texts to be 'true', not 'fictional'. A great deal of effort is thus made to persuade the reader of the veracity of the texts, by appending a transmission chain (in *ḥadīth* texts by developing a full-fledged apparatus for checking the credibility of that chain), and by incorporating historical figures and the names of real people and places. The major poetic claim of classical Arabic literature is its historicity, a claim that is so authoritative that it is made in all the prose genres, even in those that have no direct association with religion. There is hardly a story, a saying, an anecdote or even a joke in classical Arabic literature, not in the *adab* and certainly not in other genres, that does not claim that its events were actual and not invented by the author. Fiction obviously exists – and in many cases can be clearly demonstrated – but it claims the validity of historical truth. It should be noted, however, that the reality model offered by CAL is not a realistic model in the sense that it purports to present reality 'as it is', but rather one that claims to present reality in its most correct and desired form.

Obviously, such a strict and powerful literary model would not permit the introduction of any kind of openly declared fiction into classical Arabic prose, and certainly not into its canonized genres. Any such attempt would be condemned as a lie (*kidhb*, or *bāṭil*); its fate would be a total theological prohibition to employ such a model in literature. Consequently, theoretical discussions on the subject seem to be quite rare, and can be randomly found in *ḥadīth* literature. And interestingly enough, even Aristotle's discussion of mimesis in his *Poetics* (known to the Arabs at least by 940 CE from **Mattā ibn Yūnus**'s translation from Syriac) did not seem to arouse interest outside philosophical circles, or prompt the Arab literati to deal with fiction as a literary problem (the Andalusian **Hāzīm al-Qartājanni** (d. 684/1285) is exceptional in this respect). However, there are indications to the fact that fiction was tolerated in semi- or

non-canonical genres, usually of non-Arabic origin (Persian or Greek), like the *khurāfāt* (see *khurāfa*), for example the *Thousand and One Nights* (*Alf layla wa-layla*), of which the 'Abbāsīd court was very fond.

We can learn of the official literary stand towards fiction as well as of the status that fictional texts held within the classical Arabic literary system from the few attempts to legitimize fiction that can be traced. An attempt to legitimize the *khurāfāt* genre by means of *ḥadīth* tools, for instance, teaches us that, though circulated in respectable *adab* gatherings, the genre was considered as entertainment of the kind consumed by women and youths – obviously an audience of an inferior social status – rather than as part of serious male education.

Another attempt to legitimize fiction had to do with the appearance on the literary scene of the *maqāma* genre, whose major innovation was the introduction, for the first time, of openly declared fiction. But while authors of *maqāmāt* do declare their works to be fiction, at the same time they try to blur the impact of such an exceptional break of poetic rules by relating their works to well-accepted literary traditions which, they argue, also employ fiction. The pros and cons used in this debate teach us of other 'grey areas' of fictionality within CAL, and of their ambivalent status.

One established literary tradition to which the *maqāmāt* are related is that of animal fables, and in particular the book *Kalīla wa-Dimna*. In this book, animals are given the voices of human speakers; they talk and behave like human beings, telling stories and fables about human situations and relationships. Choosing animals for human roles was a poetic convention rooted in a literary tradition quite remote from that of the official *ḥadīth* and *adab*. Yet although the semi-allegorical model represented in this Indo-Persian imported work was indeed very different from the prevalent 'realistic' prose models of CAL, the book acquired a high status and considerable popularity in court circles, and became one of the most famous works of medieval Arabic literature. Its double status in the Arabic literary system, of representing an alien poetic model yet being a recognized and highly appreciated literary work, made this work a perfect banner for promoting new literary initiatives. *Maqāma* authors turned to it in order to gain recognition for their literary innovation precisely because of the fundamen-

tal poetic basis of evident fictionality, which they felt was common to both *Kalīla wa-Dimna* and their own compositions. But it was precisely this alleged common basis of fictionality that caused a row on the part of defenders of normative *adab* poetics. Animal fables, it was argued, created no confusion between 'truth' and 'falsehood' because they were understood according to a purely allegorical key; their fictional model was clearly a non-realistic one, so no 'realistic' illusion, or any confusing imitation of *adab* reality presentation norms, could occur. The *maqāmāt*, by contrast, represented a fictional model which necessarily declared itself to be a lie: although using the standard realistic model of classical prose, it nevertheless exonerated itself from pretending to be 'actual reality' and in this way stood in complete opposition to the poetic basis of *adab* literature, and misled the reader into believing 'a lie'.

Another established tradition to which the *maqāmāt* are related is that of love poetry (*tashbīb*; see *ghazal*). The non-commitment of classical Arabic poetry to conveying 'reality' is notorious, and was acknowledged by both poets and critics throughout the classical period (suffice it to mention here the famous saying *aḥsanu al-shi'r akdhabuhu*, 'falsehood makes the best poetry' [see further **truth and poetry**]). At the same time, the social function of love poetry and its thematic conventions demanded a pseudo-autobiographical description of love. This was met by incorporating into the love-poem details from 'reality' such as the name of the beloved and of her tribe and allusions to amorous rendezvous that supposedly occurred between beloved and poet. Relying on creating a realistic impression on the one hand, and on renouncing any commitment to conveying 'true reality' on the other, *tashbīb* poetry reflected a double standard with respect to the relationship between poetry and life. This is also discernible from the many *tashbīb* anecdotes scattered throughout *adab* literature. In the final analysis, the world that was represented in such poems was that of an explicitly proclaimed fiction. This was the common basis, shared by both love poetry and the *maqāmāt*, which was called upon to legitimize the *maqāmā*'s new poetics.

If we were, then, to re-examine our traditional definitions of poetry versus prose, the conclusion could not be avoided that the fundamental distinction between these two major modes of writing seems to lie first and

foremost in the question of fictionality, in the commitment to conveying reality in a fictional or a non-fictional way, rather than in the formal constraints of metre and rhyme.

Because of the fact that fiction was fundamentally rejected, but at the same time acknowledged in certain texts and manipulated in various ways and degrees in others, it could be suggested that the issue of fictionality played a role in defining the canonized body of CAL for its audience. In prose writing, fiction could only be accepted as representing 'foreign', non-Arabic literary norms (as in the case of *Kalila wa-Dimna* and the relatively few works that followed that model), or in texts considered as entertainment rather than as serious and beneficial material for study and, further, associated with an audience of traditionally inferior status in terms of learning and education – an audience of women and young people.

Although the *maqāmāt* did introduced openly proclaimed fiction into canonical *adab*, the successful acceptance of the genre was accompanied by a process of extensive blurring of its fictionality. From fictional characteristics emphasis was shifted to language, style and edifying subject matter. It seems that fiction could never avoid being regarded as a poetic norm that belonged more to the sphere of *hazl* (amusing literature) than to that of *jidd* (serious literature) – if we were to adopt this traditional classification – and in consequence was never considered proper for serious literary expression. This might account for the fact that in classical Arabic prose, fiction has never been assigned the function of carrying a serious message about 'reality'. Before the emergence of modern Arabic literature, it was never permitted to become an instrument for conveying a meaningful message about human life and existence, as was the case in European literature.

Further reading

- Arazi, A., *La Réalité et la fiction dans la poésie arabe ancienne*, Paris (1989).
- Bonebakker, S.A., 'Nihil obstat in story-telling?', *Mededelingen der Koninklijke Nederlandse Akademie van Wetenschappen* 55(8) (1992), 289–307.
- Drory, R., 'Three attempts to legitimize fiction in classical Arabic literature', *JSAI* 18 (1994) 146–64.
- , 'Introducing fictionality into classical Arabic literature: the *maqāma*', in *Studies in Arabic and Comparative Poetics*, Wiesbaden (forthcoming).

Perry, B.E., *The Origin of the Book of Sindbad*, Berlin (1960), 7–8 (see also *Fabula* 3 (1959)).

R. DRORY

nevertheless refused to correct it, claiming that he could not make any changes in a text that he had already authorized in 700 copies. The function of the *maqāma* texts has also been changed: whereas al-Hamadhānī's *Maqāmāt* were basically created as parodies of the high literature studied in scholarly circles, al-Ḥarīrī's *Maqāmāt* became scholarly material from the moment of their inception, and were studied and transmitted as such. Their amusing function became secondary to their instructive one.

Al-Ḥarīrī's *Maqāmāt* captured the literary taste of the period within a short time of their appearance. The explicit praise of literary critics, the many commentaries written on his *Maqāmāt* almost from the time they were first published in Baghdad, and the testimonies of learned men who came from distant places, including Spain, to hear the authorized version of al-Ḥarīrī's *Maqāmāt* from his own mouth, all provide ample evidence of an almost immediate prestige and popularity. Their exemplary status initiated many imitations, and set up the model for the *maqāma* genre in a way that overshadowed all previous models, including that of al-Hamadhānī, whose collection seems to have been rearranged to conform with this model. Al-Ḥarīrī's *Maqāmāt* became a symbol of Arabic eloquence and stylistic dexterity, and preserved their prominent status up until modern times. The cost of canonization was, however, a demand to dispense with the great innovation of the *maqāma* genre: its self-proclaimed fictionality (see **fiction, medieval**). With the success of al-Ḥarīrī's *Maqāmāt*, a 'real', historical biography was invented for its fictional hero Abū Zayd al-Sarūjī.

Al-Ḥarīrī's *Maqāmāt* were highly admired in al-Andalus (see **al-Saraqustī; Spain**). They were translated into Hebrew in northern Spain or Provence at the beginning of the thirteenth century by Judah al-Ḥarīzī (1170–1235), who then composed his own *Maqāmāt* on al-Ḥarīrī's model. They became known in the West from the seventeenth century, first through Latin translations and then through other European languages.

Text editions

The Assemblies of Al Hariri, Th. Chenery and F. Steingass (eds and trans), London (1867–98), rpt 1969.

Durrat al-ghawwāṣ fī awḥām al-khawwāṣ, M.A. Ibrahim (ed.), Cairo (1975).

al-Ḥarīrī (446–516/1054–1122)

Abū Muḥammad al-Qāsim ibn 'Alī al-Ḥarīrī (or: Ibn al-Ḥarīrī) was an Arab poet, philologist, man of letters and official. He divided his life between al-Mashān, a village near Basra where he had his palm tree plantation, and Basra and Baghdad, where he conducted his literary activities. His mentioned works are: a book on common misuses of Arabic words and phrases (*Durrat al-ghawwāṣ fī awḥām al-khawwāṣ*); a didactic poem on Arabic grammar, accompanied by his own commentary (*Mulḥat al-i'rāb*); collected epistles; collected poems. But he is best known for his book of *Maqāmāt*, a collection of fifty rhymed-prose (*saj'*) narrations interspersed with verse, which share two constant protagonists, the narrator and the hero, and a common plot-scheme built on a combination of confidence tricks, imposture, and demonstration of Arabic erudition.

By his own declaration, al-Ḥarīrī modelled his *Maqāmāt* after those of **Badi' al-Zamān al-Hamadhānī** (d. 398/1008), who is considered to be the initiator of the genre. While the similarity is indeed apparent, the basic cultural model has in fact been changed: whereas al-Hamadhānī composed his narrations publicly, as oral improvisations at the end of *adab* sessions, and apparently did not take care to arrange for an authorized collection (to the effect that various manuscripts have different numbers of *maqāmāt*), al-Ḥarīrī composed his privately, in writing, and presented them in an authorized version of fifty pieces. A different conception of 'text' underlines his work, which, unlike that of oral composition, regards the text as finalized and therefore unchangeable. Thus, admitting that a suggestion offered by a colleague indeed improved the text, he

- Maqāmāt*, Silvestre De Sacy (ed.), Paris (1847);
 Yūsuf al-Biqā'ī (ed.), Beirut (1981).
Les Séances, Venture de Paradis (trans.), A. Amer
 (ed.), Stockholm (1964).
 al-Sharīshī, Aḥmad ibn 'Abd al-Mu'min, *Sharḥ
 Maqāmāt al-Ḥarīrī al-Baṣrī*, 'Abd al-Mun'im
 Khafājī (ed.), Cairo (1952).

Further reading

- Beeston, A.F.L., 'Al-Hamadhānī, al-Ḥarīrī and the
maqāmāt genre', in *CHALABL*, (1990) 125–35.
 Blachère, R. and Masnou, P., *Al-Hamadhānī,
 Maqāmāt (Séances): Choies et traduites de
 l'arabe avec une étude sur le genre*, Paris
 (1957), 42–8.
 Crussard, A. *Étude sur les Séances de Harīrī*, Paris
 (1923).
 Drory, R., 'Al-Ḥarīzī's *Maqāmāt*: a tricultural
 literary product?', in *The Medieval Translator*, R.
 Ellis and R. Evans (eds), Exeter (1994), 66–85.
 —, 'Introducing fictionality into classical Arabic
 literature: the *maqāma*', in *Studies in Arabic and
 Comparative Poetics*, Wiesbaden (forthcoming).
 Dumas, E., *Le Héros des maqāmāt de Ḥariri, Abou-
 Zaid de Saroudj*, Algiers (1917).
 Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-a'yān*, I. 'Abbās (ed.),
 Beirut (1968–72), vol. 4, 63–8.
 Ibn al-Qiftī, *Inbāh al-ruwāt 'alā anbāh al-nuhāt*,
 Cairo and Beirut 1986, vol. 3, 23–7.
 Kilito, A. 'Contribution à l'étude de l'écriture
 "littéraire" classique: l'exemple de Ḥarīrī',
Arabica 25 (1978), 18–47.
 —, *Les Séances*, Paris (1983), 173–259.
 Yāqūt, *Mu'jam*, Cairo (1936–8), vol. 16, 261–93.
 Zakharia, K., 'Norme et fiction dans la genèse des
 Maqāmāt d'al-Ḥarīrī', *BEO* 46 (1994), 217–31.

R. DRORY

See also: *maqāma*

Hebrew literature, relations with Arabic

Throughout history Hebrew texts have always enjoyed a privileged status within the corpus of Jewish literature. Comprising only a segment (at times not even the largest) of the overall Jewish literary production, Hebrew literature seems nevertheless to have been the marked segment of it, the one towards which all cultural attention and literary awareness are drawn. But alongside Hebrew, Jewish literature was also produced in other languages, depending on the cultural environment of the Jewish community in each period. This means that the Hebrew corpus was never an independent one and – although this is not always the common academic procedure – it should be viewed and discussed in connection with the entire body of Jewish literature in each period, rather than in isolation.

This is the case with the Hebrew literature produced in the Middle Ages under the influence of Arabic culture. From ninth-century CE Persia and Babylonia until fourteenth-century CE Christian Spain and Provence (where Jews no longer lived under Muslim rule), we find Jewish literature created both in Hebrew and in Arabic written in Hebrew characters (Judaeo-Arabic). This entire body of Jewish literature is, in fact, a product of cultural contacts with Arabic.

While both Hebrew and Judaeo-Arabic serve for writing, they maintain a clear-cut division of functions, established already in the middle of the tenth century CE. According to this division of functions Arabic served for lucid, straightforward expression, Hebrew for festive and grandiloquent writing, in no small measure at the expense of a clear and unequivocal message. The purpose of writing in Hebrew was to prove command of the language and to produce a text that would arouse admiration of its beauty and elegance; writing in Arabic was intended simply to produce a clear and understandable text. In this respect Hebrew had in the Jewish context a function similar to that of unadulterated classical Arabic within the Muslim context – to express particular aesthetic qualities.

Three distinct phases can be distinguished in the long course of Jewish contacts with Arabic literature: the early phase, beginning around the middle of the ninth century, in the East (Persia, Fertile Crescent, Syria and Egypt); the second one, beginning around the middle of the tenth century, in al-Andalus and later also in the **Maghrib**; and the third phase, from around the middle of the eleventh century in Christian Spain and Provence, which lasted well into the fifteenth century (when the Jews were expelled from Spain in 1492), but has had a profound impact on both European and Eastern Jewish literatures up to modern times. Each phase has its own starting point in terms of time and place, but they obviously overlap greatly with one another, in particular chronologically. It would be quite misleading, however, to view them all as one consecutive process: each phase is in fact a product of a unique situation within the Jewish cultural setting. In each we find different groups competing for authority and dominance over the cultural field, different literary systems constructed, different bodies of scholarly knowledge and expertise established and different literary genres produced. Each phase seems to represent a new enterprise, involving a re-

challenge of Hebrew writing with literary options arising through contacts with different segments of Arabic culture.

Contrary to prevalent descriptions of the Arabic 'influence' on Hebrew literature, Jewish appropriation from Arabic did not start by borrowing distinct elements (such as imagery, topoi, phraseologies) or detailed writing models. The first, Eastern, phase of contacts with Arabic was characterized rather by a process of reorganization of the entire Jewish literary system after established Arabic paradigms. New scholarly activities emerged, new literary genres were produced, all entirely concentrated on Jewish contents; yet their appearance in this particular setting and the striking resemblance in structure to fundamental Arabic paradigms is inexplicable without assuming appropriation. Rabbinic literature, concentrating traditionally on Oral Law and enjoying a canonical status within the Jewish literary system, was now being challenged by an emerging peripheral group, the Karaites, who concentrated on the Bible as a source of ideological inspiration as well as a focus of scholarly activity and intense literary production. The Karaite output was distinctly different from the Rabbinic one (which seemed to be showing signs of stagnation in this period) in that it was produced in accordance with new literary models, borrowed from Arabic culture. The need for new literary models that would be distinct from the Rabbinic ones brought the Karaites to the Arabic repertoire. Contacts with Arabic literature served, then, to turn the option to the Oral Law that lay dormant in Jewish literature, namely the Bible, into a feasible literary possibility.

These contacts also brought about the granting of official status to writing. Writing gained legitimacy, and with it new models, made for writing and not for preservation by means of oral transmission (as was the norm in Rabbinic literature), were introduced into Jewish literature (biblical exegeses, refutations, Halakhic writings, studies of Hebrew grammar, philosophy, theology). Yet most of the literary output produced through appropriated Arabic models is written in Judaeo-Arabic; attempts to create new Hebrew models for both poetry and prose (mainly by **Sa'adia Gaon**) were ultimately doomed to fail at this early stage of appropriation from Arabic.

The next phase of Jewish contacts with Arabic literature, staged at the Andalusian Jewish courts, is characterized by an abundance of Hebrew secular poetry produced

according to Arabic poetic models. It is usually referred to as the Golden Age of Hebrew letters in medieval Iberia. At the court of Hisdai Ibn Shaprūt in Córdoba Biblical Hebrew was re-created as a poetic language through investigation of Hebrew grammar and formulation of its rules. The rules were immediately applied in the composition of new types of poetry, and the verses were again examined in light of the emerging grammatical conceptions. A new metrical system, based on Arabic prosody, was also employed here for the first time. With the development of Hebrew as a poetic language, new poetic genres were created, adapting Arabic themes, imagery and overall poetics to Hebrew writing. Hebrew love poems, wine poems, panegyrics, laments, satirical and even philosophical poems were composed by Jewish courtiers and literati such as Dūnash Ben Labraṭ, Samuel Ibn Naghrāla, Solomon **Ibn Gabirol**, Judah Halevi, **Moses Ibn Ezra** and others to celebrate public and private occasions, and amuse patrons and friends. Alongside the traditional long ode (*qaṣida*) and short piece (*qīt'a*), Jewish poets also adopted the strophic form of the *muwashshah* for Hebrew, with the last strophe (*kharja*) often written in vernacular Arabic or Romance. Ornamented Hebrew rhymed prose modelled after the Arabic *maqāmāt* emerged, as well as festive correspondence. Yet the traditional division of functions between Arabic and Hebrew described above was still largely maintained. Arabic remained the principal written language (for Biblical and Talmudic exegesis, law, theology, philosophy, linguistics, poetics), while Hebrew provided only poetic registers.

It was not until the relocation of Jewish cultural centres to Christian Spain and Provence (as a result of the Almohad invasions of al-Andalus) that this division of functions began to break down, and Hebrew took over more and more functions that had traditionally been fulfilled by Arabic, gradually replacing Arabic as the major written language of Jewish literature. As a result, new literary genres developed in Hebrew, either through translations from Arabic or in original forms of Hebrew writing. New Hebrew literature, still based on Arabic models yet founded on a paradigm quite different from the one dominant in the Jewish literature of the Muslim period, came into being. It is apparently because of this particular tri-cultural encounter which took place outside the domain of Arabic

culture that Hebrew was assigned the role of marking Jewish collective identity against both Muslim and Christian cultures. For the first time Hebrew contacts with Arabic were manifested mainly in translation of specific texts, rather than in appropriation of paradigmatic models. Scientific and philosophical writings were intensively translated from Arabic into Hebrew (as also into Latin). Belletristic texts, like *adab* compilations or *maqāmāt*, were also either translated or adapted into Hebrew. Yet a different product of this encounter, a result of the confrontation of Andalusian Jewish emigrants with Jewish communities in the Christian kingdoms, is the only full-fledged formulation of Arabized Hebrew poetics: the *Kitāb al-muḥāḍara wa-al-mudhākara* of Moses Ibn Ezra. Written in Arabic for a Jewish milieu exercising scientific Hebrew and detaching itself from Arabic literary taste, this work sums up a sense of a disappearing Jewish world back in al-Andalus, for which that literary taste was self-evident.

Further reading

- Brann, Ross, *The Compunctious Poet: Cultural Ambiguity and Hebrew Poetry in Muslim Spain*, Baltimore and London (1991).
- Drory, Rina, *The Emergence of Jewish–Arabic Literary Contacts at the Beginning of the Tenth Century*, Tel Aviv (1986) (Hebrew; English translation in preparation).
- , “‘Words beautifully put’: Hebrew versus Arabic in tenth-century Jewish literature”, in *Genizah Research After Ninety Years: The Case of Judaeo-Arabic*, J. Blau and S.C. Reif (eds), Cambridge (1992), 53–66.
- , ‘Literary contacts and where to find them: on Arabic literary models in medieval Jewish literature’, *Poetics Today* 14(2) (1993), 277–302.
- Halkin, Abraham S., ‘Translation and translators (medieval)’, *EJ* 15, 1318–29.
- Navarro Peiro, A., *Literatura hispanohebraica*, Córdoba (1988).
- , *Narrativa hispanohebraica*, Córdoba (1988).
- Sáenz Badillos, A., *Literatura hebrea en la España medieval*, Madrid (1991).
- Scheindlin, Raymond P., *Wine, Women, and Death: Medieval Hebrew Poems on the Good Life*, Philadelphia (1986).
- , *The Gazelle: Medieval Hebrew Poems on God, Israel, and the Soul*, New York (1991).
- , ‘Hebrew poetry in medieval Iberia’, in *Convivencia: Jews, Muslims, and Christians in Medieval Spain*, Vivian B. Mann et al. (eds), New York (1992), 39–59.

R. DRORY

See also: Judaeo-Arabic literature; Spain

Ibn Nāqiyā (410–85/1020–92)

'Abd Allāh ibn Muḥammad ibn Nāqiyā was a Baghdadi man of letters and writer. His writings (including poetry, epistles, works on Koranic imagery and Arabic rhetoric, an abridged version of **Abū al-Faraj al-Iṣbahānī's** *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, and *maqāmāt*) display the typical erudition of a literary scholar of the period.

His collection of *maqāmāt*, of which only the introduction and eight narrations are known today, is of special significance for the history of the genre, being a rare example of a formative yet uninformed stage in its development: that between the initiator of the genre **Badi' al-Zamān al-Hamadhānī** (d. 398/1008) and its canonizer **al-Ḥarīrī** (d. 516/1122). Like al-Hamadhānī's, these *maqāmāt* draw heavily on the *adab* literary reservoir; each narration is built on a different theme, and the hero combines imposturing skills with learning and eloquence. Yet there is no specific narrator, as was to be the case after al-Ḥarīrī. The introduction discloses a first attempt to declare openly the *maqāma*'s fictionality and argue for its legitimacy by relating the genre to recognized literary traditions whose fictionality is presumably well established, like love poetry and animal fables (see **fiction, medieval**).

Text editions

al-Jumān fī tashbīhāt al-Qu'rān, Aḥmad Maṭlūb and Khadija al-Ḥadīthī (eds), Baghdad (1968).

Maqāmāt al-Ḥanafī, Istanbul (1912), 123–53; as *Beiträge zur Maqāmen – Literatur*, D. Rescher, Istanbul (1914).

Further reading

Huart, M.Cl., 'Les Séances d'Ibn Nāqiyā' *JA* 12 (1908), 435–54.

Wild, S., 'Die zehnte Maqame des Ibn Nāqiyā: eine Burleske aus Baghdad', *Wagner Festschrift* 2: 427–38.

R. DRORY

khurāfa (pl. khurāfāt)

In classical and medieval Arabic, a word designating stories and tales of a fantastic nature, often dealing with wonders and incredible events. In contrast to the canonized, official literature which claimed to be non-fictional, these stories were obviously regarded as overt fiction. All the same, they were tolerated by representatives of the official literary norms (who usually condemned fiction as a 'lie'), who considered *khurāfāt* to be entertainment consumed by women and youths, an audience of inferior social status.

In the 'Abbāsīd period, the *khurāfāt* were a recognized literary genre, based initially on translations from Persian (as also from Indian and Greek), and later on Arabic adaptations of Persian models, as well as original Arabic works. Collections of *khurāfāt* were popular in literary and royal circles, especially at the court of al-Muqtadir (908–32 AD). Contemporary sources mention the book *Hazār afsān* (*Thousand Fables*; in Arabic, *Alf khurāfa*) as a representative example of the genre; the work is apparently identified with the *Thousand and One Nights* (see *Alf layla wa-layla*).

In *ḥadīth*, and especially in *adab* compilations, one can find a tradition called *ḥadīth khurāfa*, which explains, on the authority of the Prophet, the origin of the word *khurāfa* as the name of a person who was stolen by demons (*jinn*) in the *Jāhiliyya*, and when returned to the human world, told of his adventures. His stories, the Prophet emphasizes, were true. *Ḥadīth* techniques are employed here in an attempt to legitimize the type of fiction represented in the *khurāfāt* genre.

In modern Arabic, *khurāfāt* usually means 'nonsense, non-serious talk'.

Further reading

Abbot, N., 'A ninth-century fragment of the "Thousand Nights"', *JNES* 3 (1949), 149–64.

Drory, R., 'Three attempts to legitimize fiction in classical Arabic literature', *JSAI* 18 (1994) 146–64.

Fihrist (Dodge), vol. 2, 712–24.

Ghazi, M.F., 'La littérature d'imagination en arabe du II^e/VIII^e au V^e/XI^e siècles', *Arabica* 4 (1957), 164–78.

Mez, A., *The Renaissance of Islam*, S.K. Bukhsh and D.S. Margoliouth (trans.), London (1937), 253–4.

R. DRORY

See also: fiction, medieval

Usually the narrator witnesses the hero's adventures; and each episode ends with the narrator exposing the hero's identity, the hero justifying his behaviour, and their friendly departure. This is the basic scheme of a typical *maqāma*; naturally there are many variations to this scheme, depending on author and period.

The fact that the *maqāma* genre emerged in the wake of a literary institution that was highly established at the time – that of *adab* – bears significant implications for the nature and structure of the *maqāmāt*. The immense body of *adab* literature served as a literary reservoir from which the *maqāma* drew practically everything, from entire literary models to particular themes, motifs, situations, verses of poetry, figures of speech, clichés, ready rhymed-prose collocations and so on. Allusions to specific, often well-known texts from *hadīth*, *adab* and poetry can also be found in the *maqāma*, sometimes functioning as a founding principle upon which an entire *maqāma* is structured (e.g. the *Maqāma of the Lion* by al-Hamadhānī). All these are processed in the *maqāma* and moulded into a new literary model, which is, however, essentially distinct from other traditional *adab* models in that it overtly proclaims itself to be fictional.

Fiction is on the whole rejected in official classical Arabic literature, which, governed by powerful religious-poetic norms, consistently claims the historicity of its texts (see **fiction, medieval**). When discussed, fiction would usually be condemned as a 'lie' that should not be accepted. Introducing, through the *maqāma*, a literary model that purports to be fictional was therefore quite an innovative act, albeit one announced in a highly cautious fashion – a fashion that tended towards obscuring the innovation rather than declaring it loudly. In the introductions to their works, authors of *maqāmāt* would often state that 'they themselves gave the names to the hero and the narrator, who otherwise never existed', meaning, in other words, that they employed invented, fictional rather than historical characters. But at the same time, they would be very careful to relate their works to well-accepted literary traditions like those of the fables of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* or of love poetry, in order to prove the legitimacy of their writings.

What, then, were the circumstances that turned such an unfavourable poetic idea of unabashed fiction into a possible literary

maqāma (pl. maqāmāt)

Classical Arabic literary genre, developed in the fourth/tenth century out of a cluster of *adab* prose genres which basically comprised all of the education and learning of court circles. The *maqāmāt* were usually composed in collections of short independent narrations written in ornamental rhymed prose (*saj'*) with verse insertions, which shared a common plot-scheme and two constant protagonists: the narrator and the hero. In each narration (*maqāma*) one familiar *adab* topos is usually chosen to be elaborated. The narration tells of an episode in which the hero, a vagrant and mendicant but also a man of letters and eloquence, appears in a certain public place (a market, a mosque, a cemetery, a public bath, a traveling caravan, etc.) in different guises, and tricks people into donating him money by manipulating their feelings and beliefs. As Beeston has put it:

Despite his gifts of wit and eloquence, he is a hypocritical rascal – albeit a rather engaging one – and an unrestrained drunkard who, after a serious and moving religious homily, for example, which gains him alms from his auditory, dissipates the cash in low society at a tavern drinking wine; he himself is elderly, but occasionally has with him a youthful accomplice, whom he uses in playing crafty tricks for extracting money (Beeston, 1990, 133).

option? The answer seems to lie, again, in the relation of the *maqāma* to its parent genre, *adab*. The first pieces of what were later to be recognized as 'maqāma texts' were created with an obvious humorist intent. These were composed by **Badi' al-Zamān al-Hamadhāni** (d. 398/1008) as a sort of 'comic relief' at learned *adab* sessions in which serious *adab* materials were circulated and discussed. A tradition cited by al-Sharīshī, a famous comentator of al-Ḥarīrī's *Maqāmāt*, states that at the end of such sessions al-Hamadhāni used to challenge his fellow companions by requesting them to suggest a theme or topos, on which he would improvise 'a *maqāma*'. His texts were thus created as parodic variations on familiar, often well-chewed pieces of *adab* knowledge. In order to mark the improvisations as merely 'fun' and distinguish them from the 'genuine' educational texts related by and about real historical figures, fictitious characters had to be introduced, and their fictionality be (to a certain degree) openly admitted.

The genre of *maqāmāt* emerged in **Khurasan**, where al-Hamadhāni first composed his *maqāmāt* in 387/997, in Nishapur. It hovered on the periphery of the canonized literature for about a hundred years, until the *maqāmāt* of al-Ḥarīrī (d. 516/1122) appeared on the scene and captured the literary taste of the period within a short time. The explicit praise of literary critics, the many commentaries written on his *maqāmāt* almost from the time that they were first published in **Baghdad**, and the testimonies of learned men who came from distant places, including **Spain**, to hear the authorized version of al-Ḥarīrī's *Maqāmāt* from his own mouth, all provide ample evidence of an almost immediate prestige and popularity. Al-Ḥarīrī's *Maqāmāt* became a symbol of Arabic eloquence and stylistic dexterity, and preserved their prominent status up until modern times.

The success of al-Ḥarīrī's *Maqāmāt* marked a change in the status of the *maqāma* and its establishment as a canonical literary genre. Al-Ḥarīrī's model overshadowed all previous models and was followed by later writers, who focused on language, style and edifying subject matter rather than on fiction, parody or satire. The successful acceptance of the *maqāma* into Arabic literature was thus accompanied by a process of extensive blurring of the genre's self-proclaimed fictionality. Its fictional world was gradually reduced

to a mere skeleton, with its plot serving to connect now larger and more important presentations of information on a wide range of subjects. Adjusting itself to the normative classical poetics, the *maqāma* seemed to have lost its potential ability to significantly impact the established literature with the introduction of fiction. Despite the considerable prestige that the *maqāma* had won for itself, its literary model ultimately failed to fulfil a creative role in the dynamics of Arabic literature.

The prestigious status enjoyed by the *maqāma* in Arabic culture brought other, non-Arabic, communities within that culture to produce *maqāmāt* in their own languages. The twelfth and thirteenth centuries witnessed the appearance of *maqāmāt* in Persian, Hebrew (both in Spain and in the East) and Syriac. Although no evidence of *maqāmāt* translation into European languages such as Latin or Romance is extant, literary contacts between the *maqāma* and the adjacent Spanish picaresque literature have been conclusively established by modern research.

Further reading

- Beaumont, Daniel, 'The Trickster and Rhetoric in the *Maqāmāt*,' *Edebiyât*, n.s., 5 (1994), 1–14.
- Beeston, A.F.L., 'Al-Hamadhāni, al-Ḥarīrī and the *maqāmāt* genre', in *CHALABL*, 1990, 125–35.
- Bosworth, C.E., *The Medieval Islamic Underworld*, Leiden (1976), vol. 1, 96–103.
- Drory, R., 'Introducing fictionality into classical Arabic literature: the *maqāma*', in *Studies in Arabic and Comparative Poetics*, Wiesbaden (forthcoming).
- Kilito, A., *Les Séances*, Paris (1983).
- Malti-Douglas, F., '*Maqāmāt* and *adab*: "Al-Maqāma al-Maḍīriyya" of al-Hamadhāni', *JAOS* 105 (1985), 247–58.
- Mattock, J., 'The early history of the *maqāma*', *JAL* 15 (1984), 1–17.
- Nemah, H., 'Andalusian *maqāmāt*', *JAL* 5 (1974), 83–92.
- Richards, D.S., 'The *maqāmāt* of al-Hamadhāni: general remarks and a consideration of the manuscript', *JAL* 12 (1991), 89–99.
- Tarchouna, M., *Les Margitans dans les récits picaresques arabes et espagnols*, Tunis (1982).
- Zakharia, K., 'Norme et fiction dans la genèse des *Maqāmāt* d'al-Ḥarīrī', *BEO* 46 (1994), 217–31.

R. DRORY

al-Maqdisi see **al-Muqaddasi**

al-Saraqustī (d. 538/1143)

Abū al-Tāhir Muḥammad ibn Yūsuf al-Tamīmī al-Saraqustī, known as Ibn al-Ishtarkūnī, was an Arabic philologist, *adab* connoisseur, poet and writer. Born in Saragossa, he studied in Seville and in Córdoba, where he lived until his death. He wrote poetry, a dictionary arranged in a chain order (*al-Musalsal fī al-luḡha*) and a collection of fifty *maqāmas* (*al-Maqāmāt al-Luzūmiyya*, or *al-Saraqustīyya*), by which he is primarily known.

According to the short introduction to this collection, al-Saraqustī modelled his *Maqāmāt* on those of al-Ḥarīrī (d. 516/1122). Though composed in Basra not long before (c.495/1101), al-Ḥarīrī's *Maqāmāt* were introduced in Spain already in 502/1108 and rapidly gained a reputation there, to the extent that they became part of the contemporary Andalusian literary curriculum. In accordance with this model, the collection comprises fifty narrations (*maqāmāt*) in rhymed prose (*saǰ'*), sharing the same two protagonists: a narrator (al-Sā'ib ibn Tammām; occasionally the name of a second narrator, al-Mundhir ibn Ḥummām, is added to create the rhyme) and a hero, a witty but eloquent rogue (Abū Ḥabīb al-Sadūsī) who gains his alms by tricking his audience; both names obviously are modelled on those of al-Ḥarīrī's protagonists, al-Ḥārith ibn Hammām and Abū Zayd al-Sarūjī. Al-Saraqustī's intention to imitate, but at the same time to excel, al-Ḥarīrī is manifested in his choice of a particularly difficult pattern for his rhymed prose, which requires a two-consonant rhymeme where the norm is only one. Though a known rhyming ornament (*luzūm mā lā yalzam*, 'self-obligation where one is not obliged'), it is nevertheless rarely used because of the limitation imposed on the selection of rhyming words (but cf. the poems of Abū al-'Alā' al-Ma'arrī). The collection is called, after this pattern, *al-Maqāmāt al-Luzūmiyya*, but other complicated rhyming patterns are also to be found in it.

Despite their reputation as Andalusian, al-Saraqustī's *Maqāmāt* are actually very Eastern in nature, and rarely touch upon Andalusian subjects. They draw so heavily on the Eastern repertoire of literary themes to elaborate on fantastic themes of the *Arabian Nights* kind (*maqāma* no. 41), which are not to be found in al-Ḥarīrī's or other Eastern *Maqāmāt*. Thus in

a *maqāma* on the merits of poets (no. 30) only Eastern poets are discussed, with no mention of local ones.

Text edition

al-Maqāmāt al-Luzūmiyya, Aḥmad Badr Ḍayf (ed.), Alexandria (1982)

Further reading

'Abbās, Ḥ., *Fann al-maqāma fī al-qarn al-sādis*, Cairo (1986), 99–108.

'Abbās, I., *Ta'riḫ al-adab al-Andalusī, 'aṣr al-ṭawā'if wa-al-Murābiḫīn*, Beirut (1974), 317–25.

'Awaḍ, Y.N., *Fann al-maqāmāt bayna al-mashriq wa-al-maghrib*, Beirut (1979), 288–93.

al-Dāyā, M.R., *Ta'riḫ al-naqd al-adabī fī al-Andalus*, Beirut (1968), 352–63.

Ferrando, I., 'La *Maqāma* de Tarifa de al-Saraqustī', *Al-Qanṭara* 18 (1997), 137–51.

Nemah, H., 'Andalusian *Maqāmāt*', *JAL* 5 (1974), 88–92.

R. DRORY

al-Fayyūmī was a Jewish scholar, thinker, writer and leader, who wrote both in Arabic and in Hebrew. Born in **Egypt**, he began his literary career there by composing a dictionary for Hebrew poetry (*Egrōn*). After a stay in Palestine, where he studied in Tiberias, he left for Mesopotamia, the Jewish political and intellectual centre of the time. Upon his own initiative he became involved in several theological and Halakhic controversies, thereby gaining political power which eventually led him to the position of head of the academy at Sūrā, which he held, with a six-year intermission, until his death.

In his own perception, Sa'adiā Gaon was the spiritual leader of the Jewish community in his generation. Displaying the acumen of a cultural planner and using political strategies, he managed to establish for himself a recognized cultural authority with which he was able to set up a new agenda for canonized Jewish literature (that is, its Rabbinic section), and restructure it in a way that was to change its face completely for generations to come. By introducing models of literary activity and writing that were innovative for Rabbinic culture but were staples of contemporary Arabic culture, and by acting to bring about their assimilation, his career radically altered the canonical Rabbinic literature.

Sa'adiā Gaon introduced a restructured Rabbinic literary system, in which the Bible (rather than the corpus of Oral Law) becomes both the focus of literary attention, with a new repertoire being created around it, and a literary and linguistic exemplar, whose status is inspired by the Arabic concept of *faṣāḥa*; a revitalized Hebrew liturgical poetry on which the status and functions of Arabic poetry have been imposed; a liturgical canon (*Siddūr*) based on norms appropriated from classicist Arabic literary criticism; a new, official, status for the written text, along with its basic writing models; and last, new Arabic (using Hebrew script) and Hebrew prose-writing models.

Sa'adiā Gaon (269–331/882–942)

Sa'adiā ben Yōsēf (Arabic: Sa'īd ibn Yūsuf)

Sa'adiā Gaon's attempt to create a model for eloquent Hebrew prose based on the Bible is especially interesting, even though it was unsuccessful.

While the imprint of contemporary Arabic culture is discernible in all of them (either overtly or, in some cases, covertly), both the Hebrew and the Arabic models addressed Jewish problematics and were intended for the Jewish community. Being well versed in contemporary Arab learning, its contents and its modes of expression, Sa'adiā Gaon borrowed models of writing from the Arabic in order to express himself on Jewish matters, and insofar as he invoked aspects of Muslim learning, he did so by naturalizing them as part of the Jewish discourse.

Further reading

Drory, Rina, 'Bilingualism and cultural images: the Hebrew and the Arabic Introductions of Saadia Gaon's *Sefer Ha-Egron*', *IOS* 15 (1995), 11–23.
Malter, Henry, *Saadia Gaon: His Life and Works*, New York (1969), originally published (1926).
'Saadia Gaon', *EJ*, s.v., with further bibliography.

R. DRORY