The Levantine Maqāma Before the Nahḍa and Beyond the Novel

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Abstract

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This dissertation is a study of Arabic narrative forms and writing practices on the cusp of modernity. It is set in and around the Ottoman provinces of Mount Lebanon, and spans the period from the late-eighteenth century to the mid-nineteenth century. Through the study of four maqāma collections composed between the 1770s and 1856, this project offers a microhistory of a literary form before and during its earliest encounter with the Nahḍa, or Arab renaissance in the mid-nineteenth century. These highly self-reflexive maqāma collections not only shed light on practices of textuality prior to the spread of print journals and the “new” reading public in the mid-nineteenth century, but also provide an empirical basis for furthering the critique of the centrality of the novel to the definition and periodization of Arabic literary modernity. In its broadest ambition, however, this project is a search for a new theoretical language to describe this maqāma corpus and, through it, key facets of the genre in the modern period.
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Dedication

For Mitch Miller, Professor Emeritus at Vassar College, who taught me how to teach.
A Note on Transliteration, Citation, and Translation

Throughout this project, I have relied on the IJMES system to transliterate short Arabic passages. Given the emphasis on literary language in the maqāma genre and accordingly in this study, I have chosen to include longer passages in the Arabic script after my own translations. With Maqāmāt al-Barbīr, which I am publishing separately for the first time, I refer to passages in the text by reference to the pagination of the manuscript. In the case of Majmaʿ al-Bahrayn, my transcription of Arabic text is taken directly from the original 1856 print edition. I have added the hamza and shadda where appropriate, but otherwise reproduced the text and diacritical marks exactly as the author first published them. Any other minor variations or modifications I note in footnotes to specific passages.

Furthermore, I have developed a tripartite numbering system to refer as precisely as possible to passages in Majmaʿ al-Bahrayn. In cases where I am referring to the main body of an episode, I simply use the page number from the 1856 edition. However, in cases where I am referring to a footnote (of which there are thousands), I note first the episode number, then the page number, and finally the footnote number. For instance, the citation “Al-Yāziī, Majmaʿ al-Bahrayn, 33.244.5” refers to maqāma 33, entitled al-Rashīdiyya, page 244, footnote 5.

All translations are mine unless otherwise noted. In certain instances, I have manipulated the order of the lines of rhyming prose to preserve both the sense and the rhyme of the original; I
note such changes in the footnotes. I have also occasionally added a word or even a phrase to my translation in order to achieve a rhyme, which I have marked with brackets.
Introduction

The *maqāma* (pl. *maqâmāt*) is a genre of short narrative episodes that originated in the late 4th/10th century in the Abbasid hinterlands of Rayy and Isfahan. In the canonical collections of the dual originators of the genre, Badīʿ al-Zamān al-Hamadhānī (d. 398/1008) and al-Ḥarīrī of Basra (d. 516/1122), most *maqāma* episodes revolve around an encounter between a narrator (or *rāwī*) and an eloquent but deceitful interlocutor, or *adīb*. These encounters feature an exchange of speech, often between the *adīb* and the narrator or another character, staged before a fictional audience. In my estimation, their sophistication lies in their capacity to simultaneously describe, perform, and theorize elaborate and varied acts of narration. This narration is often in the service of some form of trickery, as the *adīb* is portrayed as a down-on-his luck sophisticate.

By the late eighteenth century, when this project begins, writers were certainly still composing in the *maqāma* genre. In some cases, they employed similar characters, tropes, and rhetorical devices as their canonical predecessors; in others, they introduced new formal features, adapting and occasionally subverting the conventions of the genre for a variety of reasons. This study attempts to honor these different approaches to the *maqāma* through a close reading of four key collections, to which we turn presently.
0.1 The Corpus

There are four primary maqāma texts in this study. The first is Maqāmāt al-Barbīr, composed by the gifted adīb and unhappy muftī of Beirut, Aḥmad al-Barbīr (1747-1811). This text is a single, massive maqāma. There is only a single manuscript witness, of precisely one hundred manuscript pages, in a bound volume held in Dār al-Kutub in Cairo, Egypt. My colleague Diaa al-Aswad and I will publish it separately as a critical edition.¹ Al-Barbīr almost certainly composed his Maqāmāt after he had left his position as muftī of Beirut, into which he had been pressed by the ruler of Mount Lebanon at the time, Emir Yūsuf al-Shihābī (r. 1770-1789), whose family has an important role in this dissertation. Al-Barbīr had already moved to Damascus and settled in among the Syrian intellectual elite, and his Maqāmāt can be read as a gushing panegyric to his adopted home and a vigorous rejection of the intellectual and cultural milieu in Beirut. The sheer length of this single, unified narrative is not only a clear divergence from the short episodic structure of the canonical maqāma collections, but a challenge to claims that European narrative forms were longer or more elaborate than their contemporaneous Arabic counterparts.

The second collection in this dissertation is comprised of eleven maqāmāt composed between 1804 and 1815 by Niqūlā al-Turk (1763-1828). In his role as a prominent scribe in the court of Emir Bashīr al-Shihābī, al-Turk served as a witness to and a participant in the structure of political rule and social convention in Mount Lebanon. Al-Turk’s maqāmāt feature praise for fictional emirs, playful addresses to fellow court poets, and episodes meant to critique and

¹ Al-Aswad and I will publish Maqāmāt al-Barbīr as an Arabic-language critical edition in the Orient Institut in Beirut’s Bibliotheca Islamica book series in late 2020. We must thank Dr. Maurice Pomerantz, who initially shared a digital copy of the text. The shelfmark for Maqāmāt al-Barbīr is 480 Ada, which can be found in the catalogue of the Khidīwīyya Library, Vol. 4., p. 328.
reproach immoral behavior or coerce notables into paying their taxes. That is, they are inscribed into the local Levantine political geography of the early nineteenth century, with individual episodes named after the towns and villages under his patron’s rule, addressed to the Emir in the company of his court, and performed in public venues. Fuʾād al-Bustānī edited and published these *maqāmāt* as part of a two-volume collection of al-Turk’s *Dīwān* in the 1950s, to which this dissertation adds a previously unknown seventh witness.²

The third collection comprises the five *maqāmāt* known to be composed by the itinerant litterateur and famous iconoclast Aḥmad Fāris al-Shidyāq (1804-1887). Al-Shidyāq placed a *maqāma* as the thirteenth chapter of each of the four volumes of his magisterial *Al-Sāq ʿalā al-Sāq* or *Leg Over Leg*, published in 1855 in Paris. In addition to these four relatively well-known episodes, al-Shidyāq composed a fifth *maqāma*, entitled *al-Bakhshishiyya* or “The Maqāma of King Bakhshīsh”, which was republished in an anthology in 1872. *Al-Bakhshishiyya*, the original composition of which I have been unable to date, contains many of the themes and stylistic features of al-Shidyāq's other *maqāmāt*, as well as his broader concern with gender, genre, and the encounter between Europe and the Arab Islamic world. That he chose an established genre such as the *maqāma* to express his critique of the sources of social, political, and cultural authority in his day only adds to the nuance, insight, and humor of his oeuvre.

The fourth text is decidedly the most elaborate and ambitious *maqāma* collection of the modern period: the sixty *maqāmāt* of *Majmaʿ al-Baḥrayn*. *Majmaʿ al-Baḥrayn*, which might be translated as “The Confluence of the Two Seas”, was composed by the esteemed grammarian and

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² Al-Bustānī’s edition is based on the six manuscript witnesses he consulted. In the course of conducting archival research for this project, I stumbled upon a seventh that I discovered in the catalogue of The High Institute for Islamic Studies. It had been miscataloged under the name of the episodes’ *adḥīb*, Abū l-Nawādir, rather than the author, Niqūlā al-Turk. See Appendix B for details.
lexicographer Nāṣīf al-Yāzījī (1800-1871) and published in 1856. In its emulations of and innovations on the canonical *maqāma* collections, as well as its elaborate narrative structure, wide array of intertextual references, and remarkable displays of linguistic, literary, and historical knowledge, *Majmaʿ al-Baḥrayn* is a rich site from which to theorize the meaning of the phrase “modern *maqāma*”. This is because, put simply, *Majmaʿ al-Baḥrayn* makes pointed and early interventions in a number of key debates of the period, from questions of language reform to sectarianism, and from women's role in society to the relevance of Arabic cultural heritage (*turāth*).

The four *maqāmāt* in this corpus display an array of generic innovations and were composed for myriad reasons: to mark social events, express praise and condemnation, compete for social recognition, engage in intellectual debate, commemorate military victories, embellish correspondence, entertain friends and impress social acquaintances. Despite their many differences, their authors form a “loosely articulated community of readers”, to borrow a phrase from Marwa Elshakry.\(^3\) This community was bound together through networks of patronage (especially in the Shihābī Court), shared educational experiences, and similar encounters with emerging forces of sectarianism, European encroachment, and nascent nationalism. In style and substance, this corpus provides a multifaceted lens through which to trace the nature and extent of these changes in the period before the *Nahḍa* and in a narrative form beyond the novel. While these four *maqāma* collections are by no means the only examples of the genre in this period, even in the relatively narrow geographic confines of Mount Lebanon, they offer a representative sample of an oft-neglected narrative tradition.\(^4\)

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\(^4\) Jaakko Hämeen-Anttila, building on the work of earlier scholars, has identified approximately 100 *maqāma* texts composed in Arabic between 1750 and the present. I have expanded his list of authors and texts for the period under study here,
0.2 Intertwined Interventions: Before the Nahḍa and Beyond the Novel

Despite their potential appeal to scholars of both literary and social history, the vast majority of maqāma collections remain in manuscript form, never printed nor digitized let alone studied. While some scholars have debated the works of the two originators of the genre in the late tenth and eleventh centuries, and others have studied and translated a handful of the innovative late nineteenth century collections, the field of Arabic literature has largely neglected the hundreds of other maqāma texts of the intervening centuries. As a case in point, the maqāmāt that comprise our corpus have been treated, often partially and tangentially, as an object of literary-historical and philological interest; but they have not been treated as a source for a theory of the maqāma in this pivotal period of Arabic literature when even the term adab, today often glossed as “literature”, was undergoing a complex transformation.

and include that list as Appendix A. Although beyond the purview of the current project, future research might fruitfully consult and compare the maqāmāt of the famous lexicographer Murtadā al-Zabīdī (d. 1790), author of Tāj al-ʿArūs; the Greek Catholic priest Hanānīyā al-Munayyar (d. 1823); the Shaykh al-Azhār Ḥassān al-ʿAṭṭār (d. 1832); the Shīḥābī court scribe Būṭrus Karāma (d. 1851); and the businessman, legal scholar, and amateur poet Amīn Shumayyil (d. 1897). For Hāmeen-Anttila’s entire list of 238 known and 15 anonymous maqāma texts, see Jaakko Hāmeen-Anttila, Maqama: A History of a Genre (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2002), 365–411.

5 Influential contributions to this debate include Shawqi ʿDayf, Al-Maqāmah (Cairo: Dar al Maʿārif, 1964); Mārwān ʿAbbūdū, Badiʿ al-Zamān al-Hamadḥānī (Cairo: Dar al Maʿārif, 1980); James Monroe, The Art of Badi Az-Zaman al-Hamadhani as Picaresque Narrative (Beirut: American University of Beirut Press, 1983); and Abdelfattah Kilito, Al-Ghāʾib: Dirāsā fi Maqāma lʾl-Harīrī (Casablanca: Dar Toubkal, 1997), among many others.


8 ‘Literature’ is itself a newly constituted nineteenth century category. Raymond Williams’ work still stands as the most lucid account of the genesis of the concepts of modern culture and literature under the conditions of industrial capitalism. Viswanathan and Dharwadker, among others, account for another point of origin for the concept of modern English literature, namely, the colonial encounter. While each author discusses the rise of literature within the context of British India, their model of a dialectical (if unequal) relationship between colonizer and colonized can be applied to the situation in Egypt later in the nineteenth century as well. See Raymond Williams, Marxism and Literature (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 1977); Vinay Dharwadker, “Orientalism and the Study of Indian Literatures,” in Orientalism and the Postcolonial Predicament: Perspectives on South Asia, ed. Carol Breckenridge and Peter van der Veer (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press,
My dissertation argues that this neglect arises from two intertwined assumptions that have structured the field of modern Arabic literature and continue to influence the study of the maqāma. The first assumption is that the historiographical point of departure for literary modernity is the Nahḍa, or Arabic cultural renaissance, that began in the same period. Hence my commitment to beginning “before the Nahḍa,” so as to bridge two periods of interest to different groups of scholars with different methods and audiences. The challenge is how to theorize the maqāma without approaching it, especially in the period under study here, through the lens of the competing narrative form of the novel. Such a novelistic approach sees in the maqāma what Roger Allen called its “invaluable bridging function”; that is, a bridge between pre-modern literary tradition and the quintessentially modern form of the novel.9

The maqāma offers us a particularly rich source for the cultural history of the Nahḍa by presenting a narrative form that long predated it.10 Both Aḥmad al-Barbīr and Niqūlā al-Turk were writing decades before the Nahḍa—at least the Nahḍa as a self-conscious socio-political phenomenon of the mid-to-late-nineteenth century. As such, their maqāmāt lie beyond what the German philosopher Reinhart Koselleck calls a “plane of historicity.”11 For Koselleck, a plane of historicity is a shared set of understandings and experiences of temporality, not only including the past, but also the future. Such a conception is helpful for thinking about the notions of

10 Thomas Bauer, for instance, critiques the “enormous contrast between a flourishing literary culture on the one hand and a remarkable dearth of scholarly enterprises” to study the period. Bauer attributes this “enormous contrast” to the ascendancy of Eurocentric conceptions of modern literature during the height of the colonial encounter, transforming the awe and admiration felt by Romantic Orientalists such as Sir William Jones (d. 1794) into the “contempt and even deep repugnance” for Oriental literature expressed by Europeans from the mid-nineteenth century onwards. Thomas Bauer, “Mamluk Literature: Misunderstandings and New Approaches,” *Mamluk Studies Review* 9, no. 2 (2005): 105-107.
progress and reform — both claims about the past and the future — that distinguished the Nahḍa from the preceding period. While social and intellectual historians such as Khaled al-Rouayheb, Akram Khater, Dana Sajdi, Samir Akkach, and Nabil Matar have begun to explore important aspects of this neglected period, there is still no definitive study of Arabic narrative practice prior to the Nahḍa.

The second assumption is that modern Arabic narrative began with the translations and adaptations of the European novel in the mid-nineteenth century, thereby linking the novel as a narrative form to the advent of literary modernity in the Arabic-speaking world. Hence my desire to move “beyond the novel” and the theories of narrative generated to understand it. The theoretical basis for such a move has already been advanced. Samah Selim has critiqued teleological accounts of the rise of the Arabic novel, which treat non-novelistic prose works as “abortive attempts” to compose a novel.12 Mohammad-Salah Omri has likewise critiqued the conflation of the novel and literary modernity, or what he calls the “novelization” of our critical imagination, which relegates other forms of Arabic prose to the realm of pre-modern tradition.13 Speaking broadly, my project contributes reflections on a new literary form (the maqāma) and a new periodization (before the Nahḍa) to other scholars’ recent critiques of the Arabic novel.14

When studying the maqāma, what might be called the “novelistic” features of many theories of Arabic narrative come quickly into focus: the preference for novelty over repetition,

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creativity over emulation, content over form, psychological subjects over typological characters, and the contemporaneity of the novel over the cyclical or transcendental temporality of genres such as the epic, the folktale, and the *maqāma*. From the perspective of the *maqāma*, such distinctions are not so much analytical assessments about the ostensible modernity of a text as they are aesthetic judgments, offering little to anyone who wishes to understand the *maqāma* in theoretical terms other than those developed from and for the novel.

The two assumptions complement and reinforce one another, for the Arabic novel was perceived to be the literary form par excellence of late Nahḍa-era littérateurs, critics, and historians. By approaching the study of Arabic narrative from a different genre and an earlier but overlapping historical period, this project provides the empirical ground to evaluate the validity of these intertwined assumptions about the Nahḍa, the novel, and Arabic literary modernity. In so doing, I hope to nudge the field of *maqāma* studies into the modern period, as the post-classical lives of the *maqāma* have only begun to be studied. At the same time, I wish to invite those who see themselves primarily as historians of the Nahḍa to consider the fruits of a literary analysis, especially one built around a genre likely unfamiliar to most Anglophone (and many Arabophone) students of what we call “literature”.

The *maqāma*, in its own modest way, presents us with an opportunity to know aspects of the cultural logic of the early nineteenth century in its own terms, rather than in the dismissive terms of later generations of intellectuals — including European philologists — who saw the *maqāma* as an exemplary manifestation of the cultural decline and intellectual stagnation of the world before the Nahḍa and beyond the novel. Such a project will be of interest, it is hoped, to students of Arabic literature searching for compelling theories of narrative, as well as Middle
Eastern and Ottoman historians eager for rich new sources to better understand the pre-Nahda social world.

0.3 Chapter Outline

Drawing from methods in literary criticism, cultural history, and the anthropology of textuality, this dissertation offers a collection of reflections on how we might understand the maqāma. The chapters are designed to explore facets of the relationship between narrative form and the society in which a given maqāma text was composed, performed, and received. Their collective purpose is not to advance a single interpretative lens that can be applied to the maqāma as a whole, but rather to demonstrate the variety of interpretative possibilities that this neglected genre invites. This eclecticism is an intentional stance, adopted to show how far a maqāma might be read as a source of Arabic narrative theory as opposed to an object of theories constructed out of the novel, with its provincial origins in Europe.\(^\text{15}\)

The first chapter, entitled “The Textual Shift”, grounds my study in the social and cultural history of maqāma performance in the period from the 1770s until the late 1850s. To do so, I draw on an array of primary and secondary source material, as well as the particularly rich descriptions of textual practices (such as acts of reading, writing, reciting, and listening) that are found in the maqāmāt themselves. Taken together, historical and literary sources help us to trace a pronounced shift in the sites, modes, and audiences of maqāma production. The earliest author in this study, Aḥmad al-Barbīr, composed his massive Maqāmāt al-Barbīr for a wealthy patron in Damascus. Niqūlā al-Turk, the second author, likewise composed his eleven maqāmāt for an

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\(^{15}\) I wish to thank Dr. Susanna Ferguson for suggesting that eclecticism might be presented as an intentional stance.
audience of powerful patrons and well-placed literary friends in the court of Emir Bashīr al-Shihābī II (r. 1789-1840). There is substantial evidence that al-Turk, unlike al-Barbīr, read his compositions aloud for the Emir and his retinue. This act of recitation was itself an elaborate form of negotiation between author and patron over the value of the reward al-Turk would receive for each episode he composed. In sharp contrast, the third text in the corpus, al-Yāzījī's magisterial Majmaʿ al-Bahrāyn, was printed in 1856 on a Protestant missionary press. By al-Yāzījī's time, I argue, the site of maqāma performance had shifted from the patron's court to the scientific societies, literary salons, and classrooms of a culturally- and economically-ascendant Beirut. With the shift to Beirut, the performance of the maqāma, the composition of its audience, and the way in which that audience engaged with the text were all radically transformed. In short, by the mid-1850s, the maqāma was being printed in literary journals and even in book format and read by an emerging public of silent readers. Given its reflexive nature, the formal features of the genre reflect and document these changes.

Chapter Two, “Homosocial Companions”, exposes the male homosociality at the heart of the maqāma genre and the spaces in which the maqāma was produced, performed, and otherwise circulated. In particular, I catalogue the depictions of homosocial bonds of friendship, patronage, and knowledge transmission both between maqāma characters in particular episodes and in the relations between maqāma authors and their audiences. The omnipresence of male characters, male authors, and male audiences firmly links the eloquent speech of both the adīb inside the episodes and the maqāma's authors with male homosociality. Exposing the male homosociality at the center of how the maqāma understands eloquence, and adab more broadly, invites reflection of how the genre routinely excludes women's voices—both from gaining an audience
in the elite male homosocial spaces of patronage and in the exclusively male representations of the protagonists inside the works themselves.

Having established that speech is the purview of male authors and their male characters in the *maqāma* genre writ large, Chapter Three, “Heterosocial Heroes”, turns to a profound innovation in Nāṣīf al-Yāzījī’s magisterial 1856 *Majma’ al-Bāhrayn*. In this collection of sixty intricate *maqāmat*, al-Yāzījī introduces an *adīb* named Maymūn bin al-Khizām, his daughter, Laylā, and his servant boy, Rajab, as something of a family of clever, erudite tricksters. Chapter Three focuses on Laylā, who is not only present in dozens of episodes, but takes an indispensable role in the performances and tricks, and often shares in the rewards, alongside her father and Rajab. In some cases, she even displaces her father or the narrator, usurping a role or a narrative stage that had previously been the purview of male characters. In this sense, Laylā's very presence, to say nothing of her intelligence, cleverness, and when necessary her lack of scruples, disrupts the codes of male homosociality exposed in Chapter Two. At times, her disruptions rely upon familiar roles for women, such as when she adopts disguises and plays the roles of wife, daughter, and seductress. As a seductress, the text explicitly and frequently associates (and often rhymes) her linguistic artistry (*iftinān*, from f-n-n) with the feminine allure and ability to arouse desire (*iftitān*, from f-t-n) that her male suitors and other audience members appreciate. However, in other cases, Laylā not only disrupts the norms of the *maqāma* genre, but seems to embrace a much more transgressive role, especially when she pretends to be her father’s wife. Such roles are not only frequent, but become a point of considerable anxiety for the male characters, such as her father and Rajab, who express concerns about her roles emasculating them. The larger point of this chapter, however, is to follow Laylā’s lead as she tricks and charms her way through *Majma’ al-Bāhrayn*, presenting us with a complex female hero or *adība*. The
character of Laylā is not only a persuasive reason to reevaluate the harsh manner in which al-Yāzijī has been dismissed as an imitator and a traditionalist, but also sheds light on the capacity of the genre to engage in contemporary social debates and respond to the needs of new institutions (such as the girls schools emerging in Mount Lebanon from the 1820s onward).

Chapter Four, “Other Characters”, builds on the insight that the maqāma, at least in the period under study here, can be vividly rethought through the lens of its many Other characters. While Laylā is undoubtedly the most prominent, persuasive, and provocative, she is by no means alone. This chapter reviews the corpus anew, discussing the ways in which a host of Others struggle for inclusion from the margins of specific episodes in specific collections. The ways in which they are Othered are myriad, but include everything from how they look to how they speak, and how they dress to where they are from. From these many Others, the most prominent common thread is that the Other is often conceived as a foreigner, sometimes in phenotypical or sartorial terms, but more often through language. He (and with the exception of Laylā, it is always a “he”) mumbles and grumbles, lisps, and speaks with an insurmountable and undisguisable accent. While the maqāma is often understood by scholars to celebrate eloquence and erudition in Arabic, from the perspective of the many Others who must struggle to be heard and are almost always humiliated, chased off, or vanquished, the main characters (the adīb and the narrator) are policing the boundaries of an elaborate social hierarchy built on facility with language that routinely excludes the foreigner.

Chapter Five, “The Many Seas of Majmaʿ al-Bahrayn”, is an attempt to understand how Majmaʿ al-Bahrayn challenges the dualities upon which other maqāma collections are based. Chapters Three and Four demonstrate that the presence of Laylā and a host of Other characters constantly intrudes upon the characterological duality of narrator and adīb, inviting us to
consider that there are four main characters in *Majmaʿ al-Bahrāyn*, not two. With this as a jumping off point, Chapter Five examines two other layers of the formal structure of al-Yāzījī’s *maqāmāt* that are best conceptualized through the lens of multiplicity, not duality. The first is at the level of narrative stages such as the encounter, the recognition scene, the trick, and the reward—all of which are frequently doubled or even tripled as the four main characters build elaborate, multi-stage ruses to entertain and exploit their audiences. The second aspect of multiplicity is at the level of the performance itself. The performances concocted by Maymūn, Laylā, and Rajab are so heterogenous that they defy my ability to catalogue in any satisfyingly comprehensive manner. This, indeed, is the point: *Majmaʿ al-Bahrāyn* can be productively, if only partially, understood as an unconventional lexicon, a primer on Arabic rhetoric and style, and a tireless demonstration of the multiplicity of genres of Arabic writing (from sermon to aphorism to medical treatise). Its most compelling power, however, lies precisely in the ways that it resists reduction and defies any comprehensive account. It may be encompassing, but its multiplicities refuse to be encompassed, as the limitations of my own cataloguing attempt lead me to conclude at the end of Chapter Five.

Chapter Six, “Footnotes to a *Nahḍawī* Imaginary”, is driven by an ambition that is yet to be fully realized here. It might be best thought of as a chapter-in-embryo or a signal of the direction of any future book project to be based on this dissertation. As it currently stands, Chapter Six is an initial foray into studying the nearly six thousand footnotes which al-Yāzījī composed and published alongside the original 1856 edition of *Majmaʿ al-Bahrāyn*. The sheer number of footnotes, alongside the astounding variety of topics that al-Yāzījī clearly felt compelled to explain, provides a roadmap of sorts for the imaginaries and the anxieties of a “cornerstone of the linguistic *Nahḍa*”, as many scholars have called al-Yāzījī. That is, al-Yāzījī's
footnotes are, strictly speaking, a paratextual device; however, their density, frequency, and scope allow us to draw some conclusions about how al-Yāzījī imagined his readers as well as the figures, moments, and periods of the Arab and Islamic pasts that would be most useful for the growing body of silent readers whose emergence as the audience of the maqāma is explored in Chapter One, “The Textual Shift”.

0.4 What Is a Maqāma?

The maqāma genre might be thought of as having two points of origin: two canonical texts, two authors, and therefore two intertwined histories of composition and reception. While doubling itself in many forms is an important rhetorical feature of the genre, as we return to below, this section begins with an overview of the dual canonical texts at the origins of the maqāma genre. The first origin is the maqāmat of Aḥmad ibn al-Ḥusayn al-Hamadhānī (d. 398/1008). The second is the maqāmat of his “admitted emulator” and successor, Abū Muḥammad al-Qāsim ibn ʿAlī al-Ḥarīrī of Basra (d. 516/1122). Al-Hamadhānī’s accomplishment earned him the respect of his contemporaries and the title Bādīʿ al-Zamān,

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16 Over the past century, however, scholars have debated precisely how “original” these origins are. These debates have offered a set of possible narrative models for al-Hamadhānī’s maqāmat. Zakī Mubārak argued that Ibn Durayd’s (d. 321/933) shadow plays may be one such model, while A.F.L. Beeston identified some formal similarities between the maqāmat and a particular tale in al-Tanūkhī’s (d. 384/994) compilation of anecdotes entitled Al-Faraj b’ad al-shidda. For Beeston, however, the question of origins is intimately tied to the question of originality, leading him to conclude that al-Hamadhānī was not “creative in the highest sense” because “[t]he admission of the fictional nature of his work, and the use of sajʿ, were innovations, but innovations imposed on a type of writing which, both in fundamentals and in some particular details, had a long previous history in Arabic literature.” (12) Mattock extends Beeston’s analysis to a handful of anecdotes by al-Jāḥiz (d. 255/868 or 869) in Kitāb al-muḥāǧin wa l-aḏḏād. Beeston, Mattock and others who adopt this approach fail to consider the historicity of originality as an aesthetic value, on the hand, and the nature of originality, which must contain some degree of imitation in order to be coherent and recognizable. In other words, pure originality (which al-Hamadhānī does not achieve) with no reference to any past tradition would simultaneously be pure nonsense. For this debate, see: Zakī Mubārak, Al-Muṣṭataf 76 (1930): 418-21, 561-64; A. F. L. Beeston, “The Genesis of the Maqāmat Genre,” Journal of Arabic Literature 2 (1971), 1-12; J.N. Mattock, “The Early History of the Maqāma,” Journal of Arabic Literature 15 (1984): 1-18.

“Innovator,” “Marvel,” or “Wonder” of the Age. His *maqāmāt* were studied and emulated as far away as Muslim Spain in the early 5th/11th century.\(^\text{18}\)

Al-Hamadhānī composed fifty-two *maqāmāt* or perhaps more, as recent discoveries suggest.\(^\text{19}\) These *maqāmāt* are short narrative episodes that frequently revolve around the encounter between a narrator (*rāwī*) and an eloquent but deceitful interlocutor (*adīb*). This encounter is often an exchange of speech, staged before a fictional audience, and rife with descriptions of acts of reading, writing, debating, listening, and evaluating poetry. In many of al-Hamadhānī’s *maqāmāt*, the *adīb*, named Abū l-Faṭḥ al-Iskandarī, employs his eloquence to stir the passions and sympathies of his audience with his speeches, sermons, improvised poetry, and riddles. This audience frequently includes the narrator, ʿĪsā bin Hishām, and often his friends.

Before he is recognized and unmasked by the narrator, Abū l-Faṭḥ sometimes manages to win for himself a few coins, a free meal, or some other modest reward. In other cases, as James Monroe puts it, the *adīb*’s tricks “do not stop short at crimes of need, but extend farther, into the area of crimes of greed.”\(^\text{20}\)

The *adīb* in the canonical *maqāmāt* of al-Hamadhanī and al-Ḥarīrī dons a variety of disguises, from physician to imam, young boy to old woman, and adopts a wide range of positions on religious, literary, and moral matters of his day.\(^\text{21}\) Such disguises are often essential to the *adīb*’s trick (ḥila). Many *maqāmāt* center on this trick, whether it be an act of deception, impersonation, improvisation, a riddle, a code, or a debate. The nature of this trick, its literary

significance within the text, and its socio-political significance in what we know of a given
author’s milieu resist generalization. One trick might be read as a display of Arabic rhetorical
excellence, another seemingly intended to satirize a literary predecessor, promote an idea, amuse
an educated audience, arouse desire, and so on.

To justify his trickery, the adīb often invokes the idea of dahr. Dahr can refer to a period
of time, especially a contemporary moment of cultural decline and moral corruption (as al-
Hamadhānī appears to have perceived his own time). Understood as a proper noun, however, al-
Dahr also refers to the fickleness of fate and the inevitable changes wrought upon all living
things by Time. Abū l-Fatḥ not only articulates the concept of dahr in his speech, but embodies it
through changes to his outward appearance, professed beliefs, and position in society.

Reflecting the adīb’s penchant for disguise, scholars seem unable to reach consensus over
how to name him — or rather, how to name the role he plays in the narrative (as the actual
characters switch roles more than might be expected).22 In the Arabic scholarship, the adīb is
also referred to as a batl (protagonist or hero) or balīgh (rhetorician).23 In English, he is called a
“rogue,” “trickster,” or “picaresque hero”24 as well as a number of more colorful appellations: a

22 Within al-Hamadhānī’s oeuvre, there are numerous instances in which Abū l-Fatḥ does not appear, three examples
being al-Baghdādiyya, al-Ṣaymariyya, and al-Bishriyya. See Muhammad Rushdi Ḥasan, Aḥār al-maqāma fi nāsh ʿat al-qiṣṣa al-
Miṣriyya al-ḥadīthah (Cairo: al-Ḥay′ah al-Miṣriyya al-ʾAmma li-l-Kitāb, 1974), 68.
23 Abdelfattah Kilito uses the term balīgh or, in his French, rhetor. Thinking through the lens of discourse, Kilito
conceives of the two main roles for characters in the maqāma as speaker and listener. The term balīgh, or rhetorician, emphasizes
the centrality of rhetorical eloquence to this character and the exchange of speech to the genre. In contrast to the antonyms
“protagonist” and “antagonist,” which fix characters to moral stances, the terms rāwī and balīgh invite consideration of the
different relationships each role dictates towards speech. Whereas the rāwī reports on events that he witnessed, and occasionally
stories he has heard, the balīgh demonstrates his eloquence and erudition through speech. Abdelfattah Kilito, “Le genre ‘Séance’: Une
Introduction,” Studia Islamica 43 (1976): 26-7. James Monroe likewise calls the adīb “a rhetorician...trained not to seek out
and serve an objective form of truth, but to persuade others that his own (per)version of it is valid.” Monroe, The Art of Bādīʾ az-
Zamān, 48.
24 C.E. Bosworth, “A ‘Maqāma’ on Secretaryship: Al-Qalqashandi’s ‘Al-Kawākib Al-Durriyya Fiʾl-Manāqib Al-
“witty, unscrupulous improviser,”25 a “witty, unscrupulous vagabond,”26 an “eloquent, impudent and plausible mendicant,”27 “a prosperous swindler,”28 and a “cynical perverter”.29

In al-Hamadhānī’s maqāmāt, the narrator, ʿĪsā bin Hishām, relays his encounters with the adīb through an anonymous shadow narrator, who opens each maqāma with the phrase, “ʿĪsā bin Hishām related to us, saying…” (ḥaddathanā ʿĪsā bin Hishām qāla…). The “us” is important, as it suggests that the shadow narrator is not alone but rather himself conveying ʿĪsā’s tales to an audience. Speech here is a social act: ʿĪsā, like the later narrators modeled on him, is frequently in the company of friends when he encounters the adīb, much like the shadow narrator who relays each maqāma. Eloquent speech accordingly demands not only rhetorical skill but performative excellence, inviting us to conceptualize the speaker and the audience, and composition and initial reception, together.

Composed in the pleasing cadence of sajʿ, or rhyming but unmetered prose, each episode provides the maqāma’s author with an opportunity to demonstrate his own erudition and rhetorical abilities.30 In al-Hamadhānī’s maqāmāt, many episodes play on the styles of the author’s predecessors, from subtle allusions to the poet Abū Nuwās’s metaphors for wine to an explicit debate on the accomplishments of the famed prose stylist al-Jāḥīz. Thematically, al-Hamadhānī’s corpus ranges from the evaluation of horses to the judgement of poetry, scenes of

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wine drinking to sermons on the dangers of worldly pleasure, and descriptions of feasts to mockery of bad table manners. In each case, al-Hamadhānī borrows the terminology, imagery, metaphors, and other linguistic tropes of the theme of the *maqāma* — what Philip Kennedy has aptly called the “arch-manipulation of pre-existing material.”

The canonical *maqāmat* may have been intended to entertain the author's companions, impress his patrons, and, as Shawqī Ḍayf has argued, educate their audiences in the finer points of Arabic rhetoric. Regardless of its purpose during its own day, the following is clear: the encounter between the narrator and the *adīb* inside the text mirrors (and often models) the encounter between author and audience outside the text. The doubling (or tripling of narrators, narrations, and audiences creates a multi-layered text in which the characters’ sophistication mirrors the author’s through the medium of the language they share.

While the topoi vary from food to poetry, and theology to wine, the *maqāmat* of al-Hamadhānī and his successors return time and again, at different levels of abstraction and allusion, to questions of language. Playing on the dialectic of disguise and recognition, displaying and performing language acts in an elaborate mirroring of narrator and audience inside and outside the text, and employing the dual tropes of jest and earnestness, the *maqāma* draws attention to its own ambiguity and hints at the particularly rich circularity — what anthropologist Karin Barber has called “reflexivity” — found whenever language attempts to

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describe itself. These episodes insist, often implicitly, that language is worthy of deep reflection and capable of sweeping deception; that meaning is intertextual, polyvalent, and communal; and that jest contains a degree of truth. In other words, that even at its most irreducible, truth is not only dualistic but multiple.

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If al-Hamadhānī originated the genre, it is al-Ḥarīrī who codified, and some believe perfected, its written form. Al-Ḥarīrī acknowledged al-Hamadhānī’s influence in the introduction to his *Maqāmāt*. In codifying his predecessor's characters, narrative structures, and themes, as well as the name “*maqāmāt*”, al-Ḥarīrī acknowledged his debt to al-Hamadhānī. Al-Ḥarīrī makes extensive use of riddles, literary and Qur’ānic allusions, and lexical and orthographic games — techniques that Roger Allen has called “sommersaults” and Devin Stewart “verbal pyrotechnics”.

Al-Ḥarīrī’s *Maqāmāt* were recognized as exemplary during their author’s lifetime, becoming the standard towards which many later *maqāma* writers strove and against which they were ultimately judged. The Mamluk scribe and *maqāma* author al-Qalqashandī (d. 1422) says

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35 Some scholars however see al-Hamadhānī’s corpus as a collection conceived by its author. Devin Stewart reads al-Hamadhānī’s reference to his own *maqāmāt* as *Maqāmāt al-Iškandarī* as a sign that the author conceived of his episodes as a “unified collection” crafted around the character of the *adīb*, Abū l-Fath al-Iškandarī. The other title al-Hamadhānī uses in his *Letters is Maqāmāt al-Kyalva*, which Stewart understands to suggest “an internally connected text, with beggingy serving as its major theme, if not its driving principle.” In contrast to those who have translated *maqāma* to mean “session,” “anecdote,” or “standing,” Stewart uses these two titles to justify the translation of “*maqāma*” as “feats” or “exploits,” as in *The Exploits of al-Iškandarī or The Feats of Beggary*. See Devin Stewart, “Professional Literary Mendicancy in the *Letters and Maqamat* of Badi’ Al-Zamān al-Hamadhānī,” in *Writers and Rulers: Perspectives on Their Relationship from Abbasid to Safavid Times*, ed. Beatrice Gruendler and Louise Marlow, vol. 16 (Wiesbaden, Germany: Reichart Verlag, 2004), 39–40.


that al-Ḥarīrī’s work, “caused [people] to forget the maqāmāt of al-Hamadhānī.” This sentiment is echoed in the scholarly literature up through the twentieth century. Centuries later, the lexicographer Murtaḍā al-Zabīdī (d. 1790), author of Tāj al-ʿUrūs, composed numerous maqāmāt and is reported to have recited and taught al-Ḥarīrī’s works throughout his extensive travels. Taken together, al-Hamadhānī and al-Ḥarīrī serve as the dual origins of a distinct literary genre that many notable scholars of later centuries emulated.

From al-Hamadhānī to al-Ḥarīrī, the maqāma spread from the major cultural centers of the Abbasid East to the courts of the caliphs in Baghdad, and from there, to the farthest reaches of the Islamic world. As the genre spread over the centuries, it attracted hundreds of authors, as Jaakko Hameen-Anttila has shown us. It also “poached” — as Michel de Certeau would say — styles and topoi from other genres of writing, from the hadith of the Prophet to the Bukhalā’ of al-Jāhīz to earlier maqāma collections, and from history and astronomy to medicine, food, and chess. Here again we encounter Kennedy's “arch-manipulation of pre-existing material.”

The result of this arch-manipulation is a constant generation of stylistic and thematic novelty. Jaakko Hameen-Anttila, for instance, argues that from the fourteenth to the seventeenth century, a period routinely overlooked as an era of decline, there is a marked turn towards identification of the adīb and the author, and hence more directly associating the hero’s eloquence with the author’s. Hameen-Anttila calls such changes “a clear broadening of the

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42 Philip Kennedy, “Reason and Revelation,” 85.
horizons of the genre.” Speaking generally, he identifies the ways in which various *maqāmah* authors drew from erotic poetry, wine poetry, lexical and philological studies, historical accounts, and *ḥadīth* literature to create multidimensional accounts of contemporary knowledge.

Across the centuries, these texts generated an accompanying corpus of commentaries, which themselves have only recently begun to attract critical attention as a site of theories of textuality. While the original and most famous *maqāmah* were composed in Arabic, there is a rich tradition of emulations in Hebrew, Persian, and to a lesser extent Syriac. Beginning in the eighteenth century, European philologists undertook the task of translating the canonical *maqāmah* into German, French, and English. To this kaleidoscopic history of composition, elucidation, emulation, and translation, we must add that the *maqāmah* are works of substantial sophistication and erudition, uniquely preoccupied with the possibilities and ambiguities of language.

The doubling implicit in the dual origins of the genre is also reflected in other dualities central to the genre’s literary structure. Many of the episodes in the *maqāmah* of al-Hamadhānī and al-Ḥarīrī have two main characters, two alternating tones (jest and sincerity), and two broad styles of writing, namely rhyming prose (*saj*) and verse. Moreover, much of the *maqāma’s*

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43 Hämeeen-Anttila, *Maqama*, 340-1. Such accounts constitute a distinct subgenre which Hämeen-Anttila calls the “scholarly *maqāma*,” in which “the gist of the *maqāmah* is not so much the description but the exposition of different fields of knowledge (*‘ulūm*)”.


stylistic sophistication relies on the elaborate play of pairs of homophones, synonyms, and antonyms. There is a further doubling between the text and the world in which (and for which) it was composed. The “fictional” eloquence of the *adīb* within a given episode, for instance, is a very real testament to his author’s literary talents in the courts and literary circles of his time. Or as James Monroe has observed with regard to the biography of one of al-Ḥarīrī’s emulators, “our author, for all the world like a character in one of his own *maqāmāt*, pops up in one city after another, only to vanish, just as mysteriously as he had appeared.”

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There are certain salient formal features that can be distilled from the study of the canonical *maqāmāt* of al-Hamadhānī and al-Ḥarīrī. As mentioned above, I divide these features into five categories: characterological, narratological, stylistic, thematic, and rhetorical. In characterological terms, the *maqāma* is often described as revolving around exchanges between the narrator and the *adīb*, often before an audience. Narratologically, theorists have applied a Proppian schema to the *maqāma*'s structure in the following manner: arrival, encounter, performance, reward, departure, chase, recognition, and justification. Stylistically, the genre is typically a hybridization of rhyming prose or sajʿ and verse; it also employs an array of literary and rhetorical embellishments. Finally, the *maqāma* encompasses an enormous variety of stylistic and topical intertexts. The rhetorical features include the disguise (*al-qināʾ*), the trick (*al-ḥila*), and the reward (*al-ʿatīyya, al-jāʿīza, al-hadiyya*, and so on). While each corresponds to a specific narrative stage, and moreover is often performed by a specific character, their

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significance cannot be reduced to their narratological and characterological dimensions, but must be elaborated in its own right.

**0.5 Challenges and New Approaches**

Despite the scholarly efforts detailed in the preceding section, defining the *maqāma* as a genre based on canonical models or formal terms alone presents a number of major challenges. The first is how much significance to give to the two canonical *maqāma* collections of Badīʿ al-Zamān al-Hamadhānī (d. 398/1008) and his successor, al-Ḥarīrī of Basra (d. 516/1122). While their works have long served as dual sources of inspiration for subsequent generations of *maqāma* authors, any definition of the genre that privileges their texts thereby marginalizes the rich history of emulation and transformation that carried the *maqāma* from its conception in the late 4th/10th centuries to its ultimate decline in the mid-twentieth. Indeed, relying solely or primarily on the canonical texts to define the genre carries the risk of dismissing later innovation as mere divergence from the proper (i.e. canonical) origins. For the purposes of this study, any framework that treats the canonical texts not only as the original instances but as the authoritative models of the genre risks generating a theory of the genre that can only imagine late-eighteenth- and nineteenth-century *maqāmāt* as derivative.

A second, related challenge concerns the centrality of specific formal features to the definition of the genre. For convenience and clarity, I organize such features into five categories: characterological, narratological, stylistic, thematic, and rhetorical. While such categories are a useful heuristic, in a genre that stretched across nine centuries, multiple continents and several languages, the astounding variety in these formal features is an obstacle to any purely formal definition of the *maqāma*. The identities of the *adīb* and the narrator fluctuate, as do the roles
they play in a given episode; indeed, sometimes one or the other ostensibly-central character is entirely absent, and in many cases, their encounters are complicated by an ever-shifting host of Other characters. Likewise, narrative stages are added and subtracted to suit the stylistic demands of the age and the idiosyncrasies of the author. The themes which given episodes address are so varied as to encompass nearly every field of discourse across a millennium. Moreover, the meaning of the few common formal features shifted as old texts were recited to new audiences and new texts were composed. To demonstrate this point, one need look no further than the tensions within and between the two canonical collections, which themselves contain more than one hundred episodes, and the transformations that took place during the early reception history of the genre.

Consider, for instance, Jaakko Hämeen-Anttila's classificatory approach to the definition of the maqāma is to take the maqāmāt of al-Hamadhānī as a “self-evident” starting point. Hämeen-Anttila acknowledges that “even a cursory reading” of three of al-Hamadhānī’s maqāmāt shows that they “do not necessarily belong to the same genre.” Hämeen-Anttila himself only finds two “common denominators” present in every episode in al-Hamadhānī’s corpus. The first is saj’ or rhyming prose, which, as the author acknowledges, is found in other genres of prose writing and does little to distinguish the maqāma from other prose forms. The second are the two fictional but human characters. This allows a contrast with animal fables; but is otherwise an unsatisfying basis for a formal definition.

Having reached an impasse, Hämeen-Anttila turns from commonalities to differences. He divides the maqāma into five “subgenres”: (1) picaresque and comic; (2) beggar; (3)

philological; (4) exhortatory; and (5) “left-overs”. Remarkably, of al-Hamadhānī’s 52 extant maqāmāt, Hämeen-Anttila places only fifteen in the first four “subgenres,” including only one exhortatory maqāma. The remaining 37 maqāmāt are relegated to the “left-overs” subgenre, defined as a “group of different texts for which no common denominator can be discovered.” Yet what type of classification leaves the majority of items unclassified? If Hämeen-Anttila's classificatory approach is unsatisfying for the canonical maqāmāt, what use might it have when theorizing the maqāmāt studied here?

The purpose of raising such concerns is not to deny the significance of formal features to any robust definition of the maqāma, but rather to open up imaginative space for new, complementary ways of understanding and theorizing the genre. Moving away with those definitions which rely solely on the two canonical maqāma collections, this project casts a more inclusive but also much looser net. As noted above, if we embrace the maqāmāt of al-Hamadhānī and al-Ḥarīrī as canonical, there is a temptation to consider later innovations to be deviations.49 This excludes many important texts from the maqāma corpus, despite their authors' clear intentions to write in this tradition. Moreover, treating disobedience as deviance stigmatizes the ways in which talented authors adopted and appropriated the maqāma for their own purposes.

The maqāma’s heterogeneity and playful ambiguity, coupled with the unsatisfying attempts to define the genre based on its formal features alone, are an occasion to search for new theories of this “ambivalent” genre.50 In my own search, a guiding metaphor has been the kaleidoscope, an instrument that allows for the constant generation of novelty through the

49 Speaking of five maqāma collections listed by Blachere and Masnou as composed between al-Hamadhānī and al-Ḥarīrī, Beeston asserts that “these are simply khutbahs clothed in saj’ and apart from borrowing the name maqamah for this species of composition, they in no way resemble the individual character of Hamadhani’s Maqamat.” Beeston, “Al-Hamadhani, Al-Ḥarīrī and the Maqāmāt Genre,” 132.

50 Kennedy, “Reason and Revelation,” 112, fn. 86.
rearrangement of stable, unchanging elements. While the fragments of glass, tinsel, and other reflective objects at the kaleidoscope's base remain the same, with each turn of the instrument their shifting relationship to one another creates a unique mosaic. If one were to ask, “Is the kaleidoscope one thing or many?” the wisest answer would be to dispense with the question. In its place, one might pose questions that do not assume that continuity and change, identity and difference, or being and becoming are mutually exclusive. When applied to the maqāmāt studied here, the metaphor of the kaleidoscope allows us to conceptualize both what holds together a complex literary genre that persisted for nearly a millennium and acknowledge the astounding diversity of features, forms, and functions which can be found therein.

Yet while the kaleidoscope is a useful heuristic, it alone only takes us so far. To draw us closer to an inclusive theory of the maqāma, this project proposes three new ways to think about the genre: as reflexive, morphic, and agentive. Rather than dedicate chapters to each, I have chosen to note and sometimes discuss these three approaches as they come up in particular episodes. In short, reflexive texts are those which both describe and perform at the same time. This will be most apparent in those maqāmāt that both describe and perform aspects of textuality, such as when an adīb recites poetry on the merits of poetry or when an episode describes acts of eloquence that the historical record shows the author to have undertaken himself in a patron's court. In so doing, the texts in this corpus offer a multi-faceted representation of adab (understood here and throughout this project as comprised of erudition, eloquence, and etiquette) among the intellectual elite during a time when the Arabic language and its literatures were being reformed and transformed. Seen as reflexive, the maqāma serves not only as a text but as a metatext, that is, a text that contains the key to its own theorization through its depictions and performances of textuality.
The morphic is not a quality of texts per se, but of formal features as varied as the themes, characters, and rhetorical devices such as the disguise and the trick. Morphic features, as I define them, appear across multiple episodes or texts in the same form but with drastically different meanings. For instance, a common rhetorical trope such as travel (al-safar) is resignified by each author in this corpus to convey a different meaning. While one author employs the camel steed (nāqa) to express a nostalgia for a romanticized classical past, his contemporary introduces a steamship (al-bākhira) in a perhaps begrudging recognition of modern technologies. The morphic text borrows and poaches from earlier collections, as well as many other genres of writing, often producing hybrid and even subversive adaptations. The morphic text is understood relationally, not only along a diachronic axis against the features of earlier, and largely canonical, collections, but also synchronically, as part of developing debates of the period under study.

Finally, agentive texts act upon — rather than merely representing — the world. Some have a familiar illocutionary effects, such as the panegyric maqāma which elicits a reward from a patron. Yet even in the modestly-sized corpus studied here, the maqāma performs a range of actions: one maqāma is composed to coerce village notables into paying their taxes, another to reproach young men for their moral transgressions. The agentive text articulated economic demands, made political attacks, and intervened in moral and social issues. As agentive texts, the maqāmāt in this corpus can be understood to intervene in the world in and for which they were composed.

The reflexive, morphic, and agentive are meant as complements to, rather than replacements of, literary historical and formal understandings of what holds the maqāma together. They invite ways of thinking about these texts not only over time, but intertwined with
the lived experiences of authors and audiences in a period of radical change. As we turn now to Chapter One, “The Textual Shift”, we will see that technological and social transformation over the course of the early nineteenth century is not only documented in the reflexive aspect of many of the *maqāmāt* in this corpus, but that, in turn, the shifting sites and audiences of the genre certainly changed, and arguably limited, its agentive force.
Chapter One: The Textual Shift

In the period from the 1770s until the 1860s, there was a profound shift in the site, mode, and audience of the maqāma in Mount Lebanon and the broader Levant. As this chapter argued, over this period the site of maqāma performance shifted from the courts and palaces of powerful patrons to literary salons and scientific societies, the pages of newly-emerging literary journals, early print books, and even newspapers, and likely some classrooms. Shifts in the site of maqāma performance were accompanied by a shift in the mode and audience of maqāma dissemination. While Aḥmad al-Barbīr may have delivered his massive maqāma to his patron without reciting it aloud, Niqūlā al-Turk and his contemporaries recited their maqāmāt before an array of elite patrons, friends, students, and allies, or arranged to have messengers recite them on their behalf. In contrast, Nāṣīf al-Yāzījī, Aḥmad Fāris al-Shidyāq, and other maqāma writers of the mid-nineteenth century primarily disseminated their work in written form for an emerging public of silent, individual readers.

To situate the composition, performance, and dissemination of the maqāma within the broader shifts in textuality before and during the Nahḍa, this chapter builds on research conducted in the AUB archives.\footnote{This includes the newly acquired ʿĪsā Iskandar al-Maʿlūf collection at the American University in Beirut, so generously made available to me by Dr. Kaoukab Chebaro and Ms. Samar Mikati. Al-Maʿlūf (d. 1956) was a prolific Lebanese historian and literary figure. His collection includes nearly four hundred manuscripts which he gathered from libraries, archives, and private libraries.} The first section (‘From the ' Graveyard' of Beirut to the
Gardens of Damascus”) describes Aḥmad al-Barbīr's search for suitable intellectual milieu and patronage for his literary endeavors in the 1770s and 1780s. Dismissing Beirut as “a graveyard of knowledge,” al-Barbīr fled the political instability and what he perceived as the cultural stagnation of the town for the verdant gardens, opulent palaces, and myriad opportunities for patronage in late-eighteenth-century Damascus. There al-Barbīr composed and likely presented his Maqāmāt al-Barbīr as a gift for the patrons who hosted him and introduced him to the city's intellectual and spiritual elite.

The second section, entitled “Niqūlā al-Turk's Panegyric Maqāmāt in the Shihābī Court”, turns to the maqāmāt being composed and recited aloud for the last and longest-ruling emir of Mount Lebanon, Emir Bāshīr al-Shihāb II (r. 1789-1840). Both Niqūlā al-Turk and a young Nāṣīf al-Yāzījī served Emir Bāshīr in his provincial capital of Dayr al-Qamar in the Shūf Mountains of Mount Lebanon. With Emir Bāshīr's downfall and the collapse of the Shihābī Emirate in 1840, the location of maqāma composition and performance moved to an economically- and politically-ascendant Beirut. While al-Yāzījī was from a family of scribes and scholars who had served the emirs of Mount Lebanon for more than a century, he composed the majority (if not the entirety) of the sixty maqāmāt which comprise Majmaʿ al-Baḥrayn for the emerging audience of the early Nahḍa in Beirut. As the third section documents, al-Yāzījī's life and career embody the sweeping changes in the site, mode, and audience of literary production in general, and for our purposes, the maqāma in particular.

In addition to grounding the literary critical work of subsequent chapters in the nitty-gritty details of the authors' biographies and the social history of textuality, this chapter provides...
a basis for reevaluating the claims of some Nahḍa-era intellectuals that their immediate past was one of cultural stagnation and decline. While much critical labor has been undertaken to challenge the narrative of decline, this chapter offers a positive account of pre-Nahḍa cultural history unencumbered by the ideological blinders of the tradition/modernity dichotomy. The word “shift” recognizes the complex transformation in the site, mode, and audience of the maqāma, without privileging what were taken by some early Nahḍa intellectuals and their European contemporaries as quintessential symbols of modernity: the printed text over the manuscript, the written over the recited, the publishing house over the patron's court, and the reading public over the maqāma's earlier audiences.

My choice of the term “textuality” rather than a narrower term such as “reading” or “writing” is meant to open a space for a wide and inclusive (if admittedly less precise) understanding of the environment out of which the maqāma emerged and which it also simultaneously depicted. Textuality allows me to gather together what might otherwise seem to be disparate facets of the maqāma and attempt, however imperfectly, to chart the ways in which they changed over the period in question.

The textuality that emerges from the thick description presented below is a complex, multifaceted phenomenon. At the level of textual form, the maqāma was not only written and read, but also recited and heard. It served a variety of purposes, from entertainment and edification to the solidification of political alliances and the securing of economic rewards. Textuality's diverse purposes find a parallel in the many roles that maqāma authors played as court scribes, poets, spies, historians, confidants, advisors, and companions. Together, these

facets give textuality its political valiance, whether when employed to endorse the emir, the pinnacle of the homosocial structure of power, or to dupe someone out of a few coins in the municipal court.

1.1 Aḥmad al-Barbīr: From the “Graveyard” of Beirut to the Gardens of Damascus

Aḥmad al-Barbīr was born in the town of Damietta in the Egyptian Delta on January 21, 1747 (the 10th of Muḥarram, 1160). His full name is Aḥmad bin ʿAbd al-Laṭīf bin Muḥammad al-Barbīr and he comes from a distinguished line of Levantine scholars.⁵³ His father, ʿAbd al-Laṭīf al-Barbīr, was a trader from Mount Lebanon who migrated to Damietta in the early decades of the eighteenth century.⁵⁴ Al-Barbīr was raised and educated in Egypt; worked as a muftī in Beirut; and eventually migrated to Damascus, “the most important urban metropolis in the Ottoman Levant” in the words of Dana Sajdi.⁵⁵ Al-Barbīr’s life, from his early education to his successful bids for the patronage of some of the most elite families in Damascus, offer valuable details about the practices of textuality in a period wholly before the upheavals of the Nahḍa and the encounter with colonial modernity.

The same can be said of his maqāmāt, read through a variety of critical lenses in the coming chapters. While the colophon does not provide a date of composition, Maqāmāt al-

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⁵³ Aḥmad al-Barbīr’s grandfather was named Ahmad al-Sharīf al-Barbīr. The family was known by the surname al-Qaḥf until one family member began to work as a barber and doctor (a single profession at the time), and assumed the name al-Barbīr, an Arabized form of the Italian word for barber (barbiere). For more on his family, see: Ḥasan Ikṣandar al-Maʿīf, “ʿAl-Sayyid Aḥmad al-Barbīr,” Al-ʾAḥār 3, no. 8 (May 1914): 342; Ṭaha al-Walī, “ʿAl-Shaykh Aḥmad al-Barbīr: Muftī Bayrūṭ,” Al-Fiṣr al-Islāmī 3, no. 3 (March 1972): 23-4.

⁵⁴ Damietta and other large towns in the Egyptian Delta witnessed an influx of Syrian and Greek merchants in this period as France competed with Venice for control of trade with Europe. In 1769, with the support of the French, Mikhāʾil Fakhir and Yūsuf Bīṭr, two Syrian emigres, took control of the customs in Alexandria and Damietta, respectively. More broadly, the mid-eighteenth century witnessed an increase in competition in the commercial sector, a growth of private property (some of which was waqf land), and a rise in the value of Egyptian agricultural land as the global demand for rice grew. Gran, Islamic Roots of Capitalism, 9, 11, 26-27.

Barbīr was likely written after 1781, when al-Barbīr left Beirut to take up residence in Damascus, and perhaps before 1791, the year which witnessed the passing of one of al-Barbīr's most influential hosts and benefactors, the Damascene muftī Muḥammad Khalīl bin ‘Ālī al-Murādī. The little we know of the history of the manuscript indicates that long passages were plagiarized by Rīfāʾī Rāfīʾ al-Ṭahtaʾwī (d. 1873),⁵⁶ itself suggesting it may have been acquired and brought to Egypt by al-Ṭahtaʾwī's teacher, Ḥasan al-ʾAṭṭār (d. 1835).⁵⁷

As a boy in the 1750s, al-Barbīr studied Qurʾān with Shaykh Qāsim bin Dāwūd in Damietta.⁵⁸ By the age of twelve, he had memorized Ibn Mālik's thousand-line poem on Arabic grammar, the Alfiyya, and begun to study Ibn 'Aqīl’s commentary on that text with a certain Shaykh 'Abd al-Ḥayy “Fath Allāh” al-Bayrūṭī. Hinting at al-Barbīr’s feelings toward Beirut, one scholar claims that ‘Abd al-Ḥayy is the only Beirutī to receive al-Barbīr’s praise.⁵⁹ By the following year, al-Barbīr began to compose love poetry. Al-Barbīr’s education continued in Cairo, although precisely when and under what circumstances he moved to the Egyptian capital remains unknown. He studied the exegetical and jurisprudential works of the Shāfi‘i scholar Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Baydawī (d. 685/1286), the hadīth collection Jamʿ al-Jawāmiʿ by Jalāl al-Dīn al-Šuyūṭī (d. 911/1505), and works on rhetoric, logic, poetry, and grammar.⁶⁰

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⁵⁷ Given that al-Barbīr died in 1811, when al-Ṭahtaʾwī was only ten years old, one plausible explanation for al-Ṭahtaʾwī's knowledge of Maqāmāt al-Barbīr is that his teacher al-ʾAṭṭār acquired al-Barbīr's text during his time in Damascus and brought it back to Egypt. This line of inquiry deserves further pursuit.


⁶⁰ Al-Barbīr read al-Bayḍawī's exegesis of the Qurʾān, Anwār al-tanzīl wa ʾsrāʾī al-taʿwīl, as well as work of jurisprudence entitled Minhāj al-wusūl ilā ʾīlm al-ḥadīth with a shaykh named al-Shams Muḥammad al-Dānḥāyī (or al-Dānḥāyī). Al-Barbīr studied three further works of exegesis with Muṣṭafā al-Maḥallī “al-Saqāqī”: al-Qaṣāqī’s (d. 1041/1631) autocommentary on his work of theology, Jawharat al-tauḥīd, al-Hudūdī’s commentary on Muḥammad al-Santūsī’s (d. 895/1490) Al-Aqīda al-sughrā wa ʾĪṣām al-Dīn bin Ibrāhīm bin Muḥammad Allī’s commentary on al-Samarqandī’s Risālat al-istiʿārāt. He studied al-Šuyūṭī’s Jamʿ al-jawāmiʿ with a certain shaykh ‘Abd al-Salām Abī l-Naṣr. With the same Shaykh ‘Abd al-Ḥayy mentioned above, al-Barbīr read a work on rhetoric entitled Mukhtaṣar al-maʾānī of Saʿd al-Dīn al-Taftāzānī (d.
In 1770, al-Barbūr travelled to Mount Lebanon. He was disappointed by Beirut, as we know from his invective poetry. In particular, he found the elites of the city to lack piety and sophistication, a sentiment that he echoes in his Maqāmāt. In multiple poems, he mocked the shaykhs for their beards, observing caustically that, like the billy goat (al-tais), their endowment of wisdom did not equal their endowment of hair. In another poem, he compared the people of Beirut to “small birds” (bughāth) led by a vanguard of vultures (rakham) and insects (hām), riding the winds of worldly pleasure. Numerous sources report the following couplet:

Beirut is a graveyard of knowledge and a pit that appears to the wise as hellfire.

Many a scholar has died from its hassle and seen there the angels who inquire.

لها فضاء مسجد لربك معلوم
آدماً، في أشهر سعداء

793/1390), a versified treatise on logic entitled Al-Sullam al-munawraq fi fann al-mantiq of ’Abd al-Rahmān al-Akhdarī (d. 953/1545), and Tajrid al-khaṭīb of Ibn Qāsim [?]. Likewise, with al-Shīhāb ʿAbbād al-Bustānī al-Dimyaṭī, al-Barbūr studied poetic meter (al-ʿarīḍ wa-l-farāʿ d) and another commentary on Ibn Mālik’s Al-Fīyya, this one by Abū ʿAbd al-Aṣmūnī (d. 929/1464).


In Beirut, al-Barbir married a woman from the Hantas family; however, they divorced soon after without any children. Al-Barbir left Beirut and travelled for the first time to Damascus, likely before or in 1773. While we do not know precisely when al-Barbir first arrived in Damascus, he returned to Beirut in 1775, when Damascus was threatened by the military campaign of the Egyptian Mamluk Muḥammad Bik Abī l-Dhahab (d. 1775).

Upon his return to Mount Lebanon, Emir Yūsuf al-Shihābī (r. 1770-1789) requested that al-Barbir serve as both qāḍī (judge) and muftī (jurisprudent) of Beirut. This encounter provides a clear indication of al-Barbir’s relationship to the Shihābī Court, which by the turn of the nineteenth century will come to serve as the primary source of patronage for *maqāma* authors until its collapse in 1840. At first al-Barbir declined Emir Yūsuf’s request, but he ultimately accepted the position upon four conditions. The first three limit the Emir’s power to controvert the authority of the court. The fourth exempts al-Barbir from wearing the turban (‘imāma) and the wide-sleeved robe (farajiyya) that distinguish judges from other members of the educated class (‘ulamā’). Through these conditions, al-Barbir simultaneously restricted the Emir’s ability to seek exemption from the law while asserting his own violation of sartorial custom. Multiple

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68 They stipulate that the Emir: (1) not interfere in nor delay the implementation of al-Barbir’s rulings; (2) enforce rulings in cases between the Emir himself and a “normal citizen” (aḥad al-muwāṣātīn al-ʿādiyyin) in which the court found in favor of the latter; (3) appoint a deputy to ensure that all court expenses were paid.

biographers have claimed that al-Barbîr established these conditions to establish a pretext to resign in the likely situation that Emir Yûsuf violated them.\footnote{Muhammad al-Ṭayyân, “Introduction,” in \textit{Maqáma fî l-Mafâkhara Bayna L-Mâ’ Wa’l-Hawâ} (Beirut: Dâr al-Bashâ’ir al-Islâmiyya, 2000), 12; Dimashqiyya, “\textit{Tarjamat al-Mu’allîf},” 14.}

Much like his complaints about Beirut, al-Barbîr composed verse complaining of the burdens of the judgeship:

We were just and did not stray
and judged by God’s decree.
But of our rulings they complained
and rare it is to find one who, with the court, is happy\footnote{In this poem, al-Barbîr employs the binary of outward appearance and inner truth (\textit{zâhir} and \textit{bāṭîn}) to claim that while the judgeship appears to be a source of glory (\textit{’izz}) and power (\textit{su’dûd}), in truth it is humiliation and hardship (\textit{al-dhnûl wa-l-îbhîlû}). For the text, see al-Wâlî, “Al-Shaykh Aḥmad al-Barbîr,” \textit{Al-Fikr Al-Islâmi} 3, no. 4 (April 1972): 34–35; Dimashqiyya, “\textit{Tarjamat al-Mu’allîf},” 14; Al-Ma’lûf, “Al-Sayyid Aḥmad Al-Barbîr,” 344.}

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In other verses composed in the same period, he describes the judgeship as “a position of grief” (\textit{waẓîfatu karbin}) that turns friends into enemies.\footnote{In this poem, al-Barbîr employs the binary of outward appearance and inner truth (\textit{zâhir} and \textit{bāṭîn}) to claim that while the judgeship appears to be a source of glory (\textit{’izz}) and power (\textit{su’dûd}), in truth it is humiliation and hardship (\textit{al-dhnûl wa-l-îbhîlû}). For the text, see al-Wâlî, “Al-Shaykh Aḥmad al-Barbîr,” \textit{Al-Fikr Al-Islâmi} 3, no. 4 (April 1972): 34–35; Dimashqiyya, “\textit{Tarjamat al-Mu’allîf},” 14; Al-Ma’lûf, “Al-Sayyid Aḥmad Al-Barbîr,” 344.}

According to ‘Isâ Iskandar Ma’lûf, al-Barbîr recited these and similar poems in “every majlis and gathering”, complaining of and disparaging his position with undisguised bitterness.\footnote{Al-Ma’lûf, “\textit{Al-’Qaḍā’ fi Luhmân},” 570.} Despite al-Barbîr’s dissatisfaction, Ma’lûf reads \textit{laghî} rather than \textit{bi-ghayin} in the first line.
claims to have found ample archival evidence of the mufti’s competence in carrying out his duties, his sympathy with the oppressed (inšāf), and his commitment to justice.⁷⁴

Emir Yusuf did not heed al-Barbīr’s repeated requests to resign. In response, al-Barbīr composed a longer and more explicit ode in which he asked to be released from his duties.⁷⁵ In a sign of the male homosociality at the heart of literary exchanges in this period, al-Barbīr addressed Emir Yusuf as “my brother” before accusing him of falling into error or transgression (wa ašbahta fī l-zulm). Ma`lūf writes that al-Barbīr recited the poem aloud to Emir Yusuf, suggesting that poetry (and the literary more broadly) was not only a means of self-expression and a demonstration of literary prowess, but also a site for negotiations over more mundane matters. Upon hearing the recitation, the emir was (at least in Ma`lūf's dramatic retelling), “struck with a tremor and humility, and his heart softened and he was overcome with tears.”⁷⁶

Apparently moved by strong emotion and a sense of remorse for his coercive appointment, Emir Yusuf released al-Barbīr from the position and granted him a stipend.

Al-Barbīr, in turn, thanked the Emir and praised his generosity and wisdom in verse:

Our Emir is more generous than Ḥātim,⁷⁷

his open fingers make the sky seem clenched.

Through his wisdom I attained my wish,

And God has spared me the evil of the judge's bench.⁷⁸

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⁷⁴ Al-Ma’lūf, “Al-Qaḍā’ fī Lubnān,” 570-571. Al-Ma’lūf, unfortunately, does not indicate where he found the rulings (akhām), legal opinions (fatwāwā), and documents (wathā’iq) upon which he bases these assertions, although it is likely that some indication of their location and nature will be found in the newly-acquired al-Ma’lūf collection at AUB.


⁷⁷ This is a reference to Ḥātim bin ʿAbdallāh bin Sa’d bin al-Ḥashraj, a figure proverbial for his generosity. See ʿAlī al-Maydānī, Majma’ al-Amthāl (Cairo: ʿIsā al-Bābī al-Halabī wa Shirkāhu, 1978), 1:326, #977.

Released from his responsibilities, al-Barbîr founded a school (kuttâb) for children, continued his work as a tutor, and devoted himself to literary writing. Al-Barbîr's most prominent student was ʿAbd al-Laṭîf bin ʿAlî “Fatḥ Allâh” (~1766 - 1844), who would become the muftî of Beirut and a well-known poet in his own right. 79 Al-Barbîr had a number of other students in Beirut, 80 perhaps including the children of the Shihâbî court poet and fellow maqâma author Niqûlî al-Turk (d. 1828), who is discussed in the next section. 81 ʿAbd al-Laṭîf was thirteen years old when he began to study with al-Barbîr, in approximately 1779. In the introduction (khūṭba) of his Dîwān, ʿAbd al-Laṭîf credits al-Barbîr not only with teaching him meter and rhyme, but with inspiring his love of poetry. 82 In 1781, two years after al-Barbîr began to tutor ʿAbd al-Laṭîf, Beirut was attacked by Russian “pirates” (qarāsîna rûs), causing many


80 They include the sons of two powerful landowning Druze families, Shāhîn Talhûq and Qâsim bin Bashîr Jumbliṭ, to the latter of whom al-Barbîr dedicated his Qasīdâ bâdîʿ iyya. Al-Barbîr also taught and maintained a poetic exchange (mṭâraḥât) with the Greek Catholic Mîkhâil al-Bâhirî. Al-Wâlí, “Al-Shaykh Ahmad al-Barbîr,” Al-Fikr al-Islâmî 3, no. 7 (July 1972): 55-56.

81 It is al-Wâlí who makes this claim, based on his reading of a letter which al-Turk sent to his friend and fellow court poet Butrus Karâma in 1227/1812. The letter announces the birth of al-Turk’s son Fatḥ Allâh and asks Karâma to prepare a feast (ʿaṭīqa) and send money to those who are unable to attend, including al-Barbîr. See Fâʾûd al-Bustânî (ed.), Dîwān al-muʾallim Niqûlî al-Turk (Beirut: Lebanese University, 1970), 1:71-2; Al-Wâlí, “Al-Shaykh Aḥmad al-Barbîr: Muftî Bayrût,” Al-Fikr al-Islâmî 3, no. 7 (July 1972): 56.

people to flee — including al-Barbir, who fled “the graveyard of knowledge” for the verdant and cosmopolitan city of Damascus. In a powerful autobiographical parallel, both the author and the narrator of *Maqāmāt al-Barbir* journey from Mount Lebanon to Damascus.

Eighteenth-century Damascus has been the object of a number of recent studies, allowing us to situate al-Barbir and his *maqāmāt* within the intellectual and social environment of that time. Drawing on chronicles and diaries composed by six different figures over the course of the eighteenth century, Samer Akkach describes Damascus as a site of “the culture of leisure and entertainment” (*tḥaqāfat al-tanazzuh wa-l-tarḥīf*). Bruce Masters, in a study of four of these same chronicles, argues that they all see the city of Damascus “as the central stage” for their narratives.

James Grehan offers socio-economic nuance to these assertions by describing the material conditions for Damscenes on both sides of the “gulf between rich and poor” — a gulf he describes as “enormous”. Tracing patterns in diet, trade, and the simmering political tensions over the distribution of nutrients, Grehan paints a portrait of a city where cycles of severe want co-existed with remarkable luxury. While the lower classes made do with modest nutritional supplements to a diet centered on bread, well-to-do households enjoyed luxuries such as meat

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84. This is particularly salient example of how the ostensibly fictional genre of the *maqāma* contains important traces not only of autobiography, but accounts of rulers, structures of rule, patterns of social life, and cultural practices. The patently autobiographical dimensions of *Maqāmāt al-Barbir* challenge us to reconsider whether, and in what ways, the *maqāma* can be said to be strictly fictional or imaginative literature.


(which “advertised social status as effectively as riding a horse, sporting fine clothes, or buying a big house”\(^\text{89}\) and confections (“among the quintessential symbols of privilege and easy living”\(^\text{90}\)). The patrons to whom Aḥmad al-Barbīr and his contemporaries addressed their compositions were those who had the economic means and social capital to satisfy material needs in an environment of constantly-threatening want, and to secure not only epicurian but also literary luxuries such as a maqāma.

While Grehan describes Damascus as a “veritable cornucopia,”\(^\text{91}\) Dana Sajdi calls the city a “veritable habitat” through which she traces the emergence of chroniclers from marginal social classes into elite literary culture. Through the story of Ibn Budayr, one of the six chroniclers studied by Akkach, Sajdi traces the social world of Damascus in its diversity:

[Damascus] is home to all kinds of people: notables, scholars, merchants, soldiers, mystics, shopkeepers, prostitutes, possessed individuals. It is a city where natural and divine grace abound, but it is also a place of mysterious murders and curious suicides, of immoral revelry and marital infidelities.\(^\text{92}\)

For Sajdi, Ibn Budayr's perception of the spreading vice is one aspect of his reaction to a broader “reshuffling of the social topography”.\(^\text{93}\) This reshuffling, which Sajdi also calls the “disorder of the new order,” includes the loosening of religious bonds, the spread of leisure activities such as smoking and drinking coffee, and dramatic increases in the mixing of genders, religious groups,

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and social classes in the new public spaces such as gardens and coffeeshops where such activities took place. Ibn Budayr, for instance, complains that Jewish musicians are seated on higher stools than their Muslim audience — a tangible symbol of the disruption of the social hierarchy.94

Another chronicler, the Greek Orthodox priest Mikhā‘il Burayk, whose chronicle covers the period from 1720 until 1782, attributes bold new sartorial fashions and acts of drinking alcohol and smoking in the emerging public spaces to what Sajdi calls a “misreading” by women of the increased recognition and “recently ameliorated status of Christians” in the Empire.95

Alongside this social upheaval, periodic economic and political grievances over the perceived manipulation of grain prices brought both peaceful protests and paroxysms of violence between ruling elites, competing military factions, and desperate commoners throughout eighteenth-century Damascus.96 Taken together, the social, economic, and political upheavals were understood by many contemporary chroniclers to signal a period of crisis and decline, which al-Barbir articulates through the maqāma’s trope of dahr or fickle fortune.

New spaces and new attitudes towards space were emerging, Sajdi argues, in this period. The rise of new elite families was accompanied by the construction of “ostentatious” buildings and palaces,97 many of which were located by the Umayyad Mosque in central Damascus. There and elsewhere, al-Barbir studied with a number of notable scholars,98 including the Shāfi‘ī

95 Sajdi, The Barber of Damascus, 80; and Masters, “The View from the Province,” 357-358.
96 Grehan, Everyday Life, 78-92.
98 It appears that al-Barbir’s network of scholars was much wider. He seems to have received a certificate (ijāza) from the Shāfi‘ī hadith scholar Muḥammad al-Kazbarī “al-Ṣaghīr” (d. 1846). Although their accounts differ, see Bīth, Ḥilyat al-bashar, 3:1227–9; and ʿAbd al-Ḥayy Katānī, Fiḥris al-fahāris wa-mu jam al-ma ʿājm wa-l-mushyakhār wa-l-musalsalāt (Beirut: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī, 1982), 1:487. Furthermore, al-Barbir studied with the itinerant South Arabian Sufi and poet ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-ʿAṣwarī (d. 1778), the Azhar-educated Moroccan scholar Muḥammad al-Tāfali (d. 1777), and the hadith scholar Muḥammad al-Bukhārī from Nablus. Al-Shaṭṭī, among others, claims that al-Barbir studied with Muḥammad al-Zabūdī. For details, see al-Wafi, “Al-Shaykh Ahmad Al-Barbir,” Al-Fikr Al-Islāmī 3, no. 7 (July 1972): 54; Al-Maṣūf, “Al-Sayyid Ahmad al-Barbir,” 346; and al-Shaṭṭī, Rawd al-bashar, 23. In addition, Peter Gran claims that al-Barbir studied with Ḥasan al- ʿĀṣīr (d. 1835). Gran, Islamic Roots of Capitalism, 76–91.
scholar Aḥmad al-ʻAṭṭār (d. 1803)\textsuperscript{99} and the Ḥanafi scholars Ḥusayn al-Mudarris (d. 1805)\textsuperscript{100} and Muṣṭafā bin ʻAbd al-Wahhāb al-Salāḥī (d. 1849).\textsuperscript{101} Sajdi sees the new buildings as part of a wider phenomenon of public display, in which “eighteenth-century Damascenes, Muslim or not, men or not, rich or not, seemed to spend — or desire to spend — much of their leisure time in public.”\textsuperscript{102} The sites of such public display are not only varied and classed, but seem to have served different audiences and different types of literary performance. While the coffee shops were a place for the retelling of popular epics, oral storytelling, and musical performance,\textsuperscript{103} and the cemeteries a place for social outings and romantic rendezvous,\textsuperscript{104} gardens and other outdoor spaces served as both picnic sites and “arenas for competition” between poets and intellectuals (ʻulamā\textsuperscript{ī}).\textsuperscript{105}

When al-Barbīr arrived in Damascus, he stayed with Muḥammad Khalīl bin ʻAlī al-Murādī (d. 1791), the Ḥanafi muftī of Damascus.\textsuperscript{106} Al-Murādī was a major intellectual and spiritual figure of the time, from “one of the most venerable Damascene families” and hence “a legitimate arbiter of the cultural elite.”\textsuperscript{107} Al-Murādī's hospitality not only endeared al-Barbīr to the city, but indicates the extent to which al-Barbīr's literary ambitions were tied to the system of patronage and what Sajdi calls its “base,” the elite household.\textsuperscript{108} Al-Murādī would host

\textsuperscript{99} Bīṭār, Hīyāt al-bāshār, 1:239–41.
\textsuperscript{100} Bīṭār, Hīyāt al-bāshār, 1:249.
\textsuperscript{102} Sajdi, The Barber of Damascus, 20.
\textsuperscript{103} Sajdi, The Barber of Damascus, 74-76.
\textsuperscript{104} Sajdi, The Barber of Damascus, 29-30.
\textsuperscript{105} Sajdi, The Barber of Damascus, 53.
\textsuperscript{107} Sajdi, The Barber of Damascus, 61. Al-Murādī composed a number of biographical dictionaries, the two most important of which are: Silāk al-durār fī ʻayn al-qarn al-thālith ʻashar and Arf al-baṣham fi man waṣīya waṭwā Darāsh al-Shām. For a reading of Silāk al-durār, see Sajdi, The Barber of Damascus, 57-60. For al-Murādī's biography, see Bīṭār, Hīyāt al-bāshār, 3:1393ff; and Bīk, A’yān al-qarn al-thālith ʻashr, 229-230.
\textsuperscript{108} Sajdi, The Barber of Damascus, 18-9.
gatherings at which al-Barbîr was introduced to scholars, littérateurs, and social elites of the city. To express his gratitude, al-Barbîr composed a number of panegyrics to al-Murâdî, dedicated two further works to his host and patron, and mentions the al-Murâdî family by name in his Maqâmât.\textsuperscript{109}

Al-Barbîr also entered the circle of another patron, Muḥammad Pasha al-ʿAzm (d. 1783), the Ottoman governor of the Damascus vilayat from 1773 until his death a decade later. Al-ʿAzm would host shaykhs and littérateurs in his house multiple times a week, where they would discuss matters of jurisprudence and theology, and exchange literary vignettes (\textit{al-ṭuraf al-adabîyya}) and poetic riddles (\textit{al-nukat al-shiʿîyya}).\textsuperscript{110} Al-Barbîr composed his most well-known work, \textit{Al-Shârḥ al-jâlî}, at al-ʿAzm's request.\textsuperscript{111}

Once al-Barbîr left al-Murâdî's home, he moved to the suburban neighborhood of al-Ŝâliḥîyya outside of Damascus.\textsuperscript{112} In contrast to Beirut, al-Barbîr praised many aspects of Damascus: from the sweetness of its grapes to the beauty of its gardens.\textsuperscript{113} He also interacted with a considerable number of other scholars, as discussed above. Beyond his scholarly life, al-Barbîr married again, this time to a woman from the al-Ŝalâhî family.\textsuperscript{114} From his poetry, historians have suggested he may have had daughters who died young.\textsuperscript{115} Aside from a trip to Tripoli in the Levant and a pilgrimage to Mecca in 1788, it seems al-Barbîr spent the last

\textsuperscript{109} The first of these two works, \textit{Al-Muhâkama bayna al-mâʾ wa-l-hawâʾ}, is often described as a \textit{maqâma} (likely in the style of al-Suyûṭî). The second text was \textit{Iqtibâs ayy al-Qurʾân fî madhī ʿayn al-ʿaʾyān}. Al-Qâyûṭî, \textit{Naḥf al-bashām}, 116; Bīṭrî, \textit{Hīyat al-bashār}, 102.

\textsuperscript{110} Al-Wâlî, “Al-Shaykh Ahmad al-Barbîr,” \textit{Al-Fîkh al-Islāmî} 3, no. 6 (June 1972): 11.

\textsuperscript{111} Al-Barbîr offers extensive praise of his patron and then explains the request which led to his composition. See Ahmad al-Barbîr, \textit{Kitâb al-Shârḥ al-jâlî ʿalā baytay al-Mawsîli} (Beirut: al-Maṭbaʿa al-Adabiyya, 1302 AH [1884 or 1885]), 12-17ff.

\textsuperscript{112} For a social and economic history of al-Ŝâliḥîyya, see Toru Miura, \textit{Dynamism in the Urban Society of Damascus: The Šâliḥîyya Quarter from the Twelfth to the Twentieth Centuries} (Leiden: Brill, 2015); esp. 205-279.

\textsuperscript{113} For a selection of praise poetry, see Wâlî, “Al-Shaykh Ahmad al-Barbîr,” \textit{Al-Fîkh al-Islāmî} 3, no. 5 (May 1972): 18-23.

\textsuperscript{114} As with his first wife, it has been difficult to ascertain details of al-Barbîr's second marriage. Al-Wâlî, “Al-Shaykh Ahmad al-Barbîr,” \textit{Al-Fîkh al-Islāmî} 3, no. 5 (May 1972): 18; Al-Maʿlûf, “Al-Sayyid Ahmad Al-Barbîr,” 346.

\textsuperscript{115} Al-Maʿlûf, “Al-Sayyid Ahmad Al-Barbîr,” 346.
decades of his life in Damascus, dying in that city on 12 Dhū l-Hijja, 1226 or December 27, 1811.116

Given the *maqāma*’s reflexivity and al-Barbīr’s penchant for autobiography, it is not surprising that *Maqāmāt al-Barbīr* provides a rich portrait of the site, mode, and audience of *maqāma* composition in late eighteenth century Damascus. As we will see in detail in the coming chapters, the narrator of *Maqāmāt al-Barbīr* makes mention of the literary salons and other gatherings much like those hosted by al-ʿĀzm. Moreover, he describes the social classes of elite Damascus, articulates his own position (and perhaps aspects of the position of his author) vis a vis the contentious issues of moral decline and decadence in the last decades of the eighteenth century, and offers explicit praise at multiple points for the values of hospitality and generosity embodied by al-Murādī and other elite patrons. Taken together, it is reasonable to conclude that *Maqāmāt al-Barbīr* was written to be read by the author's patrons and their extended circles of literary and perhaps spiritual elites. At one hundred manuscript pages, it is the longest *maqāma* I have ever encountered by a factor of at least five, suggesting that it was less likely that the author composed the text with the intention of reciting it aloud before his patrons.

The same cannot be said, however, for the next generation of *maqāma* authors, for whom recitation played a vital role in the poet-patron relationship. It is to one such author, Niqūlā al-Turk, to whom we now turn.

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1.2 Niqūlā al-Turk's Panegyrical *Maqāmāt* in the Shihābī Court

Niqūlā al-Turk was born in the town of Dayr al-Qamar in 1763 and died there in 1828.

The town was the provincial capital of the Shihābī emirate, located in the Shūf Mountains about twenty kilometers to the south east of Beirut. Al-Turk was one of the foremost poets serving in Emir Bāshīr al-Shihābī's court; his poetry and, more germane for our purposes, his *maqāmāt*, were composed for his patron and offer rich portraits of the political, social, and natural world of Mount Lebanon in the early decades of the nineteenth century. While the political history of the Shihābī Emirs, who ruled Mount Lebanon from 1697 until 1841, has been recorded and studied, this section attempts to reconstruct the textual practices of their court (*balāʿ*), which may have valuable and previously unexplored implications for the historiography of the *Nahda*.

Niqūlā al-Turk's father, Yūṣuf, was of Greek descent and had migrated to Dayr al-Qamar from Istanbul; a trace of his Ottoman origins is likely preserved in his family name, “al-Turk”.

Although little is known about Niqūlā al-Turk's early years, numerous scholars have noted that his title, *muʿallīm* (“teacher”), suggests that he tutored the children of some of the powerful families in Dayr al-Qamar in subjects such as reading and calligraphy. From Mount Lebanon, al-Turk travelled to Egypt in September 1789, at the age of 26, to establish connections with

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117 Dayr al-Qamar had been a political center of Mount Lebanon since Fakhr al-Dīn al-Maʿn II (r. 1590-1633), who “was the first to beautify the town with fountains, marble courts, mansions, and a palace or serai of Italian inspiration.” The town served as the capital of the subsequent Maʿn rulers and the Shihābī dynasty that replaced them in 1697, in part due to its advantageous location between Sidon on the coast, the Syrian hinterlands, and Damascus, where the town and its people could profit from the trade of silk, grain, and livestock. Leila Tarazi Fawaz, *An Occasion for War* (London: I.B. Tauris & Co., 1994), 37.


fellow members of the Melkite Greek Catholic church, to which his family converted in the early eighteenth century. These co-religionists were largely Levantine émigrés who had established themselves in Egypt as traders and government bureaucrats (kuttāb al-dawāwīn), much like the family of Āḥmad al-Barbīr. Al-Turk also forged relationships with Egyptian and foreign notables, composing verse to celebrate their marriages and the birth of their children, praise their accomplishments, and commemorate their lives.

When Napoleon invaded Egypt in 1798, Emir Bashīr (the cousin and successor of Emir Yūsuf mentioned above) enlisted al-Turk to gather information on the French army, first from Cairo and then from Damietta, and report on their movements, numbers, and preparations. In this way, al-Turk first served his patron not as a poet but as a spy. Ever the politician's poet, al-Turk composed a panegyric to Napoleon upon his conquest of Cairo in 1798, an elegy for the French General Jean-Baptise Kléber, who was assassinated in Cairo in 1800, and a commemoration of the French appointment of Yūsuf Bāshā al-Ma’dānī as governor upon their departure. Al-Turk's reports, presumably enriched by the information his flattery helped him to acquire, were carried on the dangerous overland route through the territory controlled by the governor of Acre (’Akka), Aḥmad Pāshā al-Jazzār (d. 1804). These reports formed the basis of

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123 Al-Bustānī, Diwān al-mu’āllim Niqūlā al-Turk, 468.
124 Al-Bustānī, Diwān al-mu’āllim Niqūlā al-Turk, 469.
125 This route exposed the messengers and perhaps one of al-Turk's siblings to danger. Al-Bustānī discusses his reservations about a report by Alexander Cardin which claims that al-Jazzār killed one of al-Turk's siblings in response to this illicit traffic in information. Al-Bustānī, Diwān al-mu’āllim Niqūlā al-Turk, vol. 1, page “jīm”, fn. 2.
126 When Napoleon subsequently invaded the Sinai Peninsula and the Levant, al-Turk's reports became all the more significant for his patron, who was weighing the merits of shifting his allegiance from al-Jazzār, besieged in Acre, to the quickly-approaching forces of Napoleon.
al-Turk's subsequent history of the French occupation of Egypt and Napoleon, as well as histories of other prominent political figures of his day.  

127 Al-Turk remained in Egypt until 1804, when he returned to Dayr al-Qamar in Mount Lebanon. There he stayed, serving in Emir Bashīr's court as a scribe, poet, and companion until his death in 1828.  

Emir Bashīr ruled over Mount Lebanon from 1789 until 1840 from his court in Dayr al-Qamar. While in the words of one prominent historian, Emir Bashīr's position was that of “a mere fiscal functionary of the Ottoman state,” he consolidated and expanded his rule both geographically and administratively far beyond that of his predecessors.  

129 With the wealth and power he accumulated, Emir Bashīr “revived Arabic adab in his age,” in the historian Mārūn ʿAbbūd's prescient words. ʿAbbūd sees this revival as “motivated by [Emir Bashīr's] natural munificence and his ambitions to reinforce his Emirate and heighten his reputation.”  

130 To these ends, the Emir retained a number of court poets, most prominent among them being Niqūlā al-Turk, Buṭrus Karāma, and Nāṣīf al-Yāzījī. These men composed poetry and maqāmāt, in some cases to commemorate their patron's military victories and political triumphs in verse and prose. They also served Emir Bashīr in myriad other roles, from spies to scribes, boon companions to

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128 Ḫāṣī Ṣikandar al-Ma'lufl notes that al-Turk developed close ties with many prominent figures of his day: the historian Emir Ḥaydar al-Shihābī, ʿAlī Jumblāt, ʿAlī Bīk al-As'ād al-Ma'ābī, the governor of Acre Sulaymān Bāshā, and the mu'allim Ḥāyam Fārūḥī, among others. Ḫāṣī Ṣikandar Ma'lufl, “Ṭawārikh al-Imbarāṭir Napoleon Bonaparte,” 288.  

129 He issued harsh punishments for crimes, sponsored the Islamic legal education of young men, granted relative autonomy of village leaders to manage their affairs, and extended refuge in Mount Lebanon to hundreds of Druze near Aleppo and Roman Catholics living there and in Damascus. Ṣalībī, A House of Many Mansions, 67-68, 109.  

130 The great insight of ʿAbbūd's account is that he sees through the Nahāda discourse of stagnation and identifies Emir Bashīr's court as a site of literary vitality (perhaps a better term than “revival”). Ṣārūwān Ṣabbūād, Rāwwād al-Nahāda al-ḥaditha (Beirut: Dār al-Thaqāfā, 1966), 66. Iliya Harīk makes a similar argument about the “literary revival” in the early nineteenth century, but asserts that it “gave [the name Mount Lebanon] an emotional and patriotic content, reflecting the early stirrings of national consciousness among the Lebanese.” Iliya Harīk, Politics and Change in a Traditional Society: Lebanon, 1711-1845, (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1968), 17.
political advisors.\textsuperscript{131}

Under Emir Bashîr, the town of Dayr al-Qamar flourished, becoming “the most prosperous centre in the Mountain [i.e. Mount Lebanon]”.\textsuperscript{132} There grew a community of merchants and moneylenders, as well as industrial workers and artisans who labored in the flour mills, silk workshops, and the soap factory.\textsuperscript{133} Olive cultivation increased, as did the farming of grains and fruits, the cultivation of berry trees, and the raising of silkworms in the villages and the coast.\textsuperscript{134} This prosperity led to a population boom, from 4,000 at the beginning of the nineteenth century to between 7,000 and 10,000 by mid-century.\textsuperscript{135}

These economic transformations disproportionately favored Maronite merchants of what Fruma Zachs calls an emerging “middle stratum” over the land-owning Druze families that held Ottoman tax-farming rights, known in class rather than sectarian terms as the \textit{muqāṭījī} families.\textsuperscript{136} Over the course of the early nineteenth century, shortly after his possible conversion to Christianity,\textsuperscript{137} Emir Bashîr stripped many of the powerful Druze families of their right to collect Ottoman state taxes (the \textit{mīrī}), arrogating that right to himself, his close family members,

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{131} In one case, Buṭrus Karâma was even tasked with arranging to assassinate a thief named Abû Râfî` `All. Emir Bashîr orders Buṭrus Karâma to bring Abû Râfî` `All's brother, Ḥasan, to the court, where he is enticed to murder his brother with a promise of a thousand piasters and a position among the emir's cavalry. Fuʻād al-Bustâni, \textit{`Alâ `ahd al-amîr} (Beirut: Manshûrât al-Dâ`ira, 1984), 97-98.
\item \textsuperscript{133} Fawaz, \textit{An Occasion for War}, 38. By the mid-nineteenth century, the silk industry in Dayr al-Qamar boasted 120 looms distributed across many small workshops.
\item \textsuperscript{134} The surrounding area was changing as well. The school of `Ayn Waraqa in Ghûštā was transformed from a religious seminary to a cultural center. In 1823, the American Protestant missionaries arrived and soon established their seminary in Abey, and in 1831 the Jesuits followed suit. In 1834, the American Press was moved to Beirut from Malta, and could print the Arabic letters connected. The first mission of medical students that Emir Bashîr had sent to the Qasr al-`Aynî Institute in Cairo returned to practice medicine in Mount Lebanon.
\item \textsuperscript{135} Fawaz, \textit{An Occasion for War}, 39-40. In addition to attracting traders, Dayr al-Qamar was a haven for those seeking asylum from the oppression of Ottoman authorities.
\item \textsuperscript{136} Zachs, “Commerce and Merchants,” 54.
\end{itemize}
and his vassals.\textsuperscript{138} By 1821, three years before Nāṣīf al-Yāžījī composed his first panegyric for Emir Bashīr,\textsuperscript{139} the Emir had succeeded in extending the area over which he had the authority to levy taxes (his iltizām) to the whole of Mount Lebanon, including not only the Druze territory of the Shūf but the predominately Maronite regions to the north.\textsuperscript{140}

As Carol Hakim argues, Emir Bashīr's campaigns against the Druze political families and their Maronite allies shifted the demographic balance in Mount Lebanon, reorganizing patronage networks and reshaping political allegiance around confessional identity.\textsuperscript{141} To solidify his political base among the Maronite communities, Emir Bashīr solicited the support of the Maronite Patriarch Yūsuf Ḥubaysh, creating an official link between the Emir’s court and the Maronite Church.\textsuperscript{142} These broad changes led to a series of peasant rebellions from the 1820s until the 1860s, contributing to further demographic shifts and, in particular, the waves of rural to urban migration that caused the population of Beirut to “dramatically expand” beyond the city walls.\textsuperscript{143}

With the wealth he accumulated, Emir Bashīr completed the construction of what Kamal Salibi describes as a “magnificent” new palace called Bayt al-Dīn in 1811, situated across the verdant valley from Dayr al-Qamar.\textsuperscript{144} The palace was designed by Italian architects, marble

\textsuperscript{138} Zachs, “Commerce and Merchants,” 59-60.
\textsuperscript{139} ʿĪsā Sābī, Al-Shaykh Nāṣīf Al-Yāžījī (Cairo, Egypt: Dār al-Maʿārif, 1965), 11; for the full text of the poem, see 87-88.
\textsuperscript{140} Zachs, “Commerce and Merchants,” 59. Emir Bashīr also owned and rented out many properties in Dayr al-Qamar, imposed “taxes” on silk looms, and charged merchant families to rent scales for weighing wheat, heavy goods, and silk.
\textsuperscript{142} The expression of nascent nationalism in confessional terms, a political transformation begun under Emir Bashīr, endured despite the Emir’s defeat in 1840. As early as October of 1840, in the political vacuum left by Bashir II’s flight, his former ally the Maronite Patriarch, Yūsuf Ḥubaysh, articulated what Hakim argues is the first expression of a “Lebanist ideal,” namely, calling for a self-ruling political entity in Mount Lebanon, justified by “an idealized portrayal” of the history of Maronite autonomy. While Ḥubaysh’s plan did not succeed, it demonstrates the spread of new conceptions of political identity. In the following year, 1841, the first war between the Maronite and Druze communities broke out in Mount Lebanon. Hakim, The Origins of the Lebanese National Idea, 28-30.
\textsuperscript{144} Salibi, A House of Many Mansions, 108.
workers from Istanbul, Aleppo, and Damascus, and local artisans such as Rustum and Yūsuf Majāʾīṣ. It had an administrative center (sarāy), women’s quarters (dār al-ḥarīm), wings for officials and soldiers, and baths (ḥammāmāt) in the north east corner. The palace was ornate and surrounded by terraces. A field (mīdān) was cleared before the palace for equestrian competitions, wrestling matches, and military parades. Around the field, there were hundreds of shops by the mid-nineteenth century, as well as a mosque, a school, a police station, and a customs house (makfar al-darāk).  

The palaces of Dayr al-Qamar, and later Bayt al-Dīn, served as central gathering places for Emir Bashīr's band of elite littérateurs. There they would compose poems, deliver speeches, and conduct debates, some of which the Emir would attend. In portraying a spring evening in 1829, the year after Niqūla al-Turk had passed away and Nāṣīf al-Yāzījī had been appointed to the court, Fuʿād al-Bustānī imagines the emir and his retinue (ḥāshiya) retiring from the work of ruling Mount Lebanon in the heavily decorated Hall of Columns (qā’at al-ʿamūd). It is possible that al-Yāzījī was among them. Al-Bustānī describes them heading past the women's quarters to the terrace (called al-Mashraqa) at the back of the Seray in Bayt al-Dīn. The emir would smoke his water pipe and listen to the stories of horsemanship competitions (ḥawādith al-furūsiyya) or refined poetry (raqīq al-ashʿār) recited by Buṭrus Karāma.

Emir Bashīr's litterateurs would also compose elaborate letters, the style of which was carefully tailored to the social status of the addressee within the overlapping hierarchies of authority in and around Mount Lebanon. In addition to composing correspondence for official

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146  This was quite a common scene. At one point, Emir Bashīr is depicted as retiring in the evening to the company (musūlasā) of his loyal men (ʿumānāʾ), where he would listen to their stories of bygone days (al-abādīth al-ghābirā) and narrate stories from his own life, full of proverbs and advice (al-amthāl wa’il-ībar). Fuʿād al-Bustānī, ‘Alāʾ āhd al-amīr, 141.
147  Makdisi, The Culture of Sectarianism, 34-35.
purposes, these poets corresponded with one another. Al-Turk’s dīwān is full of poems and letters sent to friends and peers; in addition to the relatively well-known figures above, al-Turk corresponded with many others, including Aḥmad al-Barbīr. Some of the daughters of these litterateurs wrote as well, as was the case with Niqūlā al-Turk's daughter, Warda al-Turk (1797-1874), as well as Nāṣīf al-Yāzījī's daughter, the poet Warda al-Yāzījī (1838-1924). The two Wardas, in fact, carried on the epistolary practices of their fathers by corresponding with one another in verse.

In Fu‘ād al-Bustānī’s collection, ‘Alā ‘ahd al-amīr (In the Age of the Emir), Emir Bashīr's poets are portrayed as at his side at important moments. In one such testament to the proximity of the poet and the patron, Emir Bashīr turns to Buṭrus Karāma to discuss reports (taḥārūr) brought by a messenger from Damascus. Likewise, when a foreign wrestler comes to Dayr al-Qamar and throws down a challenge, Emir Bashīr instructs Karāma to write to the leaders of the town (mashāyikh al-Dayr) and request that they send their most capable young men to compete. The same proximity is maintained when traveling, as we know from a story in which Karāma rides alongside the Emir at the head of a unit of seventy horsemen. These stories once again reveal the varied roles the poet served, from advisor to secretary to travel companion.

Not far from Bayt al-Dīn, the bustling markets and cafes of Dayr al-Qamar were the site

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151 Fuʿād al-Bustānī, ‘Alā’ ‘ahd al-amīr, 41-2. The messenger is named ‘Ali Ḥabaq (sp?), a young man from Dayr al-Qamar known for his speed. When Emir Bashīr learned of this, he pressed ‘Ali into his service as a messenger (ṣālī). Like the emir’s other messengers, ‘Ali was sent from Dayr al-Qamar to Damascus, Sidon, Tripoli and Acre to relay the emir’s written correspondence with other rulers. He was housed in one of the small rooms below the stairs of the palace (serai) in Bayt al-Dīn where Emir Bashīr could reach him at any hour. The trip to Damascus, it seems, was conducted on foot and took the whole day, from morning until night. For other stories of ‘Ali Ḥabaq, see Fuʿād al-Bustānī, ‘Alā’ ‘ahd al-amīr, 32, 34-6.
of non-elite textuality performed and consumed by *ṣahīfa* pastry sellers, donkey cart drivers, and even an Ottoman soldier. The Ḥāṣbānī brothers offer an example of such non-elite textuality. Bishāra and Jirjis Ḥāṣbānī sold lemonade from large glass jugs they carried on their backs around the markets. They would play brass cymbals in a special tone and call out “cold lemonade, very tasty” (*limūnāda bārida ṭayyiba kathīr*). Jirjis al-Ḥāṣbānī was also a story-teller (*ḥakawātī*) in the coffeeshops, most notably the coffeeshop of the *Midān* market. Each evening, an audience comprised of “the youth” (*al-shabāb*) would gather to hear the stories of Abū Layla al-Muhalhil (d. 531 CE) and ʿAntar bin Shaddād (d. 608 CE). Hinting at a different audience, Jirjis's brother Bishāra al-Ḥāṣbānī told stories in his shop in the Shālūṭ market. He would perform for the cart drivers (*al-ʿarābiyya*) and the muleteers (*al-makāriyya*), all the while serving them coffee and a popular liquor called ʿaraq. At the end of the night, Bishāra would charge them for the drinks and the performance, referred to as the “talk” or “speech” (*al-ḥakī*); al-Bustānī even indicates that Bishāra took customers to court over their refusal to pay for his speech, much like he would if they refused to pay for his coffee or ʿaraq.

The *maqāmāt* of Emir Bashīr's litterateurs were also often performed before a live audience, although the social status of the elite spaces and substantial rewards distinguished them from the non-elite textuality described above. Fuʿād al-Bustānī provides a tangible (if perhaps somewhat fanciful) illustration of one such performance when he attempts to reconstruct what

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154 In this last case, al-Bustānī speaks of illiteracy as a bar to advancement for one Ottoman soldier. In order to sidestep this constraint, this clever soldier makes an agreement with a prisoner to trick the authorities. In this echo of the *maqāma*’s trickster, the soldier conspires to release and then recapture the prisoner. Upon turning in the “escaped” prisoner, the soldier receives his promotion despite his illiteracy while the prisoner presumably garners some unstated benefit from the ruse. Shukrī al-Bustānī, *Dayr al-Qamar*, 21–22.

155 These stories were recited but also performed. Shukrī al-Bustānī reports that Jirjis would unsheathe a sword and act out the scenes of ʿAntara and his foes. For more on pre-Islamic Arabic folklore, see *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed., s.v. “Sīra Ṣuḥaḥāʾ biyya”.

was likely al-Turk's first *maqāma* performance before Emir Bashīr, near the end of 1804. This *maqāma* is aptly titled *al-Dayriyya*, or “The *Maqāma* of Dayr (al-Qamar)”, in recognition of the Shihābī capital in which it was performed (and within which the narrative itself is set). That the site of performance and the setting of the narrative are the same is an instance of the more general phenomenon of reflexivity in this corpus. In addition to the doubling of Dayr al-Qamar, *al-Dayriyya* features a fictional emir who serves as Emir Bashīr's double; an *adīb* named Abū l-Nawādīr, who is Niqūlā al-Turk's double; and an elaborate narrative structure in which multiple, nested layers of textuality are described — and then recited by al-Turk before his patron, Emir Bashīr.

Al-Bustānī's account begins with al-Turk presenting himself before the Emir, who was reclining on a red carpet (*ṭanfasa*) stuffed with ostrich feathers. The arrival of his “special poet” drew the Emir's attention away from a debate among his attendants about who would succeed Āḥmad al-Jazzār (who died in 1804) as the governor of Acre.157 As the audience fell silent, al-Turk began to read *al-Dayriyya* from a sheet of paper. Such an act of reading is a far cry from the eloquence often attributed to the *maqāma*’s *adīb*, who creates extemporaneous compositions on demand and recites long and elaborate works from memory.158 The lettering of the title was distinguished from the body of the episode by its Persian-style (*fārisī*) script, and, we are told, big enough to be read from “far away”.159 Moreover, the Emir's name was visibly distinguished in the written text, indicating that even at a visual level, this text emphasized Dayr al-Qamar as

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157 Al-Turk announced that he had a strange dream, which he interpreted in an even stranger manner in the form of a *maqāma* — much like al-Zamakhshārī's explanation of the origin of his *maqāmāt*, which al-Turk however gives no indication of having read. Fuʿād al-Bustānī, *ʿAlāʾ ʿaḥd al-amīr*, 76-78.

158 There are numerous examples of such extemporaneous composition in al-Turk's *maqāmāt*. See, for instance, *al-Dayriyya* (347), *al-Maghirīyya* (358), *al-Kisrawānīyya* (376), and *al-Shāfīyya* (381).

159 Fuʿād al-Bustānī, *ʿAlāʾ ʿaḥd al-amīr*, 80
the site of performance and Emir Bashîr as the primary audience and object of praise.

Al-Bustânî portrays Emir Bashîr as an active audience member. The Emir, he claims, engaged in the recitation by interrupting al-Turk and promising to fulfill the requests made of his fictive counterpart. Furthermore, al-Bustânî reports that when the adîb praises the fictive Emir within the text, the real-life audience interrupted al-Turk with chants of “long live the Emir”.

When al-Turk finished his recitation, al-Bustânî reports that the Emir congratulated him and ordered a scribe to write him a land deed on the spot. Work on al-Turk's new house, in the style of the Emir's palace (or sarây), we are told, began the next day.

Despite his loyal service while abroad, and his well-rewarded literary talents back home, al-Turk's relationship with Emir Bashîr was fraught with a violence that pitted the poet's political allegiance against his family ties. In 1807, three years after al-Turk had returned to Dayr al-Qamar and recited al-Dayriyya, Emir Bashîr had al-Turk's father executed. The back story is that Emir Bashîr had spent nearly two decades struggling against the three sons of his vanquished predecessor, Emir Yûsuf al-Shihâbî (r. 1770-1789) (who had installed Aḥmad al-Barbîr in the position of muftî). When Emir Bashîr finally got the upper hand, he confiscated his nephews' property, prohibited them from marrying and having children, and had them blinded to ensure they would never contest his authority again. In addition, he executed their regent and guardian.

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160 Fu‘âd al-Bustânî, ʿAlî ʿaḥd al-amîr, 78-82.
161 Fu‘âd al-Bustânî, ʿAlî ʿaḥd al-amîr, 82.
162 This conflict began in 1788 when Emir Bashîr first took his uncle Emir Yûsuf's position as the tax collector (multazim). Although a Maronite Catholic by confession, Emir Bashîr had cultivated the support of the Jumblatt family and the other Druze shaykhs of the Shûf, who supported his bid for the position. Emir Bashîr went to Acre, where the governor al-Jazzûr appointed him as the new multazim and provided him with an army of Albanian and Moroccan conscripts. Emir Bashîr was ordered to oust his uncle from Mount Lebanon and bring him to Acre. Although defeated militarily in the ensuing confrontation, Emir Yûsuf escaped to Hawrân and then to Acre in 1789, where he presented al-Jazzûr with a knotted rope (in a sign of repentance) and offered him six hundred thousand piasters (qarsh) if his authority were reinstated. Emir Bashîr, however, offered al-Jazzûr twice that sum on the condition that the governor have Yûsuf and his advisor al-Ghandûr hung. With his uncle hanging in the gallows, Emir Bashîr returned to Dayr al-Qamar triumphant. For an account of these events, see Tûnnûs al-Shûdûyûq, Akhbûr al-a ʿyân. 1: 98-99, 106. For an overview of the ilhizâm or iqṭa` system, see Fawwaz Traboulsi, A History of Modern Lebanon (London: Pluto Press, 2012), 3-5.
Jirjis Bāz (1768-1807), and hunted down his main supporters.163 Among these supporters was Yūsuf al-Turk, Niqūlā's father. Neither the man’s advanced age, nor his son’s loyal service to Emir Bashīr were enough to save him from execution.164

“This painful event,” Fu’ād al-Bustānī writes, “did not prohibit the poet [Niqūlā al-Turk] from fulfilling his duties in the court of the Emir.”165 As evidence, al-Bustānī points to the substantial number of panegyrics dated to 1807 and the following years. Al-Bustānī notes, however, the absence of any mention of Emir Bashīr's victory over the sons of Emir Yūsuf and their allies in the entirety of al-Turk's two-volume dīwān. This absence is remarkable for a poet who otherwise glorified his patron, and might be read as a striking testament of Niqūlā al-Turk’s conflicting loyalties to his patron and his father.166 His silence is made all the more salient by the fact that another poet, Ilyās Iddah, composed an ode praising Emir Bashīr's victory over Emir Yūsuf's sons and their supporters.167 In al-Turk's dīwān, Yūsuf al-Turk's death is only present in his son's virtual erasure of the rivalry that was responsible for it.

While writing his father's death out of his dīwān, al-Turk wrote his patron, Emir Bashīr, into the tradition of the maqāma by inserting a fictional emir into the narrative. Placing the maqāmāt into a local geography, he also wrote the towns, villages, and regions of Mount Lebanon into that tradition — not only Dayr al-Qamar and Shamasṭār, but al-Mukhtārā in the Shūf, al-Zūq in Kisrawān, the town of Maghīriyya, and the cities of Acre and Sidon, as seen in

164 For a full account, see Ahmad Haydar al-Shihābī, Lubnān fi ’āhād al-‘umarah al-Shihābīyyin, 2:512-515.
165 Fu’ād al-Bustānī, Dīwān al-Muʾallim Niqūlā al-Turk, “bā’”.
166 Fu’ād al-Bustānī speculates that, after the execution of his father, Niqūlā al-Turk likely fled Dayr al-Qamar to take shelter with Emir Bashīr’s ally, Emir Bashīr Jumbliṭ in the nearby town of al-Mukhtārā. Fu’ād al-Bustānī, Dīwān al-Muʾallim Niqūlā al-Turk, “bā’”.
167 Ahmad Haydar al-Shihābī, Lubnān fi ’āhād al-‘umarah al-Shihābīyyin, 2:515-519. For a biography of Ilyās Iddah, see Bik, A’yan al-qarn al-thālihīt ‘asr, 206-207.
Figure 1 below.\footnote{The map is reproduced from Robinson and Smith, \textit{Biblical Researches in Palestine, and in the Adjacent Regions: A Journal of Travels in the Year 1838} (Boston: Crocker & Brewster, 1856). Accessed via Wikimedia Commons, March 12, 2020. The red circles in the map indicate the towns and villages in which al-Turk’s \textit{maqāmāt} are set.}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{map.png}
\caption{Map of Mount Lebanon, mid-19\textsuperscript{th} century}
\end{figure}

The practice of inscribing the patron and his realm into the \textit{maqāma} (or any other form of \textit{adab}, for that matter) confers a significant degree of legitimacy on the ruler.\footnote{In an essay entitled “The Polyandrous Ode,” Abdulfattah Kilito argues that, if a patron were to disappoint a poet, the latter could not only transform his praise into invective, but indeed use the same ode to praise other patrons. It is the act of offering the same ode to multiple patrons that leads Kilito to use the term “polyandrous,” a term that imagines the poem to be as female as the patrons are male. Underlying Kilito’s argument is his assertion that the panegyric does not describe the patron’s “individual” traits, but rather “typical” ones. For Kilito, praise is generic, meant to elevate the patron and hence capable of a type of polyamory. In al-Turk’s praise \textit{maqāmāt}, however, the level of specificity with which the patron and his realm are described makes it difficult to imagine the \textit{maqāma} taking, as it were, a new object of praise. In this sense, we might call the panegyric \textit{maqāma} a form of monogamous prose. AbdelFattah Kilito, \textit{The Author and His Doubles} (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 2001), 26.} Beyond the fact that these \textit{maqāmāt} explicitly praise the Emir’s generosity, they also implicitly elevate his status by writing him into the Arabic literary heritage (\textit{al-turāth}). This heritage is not only a past but also a future, one that would preserve the emir’s generosity for future generations, including our own. The gesture, it might be added, was mutual. Emir Bashīr had some lines of Niqūlā al-
Turk’s poetry inscribed, quite literally, into the stone entranceway of one of the chambers of his palace, Bayt al-Dīn.\textsuperscript{170}

1.3 Al-Yāzījī: From Court Scribe to Public \textit{Adīb}

Nāṣīf al-Yāzījī was raised in the same world of scribes and patrons as his predecessors, but he flourished as a press corrector, a teacher in the new schools, and a writer for the emerging reading public of mid-century Beirut. While al-Barbīr and al-Turk were composing \textit{maqāmāt} in a relatively stable world of textual recitation and reception, in which the audience was often a small and familiar group of patrons, peers, and acquaintances, al-Yāzījī's lifetime witnessed the disintegration of key elements of that world and the establishment of new institutions and social relations, as well as new sites and modes of literary production, that have a bearing on the \textit{maqāmāt} at the heart of this project.

Al-Yāzījī, whose full name is Nāṣīf bin ‘Abdallāh bin Nāṣīf bin Junblāṭ bin Sa’d al-Yāzījī, was born in the village of Kafr Shīmā near Beirut on March 25, 1800 to a family originally from the Syrian city of Homs.\textsuperscript{171} His branch of the family belonged to the Melkite Roman Catholic Church, although other branches were Eastern or Greek Orthodox.\textsuperscript{172} His surname means “writer” in Turkish, and his family had a long history serving as scribes for the ruling class.\textsuperscript{173} Reflecting the state of education, the non-elite status of his family, and his Christian origins, as a boy al-Yāzījī was taught to read by a local priest named Mattā al-

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{170} Cheikho, \textit{Tārīkh al-adāb al-ʿarabīyya}, 43.
\item \textsuperscript{171} At the time, the village of Kafr Shīmā was two hours from Beirut. Salīm Dhiyāb, “\textit{Tarjamat al-marḥūm al-shaykh},” \textit{Al-Jīnān} 2, issue 5 (March 1, 1871), 150.
\item \textsuperscript{172} Philip Tarazi, \textit{Tārīkh al-ṣiḥāfa al-ʿarabīyya} (Beirut: al-Maṭba’a al-Adabīyya, 1913), 82.
\item \textsuperscript{173} At the end of the seventeenth century, al-Yāzījī's grandfather moved to the village of Shwayfāt, near Beirut, and served as a scribe for the emir Ahmad al-Ma’ānī. For the linguistic and professional origins of his name, see Anīs Maqdisī, \textit{Al-Funūn al-adabiyya wa-a’lāmah: Fī al-Nahḍa al-ʿArabīyya al-ṣāliḥa} (Beirut: Dār al-Kātib al-ʿArabī, 1963), 56.
\end{itemize}
Shabābī. Rather than receiving a prestigious scholarly education like Aḥmad al-Barbir, al-Yāzījī was taught by local priests and his father, Ṭabdullāh al-Yāzījī (1771-1836), a physician by training and an amateur poet. He raised his son on what Jurjī Zaydān describes as “a love for literature (adab) and poetry (shʿir)”. Furthermore, the young al-Yāzījī educated himself by borrowing books from the libraries of local monasteries and either memorizing important passages or copying the texts in part or whole.

The extraordinary value and rarity of written texts (including the canonical maqāmāt) in Mount Lebanon in the early decades of the nineteenth century is evidenced in an 1828 letter by a Protestant convert named Ṭānnūs al-Ḥaddād. Al-Ḥaddād had received material support from the early American missionaries to copy or purchase Arabic books, including a copy of al-Ḥaṭrī’s Maqāmāt. According to Abdul Latif Tibawi, who discusses al-Ḥaddād's letter, on the day that al-Ḥaddād bid the missionaries farewell in Beirut, he “went straight to Kafr Shima village...Later he called on Nāṣīf al-Yāzījī to borrow the Maqāmāt. Nāṣīf, who had ignored a request by [Eli] Smith to read this classic with him, was now evasive in replying to Ḥaddād's belated inquiry, and very reluctantly agreed to lend his copy.” Remarkably, al-Ḥaddād's letter demonstrates not only the limited access to written texts during the period of al-Yāzījī's youth, but that al-Yāzījī

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174 Sāhā, Al-Shaykh Nāṣīf al-Yāzījī, 10. Maqāsīṣ makes this point more explicitly, saying that the means of education were restricted to monasteries and mosques. Maqāsīṣ, Al-Fumūn al-adabāyya wa-a ʿlāma, 56.
175 For Ṭabdullāh al-Yāzījī's birth and death dates, see Jens Hanssen, “The Birth of an Educational Quarter: Zokak el-Blat as a Cradle of Cultural Revival in the Arab World,” in History, Space and Social Conflict in Beirut: The Quarter of Zokak el-Blat, eds. Hans Gebhardt et. al. (Beirut: Orient Institute, 2005), 165.
177 Zaydān, Bunāt al-Nahḍa, 162.
179 Tibawi, American Interests, 53.
himself, as early as 1828, possessed and jealously guarded his own copy of the *Maqāmāt al-Ḥarīrī*.

Al-Yāzījī’s remarkable memory, poetic talents, and calligraphic skills were recognized by a number of prominent figures early in his life.\(^{180}\) The Melkite Roman Catholic Bishop Ignatius V (served 1816-1833) appointed the sixteen-year-old al-Yāzījī as a scribe (*kāṭib*) in his *dīwān*. In a sign of the centrality of scribal practices to intellectual and bureaucratic affairs in this period, Anwar Chejne attributes al-Yāzījī's appointment to his “nice handwriting”.\(^{181}\) This appointment was from 1816 to 1818, during the Patriarch's stay in the monastery of Dayr al-Qarqafa in the hills above al-Yāzījī's village of Kfar Shima.\(^{182}\) Al-Yāzījī also appears to have studied in the library of Dayr al-Qarqafa.\(^{183}\) In the following years, al-Yāzījī's reputation for reciting verses from al-Mutanabbi and his own vernacular *zajal* poetry drew the attention of Emir Bashīr\(^ {184}\) — as, no doubt, did an ode al-Yāzījī wrote in praise of the Emir.\(^ {185}\)

In 1828, thanks in part to the facilitation of an ailing Niqūlā al-Turk, al-Yāzījī was appointed as a scribe and poet in Emir Bashīr's court. The year of al-Yāzījī's appointment was the same year that al-Turk died, and al-Yāzījī may have contributed the final line of poetry for the elegy etched on the wall above al-Turk's mausoleum in the Church of Mār Ilyas in Dayr al-

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\(^{180}\) In an obituary for al-Yāzījī, Salīm Dhiyāḇ praises al-Yāzījī's remarkable memory, which allowed him not only to recite long poems by memory but to recall dates, bibliographical information, and genealogical lines. He notes that al-Yāzījī memorized the Qur'ān and the poetry of al-Mutanabbi, the Jāhili poets, and those born after the advent of Islam. Dhiyāḇ continues that al-Yāzījī was often able to identify the author and the circumstances of composition for a line of poetry, and that his powers of recollection extended to the events of his own life and what he had heard from his contemporaries, stretching back to when he was five years old. Apparently, al-Yāzījī recollected a melody he had heard a foreigner (a *jāmi‘*) singing in a foreign tongue forty years prior. Dhiyāḇ, “*Tarjumat al-marḥūm al-shaykh,*” 151.


\(^{184}\) Hanssen, “The Birth of an Educational Quarter”, 166.

\(^{185}\) Maqdīsī, *Al-Funūn al-adabīyya wa-aʿlāmah*, 57.
Yet as ʿĪsā Sābā notes, al-Yāzījī wrote comparatively few works of praise for his new patron, perhaps out of respect for the primacy of the Emir's new “special poet”, Buṭrus Karāma. Al-Yāzījī served Emir Bashīr from 1828 until the Emir's defeat and exile to Malta in 1840.

It was during these years, in 1832 to be precise, that al-Yāzījī married Ṣābāt al-Shāmī (1813-1881), from the al-Ṭawīl family of Damascus. In comparison to other women of her age, Anīs al-Maqdisī writes, she was well-educated: literate and with a proclivity for reading. Her father, Mūsā, had moved to Mount Lebanon at the bequest of Bashīr al-Shihābī to serve as the chief engineer in the construction of Bayt al-Dīn. He brought his family, and it was in Dayr al-Qamar that al-Yāzījī and his future wife first met by a sort of medical-cum-romantic happenstance. One day, al-Maqdisī reports, the nineteen-year-old Ṣābāt fell sick. Her father approached al-Yāzījī, whose father had trained him in medicine. Al-Yāzījī, who at the time was thirty two, treated Ṣābāt and cured her of his illness, and during this period, their two families developed a “friendship” (ṣadāqa), in the words of al-Maqdisī. When al-Yāzījī asked Mūsā for Ṣābāt's hand, the engineer delayed his response for two days in order to ask Emir Bashīr for his opinion. With the Emir's blessing, the two were quickly wed and it seems from al-Maqdisī's account that they were a well-matched and a happy couple. Al-Yāzījī reportedly had the following to say about his wife:

Were I to have beseeched the divine to create a wife for me as I wished her to be, He

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186 For the poem, see Kamāl Jirjī al-Bustānī, Basāṭīnāt Dayr al-Qamar (Kafr Nabrakh, Lebanon: Dawkī Press, 1997), 75.
187 Sābā, Al-Šaykh Nāšif Al-Yāzījī, 10.
188 Fatā, Ťārikh ʿa ilāt Kafir Shīmā, 51.
189 Maqdisī, Al-Funūn al-Adabiyya wa-l-a lāmahā, 64.
190 Maqdisī, Al-Funūn al-Adabiyya wa-l-a lāmahā, 64.
would not have created for me someone better than my wife Šābāt\(^{191}\)

 ولو أوصيتي الله أن يخلق لي زوجةً كما أريد أن تكون لما خلق لي أحسن من زوجتي صابات

Together they had twelve children, six boys and six girls, as seen in Figure 2 below.\(^{192}\)

![Image of Nasif al-Yaziji and his family, 1864](image)

**Figure 2: Nasif al-Yaziji and his family, 1864**

The period of al-Yāzījī's service to Emir Bāṣīr corresponds to what historian Carol Hakim has described as “a period of protracted instability and conflict” in Mount Lebanon.\(^{193}\) In 1831, Emir Bāṣīr’s longtime ally Muḥammad ʿAlī of Egypt sent his son Ibrāhīm Pasha on a


\(^{192}\) I have been unable to find the original source of this image.

military campaign against the Ottoman state by occupying the Levant. The Egyptian forces remained there until 1840, when both Emir Bashīr and his Egyptian patron were driven from Mount Lebanon by a joint English-Ottoman force. The defeat of Ibrāhīm Pasha, in whose praise al-Yāzījī had composed poems at the behest of Emir Bashīr, ended nine years of Egyptian military rule, returned what is today Syria and Lebanon (or Bilād al-Shām) to Ottoman sovereignty, and most importantly for the history of textuality, precipitated the collapse of the Shihābī Emirate of Mount Lebanon. Once captured by the Ottomans, Emir Bashīr learned that he would be exiled either to London or Malta; he chose the latter, and died there in 1851, attended to the end by his loyal poet, Buṭrus Karāma.

Bereft of his patron, al-Yāzījī left Dayr al-Qamar for Beirut with his family and a wave of other refugees displaced by the sectarian and regional conflicts of 1840. He settled in the neighborhood of Zuqāq al-Balāt, where he quickly joined the “burgeoning intellectual circle” in the area. It is likely that al-Yāzījī had already been working in Beirut through much of the 1830s, given Hala Auji’s assertion that he published his first work of grammar, Faṣl al-khiṭāb, on the American Missionary Press in Beirut in 1836. In addition to his work on the missionary press, al-Yāzījī dedicated himself to writing and teaching in Beirut.

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194 For details on the political relationship between Emir Bashīr and Muḥammad ʿAlī which began in 1822, as well as a detailed account of the events of 1840, see Caesar Farah, “The Lebanese Insurgence of 1840 and the Powers,” Journal of Asian History 1, no. 2 (1967): 105-132.
195 In May 1840, there was a popular uprising against Emir Bashīr and his Egyptian patrons. In response, Egypt demanded a disarming of the Maronite community (as the Druze had already been disarmed); fear of a general conscription spread. The Maronites rebelled, inciting a “heavy-handed” Egyptian response in July of 1840, which would have quashed the rebels had a joint Ottoman, British, and Austrian force not intervened to rout the Egyptian army. Hakim, The Origins of the Lebanese National Idea, 25; and Farah, “The Lebanese Insurgence,” 124-128.
196 Tarazī, Tārīkh al-ṣīḥāja al-ʿarabiyya, 85.
As a complement to these activities, he hosted visiting poets, intellectuals, and dignitaries, many of whom he praised in verse.200 Al-Yāzījī also corresponded with a number of European intellectuals.201 Most germane for our purposes, al-Yāzījī read and corrected the first print edition of the French Orientalist Sylvester de Sacy (d. 1838)'s *Maqāmāt al-Ḥarīrī*, published in 1822. It seems he initially declined a request to share his corrections, and when he did so, he did so with characteristic courtesy towards De Sacy.202 Al-Yāzījī wrote de Sacy a “long letter” in which he informed the renowned Orientalist of his errors.203 His corrections were subsequently translated into Latin and published along with the second, posthumous edition of de Sacy’s *Maqāmāt* in 1848.204 More broadly, al-Yāzījī “enjoyed great renown,” wrote Louis Cheikho in 1924: “The scholars (‘ulamā’) of the East competed with one another in corresponding with him and circulated among themselves his poems and letters.”205 ʿĪsā Sābā echoes this view, describing al-Yāzījī’s house in Beirut as a “habitual meeting place for scholars (maba’a l-‘ulamā’), a source of literary proclamations, and an 'Ukāz market' for erudite lectures and linguistic theses.”206

Since al-Barbir’s complaints about the city's provincialism in the 1770s, Beirut had grown

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201 From 1843 to 1871, the *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft (ZDMG)* would intermittently publish its correspondence with al-Yāzījī. For details, see Hanssen, “The Birth of an Educational Quarter,” 166 fn 91.


considerably. By the early 1840s, Anglo-Ottoman trade agreements and the growth of steam ship commerce brought prosperity to the city.\textsuperscript{207} In the aftermath of the 1840 war that unseated Emir Bashīr, Beirut emerged as a site of dynamic cultural activity and nascent national identities increasingly drawn into global networks of trade, travel, and communication. Hala Auji describes the city as an emerging “regional Arabic publishing hub”\textsuperscript{208} while Jens Hanssen states that, by the 1870s, Beirut “had assumed centre stage in the writings of its literati.”\textsuperscript{209} By the middle of the nineteenth century, the capitals of the Arab world saw the emergence of a “public Arabic print sphere” in which figures such as Aḥmad Fāris al-Shidyāq, Buṭrus al-Bustānī and al-Ŷāzījī himself could engage with the “profoundly heterogeneous” literary culture made possible by the printing press.\textsuperscript{210}

Zuqāq al-Balāṭ, where al-Ŷāzījī settled, was the center of the American Protestant missionaries's educational and printing activities in Beirut.\textsuperscript{211} At some point in 1840, al-Ŷāzījī was hired by the Protestant missionaries to work as a corrector (\textit{muṣahhīḥ}) at the American Missionary Press.\textsuperscript{212} Despite tensions over his continued rejection of Protestantism, his refusal to attend “Sabbath services,” and his decision to “forbid” his son from attending the mission’s Sabbath school, al-Ŷāzījī remained in the missionaries' employ until at least June 1860, four years after he published \textit{Majmaʿ al-Bḥrayn}.\textsuperscript{213} The missionaries were also employing Buṭrus al-

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{207} zachs, “commerce and merchants,” 61-62.
\item \textsuperscript{208} auji, \textit{printing arab modernity}, 1.
\item \textsuperscript{209} hanssen, \textit{fin de siècle beirut}, 5.
\item \textsuperscript{210} rebecca johnson, “foreword,” in \textit{leg over leg, or, the turtle in the tree concerning the fāriyāq: what manner of creature might he be}, by aḥmad fāris shidyāq, trans. humphrey davies (new york: new york university press, 2013), xxi-xxii.
\item \textsuperscript{211} hanssen states that the missionaries had established between six and nine schools in beirut and its environs by 1826 serving over 300 pupils. by the turn of the century, hanssen estimates that the number of students attending a much wider array of secondary education in zuqāq al-balāṭ had soared to 2,500. hanssen, “the birth of an educational quarter”, 148-9.
\item \textsuperscript{212} tibawi, \textit{american interests}, 91.
\item \textsuperscript{213} auji, \textit{printing arab modernity}, 88-89. there were, however, interruptions in al-Ŷāzījī's employment, as when his work “came to an abrupt end” in 1845. see tibawi, \textit{american interests}, 116-7. al-Ŷāzījī appealed his termination to eli smith, including in his letter a poem.
\end{itemize}
Bustānī and maintained a long-standing relationship with Āḥmad Fāris al-Shidyāq. Al-Yāzījī tutored the American missionary Eli Smith, with whom he had previously declined to study *Maqāmāt al-Ḥarīrī*, as mentioned in al-Ḥaddād’s letter above; al-Yāzījī and Smith would subsequently collaborate on a new translation of the Bible into Arabic. In the late 1840s, al-Yāzījī was commissioned to produce Arabic textbooks on grammar, rhetoric, and prosody for the mission schools. These texts would have been in addition to *Faṣl al-khitāb*, first published in 1836 (as mentioned above) and used as an Arabic textbook at the Protestant missionaries’ seminary in ‘Abay. Al-Yāzījī produced another textbook on rhetoric entitled *Majmūʿ al-Adab*, which was first published in two parts in 1855.

Al-Yāzījī was also active in the societies that were emerging in this period. In 1847, the missionaries and their Levantine colleagues established the Syrian Society for the Sciences and Arts (*al-Jamʿiyya al-Sūriyya li-l-ʿulūm wa-l-funūn*), in which al-Yāzījī was an “active, powerful member.” In their first yearbook, published in 1852 under the editorship of Buṭrus al-Bustānī, al-Yāzījī made three contributions, including a version of *al-Maqāma al-ʿAqīqiyya*, one of the sixty *maqāmāt* that would be published four years later in *Majmaʿ al-Baḥrayn*. Elizabeth Holt sees the Syrian Society for the Sciences and Arts as a precedent to the Syrian Scientific Society.

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214 Al-Shidyāq’s relationship with the American missionaries was more complex than that of his contemporaries, not least of all because his brother Asad had died in the custody of the Maronite patriarch after converting to Protestantism. Al-Shidyāq had entered the service of the Protestant missionaries in 1826, after which they sent him to Malta to work at the English Church Missionary Society (or CMS) press. For details, see Geoffrey Roper, “Āḥmad Fāris Al-Shidyāq and the Libraries of Europe and the Ottoman Empire,” *Libraries & Culture* 33, no. 3 (Summer 1998): 233–248.


217 First printed in 1836, *Faṣl al-khitāb* was reprinted four times by the end of the nineteenth century. For the circumstances of the 1873 reprinting, see Tibawi, *American Interests*, 214.


(al-Jamʿiyya al-ʿilmīyya al-Sūriyya), founded in 1867, and the literary networks, practices, and beliefs that infused the Beirut-based periodicals of the early 1870s.\(^{221}\)

In addition to his work at the press and participation in the Syrian Society for the Sciences and Arts, al-Yāẓījī taught at a number of schools. He taught Arabic literature at Buṭrus al-Bustānī’s National School (al-madrasa al-waṭaniyya), which opened in 1863.\(^{222}\) According to what Jens Hanssen has described as the “rather jolly” memoirs of one of al-Yāẓījī’s students, Dr. Shākir al-Khūrī, it is clear that al-Yāẓījī was a beloved and respected instructor at the National School who taught from his own grammar primer.\(^{223}\) Adding to the sense of al-Yāẓījī's playful employment of language in the classroom, al-Khūrī reports that on many occasions when he was unable to answer his teacher's questions, al-Yāẓījī would turn to his brother, Khalīl al-Khūrī, and utter the following line:

Your brother fraternizes with laziness and ignorance

So tell me Khalīl, how about you?\(^{224}\)

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\(^{221}\) The Syrian Scientific Society boasted over one hundred members and was, according to Hanssen, “decidedly inter-confessional”. This new society had a library and a reading room where members could check out books and peruse periodicals and other materials in Arabic and European languages. The available journals included Khalīl al-Khūrī’s Ḥadiqat al-Akhbār (founded in 1856) and Ahmad Fāris al-Shidyāq’s al-Jawāʾib (founded in 1861). Furthermore, the Syrian Scientific Society published the proceedings of their meetings and sent them to members inside and outside of Beirut; they likewise encouraged members not only to write but to practice oratory by composing speeches to be read and later distributed. Details about the Syrian Scientific Society come from Elizabeth Holt, “Narrative and the Reading Public in 1870s Beirut,” Journal of Arabic Literature 40, no. 1 (2009): 40-42. For Hanssen's claim, see Hanssen, “The Birth of an Educational Quarter”, 153-4.


\(^{224}\) Al-Khūrī, Majmaʿ al-Masarrāt, 104.
Al-Khūrī reports (and Jurjī Zaydān reiterates\(^{225}\)) that al-Yāzījī had a harsh voice (ṣawṭ jarish) and did not have a “fluid” tongue (wa lisānuhū ghayr faṣīḥ).\(^{226}\) He adds some persuasive detail to his report, saying that he and his fellow students had difficulty understanding their teacher, especially his poetry, and that while al-Yāzījī loved music, when he sang he could not find the melody (wa ṣawṭuhū lā yuṭābīqu al-naghamāt).\(^{227}\) Regardless of al-Yāzījī’s voice, al-Khūrī confirms al-Yāzījī’s reputation for lexical and linguistic genius. Al-Khūrī reports that al-Bustānī would bring his writings, including his dictionary Muḥīṭ al-Muḥīṭ (The Sea of the Sea), to al-Yāzījī to edit.\(^{228}\) Al-Khūrī says that when al-Yāzījī asked him to return the corrected proofs of Muḥīṭ al-Muḥīṭ to al-Bustānī, he would say: “I am the roving dictionary” (anā al-qāmūs al-sayyār).\(^{229}\)

Given his knowledge of the Arabic language and his long association with Arab and European intellectuals in Beirut, it is no surprise that al-Yāzījī was one of three initial faculty members employed by the Syrian Protestant College (SPC) when it opened its doors on December 3rd, 1866.\(^{230}\) At the SPC, al-Yāzījī taught Arabic language and literature.\(^{231}\) Among al-Yāzījī’s students were the following students: Salīm Taqlā, who would become the publisher of the newspaper Al-Ahrām; Salīm al-Bustānī, the future editor of al-Jinān; ‘Abd Allāh al-

\(^{225}\) Jurjī Zaydān describes al-Yāzījī in the following terms: “Harsh-voiced (ajjash al-sawt), grave, dignified, noble-minded, consummate, and humble; deliberate in his speech, short on laughter and chaste of tongue. He did not disparage anyone nor was he disparaged, except a couplet about a miser which he composed in a spirit of jest.” Zaydān, Bunāt al-Nahda, 166.

\(^{226}\) Al-Khūrī, Majmaʿ al-masarrāt, 104.

\(^{227}\) Al-Khūrī, Majmaʿ al-masarrāt, 104.

\(^{228}\) Al-Khūrī, Majmaʿ al-masarrāt, 104.

\(^{229}\) Al-Khūrī, Majmaʿ al-masarrāt, 104.


\(^{231}\) Hanssen, “The Birth of an Educational Quarter,” 167.
Bustānī, the future owner of al-Bustān; Khalīl al-Khūrī, the future (?) editor of ُHadīqat al-Akhbār; Yaʿqūb Ṣarrūf, who would go on to found the well-regarded science journal al-Muqtaṭaf; and others.\textsuperscript{232} These students, and the schools which educated them, the journals which they founded, and the scientific societies and salons which they joined, were instrumental to the Nahḍa.

Over the course of his career, al-Yāzījī published more than a dozen texts on Arabic grammar, morphology, rhetoric, poetry, and logic, as well as a commentary on the poetry of al-Mutanabbi (see Appendix B for a complete list).\textsuperscript{233} Zaydān reports in 1922 that al-Yāzījī’s three collections of poetry were considered among the finest, much of it still memorized by heart, and that his textbook, ‘Umdat al-tadrīs, was still being used in “most of” the Christian schools in Lebanon.\textsuperscript{234} Phillip Tarazi makes a similar claim, adding that 'Umdat al-tadrīs was also being taught in Egypt.\textsuperscript{235} Confirming his status as a major figure of the early Nahḍa, Zaydan reports that many of the most notable people in Lebanon attended al-Yāzījī’s funeral in 1871, and more than ten thousand people — including 800 of his former students\textsuperscript{236} — marched in the procession.\textsuperscript{237}

1.4 Conclusion: Printing Majmaʿ al-Baḥrayn

This chapter explores three interconnected shifts: in the site, mode, and audience of maqāma production. While Aḥmad al-Barbīr sought recognition and reward before the notables

\textsuperscript{232} Maqdisī, Al-Funūn al-adabiyya wa-aʿlāmuhā, 62. Al-Maqdisī also mentions Khalīl Ghānim and Asʿad Ṭurād.
\textsuperscript{233} Cheikho, Al-Ādāb al-ʿarabiyya, 28.
\textsuperscript{234} Zaydān, Tarājim mashāḥīr al-Sharq, 8.
\textsuperscript{235} Tarazī, Tārikh al-yūḥaṣ al-ʿarabiyya, 84.
\textsuperscript{236} Maqdisī, Al-Funūn al-adabiyya wa-aʿlāmuhā, 63.
\textsuperscript{237} Zaydān, Tarājim mashāḥīr al-Sharq, 14.
of Damascus, and Niqūlā al-Turk cut his teeth as an adīb (that is, a spy, a historian, a scribe, and a poet) for Emir Bashīr in Dayr al-Qamar, with the collapse of the Shihābī Court in 1840, the site of maqāma production in the Levant shifted to the nascent Arabic press located predominately in Beirut. As the site of production shifted, so too did the mode of performance and the composition of the audience. The performance of the maqāma was transformed from a face-to-face encounter between an adīb and his audiences of friends, competitors, and dignitaries into a practice of writing for publication during the early Nahḍa.

By the time al-Yāzijī had published Majmaʿ al-Bahrayn in 1856, this textual shift had largely taken place. The site of maqāma performance had shifted from Dayr al-Qamar to Beirut, and indeed, if we included Aḥmad Fāris al-Shidyāq's 1855 al-Sāq ʿalā al-Sāq, as far abroad as Paris. The mode of dissemination had shifted as well. Al-Yāzijī included a copy of al-ʿAqīqīyya in an 1849 letter by the missionary Eli Smith to the Asiatic Society; and published a version of the same episode in the first yearbook of the Syrian Society for the Sciences and Arts in 1853, as we saw above. Al-Yāzijī allegedly composed al-Yamāmiyya while riding on the back of a horse with his family on the way Bahmadūn in the summer of 1853. When he did disseminate the text as a whole, al-Yāzijī did so on the American Missionary Press, where he himself had worked as a press corrector for more than fifteen years.

The audience, as well, had shifted. Although al-Yāzijī had served Emir Bashīr until 1840, Majmaʿ al-Bahrayn was not written as a panegyric to his former patron or any other authority figure. It was written for a much broader and more diffuse audience. On the one hand, the

238 Sāḥīḥ, Al-Shaykh Nāṣīf Al-Yāzijī, 12. Sāḥīḥ argues that al-Yāzijī “wanted to present it to the orientalists in order that they publish it.”
239 Tarāzi, Tāriḥ al-shiḥāfa al-ʿarabiyya, 88.
240 Paul Starkey claims al-Yāzijī’s maqāmat “aroused a good deal of interest, not only in the Arab-speaking world but also in Europe.” Starkey, “Nasif al-Yaziji,” 378. Starkey also claims that “a number of translations soon appeared” in Europe;
geographical spread of the men who composed verse in praise of *Majmaʿ al-Bahrayn* suggests a wide (and very favorable) reception.⁴²¹ On the other, al-Yāzījī’s ample footnotes (5,880 to be exact), published in the 1856 edition, suggest that al-Yāzījī intended or at least imagined *Majmaʿ al-Bahrayn* to be a teaching text, one which could be used like his other works to teach language, history, literary form, and the Arabic sciences to the burgeoning population of students served by the Protestant missionaries and Levantine teachers. Indeed, Philip Ṭarrāzī describes *Majmaʿ al-Bahrayn* as al-Yāzījī’s most popular (ashhar) and greatest (aʿzam) composition.⁴²² Likewise, Anīs al-Maqdisī claims that *Majmaʿ al-Bahrayn* was a “trusty resource” (muʿawwal) for students in schools from shortly after its publication in 1856 until the early twentieth century. These students, he claims, memorized parts of the text and emulated its style.⁴²³

In the *maqāma*’s reflexivity, we find aspects of this complex transformation expressed through the ways in which textuality is represented and performed. In Chapter Two, “Homosocial Companions”, we turn to the many ways in which the *maqāmāt* in this corpus were not only composed by and for men, but also represent, perform, and imagine the masculinity of literary men and the homosocial spaces in and for which they composed and performed their *maqāmāt*. The textual shift, however, expanded and changed the audience of the *maqāma*, as well as the concerns and priorities of those men who were writing in the genre. While Chapter Two explores the many links between masculinity, homosociality, and *adab*, Chapter Three (“Heterosocial Heroes”) looks at the ways in which both Nāṣīf al-Yāzījī and Aḥmad Fāris al-Shidīyāq disrupted the homosocial norm by including female characters in prominent roles in

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²⁴¹ This includes the Iraqi Shihāb al-Dīn al-Mūwsīlī, whose panegyric recognizes al-Yāzījī’s challenge to al-Ḥarīrī and claims that the latter’s work would be “humbled” in comparison to al-Yāzījī. Ṭarāzī, *Tārikh al-ṣīḥāfa al-ʿarabīyya*, 85-86.
²⁴³ Maqdisī, *Al-Funūn al-adabiyya wa-aš善于* lāmūhā, 68.
Chapter Two: Homosocial Companions

The maqāmāt considered here stage many forms of male homosociality. Maqāmāt al-Barbīr can be read as a long discourse on the intellectual and emotional dimensions of male friendship, while al-Turk's maqāmāt contain many episodes intended to entertain, and in some cases reproach, his male friends, peers, and students. Furthermore, both collections are not only addressed to wealthy, powerful patrons, but also reflect on the value and volatility of the relationship between poet and patron (as exemplified in Niqūlā al-Turk's fraught relationship with his patricidal patron, Emir Bashīr). The depictions of homosocial relationships and the spaces in which they flourished make clear that, for the early maqāma authors in this study, eloquent speech is a marker of and a means to access homosocial spaces of performance in the maqāma and, given the significance of the rewards discussed above, the Shihābī court as well.

These maqāmāt do not originate but rather continue the maqāma's long tradition of depicting male characters exchanging poetry, sermons, advice, opinions, riddles and many other genres of speech. These male characters include the adīb and the narrator as well as other recurrent but peripheral characters such as the judge, the emir, the servant boy, and the adīb's sons and students. These male characters, like their predominately and perhaps exclusively male authors, patrons, and audiences, are united through the exchange of speech, the transmission of knowledge
and wealth, and the circulation of books, letters, notes, and other forms of writing.

Their textual exchanges are homosocial insofar as they comprise a set of practices, activities, and objects that are desired and performed by men in ways that strengthen their social relations with other men. Homosociality, according to Eve Sedgwick, describes “social bonds between persons of the same sex.”244 Sedgwick uses the term homosocial to help demarcate the boundary between the sexual and the non-sexual among men, at least as represented in selections from the canon of English literature. In distinguishing the homosocial from the homosexual, on the one hand, and from the heterosocial, on the other, Sedgwick is able to assert that relations between men, as well as understandings of what constitutes sexuality, are historically- and culturally-contingent.245

The sociologist Sharon Bird builds on Sedgwick's theories and the debate they generated to argue that homosocial spaces and patterns of behavior not only differentiate between men and women, but also define and police the boundaries between hegemonic and non-hegemonic masculinities.246 In her research, the model of hegemonic masculinity that emerges is one built on emotional detachment, competition, and the sexual objectification of women.247 As Dr. Hilary

246 Bird defines homosociality as “the nonsexual attractions held by men (or women) for members of their own sex.” This definition might be nuanced by acknowledging that homosociality includes homoerotic attraction and activities, but is by no means limited to them. Sharon Bird, “Welcome to the Men's Club: Homosociality and the Maintenance of Hegemonic Masculinity,” *Gender & Society* 10, no. 2 (April 1996): 121. For accounts of homoerotic desire, especially in Ottoman- and Abbasid-era Arabic poetry respectively, see Khaled El-Rouayheb, *Before Homosexuality in the Arab-Islamic World, 1500-1800* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005); and Jocelyn Sharlet, “Public Displays of Affection: Male Homoerotic Desire and Sociability in Medieval Arabic Literature,” in *Islam and Homosexuality*, ed. Samar Habib, vol. 1 (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2010), 37–55.
247 Sharon Bird, “Welcome to the Men's Club,” 122. Bird understands emotional detachment as the withholding of expressions of intimacy and signs of vulnerability with the effect of maintaining “clear individual identity boundaries.” Competition promotes an identity based on separation and distinction, which strengthens hierarchical rather than symmetrical relationships. The sexual objectification of women distances men from symbolic identification with women and their own purportedly “feminine” traits.
Kilpatrick has indicated to me, al-Turk's personal views on women may well reinforce this point. In the homosocial spaces for which al-Barbīr and al-Turk composed and performed their maqāmāt, there emerge different structures of hegemonic masculinity, in which eloquence, erudition, and etiquette, three vital components of adab, are exchanged for material benefits and social recognition between poet and patron.

Numerous scholars of Arabic literature and cultural history have explored the complex links between male homosocial companionship, practices of adab, and the transmission of knowledge. Speaking of the biographical dictionaries of eighteenth-century Damascus, Dana Sajdi observes that the description of the relationship between scholars of the same generation employs “a collegial vocabulary of fellowship (ṣuḥba), constant companionship (mulāzama), love (ḥubb/mahabba), and benefit (fāʾida).” This vocabulary blends the pursuit of knowledge, the desire for companionship, and the affective state of love. Knowledge, in this formulation, is not abstract but rather embodied; both the knowledge and those capable of transmitting it are objects of desire. Shawkat Toorawa offers a similar assessment in his study of the autograph notes of the prominent seventh/thirteenth century scholar-physician ʿAbd al-Laṭīf al-Baghdādī. Speaking of ʿAbd al-Laṭīf and more generally of the autobiographies of medieval scholars, Toorawa argues that their desire for knowledge is conflated with a range of sentiments for the men with whom and through whom they sought their knowledge. Hence, in ʿAbd al-Laṭīf's descriptions of himself, his peers, and his teachers, “sentiments about desire, appearance, pleasure and infatuation” are


249 Sajdi, The Barber of Damascus, 51.
articulated in and through “the language of scholarly endeavor and commitment”.250

Feminist literary criticism offers further nuance to the contributions of the social historians mentioned above. In her reading of A Thousand and One Nights, Fedwa Malti-Douglas describes the two kings, Shāhriyār and his older brother Shāhzamān, as a “homosocial couple”.251 This homosociality, as Malti-Douglas demonstrates, is not defined by their longing for one another's companionship alone, but also by a shared animosity toward female characters and a suspicion of heterosexual couples. Through a series of encounters with women who either betray their trust through infidelity or attempt to coerce them into unwanted sex, the brothers come to see heterosexual relationships as “not merely problematic, but in a state of crisis”.252 The result is Shāhriyār's well-known approach to heterosexuality, in which the consummation of the sexual act is followed by the murder of the female partner. Shāhriyār's brutality serves as a poignant illustration of the central role that the exclusion of women plays in the constitution and maintenance of male homosocial bonds.

This chapter looks at how the Levantine maqāmāt of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries dramatize Sajdi's “collegial vocabulary” and Toorawa's affective “language of scholarly endeavor” in the relationships of its characters. In particular, I read specific scenes in the maqāmāt of al-Barbīr and al-Turk with the aim of distilling how these texts depict the complex relationship between male characters, notions of masculinity, and adab. The first section (“Al-Barbīr's Adīb as Homosocial Companion”) explores the ways in which al-Barbīr's narrator and adīb become friends. Given their accounts of themselves, the ways in which they interact with one another, and

252 Malti-Douglas, Woman's Body, Woman's Word, 16.
the topics which they discuss, this friendship is frequently and clearly gendered: it is a distinctly male friendship. Both characters are not only attuned to the codes of male homosociality, but also embody and often discuss what it means to be a man, and in particular, a man of letters and etiquette or an adīb.

The second section (“A Good Woman is as Rare as a White-Winged Crow': Male Homosociality and Misogyny”) turns to the relationship between male homosociality and misogyny in *Maqāmāt al-Barbīr*. The narrator and the adīb not only perform and discuss the contours of their friendship and reflect on the nature of literary masculinity; they also dedicate a good deal of energy to disparaging women and disavowing marriage. The characters' distrust of women, marriage, and what they perceive to be their own heterosexual desires illustrates homosociality’s reliance, at least in part, on the devaluation and exclusion of the opposite sex. While the passages considered in this section are decidedly misogynistic, they are not built on a male fantasy of sexual conquest or even the satisfaction of sexual urges. Rather, in *Maqāmāt al-Barbīr*, the adīb and the narrator are delighted to discover that they share a fantasy of escape from the bonds of heterosexual marriage and into the spaces of male homosociality.

Much like the first two sections, the third section (“Al-Turk's Lonely Narrator”) and the fourth section (“A Maqāma to Police Hazl”) work in tandem with one another. Section three focuses on the lonely narrator in Niqūlā al-Turk's *maqāmāt*. I call him the “lonely narrator” because so much of his travel is undertaken specifically to alleviate the feelings of boredom (*malal*) and restless irritation (*dajar*) he associates with social isolation. In al-Turk's *maqāmāt*, *adab* is not only a source of knowledge and entertainment; in the adīb, the narrator also finds a companion and thereby an antidote to his loneliness. Where the third section explores the affective dimensions of male friendship in al-Turk's oeuvre, the fourth section turns to father/son and teacher/student
relationships as models of the homosocial transmission of knowledge, moral guidance, and reproach. Here we look at an episode which al-Turk composed for the young men under his tutelage in Dayr al-Qamar, whom he and the scribes who preserved his *maqāmāt* refer to metaphorically as his “sons”. These “sons” have spread a rumor about their “father” and the episode was read aloud to them in order to reproach them and guide them back toward al-Turk's notion of proper etiquette (one sense of the term *adab*).

Finally, the fifth and sixth sections explore another homosocial relationship, that between patron and poet. The fifth section (“In Praise of the Patron”) looks at the valuable and volatile relationship between poet and patron, and offers a contrast between the literary masculinity of the *adīb* and the different (but no less hegemonic) masculinity of the patron. The ruler's will, judgement, and military prowess are not in competition with the *adīb*’s erudition and eloquence; on the contrary, these two ways of being a man are complementary and perhaps mutually dependent. Each occupies a top position in the social hierarchy of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, when court poets and their powerful patrons often split (however unequally) the bounty of political rule. The sixth and final section (“King Bakhshīsh and the Patron's Decline”), turns to a *maqāma* composed by ʿAḥmad Fāris al-Shidyāq that critiques the corruption of the patronage system and mocks the poetics of praise which earned earlier *maqāma* authors their keep. In so doing, it shows how the collapse of Emir Bashīr's court and the textual shift more broadly changed not only the circumstances of composition and dissemination, but also the content, tone, and value ascribed to refined language within the genre.

Read alongside the social history of textuality in the preceding chapter, these representations and performances of masculinity and homosociality allow us to see, once again, how the *maqāma* as a genre is reflexive. On the one hand, the episodes discussed here model
various forms of textuality, but doing so in ways that preserve, reinforce and even critique the very real male homosocial relations through which and for which they were composed.

2.1 Al-Barbīr's Adīb as Homosocial Companion

Seen through the lens of gender, al-Barbīr's Maqāmāt is an extraordinarily long and rich account of the development of a friendship between two men. While many maqāmāt might be fruitfully read in precisely this manner, al-Barbīr's text seems particularly open to such an approach for two reasons. First, the two main characters, the narrator and the adīb, speak at length, explicitly and recurrently, about a wide range of issues related to gender and sexuality. Second, their encounter and the development of their friendship is the central narrative event in this text. Their encounter is so central, in fact, that vital parts of the narrative structure of other maqāma collections, such as the trick, the recognition scene, the narrator's pursuit of the adīb, and their confrontation, are all missing from Maqāmāt al-Barbīr, inadvertently or not sharpening the focus on the encounter between the two male characters. From the moment the two meet, to their reflections on friendship, manhood, and brotherhood, to some of the scenes in which they exchange praise for one another and express their mutual affection, the friendship between the adīb and the narrator offers a sense of the contours of male homosociality in al-Barbīr's Maqāmāt.

The opening scenes, in which the narrator describes his early life, are entirely populated by men and boys, although there are a handful of references to influential female figures in Islamic history. This all-male environment recalls Toorawa's observation regarding medieval Arabic autobiography that, “the notion of maternal nurturance is almost a fiction in the world of the scholar-to-be, as it is from his mother that he is removed to be transplanted onto and into the
homosocial community of scholars.” As the narrator grows, he surpasses his contemporaries (lidāt), sitting with the elderly men (shuyūkh) and boys (shabāb) of the salons. His arrival at manhood (mablagh al-rijāl) coincides with the completion of his learning. Indeed, over the course of his youth, everyone with whom he interacts is portrayed as male. This includes the family members to whom the narrator bids a painful farewell, the community of poets and scholars who welcome him with open arms in Damascus, and even the people responsible for the city's cultural and moral decline.

By far the most extensive account of male friendship begins with the arrival of the adīb. Their encounter takes place only after the narrator's Damascene friends have passed away, leaving him bereft of the companionship he desires (and hinting at the typology of the lonely narrator central to Niqūlā al-Turk's maqāmāt, as discussed below). Al-Barbīr's narrator finds those men who remain in Damascus to be coarse and unsophisticated, and decides to seclude himself in his home. It is on one of his rare trips outside, to one of the verdant gardens of Damascus, that he first encounters the adīb. As he is enjoying the shade of its trees and the “singing girls' dance” of its streams (raqṣ jawārī anhārī), and contemplating the splendor of a divinity who could create such a world, the narrator spies a “bedouin” riding by on a female ostrich (hayqa). The narrator is amazed by the speed and grace of the animal, which “puts its

253 Toorawa, “Language and Male Homosocial Desire,” 260. Toorawa then argues that autobiographies such as Ḥabīl’s “inscribe a different elaboration of family, one where women form part of the scholarly environment primarily...as the means through which homosocial bonds are enabled and sustained, through procreation, filiation, genealogy and circulation.” (261) This point echoes Sedgwick's description of the role (or lack thereof) of women in Shakespeare's early Sonnets, namely that “[w]omen are merely the vehicles by which men breed more men, for the gratification of other men.” Sedgwick, Between Men, 33.
254 Almad al-Barbīr, Maqāmāt al-Barbīr, 2b. Note that here and throughout, the page numbers and letters refer to the manuscript pagination for the printed edition of the text which Diaa al-Aswad and I will publish with the Orient Institut Beirut (OIB) in 2020.
255 Al-Barbīr, Maqāmāt al-Barbīr, 3a.
256 Al-Barbīr, Maqāmāt al-Barbīr, 5a-b.
257 Al-Barbīr, Maqāmāt al-Barbīr, 6a.
feet gently upon the ground as if they were the fall of dew” (wa-taḍa‘ qawā‘imahā‘alāl-arḍbil-lutfḥattāka-annahāsuqūţal-nadā). Like the narrator, this “bedouin” is never named but rather referred to only as “the shaykh”.

From the narrator's first descriptions of the shaykh, we can see the merger of physical, moral, and intellectual traits that comprise an ideal literary masculinity. The narrator is not only impressed by the ostrich, but also by its rider, who sits atop his female steed “like an arrow” (ka-saham). The arrow might be read as a phallus in both its shaft-like form and its penetrating function, and an indication of an upright posture that communicates undiminished physical presence. The narrator cranes his neck to stare at the passing figure (fa-hadaqtu lahu hadnāqī wa-madadtu ilayhi ‘unuqī), suggesting that the very sight of the adīb stirs the desire behind the male gaze.

The narrator then enumerates those qualities which “emanate” (yalūḥ) from the shaykh: “horsemanship and discernment, kindness and sagacity, vigor and leadership” (al-farāsa wa-l-firāsa wa-l-latāfa wa-l-kiyāsa wa-l-ḥamāsa wa-l-riyāsa). This description is not only laudatory but aesthetically pleasing, strung together in rhyming prose (saj`). The first two attributes, al-farāsa and al-firāsa, display the author's facility with paronomasia (jinās), a form of punning based on homonyms and near-homonyms. While al-farāsa refers to equestrian skill, al-firāsa is the capacity to discern the hidden from the apparent, especially when it comes to questions of character. Taken together, they offer a portrait of an adīb who impresses the narrator with his physicality as much as his intellectual and moral excellence. Making clear that these qualities are intimately linked to adab, the narrator continues his description in the following fashion: “Adab

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258 Al-Barbīr, Maqāmāt al-Barbīr, 6b.
almost poured from his pores” (yakād al-adab yataqāṭaru min ṣaqṭārihi) and “eloquence nearly whispered to you from between his drawers and his outer layers” (takād al-balāgha tunājīka min bayn shī’ ārihi wa-dithārihi).

The feelings, it seems, are mutual. When the shaykh sees the narrator, “he headed to me the way a parched man (al-ṣādī) heads to a sweet spring”.

259 The two men exchange elaborate greetings, and after the narrator has encouraged the shaykh to dismount, they take turns offering lines of poetry, popular sayings (amthāl), and prayers for each other’s well-being and success.

260 This exchange of speech confirms their first impressions of one another as suitable companions, at which point they settle into a wide-ranging conversation. Over the course of this conversation, they model homosocial textuality by playing word games and entertaining one another with riddles, debating theological and linguistic questions, transmitting advice, and emulating one another’s poetic compositions in meter and theme.

261 Al-Barbir’s depictions of the budding friendship between the adīb and the narrator allow us to see a model of male homosociality based on admiration of physical form, moral qualities, and reciprocal demonstrations of literary knowledge and skill. As the next section endeavors to demonstrate, the gender of the adīb and the narrator is not incidental but rather fundamental to their friendship. This is for the simple reason that their friendship is based, in large part, on conversations about women and related matters that would only take place in the privacy and exclusivity of a male homosocial space.

259 Al-Barbir, Maqāmāt al-Barbir, 6b.
260 Al-Barbir, Maqāmāt al-Barbir, 6b.
261 For a detailed outline (in Arabic) of Maqāmāt al-Barbir, including the topics of conversation, see Appendix C.
2.2 “A Good Woman is as Rare as a White-Winged Crow”: Male Homosociality and Misogyny

In male homosocial spaces and texts, the bonds between men are forged at least partially through the rhetorical and social exclusion of women. Indeed, there is one long passage in Maqāmāt al-Barbīr where the adīb and the narrator discuss women. This passage, which covers nearly twenty manuscript pages or one-fifth of the entire text, includes a discussion of marriage, the desirable attributes of a woman, sex and male sexual desire, and love. Read alongside the previous section, the objectifying and often disparaging views of the male characters confirm the theoretical assertion that a vital element of homosociality is the exclusion of the other sex.

In the context of late-eighteenth-century Damascus, such an exclusion places al-Barbīr firmly within the reactionary camp of social elites concerned about what Dana Sajdi describes as the “disorder of the new order”. In particular, these elites were anxious about the increasing visibility of women in public spaces and the mixing of genders — both forms of heterosociality that Maqāmāt al-Barbīr disavows. In some sense, we once again encounter the sincere adīb, whose commentary is meant to be read as morally upright and of benefit to the society in both temporal and spiritual terms.

Furthermore, the long discussion of women takes place immediately after the only scene in which the adīb and the narrator encounter a third character. This character is a party crasher

262 This is in addition to a number of scattered references to woman as such and female figures in Islamic history. Some are laudatory, such as the references on 31b to the Andalusian princess Wallada (d. 483/1091) and the Basran ascetic and poet Rābiʿa al-ʿAdawiyya (d. 135/752). Others are derogatory, such as the adīb’s claim on 11b that one of the negative effects of the age (dahr) on his contemporaries is that they have become “more obedient to women than Thawāb” (aṭṭaw’ li-l-nisāʾ min Thawāb).

263 Sajdi, The Barber of Damascus, 14-37.
(ṭufaylī) who attempts to join the main characters for a meal in their home. Despite their
grandiose claims of hospitality elsewhere in this text, when confronted with an actual guest, the
two companions disparage the ṭufaylī for his bad manners and lowly status and then toss him out.
After ejecting the ṭufaylī, and thereby rejecting lower class male companionship, the adīb and the
narrator turn immediately and abruptly to discussing women. This shows us that, in Maqāmāt al-
Barbīr at least, male homosociality is not only gendered but also classed; adab is not only an
exercise among men, but among elite men of a certain socio-economic status.

Having just excluded a socially-inferior man from their company, the adīb and the
narrator turn immediately to an objectifying discussion of women. The narrator asks the adīb:
“How many wives do you have?” In Arabic, the question employs three near synonyms for
“wife”: Kam min ḥalīlatīn wa-ṭallatīn wa-rabāḍīn ribahlatīn? The adīb’s answer sets the tone for
the entire passage. “One,” he replies, “and she is quite a lot and a tremendous amount even
though she is contemptible (wāḥida wa hiya kathīra wa ʿazīma wa in kānat ḥaqīra).” He then
offers a few pithy sayings to justify his position: “the goodness of women is evil” (khayr al-nisāʾ
isharr) and “the benefits [of women] are injurious” (nafʿuhunna ḍarr).

From these and similar sayings the adīb cites approvingly, we might summarize the
adīb’s position as follows. Women tempt men, corrupt them, deceive them, and take advantage
of them; and at the end of it all, women are not even grateful for the many blessings that their
husbands bestow upon them. (Both al-Shidyāq and al-Yāzijī will reiterate, examine, and in al-
Shidyāq’s case also satirize many of these complaints, as discussed in Chapter Three,

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264 Al-Barbīr, Maqāmāt al-Barbīr, 28b.
265 “Contemptible” is my attempt to convey both “despicable” and “paltry”, the two meanings of ḥaqīra upon which al-
Barbīr is playing. I thank Andrew McLaren for drawing this pun to my attention.
266 Khayr also has a superlative meaning, and the saying might also be rendered “the best of women are evil”. 
“Heterosocial Heroes”.) As al-Barbīr’s characters see it, most women are corrupt and corrupting; he subsequently calls them “Satan's snares” (ḥābaʾ il Shayṭān),\(^{267}\) itself a common enough saying to have an entry in al-Maydānī's canonical collection of sayings, Majmaʿ al-Amthāl.\(^{268}\) In the framing of Maqāmāt al-Barbīr, even the best women threaten men with misfortune and unhappiness.

Having called the morality of women as such into doubt, the adīb turns to the subject of marriage. He himself prefers “solitude” (al-wahda) over “the company of iniquity” (jalīs al-sūʾ), by which he means heterosociality.\(^{269}\) To the adīb, marriage is “nothing but a month of pleasure, a dowry's weight, the sorrows of fate, and a broken back” (ladhdhat shahr wa-wazn mahr wa-ghamm dahr wa-qāsm zahr).\(^{270}\) He cites Imam al-Shāfiʿī’s claim to have never seen married people praise marriage, two lines from a certain al-Bāʿūnī\(^{271}\) on the foolishness of old men pursuing young women, and two further lines by an unknown poet that read as follows:\(^{272}\)

A pretty girl called me to join her when my youth had left me old
I said: but my hair is not painted She said: oh yes, it is painted with gold

\(\text{وَخَوْدَةُ دعَتِي إِلَى وَصْلَهَا} \)

\(^{267}\) Al-Barbīr, Maqāmāt al-Barbīr, 28b. I thank Andrew McLaren for suggesting this particularly pleasing alliteration.

\(^{268}\) Al-Maydānī, Majmaʿ al-Amthāl, 3:384, #4233.

\(^{269}\) Al-Barbīr, Maqāmāt al-Barbīr, 28b.

\(^{270}\) Al-Barbīr, Maqāmāt al-Barbīr, 28b.

\(^{271}\) This al-Bāʿūnī might be one of three figures: Muḥammad bin Aḥmad bin Nāṣir al-Bāʿūnī (d. 587/1466), Muḥammad bin Yūsuf bin Ahmad al-Bāʿūnī (d. 916/1510), or Yūsuf bin Ḥamad bin Nāṣir bin Khalīfa al-Bāʿūnī (d. 588/1475). For biographical information on these three figures, see Ziriklī, al-ʿAlām, 5:334, 7:155, and 8:215 respectively.

\(^{272}\) Al-Barbīr, Maqāmāt al-Barbīr, 29a.
The *adīb* takes these lines as evidence that women have ulterior motives. They not only covet a man's money, but his reputation and the reputation of his family. Indeed, marriage is such a trial, and women so untrustworthy, that the *adīb* then recites two lines of poetry which recommend castration:

> Forget marriage for it is not easy  
> and if your soul calls you to it, disobey

> And of a union's dangers remind it  
> and if it does not stop, cut its balls away

>: خَلَ الْرَّوَاحَ فَمَا الْرَّوَاحُ يَهَبُ  
> وإِذَا دَعَتَكَ إِلَيْهِ نَفَّسُكَ فَاعْصَهَا

> فَإِنَّ انتِهَتْ عَنْهُ وَإِلَّا فَاحْصِهَا  
> وَاذْكِرْ لَهَا خَطْرَ الْرَّوَاحَ لَتْنَهَى

In a telling sign of the ways heterosexual desires threaten male homosociality, here the *adīb* endorses a poem that recommends castration over *heterosexual* marriage!

As the *adīb* puts it, the reason for such caution is that a good woman (*al-maraʾa al-šāliḥa*) is as rare as a black crow with a white blaze (*al-ghurāb al-ʿāsam*). The phrase is an expression, and commentators have differed as to whether *al-ʿāsam* refers to a white foot, a white wing, or a white feather; the point, however, is to convey the rarity of a given

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phenomenon. As evidence of the rarity of good women, the *adīb* describes the reaction of a woman in a hypothetical scenario where a man angers her. The passage in full is as follows:

As evidence of the scarcity of righteous women and the excess of wicked ones: If once you anger a woman who claims to treasure you like the most precious *treasure*, and leads you to believe she loves you beyond all *measure*, and that she loves you more than *herself*, her family and her *wealth*, and that you are the end of her *journeys* and the realization of her *dreams*, then the roots of that love will be uprooted until not even a grain's weight *remains*, and she will fabricate offenses for which you are not to *blame*, and attribute to you faults of which you are *clear*, and spread your secrets in every *ear*, and renounce every blessing in your home she once saw *appear*.275
The *adīb* makes these assertions in the second person. The “you” is primarily addressing the narrator, and less directly the audience. The scenario is rich in detail about the *adīb*'s imagination of heterosexual companionship, and helps us understand why he has such a negative view of women and marriage. To wit, the *adīb* has extraordinarily high expectations of a woman's love, fidelity, patience, and willingness to sacrifice for her husband; and he is equally convinced of her fickleness, volatility, and treachery. By not specifying what the man did to anger the woman, the passage implicitly exonerates the man while making the woman's anger seem all the more unreasonable and hyperbolic.

After a few lines about women being slithering snakes, the *adīb* then opines on the prime motivations for men to seek female companionship, given what he has already said about women's undesirable traits. While he believes that women use marriage for material and social gains, as discussed above, men, he claims, are driven by the need to satisfy their sexual desires. He says: “Needs force the noble man to seek refuge in abasement” (*al-ḥāja tulji` al-sayyid ilā al-andhāl*).276 To substantiate this contention, the *adīb* cites the Sufi master al-Junayd (d. 297/910)'s claim to need a woman as he needs food and the habit of ʿUmar al-Khaṭṭāb’s son, ʿAbdallāh (d. 73/692), to break his fasts with intercourse.277 While sexual desire may be a deeply-felt urge, for the *adīb* this does not relieve sexual acts, nor the heterosocial spaces in which they take place, of their moral taint.

While not as severe as Shāhriyār’s “solution”, the *adīb* in *Maqāmāt al-Barbīr* decides to

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abstain not only from sexual intercourse with women but also from heterosocial interactions writ large. The narrator, as the *adīb* subsequently learns, has reached a similar conclusion, but based on markedly different — and seemingly much more extensive — experiences. When the *adīb* asks about the narrator's relationship to marriage, the latter responds with a long description of his relationships with women and the hardships it has caused him.\(^{278}\) He claims to have married four women and taken concubines as well. Echoing the *adīb*’s suspicions about the burdens and hardships of heterosexuality, the narrator claims that these arrangements brought him nothing but:

successive disease and back-to-back horror, misfortune and strife, strikes and blows, and a fire without cooling respite or peace. Were I to satisfy one [woman], I would infuriate the others; and if I left them all, the harm would increase and spread.\(^{279}\)

Although unacknowledged in the narrator's account, it is the enormous privilege of having multiple wives and additional concubines, and the challenges of managing the emotional and financial tensions of his household, that causes him hardship. The narrator goes on to complain of women’s excessive demands, far beyond his ability to maintain, and the toll it took on his

body, his soul, and his purse. He concludes:

Here I am in the tightest of prisons and the greatest of bonds, and were it not for my inability to provide alimony and the remainder of the dowry, I would have fled from them with total divorce.280

Upon hearing the narrator's self-pitying account, the adīb is overcome with sympathy (asaf). This sympathy is couched in the amorous language of the adīb's “love” (ḥubb) and “infatuation” (shaghaf) for his newfound male companion, in striking contrast to their shared dissatisfaction with heterosocial companionship.281 The adīb reiterates his sympathy (shafqa) as a feeling from one friend (sadīq) to another, and then offers a brief prayer for the narrator's “relief” (fāraj) from the hardships of his romantic life. Seemingly without irony, the narrator responds that if he can secure “salvation from these snares [i.e. the women in his life]” (al-khalāṣ min tilka al-ḥabā'il), he swears to live a life as chaste as that of Jesus or John the Baptist.

What Maqāmāt al-Barbīr reveals is a male fantasy not of sexual conquest but of marital escape. Even in the privacy of their homosocial bubble, the narrator acknowledges his sexual exploits but does not brag; his sexual desire is not primarily a source of pleasure nor is his virility

280 Al-Barbīr, Maqāmāt al-Barbīr, 30b.
281 Al-Barbīr, Maqāmāt al-Barbīr, 30b.
a source of pride. Rather the former is an unfortunate biological necessity and the latter a socio-economic and psychological liability.

2.3 Al-Turk's Lonely Narrator

While Niqūlā al-Turk's narrator, al-Ḥāzim, is not explicitly fleeing from women, he is nonetheless compelled by a desire for male companionship. In many episodes, al-Ḥāzim leaves home in search of friends after complaining of loneliness and social isolation. In particular, the narrator seeks the company of al-Turk's adīb, Abū l-Nawādir. Abū l-Nawādir's antics not only relieve al-Ḥāzim's loneliness, but also promise amusement, adventure, and intellectual stimulation to relieve the boredom (malal) and restlessness (ḍajar) from which many maqāma narrators in the period under study seem to suffer. In this sense, Abū l-Nawādir's name (which could be translated literally to mean “The Father of Anecdotes”) is all the more germane, for his company brings with it curious stories, edifying speeches, poetic performances, and entertaining jokes.

*Al-Maqāma al-Maghīriyya* (1813) illustrates the affective and social dimensions of the lonely narrator's quest for companionship. This episode was composed as a response to a letter from al-Turk's fellow court poet Buṭrus Karāma, who at the time had been travelling with Emir Bashīr. In this sense, the depiction of male companionship sought by the characters in the *maqāma* parallels the male companionship which al-Turk, Karāma, and their peers secured and deepened through their epistolatory exchanges. While al-Turk's *maqāmakt* should not be read as

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282 While beyond the purview of this project, the homosociality of the *maqāmakt* in this corpus might be productively compared to the canonical *maqāmakt*. I am grateful to Matthew Keegan for bringing to my attention the possible fruitfulness of a comparison with al-Ḥarīrī's second *maqāma*, in which the narrator seems to be looking for the companionship of the *adīb* Abū Zayd when he goes to the library in the second half of the episode.
an unmediated source of social history, they certainly provide a dynamic portrait of how their author imagined male companionship and a window into his view of an idealized literary masculinity.

In *al-Maghīriyya*, the link between a feeling of loneliness and the search for male companionship is articulated from the very first lines, when al-Ḥāzim explains why he is traveling in the following way:

I was abandoned by my companions and shunned by consolations, so out of exasperation
I decided to travel and went out searching for a friend who I would enjoy seeing once again.\(^{283}\)

The narrator's social isolation gives rise to an affective state of *ḍajar*, which I have translated as “exasperation” but could also be rendered as “irritation” or “restlessness”. Relief from this feeling drives the narrator to take action in the form of travel, connecting the social and the affective with the central motif of travel in the *maqāma* genre.

In his search, al-Ḥāzim meets a man who is going to the town of al-Maghīriyya to join a pheasant hunt (*ṣayd al-ḥijāl*) hosted by a fictional emir. Unbeknownst to al-Ḥāzim, the

\(^{283}\) Al-Bustānī, Dīwān al-mu’allim Niqūlā al-Turk, 2:356.
enthusiastic hunter is Abū l-Nawādir. The disguised adīb uses his literary talents to praise hunting and enumerate its merits and then he invites al-Ḥāzim to come along and “watch” the hunt.\(^{284}\) In the course of his speech, Abū l-Nawādir mentions details of the practice of hunting among the elites of the Shihābī court, including Emir Bashīr's famed hunting dog Ayṭū and his hawk “Kāsib”.\(^{285}\) Perhaps such references point to a larger intended audience for this maqāma, especially given that al-Turk sent it to Karāma while the latter was traveling with Emir Bashīr. Regardless of the intended audience, Abū l-Nawādir's excitement for this male endeavor is expressed in his description of the men's raised voices and the commotion of their hunting animals.

The characters, however, never have a chance to participate in this homosocial rite. In the course of al-Maghīriyya, they are first waylaid by a storm and then suffer through a miserable run-in with a group of untalented musicians. Only after these trials are they guided towards a house where they might seek shelter by “the gentleness of a refined voice” (rakhāmat sawt latīf) reciting poetry. A boy (shābb) lets the two men in when they knock, his youthful charm complemented by his courteous manners and “an appearance that stripped away our pain” (azāla manzaruhu alāmanā). When they inquire, the boy admits he had composed the poem they heard for a long-lost friend named Abū l-Nawādir. The companions encourage the boy to recite the poem again, after which the adīb reveals himself. The characters revel in an exchange of poetry, relieving the narrator of his loneliness and satisfying his desire for literary entertainment at the same time. Here, as elsewhere, the homosociality of characters' interactions is textual, and

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\(^{284}\) The invitation is ambivalent, as it invites al-Ḥāzim to come along and “watch” this homosocial ritual but not to participate and fully belong.

\(^{285}\) Al-Bustānī, Dīwan al-mu'allim Niqūlā al-Turk, 2:357. For more anecdotes of Emir Bashīr's penchant for hunting, and the participation of his various court poets in glorifying the hunters, see Fuʿād al-Bustānī, ‘Alā ʿahd al-amīr, 92, 111-112. In both of these anecdotes, Buṭrus Karāma composes odes related to Emir Bashīr's hawk, Kāsib.
specifically literary, insofar as socializing entails exchanging refined speech, especially in the form of poetry. Indeed, al-Ḥāzim does not only praise the boy's gentle voice, but adds that they are guided to his house by:

the tune of an alluring composition with expressive language and delightful substance, strong meter and rhyme in concordance

Al-Maghāriyya puts male homosociality on display. At one level, it presents three possible homosocial gatherings: the hunt, the musical performance, and the poetry recital. While Emir Bashīr may have preferred the hunt (and the martial masculinity it privileged), in this episode at least, it is the poetry recital that pleases the characters and relieves al-Ḥāzim's loneliness.

In so doing, al-Maghāriyya introduces a third male character — the young man — who shares the literary masculinity of the two main characters. The narrator and the adīb are not only attracted to the young man's charming voice, but grateful for his hospitality and good manners, admiring of his poetic skills, and drawn to his youthful attractiveness. Taken together, these are the traits which comprise a desirable male literary companion in al-Maghāriyya. While the sensual descriptions of the boy's face, voice, and presence do suggest a glimmer of erotic desire, the predominant desire is not sexual or erotic, but rather social. Given that for al-Ḥāzim the social and the affective are tied together, it is precisely this type of gathering that relieves the

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narrator of the restless irritation (ﺩﺍataire) which motivated his travels in the first place.

The lonely narrator appears as well in the third maqāma, entitled al-Maqāma al-Kānūniyya. As per the scribe's notes, this episode was created around lines of poetry which al-Turk composed for Emir Bashīr and his court in the cold winter month of Kānūn al-Awwal in 1811. This bit of social history not only accounts for the episode's name, but also, like al-Maghūriyya, shows a maqāma deeply embedded in the male homosocial practices of the Shihābī court. Unlike the practices of hunting, however, here men gather to play cards, make bets, and exchange stories and verse.

Al-Ḥāzim opens al-Kānūniyya with a complaint about his loneliness and a testament to the value of friendship:

The moon of Kānūn has appeared and the time for concealment drawn near. The night was not yet in decline, and men toward their pillows reclined. The gathering of brothers is sweet, as is the embrace of friends when they meet, enraptured with a love of late nights, to rend the gown of boredom and plight. By the troubles of night I was gripped, for of friends and family I was stripped. I had been harmed by my migrations, lacking companions and neighborly relations.289

287 In al-Turk's maqāmāt loneliness is connected to place, or rather to being out-of-place, insofar as a life of travel has isolated the narrator from the pleasures of companionship. In a complement to the geographic focus of many maqāma collections, al-Kānūniyya links sociality to the cycle of the year and the day. Here it is the temporal setting, a winter night, that heightens the loneliness of the wandering narrator. Yet the ultimate determinant of belonging is neither geographic nor temporal, but linguistic: It is Abū l-Nawādir's eloquence, erudition, and etiquette that draws other men, including al-Ḥāzim, to his company.

288 Given that al-Turk uses many words from the local dialect of Arabic, “kānūn” here might also refer to the practice of sitting around a fire or a heater and socializing during the winter. I thank Ms. Samar Awada for first pointing out this possible reading to me, and Dr. Maurice Pomerantz for drawing my attention to the fact that the same pun is found in the Mamlūk literature of Ibn Nubāta and Ibn Ḥijja al-Ḥamawi. For a detailed account of rhetorical features such as double entendre (tawriyah), see Thomas Bauer, “Communication and Emotion: The Case of Ibn Nubatah’s Kindertotenlieder,” Mamluk Studies Review 7 (2003): 84-5.

Calling forth a host of male companions, from brother to neighbor to friend, this passage again treats homosociality as an antidote to the common trope of boredom and irritation (al-malal wa-l-ḍajar). In particular, the passage connects homosocial and textual pleasure: male space is the space of textual exchange. In this passage at least, the further association between male homosociality and the pleasures of late nights, when women are presumably asleep or at least at home, suggests that masculinity dominates specific times as well as spaces.

Al-Ḥāzim then articulates, albeit in highly aspirational terms, the general type of companion for whom he is searching:

I went out at night from my hidden abode, wrapped in my outer robe, searching for a friend to treat sincerely, a comrade whose good graces I could attain, some pleasant company I could entertain, a table companion whom I could keep up late, a littérateur whom I could debate, someone astute with whom to jest, someone experienced with whom to digress, a clever thinker with whom to discuss.290

290 Al-Bustānī, Dīwān al-mu’allim Niqūlā al-Turk, 2:352. For the sake of the rhyme, in my translation I switched the order
In addition to reiterating that his search for companions took place at night, this passage offers a rhyming typology of male homosocial companionship: a friend (ṣadiq), a comrade (rafīq), pleasant company (anīs), a table companion (jalīs), a littérateur (adīb), someone astute (labīb), someone experienced (khabīr), and a clever thinker (nihrīr). In each case, the type of companion is accompanied by an action which the narrator desires to undertake. In aggregate, al-Ḥāzim imagines a companion who is an intellectual interlocutor, an entertaining friend, and someone capable of providing advice and guidance.

These desirable attributes are embodied in the adīb Abū l-Nawādir. In al-Kānūniyya, the narrator finds Abū l-Nawādir working as a poet in a fictional Emir’s court. Like the author himself, Abū l-Nawādir’s job is to praise the winners and mock the losers of the nightly card games. No bets are made, and no money is exchanged. Words and reputation are what is wagered. These games are played, or so the reader is told by the scribes, to pass the long winter nights in amusement.291 Here it behooves us to think dialectically: a text that describes the loneliness of these winter nights also played a prominent role in combatting it.

In this sense, al-Kānūniyya is a vital part of the circulation of debts and obligations that

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make a community, not merely a record or representation of that community.\textsuperscript{292} *Al-Kānūniyya,* in other words, is both a source to describe homosociality in the emir's court and one of the substitute currencies that holds that court together. The card games are played between men, and the episode written by and performed before a male audience, deepening the link between homosociality and textuality. While the narrator frequently searches for Abū l-Nawādir, rarely does he find his old friend alone; the narrator and \textit{adīb} often encounter one another before an audience of men, adding a communal dimension to their companionship. In \textit{al-Maghīriyya}, as we saw above, al-Ḥāzim is invited to participate in the ritual of a hunt, then stumbles upon the group of untalented musicians; the episode concludes with him, Abū l-Nawādir, and the boy with the sweet voice exchanging tender poetry. Likewise, in *Al-Kānūniyya,* al-Ḥāzim leaves home in search of Abū l-Nawādir, and upon meeting him, is drawn into the social world of the Emir's winter court, where he (much like al-Turk) entertains the assembled male guests with his poetry.

Given these considerations, it is no surprise that the recognition scene, in which the narrator recognizes the \textit{adīb}, is rife with affective and social significance. When the narrator recognizes Abū l-Nawādir, they greet one another with an intimate embrace described in the amorous language of reunited lovers. This embrace, repeated time and again, is the physical, bodily expression of the narrative stage of the recognition. In \textit{al-Maqāma al-Kisrawaniyya}, for instance, al-Ḥāzim's description of his encounter with Abū l-Nawādir expresses facets of the physical and affective dimensions of male homosociality. Speaking of the \textit{adīb}, he says:

\textsuperscript{292} The praise poems, composed and performed by al-Turk in the Emir’s court, and then placed in the mouth of Abū l-Nawādir, reflect the interpenetration of the social and the economic. Three of the ten poems in this \textit{maqāma} speak of the shame of losing as a debt (\textit{dayn}) that must be repaid. Al-Bustānī, \textit{Divān al-mu’allim Niqūlā al-Turk}, 2:354.
I greeted him with expressions of *peace* and so he stood upon his feet and our embrace and kisses did not *cease*, nor did our pronouncements of affection and longing, until each had satisfied his rights upon meeting and was contented with an intimacy built upon purity. Then he sat and drew me *near*, wiping from each eyelid a *tear*. So I gave him time to *finish* and drink from his weeping as he might *wish*.293

We might note here that the two characters embrace, kiss one another, narrate (*sard*) their longing and amorous love, and satisfy one another's emotional needs. Just as Abū ʿl-Nawādir does not disguise his weeping from al-Ḥāzim, al-Turk does not shy away from reporting his tears to his immediate audience. Likewise, the farewell scenes at the end of many episodes are tinged with the sadness of companions parting ways.

Considering the frequency of such scenes in the corpus, that homosocial space was a primary site for men to not only experience but also express their emotions to one another. Such expressions, at least in the idealized depictions of masculinity in this corpus, were not at odds with conceptions of hegemonic masculinity. Indeed, the characters' affective experience of

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recognition, and the amorous language of embrace, is the primary site of intimacy in al-Turk's 
maqāmāt.

2.4 A Maqāma to Police Hazl

Al-Turk's maqāmāt were not only a site for the exploration of ideals of male friendship, 
but also a means to regulate social life by expressing dismay at the violation of norms and the 
disruption of the social order. This policing of social transgression, and in particular the jest 
(hazl) and trickery that are themselves major components of the maqāma genre, takes the form of 
a father figure reproaching his metaphorical “sons” — a group of younger men. This reproaching 
father figure describes the disposition and site of authority for both the author Niqūlā al-Turk and 
his adīb, Abū l-Nawādir.

Al-Turk's sixth maqāma, al-Qādiyya, exemplifies this particular reproduction of 
homosocial relationships inside and outside the text. Al-Qādiyya was written in 1807, when al-
Turk learned that some of the younger men in Emir Bashīr’s court had concocted a rumor that he 
(al-Turk) had become semi-paralyzed (infalaja). Before the rumor could spread, or so we are told 
by the scribe, al-Turk composed and recited this maqāma upon the “dirty ears” of his “sons”.294 
This maqāma is a vehicle for the author to articulate two complementary processes: punishment 
and forgiveness, through which we witness male homosocial bond between generations come 
into and be drawn out of crisis.295 

Al-Qādiyya begins like many other maqāmāt in this collection. The narrator complains of
restlessness or boredom (*malal*), and decides to leave home in search of relief or consolation. Al-Ḥāzim wanders the roads until he comes upon the court (*dīwān*) of a judge. “Ha,” he exclaims, “Here we’ve reached *insight*, and can cease our worrying and *fright*” (*qad aṣabnā al-ʿilm wa-azalnā al-humūm wa-l-ghamm*). In this episode, it is not the company of friends with their banter nor errant disciples with their rumors, but rather the discursive world of an erudite judge that relieves al-Ḥāzim's worries:

In the judges’ court many kinds of lawsuits are brought forth, and it is pleasing to one's *ears* to listen to the strange cases that one *hears*. In this way, we can tear apart the gown of *apprehension*, and end our endless *contemplation*.

The judge himself has a dignified posture and greets al-Ḥāzim with a kind face and authentic affection. When the narrator bends down to kiss his hand, the judge turns his palm up, a sign of his modesty and lack of arrogance (*kibr*). Like the companions described above, the judge invites him to sit and engages him in conversation, which turns to questions of *ḥadīth*.

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296 In a subtle irony that plays across two episodes, the homeless narrator of the first *maqāma* and the restless narrator of the sixth use the same word — a sanctuary (*maʿāwī*). Yet the former wants to secure the sanctuary of a home while the latter seeks to escape from it. Al-Bustānī, *Dīwān al-muʿallim Niqūlā al-Turk*, 2:368.


But then another man bursts in, extremely agitated. Although al-Ḥāzim does not yet recognize him, this man is Abū l-Nawādir. After the customary greetings, the new arrival praises the judge and introduces himself as a person of good character with strong friendships. He treats his friends so well, he explains, that he considers them to be sons, and they consider him their father. However his “sons”, he complains, have been spreading a rumor about him. Abū l-Nawādir says: “I did not know what wickedness and betrayal their hearts conceal, and what hidden deceit and cursedness their tongues might reveal” (wa lam adrī mā intawat ‘alayhi qulūbuhum min al-ghadr wa l-khiyāna wa mā khabiya taḥt ilsanatihim min al-makr wa l-la‘āna). As al-Ḥāzim watches and narrates, the aggrieved man asks the judge to intervene.

The narrative proceeds from here to model punishment and then forgiveness; in its recitation before the offending “sons” in Dayr al-Qamar, this text also enacts punishment and forgiveness in social space. The injured “father” figure, whom the reader realizes is Abū l-Nawādir long before al-Ḥāzim does, produces the culprits for the judge. After an exchange of furious insults between the father and his “sons,” the judge doles out harsh words and harsher sentences. Each “son” is shackled and thrown in prison. One is tortured in graphic ways familiar from historical accounts in this period: his teeth are pounded with a hammer, and a piece of his tongue is cut out.

Speaking both literally and symbolically, the tongue is an organ of central importance not only in the maqāma but in the homosocial world of letters in which both characters and authors lived. The rumor that the boys spread, both inside the narrative and outside, is that their

301 The tongue (al-lisān) has a long and rich history in Arabic writing and thought. While this is not the place to offer a comprehensive account, a few illustrative examples add both weight and depth to al-Turk’s tongue-in-cheek portrayal of eloquence and otherness. The Qurʾān describes itself as a “clear, Arabic tongue” (lisān ‘arabī mubīn), notably in distinction to
“father” had become paralyzed. According to Abū l-Nawādir’s complaint, this paralysis (infilāj) includes paralysis of the tongue (inbakama lisānuhu). By spreading a rumor that al-Turk had lost the capacity for speech, his “sons” were also hinting that he could no longer participate in the literary life of the court. Rendered mute, one of the boys who spread the rumor is imagined to share his victim's possible fate: exclusion from the male-dominated world in which the literary was performed and rewarded.

Yet this maqāma is also a scene of forgiveness. After seeing his “sons” paraded before him in chains, the adīb is overcome with sympathy. He recites a praise poem for the judge and asks him to pardon the boys. The judge is surprised and confused, and so the adīb reiterates in prose what he first said in verse:

I saw that overlooking improcety is an attribute of high society; and that the tongue is better at teaching than the fist when it is beating. For those who are not moved by speech (kalām), neither beating nor cutting (kilām) will reach.302

فرأيت إغضاء الصرف عن الهفوات من مناقب آل النحوات وتأديب الإنسان باللسان أفود من ضرب الفطبان إذ من لا يؤثر فيه الكلام لا الضرب يعيبه ولا الكلام

the falsehoods of an “ā’jamī tongue” (lisān ʿjamī). (Q 16:103) The term ʿjamī not only means foreign, but also obscure, outlandish, and barbarous. Likewise, when told to confront Pharaoh in the Qurʾān, Moses asks God to “make loose the knot from my tongue, that they may understand my speech” (wa aḥlul ʿuqda min lisānī yafqahū qawlī). (Q 20:27-8) The tongue's many flaws (as well as the imperfections of mind and character they may reveal) are enumerated not only in the Arabic lexicon but in the particular maqāma they make up the corpus being studied here.

We know from scribal notes that this *maqāma* was read aloud by a messenger to the errant young men in Dayr al-Qamar who had slandered al-Turk. In this sense, *al-Qādiyya* was meant to reproach them and stem the spread of their malicious rumor. This message was likely intended to communicate with a degree of dignity and self-respect the hurt feelings of their author, while at the same time offering a clear pathway for the “sons” to repent and return to the fold.

What *al-Qādiyya* adds to our discussion of homosociality is a form of male-male relationships that are intergenerational and (at least imagined to be) familial. *Al-Qādiyya* presents a didactic father-son homosociality that is not about securing rewards nor entertaining companions. Rather, *al-Qādiyya* is about the limits of etiquette, the consequences of transgressing them, and the social mechanisms through which fathers (and the authoritative older generation they represent) might seek redress and offer forgiveness to their “sons”.

### 2.5 In Praise of the Patron

There is another type of male character, and hence another dimension of male homosociality, that has been hinted at above and is addressed directly in this and the following section. The character is the patron. In the *maqāmāt* of Aḥmad al-Barbīr and Niqūlā al-Turk, the patron is not only the primary audience of the text, as demonstrated in the preceding chapter, but also a significant presence in the narrative itself. Patrons not only rule the cities and provinces of the Levant, but host celebrations and parties, lead wild game hunts, judge horseman and wrestling contests, and most importantly for our purposes, constitute the primary audience and most important judge of our authors' literary compositions. The patron's masculinity, and the

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303 For the scribal notes, see the opening paragraph of *al-Qādiyya* in al-Bustānī, *Dīwān al-mu’allim Niqūlā al-Turk*, 2:368.
homosocial space that he constructs and maintains with the poets in his court, are a vital part of the larger story of how the *maqāma* treats literary masculinity as hegemonic.

In the case of *Maqāmāt al-Barbīr*, nearly the last fifth of the manuscript (from 43a to 50a) is dedicated to an elaborate exchange of poems and prose enumerating the virtues of one of al-Barbīr's patrons, a man named Darwīsh Aghā or Ibn Jaʿfar. It contains passages of rhyming prose, citations to famous lines of praise poetry, original compositions attributed to the *adīb* and the narrator, and a series of parables meant to illustrate Ibn Jaʿfar's exemplary qualities and admirable deeds. He describes Ibn Jaʿfar as the sea from which he could draw water (*baḥran li-wardika*) and the face which he could seek (*wajhan li-qāṣdika*) due to the patron's fidelity (*wafāʾ*), modesty (*ḥayāʾ*), generosity (*aghzar hibāʾ*), standing (*jāh*), and authority (*qāh*). The list of superlatives continues, reiterating different facets of Ibn Jaʿfar's moral fiber and social status, as well as his physical beauty, courage, refinement, patience, and memory.

Al-Turk goes a step further and writes Emir Bashīr into a number of his *maqāma* episodes as a character. The *adīb*'s praise for this fictive patron and the patron's subsequent granting of a reward constitute the main narrative action of these panegyrical episodes. Accordingly, these texts can be considered sophisticated instruments to negotiate the material value of textuality, in line with the long-standing practices of panegyric and courtly patronage in the Arabo-Islamic world. That the ritual of patronage is both depicted in and performed by the *maqāma* is a key illustration of the genre's elaborate forms of reflexivity and agency.

Al-Turk’s oeuvre is full of such requests. In *al-Maqāma al-Lubnāniyya* (undated), the *adīb* requests (and the author is granted) a fur coat and provisions for the winter. In al-Turk's praise poems, he made requests for wheat, lentils, chickpeas, rice, cheese, oil, fat, liquor (*ʿaraq*),
wine, tobacco, snuff and even materials to fix a damaged roof. In al-Maqāma al-Shamaṣṭāriyya (1806), rather than requesting something from a patron, the maqāma makes a request (or a demand, rather) for tax payment on behalf of the emir. In al-ʿAkkāwīyya (undated, but likely after 1807), al-Shūfiyya (undated), and al-Ṣaydāwīyya (1815), the maqāma is addressed to and likely recited for a patron aligned with Emir Bashīr. While al-Turk did not make explicit requests for material rewards in these three episodes, they can be read as both elaborations on the character of the patron as well as a means for the author to elevate his own status and solidify Emir Bashīr's political allegiances. While these episodes describe both the request and the reward, they are simultaneously a means for the author himself to negotiate the value of a work of prose fiction, and more broadly, the role of the court poet. In this sense, these episodes might be thought of as a market in which the value of the text as currency is negotiated largely, if not exclusively, among men.

In al-Dayriyya, the performance of which was discussed in the preceding chapter, Abū l-Nawādīr requests and is granted sanctuary (a maʿwā) from the fictional emir. The adīb's request is nested within a number of frame narratives. The first frame is Abū l-Nawādīr's dream, which he narrates before a gathering (jamʿ) in Dayr al-Qamar that included the narrator, al-Ḥāzīm.

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305 Al-Shamaṣṭāriyya was composed in 1806 to compel the head of the village of Shamaṣṭār in Baʿalbak to pay a debt of two sacks of wheat to the Emir. While its narrative revolves around a fantastical story of a man who claimed to grow magical wheat into full stalks in half an hour, its purpose was to remind a recalcitrant notable of his duties under the īltīzam system of tax collection. Scribal notes indicate that this maqāma was sent to the brother of the notable in Shamaṣṭār, who paid the outstanding taxes, thereby resolving the debt to the Emir. With a bit of imagination, this episode might be thought of as a literary parallel to Emir Bashīr’s much-reviled tax collectors.
306 Al-Akkāwīyya was addressed to the muʾallim Hayyam al-Ṣarrāf and contains praise for the wazīr of Acre, Sulayman Basha, and ‘Alī Agha Abī Abdallah Katkhada.
307 Al-Shūfiyya is set in the town of al-Mukhtar in the Shīfī Mountains and written in praise of the Emir Bashīr Junblāt.
308 Al-Ṣaydāwīyya was addressed to the governor of Akkar, ‘Alī Bīk al-ʿĀṣ ad.
309 Al-Ḥāzīm's account of Abū l-Nawādīr's dream narration is replete with thick description of acts of textuality. Al-Ḥāzīm says: “I saw someone amidst the crowd, telling a story sweet to hear aloud. He told the people of his dream, helping them see what it might mean. So I listened to him, as he related what had appeared to him of the strange things in his sleep he had seen, and the mixed-up jumble of his dreams.” (ʿAlqaytu shakkān fi wāst al-jamʿ yasruḍu mā yaladhiḥū ilā l-samʿ wa-yaqṣṣuʿ ālā l-qawm ḥilman wa yuṣīduhuhum fihī ʿilman fā-ṣagḥawtu ilayhi wa ḥirā wa yarwiʾ ammā tajallāʾ alayhi min gharāʾīb mā raʾ āhu fī)
The second frame is that al-Ḥāzim relates this narrative to an anonymous shadow narrator (common to the genre), who in a third frame then relates it to the audience. The nesting of narrative frames served to distance the author and the appeal he is making to his patron. In distancing the author from his appeal, these frames create the “polite fiction,” as Marcel Mauss calls it, that the author is offering the maqāma as a gift rather than seeking to oblige the recipient, in this case Emir Bashīr, to reciprocate.310

Abū l-Nawādir’s dream is the primary narrative vehicle through which both the adīb and the author articulate their request of the patron, and hence merits close reading. The dream begins with a terrifying scene of apocalypse: the hills tremble, violent winds are whipped up, lightning crowds the sky.311 Suspended above the waves of a roiling sea, the dreaming adīb sees “a shooting star” (shīhāb) break across the sky.312 This is a transparent allusion to the author’s patron, Emir Bashīr al-Shihāb, who sends down an eagle to rescue Abū l-Nawādir and bring him to the heavens.313 Full of gratitude, Abū l-Nawādir approaches the emir to ask for a ma’wā, a term that in this context means both sanctuary and an actual house.314

The emir responds with the “utmost eloquence” (aḥsan ifṣāḥ), thereby connecting facility

313 The presence of the emir calms the waters and settles the tempest. An eagle swoops down and carries the dreamer to the heavens, where he encounters a second “shīhāb” of the horizons (shīhāb al-ṭūfāq) surrounded by brilliant stars and gripping a deadly sword (ḥusām ḥusām). An anonymous voice details the awesome powers of this figure. “Eagle” is one possible translation of “al-ṭūfāq”, but it can also refer to the constellation of Aquila, which would fit the astronomical elements of Abū l-Nawādir’s description of the dream.
314 In contrast to the deceitful appeals and false poverty of the adīb in other maqāma collections, here Abū l-Nawādir’s request is strikingly sincere. Although he has not wholly surrendered his trickery, as we will see, he never once tricks the emir. Indeed, in those maqāmāt addressed to al-Turk’s patrons, Abū l-Nawādir’s concerns and feelings are often expressed in the tone of jidd, or sincerity, rather than hazl, or jest.
in speech with the distribution of material and political rewards. In granting al-Turk his request, the emir writes a contract on a board (lawḥ). It reads:

I hereby grant you a place among the moon’s stations, from which you can exalt over all the nations. I draw you close to the sky’s dome, and entrust you with the finest home. I bequeath to you the best manor, for those of the highest honor. And I will instruct the stars, to gather ‘round you in the heights where you are.315

The contract promises a physical home that corresponds to Abū l-Nawādir's social status within Dayr al-Qamar; it has a material value as well as a symbolic one for the poet. Likewise, it demonstrates the patron's magnanimity, itself a sign of his wealth and political authority. The emir's generosity shakes the adīb with an intensity of ecstasy (ṭarab) and astonishment (ʿajab) usually reserved in the maqāma for an audience's reaction to a work of great erudition or literary

315 Al-Bustānî, Dīwān al-mu’allim Niqūlā Al-Turk, 2:346.
finesse.

Abū l-Nawādir tells the audience that he awakens in this heightened affective state of ecstasy and astonishment and begins to search for someone to interpret his dream. He finds a learned man who has studied the Interpretation of Dreams (Tafsīr al-aḥlām) of Ibn Sīrīn (d. 110/728). This learned man's interpretation breaks the dream into its component narrative parts and offers a symbolic rendering of each. The convulsing earth and violent winds are taken as a sign (dalīl) of Abū l-Nawādir's internal state of turmoil (mā bika min al-balwā).316 The brilliant light that Abū l-Nawādir encountered in the sky is explained as “the great emir”: “the harbinger of peace, star of the human race” (bashīr as-salām wa shihāb al-ānām).317 The interpreter sees the Emir’s gifts as a sign of his intent to protect Abū l-Nawādir in his realm, now explicitly named as Dayr al-Qamar, and to grant the poet his nested request for a home.

The interpretation is borne out. In the final scene of al-Dayriyya, Abū l-Nawādir invites al-Ḥāzim to see the beautiful new house which the emir has granted him. Al-Turk's portrayal of Emir Bashīr's double as generous with his wealth and his political clout might be read not only as a humble request but as a clever trick. This trick is played upon Emir Bashīr, who will want to aspire to the magnanimity of his fictive double. In this sense, al-Dayriyya exemplifies the ways in which al-Turk's maqāmāt do not merely depict the patron in a laudatory fashion, but do so to derive material benefits from contrasting the portrayal of the ideal ruler against the real.318

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318 Speaking of the panegyrical, invective, and elegiac ode (qaṣīda) in the Abbasid Empire, Monroe and Pettigrew offer the following assessment: “By its very nature, the qaṣīda is a courtly genre, and its delivery constitutes an important courtly ritual. Its function is to uphold a specific ideal of rulership, and it (1) either praises the ruler for living up to that ideal, while simultaneously reminding him of the ideal itself, (2) chastises him for not living up to the ideal, or (3) mourns his death, while simultaneously reminding us of the ideal up to which he lived.” James Monroe and Mark Pettigrew, “The Decline of Courtly Patronage and the Appearance of New Genres in Arabic Literature: The Case of the Zajal, the Maqāma, and the Shadow Play,” Journal of Arabic Literature 34, no. 1/2 (2003): 158.
However, with the collapse of the Shihābī Emirate and the shift of the location and site of maqāma performance, the patron as a literary figure is also transformed.

2.6 King Bakhshīsh and the Patron's Decline

The demise of the patronage system was reflected in the declining status and diminished presence of the character of the patron (and perhaps his particular brand of hegemonic masculinity) in the later maqāmāt in this study. In the two decades following the collapse of the Shihābī Emirate in 1840, maqāma authors either minimized the role of the character of the patron, lampooned him in their texts, or adopted broader critiques of the economy of literary patronage and the poetics of praise. Notably, the patron's decline reintroduces the satirical tone to a genre that had come to embrace the sincerity of the panegyric, at least in the maqāmāt of al-Barbīr and al-Turk.

While Majmaʿ al-Bahrayn diminishes the role of the patron in the narrative, it is Aḥmad Fāris al-Shidyāq's al-Maqāma al-Bakhshīshīyya that actively restores the mocking tone and explicit social critique to the genre. In contrast to the characters in the maqāmāt of al-Barbīr and al-Turk, the characters in al-Shidyāq's al-Bakhshīshīyya tell stories in which refined language and eloquence are an obstacle to obtaining wealth, and hence worthy of scorn much like the authority figures that such laudatory language is meant to flatter. Consistent with the broader link between political authority and elite practices of textuality, al-Shidyāq's ridicule of the figure of the patron goes hand-in-hand with his mockery of what he portrays as the obsequiousness of the poet-patron relationship and the superficiality of the poetics of praise.319 Furthermore, in the

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319 It is worth noting an ironic twist that perhaps enhances the comic and critical dimensions of this episode. Despite al-Shidyāq's parody of the figure of the patron and the poetics of praise in al-Bakhshīshīyya, he himself was a frequent object of
choice of “bakhshīsh” as both the title and main theme of the episode, al-Shidyāq moves away from the model of the maqāma as a site of negotiation between poet and patron to one in which the critique of contemporary practices and authorities is for sale in the newly-configured market of the Nahḍa journal.

Al-Shidyāq republished al-Bakhshīshīyya in the first volume of an anthology entitled Kanz al-gharāʾib fī muntakhabāt al-Jawāʾib, in either 1871 or 1872. This maqāma can be divided into four distinct narratives that revolve around the shifting meaning of the term “bakhshīsh”. It opens with a narrator, identified only as “a traveler” or perhaps “a tourist” (aḥad al-suwwāḥ), reading that quintessentially modern form of writing: a newspaper (baʿḍ al-ṣuḥuf). From the news (akhbār), the narrator-cum-tourist learns of a king named Bakhshīsh who rules a far-away country. Impressed by the description of this king, and disappointed that he cannot find the king’s name in any biographical dictionary of rulers, the narrator resolves to visit his kingdom and write a book about him. Yet when the narrator arrives in King Bakhshīsh’s country in the second narrative section, he is accosted by a series of locals demanding “bakhshīsh” for various services. From “bakhshīsh” being the proper name of a sovereign patron, it acquires a second meaning of the “tips” that the narrator begrudgingly pays to a boat captain, a porter, a waiter, and a shopkeeper in the bustling port and marketplaces of an unspecified city in praise. Indeed, the entire fourth volume of Kanz al-gharāʾib is devoted to collecting praise poetry composed for al-Shidyāq by his contemporaries from across the Arabic-speaking world. Furthermore, al-Shidyāq was a prolific panegyrist whose compositions fill the third volume of the same collection. Some of these poems won him prestigious positions and social recognition. A praise poem he composed for Ahmad Bāsha Bay of Tunis won him an appointment as the editor of the state paper al-Rāʾid. A subsequent panegyric to the Sublime Porte after the war with Russia led to an invitation to Istanbul, where he was asked in 1861 to found the first Arabic literary journal in the Ottoman Empire, al-Jawāʾib. Al-Jawāʾib was also the name of the press that al-Shidyāq founded in Istanbul in the 1860s, and on which he republished al-Bakhshīshīyya a decade later, in 1871. See Salīm Fāris al-Shidyāq (ed.), Kanz al-gharāʾib fī muntakhabāt al-Jawāʾib, Vols. 3 and 4 (Istanbul: Al-Jawāʾib Press, 1878 [1295 H]).

I have not been able to find information regarding the date and circumstances of initial composition and publication.

King Bakhshīsh's realm.

At the end of the second section, the narrator meets an old friend from his home country. The narrator's complaints about the practice of demanding tips compels his friend to relate his own story, thereby opening the third narrative section. The friend tells the narrator about how his wife’s penchant for giving “gifts” (also called “bakhshīsh”) to neighbors for every social occasion big and small bankrupted their family. The use of the term “bakhshīsh” for both tips for services in the market and gifts to mark an array of social occasions in one's community adds considerable nuance to the term. In the final section, the narrator eagerly agrees to hear a second story from his friend in order to record (udawwin) the customs (‘ādāt) of the country (al-balad) for his book. The friend's second story is about his failed attempt to cash a promissory note he received in exchange for services to a “famous emir”. He attributes the failure to his attempts to flatter an agent (wakīl) and then a money changer (ṣarrāf) with words rather than slip them some bakhshīsh, i.e., a bribe.

In the opening pages of al-Bakhshīshiyya, the figure of the patron is the primary object of parody. While the narrator reports that the newspaper describes King Bakhshīsh as “magnificent and capable, pleasant faced and sociable” (majd kamīsh, anīs bashīsh), the sincerity of this praise is thrown into doubt by the relentlessly Shidyāqian hyperbole of what follows. The narrator reads that King Bakhshīsh's commands are always obeyed and his rule never contested, and that he wills truth (al-ḥaqq) into falsehood (al-bātil) and vice versa. Furthermore, it is reported that the King's subjects are so satisfied that they inscribe the first letter of his name, “bā” or “b”, on their foreheads and the walls of their homes. These exaggerated depictions of the King's power

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and popularity indicate that, while he may be lauded by the newspaper, the *maqāma* presents him in a parodic light.

Reinforcing this impression, the newspaper also details the rules of etiquette that govern relations between the patron and his subjects. If asked about the King, the narrator learns, his subjects must recall his distinguished lineage (*ašl wa fašl*) and attest to his honor (*sharaf*) and nobility (*nubl*). Moreover, if one hears someone singing the King's praises in prose (*nathr*), he must intone after each paragraph: “Amen, the trustworthy speaker spoke truth!” (*āmīn, ṣadaqa al-qā’il al-amīn*). However, in an allusion to the *maqāma*’s alternating use of rhyming prose (*saj’*) and poetry, if the praise is in verse, one is obligated to jump and leap with joy and exclaim the following: “I have never seen a harbinger (*bashīr*) and a herald (*nadhīr*) like today. He has delighted (*aṭraba*) my emotions and foretold what will be tomorrow.”

The narrator’s naive curiosity about this remarkable emir and his loyal subjects extends the mockery to reach those alleged sycophants who would praise their ruler.

*Al-Bakhshīshiyya* not only mocks the patron and his subjects, but casts a critical light on the use of language to obtain gifts. This is expressed by an inversion of the *maqāma*’s familiar trope of the reward. Whereas earlier patrons are depicted as generous, and their subjects are granted rewards, in *al-Bakhshīshiyya* both the narrator and his friend relay stories in which they are exploited as foreigners, bankrupted by family members, and denied wealth by petty and resentful bureaucrats. In each case, rather than using their eloquence to win material rewards and social recognition, the narrator and his friend are victims of language. In the second section, for example, those demanding “*bakhshīsh*” in the sense of “tips” do not threaten the narrator in

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324 Al-Shidyāq, “Al-Maqāma al-Bakhshīshiyya,” 70.
speech so much as they threaten him with speech. The boat captain who brings the narrator from the steamship to the shore complains and curses until the narrator acquiesces to his demand for a tip. Likewise, the narrator accedes to the porter who brings his luggage to the hotel after realizing that he was “prepared to go on at length” (mustaʿidd li-l-ishāb) and, in similar fashion, to the waiter at the restaurant after observing that he was “ready to expatiate and expound” (mustaʿidd li-l-ikthār wa-l-tamādī).325 Speech here is not a vehicle for eloquence but a means of exhaustion; and it is one which the fragile narrator, exasperated and far from home, is unable to withstand or rebut.

The story of a promissory note, relayed in the final section of al-Bakhshīshiyya, illustrates the crisis of praise with al-Shidyāq's typical levity and acuity. As mentioned above, this story is relayed by the narrator's friend, who was offered a promissory note (ḥāwāla) in exchange for the service (khidma) he rendered to an emir well-known (mashhūr) for his graciousness (fadl), generosity (karam), and high-mindedness (ʿulūw al-himam).326 Quickly betraying the emir's true character, however, the friend relays that he must ask (istamīḥ) for the note from the emir's agent (wakīl). In something of an aside to the reader, the friend confides his intentions to use the language of praise to aggrandize the agent with “beautiful titles” (al-alqāb al-husnā) and diminish himself. The letter he then writes to the agent is replete with flattering metaphors and laudatory superlatives. This act of humility is strategic and instrumental, not a matter of morals (adab) but a ploy to secure a desired outcome. The fact that this language is directed at an agent — a functionary for the emir — adds to the parodic tone, as does the agent's response to the letter, which is not the maqāma's conventional ecstasy (ṭarab) and astonishment.

("ajab) with the friend's facility with Arabic, but rather a straightforward demand for a bribe (bakhshīsh). It is only after threatening to report the agent to his superiors, and shaming him by mentioning the immorality of his conduct, that the promissory note is produced.

When the friend takes the promissory note to the money changer (kātib al-ṣarrāf), a similar scenario plays out. Again, the friend announces his intention to “inflate” (sa-anfukhuhu) the money changer with flattery.327 Again, the authority figure brushes aside the praise and, claiming that they do not have cash on hand, hints at the desire for a bribe. The friend reminds the money changer that he, too, is a man of the pen who can defame a reputation and threaten a career. In response, the money changer tells him to return in two weeks in order to pick up his payment. When he returns, however, the money changer and the head of the dīwān are both gone. The narrator and the friend once again attribute this shameful behavior to “bakhshīsh,” understood as something far beyond a single eponymous patron and standing in for a system of corrupt and exploitative transactions.

If the language of praise is devalued in this maqāma, the same cannot be said of all forms of writing. On the contrary, when the narrator is unable to find King Bakhshīsh's name in either the main body (al-matn) or the marginalia (al-ḥāshiya) of the biographical dictionaries of the names of rulers, living and deceased, he decides to travel to the King's realm to write a book. This book, as the narrator mentions numerous times in al-Bakhshīshiyya, would detail the customs of the people in King Bakhshīsh's country. It would be, that is, an ethnography. This ethnography, the narrator claims, would grant him a return on his investment and raise his stature among his people.328 The narrator's expectation of compensation indicates that ethnographic

writing about the Other has appreciated considerably, even while highly-stylized praise has been transformed from a means to wealth into a financial liability. This transformation, charted in the preceding chapter, took place over the course of less than a century, from the time when Aḥmad al-Barbīr composed his *Maqāmāt* for his Damascene patrons to the labors of al-Shidyāq and al-Yāzijī to rework the genre for the social and economic conditions of the early *Nahḍa*.

### 2.7 Conclusion

Al-Barbīr's characters speak *about* women but never *to* them. In *Maqāmāt al-Barbīr*, then, male homosociality is premised at least in part on the discursive objectification and social exclusion of women. In all eleven of al-Turk's *maqāmāt*, in contrast, there is barely a single mention of a woman, let alone an objectifying conversation among men about women. Moreover, al-Turk's characters never once discuss marriage, sexuality, desire, or any related matter. While al-Barbīr draws women into the conversation to objectify and marginalize them, al-Turk's *maqāmāt* represent and reflect a world entirely devoid of even the traces of women. For him, male homosociality is not only central to the experiences and interactions of his characters; it is all encompassing, not even leaving space on the margins for women, femininity, or heterosociality. Whether by speaking or remaining silent, the male characters (from friends and companions to fathers and patrons) catalogued in this chapter participate in the othering of women. Chapter Three (“Heterosocial Heroes”) turns to the question of what happens to male homosociality when a female character such as Laylā, the female protagonist or heterosocial hero of *Majmaʿ al-Bahrayn*, enters the discursive fray.
Chapter Three: Heterosocial Heroes

This chapter argues that the constellation of social and economic relationships between men and male characters was disrupted by the textual shift. The collapse of the Shihābī Emirate in 1840, and the shift in the site of maqāma reception from the homosocial spaces of the court and the scientific society to the pages of print journals, coincided with and perhaps even occasioned the appearance of female characters in central roles in two key maqāma collections of the mid 1850s. The first is Nāṣīf al-Yāzījī's Majma' al-Bahrayn, whose female protagonist Laylā adds novelty and nuance to the maqāma genre. Laylā, who I will call an “adība” or female trickster, is the star of the chapter; her eloquence, erudition, and (questionable) etiquette show how a female character emerges in the maqāma. The central purpose of this chapter will be to explore how Laylā's presence disrupts the homosocial norms and codes upon which earlier maqāmāt were based. To add nuance and contrast to my study of Laylā, I conclude the chapter with a reflection on how female characters shape the social debate and change the form of a maqāma penned by al-Yāzījī's well-known contemporary, Aḥmad Fāris al-Shidyāq.

After more than eight centuries in which maqāmāt featured male narrators and adībs, and therefore firmly linked male characters to the eloquent speech which brought them various rewards, the female characters to which we turn in this chapter introduce heterosocial or mixed-gender textuality.329 Like their male counterparts, they recite, compose, spin tales, tell riddles, etc.

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329 As Dr. Matthew Keegan has pointed out to me, there are three maqāmāt in al-Hārīrī's corpus (numbers 9, 40, and 45) that feature the character of Abu Zayd's wife. Maqāma 13, furthermore, has Abu Zayd disguised as a woman. These are discussed to some extent in Neuwirth's articles on the Maqāmāt, including “Al-Hārīrī's Plea” and “Al-Hārīrī's Travel in Search of
adopt disguises and trick their hapless audiences, thereby staking a claim on *adab* and its many rewards that had been under male hegemony since the inception of the genre. In this context, heterosocial textuality appears to be transgressive. Laylā's presence, and her many guises and roles, challenge the male homosociality of the *maqāma* genre.

### 3.1 Laylā the *Adība*

In a powerful divergence from the *maqāmāt* which preceded (and followed) it, a large number of *Majmaʿ al-Bahrāyn*‘s sixty episodes focus on the *adīb*'s daughter, Laylā.³³⁰ She is a portrait of female intelligence and ingenuity, one who adopts not only the *adīb*'s facility in speech but also his penchant for disguise and trickery. Her eloquence dazzles and her wit baffles her interlocutors, and often secures her a handsome reward as well. Laylā, in a word, is an “*adība*” or female trickster. By establishing her authority in the fields of poetry, grammar, and rhetoric, and commanding narrative space otherwise almost entirely occupied by male characters, Laylā's central role in *Majmaʿ al-Bahrāyn* links the *maqāma*’s *adab* to a female character. The representations of Laylā as an *adība* can be read as an intervention that casts critical light on the nearly-ubiquitous performances of male homosocial textuality in the *maqāma* collections studied in the previous chapter. Furthermore, Laylā’s eloquence, erudition, and even her questionable etiquette provide an important body of textual evidence to challenge those

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scholars who have dismissed Nāṣīf al-Yāzījī and the *maqāma* more broadly as “traditional,” “imitative,” and incapable of reflecting the Nahḍa’s social and stylistic transformations. (We turn to this task properly in the conclusion of this dissertation, when discussing the question of al-Yāzījī's supposed traditionalism.)

While Laylā's presence in *Majmaʿ al-Bahrāyn* is a major disruption of the homosocial and patriarchal codes of the genre, there are also important ways in which Laylā is *not* presented as on par with the male characters. In the preface to *Majmaʿ al-Bahrāyn*, al-Yāzījī introduces the reader to Maymūn and Suhayl, the *adīb* and the narrator, but says nothing of Laylā (or Rajab, Maymūn's servant boy, whose complex role in the text is discussed in Chapter Four). Laylā's absence from the introduction is a telling sign of her ambiguous position in the larger text, where she consistently appears in highly gendered roles as a daughter, wife, and seductress. Such roles rely on pre-established social codes of women's work, identity, appearance, position, and sexuality. Laylā's ambiguous position is reinforced by the narrator's frequent inability to recognize her alongside Maymūn and Rajab and remember her whenever they encounter one another. The narrator's neglect seems to find its parallel in the structure of the collection insofar as Laylā's performances are sandwiched between opening and closing scenes of male homosociality.

This chapter struggles with Laylā's place within *Majmaʿ al-Bahrāyn*. I do not attempt to resolve the tensions and contradictions in how she is represented, but rather to describe and reflect upon them. Indeed, I am convinced that Laylā's contradictions are part of what makes her a dynamic character, itself a novelty in the *maqāma* genre.
3.2 “Many a Daughter is More Beneficial Than a Son”

*Al-Baghdādiyya* (#8) embodies Laylā's ambiguous position. In this episode, Suhayl visits Baghdad and tours the city's sites and ruins (*al-mashāhid wa-l-āthār*). One day he enters a school (*baʿd al-madāris*), where he encounters and quickly recognizes Maymūn sitting amidst the male students (*ṭalaba*). Suhayl describes his encounter with the *adīb* in the same affect-laden and amorous language which al-Ḥāzim used in the previous chapter to express his joy at seeing the *adīb* Abū l-Nawādir. Suhayl describes Maymūn in the following manner:

I greeted him with the greetings of one who is loved * And delighted in him as a lover
meeting his beloved * We sat lamenting each others absence * And weeping out of ardent
passion

Immediately after these lines of male-male fidelity and passion, a woman passes by the school selling milk. Her arrival is announced with the phrase “*wa-idhā*” that typically announces the appearance of the *adīb*. Although seemingly unbeknownst to Suhayl, this woman is Laylā disguised as a milkmaid. Her physical attributes are not described, in contrast to *Maqāmāt al-Barbīr* as well as other episodes in *Majmaʿ al-Bahrayn*, where Laylā’s body and her speech are

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eroticized and otherwise objectified. Here she is presented with chastity, perhaps a perfect sincere touch (jidd) in a genre also known for its satire (hazl).

From outside the school, Laylā hawks her wares to Maymūn and the young men studying with him: “O buyer of milk * Cheaply priced” (yâ shârî l-laban * rakhîs al-thaman). As she cries out, we are told she manipulates (tatalâʿab) the case endings of her speech based on three different grammatical principles (akhām) of declension. This is not an insight that the reader needs to infer from the text, nor even study the footnotes in order to ascertain. Suhayl steps out of his role as reporter to explain what Laylā is doing. He says:

And she, in the midst of speech * Played on the three principles of case endings [one must teach]

The word “principles” (akhām) has a footnote. The footnote explains that Laylā demonstrates her knowledge of the three principles by alternating between the nominative, the accusative, and the genitive as she hawked her wares. The footnote not only clarifies which principles are meant here, but adds another exegetical layer to the episode (discussed in Chapter Six).

The students, who are the audience of this episode, are amazed by Laylā's linguistic artistry (faʿ ajibū li-iftinānihā). They yearn, Suhayl tells us, to understand her eloquent delivery (al-bayān). Thinking she is a milkmaid, they call out to her to buy her milk (li-l-shirāʿ) as a

332 Al-Yāẓījī, Majmaʿ al-Bahrān, 46.
333 Al-Yāẓījī, Majmaʿ al-Bahrān, 46. Regarding my translation, I was unable to find an adequate English rhyme. I have added “one must teach” in brackets to catch the rhyme of the original, but in so doing, added something to the sense of the line that is only implied in the Arabic.
334 Al-Yāẓījī, Majmaʿ al-Bahrān, 8.46.4.
pretext to debate her knowledge of Arabic grammar (li-l-mirāʾ). She approaches them and stands in the doorway, lowering her veil (wa arsalat al-niqāb). While Laylā reveals her face, she does not reveal her identity or her abilities. In this way, even her disclosure of her face may be read as a means to secure the other layers of her disguise. She addresses her audience as “the people of the Book” (ahl al-kitāb). They return the greeting, addressing her as “daughter of pure Arab stock” (karīmat al-aʿrāb). These greetings are just one instance of the vast, multi-layered Arab and Islamic imaginaries which Majmaʿ al-Bahrayn conjures (as will be explored, at least in a cursory manner, in Chapter Six).

It is facility in the Arabic language which secures the characters' belonging to the Arab and Islamic imaginaries, and Laylā's play with the case endings arouses the skepticism of the school boys. They ask her: “What are you doing, misusing the case endings?” (talḥānīna bi-l-iʿrāb). Rather than respond directly, Laylā teases and provokes them by playing with the multiple meanings of the root l-ḥ-n. While the students use it in the sense of “to make a grammatical mistake,” the root can also refer to a cipher or code shared among intimates or a tune or melody.335 She asks the students if they have not heard a line of poetry which employs laḥn in the sense of a cipher; and then asks if they are ignorant of what the Qurʾān says about discerning the unbelievers by the tone (laḥn) of their voices.336

Initially, the students reject her polysemic plays on the root l-ḥ-n. They compare her reference to poetry to a nick in the tooth, and her reliance on the Qurʾān to the pulling of teeth


336 Qurʾān (47:30). Al-Yāzījī, Majmaʿ al-Bahrayn, 8.46.10.
from the gums.\(^{337}\) Yet Laylā swears that she is telling the truth and chastises the boys for buying camel milk (*darr*) and hoping to get the pearls of speech (*durr*) for free. When they see that she is as shrewd as Luqmān the Wise, each student gives her a dirham and asks her to explain her triply-declining call.

The students promise to doubly reward Laylā with dinars if she were to “make clear what was obscure” (*aʿrabi ʿan al-muʿjam*). This phrase might also be translated as “to make Arabic/Arab what was foreign” or as “to properly vocalize what was foreign”. The three translations come from the students' use of the verb ‘-r-b, which conflates the acts of explaining, articulating clearly, and speaking proper Arabic.\(^{338}\) The three translations link the semantically unambiguous, the grammatically correct, and the authentically Arab. There is a further level of play here, as Laylā has been asked to “explain” (*tūrib*) her use of multiple case endings (the *iʿrāb*). Laylā's explication is not part of the narrative of this episode. Rather, in a sign that the annotations were likely intended for didactic purposes, Laylā's triple declension is explained in a detailed footnote.\(^{339}\)

What is important for our purposes is not Laylā's solution to the puzzle, but that she uses her solution to establish her credibility in the face of a skeptical audience. She does so without recourse to her father's authority. In a further sign of an independence of will that she shares with the earlier male miscreants and tricksters of the genre, Layla demands the promise of payment from her audience before she discloses the secret behind her case switching. In so doing, she engages in the act of negotiating the value of her word, the quintessential transactional

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\(^{338}\) ‘-r-b is also the root from which the word “Arab” is derived. This particular play on the root ‘-r-b is just one of innumerable instances within *Majmaʿ al-Bahrāyn* where al-Yāzījī explores and articulates the intersection of language, ethnicity, and identity in the time before or during the earliest moments of Arab nationalism.

understanding of the *maqāma* as a gift. When she has, in essence, finished negotiating the value of her riddles, she collects the students' dirhams as well as their dinars.

At this point in the episode, Maymūn takes over the show. Laylā disappears from the narrative. When Maymūn departs, Suhayl follows him, first to the market and then to his home in the Ruṣāfa neighborhood of Baghdad. At the door to his home, they find Laylā waiting for them. Maymūn's face lights up with joy (*tahallala wajhuhu bishrān*) when he sees her and he recites a poem on the spot:

Greetings Laylā, daughter of al-Khizām, of esteemed uncles on both sides
You have come to be in the City of Peace a stranger of country and speech
You are by my side each and every day smoothing out before me the way
Flushing the prey from the thicket so that it becomes the arrow's target
Even if you were fostered in the tents, the secret's not in the cup, but in the drinks

Many a daughter is more beneficial than a son

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340 Maymūn dazzles the students with further examples. When he makes to leave, the boys press him to stay and explain the examples, which again is performed in the footnotes (8.48.5, 7, and 8). Before he leaves, he tells the school boys that he would only return if his rags were draped in a shaykhly cloak (*ṭaylasān*). When the boys' teacher returns, and he learns from his students what transpired, he removes his own cloak and gives it to Suhayl to bring to Maymūn.

This poem is a site for Maymūn to assert Laylā's dignified genealogy, about which she brags in other episodes and at times exploits for her own benefit. In tandem, Maymūn gives voice to Laylā's essential estrangement, borne of the fact that she, like her father and the long line of adībs that preceded her, travels from place to place in pursuit of her livelihood:

The poem also affirms Laylā's value to her father, Maymūn. This value could be measured by the size of the rewards she secures, but here it is presented in terms of the assistance she renders in "smoothing the way" for her father. Maymūn employs a hunting metaphor to acknowledge Laylā's success in "flushing the prey from the thicket". The prey, of course, are the

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342 While we will see other examples of Laylā touting her lineage in this chapter, it should be noted that casting aspersions on a character's lineage is also a means for debasement and slander. Such attacks are often part of elaborate performances in which characters fabricate a dispute, as studied in Chapter Four. In al-Rashidiyya (#33), for instance, Maymūn and Laylā pretend to be a married couple embroiled in a dispute; in this context, Maymūn disparages the nobility of Laylā’s lineage. Al-Yāzījī, Majma’ al-Bahrayn, 33.245.6-8.

343 It is significant that she is described as “a stranger of country and speech”, although the links between what might be called territorial belonging and language will be spelled out in Chapter Four.
students, and Laylā does the work of sparking their curiosity, securing a first reward, and turning the students over to her father primed and ready to pay for further rarities of Arabic declension. This metaphor might be read as a sign of Laylā’s indispensability to her father, as there is no hunting without someone to flush the prey from their hiding places. But it could also suggest that she is essentially an assistant, perhaps even a non-human one such as a hunting dog that would facilitate the hunt but not herself a hunter. This ambivalent portrayal of Laylā’s agency contributes to the larger ambivalence of Laylā’s role in the text.

Most germane to our purposes here, however, is the final line of the poem. While the hunting metaphor is ambivalent, in the final line, Maymūn asserts Laylā’s value in comparative terms, stating that “many a daughter is more beneficial than a son”. The most literal reading of this line is simply that Laylā secures a reward for herself and the family in al-Baghdādiyya (#8), an episode in which Rajab, Maymūn’s servant boy (ghulām), is entirely absent. Yet thinking more broadly about the social world of mid-century Beirut for which Majmaʿ al-Bahrayn was composed, one wonders whether this line is meant to endorse the emerging discourse of the importance of girl’s education and nascent notions of gender equality. Perhaps there is a broader, more figurative meaning here. In what sense is Laylā “more beneficial” than Rajab, or daughters in general more beneficial than sons?

One important element of the answer posed by the representations of Laylā in Majmaʿ al-Bahrayn is that she adopts the eloquence of earlier adībs but adds what — to a certain type of dominant male imagination — only a woman, perhaps only a younger woman, can add: heterosexual allure to accompany the deeply homosocial pleasures of textuality. As we will see

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344 I wish to thank Andrew McLaren for suggesting the possible association between the adība and the hunting dog in this passage.
in the next section, Laylā is a girl (bint, jāriya) whose sexuality is the source of both her agency and her objectification; indeed, as we will see, she often allows male characters to think they have seduced her only to trick them. That all of this flirtation, seduction, and sexual intrigue is performed by a daughter not only before her father, but also with his tacit approval and explicit satisfaction, adds another layer to the ambivalence at the heart of this character.

3.3 Iftinān and Ittitān

In some episodes, such as al-Baghdādiyya (#8), Laylā's linguistic artistry (iftinān, from f-n-n) secures her the admiration of her audience, the appreciation of her father, and handsome rewards. In others episodes, however, it is her feminine allure and her ability to arouse desire (iftitān, from f-t-n) that woos boys and men to open their purses. While for male characters, adab brings together the homosocial and the literary, when a female character is introduced, the social becomes suggestive of erotic rewards. Layla, that is, not only practices the art (fann) of trickery but also adopts the role of a temptress (muftān).

Al-Ḥalabiyya (#9), discussed at length in this section, exemplifies how the heteroerotic enters the maqāma along with the female trickster. In this episode, Laylā seduces a young man and lures him to her home, where Maymūn surprises and humiliates him in what amounts to a shake-down in the guise of a moral shaming. In these scenes, it is male sexual desire that is challenged and punished, while Laylā's performance of female desire and sexual agency — even the desire of a daughter in the “public” realm of the assembled characters — does not so much as

345 Indeed, the same language of iftinān (artistry) leading to iftitān (infatuation) is used to describe the audience’s reaction to Maymūn in al-Rashidiyya (#33). However, with Maymūn, the infatuation is never physical, let alone amorous and erotic; it is a strictly aesthetic or linguistic infatuation.
raise her father's eyebrow. Although beyond the purview of this section, similar readings might be offered of two other episodes, *al-Ṣūriyya* (#16) and *al-Mawṣūliyya* (#23).\(^{346}\)

*Al-Halabiyya* (#9) is a portrait of one man abandoning another, an act that betrays the central male-male friendship of the *maqāma*. It begins with Suhayl receiving a letter from a dear ailing friend outside of Aleppo. In the letter, Suhayl's friend begs him to bring medicine.\(^{347}\) In a further testament to the strength of this homosocial bond and the urgency of the task, Suhayl describes his efforts to procure the medicine and his breakneck pace to reach Aleppo before his friend expired.\(^{348}\) Yet a surprise encounter with Laylā and an alluring scene of voyereusim and seduction along the road test Suhayl's dedication to his friend and raise doubts about the primacy of male homosociality in this episode.

As Suhayl rides toward Aleppo, he glimpses (*lamaḥtu*) "our shaykh" Maymūn and "his daughter" Laylā by the side of the road. Alongside the *adīb* and *adība*, there is a young man (*fatā*) dressed in white and wearing a ring with a red carnelian gem (*ʿaqīq*). As a footnote indicates, the dress and jewelry are two signs of the young man's "elegance" (*ẓarāfa*).\(^{349}\) Overjoyed to see Maymūn, and seeming to forget entirely about his ailing friend, Suhayl races towards the *adīb* like a gazelle during the full moon. When he greets Maymūn, however, the

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346 In *al-Ṣūriyya* (#16), Suhayl visits a judge's chambers in the Levantine town of Tyre (Ṣūr), where Laylā appears in disguise to complain of her father's poverty and the fact that he has prohibited her from marrying. Laylā's speech causes the judge to fall in love with her, and when Maymūn arrives to defend himself, the judge offers to buy Laylā for a considerable sum. Laylā is taken to the judge's farm, from which she then escapes and rejoins her family. In *al-Mawṣūliyya* (#23), Laylā serves food and drink to Suhayl and Maymūn in the market of Mosul. A young man falls for Laylā (*fa-ʿaliqa al-ṣūriyya wa iftatan bīhā*) due to her "charm" (*ẓarf*) and *adab* (183). Maymūn extorts a dowry from him, which he claims to spend on food and drink, and then accuses the young man of trying to marry his wife when they go before a judge to sign the marriage contract. Maymūn then decries the hardship his "wife" has faced on account of his poverty and asks the judge for money, which the latter gives him.\(^{347}\)

347 This friend, Suhayl indicates, is quite dear to him. Suhayl says that he and his friend were as close as the mixture of water and wine (*ka-l-mā` wa-l-rāḥ*) and then compares them to the two boon companions of Jadhīma al-Azadī. Al-Yāṣījī, *Majmaʿ al-Bahrāyn*, 9.55.5.

348 The phrase in the text is "and as I was racing fearfully" (*wa baynamā anā ajrī mulīh*). To obviate any confusion, Al-Yāṣījī adds that "mulīh" is the active participate of the verb *alāha*, which he says should be read as synonymous with "he feared" (*ashjāqa*) or "he was cautious" (*ḥadhira*). Al-Yāṣījī, *Majmaʿ al-Bahrāyn*, 9.55.12.

latter responds in Persian — a disruption of the typical homosocial embrace. Revealing an awareness of the conventions of the *maqāma* genre, Suhayl says to himself:

> This is one of his tricks * which he has made into one of his traps.

So Suhayl leaves Maymūn alone and turns his back on the *adīb* in a further disruption of the embrace, hiding where he can see but cannot be seen (*wa tawāraytu bi-ḥaythu arā wa lā urā*). As Suhayl watches in hiding (its own form of disguise), Maymūn turns away from Laylā and the young man and mutters to himself (*yudamdim*) in the “language of the foreigners” (*lughat al-aʿjām*).

Under the doubled gaze of the hidden narrator and the disguised *adīb*, the young man begins to steal glances at Laylā and flirt with her cautiously. That is: there are three men watching Laylā, giving some sense of the multi-layered voyeurism that runs through this episode. Laylā, amply observed, has not uttered a word and hence could not have seduced these men with her eloquence. In response to the young man's glances, Laylā says, referring to her “Persian” admirer:

> Our friend is an incoherent foreigner * Who cannot understand nor make himself understood * By coincidence I met him * Not as a companion * But I see that his eye lusts after me * So he has hung around me * Sometimes offering me a purse * Other

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times a pearl * But I shy from him like a wild she-camel * Uttering not a word, either kind or cruel\textsuperscript{351}

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{إنّ صاحبنا أعجمُ طِمْطِمَ لا يَفْهَمُ ولا يَفْهِمُ وقد لقيتهِ وفافاً لا رفافاً لكنى أرى عينهُ قد تَّمِّحَت إِلَيّ فلا يزال حواليّي وهو يعرض لي طوار بصرة ونارة بدرة وأنا أنفر منه كنافحة الهوجاَة ولا أُنَّسُ له بِهِوْجاَةً ولا أوجاءَ
\end{align*}
\]

In her description of Maymūn, Laylā presents herself to her young suitor as an object of another man's desire.\textsuperscript{352} This adds to the significance of Maymūn's pretense that he cannot speak Arabic; as without a shared language, the “Persian” must communicate his interest in Laylā through material gifts. While Laylā displays her desirability in the eyes of another man, she simultaneously indicates that she does not reciprocate his feelings. She is desired without desiring, creating a space for the young man to court her and court her he does. An important aspect of his seduction is an attempt to dismiss Laylā's Persian suitor as a “transvestite”

\textsuperscript{351} Al-Yāzījī, Majma’ al-Bahrāyn, 9.56.14.

\textsuperscript{352} As we know from René Girard's theory of triangular desire, men's desire for women is often a source of male homosociality, competitive as it might be. Girard argues that the love of two men for the same woman implies a relationship between the two men. Girard was showing the value of reading homosocial relationships between the two male characters — and, perhaps by extension, any two men — might be obscured by heterosexual competition. René Girard, Deceit, Desire, and the novel (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980), 1-52.
The young man, treating the Persian's presence as an obstacle to his amorous designs, suggests to Laylā that they send Maymūn off to “where the wolves howl” — i.e., the desert. Laylā now sets the trap, lamenting that she does not have a mount for Maymūn to ride. The young man blithely volunteers his own horse (birdhaun). By helping Laylā saddle Maymūn on his horse, the young man helps the pair of tricksters steal his mount as their first reward of the episode.

Left “alone” (which is to say, still under the watchful eye of the peeping narrator), the young man quotes a verse by the pre-Islamic poet Ţarafa about the freedom of birds after the hunter has departed. Like other characters who encounter the Khizāmī family, the young man thinks himself the hunter; for the reader, the irony may be a source of pleasure, anticipation, and perhaps a bit of moral instruction, as the young man does not see that Ţarafa's line applies to himself.

The young man, with some arrogance, asks Laylā to introduce herself. The “self” which Laylā presents to the young man is highly suggestive of an erotic interest of some sort. She is ever, at points, explicit about her interest in him. She is more than flirtatious; she is seductive,

353 The young man says of the character he thinks of as the Persian: “Too bad for the transvestite (mukhannath) * He really is dumber than Sharanbath” (sā’ fa’la t-mukhannath * innahu la-ahmaqu min Sharanbath). Beyond the exigencies of saj , it is not clear why the young man would call Maymūn a “mukhannath”, a term with a complex history in Arabic stretching back at least to the gender non-conforming community in Yathrib/Medina before and during the time of the Prophet Muḥammad. For stories of individuals in this community, and the tragedy of their collective castration, itself said to have been executed due to a mistaken placement of a dot over the letter ḥāʾ , turning the governor's command to count (iḥṣi) the community into an order to castrate (ikhṣi) them, see al-Maydānī, Majmaʿ al-Amthāl, under the entry for Akhnath min Hayt (1337ff). Sharanbath, according to al-Yāzījī's footnotes, is a man proverbial for his stupidity, who buried his money for safekeeping in a spot marked by the shadow of a cloud in the desert. (9.56.16) Everett Rowson has written about the mukhannathūn and their female counterparts, the ghulāmiyyāt (from the word ghulām or “boy”). Rowson argues that both male and female transvestism were not only tolerated in elite Abbasid society, but actively institutionalized as a form of “professional entertainment” in the caliphal court. Everett Rowson, “Gender Irregularity as Entertainment: Institutionalized Transvestism at the Caliphal Court in Medieval Baghdad,” in Gender and Difference in the Middle Ages, ed. Sharon Farmer and Carol Braun Pasternack (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 45-46.

saying:

I am a girl of noble origin * And few kin * I have neither father nor husband * I've grown
tired of my long captivity * And bearing for myself sole responsibility * So if you have a
need for a woman * Then follow me to pack my things * And I will follow you wherever
your desire brings

Employing the gendered trope of a woman's obedience and desire to depend on a man, Laylā
signals her availability and interest. The passage is sufficiently ambiguous as to leave open the
question of what type of relationship Laylā is suggesting; and perhaps the hint of something
outside the bounds of marriage appeals all the more to this young man. What is certain is that, for
the reader, Laylā's portrayal of herself is at odds with her behavior, as her invitation is nothing
more than a ploy to lure the young man home and, along with her father, swindle him out of his
wealth.
At this point, Suhayl interjects himself to confess that this remarkable occurrence (*al-tawil al-ʿarīd*) has distracted him from his pressing mission to bring medicine to his sick friend. This and another admission of neglect near the end of the episode confirm the success of Laylā's disguise and the boldness of her invitation, which not only seduces the young man but holds Suhayl's interest — despite the urgent need of his friend outside Aleppo.355 Suhayl enjoys watching Laylā perform because she is an *adība*, enjoys her enough to betray a dear friend in a life-or-death matter.

There is a subtext of profound abandonment here. Suhayl, who is constantly searching for, celebrating, and lamenting the departure of his companion Maymūn, is perhaps not such a good friend after all, as this chance encounter with the *adīb* and the *adība* distracts him from a life-saving mission. He not only witnesses what transpires between Laylā and the young man, but he follows the couple (*al-ṣāḥibayn*) back the way to Laylā's house. There Suhayl watches while the young man begins to pack Laylā's possessions and Laylā herself gathers provisions for their trip.

It is at this moment that Laylā's "father" (*wa idha bi-ābīhā*) falls upon them like a lion upon a lamb (*al-naqad*). This father is her real father, Maymūn, no longer disguised as a Persian. Maymūn curses the young man, calling him depraved (*fāsiq*) and a thief (*sāriq*), and threatening him with the punishment of the adulterer (*al-ḥadd*) and the thief (*al-qat*'). The young man is terrified and begs for clemency. Maymūn responds by turning up his nose, shaking from his sides, jabbing with his feet and pointing. The mortified young man offers Maymūn a reward in the form of dinars. Maymūn responds that he will accept the coins on condition that the young

355 Suhayl reiterates his forgetfulness at the end of episode in an extemporaneous composition for Maymūn.
man never again approaches “the girls of foreigners” (*banāt al-ājām*). Through this hint (*talmīḥ*), the young man realizes that the “father” is actually the Persian-speaker he met on the road, a revelation which al-Yāzījī spells out explicitly in a footnote.  

When Maymūn has chased the young man off, he calms down and recites a poem. The poem begins by lamenting Suhayl's absence, and then turns to the trickery he and Laylā undertook. Maymūn justifies his theft of the young man's money first to feed the horse he stole, and then as a moral lesson to the young man about his behavior. Of particular interest is that Maymūn first acknowledges the young man's sexual desire for Laylā (*wa huwa yaṭmaʿī fī waṣl Laylā*) and then, in the last line of the poem, indicates that the lesson he taught the young man was to beware of intercourse with girls (*waṣl al-banāt*).  

There is a remarkable divergence between Maymūn's performance of fatherhood and the values he espouses when he is being — at least ostensibly — himself. In order to fleece the young man out of his gold, Maymūn plays the role of the angry, protective father guarding his daughter's sexual morality. He accuses the young man of being depraved (*fāsiq*), as mentioned above, and threatens him with the Islamic punishment of the adulterer (*al-ḥadd*). But once the young man has been chastised and chased off, Maymūn abandons the language of reproach. Laylā's sexuality does not seem to trouble or concern him, and he neither expresses disapproval of the role she played in their trick nor makes any effort to control her behavior. On the contrary, Maymūn appears to consider Laylā's sexuality as amoral, not immoral; that is, as little more than another means for him and his family to secure a bit of sustenance.  

That being said, while Maymūn does not reproach Laylā, he also does not address (let

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alone praise) her in his concluding poem. While his daughter is standing by his side, and has just helped him to pull off a lucrative and elaborate trick, the poem he recites is addressed to Suhayl. In other words, Maymūn somewhat ironically neglects the female companion by his side in order to address a male companion he believes to be absent. Such pining for male companionship does not erase the role that Laylā plays in this episode, but it complicates al-Yāzījī’s representation of his female hero by preserving elements of the privilege accorded to male homosociality.

There is yet another layer of irony in this episode, as Maymūn's composition draws Suhayl from hiding. When Suhayl emerges, he announces himself with a short poem and then tells Maymūn he has been watching them since Maymūn was pretending to be a Persian. Despite Suhayl's joke that Maymūn should teach him Persian (a language neither man speaks, as a footnote informs the reader358), their friendly reunion is troubled, at least to my mind, by Suhayl's other friend — whose abandonment to his fate outside of Aleppo belies Suhayl's loud attestations of the primacy of male friendship.

In al-Ḥalabiyya (#9), Laylā seduces a young man while Suhayl watches voyeuristically. The opening and closing scene both involve displays of affectionate male homosociality, and one might argue that Suhayl is able to forget Laylā because she is an object of his gaze and a source of curiosity, distraction, and entertainment. In al-Hazliyya (#14), discussed in the coming section, Laylā again undertakes the role of seductress. In this next case, however, Suhayl is not the witness to the trick but rather its victim.

358 Al-Yāzījī, Majma’ al-Bahrāyn, 9.60.4-5.
3.4 From Voyeur to Victim

In contrast to the episodes above, al-Hazliyya (#14) does not open with the narrator pining for male homosocial companionship. It begins rather with Suhayl's descriptive account of his own mourning for his deceased wife. He tells the reader that she had been “good with her hands” (ṣīnāʿ al-yadayn) and “from distinguished parents” (karīmat al-nabʿatayn). After her passing, Suhayl candidly reports, he lingered a long time sighing and wailing, mourning her day and night. This portrayal reveals the narrator's feelings for a female companion and his sorrow at her loss, a stark contrast to the typical expressions of emotion between male characters. He tells the reader that he mourned his wife for a year (al-ḥaul) until his soul intimated to him that he should “replace what pleased him in a woman” (astabdil mā ṭāb lī min al-nisāʾ). Unable to find a suitable wife in his area (al-ḥayy), he sets out to travel not in pursuit of male but rather female companionship.

Suhayl's search for a new female companion results in an encounter between the narrator and the adība. Camped in a mountain pass at night, Suhayl hears a “snore” (ghaffīt) like the groan of a camel carrying a heavy load (aṭīf). Unsettled, he sneaks out of the moonlight into a shaded area (al-samar) where he can again watch without being seen. From his hiding place, Suhayl spies a girl (jāriya).

This girl, whom Suhayl does not recognize as Laylā the adība, sighs and then recites a poem in which she laments her sorry state. Much of her sorrow comes from the fact that she married a detestable old man. She attributes her poverty and suffering to this weak, ailing shaykh whose thick beard, Laylā cries, is matted with eye pus, mucus, and spittle. In the final lines of her composition, the despairing girl returns to the initial theme of liberation from the “bonds” of her marriage. She cries out for someone of “noble soul and morals” to employ artful means
(yaḥtāl) to secure her the relief of divorce (farjat al-ṭalāq). She then offers to doubly reward her savior with her alimony (al-ṣidāq) and some of her clothing.

Suhayl's first reaction to her composition is to claim that he is infatuated (iftatantu) by her eloquence (faṣāḥa) without noticing the beauty of her form (qayd malāḥatiḥā). At one level, Suhayl's reaction resonates with the long social and literary history of eloquent female companions. Yet Suhayl not only praises Laylā's poem, but also denies seeing her as an object of physical desire, as a female body. Lest the reader doubt the text and its narrator, al-Ŷāzijī has appended a footnote that reiterates that Suhayl's desire is purely and exclusively based on what he heard, not on what he might have seen. Given that Suhayl elsewhere has a penchant observing without being observed, what some might call peeping, it is remarkable that here he hides in order to observe and claims to have seen nothing. Has Laylā's eloquence blinded the narrator, or is he the vehicle for the expression of a type of chaste, decarnalized desire in the very same collection where Laylā presents herself as a sexual agent and object?

Suhayl then recites a few lines, praising God for the happy coincidence and suggesting that they would be “stupider than Habannaqa” if they did not pronounce themselves as suitable for marriage as Shann and Ṭabaqa. While Habannaqa is well known for his stupidity, the reference to Shann and Ṭabaqa deserves careful consideration, not least because al-Ŷāzijī himself provides an extensive footnote on the story of their marriage. Al-Ŷāzijī explains that in pre-Islamic times, Shann was a man from the tribe of Banū Ḥabīl who went off

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360 Al-Ŷāzijī, Majmaʿ al-Ṭabarayn, 14.103.8.
looking for a wife. On the road, he meets an older man and they travel together. Shann asks the older man a series of questions that appear on the surface to have obvious answers; they seem so obvious that the older man mocks Shann and refuses to answer. When they reach the older man's village, he relays Shann's questions to his daughter, Ṭabaqa. She informs her father that he has misunderstood Shann's questions (although the parable does not explain how she knows this), and then explains to him the underlying meaning of each question. Ṭabaqa's father returns to Shann and offers to answer his questions.

While the expression which Suhayl employs refers to how Shann suited (wāfaqa) Ṭabaqa, al-Yāziji's account of their courtship reveals a more complex portrait. The two men in the story cannot understand one another and need a woman with knowledge of the intricacies of Arabic to facilitate their communication. The irony, however, is that Suhayl's total failure to recognize Laylā, let alone understand her intentions, is only heightened by his reference to a pre-Islamic courtship kindled through philological exegesis. He and Laylā, in other words, are the exact opposite of Shann and Ṭabaqa; they are, in fact, much closer to the misunderstanding-riddled relationship between Shann and Ṭabaqa's father!

Suhayl, who is not only intimately involved in but also narrating the events of this episode, then reports that the girl's “husband” arrives. Unbeknownst to Suhayl (who is still in hiding), the husband is Maymūn. Maymūn warns Laylā and Suhayl that he is aware of what both have said, and then recites a poem announcing his intention to divorce his “wife” presently. He recalls her “adorned neck” (jīdahā al-muṭawwaq), her “pure white forehead” (jabīnahā al-naqiy al-yaqiq), “the darkness of her enchanting eye” (sawādʿ aynihā dhāt al-ruqā), her “beautiful, friendly face” (muḥayyāhā al-jamīl al-ṭaliq), and the quality of her speech (ḥadīth) and her
eloquence (manṭiq).³⁶²

As al-Yāzījī states unambiguously in a footnote, Maymūn recalls these virtues (maḥāsin) in order to make Suhayl fall in love with Laylā and long for her (yuḥabbibuhā īlā Suhayl wa yushawwīquhu ilayhā).³⁶³ Having thus tempted Suhayl with reference to the very features the narrator claims not to have seen, Maymūn concludes his poem with a few lines to the effect that he needs to return her dowry to her and collect a new dowry for his next wife (“for man was created to be a spouse” he intones cheerily). If Suhayl can bring him the two dowries by nightfall, he promises to divorce his wife. Suhayl is overjoyed by Maymūn's composition, not for its aesthetic qualities but for what it promises him of a different type of pleasure. Suhayl's ardent emotions (al-wajd), he says, makes it easier to part with the money he had on him (al-jīda).³⁶⁴ Once the coins have filled Maymūn's sleeves and his hands, he offers a few blessings for the newly-weds.

Suhayl seeks to leave with his new wife, but Maymūn implores Suhayl not to leave him alone to converse with the stars. Maymūn, in other words, appeals to the code of male companionship depicted countless times in Majmaʾ al-Bahrayn: two or more men passing their time together (at night, on long journeys, in taverns, and so on) in entertaining conversation. Thus tempted, Suhayl spends the night and in the morning, the daylight reveals Laylā and Maymūn for who they are.³⁶⁵ Maymūn bursts into laughter and recites a poem in which he mocks Suhayl's naiveté and claims that his severe poverty justifies stealing from his “dearest”

³⁶² Al-Yāzījī, Majmaʾ al-Bahrayn, 104-5. For al-Yāzījī's philological gloss, see footnotes 14.105.19 to 14.106.3.
³⁶³ Manṭiq can also mean “reason” or “logic”, however it seems in this context better rendered as a parallel to speech (ḥadīth). Al-Yāzījī, Majmaʾ al-Bahrayn, 14.105.4.
³⁶⁴ Al-Yāzījī, Majmaʾ al-Bahrayn, 14.106.5-6.
³⁶⁵ Al-Yāzījī, Majmaʾ al-Bahrayn, 107.
friend. Maymūn promises to pay Suhayl back once he has tricked someone else, and asks the narrator to consider the theft as a loan. After Suhayl reproaches him, they spend the day together, sharing a meal and enjoying Maymūn's stories until it is time to sleep.

When Suhayl awakes, he finds Maymūn and Laylā gone and a note (ruqʿa) addressed to him pinned to the saddle of his she-camel. The note begins with an apology, but then takes a surprising turn. The last few lines read as follows:

If she [Laylā] deceived you as it appears
she neither knows nor can report
Except what I taught her in secret.
So if you want the holder of the prize
Take her father; he is the mother of wisdom
And yesterday's dowry has already reached him
Following the law of a man's portion

وإِنْ يَكُنْ غَرَّكَ مِنْهَا مَا ظَهَرَ
فَإِنَّ تُرْدُّ صاحِبِ هَذِهِ الغُرْرَ
إِلَّا الَّذِي عَلَمَتْهَا فِي مَا أَسِتَرَ
فَتَلَّكَ لَا عَلَمَ لَهَا وَلَا خَيْر

367 This reproach contains no small amount of ambiguity. Suhayl says Maymūn is the most wicked (amkar) and the most capable (aqdar) of both good and evil (al-zayn wa l-shayn). Al-Yāzījī, Majmaʿ al-Bahrāyn, 108.
368 Al-Yāzījī, Majmaʿ al-Bahrāyn, 110.
369 Al-Yāzījī, Majmaʿ al-Bahrāyn, 110.
As elsewhere, al-Yāzījī takes care to make sure the reader understands precisely what is intended. The above lines have two footnotes, the first of which makes clear that Maymūn is taking credit for imparting to Laylā her eloquence (faṣāha). The second footnote is far more telling, and I translate it here in full:

He [i.e. Maymūn] is saying: “If you want to take the owner of these arts, take me because I am the owner of them.” When [Maymūn] presented himself in a male marriage to [Suhayl] (li-zawāj al-rijāl bihi), [Maymūn] put himself in the feminine and said that he is “the mother of wisdom.” Then he said that the dowry he had already received yesterday was double a woman's dowry because a man's entitlement is equal to that of two women as is established by legal injunction.

370 Al-Yāzījī, Majmaʿ al-Bahrayn, 14.110.10.
371 Al-Yāzījī, Majmaʿ al-Bahrayn, 14.110.11.
What this footnote makes clear is that when Maymūn encourages Suhayl to “take” him, the intended meaning — ironic or not — is a marriage between two men. However, al-Yāzījī's explanation that Maymūn renders himself a mother, and therefore feminine in both social and grammatical terms, shows the extent to which the author conceives of even the possibility of male homosexuality in a heterosexual frame: to make sense of two men marrying, one of those men must be understood as a woman.

While Maymūn becomes a woman momentarily, he all the while retains the privileges afforded to men in inheritance in Islamic law. This reminds us that Laylā, whose eloquence lured Suhayl into the lucrative trap, has once again been elided by male homosociality. Here as elsewhere, Laylā's position is ambiguous. As the character whose eloquence and guile are needed to transform the narrator from a voyeur to a victim, she is indispensable; yet in taking credit for her eloquence, and excluding her from the male homosociality with which the episode concludes, Maymūn in effect dispenses with her.

### 3.5 Incestuous Disguises

In some of the episodes discussed above, as well as the one discussed in this section, Laylā disguises herself as her father's wife. Laylā's simultaneous position as Maymūn's daughter and his wife, and the characters' acknowledgement of this duality in the narrative itself, troubles the boundaries of the family structure established by social convention and Qur'ānic
injunction. While this section focuses on close readings of al-Šaʿīdiyya (#5) and al-Damyaṭīyya (#55), similar insights can be culled from other episodes, such as al-Rashīdiyya (#33) and al-Anṭākiyya (#35).

In al-Šaʿīdiyya (#5), Laylā appears in guise of her father's wife. When Suhayl first sees her, he describes her as a “supple woman” (imraʾa ghadḍa) like “a tower of silver” (burrju fiḍda). She goes before a judge to bring a suit against her “husband”, Maymūn. Laylā's character, “the wife”, tells the judge that she was married under false pretenses. Before the marriage, her husband claimed to “be among those with great treasure” (min ʾaṣḥāb al-kunūz), and offered her an endowment (waqf) and a splendid house. Yet she soon finds out that the promised house is as empty as a “spider's web.” Her husband married her against her will (wa

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372 I wish to thank Dr. Susanna Ferguson for first suggesting that Laylā's roles threaten the family structure.

373 In al-Rashīdiyya (#33), Suhayl happens upon Maymūn and his daughter (ibnatuḥu) pretending to have a maritall dispute in a tavern (funduq). Their dispute draws a crowd (and the promise of a reward), and Maymūn, dispensing with the propriety (adab) of The Book, insults Laylā. He describes her as a beast with twisted horns, casts aspersions on her origins and her people, and says her father — by which of course he means himself — is more blameworthy than Ibn al-Qarsaʾ (33.245.11). An antagonist from the audience demands that Maymūn provide evidence of his wife's infractions. After some further escalations, Maymūn claims that his “wife” was not satisfied with bread and water; and that she turned up her nose at walking barefoot and sleeping without a blanket as if she were Māʾ al-Samāʾ or Fāṭima al-Zahrāʾ (33.246.19 and 33.246.20, respectively). His complaint leads him to decry his own poverty and recite an affecting poem on his own misfortune. When he finishes his poetic enchantment (iftātānīh), the audience is infatuated (iftatana) by the merrymaking of his tongue (fakhat lisānīh) and his intelligence (nahabat janānīh). They reward Maymūn and extend their sympathies for his difficult situation; then he and Laylā depart. Suhayl, upon following them, finds them gleefully counting their reward.

374 In al-Anṭākiyya (#35), Suhayl encounters Maymūn and Laylā in a judge's chambers in Antioch (Aṭaḳīyyat al-Rīm). When he makes to greet them, Maymūn indicates with a glance that Suhayl should not identify them. Laylā addresses the judge, complaining of her “husband's” poverty and abuse. She accuses him of locking her in the house, never keeping his promises, and being “unbearably acerbic” (murr al-madhāq * îlā mā lā ṣutāq). She describes herself as a young woman (anā fattāʾī * gharībat al-sabāʾ) who had other marriage offers, but ended up with Maymūn. She asks the judge to either command him to meet her needs or divorces her from her husband (yutiliqunī) and free her (yūṣūqunī) lest she kill herself. Maymūn responds “like one possessed”, accusing his “wife” of only recalling the difficulties and hardships, and gesturing briefly to his own loss of wealth and prestige. Suhayl observes that the girl has seduced (ḥajalathu) the judge with the iftāțān of her speech (kalāmīhā) and the curve of her legs. Seeking to have Laylā for himself, the judge advises Maymūn to trade her for someone who suits his passions (tastābdila biḥa man tuwāfīghu hawākā). Maymūn refuses, so the judge gives Maymūn twenty gold dinār (nisāb) and tells him to release his “prisoner” (al-aṣira) and make use of the gold. Maymūn then divorces his “wife” and the judge takes her to his den (arīn). Maymūn tells Suhayl to meet him at the tavern (khān) that evening. When Suhayl arrives, Laylā is by Maymūn's side disguised in boy's clothing. Maymūn says: “These are our goods (biṭaʾatunī) returned to us,” referring to Laylā, who apparently escaped the judge's “den”.

375 Ghaḍḍa when applied to a woman means soft, smooth, and supple. Especially in contrast to al-Barbir's obscene descriptions of women in maqāmāt (see especially 32b, where the describes at length the physical features of a good woman, including desired tightness (dayy) and plumpness, who he complains is “as rare as a white-winged crow”), al-Yāziji's concise and modest description displays what Jurji Zaydān praised as his famous propriety: “If someone spoke ill of someone else in his presence, [al-Yāzij] would lower his head (aṭraqa) and disregard it (aghḍā) as if he did not hear.” Jurji Zaydān, Bunāt al-Nahḍa, 166.
amsakanī jabarʿan) and cost her more than she could bear.

When her husband is brought before the court, his legal defense is to critique his wife's literary abilities. After impugning his wife's credibility, the husband recites a poem in an “alluring voice” (bi-ṣawt rakhīm). In his fourteen lines of extemporaneous verse, the husband explains that his “treasure” (kanz) is his knowledge (ʿilm), and likewise that the “waqf” he offered his fiancée was not a pious financial endowment common across the Muslim world but rather an ivory bracelet by the same name. In other words, he suggests, her dissatisfaction with their marriage arises from her failure to recognize the obscure, secondary meanings of words — the very basis for the puns that riddle the maqāma genre. While he never accuses her explicitly of misunderstanding the nuances of the Arabic lexicon because she is a woman, the implication is that the “wife” lacks the discernment required of those who practice adab.

When the adīb concludes his recitation, the narrator steps back into the story to inform us that the judge's chambers (majlis) are full of people celebrating the holiday (ḥāfīlān bi-ahl al-ʿīd). Pleased by the husband's eloquent defense, this anonymous audience contends that he did not err in the lawsuit (al-daʾwā). It was rather his wife, they claim, who misunderstood the true substance (faḥwā) of the matter. This judgment is not confined to the poetic merits of the husband's composition, but rather recognizes the legal and specifically contractual ramifications of his eloquence. The reader can see the irony here: it is the audience, including the judge, who

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376 After hearing the wife's complaint, the judge commands that her husband be brought before him. In a glimpse of the representation of judicial proceeds in an adab text, the judge sends a boy (ghulām) from the court to apprehend the accused, and sends the wife along to identify her husband. For details on the intersections of the literary and the legal in this period, see the unpublished dissertation of Hannah Scott Deuchar at NYU.

377 He calls her accusation “a lie” (firya) which Satan whispered (waswasa) to her and “a spurious contention” (mirya).

378 In a resonance of classical imagery he claims to be a brother of the seventh-century Arabian poet al-ʿAjjāj and a man known for his rajaz poetry (arjāz) and his riddles (ahjūjī). In a much more Freudian gesture, if “Freudian” is the right term for this psycho-sexual imaginary, he identifies himself as “Abū Laylā” in the first line.

379 While he may not explicitly attribute her lack of nuance to her gender, the adīb dedicates the last lines of his composition to enumerating his wife's domestic shortcomings. She complains, he says, despite being relieved of every irritation, from carrying the lantern oil to scrubbing the walls of the residue of its flame.
have erred, not Laylā. Whereas she pretends to misunderstand the true nature of things, they have failed to recognize her ruse.

After faulting the wife, the audience takes pity on her and gathers some coins which they encourage her to “spend” (anfīqī) until God provides for her. Maymūn feigns outrage that the audience has not only offered his wife alimony (infāq), but ordered her to spend that money. In his reasoning, spending their donations makes her into his husband, perhaps through an unstated association between spending money and providing for the family, a role that the husband seeks to retain for himself.380 Maymūn is direct when he articulates this complaint, and seemingly unembarrassed about describing the gender-bending effect of their charity. He addresses the audience and says:

I see you have ordered her to spend and thereby made her a husband to me * and made for her a wife of me381

أراكم قد أمرتموها بالإنفاق فقد جعلتموها لي بعالا * وجعلتموني لها أهلا

In the footnotes, “baʾr” is glossed as “husband” (zauj) and “ahl” as “wife” (zauja).382 Precisely

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380 I wish to thank Andrew McLaren, who directed me to the Qurʾānic verse 4:34: “Men are the managers of the affairs of women for that God has preferred in bounty one of them over another, and for that they have expended of their property (anfīqī).”

381 Al-Yāziǧī, Majmaʿ al-Bahrāyn, 29.

382 Al-Yāziǧī, Majmaʿ al-Bahrāyn, 5.29.19-20.
like *al-Hazliyya* (#14) studied above, this gloss leaves no room for semantic ambiguity. Laylā, who is Maymūn's daughter, has adopted the role of his wife; now, playing on gendered assumptions about control of the family purse strings, Maymūn is claiming that he and his wife have switched roles, and that she, in effect, has become his husband.  

Maymūn, expressing his anxiety about the gender switching in this episode, then angrily denounces his daughter/wife/"husband":

> She [Laylā] won't hesitate to say, “the he-camel has been mistaken for a she-camel” * 
> And divorce me without any chance to reconcile for the way things have been reversed.  

 فلا تثبت أن تقول قد استنقو الحمل وتطلفني البتات لعكس العمل

The audience agrees with what they take to be Maymūn's sagely interpretation of the situation. They praise him as “*al-jandala*”, a boulder that serves as a metaphor for the firmness of his argumentation, and then they solicit his opinion on the “matter” (*al-masʿala*).  

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383 Maymūn's anxiety about switching roles corresponds to al-Ẓājī’s hints at Maymūn's femininity at multiple points in *Majmaʿ al-Bahrāyn*. In *al-Sawādīyya* (#54), for instance, Maymūn is described as strutting around (*yamīs*) in a new cloak “like a full-figured woman” (*ka-l-ʿuthul*). While Maymūn does not undertake any seduction in this episode (perhaps because al-Ẓājī cannot imagine a male character being the object of desire instead of the agent), his portrayal here as both moving and appearing like a desirable woman is unmistakable. Indeed, the footnote makes clear that “*al-ʿuthul*” refers specifically to women. Al-Ẓājī, *Majmaʿ al-Bahrāyn*, 54.385.3-4.  
Hazliyya (#14), Maymūn again alludes to the Qur’ānic passage in which a man’s testimony is worth that of two women, demanding twice the payment his wife has received.386 Continuing the ruse, first the husband and then his wife threaten to bring suit against the judge and each receives a further reward.

When they leave with what they have won, the narrator follows them. He recognizes the husband as the adīb, his old friend Maymūn, and immediately exclaims that he is “overjoyed to see him” (ibtahaju bi-marʿāhu) and “delighted to meet him” (wa ightabattu bi-multaqāhu).387

As the two male characters perform an attenuated version of the rituals of male companionship, Laylā again largely disappears from the narrative. Suhayl does not greet her, let alone recognize her as Maymūn's daughter. His only question related to Laylā is posed to her father: “So when did you get married?” This question suggests that Laylā — unlike her father — cannot shed her disguise and retain her visibility to the narrator and perhaps other male characters in this episode. Rather than being recognized by the narrator, she must be identified by her father, who acknowledges her incestuous double role when he tells Suhayl: “In the house, she's my daughter, and in the court (al-maḥkama), she's my wife.”388

Al-Damyāṭiyya (#55) presents Laylā in another incestuous disguise, this time not as her father's wife but rather as Rajab's. Rajab, as will be discussed in the next chapter, does not seem to be Maymūn's biological son, but rather oscillates between the adīb's servant boy (ghulām), his

387 Naṣīf al-Ŷāzījī, Majma’ al-Bahrayn, 32. In a physical sign of the intimacy among men that runs through this and other maṣāma texts, before departing the adīb grips the narrator's elbow (mirfaq), kisses him at the part in his hair (mafraq), and wishes him well until they meet again.
388 Al-Ŷāzījī, Majma’ al-Bahrayn, 32. This claim might be contrasted to the claim of the young man who falls for Laylā in al-Mawṣilīyya (#23). In that episode, he offers Maymūn one hundred dinars as a dowry for a woman he believes to be Maymūn's daughter. However, when they go to the judge to sign the marriage contract, Maymūn claims that Laylā is his wife. The young man protests, saying that Laylā is Maymūn's offspring (salīla), not his wife (balīla). (185) The judge demands proof, and when the young man cannot furnish any evidence, the judge has him evicted from the court.
student and apprentice, and his adopted son. As a result, when Rajab and Laylā pretend to be a married couple, they are not disrupting the lines of biological kin but performing the transgression of other structures within their family, in particular, the lines of class and perhaps a type of kinship between a sister and her adopted brother.

When Suhayl and his travel companions arrive in the Egyptian town of Damietta on the eastern coast of the Nile Delta, they find three people engaged in a boisterous argument. Suhayl recognizes the two men as Rajab and Maymūn, followed by a woman he does not seem to recognize. This woman is of course Laylā, disguised as hunchback (bādiyat al-ḥadab) who is, in Suhayl's words, “calling for war” (munādiyatum bi-l-ḥarab). As Suhayl and his companions watch, Rajab, Laylā, and Maymūn perform an elaborate dispute in three parts. First, Rajab berates his “wife”, Laylā, and complains about her. Laylā then responds, defending herself and casting aspersions on Rajab. Finally, Maymūn steps forward to opine that Rajab should divorce his “wife” and takes it upon himself to collect alimony from the audience, rendering Suhayl the witness, audience, and once again the victim of this episode's trick.

While this episode contains extensive disparaging language about women, and Laylā in particular, as well as complaints about the institution of marriage, it is important to bear in mind two points that distinguish this episode (and the project of Majmaʿ al-Ṣaḥrayn as a whole) from the misogynistic passages in Maqāmāt al-Barbīr discussed in the previous chapter. First, Laylā is afforded space to respond directly to Rajab's complaints, and to articulate in equally-humorou and disparaging language his shortcomings as a husband. Second, Rajab and Laylā are both playing theatrical roles for the purpose of securing a reward from a gullible audience. This places distance between the speakers and their assertions. Unlike the narrator and adīb of Maqāmāt al-Barbīr, who discuss their views on women in private, Rajab and Laylā perform their
disagreement for an audience that includes the narrator. Taken together, the performative nature of their exchange and Laylā's robust response distinguish this episode in Majmaʿ al-Bahrayn from similar passages in Maqāmāt al-Barbīr. While Rajab performs misogyny, it remains a performance, and one that is contested by Laylā within the episode.

Rajab comes forward like someone possessed, frowning (basara) and glowering (tajahhama) as if he were a jinn from Jayham. Rajab's attack on Laylā is too linguistically rich and charged with significance to summarize or excerpt, and hence, I translate it here in full:

My woman is a stupid old hag * Too dumb to dress herself or work a rag * Fat and flabby * With gigantic tits and tummy * She subjects me to her white ear hair * And her dark outer layer * And a yellow eye * And a stench like something had died * She could nearly devour a camel whole * And drink up the watering hole * Above all this, she has a filthy tongue * And does no good deeds for anyone * Nor does she remember what is sacred * Nor is she grateful for blessings * Like a dog she growls * Like a wolf she howls * When I greeted her, I would be socked * And if I turned my back she would hurl a rock * With fingernails like talons she rips * And she bites with fangs like Qaʿḍab's sword tips * With open palm she smacks * And with her hoof she attacks * As for our home, she once granted me entrance to its halls * Then she began to prohibit me from sleeping within its walls * From her I suffered an illness the doctors could not cure * And hardship I could not endure * If I were to divorce her * I would not be able to pay to support her * And if I could bear to tolerate her * “No one can withstand the lion when it roars”

As al-Yāzījī indicates (55.388.1), this is a hemistich from the famous poem of apology which al-Nābihga al-Dhubyānī (active 570-600 CE) addressed to his erstwhile patron, the Lakhmid King al-Nūmān bin al-Mundhir. I have used the English translation produced by Suzanne Stetkevych, *The Mantle Odes: Arabic Praise Poems to the Prophet Muḥammad* (Bloomington:
Rajab's performance draws on many of the disparaging tropes employed by al-Barbîr. He insults his wife's intelligence, mocks her physical appearance, accuses her of violence and mistreatment, and disparages her for her alleged lack of morals and etiquette.

Indiana University Press, 2010), 12-19.
His attack, however, does not go unchallenged. Laylā responds immediately and fiercely, using many of the same slights and insults as her estranged “husband”. Testifying once again to the success of her disguise, Suhayl describes Laylā as “the foolish woman” (al-mar’a al-safiha), suggesting that he still does not recognize her despite identifying her father and brother. Laylā's speech, however, is anything but foolish: her complaint is composed in saj', and employs esoteric language, allusions to the figures of the Arab Islamic past, and a string of sayings to disparage Rajab. As is clear from the translation and text reproduced below, Laylā impugns Rajab's honesty, his pedigree, and his morality, and then she mocks his poverty and arrogance, and finally turns to his ugliness and purported stupidity. Not only is Laylā pitted against Rajab in this episode, but she is easily his equal: she can match his insults and his stylistics point for point, recalling Maymūn's poem in al-Baghdādiyya (#8), which concludes: “Many a daughter is more beneficial than a son”.

[Suhayl said:] The foolish woman was all stirred up * And said: What lies he has made up! * My covers this servant boy has ripped * As if my worn-out clothes he had stripped * Damn you, you slave girl's son * You whose parents were slaves, each and every one * Do you not remember your faults * And your doubts? * Your ill-fortune * And your lowly station? * Your wretched impoverishment * And your patched garments? * Every day you come to me with a reproach * And you don't even own a cockroach! * You sit on the cushion with your snout raised high * And command and prohibit, approve and deny * Saying: “How splendid is my throne * Even if its over a single stone” * And: “A husband of reed * Is better than sitting [in need]” * You are so misinformed * And your dark face deformed * If only I was not composing for a man colder than a cold mist *
More lowly than a wilted mushroom in a ditch * Who does not have an ewe [or other
mammal] * Or a she-camel * Who has neither plantlet * Nor droplet * On top of this he is
more of a tyrant than al-Khayfaqân * And lacks more than the moon, al-Zabraqân * He
flirts with fine lips and eyes * And he is more ugly than al-Jâhiq * He claims to have the
insight of Ibn Jumâ’a * Despite the stupidity of Banî Khuzâ’a * He throws the invective
of Jarwal * And does not know the adab of al-Akhṭal * But my pen has run along * And
he who resembles his father is not himself wrong

فتارت تلك المرأة السفيفة * وقالت يا للعجبية * قد هنكل هذا الوعد أستاري * حتى كان له جرِّدي

من أطماني * ولكل يا أنسى يا ابن الفنفس * أما تذكر عبك * وبيك * وشوك * ولوك *

ووفقتك المُدقَعَة * وأسمالك المُرفَّعَة * تأتيتي كأن يوم بعنتبة * وما في يدك عنتبة * ثم تجلس

على التكربة * وأنت شامخ الهجرة * فتأخذ في الأمر والنهي * والإيجاب والنفي * وقول يا حبيبا

الإمارة * ولو على الحجارة * وزوج من عود * خير من الفعود * ساء ما تنوهم * وشاحة وجهك

الأدم * ولبنت شعري ما أصنع برجل أباد من عشقر * وأدل من فقع يشرق * ليس له ثاغية * ولا

راغية * ولا عنزة حضض * ولا تضض * وهو على ذلك أظلم من الحيفان * وإنقص من الزبرقان
As is clear from the passage itself, Laylā's rebuttal is replete with esoteric words and references to the Arab and Islamic imaginaries. Beyond another demonstration of her eloquence, however, in her role as Rajab's outraged wife, she gives voice to much more familiar concerns. In this one dense passage, Laylā reminds her “husband” of his past deeds and status, complains about what she experiences as his hypocrisy, and objects to his arrogance and domineering behavior.

In the last line, Laylā shifts the blame from son to father, thereby imputing Maymūn for Rajab's alleged shortcomings. In the logic of their performance, this is the pretext for Maymūn to step forward. In so doing, he expands the scope of the conflict from a marital dispute to a family dispute in which Maymūn plays the role of the aggrieved father-in-law. This role, of course, makes his servant boy Rajab into his son, and his daughter into his daughter in law; in other words, it inverts the blood relations in the family. After Maymūn utters a few lines disparaging his son's wife, the conflict once again shifts from the verbal to the physical. Maymūn leaps upon Laylā (iqtahamahā) and kicks her. She falls to the ground, stands up, and falls again, cursing (tashtum) and speaking incoherently (tubarbir). As is carefully marked with diacritical marks in the Arabic text, Suhayl then says that Laylā made the audience laugh like Nuʿaymān made the
Companions laugh, or like the hoopoe bird (al-hudhud) made Solomon's soldiers laugh. Having pretended to insult and beat his daughter-in-law for the amusement of the audience, Maymūn turns to Rajab, tells him to divorce his wife, and promises to take care of the alimony owed to Laylā. He then gathers donations from Suhayl and his companions and presses the coins into Laylā's hands.

3.6 Conclusion: Killing the Father

The episode in which Laylā is most fully at the center of the narrative, al-Anbāriyya (#39), revolves around her false accusation that a young man (fatā) has killed her father. The coincidence of Laylā's most clear emergence as the central character and Maymūn's alleged demise invites speculation about how this collection imagines the conditions under which a female character might assert herself. As we will see below, Laylā performs a trick to dupe a judge into convicting an innocent young man of murder and coercing blood money (al-diya) from him. She then confronts Suhayl, thereby usurping Maymūn's role in the confrontation and inverting the conventional confrontation scene in which the narrator confronts the adīb. Despite Laylā's centrality, al-Anbāriyya (#39) follows the trend of beginning and ending with scenes of male homosociality. In the opening passage, Suhayl announces that he was traveling with a group (rakb) from Banū l-Qayn “who fill the ear and eye”. They are both

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390 Al-Yāziḏi, Majmaʿ al-Bahrayn, 55.393.7.
391 Al-Yāziḏi, Majmaʿ al-Bahrayn, 55.394.1.
392 Laylā similarly confronts Suhayl in al-Ṣūriyya (#16). In that episode, Maymūn accepts a large sum of money in exchange for leaving his daughter with a judge. When the judge orders his attendant to take Laylā to his home, Suhayl follows and witnesses Laylā trick the attendant into leaving her alone. Laylā then turns to Suhayl, greets him, and asks him to deliver a message in the form of a poem to the judge's attendant. The poem brags of her cleverness and tells the judge that their next meeting will be on the Day of Judgement. In so doing, she not only confronts Suhayl, but also completes her deception of the attendant and the judge.
393 Al-Yāziḏi, Majmaʿ al-Bahrayn, 39.283.7.
eloquent and attractive, a kind of desirability often reserved in this collection for Laylā. Suhayl does not dwell on this point, however, but rather begins to tell of an encounter with a “wide-ranging and shrewd-minded narrator” (wāsī’ al-riwāya ba ’īd al-ghāya). Suhayl is taken by a type of tribal or communal arrogance (al-hamiyya), and demands to know how the man thinks he compares to al-Shaykh al-Khizāmī, i.e., Maymūn. In his self-effacing response, the man compares himself to a cloud which brings little rain (ṣalaf) and Maymūn to a thundercloud (al-rāʿida). He then compares himself to a man named Bāqil bin Rabī’a, proverbial for his stupidity, while he likens Maymūn to the famously eloquent Quss bin Sāʿida. His fervor seemingly satisfied, Suhayl then tells the man of Maymūn's anecdotes (nawādir) and exploits (bawādir), until the latter “nearly melted from longing [to meet Maymūn]” (awshaka an yadhūba min ghaytihi). So Suhayl invites the man to join them to feast on Maymūn's speech (ḥadīth).

This opening scene sets up the reader to expect another male homosocial encounter, perhaps one in which Maymūn and the man from Banī al-Qayn compete in a dazzling display of eloquence and erudition. Suhayl seems to have carefully laid the groundwork for such an encounter, first promoting Maymūn's prowess and inciting competition among male litterateurs, then inspiring the Qaynī man's desire to meet Maymūn, and finally offering to facilitate their meeting. Yet when the group subsequently arrives in Anbar in Iraq, it is not Maymūn whom Suhayl encounters, but rather Laylā.

Once in Anbar, Suhayl approaches the governor's majlis (majlis al-wālī) in order to seek a favor. There he encounters Laylā disguised by a loose-fitting niqāb, holding on to a boy (fatā) whom she accuses of tricking and then murdering her father. There is a particular irony —

394 Al-Yāzījī, Majmaʿ al-Bahrānī, 283.
395 Al-Yāzījī, Majmaʿ al-Bahrānī, 287.
perhaps a perversity? — in the trickster adopting the guise of a victim not only to perform a trick but specifically to victimize an innocent young man. Laylā presents her case to the governor or wālī as follows:

This young man took my father with a ruse * And made him a target he could abuse * Leaving me alone in the lands of strangers * Bearing hardship * And suffering the pains of grief

إنّ هذا الفتى قد أخذ أبي احتيالًا * وفتك به احتيالًا * وتركني وحيدةً في دار الغربة

أكبّد عَرَق القرية * وأتَكِبّد شَظَف القرية

In response to her complaint, the wālī asks for proof. Laylā produces none other than Rajab and the alleged victim, Maymūn, to serve as witnesses of the murder of her “father”! Unlike Laylā, Suhayl recognizes the two male characters immediately. They give their testimony, which Suhayl mentions but does not report in the episode, and then depart just as quickly as they came.

Ignoring his protestations of innocence, the wālī has the accused boy imprisoned. While the wālī ignores the young man's pleas out of ignorance or naive trust in Laylā, the same cannot be said about Laylā herself. She knows that the young man is innocent. She demands his prosecution knowing it is persecution. Much like scenes in which Suhayl abandons his ailing friend to his fate, or when Maymūn's tricks cross the line from theft to the risk of bodily harm,

396 Al-Yāzījī, Majmaʿ al-Bahrāyn, 287.
here Laylā's actions may be profitable and entertaining, but they are also morally questionable.

The wālī urges Laylā to accept blood money (al-diya) in repayment, saying it is more pious than executing the young man. Laylā, in a ploy to increase her reward, replies with praise for her father's extraordinary standing and his value were he to be ransomed. She insists she would not have traded a hair on his head for one hundred camels, nor a clipping from his nails for all the palm trees of al-Yamāma.\(^{397}\) Having established Maymūn's worth, she then settles for blood money, which the wālī retrieves from the accused.

When Laylā lays her hands on her reward, she has an affective response: Suhayl reports that her sighs calmed down and her tears dried up.\(^{398}\) Suggesting further the perverse view of justice in this episode, Laylā then recites a short poem in which she claims:

Orphanhood is not the loss of a father but

    in truth the loss of a just ruler

Who revives the people with generosity

    so that the killed might defeat the killer\(^{399}\)

\[
\text{ما الّيـنَمُّ فقـدُ الأبِ لكنـهُ}
\]

في الحقّ فقـدُ الحاكم العادل

\[
\text{فيظفـر المقتول بالقاتل}
\]

\[
\text{ذلك يَحْبِـي الناس من فيضه}
\]


In the poem, she hints at the way her father (al-maqtūl) has defeated his “killer” (al-qātīl). To those who do not know her ruse, her poem indicates that the blood money gives the murdered justice, a type of victory over the murderer. But for Laylā, Suhayl, and the reader, all of whom know that Maymūn is still alive, the poem is a bolder assertion of the duplicity behind Laylā's trick.

Suhayl, at this point, wants to test his intuition that this woman is Laylā. When she departs, he follows her. Yet in a reverse of the conventions of the narrator's pursuit and confrontation of the adīb, here it is Laylā the adība who turns to the narrator and addresses him in verse. Her two lines identify Suhayl by name and claim that, like the star named “Suhayl”, the character Suhayl is to be found everywhere one looks. From this, it might be assumed that Laylā is aware of Suhayl's presence from other episodes, and that she, like him, has the capacity to recognize as well as be recognized. Indeed, these two lines of poetry confirm for Suhayl that the woman who has just performed the trick is indeed Laylā. It is clear that she was certain of him before he was certain of her, thereby usurping his role as the one who recognizes.

Suhayl claims he recognized Laylā by her Ḥadhām-like speech (al-maqāla al-ḥadhāmiyya) and the sword-like devastation she wrought (al-fatka al-ḥusāmiyya).400 As the footnotes explain, however, Suhayl is mocking Laylā, as Ḥadhām was known for her trustworthiness, while Laylā called her father Maymūn as a witness to testify to his own death. In an attempt to justify herself, much like her father does in other episodes, Laylā replies that this “horse's flank” (kashhān)401 tried to steal from them, and so they stripped him of the gown of

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401 Al-Yāzījī merely defines this word as an insult (kalimat shatm). The only definition of the term I was able to find in the Arabic lexicons is the flank of an animal or a human. Perhaps it is a term for the Levantine dialect of which I am not familiar. Al-Yāzījī, Majmaʾ al-Bahrayn, 39.290.3.
and made him more regretful than Abū Lahab (an opponent of the Prophet Muḥammad who is cursed in the Qurʿān⁴⁰²). Laylā then takes Suhayl to a tavern, where they meet Maymūn (and an “other” character only identified as the Qaynī man).

The episode draws to a close with Maymūn besting the Qaynī man in a literary contest, however our attention remains on Laylā. Here in al-Anbāriyya (#39), Laylā not only performs a trick and secures a reward for herself, thereby overshadowing her father, Maymūn; she also usurps key elements of Suhayl's role. Furthermore, she proves herself not only to be eloquent and erudite, but daring enough to accuse an innocent young man of killing of her father and then call her still-very-much-alive father as a witness. While Maymūn is not literally killed in this episode, he suffers a symbolic death at the hands of his wily and brazen daughter.

3.7 Postscript: Al-Shidyāq's Wives

Aḥmad Fāris al-Shidyāq, a near contemporary of al-Yāzījī and by many accounts his rival, also employs female characters (and in particular the character type of the wife) in his maqāmāt.⁴⁰³ This not only invites comparison between the two Levantine litterateurs’ portrayals of women and what can be distilled of their mid-century gender politics, but given al-Shidyāq's reputation for subversion, innovation, and other elements of a “modern” literary sensibility, a comparison of the two authors will expand the ground for reconsidering whether al-Yāzījī was

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⁴⁰² See Q111:1-3.
⁴⁰³ Fāris al-Shidyāq, who later adopted the name Aḥmad upon converting to Islam, was born into a Maronite family in Mount Lebanon in either 1801 or 1804. He grew up in the pre-sectarian world of Mount Lebanon described by Ussama Makdisi as an arena of elite political violence, class conflict, and familial and religious orders. A precocious student, he studied in ʿAyn Waraq, the elite school to train future Church leaders and Maronite intellectuals. Yet for various reasons, from his disposition to his political beliefs to the death of his brother Asʿad at the hands of the Maronite Patriarch in 1830, he fled Mount Lebanon. Over the course of his life, he played a wide range of roles: a brilliant prose stylist and epistolographer, a lexicographer, grammarian; a scribe, publisher, and editor; and a satirist who opposed many of the powerful institutions of his day and scorned colleague, patron, and enemy alike.
truly a “traditionalist.”

In al-Shidyāq's *maqāmāt*, the wives are both objects and vehicles of parody, simultaneously presenting and critiquing a variety of conventional gender stereotypes and social expectations. There are wives in each of the four *maqāmāt* al-Shidyāq included in his magisterial work, *al-Sāq `alā al-Sāq*, which was published in 1855 in Paris, a year before Majma `al-Bahrayn. There is also a wife character that follows many of the same patterns in *al-Maqāma al-Bakhshishiyya*, discussed in Chapter Two.

In one *maqāma*, the narrator al-Ḥāris ibn Hithām seeks out the Fariyāq for advice on his marriage, providing a valuable point of comparison for how marriage is represented in both al-Yāzījī's and al-Barbīr's *maqāmāt*. Entitled *Fī-l-maqāma al-μuqīma* or “A Maqāma to Make One Stand,” and placed as the thirteenth chapter of the third volume of *al-Sāq*, this episode surveys contemporary stereotypes of gender relations, sexual desires, and the benefits and pitfalls of marriage — largely through the dialectical exchanges of a cast of peripheral characters. Such a structure allows for a sympathetic and complex portrait of competing views about women's status, agency, and labor, both domestic and reproductive.

In the opening to “A Maqāma to Make One Stand,” the lisping narrator al-Ḥāris attributes his marital problems to an otherworldly providence. He was tempted into marrying a
woman whom he describes, in Humphrey Davies' translation, as:


cunning and deceitful, loudmouthed and lustful, shrewish and frigid, a woman lewd and rude, answering questions never asked, throwing down the gauntlet with none to take to task, promising things to which no coin could aspire, and casting me into perils ringed about with fire.\textsuperscript{406}

This depiction summarizes the views espoused by numerous husbands in this \textit{maqāma}: wives are jealous, disobedient, untrustworthy, and insatiably greedy, while the institution of marriage leads not to sexual gratification but rather constraint, frustration, and mutual betrayal. This is a clear, ironic echo of the view of marriage held by al-Barbīr's characters.

Al-Ḥāris, like al-Yāzījī's narrator, Suhayl bin ʿAbbād, leaves home looking for a new wife. It is not long before he runs into a subtly-animalized “flock” (\textit{sirb}) of twelve beautiful women. After a fleshy description of their garments and jewels, their slender waists and plump ankles, al-Ḥāris declares that their beauty — and his desire for “connection” (\textit{wiṣāl}) in all its connotations — has made him forget the “humiliation” (\textit{lakā}) he suffered at home.

In a clever reversal of the \textit{maqāma} as a social gathering among men, al-Ḥāris exchanges verse with the twelve women. His verse, which opens the exchange, complains of the “hatred, aversion, and cause for bile” in his “hussy wife”\textsuperscript{407} “Hussy” is Davies rendering of \textit{ilqa}, a term that Ibn Manẓūr glosses as a wife who routinely lies (\textit{kudhūb}) and has poor morals (\textit{sayʿat al-khuluq}).\textsuperscript{408} Deceit and intrigue, especially in language, are not only a common theme among

\textsuperscript{406} Al-Shidyāq, \textit{Leg Over Leg}, 3:251.
\textsuperscript{407} Al-Shidyāq, \textit{Leg Over Leg}, 3:253.
\textsuperscript{408} Ibn Manẓūr, \textit{Lisān al-ʿArab}, vol. 1, 182-183.
disgruntled husbands, but also a central preoccupation of the maqāma genre, whose participants revel in each opportunity to display their own eloquence in playing tricks and laying traps.

The wives each step forward to recite two or three lines of poetry composed by their respective husbands. Each poem is more injurious than the previous one, leading the reader through an ascending volley of frustrations, complaints, and outright slander against wives in general and these twelve wives in particular. The first woman, whose neck al-Hāris compares to that of a gazelle, relates what her husband has written about her as follows:

I ponder the base nature of my wife
And hate all members of the feminine gender
But then recall not all of them are she
and toward all of them feel equally tender

Much like al-Hāris, the author of these lines distinguishes women from wives: the former are objects of desire and adoration, while the latter are a source of misery and depravity. What stands between them is the institution of marriage. Marriage turns women, about all of whom a man may feel “equally tender,” into a wife.

What is a wife? One husband complains that his wife wants to subjugate him to her every whim and desire, while another observes that his wife is so jealous of him that when he falls ill, she does as well (an instance of al-Shidyāq’s comic hyperbole). Three others report that their wives cannot help themselves from seducing their husbands’ guests. Wives, in short, are held by

409 Al-Shidyāq, Leg Over Leg, 3:253.
their husbands to be deceitful, stupid, and driven by lust.

In their complaints about their wives’ greed, we can hear the husbands’ anxieties about their own ability to provide; in their suspicions about their wives’ fidelity, we might hear doubts about their own ability to satisfy their spouses in bed. The eighth wife, described by the narrator as “wantonly strutting, one well equipped to please her husband in his rutting,” relates the following verse:

My wife would love it dearly
If I had two things quite off-putting —
A what’s-it like a donkey’s when its pissing
And a horn like a bull’s when its butting

This is just one of many references to men’s inability to ‘measure up,’ both literally and figuratively. It is repeated often enough to become a theme, suggesting that we might read the husbands’ scorn for their wives as arising from their own insecurities.

Much of the nuance, critical insight, and humor of this passage comes from the fact that al-Shidyāq places these misogynistic lines in the mouths of the maligned women. The twelve husbands are removed from the scene, unable to challenge their wives’ transmission nor conceal them from the narrator’s lustful gaze. The husbands, in other words, are silenced while their verse is given voice. This technique creates distance between speech and speaker, and allows for the husbands' speech to be examined while the husbands themselves have been removed, at least

410 Al-Shidyāq, Leg Over Leg, 3:255.
411 Al-Shidyāq, Leg Over Leg, 3:257.
momentarily, to the periphery of the text.

The wives, while maligned by their husbands, are cast in the authoritative role of transmitter, and thereby placed within a long history of preserving and performing poetry. In reciting their husbands’ offensive verses, the women are afforded a chance to defend themselves. They challenge the moral and intellectual authority of their spouses; one husband is dismissed as an “inveterate liar,” another “suspicious,” a third “raving.” One wife makes an appeal directly to the narrator, and perhaps by extension to the reader, saying: “Hear how my husband has decried me, and be not one of those who vilify me.” On the other hand, the wives' moral authority is contradicted by the very verses they relate, and their intellectual and poetic abilities are repeatedly undermined by the narrator’s fetishization of their physical attributes.

After the twelfth wife concludes her recitation, the narrator abruptly departs, announcing that he “must go to where these poets congregate and make of each an associate.” The poets to whom he refers are none other than the wives' husbands. Adding to the difficulty of determining whom to trust, and how to read the narrator’s tone, he adds:

Who knows, perhaps I’ll acquire from them good sense, discover some guidance in their vehemence, for their words are very wise and from seeking them out some clarity may well arise.
Al-Hāris seems, despite the appeals of the wives, to have found the husbands’ poetry to be sufficiently compelling to seek them out and solicit their guidance in his own troubled marital affairs.

The poets welcome al-Hāris into their circle, where they are in the midst of a heated debate on the topic of women.419 The first speaker does little more than elaborate on the unflattering views already transmitted in the poets’ verse. His interlocutor, however, begins by confessing that he composed his poetry about his wife while jealous, but that he will now speak “in a spirit of good sense and inquiry zealous.”420 He compares a young woman to her brother, enumerating the various ways in which the brother is free to “sport and frolic” while the sister is “hidden away” until she marries. “When she weds,” the poet continues, “she can do nothing her husband forbids.”421

His account of the restrictions placed on a wife by her husband is followed by a detailed description of the responsibilities of child rearing, from the pleasurable to the burdensome. He exclaims:

[S]he [is the one] who cleans them and weans them, handles them and dandles them, cuddles them and swaddles them, juggles them and juggles them, dresses them and caresses them, pats them and pets them, wipes them and gripes them…

Here al-Shidyāq uses sajʿ to enumerate the many labors of motherhood. Breaking the stylistic

419 In form although not in content, this scene recalls the gatherings of poets in the canonical maqāmāt. For instance, in al-Hamadhānī’s “Maqāma of Poesy” (al-maqqama al-qaridiyya), the narrator and his friends have gathered to debate the merits of the pre-Islamic and Umayyad poets.
420 Al-Shidyāq, *Leg Over Leg*, 3:263.
421 Al-Shidyāq, *Leg Over Leg*, 3:263.
conventions of the *maqāma*, the narrator lists dozens of obscure words for specific childcare practices. Many of them are onomatopoetic and full of double entendre, ranging from *tuhamhim*, or to lull a child to sleep with a woman’s voice, to *tunassis*, which al-Shidyāq himself is courteous enough to gloss as “making a child urinate or defecate.” This list extends for more than a page, followed by a detailed account of the physical pains and hardships that women bear while pregnant and nursing, from lactation to menstruation.

It is at this quite serious juncture that the Fāriyāq, the autobiographical protagonist of al-Ṣāq, appears. (In a fascinating divergence from generic convention, the Fāriyāq, who plays many roles within al-Ṣāq, appears here as the *adīb* of a *maqāma*. In this sense, al-Shidyāq quite brilliantly turns being the *adīb* itself into a disguise.) The Fāriyāq is harried and hungry, carrying a basket to do his shopping. He seems to be more a figure to pity than one to consult; like those glimpses of what I will call the sincere *adīb* which we will study in the *Majmaʿ al-Bahrayn*, at no point does the Fāriyāq suggest his poverty is a ruse or a disguise. Seeming to disregard the Fāriyāq's sorry state, al-Hāris rushes up and asks him to resolve their dispute. The Fāriyāq, in a nod to the conventional role of the *adīb*, issues a few lines of verse. Men and women are equal, he proclaims, not only in their right to divorce, but also in their entitlement to sexual satisfaction. Al-Hāris heeds these words, and the *maqāma* ends with his return home to reconcile with his “hussy” wife.

Al-Shidyāq brings the ambiguity of the *maqāma* to a crescendo. One could read this episode as a mocking response to male social authority and the tired clichés about women’s sexuality and wives’ morality that uphold it. Indeed, by separating speech from the speaker, the

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text invites a reconsideration of the value of that speech apart from the speaker’s authority. Al-Shidyāq, moreover, writes the maligned wives into this scene, and thereby into a genre that has traditionally kept female characters on the margins. That the wives are brought to the center of the scene, yet retain their marginality as transmitters of verse that malign them, serves as a further indication of the capacity of the maqāma to serve as a site for the complex concerns of “Other” characters, to which we turn in the next chapter.
Chapter Four: Other Characters

The scholarship on the *maqāma* is replete with reflections on its two male protagonists, the *adīb* and the narrator. It is easy to understand why: they are nearly ubiquitous in the genre, their encounters are the narrative center of most episodes, and their performances are considered an indispensable vehicle for the *maqāma*'s displays of eloquence and erudition. Without denying these characters' significance or the validity of the theories that seek to make sense of their sophisticated antics, this chapter turns to some of the other, unstudied characters that crowd the margins and, more frequently than might be expected, steal the limelight of the *maqāmāt*. While Laylā may be the most complex character to trouble the duality of the narrator and the *adīb*, she is by no means the only one. Indeed, in the postscript to the previous chapter we have already encountered the twelve wives (and their twelve husbands) around which al-Shidyāq's third *maqāma* revolves. This chapter builds further, presenting an array of “other” characters from the *maqāmāt* of Aḥmad al-Barbīr, Niqūlā al-Turk, and Nāṣīf al-Yāzijī.

While Laylā's gender challenges the homosocial hegemony over refined speech, the otherness of the characters studied in this chapter give vivid portraits of how marginal figures were imagined by prominent *maqāma* authors before and during the early *Nahḍa*. Their otherness takes many forms, including phenotype, ability, age, and class, with the caveat that each of these terms is something of a presentist approximation for the contours of difference as
they are articulated in the period under study here.\textsuperscript{423} As the examples discussed in this chapter make clear, the peripheral position of the “other” characters in the narrative and their various forms of social Otherness are not distinct but rather intertwined matters. Hence, these Other characters struggle, and succeed to varying degrees, in finding their voice, both literally and figuratively.

The centrality of eloquence to belonging in the \textit{maqāma} is no mere coincidence: it manifests a deep connection between notions of “proper” Arabic and social status. In line with one of the larger arcs of this dissertation, it is eloquence that allows characters to occupy the elite space of the \textit{maqāma}, whether it is defined as male, adult, or wealthy. Refined speech is a gendered and classed act, and in these \textit{maqāmāt}, infelicity with speech is linked to being less of — less of a man, less of an educated elite, less of an adult, less of the type of character who could benefit from the masterful employment of Arabic. While scholars have lauded (or denigrated) the \textit{maqāma} for the intricate demonstrations of eloquence, we have not considered with equal curiosity and rigor how the genre established and policed a narrow understanding of communal belonging built on facility with language, thereby excluding from literary critical consideration the host of Other characters we begin to study here.

The first three sections focus on Other characters in the \textit{maqāmāt} of Aḥmad al-Barbīr and Niqūlā al-Turk. These characters are marked by their ineloquence and inability to communicate: they grumble, growl, lisp, mispronounce and even stand mute in the background. Their ways of speaking, their very voices, reinforce the link between eloquent speech and social belonging, yet

\textsuperscript{423} It would require a whole chapter to discuss the many other Others marked in this corpus. This includes donkey drivers, dream interpreters, and thieves, and banshees and ghouls. Even the Devil himself plays the role of an \textit{adīb} in ‘Abdallah al-Nadīm’s \textit{Kitāb al-Masāmīr} (Cairo: Press Unknown, 1893). For another curious representation of the supernatural, see \textit{al-Maqāma al-ʿAlawīyya} in Amīn Shumayyil, \textit{Al-Mubtakir} (Liverpool, England: Press Unknown, 1867), 33–45. Here Shumayyil imagines a galactic voyage in which his \textit{adīb} meets strange celestial beings who guard the far-away but precisely-measured stars.
the grounds of their exclusion in the eyes of their “betters” shift from episode to episode.

We then turn, in the second half of this chapter, to the study of the Other characters in al-Yāzījī’s Majmaʿ al-Bahrayn, and Rajab in particular. Among al-Yāzījī’s cast of other characters, Rajab, Maymūn's servant boy or ghulām, stands out. He is present in nearly half of the episodes in Majmaʿ al-Bahrayn and (with a handful of exceptions) serves as a central and indispensable character. In the previous chapter, we saw his instrumental performance as Laylā’s husband in al-Damīyiyya (#55). In Chapter Five, we will discuss Rajab's role in al-Ghazziyya (#53), a paradigmatic example of a performance type I am calling “the single double entendre”. In sections four through six of this chapter, I lay out a few choice examples of Rajab's myriad roles, disguises, and performances, the purpose of which is to assert that he, like Laylā, should be considered an adīb on par with Maymūn.

Through his command of the Arabic language, broad knowledge of many fields of discourse, and facility with disguises and theatrics, Rajab (like Laylā) proves himself to be an

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424 One type of exception is those episodes in which Rajab is mentioned but plays no role. This is the case in al-Ramlīyya (#15), where Suhayl recognizes Rajab, Laylā, and Maymūn as members of a band of marauding thieves, but Rajab himself plays no further part. Likewise, in al-Muʿariyya (#24), Suhayl encounters Rajab and Laylā near the end of the episode, only long after the trick has been performed and Maymūn has escaped to divide up his reward to pay for food, drink, and musical instruments. In al-Adabiyya (#34), Rajab is addressed as the servant (ghulām) who receives Maymūn’s fatherly advice, but does not appear. There are also three episodes in which a character seems, for all intents and purposes, to be Rajab, but careful study of the text does not explicitly identify him as such. One of these episodes is al-Tīhamīyya (#41), when “the orator of the Arabs” (khaṭṭīb al-ʿarab) arrives before a gathering of Suhayl and his friends. Suhayl describes this orator as “a man in the prime of his youth” (rajul‘ī fi muṭṭabāl al-shabaḥ) riding a fast horse (ya bāb) like a torrent (ka-l-ʿubāb). (41.298.7-9) Maymūn follows in the tracks of this youthful orator, who displays an eloquence of which few men aside from Rajab are capable; but the orator is never explicitly identified as Maymūn servant boy. Adding to the ambiguity, Suhayl recognizes Maymūn on sight, even though the adīb is pretending to have a foreign accent, but does not similarly identify Rajab. At the end of the episode, Maymūn departs with a prayer for orators, but Suhayl does not pursue and confront him. We are told in a footnote that this prayer is on account of the way in which Maymūn was able to win a reward from the audience due to the orator of the Arabs, but there is no further scene in which Rajab reveals himself to Suhayl. The same can be said of the servant character (ghulām) in al-Hikamiyya (#17) and al-Lāḥiqa'yya (#48). In al-Hikamiyya (#17), to take just one of the episodes as an example, Maymūn harangues an unidentified man (rajul) with a long string of rhyming advice and then an equally-long poem, after which he collapses in a fit of emotion which leads the audience to fear he may have expired. They tell his servant (ghulām) to take their donations (sadaqa) to use for funeral preparations (tajhīz) if he dies and for living expenses if he lives. When the crowd departs, leaving only Suhayl, and Maymūn “brushes off the dust of death” (nafaḍa‘ an nafṣīhi ghūbār al-maimiyya), he tells his servant (yā ghulām) to bring them a wine jug (al-dastaja) big enough to last a week (al-haťaja). (17.143.1-2) This is the extent of our exposure to the servant in this episode; no mention is made of whether he gives the donations to Maymūn, nor does he appear again to count and divide the reward at the end of the episode, shrouding his identity in ambiguity.
whose presence in nearly half of al-Yāziji's episodes changes the long-standing pattern of having two main characters in the maqāma tradition. If the other characters in the maqāmāt of al-Barbīr and al-Turk struggle for recognition in the episodes where they appear, and only gain it temporarily, Rajab and Laylā are both much closer to the center of the action. They play instrumental roles in the tricks, win for themselves and Maymūn a wide array of rewards, and often participate in the central narrative stages of the episodes where they appear.

Rajab embodies with force and clarity what many of the “other” characters in this corpus can teach us about the maqāma: that when seen from the margins, the characters at the ostensible center of the genre are not only models of eloquence and erudition, but also of significant social power. In the case of Rajab, he is most frequently, and perhaps most reliably, portrayed as Maymūn's servant boy. This makes Maymūn his master, introducing a world of power relations which the characters' antics play upon and, perhaps, attempt to conceal in layers of theatrical and linguistic ambiguity.

This is not, however, how al-Yāziji presents his Other characters. In the introduction to Majmaʿ al-Baḥrayn, al-Yāziji makes no mention of either Laylā or Rajab. He only says that he attributed the events (nasabtu al-waqāʾiʿ) of the episodes to his adīb, Maymūn al-Khizāmī, and the relaying of the narratives (riwāyāt) to Suhayl bin ʿAbbād. The reader is not introduced to Rajab or Laylā until the first episode of the collection. While the encounters, adventures, and exchanges between Suhayl and Maymūn are undoubtedly central to the narrative structure of the text, and they are accordingly two of its main characters, one cannot conclude that they are the

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425 While numerous episodes blur the lines between Rajab as servant, student, and son, the fact remains that, in those unguarded moments before the trick commences or after it has concluded, Suhayl frequently bears witness to Rajab being, in truth, Maymūn's servant.
426 Al-Yāziji, Majmaʿ al-Baḥrayn, 0.2.8-9.
only two. Building on the arguments of the previous chapter, I believe that there are four main characters in *Majmaʿ al-Bahrāyn*: the *adīb* and the narrator mentioned above, as well as Maymūn's daughter Laylā, who I have called the *adība*, and Rajab, Maymūn's servant boy. While Suhayl and Maymūn are drawn from the familiar mold of the dual protagonists of the canonical *maqāma*, Laylā and Rajab are characterological innovations.

### 4.1 The Ṭufaylī

The only peripheral character in *Maqāmāt al-Barbīr* is identified as a “party crasher” or “social parasite” (*ṭufaylī*), a clever and often greedy character type with a long history in Arabic belles-lettres.⁴²⁷ What is so curious about the *ṭufaylī* in al-Barbīr's extraordinarily long *maqāma* is that he is the *only* Other character. The sole Other is a subaltern figure, a prototypical outsider, who appears in the text in order to ask for charity from the main characters. The narrator and the *adīb* treat the party crasher's appearance as a distasteful intrusion, and they insult and humiliate the man before expelling him with a few table scraps. In so doing, the two canonical characters meticulously police the boundaries of the company they keep, excluding those they deem to be insufficient in manners, education, and sophistication (i.e., lacking in *adab*).⁴²⁸ The eloquent condemnations of the narrator and the *adīb*, furthermore, do not conceal the rupture occasioned by the interloping *ṭufayl*, whose scorn and outrage challenges the main characters' moral legitimacy, if not their linguistic authority. Indeed, their treatment of the *ṭufaylī* makes this

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⁴²⁷ The *ṭufaylī*, both as a literary figure and a social phenomenon, may have been an inspiration and a model for the *adīb*'s trickery in the canonical *maqāmāt*. For portraits of the *ṭufayl* in classical Arabic works, see for instance *Kitāb al-Bukhālā* (*The Book of Misers*) by al-Jāḥiz (d. 255/868-9), *Al-Faraj baʿd al-shidda* (*Relief after Hardship*) by al-Tanukhī (d. 384/994), and *Kitāb al-Taffīl* (*The Book of Sycophancy*) of al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī (d. 463/1071).

⁴²⁸ This policing adds a layer of complexity to way that the canonical narrator and the *adīb* have been understood by other scholars to be social miscreants and party crashers themselves.
*maqāma* into something of a dour departure from the trope of the convivial gathering in which all are welcome, or even one where entrance can be negotiated in one manner or another.

The encounter with the *tufaylī* takes place in a short scene that begins on 26b, almost precisely halfway through the text. The narrator has just invited the *adīb* to stay with him in his home. When they arrive at the door, however, a third person (*shakhṣ*) attempts to enter the narrator's home with them, taking advantage of the fact that each man thinks he is a follower (*min atbāʾ*) of the other. The narrator characterizes this interloper in the following manner:

He evinces boorishness and coarseness * And his hide secretes frigidity and odiousness

This judgment is immediate and absolute, taking place prior to any conversation between the characters and enduring long after the newcomer's departure, as the *adīb* and the narrator take turns composing invectives against what they perceive as the man's moral flaws and social faux pas.

Fearful that the *adīb* might mistake the newcomer for one of his “followers,” and determined to stave off any injury to his reputation that might result from such a mistaken association, the narrator sets out to *unmask* the new character (*akshīf li-*l-*shaykh masdūl qināʾ iḥī*). To do so, he asks the newcomer if he is one of the *adīb*’s followers. Before the newcomer can answer, the *adīb* himself denies knowing the man. The *adīb* decries those who enter without invitation or permission, inciting the newcomer to respond as follows, using the “narrow eye” as an idiom for frugality or penny-pinching: “That's nothing but a narrow eye
(dayqat ʿayn).” “Do you not know,” the ṭufayl continues, “that one's supplies (zād) can, for two, provide?” This request for assistance is apparently all that is needed to “unmask” the newcomer, for the narrator cries: “You wedding-party parasite!” (ṭufayl al-ʿrās). 429

While the scene employs the tropes of disguise, unmasking, and recognition central to other maqāmāt, here the figure being unmasked and the significance of his disguise are strikingly different. 430 It is not the adīb but rather the Other character who appears in disguise and attempts, in the eyes of the main characters, to execute a trick. The “disguise” itself is neither elaborate or sophisticated; the newcomer has not even opened his mouth, nor are we told anything about his manner of dress or appearance, when the narrator announces his intention to unmask him.

The scene is so compressed, however, that the reader is given no evidence of the ṭufayl's coarseness aside from the string of accusations leveled at him by the narrator and echoed by the adīb. In the absence of dialogue or description that establishes such an unflattering portrait, we are left with the insults of the two main characters standing in pronounced contradiction with their proud assertions of generosity elsewhere in Maqāmāt al-Barbīr. That is, in their one chance to demonstrate in action the hospitality they proclaim in words, their behavior reveals that their avowed generosity is only bestowed upon the elite.

The narrator bluntly tells the party crasher to take some food and be on his way, as the adīb is so “refined” (laṭīf) that, “were you to sit with him but a moment, he would require medical treatment.” 431 In response, the humiliated ṭufayl utters a string of curses impugning the generosity and hospitality of the two main characters. While many of his utterances have none of

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429 The narrator then adds a gratuitous insult about his bad breath (yā abkhūr al-anfās) and insensitivity (yā muẓlam al-hawwās).
430 For more on the trope of disguise, see al-Qadi, “Maqāmāt Bāḍī al-Zamān al-Hamadhānī,” 462.
431 Al-Barbīr, Maqāmāt al-Barbīr, 26b.
the pleasing cadence of saj’, the ṭufayl’s condemnation rings strikingly true. He rattles off a list of what these two eloquent characters so patently lack: “no dignity, no honor, no reward, no gratitude, no recompense” (wa-lā karāma wa-lā sharaf wa-lā ajr wa-lā shukr wa-lā khalaf). The ṭufayl then adds, in the only line in saj’:

A curse upon your house, where the water does not boil nor the backsides of the pots know the fire, where you are like wild animals in the wastes or the dead in their graves.\footnote{Al-Barbîr, Maqâmât al-Barbîr, 27a.}

By way of response, the narrator turns to the adîb and recites a line a poetry from Ibn al-Rûmî (d. 283/896):

You are like the swine to the hunter there is no one to praise its killer\footnote{Al-Barbîr, Maqâmât al-Barbîr, 27a.}

Hearing this line, the narrator tells us, the ṭufayl stands, takes his food and “growls and
grumbles” (*hamhama wa-damdana*) out the door. This phrase employs the same word (*damdana*) that al-Turk will use in the coming section to describe ‘Īsā l-Jabbar's speech.

Once the ṭufayl has left the two men comfortably alone — that is, alone together in the gendered and, as we ascertain here, classed social space of discourse within the *maqāma* — the *adīb* composes a refined invective against their erstwhile “guest,” which the narrator praises and then emulates with an ode of his own.434 Their eloquent condemnations, however, do not conceal the rupture occasioned by the interloping ṭufayl. While his scorn does not challenge the linguistic and scholarly authority of the two central figures, his outrage questions their moral legitimacy and their claim to speak the truth. Furthermore, this encounter reveals a shift in the characterization of the *adīb*, who in the canonical *maqāmat* is a rogue litterateur surviving, and sometimes thriving, on what he can flatter and swindle from wealthy patrons and fellow commoners. In *Maqāmat al-Barbir*, the *adīb*'s encounter with an uninvited and clearly unwelcome guest reveals a much closer link between the practices of *adab* and the undisguised prejudices of the socially powerful, among whom this particular *adīb* and narrator see themselves to belong.

Even if the Other character in *Maqāmat al-Barbir* does not take the center of the episode, his grumbling introduces a competing vantage point within the narrative, from which one might begin to doubt the authority of the *adīb* and the narrator. While no less marginal or derided than the ṭufayl, al-Turk's Other characters, to whom we turn in the next two sections, manage to establish a more substantial and central place for themselves in their respective episodes.

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4.2 ʿĪsā l-Jabbār, The Bahmūt

The final maqāma in Niqūlā al-Turk's collection is entitled Al-Maqāma al-ʿĪswiyya (undated, but likely composed between 1804-1815). This episode is named after ʿĪsā l-Jabbār, the Other character around whom the plot revolves. The name ʿĪsā recalls the name of al-Hamadhānī's rāwī, ʿĪsā bin Hishām, while his epithet, “al-Jabbār,” “the mighty” or “the tyrannical,” hints at the outsized role of physical (compared with rhetorical) strength in this episode. His name and description also call to mind the accounts of wrestling matches and equestrian contests in Fuʿād al-Bustānī's collection of stories about Emir Bashīr, al-Turk's patron.

ʿĪsā l-Jabbār is neither the narrator al-Ḥāzim nor the adīb Abū l-Nawādir, but a third character. His portrayal links the inarticulate speech of the animal, traces of the supernatural, and the physical markers of his status as a stranger or foreigner. Still, al-Jabbār seizes on his own language and physical might to briefly claim the place of the adīb for himself, demonstrating how language and eloquence are a vehicle for him to assert his belonging.

The link between ʿĪsā l-Jabbār's inarticulate speech and his social marginality is best expressed by what the narrator, al-Ḥāzim, calls him: a “bahmūt” or “behemoth”. Bahmūt comes from the Arabic root b-h-m. From this root is derived the noun “beast” (bahīma, pl. bahāʾim)

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435  Al-Jabbār is also one of the ninety-nine names of God, as Dr. Maurice Pomerantz has pointed out to me.
436  In one such story, a wrestler referred to only as “al-Jabbār al-Gharib” or “the Mighty Stranger” arrives in Dayr al-Qamar and boasts he can beat any challenger that Mount Lebanon might produce. (68) In another, al-Bustānī tells of the arrival of a foreign horseman named al-Dalalati in 1829. Linking foreign speech, anger, and ineloquence, al-Bustānī reports: “His Kurdish accent corrupted his speech,” and when driven to anger in the midst of a jousting match, he returns to his native tongue to curse his opponent. (57-60) For these and other such stories, see Fuʿād al-Bustānī, ‘Alāʾīhād al-amīr, 56-60, 62-64, 90-91, and 111-112.
437  Bahmūt carries the “ūt” ending is found in Arabic words that came from older Semitic languages, such as jabarūt and malakūt. In this case, the word or a variant thereof is found in both Syriac and Hebrew, and entered English through Latin translations of the Hebrew Bible. I wish to thank Dr. Mario Kozah for his guidance on this particular term.
and the adjective “obscure, unclear, vague” (mubham). The link between the beast and the obscure is language, precisely that faculty which was long believed, from Aristotle to al-Jāhiẓ to the modern age, to distinguish the human from other animals. The well-known contemporary of many of the authors in this study, Rifāʿa Rāfiʿ al-Ṭaḥawi (d. 1873) defines the human as “the speaking animal” (al-insān huwa al-hayawān al-nāṭiq). Al-Turk's representation of ‘Īsā al-Jabbār as the bahmūṭ suggests he may similarly locate the distinction between the human and the animal firmly in the capacity for speech.

Al-Maqāma al-Īsawiyya opens with the narrator's arrival in an unnamed village in the midst of a chaotic scene. Villagers are running to and fro, and when al-Ḥāzim enquires about the commotion, he is told of the appearance of “a person whose reputation was known” (shakhsh shahīr al-sumʿa). In other maqāmāt, such an introduction would likely intimate the arrival of the adīb, whose reputation for eloquence and erudition precedes him. Curious, al-Ḥāzim follows the villagers to a square where a large crowd (an audience of anonymous Others) has gathered to witness the spectacle of the “person” (shakhsh) at the center of the commotion. The mood is ominous, with a town crier (munādī) issuing a terrifying call to the assembled villagers.

We later learn that this “person” is ‘Īsā l-Jabbār. While al-Ḥāzim repeats the term “shakhsh” which he heard from the racing villagers, his description of ‘Īsā l-Jabbār raises questions about the extent to which he imagines this “person” to belong in the realm of the

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438 There are other connotations as well. A wall (ḥā'īt) that is described as “mubham” has no door; a door is said to be “mubham” if there is no clear way to open it; a road that is hidden and unclear is likewise described, as is a night with no light. Ibn Manẓūr, Lisān al-ʿArab (Beirut: Dār al-Ḥayat li-l-Turāth al-ʿArabi, 1988), vol. 1, 523-527 (esp. 524).

439 For Aristotle's assertion that “man alone among the animals has speech,” and the moral capacities Aristotle argues this bestows upon human beings, see Carnes Lord (tr.), Aristotle's Politics (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2013), 41 (section 1.1253a, lines 1-19).

440 Al-Taḥawi's choice of the word “al-nāṭiq” offers a further etymological link between utterance (mutq) and logic (mantiq). For his assertion, see al-Taḥawi's Kitāb al-mursid al-amīn li-l-banān wa-l-banān in Muḥammad Ḥimār, ed., Al-Āmīl al-kāmil, 2:299.
human:

In the middle of the group I found someone whose appearance would shake those whose heart was sound. Like a devil he was screaming, and like a deadly viper he was breathing, roaring like a ghoul whose voice would horrify [the soul].

Both the devil (ʿifrīt) and the ghoul (ghūl) are familiar figures of Arabic folklore, poetry, and prose writing, closely associated with moral deviance, danger, and the mysteries of the supernatural world. In the context of the maqāma, a genre where eloquence is particularly prized, the description of screaming, hissing, and roaring is especially poignant, as it calls to mind the organ of speech (the mouth) and its medium (sound) while simultaneously distancing ʿĪsā l-Jabbār from eloquent or even coherent speech.

In the next line, al-Ḥāzim describes ʿĪsā l-Jabbār's appearance:

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He had a black countenance and reddened stare, protruding lips and a grotesque air, long of arm and broad of shoulder, intensely powerful, his wrath [did smolder].

While the first line of al-Ḥāzim's description attributes animalistic and supernatural qualities to ʿĪsā l-Jabbār, this second line links physicality (size and strength) and phenotype (the color of his skin, the shape of his lips). The term "zanjī" (or zinjī), which I have translated as “black” in the phrase “black countenance”, is understood by the lexicographer Ibn Manẓūr (d. 711/1311-2) to refer to the people of Sudan. While there may be contexts in which the term is purely descriptive or even laudatory, it also carries negative connotations, especially when conflated, as it is here, with ugliness (qubh), intimidating physical size, strength, and anger. A careful reading of al-Turk's oeuvre reveal further traces of such difference.

443 Al-Bustānī, Diwān al-muʿallim Niqūlā al-Turk, 2:387. I took some poetic license in my translation of “qabīḥ al-sīffā” as “a grotesque air”. A more literal translation would be “with a grotesque appearance”.
445 In al-Kānimiyyya, discussed above, there is a character described as “zinjī” and nicknamed “Arab” (ʿarab). While “zinjī” might be translated as “dark-skinned”, “black”, “African”, “Sudanese” or perhaps with a derogatory term, what is striking about this passage is that his nickname invites the possibility of being (or becoming through naming) both black/Sudanese/African and Arab. Unlike the adīb in al-Kānimiyyya who regales the Emir's guests with clever lines of poetry, “Arab” silently makes shadow puppets of animals on the wall — a further demonstration of the nexus of language and social recognition, or silence and marginalization. Likewise, the adīb in another of al-Turk's maqāmāt, al-Maghriyya, refers to his servant's complaints about the weather in the Levant and her pining for Egypt. Scribal marginalia indicates in two places that this woman, referred to as a servant (khādem) named ʿAṭīyya, is speaking “the language of the slaves (ʿabīḍī)” Al-Bustânī, Diwān al-Turk, 2:362.) Al-Bustānī goes so far as to suggest that this character may have been modeled on “a black slave woman” (ʿabda sawdā) with whom al-Turk returned to Mount Lebanon in 1804 from his many years in Egypt. Al-Bustānī, Diwān al-muʿallim Niqūlā al-Turk, vol. 1, pages “dāl” to “waw”.

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Having established ʿĪsā l-Jabbār as Other by presenting him as animalistic, otherworldly, and physiologically remarkable, al-Ḥāzim then turns to the main narrative event: ʿĪsā l-Jabbār's search for someone to fight. This search might be contrasted to the conventional search for a literary companion. While both are homosocial, in the first the characters seek an exchange of *adab* while in the second, the Baḥmūt wishes to exchange blows. He bellows (*ṣarakha ṣarkha*) out a (rhyming) challenge:

Who among you is a contender for a clash or a champion in a boxing match? Who seeks a brawl or desires to maul? Who loves to rumble or knows how to tumble?\(^{446}\)

His challenge silences the crowd, although this is likely not the awed silence that follows eloquent performances in other *maqāmāt*. Here it seems to be the threat of physical violence that quiets the onlookers rather than any fear of being outwitted or out-rhymed by a wily rogue.

While the challenge to compete before an audience is the same, the nature of the competition has changed dramatically. The introduction of a coarse physicality to the *maqāma*’s encounter occurs in tandem with, and perhaps is enabled by, the introduction of another, more aggressive, more physical masculinity.


\(^{447}\) Al-Turk routinely uses the letter *yāʾ* rather than a *hamza* in the active participle (*ism fāʾ il*).
In the face of their silence, ʿĪsā l-Jabbār demands that the village produce “a group of poets” (zumrat al-shuʿarāʾ) so that he might give them a taste of “the bitters of adversity” (marāʾ ʿir al-ḍarrāʾ). A new audience is thus called forth within the narrative. From among its ranks, a slender, weak-looking man steps forward, “oiled” (mundahan) from head to fingertips in shiny ink. Al-Ḥāzim observes that Time (al-zamān) — that indefatigable enemy of the characters of the maqāma — has crushed this pitiful representative of the writing class. The unnamed writer raises his voice in the cry of a coward (jabān) and, withdrawing his pen from its inkwell, asks ʿĪsā l-Jabbār to identify himself. His request is expressed with a snippet of rhyming prose, perhaps poking fun at ornate speech as well as the acts and instruments of writing.

Before reporting ʿĪsā l-Jabbār's response, the narrator describes how he spoke: “The behemoth muttered (damdama) and jabbered (tamṭama) and his eyes grew red and he blubbered (tabartama) and hollered.” In the onomatopoetic repetition of simple phonemes, these three verbs impute a certain simplicity, redundancy, and vacuity to ʿĪsā l-Jabbār's speech.448 Their meaning corresponds to what might be surmised from their form. Hans Wehr defines damdama as “to mutter, grumble, growl, [or] snarl,”449 while Ibn Manẓūr says that the verb damdama means “to speak to someone while in a state of anger” (kallamahu mughḍaban).450 The verb ṭamṭama is used to describe a way of speaking ineloquently (wa qad ṭamṭama fi kalāmihi) due to being — or speaking like, as the two are indiscernible here — a foreigner, as “ṭamṭama” is a synonym for the verb “aʾjama”.451 The final verb, bartama, deepens the connections between

448 Morphologically, each verb is made up of four consonants. In a language comprised predominately of three-consonant or triliteral roots, these quadriliteral verbs are not only irregular, but share a morphological pattern with the many quadriliteral loan words from foreign languages (such as ʿaskara, tarjama, barhana, and so on). The quadrilateral roots are also associated with defective speech (taʿa a, barbara, tamta, hamama, etc). My thanks to Dr. Matthew Keegan for this final observation.
451 The link between the animal and the inarticulate can be traced further, as Ibn Manẓūr notes that “al-ṭimṭim” is a type of small-eared sheep and cites a line of Jāhiliyya poetry by Al-Afwāḥ al-Awdīyy (d. approx. 570 CE) referring to “a thin-legged
physical features, affective states, and language. The noun “birṭām” describes a man with enormous lips (like Ḥsā l-Jabbār), while the verb “barṭama” connotes the act of casting down one's lips in anger; the related form of “tabarṭama” is to be angered by someone's speech.452

When read closely, these verbs reinforce the larger argument that inarticulate speech is a marker of Otherness with complex undertones. It is no surprise, then, that when Ḥsā l-Jabbār does speak, the violent content of his speech counteracts its stylized form. In contrast to canonical examples of self-presentation in the maqāma, Ḥsā brags of his “severing sword” and his ability to stir up trouble and cause suffering.453 That is, even when demonstrating his rhetorical finesse by speaking in saj’, Ḥsā l-Jabbār's capacity for physical violence is still on display. When his ink-stained opponent hears his name, al-Ḥāzim tells us, he falls on the ground in fear and does not move, despite the cries of the crowd for him to “stand, stand!”.

From the crowd advances a distinguished scholar (jihbidh humām), who we learn is the adīb Abū l-Nawādir. He is, however, an adīb in name alone. He utters not a word. When Ḥsā l-Jabbār sees Abū l-Nawādir, he sheathes his sword and retreats “like the fog before the noonday sun”.454 The suggestion is that merely glimpsing Abū l-Nawādir is enough to scare off the fearsome bahmūt.

With the departure of this “demon” (mārid)455 — a further othering of Ḥsā l-Jabbār to the realm of the supernatural — the audience becomes ecstatic (fa-ṭaruba l-jumḥūr). Through the

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452 Ibn Manẓūr, Lisān al-’Arab, 8:203.
453 For the passage, see Fu’ād al-Bustānī, Dīwān al-mu’ālim Niqūlá al-Turk, 2:387. Compare Ḥsā l-Jabbār’s speech with the horseman’s speech in al-Hamadhānī’s Al-Maqāma al-Sijistāniyya. In the latter, the disguised adīb boasts of his travels, learning, refinement, and reputation.
455 The term mārid is not without its ambiguity. While it can mean “demon”, it can also mean “rebel” and even “giant”, as Matthew Keegan pointed out to me.
affective state of *ṭarab*, typically reached during a performance of *adab* that is notably absent in this episode, the audience becomes a celebratory crowd. They call for drinks to be brought, sheep to be slaughtered, and fires to be lit: a ceremony to commemorate the *adīb*'s silent and seemingly-effortless victory. The scent of roasting meat revives the fallen ink-stained writer, who springs to his feet. While Abū l-Nawādir remains silent, the writer dances and chants a few lines of verse in praise of his savior. Only then does the narrator himself recognize the (true?) *adīb* and greet him, before each goes his own way and *Al-Maqāma al-ʿĪswiyya* draws to a close.

This episode raises a deceptively simple question: who is the *adīb* of *al-ʿĪswiyya*? In all but name, a compelling case can be made for reading ʿĪsā l-Jabbār as the *adīb*. While Abū l-Nawādir arrives late in the narrative and holds his tongue, ʿĪsā l-Jabbār captures the attention of the audience, including the narrator. He issues a challenge to a contest and he demonstrates a rhetorical and physical fitness that can (literally!) knock out the poets of the town.456 Recognizing the ways in which ʿĪsā l-Jabbār claims belonging to the conventions of the *maqāma* by usurping the role of *adīb* once again reinforces the larger argument that belonging and exclusion are articulated through eloquence.

In the final analysis, ʿĪsā l-Jabbār is neither a central character nor a marginal one, but rather someone in-between the two poles and in this sense, liminal. As the *bahmūt*, his animalistic cries uphold the maxim that that which does not speak, or does not speak like us, does not belong. This reading emphasizes ʿĪsā l-Jabbār's difference — the way he speaks, how he looks, and the type of (violent) contest he desires — in order to conflate the stranger and the interloper, the foreign and the dangerous. Yet in his bid to become the *adīb*, which seems to be

456 Moreover, in an odd doubling, first ʿĪsā al-Jabbār and then Abū l-Nawādir rely on their reputation rather than a demonstration of their superiority to best their respective foes; the doubling itself suggests that ʿĪsā al-Jabbār is closer to Abū l-Nawādir than might be first thought.
the true contest of this maqāma, ʿĪsā l-Jabbār uses the adīb's tools to take his place, however briefly. We see that language is a prime means for a marginal character not only to claim a place among the canonical characters, but to momentarily displace the adīb and challenge the duality believed to be at the very heart of the genre.

4.3 The Lisping Boy

There are other strangers in al-Turk's oeuvre, marked by another locutionary difference: their lisp. In the seventh episode, Al-Maqāma al-Kisrawāniyya (1809), there is a lisping boy. Named “Fuḍūl” in playful mockery of the author's fellow littérature Fuḍūl ʿAbduh (with whom the author enjoyed an ongoing epistolary relationship), this boy is brought to the adīb to have his tongue “straightened” (taqwīm al-lisān). If ʿĪsā l-Jabbār is othered through the conflation of the bodily, the animal, and the supernatural, here it is primarily Fuḍūl's incapacity to speak properly that marks him as an outsider. The lisp, as we will see presently, not only lowers Fuḍūl's social status in the eyes of his community but also bars him from participation in the literary activities of the maqāma, including the exchange of speech and the recitation of poetry. Unlike al-ʿIsawiyya studied above, which showed us how an ineloquent other displaces the adīb, this episode demonstrates how Abū Nawādir's inability to correct a boy’s pronunciation undermines his authority as the adīb and casts doubt on adab as both a subject and a pedagogical tool.

Al-Kisrawāniyya contains two narratives. In the first, al-Ḥāzim the lonely narrator takes to the road to dispel his feelings of boredom and agitation, travelling through Mount Lebanon until he reaches the village of al-Zūq in the region of Kisrawān. There he hears a group of boys reciting from the Torah, the Book of Psalms (zabūr), and the Qurʾān. Entering their school, he discovers that their teacher is his old friend, the adīb Abū l-Nawādir. This recognition obviates
any later unmasking of the adīb’s identity, as the scenes of encounter and recognition are here conflated (a topic dealt with at length in Chapter Five).

After they embrace, al-Ḥāzim presses the adīb to explain what misfortune has led him to the lowly position of a village teacher (an echo, perhaps, of al-Turk's own experiences as a tutor in Dayr al-Qamar and al-Ḥarīrī’s adīb Abū Zayd⁴⁵⁷). Abū l-Nawādir sighs, wipes away his tears, and recounts a story of being robbed on the road from Cairo (the same road, presumably, upon which al-Turk returned to Dayr al-Qamar from his years abroad in Egypt). Bereft of all worldly possessions, Abū l-Nawādir tells the narrator that he wandered until he reached al-Zūq, where he found a position teaching semantics and rhetoric (al-maʿānī wa-l-bayān), syntax and morphology (al-nahw wa-l-ṣarf), numerology of the Arabic alphabet (ʿilm al-ḥarf), the poetic meters (al-ʿarūḍ), the Sunna and the religious obligations (furūḍ),⁴⁵⁸ and what he calls “moralizing literatures” (adabiyyāt waʾziyyāt).⁴⁵⁹

It is here, in the middle of their conversation, that the second narrative suddenly begins with the appearance of two other characters, marked by the “idhā bi” that usually signifies the adīb’s arrival. These two young men, recalling the animalization of ʿĪsā al-Jabbār but adding aspects of the criminal, approach like thieves, hissing like insects, and leaving a trail of feces like two hyenas. The more repulsive (akhbath, which can also mean “more wicked”) of the two steps forward and addresses Abū l-Nawādir in unexpectedly eloquent, extemporaneous sajʿ. After a few polite phrases, which stand in stark contrast to the speaker’s grotesque body, he introduces

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⁴⁵⁷ I am grateful to Dr. Maurice Pomerantz for suggesting this further echo of al-Ḥarīrī here.
⁴⁵⁸ The phrase which al-Turk uses is “al-summa wa-l-furūḍ”. The proper term, as Matthew Keegan has pointed out to me, is “al-farāʾ idf”.
⁴⁵⁹ In an interesting divergence from a later Nahḍa-era discourse of the value of teaching, both Abū l-Nawādir and al-Ḥāzim consider teaching (or perhaps village teaching) to be a profession born of unfortunate circumstance. Indeed, while in this maqāma Abū l-Nawādir uses the terms “taḥdīḥ”, “ʿa ṭim”, and “tarbiya”, they do not carry the Nahḍa-era connotations of a moral duty to participate in national improvement.
his silent companion as follows:

This young man is nothing but a wild animal a’braying and a crow a’cawing. He inverts the language’s letters, and buries every push to make them better. He pronounces the jīm as a zayn, and the shīn as a sīn, and the ghayn as an ʿayn, and the kāf as a fāʿ.

The boy, that is, has a lisp.460 This malady, his companion continues, has exhausted the doctors and bewildered the wise men, becoming a source of shame (muʿīra), scorn (huzʿ), and mockery (maskhara) in their community. Left with no other recourse, the two young men have come to seek the help of Abū l-Nawādir.

The Abū l-Nawādir of this maqāma is a tragic figure; unlike udabāʿ who dazzle their audiences with their eloquence, here the adīb’s repeated failures only disappoint and frustrate. In an attempt to “straighten” the boy’s tongue, Abū l-Nawādir poses a series of questions. Yet in each case, the boy’s lisp transforms his answers into obscurity and profanity. Shabba, to flirt or rhapsodize a woman, becomes sabba, to insult. Tarajjala, to become a man, is transformed into

460 The name for a lisp is “luthgha” and it is defined quite simply by Ibn Manẓūr as “changing one letter to another”. Arabic linguists studied the mechanics of pronunciation, noting a wide array of possible lisps: from the letter rāʾ to ghayn or lām; the erroneous pronunciation of the rāʾ on the tip (ṭarf) of the tongue; the pronunciation of the sād as a fāʾ; and the shīn as a thāʾ. More broadly, Arabic has an expansive vocabulary to describe, often somewhat poetically, many features and types of speech disorder. For example, a stutter is called a “tamtama,” and is literally defined as “the reiteration in speech of the [letters] tāʾ and mīm.” As the name suggests, “al-fāʾ jāʾ” was a stutter with the letter “fāʾ”. Ibn Manẓūr, Lisān al-ʿArab, 2:55-56.
taradhdhala, to be debased and despicable. In exasperation, Abū l-Nawādir exclaims, “He only farts from his mouth” (lā yaḍriṭu illā min fīhi). The inversion of bodily functions transforms the mouth, the source of eloquence, into the anus; and language into excrement.461

In a second fruitless attempt, Abū l-Nawādir turns to verse, giving the boy two lines of poetry that end with each letter of his lisp: first a zayniyya, then a jīmiyya, and so on. Yet āfsā, to disclose or reveal, becomes āfsā, to break wind noisely. Ashīl, to carry, becomes asīl, which in this context likely refers to the act of urinating. Afrāj, relief, becomes afrāz, excrement. This continues until Abū l-Nawādir hollers, “Damn you, all of my rhymes you’ve exhausted, except the crack of this staff on your forehead.” This cry amounts to an admission that Fuḍūl's lisp can only be “remedied” by physical violence; in these threats, there is an echo of ʿĪsā l-Jabbār's anger. Defeated and despairing, Abū l-Nawādir issues a few lines of satiric verse (hijāʾ) condemning the boys and cursing fate (al-dahr), and then chases them away. The maqāma ends with Abū l-Nawādir’s state as they depart: “And off the two raced, giggling a-pace, and leaving the faqīh (i.e. Abū l-Nawādir) biting the fingertips of remorse.”

Abū l-Nawādir’s failure to “straighten” the boy's tongue again raises questions about his status as the adīb. Yet unlike in al-ʿĪsāwīyya above, here there is no viable character to displace and/or replace him. While Fuḍūl's lisp undermines the authority of the adīb, neither Fuḍūl nor his companion attempt to mirror the adīb's identity or usurp his role in the narrative. They destabilize and depart, leaving us face-to-face with an ineffective teacher and an inarticulate adīb.

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461 As Matthew Keegan has pointed out, this is part of a broader trend in which parodic texts (including maqāmas) transform nonsense and even offensive speech into erudition, often through commentary. This practice culminates in al-Ṣafadī’s parodic commentary entitled Ikhtirāʿ al-khurāʿ. Kelly Tuttle discusses in detail the comic elements of al-Ṣafadī's parodic commentary, including the nonsensical poem for which the commentary is said to be written, and the many varieties of grammatical, historical, and other errors which are intentionally woven throughout the text. See Kelly Tuttle, “Play and display: al-Ṣafadī’s Invention of Absurdity,” Postmedieval 4, (2013): 364–378.
with his fingers, not incidentally, inserted regretfully in his mouth. The gesture might be read as expressing doubts (perhaps sincere, perhaps in jest) about the didactic benefits of Arabic adab. Or it might speak to an anxiety that language itself, much like the tongue which articulates it, is untrustworthy and deceptive.

4.4 Rajab's Qalb

In al-Turk's Al-Maqāma al-Kisrawāniyya, studied in the preceding section, the adīb's failure is real in the sense that it is the outcome of the performance. In al-Yāziji's maqāmāt, in contrast, what appear to be Maymūn's defeat is itself part of the performance. In such performances, Rajab often delivers an illusory defeat to Maymūn, his master and teacher, before their audience only to reap the benefits of this coup de grâce after they depart. This performance of defeat adds a further layer of deceit and trickery made possible by the multiplication of adībs. Furthermore, in al-Turk's maqāmāt, Other characters can elbow their way into maqāma by contesting the adīb. In Majmaʿ al-Bahrāyn, however, some Other characters secure a more permanent place in al-Yāziji's maqāmāt by equalling and even besting (or at least appearing to best) Maymūn at his own games. This section, “Rajab's Qalb”, focuses on a type of episode in which Rajab, Maymūn's so-called servant boy (ghulām), performs the central trick by manipulating Maymūn's poetry.

The section title itself comes from a play on the word “qalb” found in al-Rajabīyya (#18). In this episode, when the audience gives sparingly to Maymūn, he responds by claiming that he will praise them with his “heart” (qalb) and not his “tongue” (lisān).462 While the audience takes

462 Al-Yāziji, Majmaʿ al-Bahrāyn, 145.
this to mean that Maymūn's praise is authentic and heartfelt, “qalb” has a second meaning: to flip, reverse, invert, upend. Once Maymūn has departed, Rajab appears disguised as an “arrogant” young man (fatā shādīd al-kunzūāna) from among the audience.⁴⁶³ He encourages them to “reverse” (fa-aqlabū) Maymūn's short panegyric. When one audience member reads the poem backwards word by word, they discover that the panegyric becomes an invective.⁴⁶⁴ The audience is offended and infuriated, and demands to know who can bring Maymūn back to them to “make a lesson (adab) of him for the people”.⁴⁶⁵ Rajab volunteers and the audience sends him off after Maymūn on the back of one of their thoroughbred horses (timirra). Suhayl acknowledges (and a footnote reiterates) that this is indeed a trick (ḥīla), and when the narrator follows the boy, he finds him sitting between Maymūn and Laylā.⁴⁶⁶

What we witness in al-Rajabīyya (#18) is that Rajab, like the Other characters studied above, secures his place in maqāma through language. The reversal of the syntax of Maymūn's panegyric not only transforms the genre of the poem from praise to invective, but also stirs up the audience's anger. Rajab's role here is admittedly secondary, as he neither recites nor interprets the poem, but rather encourages the audience to do the syntactical flipping themselves. In al-ʿIrāqiyya (#11), to which we turn presently, Rajab's qalb not only requires linguistic and dramatic finesse, but is the trick at the center of each episode's performance.⁴⁶⁷

In al-ʿIrāqiyya (#11), Suhayl is visiting the majlis of the emir of Iraq when Maymūn appears disguised as an old man with a “supple-fingered youth” (fatā tarif al-banān) in tow.⁴⁶⁸

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463 Al-Yāzījī, Majmaʿ al-Bahrāyn, 18.146.1.
464 For those interested in textuality, it is notable that the audience member first writes down Maymūn's couplet before reversing it.
465 Al-Yāzījī, Majmaʿ al-Bahrāyn, 146.
466 Al-Yāzījī, Majmaʿ al-Bahrāyn, 18.146.10.
467 Similar arguments could be made regarding al-Sāḥiliyya (#27). In that episode, Maymūn brings Rajab before an emir and accuses him of inverting one of his praise poems (taqrīẓ) to a judge, thereby transforming it into invective.
468 In full, Suhayl describes Rajab as “a young man with supple fingers * as if he was one of the children of heaven”
The young man is Rajab in disguise. Maymūn accuses him of stealing (saraqa) one of his panegyric poems and transforming it into an invective (hijāʾ). When the emir whom he had praised heard Rajab's invective, he had Maymūn arrested (or so the adīb claims). Now that Maymūn has been released, he continues, he wants the emir of Iraq to compel Rajab to compensate him and then be punished with the amputation prescribed for a thief (qaṭ ʿal-sāriq).

When the emir asks how Rajab manipulated his poem, Maymūn replies: “like one reading Chinese writing (mushajjar al-ṣīn).” That is, Rajab allegedly took the first hemistich of each line and discarded the second. The emir asks Rajab how he separated the salt from the food (kayfa salalta al-milḥ min al-ṭaʿām), i.e., how he split each line in half. Rajab responds that the invective is his own composition, not a bifurcated version of Maymūn's panegyric. He then asserts that if there was an emulation (tawārud), the emir would need to distinguish the original poet (al-sābiq) from the thief (al-sāriq).

Maymūn turns up his nose and insults the young man, demanding that he demonstrate his literary abilities by composing a series of poems on the Arabic meters (al-buḥūr), the system of prosody (al-ʿarūḍ), the end rhymes (al-qawāfī), the names of the metrical feet (called ajzāʾ in the episode, or the tafʿīla system), the vocalizations (ḥarakāt), and finally the poetic errors (ʿuyūb). When Rajab does so, Maymūn asks what would stop the young man from claiming another poet's work as his own (al-intihāl). To prove that Rajab is able to compose extemporaneously, Maymūn demands the young man praise the emir on the spot.

(wildān al-jinān). The supple fingers are likely an indication that Rajab has not done manual labor; while the description of him a child of heaven is not only an explicit Qurānic reference, but one that conveys his piety, innocence, and comeliness. See al-Yāzījī, Majmaʿ al-Bahrāyn, 66.
469 Al-Yāzījī, Majmaʿ al-Bahrāyn, 11.66.9.
470 Al-Yāzījī, Majmaʿ al-Bahrāyn, 11.98.3.
Rajab responds that he would rather compose an invective attacking Maymūn, which he does presently. The invective mocks Maymūn's last name and then his first, associating him with the Turks rather than the Arabs.\textsuperscript{471} It convinces the emir of Rajab's authentic poetic abilities, absolving him of Maymūn's accusations. The emir adds that Maymūn has wronged the boy, and offers Rajab dinars in compensation and invites him to stay at his house as a guest (a doubled reward). Maymūn then composes a short poem in which he laments fate (\textit{dahr}), his lack of support and the failure of his complaint. The emir, afraid for his reputation, silences Maymūn by giving him twenty dinars (\textit{al-niṣāb}). As Suhayl follows from behind, Maymūn and Rajab leave the emir laughing together, “as if there was nothing between them.”\textsuperscript{472}

\textit{Al-\textsuperscript{Irāqiyya} (#11)} puts Rajab's facility with Arabic on full display. He gracefully meets Maymūn's demand that he compose verse on a number of topics (or \textit{quyūd}, another performance type to be discussed in Chapter Five) related specifically to Arabic poetics. He then defends himself against the accusation of plagiarism by extemporaneously composing an invective on Maymūn, and thereby winning the emir's trust and favor. Indeed, it is Rajab's eloquence that earns the rewards in this episode. This same eloquence allows him, at least in the eyes of the audience, to first trick Maymūn by stealing his verse and reversing it before an earlier patron; and then to outwit Maymūn and undercut his complaints before the emir of Iraq. As Suhayl witnesses when he follows the pair, Rajab's eloquence earns him Maymūn's affection and appreciation, as well as a hefty reward.

\textsuperscript{471} Rajab claims that Maymūn is “\textit{maymūn ummat al-Turk, lā maymūn ʿurbd}”. In a footnote, he explains that the noun “\textit{maymūn}” in Turkish means “monkey” (\textit{al-qīrd}), whereas in Arabic it means “blessed”. Interestingly, even here, al-Ŷāzījī’s conception of Otherness is primarily linguistic rather than ethno-national. For the invective and its gloss, see al-Ŷāzījī, \textit{Majmaʿ al-Bahrāyn}, 11.72.4.

\textsuperscript{472} Al-Ŷāzījī, \textit{Majmaʿ al-Bahrāyn}, 74.
4.5 Servant, Student, Son

*Al-ʿIrāqiyya* (#11) is not the only episode in which Rajab's relationship to Maymūn is reversed (or at least appears to be). Alongside the inversion of language, one of Rajab's most complex tricks, often performed in tandem with Maymūn, is to play on the nature of their relationship. This demands that Rajab pull off complex disguises that involve his dress, comportment, and identity vis a vis Maymūn. In particular, Rajab oscillates between being Maymūn's servant, his student, and his son. In many cases, as we will see in this section, multiple characters will reinforce Rajab's assumed identity.

From the first *maqāma*, *al-Badawiyya* (#1), Maymūn introduces Rajab to Suhayl, and hence to the reader, as his “servant boy” (*ghulām*). This term is reiterated throughout the collection, not only by Maymūn but also by Suhayl. In *al-Rajabiyya* (#18), for instance, Maymūn recites a poem in which he identifies Rajab as his servant, boasts of having taught him, and seeks to justify their trickery. However, what the term “*ghulām*” means is complicated by the many ways in which Rajab and Maymūn play on their relationship.

Rajab's role in some episodes and the particular language Maymūn invokes in his praise suggest that the *adīb* does not only see Rajab as a servant, but also as a student, an apprentice, and a son. Indeed, Maymūn is often emphatic about his desire to educate and raise Rajab. It is through reference to the language of imparting *adab* (*taʿdīb*), knowledge (*taʿlīm*), and culture (*tathqīf*) that Maymūn often justifies his ruses and Rajab's role in them. In *al-Lubnāniyya* (#49), for instance, Maymūn recites a poem in which he refers to Rajab as a “foal” (*muhr*) whom he

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474 In *Al-ʿIrāqiyya* (#11), Maymūn refers to Rajab as “this *ghulām*”. (66) In *Al-Anbāriyya* (#39), Rajab is described as Maymūn's “servant boy” (*ghulām*), (288)
must train and prepare for the day when Maymūn is no longer there to guide him.\footnote{476 Al-Yāziǧī, Majma ‘al-Bahrayn, 355.} In al-
Yamaniyya (#7), Maymūn takes the claim a step further, asserting first that he pressed Rajab into his service in order to make money, and compensates him with clothing and food; and then that he puts Rajab in the place of a son (wa-huwa maqāma waladī aqamtuha), and should be punished by God were he to mistreat or deprive him. In al- ‘Irāqiyya (#11), discussed in the previous section, Maymūn muddies the waters further by reciting a poem in which he identifies Rajab as his ghulām and then describes himself as the ghulām of Rajab for all the ways in which the boy has served him.\footnote{477 Al-Yāziǧī, Majma ‘al-Bahrayn, 74.} Adding further complexity, in al-Taghlībiyya (#13), Maymūn claims that Suhayl occupies the place of a son (bi-mathābat waladī).\footnote{478 Al-Yāziǧī, Majma ‘al-Bahrayn, 13.100.11.}

In other cases, in contrast, Maymūn emphasizes Rajab's status as a servant rather than obscuring or complicating it. In al- ‘Adaniyya (#37), Maymūn — with Rajab at his side — tells an audience that he bought the “handsome, youthful boy” (al-ghurānaq al-waddā’) for a thousand pieces of silver (al-riqa).\footnote{479 Al-Yāziǧī, Majma ‘al-Bahrayn, 37.272.13-15.} He paid half up front, ransomed his she-camel to the seller to cover the other half, and took the boy with him to Yemen. Maymūn praises the boy's intelligence, comparing him favorably to important figures of the Arab past. He claims that Rajab is more poetic than (ash’ar min) the Umayyad poet Nuşayyib bin Riyāḥ (d. 726 CE), wiser than (ahkam min) Abī l-Ṭayyib al-Mutanabbī, faster than (aḥḍar min) Ta’abbaṭa Sharran, and a better night traveller than Rabī’a bin al-‘Adbaṭ (who was apparently proverbial for his facility with night travel).\footnote{480 Al-Yāziǧī, Majma ‘al-Bahrayn, 37.273.3-6 and 37.274.1.} At Maymūn's request, Rajab then recites a poem praising the people of Yemen. The poem concludes with a plea for the audience's help in retrieving the she-camel or
paying the ransom. A ruler (zaʿīm) replies with sympathy and gives them a she-camel; the audience then provides monetary gifts as a second reward.

In a more elaborate illustration of the same gag, Maymūn pretends to sell Rajab to forestall his own indigence in *al-Miṣriyya* (#29). (Rajab, we might add, is not the only character whom Maymūn pretends to sell; there are a number of episodes in which Laylā is made the object of exchange.) In *al-Miṣriyya* (#29), Suhayl witnesses Maymūn and Rajab perform an elaborate ruse to dupe a judge. Rajab begins the trick by complaining of Maymūn's stinginess and neglect. In a testament to his master's abject poverty, he claims that Maymūn “nourishes himself with the dust of the mill during a time of famine.” He reports that Maymūn pressed him into servitude; and does not provide either clothing nor food. As a result, Rajab complains, he must provide for himself and Maymūn (fa-ʿana aʿwal nafṣī wa-ʿiyāhu), as if he were Maymūn's master (mawlāhu). Rajab, in a remarkable inversion, claims that he not only provides the labor of a servant, but furnishes the food and clothing expected of a master as well. In this episode, that is, Rajab plays a servant who complains that his master's indigence and frugality forces him to adopt the master's responsibilities himself.

Rajab's tale displeases the judge, who demands that Maymūn respond. The *adīb* sighs, tears up, and composes a poem in which he acknowledges the truthfulness of Rajab's complaints, bemoans his poverty and misfortune, and declines to release Rajab from his servitude. He

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481 In *al-Hazliyya* (#14), for instance, Maymūn pretends to be Laylā's husband and demands a large sum of money from Suhayl to divorce his “wife” so that the narrator can marry her. When Suhayl has filled Maymūn's hands and sleeves, he learns that he has paid Maymūn to divorce a woman who is his daughter! Similarly, in *al-Ṣūriyya* (#16), Laylā brings a complaint before a judge about her father. She seduces the judge, and when Maymūn arrives, he offers Maymūn a handsome sum to leave his daughter with the judge.


describes Rajab as his companion (anīs) and his foundation (sanad), complimenting his speech and comparing him to the famous philologist al-ʿAṣmaʿī (d. 213/828 or 216/831).

The judge accuses Maymūn of having wronged the boy, and demands that he sell Rajab and use the money to hire a servant. Suhayl observes that Maymūn's description of Rajab has enticed the audience, one member of which offers to buy Rajab. Maymūn weeps and complains, but speedily agrees to have a contract drawn up and accepts payment. He then bids a tearful and very public farewell to Rajab, recites two lines of poetry urging him not to forget his former master, and weeps again as he leaves. The remaining audience members feel sympathy for Maymūn and each gives him a dinar as a (further) reward before the adīb slips away.

When Suhayl finds Maymūn the next day, Rajab is by his side. Maymūn recites a poem in which he explains the trick: he sold Rajab even though Islamic law prohibits the selling of free men, and therefore the sale was illegitimate. He explains that Rajab escaped and returned at night, and that Maymūn himself deserves the rewards he secured because he “taught” the buyer how to behave. As a footnote from al-Yāzijī explains, Maymūn claims to have taught the buyer to be wary of entering contracts quickly, lest he fall victim to deception; and the adīb claims the right to keep his earnings as payment for this lesson.

While in al-Miṣriyya (#29), Rajab plays the role of Maymūn's servant (oddly playing himself in a sense), in al-ʿAbsiyya (#31), Rajab appears as Maymūn's son. Suhayl describes Rajab as Maymūn's “boy” (fatāhu), although a footnote clarifies that Suhayl is referring to his “servant Rajab” (ghulāmuhu Rajab).484 Despite the appearance of clarity provided by the annotation, this episode plays with the nature of Rajab's relationship to Maymūn. It opens with

484 Al-Yāzijī, Majmaʿ al-Bahrayn, 31.233.9.
Maymūn addressing himself to a group from the tribe of ḇAbs. After praising his audience and their tribe, he turns to complain about his “son”. He describes himself as “an old man with a heavy heart” (ṣaykhun kāsif al-bāl) who had asked God for a “good son” (waḥad ḥasan). His son, however, opposed and disobeyed him, causing him all sorts of trouble. When his “father” has finished, Rajab responds indignantly that Maymūn's complaints are bogus, and that he asks the impossible and then casts aspersions on his “son” when his wishes are not fulfilled.

The audience is confused by these contradictory claims, and Laylā steps in to clarify with a poem (another instance, much like in the previous chapter, of a woman helping men to communicate). As in many other episodes, she invokes the trope of made-up mendicity (to be discussed in Chapter Five), recounting Maymūn's wealth and status and his subsequent losses. Due to his misfortune, she claims, Maymūn demands that his “son” (ibnuhu) go out begging, which the miserable young man refused to do. The “truth” thus revealed, Rajab steps forward to issue a longer and more emphatic speech elaborating on Laylā's account and ultimately turning to ask the audience to restore his “father” to his former station through their donations.

4.6 Feigning a Foreign Tongue

While there is repeated emphasis in Majmaʿ al-Bahrayn, and accordingly in what I have written in the preceding chapters, about companionship in its many forms, the text also grapples with the countervailing theme of estrangement. Estrangement takes numerous forms, from the lonely narrator's descriptions of social isolation to the awareness of belonging (or not) in certain places and spaces, with certain peoples. In Majmaʿ al-Bahrayn, characters perform foreign

486 Al-Yāzījī, Majmaʿ al-Bahrayn, 31.236.15.
identities through their dress, behavior, and especially their manner of speaking. These facets of 
estrangement are often linked, as foreign identity and especially language is both the most visible 
expression and a primary cause of not belonging to a place; and concurrently, not belonging 
gives rise to strong feelings of isolation and loneliness among al-Yāzījī’s characters. While al-
Yāzījī’s characters conjure and even embody the foreign through their dress, affect, and 
language, there is not a single episode in Majmaʿ al-Bahrayn set in a foreign (i.e. non-Arab) 
land. Of equal note, the characters often feel estranged even though they never leave the 
territorial heartland of the Arab world; that is, they often feel estranged in the putative national 
home that al-Yāzījī appears to be imagining in the geographical staging of Majmaʿ al-Bahrayn 
(another topic to which we turn in Chapter Six).

Before turning to a close reading of al-Yamāniyya (#51), in which Rajab feigns a foreign 
accent to a comic (and lucrative) effect, I wish to offer a general sense of the ways in which 
estrangement runs through the larger text in both subtle traces and as a major theme. In some 
episodes, it seems that estrangement is an aspect of a given character’s genuine feelings and 
experience. Such feelings are not limited to any one character; on the contrary, at different points 
we find Maymūn, Suhayl, Laylā, and Rajab all describing themselves or being described as 
estranged. In al-ʿAdaniyya (#37), Maymūn claims he left his country (waṭan) and abandoned his 
companions (ḥajartu al-samīr wa-l-nadīm) to seek out the face of God. Likewise, in al-
Yamaniyya (#7), Maymūn claims to have arrived in Yemen as an impoverished stranger: “I 
arrived in this country (al-bilād) * My bag (waḍdatī) empty of any bounty (al-zād)”487; and in al-
Ṣūriyya (#16), Maymūn defends himself in court from Laylā’s accusations of neglect by claiming

487 Al-Yāzījī, Majmaʿ al-Bahrayn, 44.
that his poverty is the result of being a stranger (gharīb al-dār).  

In al-Baghdadiyya (#8), it is Suhayl who arrives in Baghdad as a stranger. He announces this fact, saying: “I was a stranger in the place * In a far-away destination” (wa anā gharīb al-dār * baʿīd al-mazār). Suhayl expresses similar sentiments in al-ʿIrāqiyya (#11), when he stands before the emir of Iraq as a stranger; al-Lādhiqīyya (#48), where he says he entered Latakia as a stranger, with neither friend nor servant; and al-Hazliyya (#14), when he explains that he “resolved to leave home” or “become a stranger” (azmaʿtu l-ightirāb) in search of a new wife. Near the end of al-Baghdadiyya (#8), Maymūn recites a poet about Laylā in which he describes her estrangement of place (mawṭan) and speech (kalām) in Baghdad. Likewise in al-Anbāriyya (#39), studied in detail in Chapter Three, Laylā complains to the wālī that the young man who killed her father left her alone (waḥīdatum) in the “land of estrangement” (dār al-ghurba).

In contrast, there are several episodes in which estrangement does not seem to be a sincere feeling but rather a performance, an aspect of a character's disguise or trickery. This is true in al-Ḥalabiyya (#9), studied at length in Chapter Three, where Maymūn pretends to be a Persian, as well as al-Yamāmiyya (#51), to which we turn below, and al-Tihāmiyya (#41). In al-Tihāmiyya (#41), Maymūn disguises himself with a foreign accent but Suhayl recognizes him, saying:

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488 Al-Yāzijī, Majmaʿ al-Bahrayn, 129.
489 Al-Yāzijī, Majmaʿ al-Bahrayn, 45.
490 Al-Yāzijī, Majmaʿ al-Bahrayn, 66.
491 Al-Yāzijī, Majmaʿ al-Bahrayn, 48.345.16-7.
493 Al-Yāzijī, Majmaʿ al-Bahrayn, 287.
He spoke Arabic with a foreign accent * But I recognized him on sight * Despite the foreignness of his tongue

وهو يرتضخ لُكُنَّة أَعْجَمِيَّة * فَعَرَفْتُهُ عِندَ عَيْبَانِهِمْ عَلَى عُجْمَةَ لسَانِهِ

When Maymūn speaks, he switches the 𐤆 and the 𐤂, lowering his standing in the eyes of the audience until he becomes “less than a kitten” (ahwana min dirṣ) and “more humiliated (adhalla) than a Qaysī in Homs”. Hāshānī. Having established his foreignness, Maymūn sits back while a young orator (khaṭīb, who perhaps is Rajab in disguise) addresses the audience.

When the sermon (waʾẓ) is finished, the “foreign-appearing” shaykh (al-shaykh al-mustaʾjam) gropes towards the orator and begins to speak in a tongue that needs a translator. Ironically, what needs to be translated is Maymūn's assertion that every sound has a particular and precise name. He then corrects the orator's use of a particular verb, and proceeds to deliver a composition on the quyūd or forms of sound. Despite his accent, Suhayl reports that Maymūn's poem is recited in the most captivating cadence (ashjā al-nagham). Its twenty rhyming lines provide a lexicon of terms for sounds in Arabic, from the caw of a crow to the twang of a bow to the scratching of pens on paper. When he finishes, he says: “Take your language from a foreign man”. As a footnote informs us, Maymūn is quoting Ḥammād bin Ismaʿīl al-Jawharī, the author of the lexicon al-Ṣīḥāh. The audience is amazed by his excellence (najāba) despite his foreignness (gharāba). They ask him to identify himself, and he replies that he is ʿAmr bin...
ʿAmira from the Aḥāmara, a tribe of non-Arabs who settled in Kufa.498 The audience says that his accent (al-ʿuṣma) distracted them from his wisdom (al-ḥikma), and they did not stand up for his dignity (ḥurma). They acknowledge they did him wrong and approach him like a child looking to breastfeed (aqbalū ʿalayhi iqbāl al-ṭafl ʿalā l-raḍāʾ).

In all the episodes discussed above, as well as al-Yamāniyya (#51) below, belonging to a place or people is intimately linked to the Arabic language. In al-Ṭāʾiyya (#36), Rajab pretends to be a young man (fatā) from the Banī Ṭayy. When Maymūn presents himself as an elderly scholar who has fallen on hard times, Rajab steps forward to test Maymūn's knowledge of Arabic with seven quyūd questions. After Maymūn gracefully composes responses to the first five questions, Rajab compliments his poetic skill and affirms his belonging in the following fashion:

I do not see you as an interloper in the desert * Nor in intellectual benefit as stingy.499

ما أراك في البادية بالدخيل * ولا في الإفادة بالبخيل

In a footnote, al-Yāzijī glosses the term al-dakhīl as “the stranger who belongs to a people other than his own” (al-gharīb al-muntasab ilā ghayr qawmihi).500 Similar links between eloquence in Arabic and belonging to the Arab people, are found in al-Taghlibiyya (#13)501 and al-.BackgroundColor[20]Baṣriyya (#20)502; in al-Sawādiyya (#54), an antagonist accuses Maymūn of being a stranger due to a

498 Al-Yāzijī, Majmaʿ al-Bahrāyn, 41.304.11.
499 Al-Yāzijī, Majmaʿ al-Bahrāyn, 36.267.3.
500 Al-Yāzijī, Majmaʿ al-Bahrāyn, 36.267.3.
501 In al-Taghlibiyya (#13), Maymūn's knowledge of customs and practices of the Arabs pleases the emir, who compliments him saying that he has proved wrong the person who said “he whose house it is knows best”. The emir then recognizes Maymūn as belonging to “the true desert Arabs” (ṣāmīm al-ʿarab al-ʿarbāʾ). Al-Yāzijī, Majmaʿ al-Bahrāyn, 13.99.4.
502 In al-BackgroundColor[20]Baṣriyya (#20), when Maymūn claims that paronomasia (jinās) that can be reversed is the best kind, his audience
perceived grammatical error. In *al-Yamāniyya* (#51), to which we devote the remainder of this section, it is Rajab, not Maymūn, who adopts the guise of the foreigner. Suhayl begins this episode by expressing his longstanding desire to travel to the homes (*diyār*) of the “authentic Arabs” (*al-ʿarb al-ʿarbā*). He wishes to do so, he says,

> For their poets and orators * Eloquent men and litterateurs * Rhetoricians and noble [superiors]

Consistent with the subtle irony of the broader text, in this episode Suhayl’s wish is fulfilled by Rajab’s masterful performance of linguistic disability, not ability. The irony is only enhanced by the setting, al-Yamāma, which like al-Tihāma is one of the Arabian geographies which al-Yāzijī and his characters associate with a pure, distant, and noble Arab past. Among the many tropes of pre-Islamic Arab culture which are conjured, the most persistent is an innate virtuosity in Arabic. This is precisely what Suhayl craves, what piques his curiosity and motivates his travels in this

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503 In this episode, the antagonist links making a mistake in declension (*al-ʾirāb*) to appearing like a stranger (*al-īghrāb*). Al-Yāzijī, *Majma’ al-Bahrāyn*, 381.

episode. What he finds, however, is Rajab pretending to be a foreign-born servant whose unshakable accent pains the ears and offends the sensibilities of his Bedouin audience.

When Suhayl arrives in the town of Ḥajr in the lands of al-Yāmama, he sees a group (katība) circled tightly around two men. The men are Rajab and Maymūn, described (in my somewhat awkward translation) as “a young man raising a din” (fatā lāghīṭ) and “an older man pressing down on him” (shaykh dāghīṭ).505 As Suhayl peers from behind the closely-pressed audience, Maymūn disparages Rajab, cursing the boy's mother and addressing him as “more wicked (akhbath) than al-Shayṣabān”506 and “more cunning (arwagh) than a fox (al-thu 'lubān).”507 How long will you persist in your recalcitrance (al-'uqūq), Maymūn asks, disregarding what is right (al-huqūq)? He then reproaches Rajab for forgetting his upbringing and disregarding what Maymūn sacrificed for his sake, including the expenses of school, food, and clothing.

We are told that Rajab grumbles and groans, but the content of his complaints are not reported. The audience, intoning that there cannot be a “complaint” (shakwā) without “injury” (balwā), demands to know the specific nature of Maymūn's concerns. Maymūn happily complies, saying: “This young man is Arabic of house (‘arabī al-dār) * but he is foreign of origin (rūmī al-nijār).”508 Rūmī does not just mean “foreign” but refers specifically to Turkish merchants and mercenaries from al-Rūm, i.e., those territories of the Ottoman Empire once under Byzantine rule. While the footnote does not elaborate at all on this particular origin story for Rajab, it is interesting

506 Al-Ŷāzījī glosses “al-Shayṣabān” as either a name for Satan or the name of a “tribe” (qabīla) of Jinn. Al-Ŷāzījī, Majma ‘al-Bahrayn, 51.362.11.
508 Al-Ŷāzījī, Majma ‘al-Bahrayn, 51.363.11. Al-Ŷāzījī glosses “al-nijār” as “origin” (asl).
to note that al-Yāziǰī makes only the rarest and most oblique of references to Turkish identity and no other mention of the Ottoman Empire (as discussed in detail in Chapter Six). Maymūn then claims that he has spent a large sum of money trying to “cultivate his tongue” (taḥdīḥ lisānīḥi), but yet he still “leans toward the utterances of the foreigners” (al-fāz al-aʿjām). Al-Yāziǰī, in the footnote, glosses the term “foreigners” as all non-Arabs.

Maymūn then offers some humorous examples, claiming for instance that Rajab mispronounces the letter ʿayn as a hamza, transforming “teacher” (al-muʿallim) into “injurer” (al-muʿallim). He likewise confuses the kāf and the qāf, saying “dog” (kalb) when he means to say “heart” (qalb). Beyond phonological issues, Maymūn accuses Rajab of various grammatical mistakes, such as making the mudāf in an idāfa construction definite. Such mistakes inspire hatred, Maymūn continues, in a literary sensibility (al-sajiyya al-adabiyya) and Arab ears (al-masāmaʿ al-ʿarabiyya).

To alleviate the audience's doubts, Maymūn offers to test Rajab. He recites a poem, and then asks the boy to repeat it. The original poem reads as follows:

I am al-Khizāmī, my speech refined,

who swept the corners of the holy shrine.

I have a servant, foreign born,

who radiates from his heart and horn [i.e. his mouth].

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509 Al-Yāziǰī, Majmaʿ al-Bahrayn, 51.364.3.
The Creator brought him forth from oblivion
and shielded him by predestination
Such that he remains under full protection.

In an echo of the inversions discussed in “Rajab's Qalb”, when Rajab repeats the poem here, he changes not the order of the words or the number of hemistiches, but some of the Arabic letters. For qāf he says kāf, for hāʾ he says khāʾ, for ʿayn he says hamza, and for sād he says sīn.

Such transformations in the letters have major semantic and generic implications. Semantically, the above poem conveys eloquence, piety, purity, and divine protection. Rajab's attempt to emulate the poem, reproduced below, turns these tropes on their head. Eloquence becomes inarticulateness, piety becomes apostasy, purity and cleaniness become corruption filth.

At the level of genre, whereas Maymūn's poem might be described as boastful verse (fakhr),
Rajab's is invective (*hijā*). In retaining the same structure, Rajab not only insults Maymūn, but disparages himself as well, as we see in his emulation below:

I am al-Khizāmī, my speech declined,

who soiled the corners of the decrepit shrine.

I have a servant, wild born,

who deviates with his heart and horn.

The Creator brought him forth from leather hide

and with poisonous worry stitched up his insides,

Such that he remains completely tongue-tied.

مَسْخْتُ رَكْنَ الْمَسْجِدِ الدُّخْرِ

وَلِيَ غَلَامٌ مَّن نَٰتَجَ الْأَجْمَِ

أَوْجَدُوهُ بَارِيَ الْوَزْرِي مَن أَدَمُ

فَلُمْ يَزَالُ فِي خَرْسِ مُّتَمَّمٍ
When the audience sees how Rajab's mispronunciations lead to profanity, they seek refuge in God from “the evil of that lisp” (ṣū’ tilka al-lathgha).510 “Lisp”, however, seems like a slight misnomer, as al-Yāzijī makes clear that Rajab is performing a foreign accent (lukna or ‘ujma), not a speech impediment. They ask Maymūn what is the purpose of a servant who could not be sold for “the pith of a sugar cane” (fashgha).511 The shaykh huffs and puffs, and replies that if he could do without the boy, or found some wealth, he would sell him for half his value and buy another servant.

Pretending to be aghast by Maymūn's confession, Rajab takes a piece of paper (ruq‘a) and writes out a poem in which he asserts his value as a servant despite his tongue. He claims that he is “the son of 'sit!' and 'stand!'“ (ibnu q‘ud wa-qum), that is, a servant. In the next breath, he denies being an evening companion (samīr) or an orator (khaṭīb), and insists that he serves good wine, not refined speech. Of course, the very fact that he expresses these sentiments not only in writing, but in verse, belies his claims — although the audience does not seem to notice. Concluding that Rajab is fit for servitude but not speech, they offer Maymūn some money (ba‘d al-māl) as a reward, and gift Rajab a camel. The two depart happy.

4.7 Shells and Kernels

In al-Yamāmiyya (#51), Rajab presents himself as a foreign-born servant. Both his foreign identity, expressed primarily through his accent when speaking Arabic, and his status as Maymūn's servant, are important facets of how Majma‘ al-Bahrāyn imagines Otherness. While the preceding section explored his foreignness, here we turn to how class and social status

511 Al-Yāzijī, Majma‘ al-Bahrāyn, 51.365.10.
distinctions are articulated through descriptions of body language and affect, clothing, and eloquence in speech. In some episodes, eloquence elevates Maymūn and his companions in the eyes of his audience even when they are wearing rags. Indeed, as we will see in this section, clothing — that most superficial of disguises — is represented as having the transformative power to turn skeptical, disrespectful, and disinterested groups into enthralled and ecstatic audiences. 512

In *al-Ḥalliyya* (#44), upon which we focus here, Suhayl and Maymūn venture out during the Muslim holiday of ʿĪd al-ʿAḍhā. During their peregrinations, Suhayl says that they “stepped over the shells to the kernels” (*wa natakhaṭṭā al-liḥāʾ ilā al-lubāb*) to describe avoiding the gatherings of certain people. 513 The verb *natakhaṭṭā* literally means to overstep, outpace, or pass by, but it also conveys the sense of ignoring and disregarding something, perhaps in favor of something else. While this phrase might seem innocuous, reading it alongside the footnotes, subsequent events in this episode, and another similar episode reveals a subtle and complex representation of social status.

To begin, al-Ŷāzijī glosses *al-liḥāʾ*, the shells, as *al-qishr*, meaning shell, peel, or rind. However, he then adds that it is a metonym (*kināya*) for “a mixed group of people” (*awbāsh al-nās*). 514 While Hans Wehr glosses the word *awbāš* (sing. *wabash*) as “rabble” or “riffraff,” Ibn Manẓūr defines the term as a group in which there is mixture (*ikhtilāṭ*). Whereas rabble is nearly

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512 Clothing is a sign of class distinctions in a number of other episodes as well. For instance, in *al-Ṣaʿāʾidiyya* (#5), Maymūn, disguised as Laylā’s impoverished husband, makes a reference to *maṭārif al-ḍībāj*. “Maṭārif” is glossed as “ardiya” (the plural of *ridāʾ*), a loose outer gown or cloak, while “al-ḍībāj” is explained as “expensive clothing” (al-thiyyāb al-thamīna). (5.28.8-9) Likewise, in *al-Judāliyya* (#40), a maqāma in which the characters debate the merits of wealth against those of knowledge, Rajab, the proponent of wealth, appears wearing an outer gown (*ridāʾ*) like a flag (*liwāʾ*) and on his head a turban (*ʿamāma*) like a rain cloud (*ghamāma*). Maymūn, in contrast, wears a fur coat (*ḥanbal*) with no wool (*ajrad*). (40.294.4-5) Pointing to Maymūn’s poverty, Rajab says that if knowledge truly brought wealth, then Maymūn would not have appeared in “that torn gown” (*bi-khatatī al-ghaddāṭil*). (40.297.1)


synonymous with the disorderliness and violence of a lower-class mob, and riffraff connotes those perceived to be disreputable, the people whom Suhayl and Maymūn seek to avoid are “mixed”. Digging deeper into the Arabic lexicon, we find that Ibn Manẓūr reports that wabash is an inverted (maqlūb) form of baush or būsh. On the authority of the Andalusian lexicographer Ibn Sīdah (d. 458/1066), Ibn Manẓūr asserts that baush/būsh is a group in which several tribes (qabāʾil) are mixed.

In an evocative image of distaste and perhaps disgust, Suhayl and Maymūn literally step over “the shells” in pursuit of “the kernels”, recalling the attitude of the adīb and the narrator toward the ṭufayl in al-Barbīr's Maqāmāt. For al-Yāzījī, the kernels are a group of scholars (qawm min al-ʿulamāʾ) huddled closely together, engrossed in an exchange of riddles. When Maymūn asks what they are doing and if he and Suhayl might follow along, they “turned away frowning” (fa-aʿraḍū ʾanhu bi-wujūḥān bāsira) and announce “indeed, a bad bargain” (ṣafqa khāsira).515 Having disregarded the people they consider undesirable, Suhayl and Maymūn are now in turn shunned by those who perceive themselves to be of a higher status.

The scholars demand that Maymūn identify himself. They say:

Who are you riding a horse he does not own * And drinking from a pond not his own?516

Their questions, while vague, intimate that the scholars perceive Maymūn to be out of place.

515 Al-Yāzījī, Majmaʿ al-Bahrāyn, 320.
516 Al-Yāzījī, Majmaʿ al-Bahrāyn, 44.320.3-4.
Maymūn's retort names and thereby challenges their arrogance and exclusivity. Maymūn asks:

Who are you who take notice of the stock from which one came * While overlooking what one has attained?\textsuperscript{517}

The group is frightened by Maymūn's response (\textit{fa-dhu 'irū li-jawābihi}) and they recognize that he is in the right (\textit{wa sha'arū bi-sawābihi}). His response raises his status to the point that the group challenges him to join their exchange of riddles. And join he does. Maymūn recites short riddles (\textit{mu'amman}) in verse on the Prophet Muhammad, ʿAlī, and then ʿUthmān. In each case, he plays with the letters in their names. In the case of ʿUthmān, he also mentions Badīʿ al-Zamān (and al-Ḥarīrī in a footnote).\textsuperscript{518} Maymūn then offers three further riddles (\textit{muḥājī}) on wine (\textit{salsabil}), water pitchers (\textit{abārīq}), and finally coconuts or a water pipe (\textit{nārajīl}).\textsuperscript{519}

Maymūn's riddles earn him the praise of his audience. Once they have lauded him, however, Maymūn cries the cry of a woman who had lost her child, and raising his eyes to the horizon, prays to God to provide for him and relieve him of a life of begging. Turning to specifics, he beseeches the Creator to provide “a red, embroidered turban” (\textit{ʿimāma mudarrajā}) and a “carved necklace” (\textit{ḥulla mudabbaja}). While the request for a reward is familiar, here Maymūn's stated purpose is unique. Maymūn explains that he has asked for these particular

\textsuperscript{517} Al-Yāzījī, \textit{Majmaʿ al-Bahrayn}, 44.320.6-8.
\textsuperscript{518} Al-Yāzījī, \textit{Majmaʿ al-Bahrayn}, 44.321.12. The reference to al-Ḥarīrī is only a short note to indicate that he followed al-Hamadhānī’s style (\textit{minwāl}).
\textsuperscript{519} Al-Yāzījī glosses \textit{nārajīl} as \textit{jawz hindī}, meaning coconut. However, \textit{nārajīl} is also the plural of \textit{nārīla}, a water pipe used to smoke flavored tobacco.
rewards:

So that when I come upon your servants they will know my measure * And extol my stature

Through an appeal to God, Maymūn is asking his audience for items which make visible his status. The turban and the necklace, that is, serve as outward signs of his belonging to the circle of scholars, a belonging that his poverty otherwise prohibits him from asserting (as we encountered earlier in this episode). In this sense, al-Yāzījī's social criticism is conservative. When his characters encounter and even suffer from social exclusion, they do not seek to challenge the legitimacy of social divisions but rather they protest that they belong on the side of privilege.

While one might think that Maymūn's mendicancy is yet another cynical ruse intended to elicit the sympathy of his well-heeled audience, the parting scene in al-Ḥallīyya (#44) suggests otherwise. After receiving his rewards, Maymūn takes Suhayl back to his “nest” (wakna). Suhayl describes Maymūn's home as “tighter than a scabbard” (ahraj min al-jafn), an expression of Maymūn's cramped and presumably impoverished living situation. He then serves Suhayl stale bread (khubzuhu al-ladh) and food that has no salt (taʿamihi al-kafn). Maymūn tells Suhayl

520 Al-Yāzījī, Majmaʿ al-Bahrāyn, 323.
521 Al-Yāzījī, Majmaʿ al-Bahrāyn, 44.323.18.
522 Al-jafr is glossed as either a “scabbard” (ghimd) or an eyelid (jafn al-ʿayn), in an illustration of the author's keen awareness of the polysemy of the language in which he is writing. This topic is discussed in Chapter Six. Al-Yāzījī, Majmaʿ al-Bahrāyn, 44.323.19-20.
this food is merely for sustenance (li-l-ghidhāʾ), not for pleasure. Unlike other episodes in which Suhayl describes the good times and intimacy he enjoys in Maymūn's company, here he simply says that he spent the night listening (bi-l-samāʾ) to his friend and that it was “the night of departure” (wa kānat laylat al-wadāʾ). Taking into account these further signs that Maymūn's poverty is not a ploy but a reality, we find here an episode which suggests that the adīb's plea for material assistance and social recognition is sincere, not the machinations of a trickster.

4.8 Conclusion: Beyond Accomplices

Jaakko Hämeen-Anttila, one of the very few critical readers of Majmaʿ al-Bahrayn, describes Laylā and Rajab as the adīb's “accomplices” whose role “is more regular than in any earlier maqamas [sic]”. Hämeen-Anttila, that is, sees Laylā and Rajab as the characterological innovations that they are. However, he does not seem to know what insight to draw from this observation. First he describes Laylā and Rajab as “part of the picaresque hero, his emanations as it were”. Then he says “there is almost a division of the role of the hero between several characters...although Maymūn manages, in the end, to retain his authority.” Citing the precedent in al-Ḥarīrī's Maqāmāt of husband and wife appearing before a judge in order to perform a trick, Hämeen-Anttila argues that “in al-Yāzijī, the picaresque potential is more evenly distributed among the members of the unholy family”.

In treating Rajab and Laylā as “emanations” of the adīb, and arguing that the role of the

523 Al-Yāzijī, Majmaʿ al-Bahrayn, 323.
524 Hämeen-Anttila, Maqama, 353.
525 Hämeen-Anttila, Maqama, 353.
526 Hämeen-Anttila, Maqama, 353.
527 Hämeen-Anttila, Maqama, 354.
adīb is “more evenly distributed” among several characters, Hämeen-Anttila denies an obvious, if inconvenient, truth: Majmaʿ al-Baḥrayn has more than two heroes. In diminishing Laylā and Rajab’s significance, Hämeen-Anttila not only attempts to preserve the dualistic model of the canonical maqāmāt, but obscures al-Yāziji’s innovative approach to the characterological conventions of the maqāma genre.

Al-Yāziji’s new heroes add nuance to Majmaʿ al-Baḥrayn as a work of literature and depth to the text's function as social commentary. The literary nuance comes from the higher degree of sophistication and variation that is possible when an episode has two or even three adībs working together, often in complementary disguises, executing elaborate ruses that generate multiple rewards, at times from multiple audiences. As a work of social commentary, Majmaʿ al-Baḥrayn endows Laylā, a young woman, and Rajab, a young servant boy, with the gifts of eloquent speech and erudition. In a genre that celebrates eloquence and erudition, their full participation in many episodes challenges the long-established link between adab and the two adult male characters at the center of the maqāma. Chapter Five builds on the characterological multiplicity established here to argue that Majmaʿ al-Baḥrayn embraces a multiplicity far beyond its characters. The multiplication of adībs results in a multiplication of narrative stages, forms of performance, and interpretative possibilities for the text as a whole.
Chapter Five: The Many Seas of Majmaʿ al-Bahrayn

A literal translation of the title Majmaʿ al-Bahrayn is “The Confluence of the Two Seas”. Like the text which it names, however, it is only through a reiterative process of reading and rereading that the many possible interpretations of the title reveal themselves. Most immediately, we might note that the phrase “majmaʿ al-bahrayn” is a direct quote from the Chapter of the Cave (Surat al-Kahf) in the Qur’ān. The relevant passage depicts an encounter between Moses and a servant of God, identified as al-Khiḍr in the commentaries, whose actions appear to Moses to be immoral. When Moses confronts al-Khiḍr, however, the latter reveals a broader context in which his actions were justified. He then reproaches Moses for his lack of patience and parts ways with him. This Qur’ānic account models a hermeneutic approach that distinguishes truth from appearance and enjoins humility and patience in the face of the unknown. In the Chapter of the Cave, the story of Moses and al-Khiḍr follows a series of warnings about the dangers of disregarding God's message, and therefore also serves as a parable for the vital importance of interpretation not only for this world but for the next.

528 Qur’ān 18:60. In the relevant passage, Moses meets and accompanies an unnamed servant of God (identified in the tafsīr of al-Jalālayn as al-Khiḍr). When Moses asks to follow al-Khiḍr and learn from him, the latter warns him that he will not have the patience (ṣabr). Al-Khiḍr relents, however, on the condition that Moses withhold his questions. Al-Khiḍr then proceeds to act in what appears to Moses to be an unethical manner. In each instance, Moses cannot resist objecting and al-Khiḍr ultimately parts ways with him — but not before explaining the hidden reasons behind each of his actions. Somewhat tangentially, elsewhere in the same verse one finds the story of the people of the cave, from which Muhammad al-Muwaylihi draws a central plot device of his maqāmāt, Ḥadīth ʿĪsā bin Hishām.
Taken at face value, this Qurʾānic reference might signal al-Yūzījī's desire to place himself and his maqāmāt within what he perceived to be an Islamic discourse. Indeed, one might even read the title as an indication of how to read the collection, from apparent to revealed truth. Yet while the Islamic dimension of the title and the larger work are indispensable, it cannot by itself provide a satisfying interpretation. In part, this is because an “Islamic” text written by a devout Christian raises complex questions about faith, identity, and legitimacy during the early Nahḍa, and in part because a hermeneutic approach that moves from appearance to truth is itself inadequate to the task of describing the many layers and folds, contradictions and resolutions, and disguises and acts of uncovering that constitute al-Yūzījī's maqāmāt.

This becomes more clear when we delve deeper into the many layers of meaning contained within the title, Majmaʿ al-Baḥrayn. In historical terms, the term majmaʿ has long been used to name collections of various sorts, such as Aḥmad al-Maydānī's (d. 518/1124) canonical collection of proverbs, entitled Majmaʿ al-amthāl (The Collection of Proverbs). Al-Raḍī al-Dīn al-Ṣāghānī (d. 650/1252), the author of al-ʿUbāb among other works, composed a work of lexicography entitled Majmaʿ al-Baḥrayn.Likewise, the phrase Majmaʿ al-Baḥrayn was used by the Najaf-born scholar Fakhr al-Dīn Ṭūrāyḥī (d. 1085/1674) as the title of his commentary on esoteric terms (al-gharīb) in the Qurʾān and ḥadīth. While al-Yūzījī only very rarely cites specific works of scholarship in his maqāmāt, his extraordinary knowledge of the Arabic language and his particular interest in lexicography invite speculation as to whether his title might have been a nod to al-Ṣāghānī and Ṭūrāyḥī, among its many other meanings.

530 While al-Yūzījī may not have known about Ṭūrāyḥī's manuscript, it is mentioned in Ziriklī’s authoritative biographical dictionary, al-ʿAlām, and was printed in Tehran in 1881, suggesting that at least some of al-Yūzījī’s contemporaries were aware of the text. Ṭūrāyḥī's text is alternately titled Majmaʿ al-baḥrayn wa-maṭlaʿ al-nayyirayn.
Beyond thinking of explicit references to earlier works and practices of compilation, the title's “two seas” can be read as an allusion to any number of dualities that run through the maqāma genre and are exemplified by aspects of al-Yāzījī's text. These include the alternating use of poetry (ṣi`r) and prose (nathr), as some scholars have maintained, the oscillation between the tones of jest (ḥazl) and sincerity (jidd), and the conventional narrative structure, which revolves around an encounter between two main characters, an adīb and a narrator. The two seas can also be read as an indication that al-Yāzījī's work is a synthesis of the canonical maqāmāt of al-Hamadhānī and al-Ḥarīrī, as ʿĪsā Sābā has suggested.

Following a different line of reasoning, the two seas might be understood to represent the complex relationship between Majmaʿ al-Bahrāyn's main text (al-matn) and the copious annotation (sharḥ) which the author himself composed and appended in the form of nearly six thousand footnotes to assist the reader of the original 1856 edition. Thinking more broadly, the two seas could also symbolize the tensions that concerned al-Yāzījī and his generation: the emerging dialectic of modernity and tradition, the solidifying sectarian boundaries between Christian and Muslim communities, the gathering tensions between Arab and Ottoman identity, and the debates over whether reform or revival was the right way forward for the Arabic language.

While possible readings proliferate, this chapter is largely unconcerned with fixing the meaning of either the title of Majmaʿ al-Bahrāyn or the text itself. Beyond the tricky philosophical questions of where such meaning might lie, and the methodological concerns about how it could be conclusively demonstrated, the text itself contains persuasive evidence that it

531 See Ḍayf, Al-Maqāma, 85; and Jaakko Hämeen-Anttila, Maqama, 353.
532 Sābā, Al-Shaykh Nāṣīf al-Yāzījī, 23.
was not intended (or not solely intended) to be reduced to a single meaning. Rather, both the
main body of *Majmaʿ al-Bahrayn* and a substantial portion of al-Yāziji'i's autocomentary are
preoccupied with playing upon (and sometimes elucidating) the inherent polyvalence of the
Arabic language, itself magnified by the *maqāma's* many ruses and games.

In this spirit, this chapter reads *Majmaʿ al-Bahrayn* as an intervention that dispenses with
the *maqāma's* foundational preference for duality. In place of the many dualities mentioned
above, here I argue that multiplicity, not duality, is the proper theoretical frame for reading these
sixty episodes. To do so, the sections in this chapter build on the characterological multiplicity
demonstrated in Chapters Three and Four by turning to *Majmaʿ al-Bahrayn's* narrative structure
and then its performance types. In both cases, I argue that duality cannot contain the complexity
of the text. Hence, while the title of al-Yāziji'i's *maqāmāt* is in the grammatical dual ("*al-
bahrayn*"), here I read it — at least hermeneutically — in the plural, as the many seas.

### 5.1 Narrative Structures: Multiplications and Conflations

Various scholars have developed models for the narrative stages of the canonical *maqāmāt*
of al-Hamadhānī and al-Ḥarīrī. Abdelfattah Kilito provides an elegant eight stage schema: (1)
narrator's arrival; (2) encounter of the narrator and the disguised adīb; (3) adīb's performance; (4)
the reward; (5) the narrator's recognition of the adīb's true identity; (6) the narrator's reproach of
the adīb; (7) the adīb's justification; (8) the parting of the two characters.\(^{533}\) James Monroe,
discussing Kilito's schema, suggests a ninth stage: (9) the departure of the narrator.\(^{534}\) Devin

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Stewart, drawing on both studies, offers a twelve-stage schema, which I reproduce below. In Stewart's schema, stages (2), (6), and (8) are new; (8), which I will call “the pursuit”, seems particularly important.

1. The narrator arrives in a city;
2. Formation of an assembly or gathering for learned discussion;
3. The protagonist enters the assembly;
4. The adīb undertakes an eloquent performance;
5. Rewarding of the adīb by the narrator or other character;
6. The adīb leaves assembly, which breaks up;
7. The narrator realizes the protagonist’s true identity;
8. The narrator follows the protagonist;
9. The narrator accosts or reproaches the protagonist;
10. Justification by the adīb;
11. Parting of the two;
12. Departure of the narrator from the city (implicit).

While these various narratological schema are a helpful heuristics for understanding the canonical maqāmāt, they obscure the ways in which the proliferation of characters, disguises, and roles multiplies the narrative stages found in the episodes of Majmaʿ al-Bahrāyn. In some cases, familiar narrative stages such as the adīb's performance and the audience's provision of a

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reward (4 and 5, respectively, in Stewart's schema), are doubled or even tripled within a single episode. In rare instances, other key stages are multiplied as well, as when the same character dons two disguises in a single episode, thereby doubling the recognition scene (7). In other cases, narrative stages that are usually distinct are conflated. The most elaborate example of this phenomenon is the conflation of the encounter and the recognition scenes. As this section explores through close readings of select passages, both multiplication and conflation have complex consequences for the narrative structure and relationship between the characters.

A Tripled Trick

In the first episode of Majmaʿ al-Baḥrayn, al-Badawiyya (#1), Maymūn pulls off three different tricks, each of which demands a different type of deceit and has a different victim. At the beginning of this episode, Suhayl meets Maymūn, Laylā and Rajab in the desert. The adīb invites Suhayl to spend the night, which they pass in pleasant conversation. In the morning they set out together, but are accosted by a group of robbers. When the robbers confront Maymūn, he responds by asking them if they would like to know about a bit of lucrative “business” (tijāra), thereby commencing the first trick. When they assent, Maymūn instructs Rajab, again identified as his “servant boy” (ghulām), to lead the thieves to the nearby town. As soon as they have departed, Maymūn himself rides into town from another direction and alerts the population to the threat. The townspeople pour forth, arrest the thieves, and beat them within an inch of their lives. At this point, Maymūn and his crew have outwitted the robbers, protecting both their bodies and their possessions from their well-armed adversaries.

The ruses do not stop here, however. The prisoners are taken to an emir, who offers to reward Maymūn and his party with the thieves' booty. Maymūn chastises the emir for his
“generosity” in gifting what is not his. While Maymūn had tricked the thieves by appealing to their greed and (perhaps?) relying on his superior knowledge of the surrounding area, he tricks the emir by threatening his reputation for generosity. In other words, Maymūn employs the power of social convention to his advantage. This second trick works handsomely, as the emir's messenger (dāʿī) arrives with a purse of gold coins the next morning. With Suhayl in tow, Maymūn and his party gather the thieves' booty and the emir's reward and depart together.

When they make camp that night, Maymūn approaches Suhayl's camel, unties its bridle, and sends it galloping away. Suhayl gives chase, thereby falling for the third trick, for when he returns, he finds that everything in the camp is gone except a note. This note has a short poem which reminds Suhayl that Maymūn saved him from the thieves (and presumably the desert) and owes him nothing, but has “left” the she-camel for him regardless. The episode ends with Suhayl praising Maymūn and lamenting his departure.

Three tricks, three victims: an ambush for the thieves, a threat against the emir's reputation, and a diversion to deceive the narrator. Taken together, the three tricks demonstrate the breadth of Maymūn's cunning, although curiously, none of these tricks revolves around Maymūn's eloquence nor his erudition. Despite this oddity, in al-Badawiyya (#1), as in many subsequent episodes, the adīb's multiple tricks often result in multiple rewards, to which we turn presently.

Multiple Rewards

Multiple tricks and multiple adībs result in multiple rewards. In some cases discussed in this section, the same character attains more than one reward, as was the case with Maymūn in al-Badawiyya (#1) discussed above and a number of other maqāmāt studied in the preceding
chapters. In other episodes, multiple characters each receive a distinct reward, as is the case in *al-Yamāmiyya* (#51), studied in “Feigning a Foreign Tongue” in Chapter Four. Although less common, sometimes one of the main characters will gift a reward to another character. In *al-ʿIrāqiyya* (#11), an emir rewards Rajab for besting Maymūn, and then silences Maymūn with a further gift. However, when Suhayl catches up with the two *adībs* after their departure, Maymūn describes him as “my transmitter” (*rāwiyaṭī*) and “my witness” (*shāhidatī*) and offers him a gift (*nihla*). While the most common reward is money (gold and silver, dinars and dirhams), there are numerous other rewards as well, including fine clothing, animals, the extension of hospitality, and words of apology.

The sheer variety of ways in which rewards circulate in *Majmaʿ al-Bahrayn* renders any strict typology of rewards inadequate. However, a few examples can illustrate the multiplicity of rewards and some of the ways in which they are deployed in the collection. In *al-Azhariyya* (#12), Maymūn and Suhayl conspire to trick the prayer goers at al-Azhar Mosque by having Suhayl recite and Maymūn solve a riddle. Once they have secured a reward for solving the
riddle, however, Maymūn offers the audience a “double or nothing” arrangement. When Maymūn offers a commentary (sharāḥ) that opens the listeners' breasts (sharāḥa suḍūrāhun), an elderly shaykh gifts him a purse (ṣurrā) of dinars.\footnote{Al-Yāzijī, Majma’ al-Bahrāyn, 81.} As Maymūn is leaving, he calls to Suhayl to join him. He acknowledges that Suhayl helped him execute the trick, and is therefore entitled to a reward; however, he claims, Suhayl also benefited from hearing the solution to the riddle, and hence owes Maymūn a reward! Maymūn (graciously?) proposes that the two debts cancel one another out, and invites Suhayl to stay with him as a guest for as long as he stays in Cairo.

In al-Ḥimyariyya (#38), Maymūn receives multiple rewards for himself and also manages to secure a smaller reward for Suhayl.\footnote{A similar scenario plays out in al-Laghaziyya (#26). In that episode, after securing a reward, Maymūn gifts Suhayl a dinar on account of the latter being a “stranger”. Maymūn's “generosity” shames the audience into making donations to Suhayl as well. In al-Tā iyya (#36), likewise, it is Rajab who tosses Maymūn a coin and compels the audience to do the same with another false performance of generosity and compassion.} In this episode, Maymūn, in the company of Suhayl and his “two companions” (ṣāhibay), Laylā and Rajab, is brought before an emir. One of the emir's attendants recognizes Maymūn as a brilliant and wily adīb, and calls for his wit to be tested. Maymūn gladly rises to the occasion, stumping the antagonist with two grammatical questions. A boy (fatā) (who is not Rajab) takes the man's place, and asks Maymūn to compose a response to eight quyūd questions.\footnote{The questions are as follows: the stages of a man's life, the stages of a woman's life, the types of gestures, the rain, the rivers, the mountains, the dust, and types of thread or cord (al-khuwīt).} The audience praises Maymūn when he finishes, calling him the Nābigha of the Ages.\footnote{Al-Yāzijī, Majma’ al-Bahrāyn, 282.} Their first reward is to offer Maymūn a striped outfit (qiṭr) for each line (shaṭr) of his own compositions he writes down for them. Maymūn indicates that Suhayl is his scribe (kātib), and sets off dictating, which, in turn, sets Suhayl off scribbling. When they finish, the emir gives Maymūn a Yemeni gown (ḥulla yamaniyya) and the audience then gives him a
type of sheep (called a *naqad*). Finally, Suhayl reports that the audience brought him “little dirhams” (*durayhimāt*) as the “scribe's reward” (*ṣilat al-kātib*).

In *al-ʿAbsiyya* (#31), discussed in the previous chapter, Maymūn, Rajab, and Laylā each receive a reward. However, these rewards are not for their literary performance, per se, but rather in response to their masterful manipulation of their audience's sympathies. As described above, Rajab complains of being Maymūn's neglected son, which is a pretext for Maymūn to present himself as desperately poor. Laylā explains their complaints and petitions the audience to make donations to restore her father to his former wealth and status. The audience gives Maymūn what is called a *dhawd*, defined in a footnote as between three and ten camels. They then give Rajab an *ʿawd*, defined as a camel over the age of ten. The two men thank the audience for their gifts (*al-jadwā*), and Suhayl notes that their complaints (*al-daʿwā*) also come to an end.

Laylā, however, howls (*harrat*) and frowns (*wa-kaḥarrat*) and then protests her exclusion in verse. The howling recalls the animalizing language used to other certain characters in Chapter Four, especially given that al-Yāzījī glosses the verb with a detailed description of a dog's howling cry. Her two-line poem exposes the hypocrisy of the audience by linking the *maqāma*'s trope of Time (*al-zamān*) to a notion of equal livelihood among people of a given age (*taswiyat al-rizq fī ahlihi*). In particular, she says that “we” fault Time if livelihood (*rizq*) is not equal, but now “we” (by which she must mean the audience) do what Time does (*nafʿalu fī lahu*). The audience acknowledges her complaint and rewards her with a bit of money (*shayʿ min al-māl*). Her success

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is not only a relatively explicit recognition of the value of a woman's labor, linked to the common
trope of Time in the *maqāma* and brought about by that woman's own advocacy, but also serves
to deliver a triple reward for the Khizāmī family in this episode.

**Doubled Disguises**

There are a handful of instances in which the same character adopts two different disguises
in a single episode. In formal terms, this phenomenon of the doubled disguise seems to be the
product of *Majmaʾ al-Bahrāyn*’s intricate and varied narrative structures, as well as the inclusion
of multiple *adībs*, tricks, and rewards.

*Al-ʿAbsīyya* (#31), studied in detail in “Servant, Student, Son” in Chapter Four, and
discussed again in “Multiple Rewards” above, presents an instructive example. In this episode,
Suhayl encounters Maymūn in the lands of the Banū ʿAbs in the Ḣijāz, accompanied by “his girl”
(*fatātuhu*) and “his boy” (*fatāhu*) (i.e. Laylā and Rajab). Maymūn first presents himself as
Rajab’s father, broken hearted by his son’s disobedience. When Maymūn and Rajab each present
their complaints to the audience, however, their disagreement confuses the assembled crowd, who
call for them to give their account before a judge. When Laylā then steps forth to resolve the issue,
she effectively changes Maymūn's disguise, from aggrieved father to made-up mendicant. She
elaborates on this new disguise by describing Maymūn's former generosity and the hard times that
Fate (*al-dahr*) has brought upon him. To further disguise her father's identity, Laylā recites a poem
in which she calls Maymūn “Abū l-ʿAbbās” (itself acknowledged to be a trick in a footnote\(^\text{553}\)).

In a somewhat different fashion, Maymūn presents himself in two different roles in *al-

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Mawṣūliyya (#23). While they both disguise his intentions and designs, his first role as Laylā's father is not, strictly speaking, a disguise. Yet as Laylā's father, Maymūn agrees to marry his daughter to a young suitor in exchange for a dowry. As he never had any intention of marrying off Laylā, however, once they arrive in the court to sign the marriage contract, Maymūn discards the “disguise” of the happy father and presents himself before the judge as Laylā's husband. In a fit of fabricated outrage, Maymūn accuses the young man of seeking to marry his wife. The young man protests, rightly saying that Laylā is Maymūn's offspring (salīla), not his wife (ḥalīla). The young man's protests draw our attention to the fact that Laylā, too, switches disguises in this episode: from seductive daughter to chaste and obedient wife. When the suitor cannot provide evidence (bayyina) of the true identity of his once-soon-to-be wife and father-in-law, the judge orders him evicted from the court. Maymūn and Laylā then successfully appeal to the judge to financial assistance to relieve their poverty. By the episode's end, they are counting a doubled reward: not only the judge's donations but the dowry they received from the erstwhile suitor.

Al-Anṭākiyya (#35) serves as a third and final example of this doubling of disguises. In this case, the disguise itself is sartorial. In this episode, Laylā pretends to be Maymūn's wife before a judge. In this role, her complaints about Maymūn's neglect reinforce the impression that the adīb is dirt poor, while her suggestive glances and frequent references to her youth and desirability seduce the judge. After hearing each party's complaint, the judge urges Maymūn to divorce his “wife”, which the adīb agrees to do in exchange for a purse of gold coins. Maymūn leaves with his reward, while the judge leaves with Laylā. However, as Suhayl reports, when he rejoins...

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554 A similar analysis might be offered of al-Misriyya (#29), studied in Chapter Four. In that maqāma, Suhayl encounters Maymūn and Rajab near the end of the episode and each is wearing the other's clothes (wa qad labisa kullmā minhum ābazzatā šāhibikī). While this lacks the gender-bending dimension of Al-Anṭākiyya (#35), it retains the clothing swap as a way to conceal the characters' identities and double their disguises. Al-Yāziī, Majmaʿ al-Bahrāyn, 29.224.11.
Maymūn that evening at a tavern, Laylā is sitting next to him, disguised in boy's clothing (*malābis al-ghilmān*). Suhayl makes no comment on Laylā's reappearance in boy's clothing, and the narrative moves on to other matters.

But the fact remains that Laylā appears in two radically different disguises. First, she plays the role of her father's wife, with all of the incestuous implications discussed in Chapter Three. She then reappears disguised in boy's clothing; but here, her disguise does not fool Suhayl, despite his remarkably consistent failure to recognize Laylā elsewhere in *Majmaʿ al-Baḥrayn*. While it clear that Laylā adopts two disguises in *al-Anṭākiyya* (#35), the significance of the doubling, and in particular, of her gender-bending second disguise, is difficult to comprehend.

**A Doubled Recognition?**

In *al-Rashīdiyya* (#33), there is what might I will be called a doubled recognition. In the opening lines, Suhayl says that he spied Maymūn in a market and nearly flies to him “on the wings of longing” (*ajnāḥat al-ashwāq*). Yet having proclaimed his desire to quench his thirst in Maymūn's pure water and other such tropes of male homosocial companionship, Suhayl is unable to find even a “trace” (*athar*) of his companion in the market. He retires to a tavern (*funduq*), where he happens upon an old man surrounded by a tightly-packed crowd of people (*al-nās*). When Suhayl gets closer, he recognizes them (again) as Maymūn and his daughter Laylā, engaged in a marital dispute.

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556 Al-Yāzījī, *Majmaʿ al-Baḥrayn*, 244.
557 Al-Yāzījī, *Majmaʿ al-Baḥrayn*, 33.244.5-6.
Conflations: Encounter and Early Recognition

In the canonical maqāmāt, as in many of the collections studied in earlier chapters of this dissertation, the narrator's recognition of the adīb typically takes place after the adīb's performance. This makes perfect sense, as it is often the adīb's eloquence or trickery that alerts the narrator to the reappearance of his wily friend. However, in at least thirty of the sixty episodes in Majmaʿ al-Bahrayn, this recognition takes place early in the episode, at the very moment when Suhayl encounters Maymūn and the other adībs. Hämeen-Anttila calls this phenomenon the "initial recognition" and rightly points out that it renders Suhayl either an observer or an accomplice to Maymūn. Here I will suggest we call it "early recognition" to emphasize its unconventional placement in the narrative schema. Through a discussion of a number of rich examples, I will attempt to tease out not only the narratological changes but also some of the moral implications of Suhayl's early recognition of his companion.

In al-Anṭākiyya (#35), Suhayl goes to a judge in the town of Antioch to take care of a small matter (murāsha). In the judge's chamber, he encounters Maymūn and Laylā. When Suhayl makes to greet them, however, Maymūn shoots him a glance to warn him not to reveal their real identities to the judge. Suhayl then watches as Maymūn and Laylā play out an elaborate ruse involving deceit and seduction to lighten the judge's purse. Yet what Suhayl witnesses is not an innocent trick, but the effective sale of Laylā to the judge, who takes her with his "right hand" back to his "den" (ʿarīn). Lest the reader misunderstand the judge's intentions, a footnote explains that the word

558 In addition to al-Anṭākiyya (#35) and al-Shāmiyya (#4) discussed in this section, early recognition is a clear and recognizable feature of the following episodes: al-Yamaniyya (#7), al-Ḥalabiyya (#9), al-Kūfīyya (#10), al-ʿAzhariyya (#12), al-Taghlibiyya (#13), al-Ramlīyya (#15), al-Dimashqīyya (#21), al-Sarajīyya (#22), al-Mawsūliyya (#23), al-Tamīmīyya (#25), al-Ṭihābiyya (#30), al-ʿAbbāsiyya (#31), al-ʿAṣīmiyya (#32), al-Rashīdiyya (#33), al-Ḥumariyya (#38), al-ʿAnbariyya (#39), al-Tihāmiyya (#41), al-Mudariyya (#42), al-ʿAbhāriyya (#43), al-Ḥallīyya (#44), al-Furāṭiyya (#45), al-Ruḍāfiyya (#47), al-Hanawiyya (#50), al-ʿUmāniyya (#52), al-ʿUmayyitha (#53), al-Sawādiyya (#54), al-Dumyātiyya (#55), and al-ʾIskandariyya (#56).

559 Hämeen-Anttila, Maqama, 354.
“den” was chosen because the judge “wants to prey on [Laylā] like a lion”. Suhayl bears witness to this scene and dutifully records it without so much as objecting; while the adīb, Laylā's father, orchestrates the sale of his daughter to a predator—so named, literally, metaphorically, and explicitly, in a footnote.

With an equal amount of moral turpitude, in al-Shāmiyya (#4), Suhayl visits a sick friend (šāhib) in Syria. As the friend is complaining of his ailments, Maymūn arrives disguised as a doctor. Once again, Suhayl recognizes Maymūn immediately; and once again, Maymūn gestures to the narrator to hold his tongue. As Suhayl watches, Maymūn then dispenses made-up advice, sells Suhayl's sick friend overpriced, bogus medicine, and then slips away with a clever excuse when a real doctor shows up. As Suhayl is subsequently confronting Maymūn, they hear the sound of people screaming and the din of female mourners (dajīj al-nawāʾīḥ), indicating that Suhayl's friend has died. Suhayl is thereby transformed into a willing accomplice to Maymūn's quite sinister ruses, shed of their otherwise playful and innocent character.

Non-Encounters

Furthermore, there are a handful of episodes in which a character other than Suhayl recognizes Maymūn. This, in effect, negates both the conventional encounter and recognition scenes, as they do not take place between the narrator and the adīb. While we focus here on al-Ruṣāfiyya (#47), a similar analysis could be offered of al-Adabiyya (#34) and al-Ḥimyariyya (#38). In al-Adabiyya (#34), Suhayl and his companions recognize Maymūn near the end of the episode; as Suhayl reports it, his companions exclaim their surprise at recognizing the adīb in the dawn

light, leap toward him, and greet him with the salutations reserved for a ruler. In *al-Himyariyya* (#38), it is not Suhayl's companions who recognize Maymūn but rather one of the emir's attendants, who sees the *adīb*, praises his literary guile, and challenges him to a contest. In both cases, as with *al-Ruṣāfiyya* (#47), what we find is that Suhayl is sidelined and deprived of his role as the one who recognizes, drawing otherwise marginal characters into a more central role in the narrative of a given episode.

In *al-Ruṣāfiyya* (#47), Suhayl spends an evening (*samartu laylat*) in the company of “dignified men with first-rate minds” (*kirām min uwli l-ḥašāfa*). As with many other scenes of male homosocial companionability, Suhayl's evening with these litterateurs revolves around their shared love of *adab*. Employing familiar tropes, al-Yāzījī describes the men as “playing with the edges of the finest talk” and “pulling back and forth the sides of refined speech”. The conversation then turns to recollecting the “individuals of the age” (*afrād al-ʿaṣr*). One of the men in the group says that “al-Khizāmī” has just arrived, and describes him as follows:

Al-Khizāmī has arrived, who when he races, outpaces * And when he speaks up, no one can keep up * And when he has related, you'll see the people intoxicated

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561 Suhayl's companions leap toward Maymūn with the speed of a *sim‘*; which is an offspring of a hyena and a wolf. Al-Yāzījī, *Majma‘ al-Bahrayn*, 34.254.6-9.
Having praised Maymūn's inimitable literary prowess, the other people in the group are struck with wonder by his high station (*fa-aʿ jabā l-qawmu bi-ʾirtiqāʾ ŏhi*) and ask how they might meet him. The man who announced Maymūn's arrival offers to serve as their guide, and in the morning they take off as a group with a silent Suhayl in tow.

While the rest of this episode follows a familiar course, this opening scene diverges from convention. Suhayl notably does not travel in the beginning of this episode, but describes himself as passing an evening with a group of friends. At least one of these friends not only knows of Maymūn's reputation, but persuades the group to seek him out. While Suhayl follows along, he neither leads the group nor does he encounter Maymūn by happenstance. In this sense, al-Ruṣāfiyya (#47) lacks both the conventional encounter and the recognition scene, as both are elided by the initiative of one of Suhayl's anonymous companions.

### 5.2 Types of Performance

Maymūn, Laylā, and Rajab are constantly putting their eloquence and erudition on display in an array of performances. In this section, I attempt to distinguish these performances along two axes: the forms of speech they involve and the social codes they manipulate. In some cases, one axis is so prominent across multiple episodes that it demands its own performance type. For instance, what I call “the fabricated fight” is dominated by the manipulation of social codes (of etiquette, appearance, desire, and conduct) to the point that these performances create a

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567 Al-Yāzījī, Majmaʿ al-Bahrāyn, 47.339.6.
coherent typology despite the fact that the topics or themes about which the characters are fighting vary greatly. Likewise, I find it justifiable to group the various riddles together, despite the fact that they are deployed in a range of environments, for different ends. To a large extent, what follows is an impressionistic catalogue built around what has struck me as particularly evocative, entertaining, elaborate, and strange performances; it is not difficult to imagine a different reader producing a different catalogue.

Indeed, others have. Anīs al-Maqdīsī, like a number of other prominent Arabic literary critics, argues that Majmaʿ al-Bahrāyn puts the breadth of al-Yāzījī’s reading on display. Speaking of al-Tībbiyya (#30), al-Maqdīsī praises al-Yāzījī’s knowledge of medicine; and likewise, judging from al-Falakiyya (#28), his knowledge of astrology and astronomy. He also praises al-Yāzījī’s knowledge of history, zoology (al-ḥaywāniyya), botany, and society in what is likely intended to be a non-exhaustive list. Citing limited space, he then mentions examples of two particular areas, both related to language, in which al-Yāzījī excelled. The first are what he calls “rarities of language” (nawādir al-lugha)\(^{568}\) and the second “marvels of composition” (gharāʾ ib al-tarkīb).\(^{569}\)

While al-Maqdīsī is correct that these episodes deal with linguistic rarities and marvels, his grouping together of (some) episodes under a general theme leaves unexplored the challenges of multiple characters, different types of linguistic performance, and the tone of a given episode

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\(^{568}\) Regarding the rarities of language, al-Maqdīsī cites the multiple declensions with which Laylā plays in al-Baghdadiyya (#8), and the grammatical questions put forth in al-Kūfīyya (#10), al-Bahrīyya (#43), al-Furātīyya (#45), al-Lubnāniyya (#49), and al-Sawādiyya (#54). Al-Maqdīsī, Al-Funūn al-adabiyya wa-a’lāmuhā, 72-3.

\(^{569}\) Turning to the “marvels of composition” (gharāʾ ib al-tarkīb), al-Maqdīsī follows Ǧayf in first discussing al-Ramlīyya (#15). In rapid succession, al-Maqdīsī then mentions the two lines of verse in al-Rajabīyya (#18) that can be read forwards as praise and backwards as invective; the palindromic fourteen-line poem in al-Baṣrīyya (#20); and the riddles of al-Lagḥaziyya (#26). Grouped under the same heading of “marvels”, al-Maqdīsī lists the advice found in al-Hikamiyya (#17), al-ʿAsimiyya (#32), and al-Adabiyya (#34); and the religious exhortations in al-Maʿārīyya (#24), al-Tihāmiyya (#41), and al-Makkiyya (#59); and the elaborate double entendre performed in al-Sarājiyya (#22). Finally, he mentions al-Qudsiyya (#60), in which al-Khizāmī repents. Al-Maqdīsī, Al-Funūn al-adabiyya wa-a’lāmuhā, 74-78.
in establishing a robust theory of genre in *Majmaʿ al-Bahrāyn*. This section attempts to build on earlier sketches of the linguistic features of the text, complicating the notion of performance by tracing how language and social codes intersect, and laying the groundwork for future scholars to explore more fully the implications for defining the *maqāma* genre.

*Quyūd, Or Questions of Form*

The Arabic term *quyūd* means “forms” or “types”. One salient type of performance in *Majmaʿ al-Bahrāyn* involves one character challenging another to enumerate the *quyūd* of a given phenomenon. While the response is invariably composed in verse, the topic and its degree of abstraction changes from one performance to another. In *al-Ruṣāfiyya* (#47), for instance, an antagonist demands that Maymūn list the types of horses (by both age and color), and then the types of camels; likewise, in *al-Tihāmiyya* (#41), Rajab asks Maymūn to compose on the types (*quyūd*) of sound and that which makes them, whether animate or inanimate. In other episodes, the characters compose on much more abstract typologies. In *al-ʿUmāniyya* (#52), an old man tests Maymūn's claim to be from the tribe of Muḍar by posing questions on the forms (*quyūd*) of Bedouin dwellings (*al-masākin*), width (*al-saʿa*), fullness (*al-imtiḥāʾ*), and emptiness (*al-khillāʾ*). It is not only the subject matter which changes, but also the character who poses and responds to a *quyūd* challenge. Whereas in the episodes mentioned above, it is Maymūn who effortlessly composes rhyming typologies, in *al-Lubnāniyya* (#49), Maymūn poses questions about the forms of cutting (*al-qāṭr*), then breaking (*al-kīsr*), and finally the categories of broken things (*al-hīṣās*), while Rajab composes the answers and wins a reward.

To offer a more granular sense of how a *quyūd* performance works, let us turn to another example, *al-ʿUkāziyya* (#58). In this episode, Suhayl and an unnamed companion travel across
“the lands of the Arabs” (al-bawādī) until they reach the market of Ṭukāẓ. Located southeast of Mecca, Ṭukāẓ was the largest annual fair and market in pre-Islamic Arabia, serving not only as a site for economic activity but also for poetry competitions and political negotiations. When Suhayl and his companion arrive, they wander (naṭūf) between the bands of people (al-ṭawāʾif) engaged in a boisterous and diverse exchange of speech. They eventually happen upon a group (laṭīf) of noble Arabs (min nawlāšī al-ʿarab). Among this group, Suhayl recognizes Maymūn and Rajab engaged in a vigorous exchange of challenges and boasts which had drawn a large audience of market-goers. When Maymūn notices the crowd, he puffs himself up and makes himself bigger, expressed in playful, onomatopoetic language by the observant narrator.

Before the swelling crowd, Maymūn issues a bold challenge to Rajab, littered with insults and obscure words. He proposes to test Rajab's knowledge; if Rajab passes the test, Maymūn will strip down and give Rajab his rags (aṭmārī). However, if Maymūn stumps Rajab, the latter must strip off his clothes before the people (al-qawm). By wagering the clothes quite literally off his back, Maymūn signals both his abject poverty by suggesting he has nothing else to bet and his sweeping confidence in his own abilities. Considering the importance which Maymūn and the other characters place on disguise, the risk of nudity not only threatens to humiliate the loser, but

570 Al-Yāzījī, Majmaʿ al-Bahrayn, 58.410.1.
572 Suhayl describes this cacophony of speech as follows: “Some had taken to imploring and nicknaming * Others posed riddles and asked the unanswerable * And others bantered and taunted”. The terms Suhayl uses are al-munāshada, al-munābaḍa, al-mubājā, al-muʿajaza, al-mufākaha, and al-mujāraza; all six are morphologically identical and semantically convey a range of speech acts. The infinitives are transitive, meaning they are done to someone, emphasizing through grammatical subtlety that these forms of speech are found in social space, between people. Al-Yāzījī, Majmaʿ al-Bahrayn, 58.410.11-15.
573 Al-Yāzījī glosses the term “laṭīf” as “a people gathered from numerous tribes” (qawmīn mujaṭama ʾin min qābāʾ il shatta). 58.410.17.
574 Suhayl employs two onomatopoetic near-synonyms to describe Maymūn's reaction: “akhranshama wa akhrāntama”. Al-Yāzījī, Majmaʿ al-Bahrayn, 58.411.3-4.
to strip them of the clothing that elsewhere masks their identities and facilitates their trickery. Rajab happily accepts the challenge and warns Maymūn to ready himself to be shamed (wa-stahdif li-sihām al-ʿār). It is unclear whether Rajab intends to shame Maymūn by besting him in the literary contest, or forcing him to strip in public, or both. Indeed, the association of the two goes a long way in showing the social standing which the characters and their audience, and by implication al-Yāzijī, place in literary performance.

Maymūn's first question is as follows:

If you are an adīb * then [tell me] what are the types of sons * with respect to the kinds of fathers?\(^\text{575}\)

إذا كنت من الأدباء فما قُبِود الأبناء باعتبار ضُرُوب الآباء

In response, Rajab issues an eleven-line poem in rajaz, a form of poetry in which the end rhyme changes with each line. His poem, however, does not deal with human sons and fathers, as a literal reading of the challenge would likely invite, but rather displays his knowledge of animals and the names of their offspring. This is no small feat, as Rajab enumerates thirty-four animals and the names of their offspring in this eleven-line poem, including such treasures as al-khinnūṣ, a piglet; daghfal, an elephant pup; shiqdhu, a baby chamelion; raṣaʿa, a baby bee; and hirniʿ — baby lice.

\(^{575}\) Al-Yāzijī, Majmaʿ al-Bahrayn, 411.
When he finishes, Maymūn applauds the “correctness” of his composition (ahkamta l-sadād) while alleging that Rajab is a masterful thief (sibd asbād). Maymūn then poses a second question, demanding that Rajab compose a poem naming the fingers and the spaces between them. Without missing a beat, Rajab lists the fingers from thumb to pinkie, or ibhām to khinṣir, and then gives the names for the distances between them. He starts with shibr, the distance between thumb and pinkie or a hand’s length, and then adds fitr, the length from thumb to pointer; ratab, the length between the pointer and the middle finger; ʿatab, the length from the middle finger to the ring finger; and al-buṣm, the length from the ring finger to the pinkie, or between the binṣir and the khinṣir. Rajab completes the poem with a lexical flourish, explaining that the general term fawt can be used for the distance between any two fingers.

Maymūn and Rajab repeat this ritual a third time, with Maymūn asking the names of the stages of a plant's growth. When Rajab successfully composes a response to this third challenge, he demands that Maymūn strip off his clothing, even his sandals. In a shift from verbal contest to physical confrontation, Rajab threatens to break Maymūn's neck if he does not comply. He then takes Maymūn by his jugular (ḥabl warīdīhi), and the latter begins to “spin in a spiral * and kick like a foal” (yadūr ka-l-lawlab * wa yarfās ka-l-tawlab).576 Rajab holds on tight to Maymūn's clothes and prevents him from escaping.

While the scene devolves from here into a physical scuffle carefully orchestrated to embarrass the audience into placating both parties with new clothing and other rewards, our focus remains on the quyūd performed above. Demanding that a character enumerate the quyūd of a given subject puts on display multiple types of knowledge and a range of linguistic abilities.

In *al-ʿUkāziyya* (#58), Rajab's compositions demonstrate his broad knowledge of the esoteric in the Arabic lexicon. Moreover, his ability to compose such poems extemporaneously (or so we are led to believe) is a metrical and rhythmic feat, made all the more challenging by the range of topics on which *quyūd* are composed in this corpus.

**The Fabricated Fight**

In the example of *al-ʿUkāziyya* (#58) discussed above, as well as *al-Damyāṭiyya* (#55) studied in Chapter Three, the characters perform a conflict in order to manipulate the audience into providing them with a reward. This fabricated fight is theatrical, involving verbal jousting and sometimes physical scuffles as well. Beyond eloquence and erudition, however, these fabricated fights show that the characters have a sense for the dramatic as well as the manipulating the codes of social convention. In *al-Damyāṭiyya* (#55), these codes were largely about marital and familial relations, obligations, and financial ties. In *al-Najdiyya* (#57), to which we turn presently, it is the codes of servitude, both social and economic, that Maymūn and Rajab manipulate to their benefit.577

In *al-Najdiyya* (#57), Suhayl comes upon an old man and his servant. While he does not recognize them as Maymūn and Rajab until the end of the episode, he watches as Rajab brings a lengthy complaint against his “master”. Rajab addresses his complaint about Maymūn to the ruler (zaʿīm al-qawm) and the gathered people, who together comprise the audience. He says Maymūn pressed him into servitude (*istaʿbadanī*) like the sons of Ḥām, but that he was so cheap (ʿubayd

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577 There are many other instances of fabricated fights in *Majmaʿ al-Bahrāyn*. Some blend verbal altercation, physical comedy, and the performance of stupidity, as in the elaborate fabricated fight in *al-Sukhriyya* (#46).
falasihi) that he could (or would?) not even provide for himself. Drawing from the wealth of Arabic adages, Rajab calls Maymūn more lowly than Aslam, 578 dumber than 'Ijl, 579 and more nerve-wracking than a jangling anklet (wa aqlaq min al-ḥijl * fī l-rijl). 580 Moreover, he complains that Maymūn is a habitual flatterer (mallāq) and insincere (madḥāq), 581 a superficial chatter (safsāf) 582 and an incessant prattler (shaqshāq). 583 Rajab continues to complain about Maymūn's excessive speech, seeming to poke fun at the esoteric language and headache-inducing riddles that fill the pages of Majma’ al-Bahrayn (including, ironically, in Rajab's own performances). Of Maymūn, he says:

He never ceases to blabber and jabber * Babble and grumble * Twaddle about ancient expressions * And amuse himself with frivolous obfuscations 584

لا يزال يهدَّر ويَهْدُر ويَبَثُ ويَدُمَم ويُلغَو بالكلم الجاهليَّة ويغتَب بالتهويهات الخرَاعميَّة

As is common in such fabricated fights, here refined language is not mere a source of puzzlement and irritation, but has concrete social and material consequences. Having complained

578 Al-Yāzijī, Majma’ al-Bahrayn, 57.404.20.
579 Al-Yāzijī, Majma’ al-Bahrayn, 57.404.21.
580 Al-Yāzijī, Majma’ al-Bahrayn, 57.404.22. Al-Yāzijī glosses ḥijl as khalkhal, the two being synonyms for anklets worn by women. While the association with women is clear, it is not clear whether the sound of the anklets is meant to be the cause of anxiety, the fact that the sound signifies the approach of a woman, or some impediment to comfortable walking that such jewelry causes to those who wear it.
582 Al-Yāzijī, Majma’ al-Bahrayn, 57.404.25. In its literal sense, safsāf refers to fine dust (mā daqqa min al-turāb), but is also used to describe inferior poetry and lowly morals. Here al-Yāzijī glosses the term as “sakhīf al- ibārā”, which when combined with my desire to render the English translation in an approximation of the Arabic rhyme, explains my choice of “superficial jabberer”.
583 Al-Yāzijī, Majma’ al-Bahrayn, 57.405.1.
584 Al-Yāzijī, Majma’ al-Bahrayn, 405.
of Maymūn's incomprehensible prolixity, Rajab then accuses Maymūn of misunderstanding his needs. These misunderstandings have compromised Maymūn's ability to fulfill his role as Rajab's master. Rajab reports:

If I asked him for a 'portion' * He would recite for me a poetic composition * And if I said 'I have an issue' * He would say: 'Bring me the inkwell and blotting tissue'585 * And if I begged that we 'break apart' * He would break his speech into parts * He is meticulous about the most tedious of errors * From the language of the bygone Arabs * Which has neither novelty nor use586

This passage relies extensively on puns, perhaps the most entertaining of which are the two meanings of the Arabic word ُṣَارِف. While Rajab means to convey his request to depart or be released from his service to Maymūn, the latter understands ُṣَارِف in its linguistic sense as

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585 Rajab uses the Arabic word “al-mirmala”, which refers to the sand or fine powder (also known in English as “pounce”) used to prepare a writing surface or blot out an error. I have taken some liberties with my translation here to preserve the playful rhyme of the passage at the expense of a precise rendering such as “blotting sand”.

586 Al-Yāzījī, Majma‘ al-Bahrāyn, 405.
morphology and accordingly begins to conjugate verbs for his miserable servant. The larger point, however, is that Rajab has fabricated a series of accusations and a history of neglect intended to illicit the sympathies (and material support) of his audience.

Maymūn then issues a nearly unintelligible rebuttal that only reinforces Rajab's complaints. Before the curious audience, he denounces Rajab with the following:

Damn you, you miscreant depraved * You who are to the singing slave girl's slave enslaved! * When did I blare such camel braying? * And emit such a sound of chewing? * Stop this grand impropriety * And profound indecency * Or else I'll strike your humongous head * Even if you were the grandson of King ʿAranjaj

Suhayl reports that Maymūn's rebuttal makes the audience laugh, as it ironically confirms Rajab's complaints. In order to determine whether Maymūn is an adīb or merely “an incessant

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587 Al-Yāzījī, Majmaʿ al-Bahrān, 405-6.
prattler (shaqshāq)”, as Rajab described him above, an antagonist steps forward from the audience. This unidentified man poses a series of quyūd questions to Maymūn, thereby shifting the performance away from a fabricated fight and providing the pretext for Maymūn to demonstrate his knowledge and impress his audience.

Riddles, Puzzles, and Questions Without Answers

While the quyūd are one way in which the characters test one another's knowledge and poetic abilities, another form of contestation is the posing of riddles, puzzles, and questions without answers (at least in the main body of the text). While both the quyūd and the riddles explored here comprise a challenge, their difference emerges in the nature and location of the characters' responses. While Maymūn responds in verse to quyūd questions, the posing of riddles, puzzles, and questions without answers all leaves the interlocutor stumped and silent. This undermines the character's authority, revealing them to be a braggart and a hypocrite. As the interlocutor is silenced by the onslaught of riddles or puzzles, the main text does not provide answers or solutions, but the footnotes do.

In al-Sawādiyya (#54), for instance, Suhayl encounters Maymūn and the two travel together to Iraq. An elderly scholar from “al-baladayn,” glossed as Basra and Kufa, visits them in their encampment. One day, this scholar enters a mosque where he hears Maymūn reciting the following lines:

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588 Al-Yāzijī, Majma’ al-Bahrayn, 54.380.23.
They reproached me for the separation as

the distance grew and our aversion dragged on.

Tell them: Those who visit me I visit every day

And those who call upon are called upon.

The scholar objects to Maymūn's couplet, claiming that errors (ikhlāl) in declension (bi-l-i`rāb) cause one to be considered a stranger (min al-īghrāb).589 He is referring to the fact that Maymūn uses the jussive (al-jazm) in the first hemistich of the second line; and then the nominative (al-raf') in the second hemistich. While both appear to be mistakes, a detailed footnote explains the circumstances under which Maymūn's declensions would be admissible.590 This is one instance of a general pattern in which intricate grammatical matters are posed in the narrative while lengthy justifications and explanations are provided in the footnotes.

Maymūn leaps up like a lion (ka-annahu al-sabandā) and decries the elderly scholar's "error" (wahm). Since the error itself is explained in a footnote, Maymūn does not elaborate in the narrative but rather turns to the riddles which comprise the main performance of the episode.

589 Al-Yāzījī, Majma` al-Bahrāyn, 381.
590 Al-Yāzījī, Majma` al-Bahrāyn, 54.381.1.
Maymūn frames his interlocutor's capacity to answer his riddles as a test of the latter's belonging among a group of distinguished intellectual elites. He says, “If you were al-Farrāʾ * Or Muʿādh al-Harrāʾ * Then...”. Al-Farrāʾ, as al-Yāzījī explains in a footnote, is a distinguished scholar of syntax (nahū) and a prolific author.\textsuperscript{591} Muʿādh is the famous grammarian al-Kisāʾī.\textsuperscript{592} Maymūn's conditional formula makes clear that if the elderly scholar wishes to be recognized as a first-rate grammarian, then he must answer the riddles which are to follow. Having established the stakes, Maymūn immediately begins to enumerate his riddles.

There are fourteen riddles in all, listed back to back. It is far beyond my abilities as a translator to render this passage in English due to the trifold challenge of accurately translating the Arabic grammatical terminology, conveying the appropriate degree of vagueness and mystery which contributes to the challenge of any riddle, and the remarkable fact that this passage — like the rest of the text — is in rhyming prose. Speaking generally, however, they deal with a variety of questions in the fields of syntax, morphology, phonology, and semantics. Some of the riddles ask how many categories (aqsām) a given linguistic phenomenon is divided into, seeming to test one's knowledge of Arabic's highly-refined system of grammatical classification. Some demand to know under what circumstances a particular grammatical situation would obtain, such as when a pronoun would precede the noun to which it refers. Some probe for linguistic phenomena that fulfill multiple functions or could be classified in multiple ways, such as an utterance that can serve as a noun, a participle, and a marker of time. Yet others look for highly irregular exceptions, for instance asking what nouns are declined in two places (the answers being imraʾ, meaning “man”, and ibnum, a variant of ibn, or “son”). Finally, there is

\textsuperscript{591} Al-Yāzījī, Majmaʿ al-Bahrāyn, 54.381.5.
\textsuperscript{592} Al-Yāzījī, Majmaʿ al-Bahrāyn, 54.381.6.
one riddle that seems to rely not on knowledge of systems and exceptions, but rather on the ability to think creatively. This is the eighth riddle, in which Maymūn asks the elderly scholar what words neither decline nor remain fixed. As the rules of declension and its absence cover all cases, this riddle seems particularly baffling. The answer which al-Yāzījī provides in the footnotes is that nouns not yet placed in sentences are not governed by the rules of syntax, and therefore neither decline nor remain fixed.

The riddles silence the elderly scholar. Suhayl first says that the scholar “fell silent for a long time” (akhrada) out of “fatigue” (al-i’yā’), then adds that he “grew still and feigned death” (agrada) out of “shame” (al-ḥayāʾ). When Maymūn then mocks the scholar, “a sullen silence” (al-wujūm) overcomes him until he is unable to even emit a croak (naqīq al-ʿuljūm). By describing the elderly scholar's silence in such rich terms, al-Yāzījī displays the character's ignorance and conveys a palpable sense of his humiliation; this humiliation is exacerbated by the fact that the answers to the riddles themselves are tucked away in the footnotes.

When Maymūn sees his interlocutor's vulnerability, his heart takes pity (or so it seems) on the shaykh. He begins to treat him with kindness and sympathy (al-talāṭṭuf wa-l-taʿṭṭuf) and do away with oppressive speech and unfriendliness (al-taṣalluf wa-l-taʿssuf). When the shaykh's rancor dissipates into geniality again, he confides in Maymūn that he is worried that his failure would harm his reputation and, as a consequence, that the people would abandon him. He offers Maymūn a cloak (ṭaylasān) in exchange for his discretion. Maymūn swears to keep the

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594 Al-Yāzījī, Majmaʿ al-Bahrāyn, 54.383.7.
596 Al-Yāzījī, Majmaʿ al-Bahrāyn, 54.384.5-6.
secret, insisting he is more trustworthy than 'Awf bin Muḥallam al-Shaybānī.\textsuperscript{597}

Until this point in the narrative, the tone of \textit{al-Sawādiyya} (#54) is decidedly sincere. Not only has there been no deceptive performance, but there has not even been an audience. On the contrary, the entire performance of the riddles takes place in the privacy of an exchange between Maymūn and the scholar, with Suhayl as the witness. Notably, though, Maymūn is not rewarded for his erudition, but rather for his discretion. Regardless, having asserted his trustworthiness, Maymūn immediately sets out to break it by reciting the following couplet:

Tell whomever you wish in the two Iraqs

that the imam gave me his cloak

Out of need, not kindness; a greedy man

who wanted with his gift the truth to cloak\textsuperscript{598}

\begin{center}
قد حباني الإمام بالطبلسان
قل لمن شئت في العراقيين إني
مأرث لا حفاء من حريص
رام بالطبلسان طي لسان
\end{center}

Suhayl reports that Maymūn then returned to his tent (\textit{fisṭātihi}). When the people learned of how

\textsuperscript{597} Al-Yāzījī, \textit{Majma’ al-Bahrāyn}, 54.384.10.
\textsuperscript{598} Al-Yāzījī, \textit{Majma’ al-Bahrāyn}, 385.
he had exposed the elderly scholar, they made Maymūn their leader. He dwelled among them for a few days, enjoying their hospitality and food. When he decided to depart, he did so well provisioned for his onward journey, thanks to his riddles, puzzles, and questions without answers.

The Single Double Entendre

Unlike the enumerative approach to language in the quyun and riddles described above, other performances revolve around what might be called a single double entendre. In the case of al-Mudāriyya (#42), the double entendre which governs the episode is the two meanings of the word sabiyya: girl and wine. Maymūn uses the ambiguity to his advantage by collecting donations from his audience in order to rescue a sabiyya that has been imprisoned and wronged. As Suhayl later discovers, the sabiyya in question is a fine red wine, which he finds Maymūn drinking at a discrete tavern (ḥāna).

Likewise, in the episode to which we turn our full attention here, al-Ghazziyya (#53), the double entendre is a conflation of a book with elaborate descriptions of a friend. It is set in the town of Gaza, where Suhayl and his companions hear an uproar and commotion (laghāṭ wa ḍawḍāʾ) when they pass before a judge's chambers (dār al-qadāʾ).599 There Suhayl sees Maymūn holding tight to Rajab (mutaʿalliq) and leveling an accusation against him before the judge. One element of this performance is a fabricated fight in which Maymūn and Rajab disguise themselves as litigants and perform a carefully-calculated disagreement to secure a reward. However, here we are more curious about the linguistic dimension of their performance than the

599 Al-Yāziḥī, Majmaʿ al-Bahrayn, 375.
dramatic or the social.

Maymūn's complaint hinges on his claim that Rajab “tore apart” (mazzaqa) his friend. The ruse of the episode is that his “friend” is in fact a book, not a human. In his appeal to the judge, Maymūn praises the friend's intelligence, generosity, loyalty, and knowledge, and then describes his mourning for his loss. However, as is made clear first to the reader and then to the judge himself, the “friend” in question is not a human but rather a book.

I had a companion with an elegant form * Who was well informed * Handsome in how he displayed * Judicious in what he relayed * Easy to pick up and put down * With fresh jokes and wit * Never frivolous or inarticulate * He accompanied me night and day * Sparing me the visitors who never seemed to go away * He served me morning and night * Never sipping even a water drop * He always lent a hand * Without making a demand * When asked, he delivers * He steps without misstep * What he provides * Guides * And what he reiterates * Facilitates * Coquettishness does not shake him * And boredom does not take him * He does not know reproach * Nor the bounds of etiquette encroach * He does not keep me from staying out late * Nor disobey a single dictate * When I cut him off, he withdraws * And when I call him back, he returns [without pause] * When I press him tight, into himself he folds * When I secret him away, into his corner he molds * And when I seek him out, by my side he firmly holds * He meets me with a clear face * And an open gate * And a jovial countenance * And a voice of consonance * So I took him as a friend * With whom all my time I wished to spend * Doting on him, I passed the hours by * As he was a decent soul and a consolation to the eye * And now that idiot * Has torn
him bit from bit * And left me more remorseful than * Over his two companions, King Nuʿmān

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600 Al-Yāzījī, Majmaʿ al-Bahrayn, 375-376.
Maymūn's ability to maintain the double entendre through a lengthy description of his friend reveals the centrality of intellectual pursuits, including acts of reading and writing books, to conceptions of friendship. This point is reinforced by a few subsequent plot twists. First, Rajab offers “blood money” to compensate Maymūn for the loss of his friend, indicating that in financial terms, the loss of a book can be assessed on the same scale as the loss of a treasured human companion. Second, at the end of the episode, after Suhayl has followed and confronted Maymūn and Rajab and discovered their ruse, Maymūn asks him to return to the court and give the judge a gift. This gift is a book with a poem penned inside of it; in the poem, Maymūn reveals the trick and asks the judge to bury his “friend” in his home. Contrary to what might be expected from other episodes, the judge is pleased by the joke, and even seeks Suhayl's help in persuading Maymūn to return to his court.

Rajab, in turn, furthers the ruse. Shaking with fear and appearing to cry (tabākā), Rajab insists he was respectful and careful with Maymūn's “friend”, who distracted Rajab from his hunger and thirst and diverted Maymūn's attention from picking fights with him. Insisting that what befell the “friend” was the will of God, he offers Maymūn blood money (diya) or a punishment to settle their account (qawad). Maymūn responds that blood money is the proper punishment for a mistake (khaṭa'). But, in a clever ploy to secure a reward from the audience, he
asks: “Is there ample rain in the sands?” The suggestion is that Rajab, a servant boy, does not have enough money to compensate Maymūn for his loss, which provides the pretext for Rajab to turn to the audience, comprised here of Suhayl and his companions, to ask for donations.

When they depart, Suhayl pursues them and demands that Maymūn identify the one who was murdered (al-qatīl). Maymūn responds that it was a book which “that devil” (al-shayṭān) Rajab had tossed in a corner of a tavern. Mice tore the book apart, he says, and it was covered with dirt and grime (bi-l-riṣa wa-l-qadhar). Maymūn then gives Suhayl a Sabani cloth (līfāʾa sabaniyya) and tells him to return to the court in the morning and give it to the judge. Maymūn departs without so much as looking back, and when Suhayl opens the cloth, he finds the “deceased” book. In the margin is a short poem:

This is the victim guided by His light
I came to the judge to take his blood money
From the tavern's rodents or its mice
And out of a desire to dwell in his company
I would ask that we bury it where he makes his residency

602 Al-Yāzījī, Majmaʿ al-Babrayn, 378.
Suhayl follows Maymūn's orders. When he relays what transpired and delivers the gift, the judge laughs until his headgear (*galansuwatahu*) falls off and the wisps of his hair unravel (*wa iltawat 'ansuwatuhu*). His laughter seems genuine and free of any bitterness, as he implores Suhayl to persuade Maymūn to return so he can offer him further rewards. While Suhayl says this is unlikely, the narrator reports that he himself becomes friends with the judge and visits him multiple times before departing Gaza. Unlike other episodes where being exposed to Maymūn's tricks gives rise to feelings of anger, vulnerability, and hurt pride, here the judge is entertained by the clever and lengthy play on words upon which the trick depended.

Made-up Mendicancy

In *al-Ḥijāziyya* (#2), Suhayl goes to the region of al-Ḥijāz in the Arabian Peninsula, staying in Yathrib for a month with a group of poets (*ʿusbatin min ʿulī al-khulābīs*). One night, as the group is out among their mounts, they hear a sigh (*zafra*) followed by a despairing voice (*sawt kaʾīb*) reciting an ode. This ode laments the poet's misfortune and the irreversible loss of old age. The last line proclaims that he had never envied a master (*sayyid*) his realm (*mulk*), but now he envies the servant of the servant of the master (*ʿabda ʿabdi l-sayyid*). Suhayl and his companions,

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603  Al-Yāziǧ, Majmaʿ al-Bahrayn, 53.378.16-17.
604  Al-Yāziǧ, Majmaʿ al-Bahrayn, 2.8.6-7.
who comprise the audience of this episode, are inundated with feelings of sympathy and affinity for this eloquent, despairing poet. When they wonder aloud whether one of them might go knocking upon his door, he springs up among them and issues a two-line poem replete with literary puns that further titillate the audience. As Suhayl reports, they install the poet amongst them as a companion (wa-aḥallū al-rajul maḥalla al-anīs).

Switching to saj, the poet (who, of course, is Maymūn in disguise) reiterates his former wealth and nobility, and with it, his former magnanimity:

Indeed I would mince the meat * And light the cooking fires [for all that I would meet] * 
And forfeit [what I deserve] * And serve * I continued to cloth and feed * And to allow and endow * Until what was in the vessel dwindled carelessly * And what was in the well was drained incrementally

إِنِّي لَقَدْ كَفُّتْ أَفْقِيُّ وَافْقِيُّ وَأَفْدِيُّ وَأَسْدِيُّ وَمَا زَلَّتْ أَلْيَسْ وَأَطْعُمْ وَأَجْرُ وَأَنْعُمّ حَتَّى

ذَهِبَ مَا فِي السَّفْقَةِ جَرَافًا وَتَنَٓدَ مَا فِي الْكَثِيمَةِ أَسْتِرًا

Maymūn employs the same trope of excessive generosity leading to financial ruin and the loss of status in many other episodes where he asserts his mendicancy. Indeed, it not only serves to

605 Al-Yāzīj, Majmaʿ al-Balāgha, 10.
606 The trope of made-up mendicancy is employed in the following episodes: al-‘Irāqiyya (#11), al-Šarīyya (#16), al-Ḥikamiyya (#17), al-Rajabiyya (#18), al- Başriyya (#20), al-Mawsūliyya (#23), al-Sāḥiliyya (#27), al-‘Absiyya (#31), al-
establish his poverty and hence his material needs, but simultaneously demonstrates his nobility
to his audience.

He concludes his appeal by saying that Fate (al-dahr) has left him nothing but one son
(walad). He arranged for his son to be engaged to a girl (qad khaṭabtu lahu jāriyatan), but when
the time came, the bride's family demanded a dowry he could not afford. Hence, he explains, he
must ask his newfound friends for some assistance. Taken by his eloquence and moved by his
hardship, Suhayl and his companions each offer the unfortunate man a dinar. This is a model of
the maqāma of mendicancy, in which the adīb pretends to be a noble man fallen on hard times to
elicit the sympathy of his audience.

Blended Performances

While some of the episodes described above are centered on a single, clear type of
performance, many episodes blend aspects of various performance types. In al-Lubnāniyya (#49),
for instance, Rajab is entertaining a group of men when Maymūn arrives and joins them without
greeting anyone. Rajab confronts him, asking from where he came. Maymūn responds by first
reproaching Rajab for speaking out of turn to his elders and betters, and then demands that Rajab
(who, he adds, does not know the kāʿ from the bāʾ) identify himself.607 Rajab in turn demands that
Maymūn (who, he retorts, cannot distinguish the kāʾ from the bāʾ) identify himself.608 Following
the conventions described above, Rajab then says “If you are really that type, then...” and launches

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607 Al-Yāzījī glosses al-kāʿ as the radius (the larger of the two bones that makes up the forearm in human anatomy), and
al-bāʿ as the bone that follows the big toe, perhaps referring to the first metatarsal bone. Al-Yāzījī, Majmaʿ al-Bahrāyn,
49.351.5-6.
608 Al-Yāzījī glosses al-kāʿ as the ulna (the smaller of the two bones that makes up the forearm in human anatomy) and al-
bāʿ as the distance between one's outstretched arms. Al-Yāzījī, Majmaʿ al-Bahrāyn, 49.351.7-8.
into a string of complex riddles that reduce Maymūn to grumbling and muttering (*fa-hamhama al-shaykh wa jamjama * wa ghamghama hanaqan wa damdama*). Rather than answer the riddles, Maymūn responds with a series of *quyūd* questions on the words for cutting (*al-qat*), breaking (*al-kasr*), and what might be called the pieces and portions of larger things (*al-ḥiṣaṣ*). Rajab deftly composes on each, and the crowd delights in his triumph and rewards him with a bracelet (*ḥulla*) and what one can carry in their hands (*a qabṣa*) of gold. When Suhayl subsequently confronts them, he finds Maymūn wearing the bracelet and Rajab standing by his side like a slave (*ka-l-raqīq*).

Likewise, in *al-Furāṭiyyya* (#45), Maymūn enters a debate over the foundation of language (*matn al-lughā*) with an elderly man from the “Arabs of the desert” (*ʿaribat al-bādiya*). As the debate grows heated, Maymūn demands that his interlocutor enumerate those utterances in which the letter *ẓāʾ* can be interchanged with the *dād* to produce different meanings. The shaykh is stumped, and seeking to turn the tables, he asks Maymūn to respond to his own question. Maymūn thinks for a moment and then spontaneously (*murjataḥan*) recites a long poem in which words with *dād* and *ẓāʾ* are compared and their meanings explained. The audience praises Maymūn, whose pride inspires him to perform a second poem. This second poem moves away from the questions of language toward Maymūn’s account of his own poverty, loss, and need. While the audience felt admiration for Maymūn’s first poem, his second elicits their compassion. Suhayl reports that they sighed with admiration (*āwā*) and each gave him a portion of gold. Even the vanquished shaykh is moved, and he gifts Maymūn a fine Mahrī camel and pays him a compliment.

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611 The elderly interlocutor’s compliment is to say to Maymūn that a “shaykh” is one who advances his efforts (*juḥduhu*), not one whose age has advanced (*lā man taqādama ʿahduhu*). Al-Yāzījī, *Majmaʿ al-Bahrayn*, 45.329.11-12.
In both cases, as well as many others, a given episode not only features multiple heroes and narrative stages, but also contains multiple performance types on a wide array of topics.

5.3 Ways of Reading *Majmaʿ al-Bahrayn*

There are many patterns, themes, and features which have simply been too much to catalogue. An entire chapter could be devoted to the botanical references in *Majmaʿ al-Bahrayn*, another to the extensive descriptions of heat, rain, and other weather conditions, and a third to the many animals, often employed metaphorically or metonymically to characterize human traits and behaviors. I say nothing substantial about the seemingly-endless vocabulary used to describe the various paces and gaits of human and animal movement, nor the equally-extensive lexicon that al-Yāzijī uses to describe the varied natural topography through which his characters travel. At a more thematic level, one could spin out a compelling essay on the references to the term *ṣalaf* and its related form *taṣalluf*, two words which al-Yāzijī never seems to tire of glossing as “the antonym of companionship” (*didd al-rifq*).\(^{612}\)

These shortcomings aside, I can venture three broad approaches to reading *Majmaʿ al-Bahrayn*. First, the collection can be understood as a work of preservation, much like a lexicon which seeks to catalogue and organize knowledge. Second, the collection can be seen as a pedagogical tool, one which transmits knowledge through an entertaining and challenging narrative form. Third, *Majmaʿ al-Bahrayn* can be seen as an elaborate intervention in the polemical

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\(^{612}\) For a genre so committed to exploring companionship, these intermittent references to *ṣalaf* are notable gestures to animosity and the break down of *rifq*. In *al-Sawādiyya* (#54), for instance, *tasawwuf* is mentioned. When Maymūn sees this, his heart takes pity on the shaykh, and he begins to treat him with kindness and sympathy (*al-talāṭṭuf wa-l-taʿṭṭuf*) and do away with boasting and oppressive speech (*al-taṣalluf wa-l-taṣṣuf*). Al-Yāzijī, *Majmaʿ al-Bahrayn*, 54.384.5-6. *Ṣalaf* (vowelled *ṣalif* in the footnote) is explained as a cloud with no rain, a metonym for empty talk at 39.286.2.
debates about language in the author's own day. None of these ways of reading the text contradict the arguments of other scholars that al-Yāzījī was emulating the *maqāmah* of al-Ḥarīrī; but as I expound upon each facet of the text in what follows, it is my hope that emulation, as both an approach to writing and a way to relate to the literary past, is placed within a broader context.

As a work of preservation, *Majmaʿ al-Baḥrayn* is a robust catalogue of knowledge. Between its sixty episodes and its elaborate auto-commentary, the text displays an astounding breadth of knowledge. In one sense, this knowledge is expressed through a brilliant, sustained engagement with the Arabic language: its grammar, lexicon, styles and forms of writing, and its long history and many luminaries. Through this engagement, *Majmaʿ al-Baḥrayn* also contains a vast compendium of positive knowledge, from astrology to medicine, botany to zoology, the names of the months, the seasons, times of day, types and speeds of travel, types of food, and descriptions of the natural world. Such an understanding of the text would place it alongside the works of al-Yāzījī’s contemporaries, Buṭrus al-Bustānī and Aḥmad Fāris al-Shidyāq, each of whom was committed, in his own way, to preserving the Arabic language.

As a means to transmit knowledge, *Majmaʿ al-Baḥrayn* can be thought of as a language primer. Al-Yāzījī was a teacher and wrote a number of primers on the Arabic language intended to be used by students in the missionary schools and, later, the national schools; Tibawi indicates that al-Yāzījī’s works on “grammar, rhetoric, and prosody” crossed confessional boundaries and were used in Muslim schools as well.613 *Majmaʿ al-Baḥrayn* might accordingly be read as a school primer, written not only to catalogue knowledge but also to transmit it to students and other readers. As I turn to in earnest in Chapter Six, the auto-commentary which he composed and published

along with the main text in 1856 is clearly intended to elucidate the myriad challenges of Majma‘ al-Bahrayn for readers. These challenges are not limited to the lexical and topical issues discussed above, but include commentary on the intentions, disguises, and tricks of the various characters, identifications of the conventions of the maqāma genre, and glosses of the literary flourishes which al-Yāzījī, like his predecessors, employs throughout the text.

Finally, Majma‘ al-Bahrayn can be read as an intervention in the linguistic debates of the period. The reform of the Arabic language is a complex historical and linguistic subject which was central to the anxieties and aspirations of multiple generations of Arab intellectuals in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. For our purposes, a brief sketch of the main positions and their proponents will help to properly situate Majma‘ al-Bahrayn within the heated linguistic debates of its own time. In this context, it is clear that al-Yāzījī's maqāmāt were not only a work of prodigious literary refinement, but also a nuanced intervention in the debates about what it might mean to “reform” the Arabic language. In this sense, as in so many others, Majma‘ al-Bahrayn can be shown to be engaged in subtle but significant ways with the author’s contemporary world.

In a recent article, Abdulrazzak Patel divides the debate on language reform into two main camps. The first are what he calls the “conservative reformists,” among whom he places Buṭrus al-Bustānī (1818-1883), Ibrāhīm al-Yāzījī (1847-1906), and Saʿīd al-Shartūnī (1849-

The second camp are called the “liberal reformists,” comprising Aḥmad Fāris al-Shidyāq (1804-1887), Yūsuf al-Asīr (1815-1889), and Ibrāhīm al-Aḥdab (1827-1891). Nāṣīf al-Yāziṭī would certainly fall among the conservative reformers, which notably included his son and protege, Ibrāhīm, as well as his friend and colleague, Buṭrus al-Bustānī. While these two camps agreed on the need to reform Arabic, they “differed over the scope, method, and especially in their conception of linguistic reform”.615

Patel explains that the conservative camp emphasized the correct use of Arabic and aimed to purify the language, while the liberals stressed “making the language an adaptable means of communication” and sought to simplify it.616 Patell's article focuses on one particularly “notorious” debate between al-Shidyāq, his detractors, and his defenders—a debate sparked by a personal disagreement between al-Shidyāq and Nāṣīf al-Yāziṭī.617 When al-Shidyāq, whom Patel places in the liberal reformist camp, published his simplified grammar (entitled Ghunyat al-ṭālib wa-munyat al-řāghib, hereafter Ghunyat al-ṭālib) in 1872, it inspired a refutation by Saʿīd al-Shārtūnī in 1874. Al-Shidyāq claimed that Arab and non-Arab students could learn Arabic grammar in three months from Ghunyat al-ṭālib. In Patell’s words, al-Shidyāq was concerned that “the excessive and complex nature of the rules and methods” of Arabic grammar caused

616 While Patel sees the efforts of the Arabic language academies of the early twentieth century as a continuation of the conservative camp's drive to purify the language, he argues that their calls “have largely gone unheeded”. In contrast, Patel sees the success of the liberal reformists in the development of modern literary Arabic and what he calls the “distinct linguistic genre” produced in the Arabic press and concerned with the “communicative significance” of Arabic. Patel, “Language Reform and Controversy in the Nahda”, 525.
617 It should be noted that Patel, Adrian Gully, and Anwar Chejne attribute the origins of the polemical dimension of this controversy to al-Shidyāq's decision to publish a complaint in al-Jawāib in 1871 about Nāṣīf al-Yāziṭī. The complaint was that al-Yāziṭī had slighted him by not mentioning him by name in a poem. Al-Shidyāq's response was to point out two minor typographical errors in Majma’ al-Bahrānī: fiḥṭāl for fiḥṭal and marābīd for marābīt. In consequence, a “long and bitter dispute” between al-Shidyāq and Ibrāhīm al-Yāziṭī in the pages of Buṭrus al-Bustānī's journal, al-Jnān. Patel, “Language Reform and Controversy in the Nahda”, 519. See also Gully, “Arabic Linguistic Issues and Controversies”, 110; and Chejne, The Arabic Language, 135.
considerable problems for students. Moreover, al-Shidyāq offered specific precedents from the grammatical tradition for simplifying the rules of the Arabic language, and encouraged his readers to seek out these texts to further educate themselves.

Al-Shartūnī's refutation reflects, according to Patel, “his prescriptive tendencies” and his commitment to “preserving linguistic standards.” Al-Shartūnī raised doubts about al-Shidyāq's pedagogical methods as well as the ways in which, to al-Shartūnī at least, his simplification contravenes the authoritative conventions of Arabic linguistics. Patel distills al-Shartūnī's long list of objections (seventy-six to be precise) into four categories. Beyond ad homenien attacks, the remaining three categories are al-Shartūnī's claims that Ghunyat al-ṭālib is replete with grammatical errors, the misuse grammatical terminology, and “inadequate” definitions of grammatical phenomenon.

While these categories appear linguistic in nature, Patel argues that al-Shartūnī's core objection is not to al-Shidyāq's various linguistic errors, but to a deeper textual shift which al-Shidyāq's simplified grammar pioneered and represented. Unlike other abridgments, Patel argues, including a six-page abridgment of the most famous sayings of the classical grammarians by Nāṣīf al-Yāzījī entitled al-Jawhar al-fard (The Unique Gem), al-Shidyāq's Ghunyat al-ṭālib was not meant to serve as a memory aid for students nor was it intended to be expanded upon by a more robust commentary. In this sense, Ghunyat al-ṭālib was meant as a substitution, not a supplement, for those interested in learning Arabic grammar in a simplified form. Substitution

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620 In their defense of al-Shidyāq, al-Asīr and al-Ḥadāb assert that al-Shidyāq himself is an authority figure and cast aspersions on the motivations of al-Shartūnī and the other adherents of the conservative reform camp. Patel, “Language Reform and Controversy in the Nahḍa”, 514.
threatened al-Shartūnī and the conservative reformists, who highly valued the textual history and practices of Arabic linguistics. While simplification itself had a long and accepted history in Arabic linguistics, simplification as a substitute for the elaborate rules of the Arabic language raised deep anxieties about the loss of the past and the marginalization of an epistemological system believed to be at the heart of religious, scientific, and literary thought and practice.

In this context, Majmaʿ al-Bahrāyn can be firmly situated within the “conservative camp”: it emphasizes and models the correct use of Arabic over its simplification and ease of communication. Indeed, Majmaʿ al-Bahrāyn offers the reader extensive guidance on lexical and grammatical matters as well as sincerely modeling the formal and stylistic elements of the maqāma genre. In this sense, Majmaʿ al-Bahrāyn can be seen as a counterpoint to the maqāmāt of Aḥmad Fāris al-Shidyāq. Unlike al-Shidyāq, who employed sajʿ in order to ironize it, al-Yāzījī’s tone is not subversive or contrarian but rather proud and even celebratory.622 Furthermore, Majmaʿ al-Bahrāyn is neither a substitute nor a supplement, but rather a testament to and illustration of the seemingly-inexhaustible extent of the Arabic language. In this regard, al-Yāzījī’s maqāmāt might even be considered a subtle rebuttal Buṭrus al-Bustānī’s more “liberal” reformist calls to simplify and instrumentalize Arabic in his Khuṭba fī al-ʿAdāb al-ʿArabī (A Speech on Arabic Literature). Indeed, al-Bustānī ridicules some of the very expressions which al-Yāzījī weaves into his maqāmāt.623

623 In al-Rashīdiyya (*#33), for instance, Suhayl makes reference to a saying by ʿĪsā bin ʿUmar al-Ṭhaqafī al-Baṣrī which al-Bustānī uses as a prime example of obscurity and excess in Arabic prose writing. Al-Yāzījī, Majmaʿ al-Bahrāyn, 33.245.1. Al-Yāzījī uses the same verb (takāʾī ʿālī) in al-Ramlīyya (*#15), to describe the audience’s reaction to Maymūn composing in ʿāṭil al-ʿāṭil (15.123.12). At 41.304.2, al-Yāzījī uses and explains two synonyms for cat.
5.4 Conclusion: An Inexhaustible and Untranslatable Text

As I hint at in the last lines of the previous section, Majmaʿ al-Baḥrayn has nimbly resisted my attempts to catalogue the text in any comprehensive or encompassing manner. While my ambition in this chapter was originally to provide such a comprehensive account of the major literary features of Majmaʿ al-Baḥrayn, my enduring inability to construct precise categories that comprised a tidy catalogue demonstrates a much more powerful point about the text. Namely, Majmaʿ al-Baḥrayn, in its density, its sophistication, and its scope, has defied my attempts to circumscribe it in a single system of classification. In this sense, the very inadequacy of my description gestures toward the ways in which Majmaʿ al-Baḥrayn resists classification and thwarts schematization. To extend the metaphor introduced above, the many seas of Majmaʿ al-Baḥrayn may well turn out to be uncharitable and inexhaustible.

Alongside these features, Majmaʿ al-Baḥrayn may well be untranslatable. Maqāmāt are notoriously difficult to translate. In the introduction to his 1915 translation of al-Hamadhānī’s Maqāmāt, the English translator Theodore Preston writes that the episodes presented “almost insuperable obstacles to that union of elegance with accurate translation which is indispensable to a faithful representation of the highly-finished originals.”624 As my own translations of passages of Majmaʿ al-Baḥrayn make all too clear, al-Yāzījī’s maqāmāt have presented similar challenges for this translator.

Notably, al-Yāzījī chose to contribute to a genre that was extremely difficult—if not impossible—to translate at a time when his colleagues, rivals, and even his students (such as Khalīl al-Khūrī) were seeking to adopt, incorporate, and subvert the literary conventions of the

624 Preston, Makamat, 2.
European novel. Perhaps the untranslatability of *Majmaʿ al-Bahrayn* speaks to a nostalgia for a time when Arabic literature was not written to be translated\(^\text{625}\) — as one finds in the unselfconsciously difficult works of al-Ḥarīrī, as well as the inimitability of the Qurʾān, which is a matter of religious doctrine. From this perspective, *Majmaʿ al-Bahrayn* might be understood as an attempt to preserve (or reclaim?) the unapologetic confidence of classical Arabic *adab*.

Chapter Six: Footnotes to a Nahḍawī Imaginary

This chapter reads the extensive autocommentary — i.e. the nearly six thousand footnotes — which al-Yāzijī himself composed and published alongside the original 1856 edition of Majmaʿ al-Bahrayn. While these footnotes are certainly intended to serve as a critical apparatus to clarify and expand upon the episodes in Majmaʿ al-Bahrayn, here I argue that they can also be read in other ways. After an initial account of the extent of the annotation, I first treat the autocommentary as a source of insight into how al-Yāzijī imagined the multiple periods, places, people, and practices that comprise the Nahḍa's past. While it is commonly said that the Nahḍa harkened back to an Abbasid Golden Age, a close reading of Majmaʿ al-Bahrayn makes clear that this text, at the very least, conjured multiple pasts comprised of layers of Arab(ic), Islamic, and polytheistic history rather than privileging a single period (all the while neglecting and even erasing Christian imagery and references). These multiple and sometimes competing pasts are not only drawn from different eras of history, but hold different ideological significance in the debates of al-Yāzijī's own day. I then turn to consider some of the ways in which these footnotes


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provide an impression of how al-Yāzijī conceived of his readers: students, journal readers, intellectuals, and litterateurs of the early Levantine Nahḍa. As a contribution to the intellectual history of the Nahḍa, the text and its auto-commentary provide a remarkable and previously-unexplored portrait of a prominent intellectual’s conception of his audience in the early years of the spread of print readership, new forms of schooling, and heated debates over the revival and/or reform of the Arabic language. Admittedly, however, while this final chapter presents compelling ideas, further research and refinement would be needed to fully realize them. Due to constraints of time and energy, I must leave this task to future scholars.

6.1 The Extent of the Annotation

In its initial, 1856 printing, Majmaʿ al-Baḥrayn amounted to 423 pages, including its two-page introduction and the sixty maqāmāt. This text has a stunning 5,880 footnotes, catalogued in Appendix F. Every single page, as Appendix F demonstrates, has ample annotation. While some of al-Yāzijī's footnotes are a single word, many are complex, multilayered glosses. Consider a single example—al-Yāzijī’s gloss of the word al-ḥibā.627 He tells us that al-ḥibā is the plural of ḥibwa, explained as the posture in which a man gathers his backside and his thighs with his hands and sits. He then says that this manner of sitting is itself a metonym (yuknā bi) for having a situation under control (al-tamakkun fī l-amr). While the gloss is only two lines long, it performs three interwoven exegetical tasks. First, al-Yāzijī identifies the word as a plural noun and offers the singular form; then he describes what it signifies precisely but concisely; and finally, he informs the reader of its metaphorical significance. There are

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627 Al-Yāzijī, Majmaʿ al-Baḥrayn, 10.62.1.
hundreds, if not thousands, of similar glosses in *Majmaʿ al-Bahrain*.

On nearly a dozen occasions, a single footnote takes up an entire page, and in one instance, a single footnote is one line shy of three full pages of text. Figure #3 below gives the reader a sense of the visual layout of a randomly selected but representative page.

**Figure 3: First page of *al-Falakiyya* (#28)**

In Figure #3, the footnotes are numbered and organized not so much into clear columns but rather into rows that crowd together on the bottom half of each page. This visual layout, text on top, paratext directly below, emphasizes the relationship between the main body of the text (or

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628 This footnote is found in *al-Damyaṭṭiya* (#55), pp. 390-3.
matn) and its commentary (or sharḥ). While the sharḥ on a work like Maqāmāt al-Barbīr comprises hand-written marginalia added by the scribe (i.e. a hāshiya), in the case of Majmaʿ al-Bahrayn, al-Yāziji's sharḥ is presented in the form of footnotes below the episode text. These footnotes, as has been discussed in Chapter One, were composed, perhaps even set, and certainly published by al-Yāziji in 1856.

Whereas in Figure #3 the text and commentary are roughly equal on the page, Figure #4
Figure 4: Page from al-Taghlibiyya (#13)

Figure #4 shows a small number of lengthy footnotes dominating a page and conveying the significance of extensive commentary. These lengthy footnotes are primarily concerned with conveying biographical information, including anecdotes, about figures mentioned in the text.

In contrast, Figure #5 below shows a large number of footnotes glossing nearly every word in the main body (matn) of the text. The footnotes in Figure #5 offer synonyms or short
explanations of the obscure words (al-gharā’īb) out of which the poem on this page is composed:

Figure 5: Page from al-Ramlīyya (#15)

In contrast, Figure #6 below shows a page that is comprised entirely of a single footnote.

On this and similar pages, al-Yāzījī’s drive to comment and explicate his own work overtakes
that work itself, rendering it invisible.

Figure 6: Page from al-Khatibiyya (#19)

The footnotes in Majma' al-Bahrayn are not only remarkably numerous, visually distinct from the matn, and omnipresent; but they also address a wide berth of topics and fields. They include, in no particular order, biographical stubs on historical and mythological figures, descriptions of the characters' dress, explanations of topographical and medical terminology, clarification of characters' intentions, solutions to riddles in the text, explanations of animal names, physiology, and symbolic meaning, accounts of many of the Arab tribes, and
geographical details about cities and countries. While many of these categories are lexical, semantic, or etymological in nature, al-Yāzījī also offers detailed notes on more strictly linguistic matters, including but not limited to synonyms for rare and obscure words (gharāʾīb), identifications of and sometimes glosses for Arabic sayings (amthāl), discussions of grammatical puzzles, poetic terminology and technique, and explanations of rhetorical devices. ⁶²⁹ Each of these topics runs through Majmaʿ al-Baḥrayn, reinforcing the argument in the previous chapter that one productive way to understand the text is as a multifaceted and disaggregated lexicon.

6.2 From Episode to Ensemble

The maqāma is routinely described as an episodic genre. ⁶³⁰ However, Majmaʿ al-Baḥrayn presents compelling evidence that it was composed to be read as a whole. One body of evidence supporting this approach is that Majmaʿ al-Baḥrayn's characters remember and refer to events in previous episodes. In al-Shāmiyya (#4), for instance, Suhayl confronts Maymūn and says: “I came to know you yesterday as an orator (khaṭīb), and today you have become a doctor (ṭabīb).” ⁶³¹ The “yesterday” is a reference to the preceding maqāma, al-ʿAqīqiyya (#3), in which Maymūn adopts the disguise of a preacher at a funeral. Doing away with any doubt, a footnote has been added to Suhayl's challenge that reads, “This is a signal of his oration at the funeral in the preceding maqāma.” ⁶³² Insofar as the characters in these and similar examples only refer to

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⁶²⁹ In addition to such ongoing topics, there are also footnotes that serve as seemingly one-off explanations of odd and esoteric questions raised by the text. For instance, in one footnote, al-Yāzījī glosses three different meanings of the term “mile” (mīl). (35.261.4) In another, al-Yāzījī digresses into a description of how to prepare and read lineal trees while commenting on the phrase “ṭarīmat al-nasab”. (37.370.18)

⁶³⁰ Hämeen-Anttila, to take but one example, writes: “Neither is there any attempt to combine the separate maqamas into any larger whole. The first maqama did introduce the character, to the audience as well as to Suhayl, and the last shows the repentance of the hero but the other maqamas are not linked together, nor do they exhibit any development in the hero or the narrator. They could be arranged in another order at will, without doing them any harm.” Hämeen-Anttila, Maqama, 355-356.

⁶³¹ Al-Yāzījī, Majmaʿ al-Baḥrayn, 23.

⁶³² Al-Yāzījī, Majmaʿ al-Baḥrayn, 4.23.11.
previous episodes, their awareness not only transcends a single episode, but structures the sequence of episodes teleologically.\textsuperscript{633}

A second body of evidence for conceiving Majmaʿ al-Bahrayn as an ensemble, not just a collection of episodes, is found in the referential structure of the footnotes themselves. To put a finer point on this observation, I found that of the sixty episodes, forty-six of them contain at least one footnote that explicitly refers to another episode in the collection (for a detailed, episode by episode account of these references, please see Appendix G). Many episodes make two, three, or four such references; two episodes each make seven distinct references to other episodes. There are, in total, one hundred and nineteen references to other episodes. Of these, sixty-one (slightly more than fifty percent) make explicit reference to another episode or the commentary of another episode by name; the remaining fifty-eight inform the reader that a particular point has been made elsewhere.

Many footnotes make explicit reference to other points in the text (both later and earlier) where the same historical figure, literary reference, or obscure term was already explained, often in greater depth. In the opening scene of al-Adabiyya, for instance, a footnote explains that the phrase “the embers of the Arabs” (jamarāt al-ʿArab) refers to the three tribes of Banū Ḍabba, al-Ḥarth, and ‘Abs, as had been mentioned in the footnotes (sharḥ) of al-ʿAbbāsiyya (#31).\textsuperscript{634} The very next line makes a reference to “al-Ṭalahāṭ”, also glossed with reference to an earlier maqāma, in this case, al-Hijāziyya (#2).\textsuperscript{635}

\textsuperscript{633} In al-Hijāziyya (#2), Suhayl exclaims that the adīb is “our friend” (sāhibunā), which a footnote confirms is the “shaykh” whom Suhayl met on his “first trip” (al-safra al-uwilā). (2.11.13) In al-ʿIrāqiyya (#11), the adīb opens a confrontation with Suhayl by saying: “Welcome Abī ʿIbād [Suhayl's teknonym] who does not miss a maqāma.” (74) This comment not only indicates that Maymūn remembers Suhayl from their previous encounters, but that the adīb is aware of some of the generic features of the literary form in which he appears. In al-Sukhriyya (#46), Maymūn complains of God predestining him to continue to meet Rajab. (332-333)

\textsuperscript{634} Al-Yāzījī, Majmaʿ al-Bahrayn, 34.250.11.

\textsuperscript{635} Al-Yāzījī, Majmaʿ al-Bahrayn, 34.250.12.
While 110 of these footnotes refer to earlier episodes, the remaining nine anticipate a longer explanation yet to come. In *al-Ṣaʿidiyya* (#5), a footnote first glosses the term “*ahājī*” as “a kind of riddle” and then tells the reader it will be mentioned (*sayudhkaru*).636 Likewise, in *al-ʿIrāqiyya* (#11), a footnote says that the principles of end rhyme will be explained later in the episode.637 Perhaps the clearest indication of anticipation takes place in *al-Muḍariyya* (#42), when Maymūn is defending himself in verse against any suggestion that he stole or otherwise tricked the people of Muḍar. In his poem, after his denial, he says “and in a little while, you will see me repenting.”638 This could clearly be read as pointing to the *adīb*’s repentance in the final episode.

The larger point here is that the extensive autocommentary not only elucidates the meaning of the text, but also provides some indication of how the collection was imagined as a whole by its author. In allowing the episodes to refer to one another, both in the *matn* or main text and in the footnotes, there are extensive indications that the author conceived of *Majmaʿ al-Bahrayn* as an interconnected ensemble rather than a set of sixty individual episodes.

### 6.3 An Arab Geography

Through episode titles and settings, *Majmaʿ al-Bahrayn* conjures a specific geographic imaginary, definitively located in the heartland of the Arab provinces of the Islamic world: Arabia, Iraq, the Levant, and Egypt. This section details this geographic concentration, setting the scene for subsequent sections that discuss the myriad Arab(ic), Islamic, and polytheistic

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636 Al-Yāzījī, Majmaʿ al-Bahrayn, 5.28.7.
637 Al-Yāzījī, Majmaʿ al-Bahrayn, 11.67.3.
638 Al-Yāzījī, Majmaʿ al-Bahrayn, 309.
imaginaries. While the focus on the Arab provinces is itself noteworthy, it is equally important to emphasize the worlds that al-Yāzījī excludes: all of Persia and the Islamic lands of Central Asia, Anatolia and the Ottoman provinces in southeastern Europe, and all of North Africa and al-Andalus.

The geographical imaginary of the Arab(ic) world is conjured in the titles and settings of the sixty episodes.²³⁹ Twenty-four episodes are named after cities, towns, or other urban areas. Of these, nine are set in major cities: Baghdad (#8, and again in al-Ruṣāfiyya (#47), one of the city's neighborhoods), Aleppo (#9), Basra (#20), Damascus (#21), Mosul (#23), Alexandria (#56), Mecca (#59), and Jerusalem (#60). As Figure #7 below makes clear, these cities are concentrated in Iraq and the Levant, with one city each in Egypt and Arabia. Moreover, many of these cities were of central significance in the administrative, economic, spiritual, and symbolic life of the early Arab Islamic caliphates. Mecca was the birthplace of the Prophet Muḥammad, Damascus served as the capital of the Umayyad Dynasty, and Baghdad was founded in 762 by the second ʿAbbasid Caliph, al-Manṣūr (r. 754-775).

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²³⁹ In addition to the geographic imaginary, future researchers may wish to explore Majmaʿ al-Bahrāyn’s spatial imaginary and the extensive topographical lexicon. By spatial imaginary, I mean the spaces where characters meet and the action of specific episodes unfolds. These include a judge’s chambers, a marketplace, the characters’ private homes, a hotel or inn (funduq), a tavern (ḥāna or khān), a garden, a desert, or along a road to a city. Many of these spaces allude to institutions and modes of socializing that had long fallen out of favor by the time al-Yāzījī was writing his maqāmāt. In so doing, they add a degree of detail to the geographic imaginary employed in the text, especially when they intersect with cultural practices and religious spaces that had acquired symbolic and perhaps nostalgic meaning for al-Yāzījī and at least some of his contemporaries. For a preliminary chart of geography and setting by episode, see Appendix E.

²⁴⁰ The unlabelled maps used for Figures #7 through #9 were developed by Terry Dorschied, Department of Geography, University of Arizona.
Figure 7: Major Cities of Majma‘ al-Bahrayn

Those episodes set in smaller cities and towns reinforce this geographic concentration. Figure #8 below adds a blue dot for each of the nine episodes named after a town: Ramla (#15) and the city of Gaza (#53) in Palestine, Tyre (#16) in Mount Lebanon, Latakia (#48) and Hama (#50) in Syria, Rashīd (#33) and Damietta (#55) in the Egyptian Delta, and Aden (#37) and Umān (#52) in Yemen.641

Figure #8 retains the focus on the central territories of the Arab world, adding an emphasis on coastal towns on the Mediterranean and Arabian Sea.

Some further episodes are named after urban centers that have great historical significance, including Kufa (#10) and al-Ḥalla (#44) in Iraq, and Antioch (#35) in the Levant. Others are named after towns of great literary significance, such as the town of Sarūj (#22) in Iraq, from which al-Ḥarīrī’s adīb, Abū Zayd al-Sarūjī, is said to hail; and the town of Maʿarat al-Naʿmān (#24) in Syria, which was the home of the poet Abū al-Alaʾ al-Maʿrī, before whose tomb (darīḥ) the episode is set. Figure #9 layers on these towns with green stars.
Figure 9: Historical sites

Figure #9, along with the data presented in the preceding two figures, makes quite clear that the geographic focus of Majmaʿ al-Bahrayn is the four central territories of the Arab world: the Levant, Iraq, Arabia, and Egypt.

A further six episodes in Majmaʿ al-Bahrayn are named after countries. These are Syria (#4), Yemen (#7), Iraq (#11), Egypt (#29), Lebanon (#49), and an episode entitled al-Sawādiyya (#54), a reference to al-Sawād, another name for Iraq. Two episodes are named after land formations: al-Sāḥiliyya (#27), “The Maqāma of the Coast”, and al-Bahriyya (#43), “The Maqāma of the Sea”. One is named al-ʿAsimiyya (#32), or “The Maqāma of the Capital,” which is set in an unspecified capital city.

Of the twenty-seven remaining episodes, seven are named after Arab tribes: al-Khazraj (#6), al-Taghlab (#13), al-Tamīm (#25), al-ʿAbs (#31), al-Ṭayy (#36), al-Ḥimyar (#38), and al-
Muḍar (#42). An eighth is simply entitled *al-Badawiyya* (#1) or “The *Maqāma* of the Bedoiun”. Another six are named after territories: Ḥijāz (#2), Tihāma (#41), al-Yamāma (#51), and Najd (#57) in the Arabian Peninsula, al-Ṣa’id or Upper Egypt (#5), the Euphrates River (#45). Two episodes are named after famous institutions: *al-Azhāriyya* (#12), named after the mosque university al-Azhār in Cairo; and *al-ʿUkāziyya* (#58), so named after the market outside of Mecca.642

We can draw some provisional conclusions from these titles. First, the geography that is imagined through these titles privileges Iraq, the Levant, Egypt, and Arabia. The very important corollary of this point is that al-Yāzījī's geographic imaginary excludes all of North Africa (except Egypt), the non-Arab parts of the Ottoman Empire, and all of the cities and regions of the Persianate world that feature prominently in the canonical *maqāma* collections. This point invites reconsideration, once again, of the scholarly consensus that al-Yāzījī merely emulated his predecessors, given that he truncates—and effectively Arabizes—their geographic imaginary. Might this be read as a protonationalist gesture, perhaps in subtle opposition to other political allegiances of the period (especially Ottoman)? This invites exploration of the subtle and not-so-subtle ways in which al-Yāzījī changed the *maqāma* to suit the political and social concerns of mid-nineteenth century Beirut.

A cursory review of the setting, which is frequently identified in the first lines of a given

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642 It should be noted that geography is the primary but not the only source of episode titles in *Majmaʿ al-Bahrayn*. Al-Yāzījī names a small number of episodes after literary features and other miscellaneous sources. There are six episodes named after literary features of the *maqāma* itself or adjacent genres. These include *al-Hazliyya* (#14), a reference to the tone of hazl or jest; *al-Hikamiyya* (#17), on hikam or maxims; *al-Laghaziyya* (#26), on alghāz or riddles; *al-Adabiyya* (#34), on adab; *al-Jadaliyya* (#40), a reference to *jadal* or dispute; and *al-Sukhriyya* (#46), on irony. In addition, there are five miscellaneous titles. *Al-ʿAqīqiyya* (#3), or “The *Maqāma* of the Spring”, *al-Rajabiyya* (#18), which literally refers to the month of Rajab but could also be read as a nod to the character by the same name; and *al-Kharībiyya* (#19), “The *Maqāma* of the Orator”. There are also two topical episode titles, *al-Falakiyya* (#28) and *al-Ṭibbiyya* (#30), ostensibly on astronomy and medicine, although the former takes its title from the subject of poetic compositions on astronomical topics.
episode, reinforces the preliminary conclusions above. While a handful of episodes do not specify their geographic setting, the gross majority are set in a specific geographical site. Some are set in the great cities of Arabic-Islamic history, from Yathrib to Mecca, Damascus to Aleppo, and Baghdad to Cairo to Jerusalem. In an echo of Niqūlā al-Turk's desire to write the towns and cities of Mount Lebanon into his maqāmāt, al-Yāzījī sets a handful of episodes in the relatively provincial towns of Sidon (Ṣaydā) and Tyre (Ṣūr). Other episodes are set in the tribal areas of the pre- and early Islamic world: the desert of Ahwāz, the heights of Yemen, and the farmlands of Upper Egypt. Al-Yāzījī often refers to “the countries (or lands) of the Arabs” (bilād al-ʿarab), a term he defines as Yemen, al-Ḥijāz, Tihāma, Najd, and al-Yāmama. Such territories comprise the geographic extent of the Bedouin imaginary conjured in Majmaʿ al-Baḥrayn; as we turn to in the next section, this geography is enriched by references to everything from genealogy to oral history, and from values and virtues to famous men (and to a lesser extent, famous women) of the great pre-Islamic tribes of Arabia. It is further extended in temporal terms to include the early periods of Islamic rule in Arabia and under the Umayyad and Abbasid Caliphates, suggesting a much broader historical imaginary than a single, idealized Golden Age to which the Nahḍa harkened back.

6.4 An Arab(ic) Imaginary

I use the term “Arab(ic)” to bear in mind the ways in which al-Yāzījī blurs the lines between an Arab identity in the ethno-national sense of the term, and a notion of belonging based on facility with the Arabic language and knowledge of its rich and complex history. As discussed

643 Al-Yāzījī, Majmaʿ al-Baḥrayn, 41.298.2.
in the preceding section, one facet of the Arab(ic) imaginary is geographical: individual episodes are named after regions of Arabia, the tribes that once populated them, and major centers of early Islamic civilization. Beyond this, the characters in Majmaʿ al-Bahrayn make frequent reference to historical figures, popular sayings, and famous works of literature and scholarship that span several consecutive periods, from the centuries before Islam through the ʿAbbasid period. While a comprehensive catalogue of these references is beyond the purview of this project, here I present an illustrative sampling from the thousands of examples, intended to show the temporal, regional, and generic dynamism of the imagined pasts al-Yāzījī employs.

One prominent layer of this imaginary is Bedouin, as Anīs al-Maqdisī and others have noted.644 It is a world populated by desert marauders,645 “pure Arabs” (al-ʿarab al-ʿarbāʾ)646 and “Arabs of the desert” (ʿāribat al-bādiya),647 eloquent orators and gifted poets, and powerful Arab sheikhs and emirs. Its characters are dressed in garments worn by the Arabs648 and speak not only a refined and literary Arabic but also employ choice words from the dialects of the various Bedouin tribes.649 Many of the episodes that contribute to this Bedouin imaginary open with

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644 Taking al-Badawiyya (#1) and al-Taghlibiyya (#13) as his examples, al-Maqdisī notes the “Bedouin setting” (al-jaww al-badawi) of many episodes. These episodes, al-Maqdisī is right to point out, frequently describe aspects of Bedouin culture: their practices, manner of dress, diet, and homes (masākin). Yet in a sign of the cursory and partial nature of his description, al-Maqdisī does not mention al-Yāzījī’s interest in the dialects of Bedouin Arabic, the geography and genealogy of the tribes, their famous historical figures, and other facets of their intellectual and cultural life. More importantly, while al-Maqdisī mentions the Bedouin setting, he neglects two other countervailing imaginaries conjured by al-Yāzījī: the Islamic imaginary and the much more sparsely dispersed imaginary of pre-Islamic and heterodox practices, including an array of superstitious beliefs, practices, and figures. Al-Maqdisī, Al-Funūn al-adabiyya wa-a-lihmāh, 69-70.

645 Desert marauders is my translation of tawāriq al-bādiya. Al-Yāzījī, Majmaʿ al-Bahrayn, 12.76.9.

646 Al-Yāzījī, Majmaʿ al-Bahrayn, 9.55.2.


648 To offer but a few examples: In al-Laghaziyya (#26), Maymūn wears al-samāʾ (26.203.3) and al-maylāʾ (26.203.4), qtw two garments worn by the Arabs. In al-Ṭūʾiyya (#36), Maymūn appears in a “shamālāʾ”, glossed as a garment of the Arabs (36.262.20), and praises his audience as the owners of “al-burūd al-maṣahhama”, a striped cloak distinctive of Yemen. (36.263.4) In al-Muṭariyya (#42), a shaykh is dressed in a ḥijād, a striped garment worn by the Arabs. (42.306.6) At the same time, however, clothing marks the non-Arab as well. In al-Tihāmiyya (#41), Maymūn is disguised in a “pitch-black jubbah or long outer garment” (jubba al-tīhāmiyya) and a “red-dyed turban” (ʿammāna al-anāmiyya). These clothes, along with the adīb’s foreign accent (lukna a’ jamīyya) indicate his performance of the role of a foreign figure in this episode. (41.298.10-11)

649 In Maymūn uses the word, mahyam, glossed as being from the language of the people of Yemen. (12.77.7) Likewise, he uses a lexeme from the language of Ṭayy. (36.262.22)
vivid descriptions of Arab encampments. They also revolve around myriad performances in which one character or another praises the merits, virtues, and glorious history of the particular Arab tribe that comprises his audience.

In *al-Taghlibiyya* (#13), to offer but one example, Suhayl and a group of companions are captured while travelling in the desert in al-ʿĀliya. They are taken to an encampment (*halla*) with many tents and domes, where they witness an emir interrogating Maymūn and accusing him of having “insulted the Arabs” (*tahjū l-ʿarab*). The emir praises the Arabs as the source of poetry and oration, grammar and eloquence, courage and hospitality and so forth. The emir then demands that Maymūn compose *quyūd* poems on the famous Arabs, their mounts (*al-khayl*), their homes, the types (*al-wān*) of their food, the containers for their food, and finally the names of the arrows used in pre-Islamic divination (*azlām al-maysir fī l-bādiya*). When Maymūn gracefully meets the emir’s demand, the latter is surprised and pleased (*ʿajaba*). The emir compliments the *adīb* by saying that he belongs to the true desert Arabs (*ṣamīm al-ʿarab al-ʿarbāʾ*) and apologizes for having had him imprisoned. In a sign of the emir’s regret and good will, he orders food and drink to be brought, and Maymūn, Suhayl, and his companions leave

650 In *al-Ṭāʾiyya* (#36), for instance, Suhayl reports he was in Yemen in ancient times (*fī sāliḥ al-zaman*) when he himself was very young. He traveled through the deserts (*bawādī*) until he reached the lands (*ahlā*) of the Baʾnī Ṭāyy, for whom al-Yāẓījī offers a brief genealogy in a footnote. (36.261.13) Suhayl describes their encampment: the tents and fires, bowls of provisions, horses and lances, camels and sheep, girls like gazelles and boys like the edge of swords (*wa jawārī fi l-zibāʾ wa ghilmānīn ka-l-zubbā*). This is during *ḥajj* and there is a terrible clamor as the assembled people begin to race as if toward some idol (*naṣab*). Suhayl follows them to a sand mound where a disguised Maymūn is addressing the crowd in the local dialect and praising their horsemanship, dress, military prowess, flag, and famous figures. *Al-Mudariyya* (#42) features a similarly rich opening description, more focused on literary performances by both sexes.

651 In *al-Khaṭābiyya* (#19), for instance, Maymūn not only offers extensive praise of his audience in the Iraqi town of al-Hilla, but then responds to an antagonist’s complaint that he neglected the *ayyam al-ʿarab* with an *urjiʿa* on their wars.


653 The lands above Najd until Tihāma which is said to be the area under Kulayb bin Taghlab’s protection and rule (his *hamāʾ*). Al-Yāẓījī, *Majmaʿ al-Bahrayn*, 13.82.8.

encumbered with gifts the next morning after a pleasant night in the company of the emir.

Maymūn’s knowledge of the Bedouin imaginary is equaled by Suhayl’s avid curiosity about pre-Islamic Arab culture and language. In *al-Muḍariyya* (#42), Suhayl visits the settlements of Muḍar. He passes through the gatherings (*maḥāfil*) of men and women, listening to what is pleasant (*al-māʾnūs*) and esoteric (*al-gharīb*), and enjoying the amorous poetry for boys (*al-ghazal*) and girls (*al-nasīb*). Speaking of the people of Muḍar, Suhayl says that he “gathered what I could of their Jāhilī languages” and their poetry.⁶⁵⁵ In *al-Ḥimyariyya* (#38), Suhayl and his companions stay among the people of Ḫimyar, listening to their dialect, observing their way of writing, and visiting the ruins of their kings.⁶⁵⁶ Likewise, in the opening lines of *al-Yamāmiyya* (#51), Suhayl offering the following explanation of the scholarly motivation behind his travels:

I was seeking the lands of the authentic Arabs * For their poets and orators * Eloquent speakers and litterateurs * Rhetoricians and distinguished authorities * So I led the mounts there * Begriming myself with dust and smoke * Perfuming myself with the scents of sunflower⁶⁵⁷ and balsam⁶⁵⁸ * Plucking the fruits of the *arfaʿ*⁶⁵⁹ and the *thagām*⁶⁶⁰ * Delighting in their melodies and camel songs * And enjoying the baaiing of

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656 Each facet of Suhayl’s study of the people of Ḫimyar is glossed in the footnotes. In their dialect of Arabic, al-Yāzijī claims that the people of Ḫimyar substitute the letter *mīm* for *lām* in the *lām al-ta rif*, that is when using “al” to make a noun definite. Their script, he notes, was written with unconnected letters. Al-Yāzijī mentions a specific king, known by the Ḫimyarite word *tubbaʿ*, and identifies him as Al-Ḥarith bin Qays, although I have not been able to confirm this assertion. Al-Yāzijī, *Majmaʿ al-Bahrāyn*, 38.278.5-7.
657 Likely the genus of sunflower called Pulicaria Jaubertii, native to Yemen.
658 It seems that the English name for this shrub is the Arabian balsam tree, or Commiphora gileadensis.
659 The *Arfaʿ* plant consists of a complicated network of branches scattered with small thorny leaves and bright yellow flowers. Its Latin name is *Rhanterium epapposum*, in the *Asteraceae* family, and it is native to the deserts of the Arabian Peninsula.
660 Similar to Wormwood and Hyssop, this hoary, white plant is indigenous to the mountains of the Najd region of the Arabian Peninsula.
their goats and the grunting of their camels

Their goats and the grunting of their camels

Suhayl’s account brings together his respect for and interest in Bedouin learning with the

maqāma’s motif of travel and rich descriptions of botanical and pastoral life. In Suhayl's

curiosity about all things Arab, we hear an autobiographical echo of al-Yāzījī's own passions and interests. Furthermore, we see how Suhayl steps out of his role as a narrator in order to transmit the knowledge that he claims to have gathered about pre-modern Arab culture and society.

The Arab(ic) imaginary, however, is not limited to the Bedouin in geographic, temporal, or cultural terms. On the contrary, this imaginary draws extensively on prominent figures, textual allusions, and historical events during the life of the Prophet Muḥammad, the rule of the four Rightly-Guided Caliphs, and the reign of the Umayyad and ‘Abbasid caliphs. While Islamic references will be discussed in the following section, from the ranks of the Umayyads, al-Yāzījī invokes—to name but a few—the poet ’Umar bin Abī Rabī‘a (d. 711),661 the governor al-Ḥajjāj bin Yūsuf (d. 714),662 the satirist al-Farazdaq (d. ca 728 or 730),663 and the epistoler ’Abd al-

661 Al-Yāzījī, Majma‘ al-Bahrāyn, 34.254.6.
662 Al-Yāzījī, Majma‘ al-Bahrāyn, 5.28.17.
663 Al-Yāzījī, Majma‘ al-Bahrāyn, 51.367.2.
Ḥamīd al-Kātib (d. 750). Likewise, from the notable figures of the ‘Abbasid era, Majma’ al-Bahrāyin makes reference to Abū l-‘Abbās al-Saffāḥ, the first ‘Abbasid Caliph (d. 754), the philologists al-Kisā’ī (d. ca. 805), al-Farrā’ (d. 822), Abū ‘Ubayda (d. 824-5), and al-Aṣmaʿī (d. 828), as well as the calligrapher Ibn Muqla (d. 940) and the lexicographer Ḥammād bin Ismaʿīl al-Jawharī (d. 1002-3 or 1007-8). Finally, al-Yāzījī makes occasional reference to Andalusi figures and their writing, such as the poetess Wallāda (d. 1087 or 1091) and the grammarian Ibn Mālik (d. 1274), author of the Alfiyya.

When this field of references is placed within the geographical imaginary of the Near East described in the preceding section, both the extensive scope and the boundaries of the past which al-Yāzījī invokes become more clear. In temporal terms, Majma’ al-Bahrāyin draws from the Bedouin world as well as that of the time of the Prophet Muḥammad and the Caliphates of the Rashīdūn (632-661 CE), Umayyads (661-750 CE), and ‘Abbasids (750-1258 CE). Consistent with this temporal scope, the geography of the text is focused on four regions: Arabia, the Levant, Egypt, and Iraq. It is the major cities, holy (and literary) sites, natural features, and tribal territories of this region through which the characters of Majma’ al-Bahrāyin roam.

6.5 Islam and The Missing Christian Imaginary

The Arab(ic) imaginary is complemented by an Islamic one. Al-Yāzījī actively employs
the sites, motifs, and ideas of Islam throughout his *maqāmāt*. Characters are clearly and repeatedly identified as Muslims: they employ Islamic idioms and utter pious phrases, read and study the Qurʿān, don Muslim dress, and meet in mosques and Islamic schools. In *al-Lādhiqīyya* (#48), for instance, Suhayl finds accommodation above a school (*madrasa*) and visits so often that he becomes the *imām*.674 Further demonstrating the centrality of Islam to this episode, and by extension, to the whole collection, when Maymūn arrives, he delivers a speech rich in religious imagery, concepts, and metaphors. The speech begins by praising the value of schools as the “doors of heaven” (*abwāb al-janna*), and then cites a number of Qurʿānic phrases regarding reading, and, through the metaphor of the pen, writing. He then praises reading and writing as the most trustworthy (*arjaḥ*) of trades and profitable (*arbāḥ*) of goods, the pivot of the Qurʿān and the Sunna, the site of the enlightenment of the mind, the location of authority and the source of happiness, a sign of success, and the goal of righteousness and reform.

Such references, however, do not seem to be intended to wholly obscure al-Yāzījī’s Christian identity. The introduction to *Majmaʿ al-Bahrāyn* begins with the formula “In the name of God, the Opener” (*bi-smi llāh al-fattāḥ*). This phrase navigates between the most common Islamic and Christian invocations. The book, as Hala Auji has argued with regard to its visual language, is accordingly addressed not only to the Christian readers one might imagine as the audience of a devout and devoted Greek Orthodox scholar printing on a Protestant missionary press, but is also designed to appeal to a Muslim readership. Al-Yāzījī identifies himself in the first lines of the introduction as “one of the Christian community” (*ahad al-umma al-ʿīsawiyya*) in Mount Lebanon.675 While he identifies himself by name, faith community, and geography, he

then introduces the *adīb* and the narrator as explicitly bereft of communal identity or lineage of any sort. After giving their names, he writes: “Both of them are *hayyu bin bayy*”, unknown of lineage and community.” 676 From the opening pages of *Majmaʿ al-Bahrayn*, this difference between the assertion of the characters' ostensible non-identity in the introduction and the obvious, endless signs of their Islamic identity in the episodes which follows underscores a curious irony in the text.

To wit: Rather than Maymūn, Suhayl, Rajab, and Laylā being of unknown origins and identity, it is al-Yāzījī’s own communal identity that is radically attenuated and almost entirely erased. The one set of references to Christianity that I was able to find in the *entire* sixty episodes is in the title and setting of *al-Anṭākiyya* (#35). In this episode, Suhayl travels with a group of companions (ʾiṣāba) to Antioch (*Anṭākiyyat al-Rūm*), a city with a long and important history to Eastern Christianity. The episode, however, does not dwell on this fact; rather, Suhayl quickly goes to a judge's chambers to take care of a small matter (*murāsha*), and the narrative moves on from there. Neither in *al-Anṭākiyya* (#35) nor elsewhere in *Majmaʿ al-Bahrayn* was I able to find mention of Christian religious practices, beliefs, texts, or holy sites. Nor is there a single village priest or Christian congregant among the wide array of Other characters—although this does not necessarily mean they do not exist. 677

Why would al-Yāzījī first announce his Christian identity in his modest two-page introduction, and then avoid any trace of Christianity in the massive tome which followed? To even begin to answer such a question, one must appreciate that in al-Yāzījī's time, there were competing confessional claims to the Arabic language. Anīs al-Maqdisī expresses this dynamic

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677 A more thorough study by an expert on Near Eastern Christianity that focused on traces of Christian figures and thought might well be able to identify traces in the footnotes, but that is beyond the purview of this project and my expertise.
in a succinct example: he writes of al-Yāzījī’s correspondents, the Egyptian mufti ʿAbd al-Ḥādī Najā al-Abyārī, who expressed his astonishment more than once that a Christian could compose first-rate verse in Arabic. For al-Abyārī, eloquence and refinement in Arabic belong to Muslims. In his view, al-Yāzījī is not so much an intruder as an exception, and a remarkable one.

In this context, al-Yāzījī’s embrace of Islamic discourse might be read as a ubiquitous but subtle articulation of the politics of anti-sectarianism. It might also, however, be read in quite different terms, as al-Yāzījī’s acquiescence to the cultural hegemony of Islam in Levantine literary writing of the period, and/or as an attempt to assert that a Christian could master Arabic in much the same way as his Muslim contemporaries and even, given his choice of genre, a millennium of (mostly Muslim) maqāma authors. Further archival research, especially in the unpublished works of Ẓāhir ʿIsā Iskandar al-Maʿlūf currently being catalogued by AUB, may well shed light on al-Yāzījī’s relationship to his Christian faith and identity, as well as his views on Islam, in the middle decades of a century which saw the rapid rise of sectarianism as the defining feature of Levantine identity.

6.6 Soothsayers and Ill-Omens: A Counter-Imaginary

While nearly every scholar mentions al-Yāzījī’s remarkable knowledge of the Islamic texts, histories, and practices that comprise the imaginary above, I have yet to find a single reference to the countervailing imaginary of pre- and non-Islamic beliefs and practices that

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678 Al-Maqdisī, Al-Funūn al-adabiyya wa-aʿlāmahā, 58.
679 Writing not of al-Yāzījī but of Ahmad Fāris al-Shidyāq, Rana Issa argues that the latter used an Arabic lexicon in his Bible translation that was “closer to the worldview of a Muslim public”, thereby “resolving at the level of the lexicon the political sectarianism that was storming through his homeland.” Rana Issa, “Al-Shidyāq-Lee Version (1857): An Example of a Non-Synchronous Nineteenth-Century Arabic Bible,” in Senses of Scripture, Treasures of Tradition: The Bible in Arabic among Jews, Christians and Muslims, ed. Miriam Hjälm (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 318.
courses through Majmaʿ al-Bahrayn. Throughout Majmaʿ al-Bahrayn, there are frequent references to heterodox practices, including allusions to pre-Islamic superstitions and various forms of polytheism. Here I will trace references to soothsayers, omens, divination practices, and jinn—although future researchers have much to gain from expanding this inquiry to explore references to idols, the Devil, ghouls, and magical practices. One consistent theme that emerges from this survey is that references to Islam typically precede, follow, or otherwise abut references to the non-Islamic counter-imaginary. I cannot say whether this is the inevitable result of the sheer number of references to Islam or a more intentional strategy to balance different systems of belief and practice that held meaning during the period of the Arab(ic) imaginary described in the preceding sections.

Majmaʿ al-Bahrayn contains numerous references to soothsayers and their divining practices. In al-ʿAqīqiyya (#3), Suhayl opens the episode by announcing that he awoke one day as early as a soothsayer (bakartu yawm an bukūr al-zājir). After this hint toward the world of pre-Islamic belief, Suhayl happens upon a funeral party. Maymūn, disguised as a preacher, employs Islamic tropes to eulogize the deceased and chastise the mourners to adhere to an ascetic life on earth so as to reap the benefits of the afterlife. In al-Khazrajīyya (#6), Maymūn accepts an invitation to a literary contest and says that they will see what fortunes (al-anṣība) the divining rod (al-qidāḥ) brings. Al-Taghlībiyya (#13) refers to Ahājīj Shaqq and Ahājīj Saṭīḥ, two soothsayers (kāhin). The divining rod, often with a gloss of varying detail, appears elsewhere in the collection as well. In al-Anṭākiyya (#35), Maymūn makes reference to those who

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680 Al-Yazījī, Majmaʿ al-Bahrayn, 13.83.4 and 13.83.5.
681 In al-Taghlībiyya (#13), for instance, an emir asks Maymūn to recite on a number of topics, the last of which is the names of the arrows used in pre-Islamic divination (azlām al-maysir fi l-hādīya). (13.99.2-3) In al-Laghaziyya (#26), Suhayl says that he threw the qidāḥ to determine what direction to travel. (26.203.5)
“predict good fortune with \textit{al-ghurāb al-abqa’},” glossed in a footnote as a white-winged crow that “they” believe to be an ill-omen.\footnote{Al-Yāzījī, Majma ʿal-Bahrāyn, 35.259.13.} Likewise, the audience in \textit{al-Jadaliyya} (#40) compares Rajab, disguised as a man who praises wealth, with someone who “foretells good fortune from a red-beaked crow” (\textit{ghurāb al-bayn}), glossed in a footnote as another sign of ill-fortune.\footnote{Al-Yāzījī, Majma ʿal-Bahrāyn, 40.295.14.} \footnote{Al-Yāzījī, Majma ʿal-Bahrāyn, 24.193.13.} 

Alongside soothsayers and their omens are frequent references to \textit{jinn}, those imperceptible, intelligent beings created of smokeless flame and mentioned in the Qurʾān alongside humankind and angels. In \textit{al-Maʿariyya} (#24), Suhayl follows Maymūn after his moralizing sermon and discovers him counting out his reward and instructing Laylā and Rajab to spend the money on food, drink, and musical instruments. When Suhayl points out Maymūn’s hypocrisy, Maymūn stares at him with “the eye of Daḥrash”.\footnote{Al-Yāzījī, Majma ʿal-Bahrāyn, 24.193.13.} Daḥrash is glossed as the name of one of the forefathers of one of the tribes of \textit{jinn}. Similarly, in \textit{al-Laghaziyya} (#26), Rajab appears as a servant boy with burning red eyes (\textit{ashʿal al-aḥdāq}), as if he were from “the people of Shiniqnāq”.\footnote{Al-Yāzījī, Majma ʿal-Bahrāyn, 26.203.10.} Shiniqnāq is glossed as a ruler (\textit{raʾīs}) of the \textit{jinn}.

In \textit{al-Iskandariyya} (#56), Suhayl and his companions mistake Maymūn for a ghost and tie him up. When they recognize and release him, Maymūn berates them and tells them they’ve attacked the \textit{dawsar} of the Arabian king al-Nuʿmān (r. 390-418 CE) or the demons of ʿAzwān. A long footnote explains that the \textit{dawsar} was the fiercest of al-Nuʿmān’s five battalions of soldiers, and offers a summary account of each, the practices of enlistment, as well as a gloss of the etymology of “\textit{dawsar}”. A very brief footnote then explains that the demons (\textit{marada}) of ʿAzwān are a “tribe” (\textit{qabila}) of \textit{jinn}.\footnote{Al-Yāzījī, Majma ʿal-Bahrāyn, 56.397.1.}
Beyond the hints and traces described above, there are many scenes in which the tensions between an Islamic worldview and the panoply of polytheistic beliefs and popular superstitions are made more explicit. In al-Ṭāʾiyya (#36), Suhayl describes with wonder seeing “what God willed” (mā shāʾ Allāh) of the great tents, cooking fires, lances and mounts of the campsites of the people of Banū Ṭayy. It is the “season of the pilgrims” (mawsim al-ḥajīj), he explains, are the camps are engulfed in a cacophony (al-ḍajīj and al-ʿajīj) of bustling activity. Turning now to the explicitly non-Islamic, Suhayl says that a great crowd began to run “as if toward a naṣab”. The term naṣab is defined in a footnote as “that which is made into a flag (ʿalam) or worshipped (yuʿbad) outside of God (dūn Allāh)”. Building on the root meaning of the word, which is “to stand up”, the term naṣab is here obliquing referring to an idol that is stood up for worshippers. Furthering the significance of the coupling of the Islamic and the idolatrous, what the people are racing towards is Maymūn, who has ascended a small mound and is preparing to give a speech.

6.7 Imaginations of the Reader

The footnotes in Majmaʿ al-Bahrayn not only help us to understand an extraordinary maqāma collection and its imagined pasts; they also provide a glimpse into how al-Yāzījī imagined and attempted to address the questions his readers might have had. These readers are the emerging bourgeoisie of mid-nineteenth century Beirut, the fabled first practitioners of silent reading, the consumers of the nascent Arabic literary press, and hence of particular interest to

687 Another example is found in al-Tihāmiyya (#41), where Rajab appears disguised as “the orator of the Arabs” (khaṭīb al-ʿarab). When a conflict (fiṭnā) breaks out among the audience, he gives a sermon in which he addresses them as “the purest of Muslims” (ṣafwat al-muslimīn), not the Jahālīyya nor the mukhadramīn who worship the God of the star of al-Shiʿrā, Al-Lāt, al-ʿUzzā, and al-Manāt. After reminding the audience that they have received revelation and the sayings of the Prophet Muḥammad, he distinguishes them from the disobedient figures of pre-Islamic mythology such as Aḥmar Ṭāʿ and Pharaoh, as well as numerous warring tribes in the history of Arabia. Al-Yāzījī, Majmaʿ al-Bahrayn, 41.300.1-9.

688 Al-Yāzījī, Majmaʿ al-Bahrayn, 36.262.18.
cultural and intellectual historians of the nineteenth century and those who wish to theorize about the *Nahda*. In what follows, I discuss instances where al-Yāzijī sought to clarify the workings of his text and the meanings of its enormous field of allusions.

In pursuit of clarity, al-Yāzijī expends significant effort identifying literary devices, glossing obscure terms from a wide array of fields, and offering biographical and historical information about the panoply of figures and texts interwoven into his *maqāmāt*. Much of this exegetical labor is undertaken in the footnotes. The most intriguing body of autocommentary, however, are those footnotes through which the author casts light on his characters' intentions and the meaning of their words and actions. Here I focus on examples of those footnotes which seek to clarify a character's identity, tricks, and intentions. Taken together, these examples provide the rough contours of al-Yāzijī's anxieties about what aspects of *Majma’ al-Bahrayn* might have been difficult for his readers to understand.

The task of clarifying a character's identity is the most straightforward. In many cases, a footnote clarifies the identity of a character referred to in vague terms in the main body of the episode. For instance, in *al-Ḥimyariyya* (#38), Suhayl sees Maymūn and his “two friends” while visiting the people of Ḥimyar in Yemen. A footnote tells us that these “two friends” are his daughter (*ibna*), Laylā, and his servant (*ghulām*), Rajab.689 Similarly, in *al-Tihāmiyya* (#41), a footnote to the phrase “our shaykh” (*shaykhunā*) clarifies that this is an “indication” (*tanbīḥ*) that the shaykh in question is Maymūn.690

Beyond such clarifications, however, the autocommentary delves into clarifying the

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690 Al-Yāzijī, *Majma’ al-Bahrayn*, 41.299.5. Similarly, in the opening lines of *al-Ḫalīyya* (#44), Suhayl says he met “our shaykh” Abū Laylā, identified in a footnote to be Maymūn. (44.319.6)
characters' intentions. When Maymūn departs at the end of *al-Rashīdiyya* (#33), for instance, he says to Suhayl: “Let us meet in Manfalūṭ”. Manfalūṭ is a town on the Nile, a short distance north of the city of Asyūṭ in Upper Egypt. Given that *al-Rashīdiyya* (#33) takes place in the Nile Delta town of Rosetta (known as Rashīd in Arabic) not far from Alexandria, Maymūn's suggestion to meet again in Manfalūṭ might not raise any particular suspicions. The characters travel frequently, Manfalūṭ is not particularly far from Rosetta, and Maymūn seems to be on good terms with Suhayl in this episode. However, a footnote appended to the word “Manfalūṭ” provides the following information:

> A city in Egyptian lands. [Maymūn] said this to obfuscate matters for [Suhayl] because he did not want to inform [Suhayl] of the place to which he was departing. 

The first part of this annotation is a straightforward geographical gloss for any reader who might not know the town of Manfalūṭ. The footnote then turns to Maymūn's purpose in mentioning Manfalūṭ, which is apparently to throw Suhayl off his trail.

In *al-ʿUmāniyya* (#52), when an antagonist greets Maymūn and Suhayl, he says that he sees the turbans of the Bedouin on city folk. A footnote indicates that by “city folk” he means Suhayl and Maymūn. Maymūn responds by claiming that the antagonist is actually seeing “the crowns of the Arabs” (*ṭījān al-ʿarab*) on the noblemen (*aʿyān*) of Muḍar. This claim is described

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in the next footnote as another of Maymūn's “fantastical claims” (daʿwā khurāfiyya). A similar process takes place in al-Taghlibiyya (#13), when a footnote explains that Maymūn's purpose in claiming to be from the Arabs is to bring him closer to the emir.

The footnotes also sometimes identify and describe the workings of a character’s trick. For instance, when Maymūn introduces himself to a pompous group of litterateurs in al-Halliyya (#44) under the name of Al-Raqmaʿ bin Aṣmaʿ from Banī al-Samaʿma', al-Yāzijī adds a footnote which reads:

This whole lineage is [meant] to deceive them and is untrue.

Similarly, in al-Shāmiyya (#4), a string of footnotes identify Maymūn’s claims to medical authority as bogus. In a different vein, near the end of al-Falakiyya (#28), Maymūn claims to have had a premonition (taṭayyartu) of ill-fortune (naḥas) from Suhayl. He orders the audience to send Suhayl away on one of their mounts. This trick, as explained in a four-line footnote, is intended to secure a reward for Suhayl above and beyond the coins that Maymūn already won. There are many other such examples, indicating the extent of al-Yāzijī’s concern that the maqāma’s trickery not be missed by his readers.

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694 Al-Yāzijī, Majmaʿ al-Bahrayn, 52.369.16.
695 Al-Yāzijī, Majmaʿ al-Bahrayn, 13.89.11.
696 Al-Yāzijī, Majmaʿ al-Bahrayn, 44.320.5.
697 Maymūn’s claims, per the footnotes, involve citing made-up medical authorities and diagnosing fake diseases. Al-Yāzijī, Majmaʿ al-Bahrayn, 4.20.6-8.
699 To offer but a few more examples: In al-Anbāʾiyya (#39), a footnote glosses a line of Laylā’s poetry as an “indication”
(Although through the purview of the current section, it bears noting—and in the spirit of this chapter, footnoting—that ambiguity exists alongside clarity in this text.\textsuperscript{700} One might even say that the dialectic of clarity and ambiguity in the autocommentary could be added to the long list of possible interpretations of the “two seas” of Majma‘ al-Bahrayn.)

While this text may be a test of the reader’s patience and endurance, the footnotes significantly diminish its function as a test of the reader’s knowledge. If the purpose of an allusion is to distinguish those who can identify it from those who can not, then an allusion with a footnote has the opposite effect. It expands access to otherwise obscure knowledge, erasing the distance between the reader who knows and the reader who does not. For instance, in al-Ţibbiyya (#30), the young man asks the shaykh to be “ghinyat al-labīb * ‘and ghaybat al-ţabīb’.”\textsuperscript{701} To many readers, certainly including myself, this would be just another rhyming phrase in a long and indistinguishable pattern of saj’. However, al-Yāzījī footnotes the phrase and identifies it as an allusion to a specific medical text.

\textsuperscript{700} Al-Yāzījī generates ambiguity by articulating rather than resolving the polysemy of the Arabic language. By this I mean that, in certain cases, he does not shy away from presenting the multiple possible meanings of a given expression or term rather than identify which particular meaning was intended. In al-Sarījiyya (#22), for instance, Suhayl describes a few lines of Maymūn’s poetry as “Ḥamāsī” verse (ahiyyāt ḥamāsiyya). (22.175.10) Al-Yāzījī glosses this term as \textit{either} an adjective derived from \textit{al-ḥamāsa}, meaning the pride that a man takes in himself and his courage, or as referring to an anthology entitled \textit{Dīwān al-ḥamāsa} of Abū Tamān al-Tā’ī (d. 845 CE). As with other similar examples, al-Yāzījī does not clarify this ambiguity by telling us what Suhayl means; he leaves both interpretations as possibilities. In contrast, in a handful of cases al-Yāzījī presents the polysemy of the Arabic language for the reader and then indicates which meaning is “intended”. In al-Taghlihiyya (#13) al-Yāzījī glosses a reference to the “scent of lavender (al-khiżām)” in the following manner: “It may be that what is meant is Shaykh Maymūn or the aromatic plant. The first is the intended.” (13.85.5) Furthermore, on rare occasion the same footnote seeks to clarify \textit{and} keep open the door to ambiguity. This is indeed the case for the very first footnote in the entire collection, affixed to the first line of the introduction to Majma‘ al-Bahrayn. The footnote, appropriately, provides a gloss for the word “maṣāmāt”. The line reads: “Praise be to God who gathered the maṣāmāt * For the people of miracles (karāmāt).” (0.2.1) The footnote simply reads: “It might be the plural of maṣām or maṣāma” (yaḥtiṭn an yakān jam’ maṣām aw maṣāma).

\textsuperscript{701} Al-Yāzījī, Majma‘ al-Bahrayn, 30.228.19.
Does al-Yāzijī’s near-compulsion to annotate reflect a broader impulse among Nahḍa writers to reach new audiences? Does it embody a set of nascent democratic values about making knowledge accessible, and using the modern instrument of the printing press to do so? How might such an understanding of the autocommentary compare to arguments that al-Yāzijī is mustering his erudition to establish his place among the ranks of distinguished and elite writers of the Arabic (and as he may well see it, Muslim) literary tradition? As I have said elsewhere in this final chapter, further research is needed to explore these questions—but being able to pose them provides a direction for my own future inquiry as well as a roadmap for other students of Arabic literature interested in understanding the social history and literary mores of the Nahḍa in terms, and from texts, beyond the novel.

6.8 Conclusion: A Rebirth of the Author?

Beyond revealing how al-Yāzijī conceived of his readers, the auto-commentary provides a point of contrast to the arguments about the printing press presented by Timothy Mitchell in Colonising Egypt.702 There Mitchell argues that the spread of the printing press threatened the relationship between teacher and student, premised as it was not on oral transmission but on the recitation of an unwoveled text. For Mitchell, the act of recitation set the meaning of the written text, and hence, clarity and understanding necessitated a face-to-face engagement between teacher and student. From this perspective, the spread of printing did a pedagogical and epistemological violence to the social process of learning. Yet Majma’ al-Baḥrayn invites a different reading, one in which the technology of the press was employed to write the teacher

into the text with great precision, such that, when he so chose, he could fix the meaning with a footnote and obviate any ambiguity even in the author’s absence.
Conclusion: A Strange Disjuncture

A strange disjuncture appears when *Majmaʿ al-Bahrāyn* is compared to prominent examples from Victorian literary history — the period roughly coterminal with al-Yāzījī’s life. Elizabeth Barrett Browning resuscitated the Petrarchan sonnet (popular among Renaissance poets of the 15th century) for her *Sonnets from the Portuguese*, published in 1850, six years before *Majmaʿ al-Bahrāyn* was first published in Beirut. Alfred Tennyson, the poet laureate of Victorian England, drew on the cultural legacy of King Arthur for his poem *Morte d’Arthur*, and Robert Browning borrowed much of his imagery from the Italian Renaissance. All three poets were immersed in Greek literary culture, from studies of the language to extensive knowledge of the mythology. Elizabeth Barrett Browning, quite tellingly, opens the first of her forty-four Sonnets with a reference, penned in iambic pentameter, to Greek antiquity: “I thought once of how Theocritus had sung.”

As English literary history makes abundantly clear, the “modern” world contains rich traces of the past. Victorian authors employed the poetic, mythical, and thematic traditions of

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Antiquity and the Renaissance to express their sentiments and describe their world. Al-Yāzījī seems to share with his most popular Victorian contemporaries a penchant for alluding to and drawing from multiple, imagined cultural pasts. In the English tradition, this nostalgia has been described as the genre of “pastoralism.” As best expressed by A.E. Housman’s *A Shropshire Lad*, pastoralism as a genre is distinguished by the timeless quality and typological characters that are a mainstay of the *maqāma* genre. What distinguishes al-Yāzījī’s “traditionalism” from his Victorian contemporaries’ “modernism”? It cannot be their shared reliance on a romanticized past, nor their approval of emulation. The difference may rather lie in how the past is understood in a literary history that assigns different values to “tradition” in the case of London and Beirut.

A critical review of the historiography of modern Arabic literature helps us to understand the strange disjuncture with which this conclusion begins. As we will see, with few exceptions, scholars writing in both Arabic and English have generally seen al-Yāzījī’s relationship to the past along a spectrum from laudable emulation to rote imitation. Accordingly, they share an assumption that al-Yāzījī was reproducing past literary forms, a position which leaves little room for recognizing the innovative dimensions of *Majmaʿ al-Baḥrayn*, let alone raise questions about whether innovation itself is the ultimate marker of aesthetic accomplishment.

### 7.1 Emulation

In one thread of the Arabic historiography, *Majmaʿ al-Baḥrayn* is lauded as a work of emulation. Indeed, “emulation” (*muʿāraḍa*) is the very word that Louis Cheiko uses to describe al-Yāzījī’s relationship to al-Ḥarīrī’s *maqāmāt*.704 ʿAlī Shalaq argues that al-Yāzījī “followed the

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704 Cheikho, *Aḥdāb al-ʿarabiyya fī al-qarn al-tāsiʿ ashar*, 29. In poetry, *muʿāraḍa* is the practice of reproducing the first half line (*ṣadr*) of a famous poem and adding a new second half (*ʿajuz*) in the same meter.
manner of al-Ḥarīrī and surpassed him in riddles and folktales.”  

Indeed, in his brief and characteristically modest preface, al-Ŷāzījī himself alludes to his ambition to emulate his predecessors with a reference to the “fuḥūl” or steeds of the maqāmāt. Yet as I have argued repeatedly in the preceding chapters, to consider this text exclusively or even primarily as a work of emulation obscures its remarkable innovations in literary form and the multiple ways in which it can be read as a commentary on the turmoil and hopes of the mid-nineteenth century.

A closer look at Shawqī Ḍayf's still-influential 1954 monograph, entitled *Al-Maqāma*, brings to light some of the more problematic dimensions of approaching *Majmaʿ al-Bahrayn* as a work of emulation. *Al-Maqāma* is primarily focused on the study of the literary qualities and patterns of emulation in the canonical maqāmāt of al-Hamadhānī and al-Ḥarīrī. To his credit, however, Ḍayf recognized al-Ŷāzījī's exemplary contribution to the post-canonical maqāma and dedicated a third and final section of his short book to a discussion of *Majmaʿ al-Bahrayn*. In a claim that would be echoed (often without attribution) by later scholars, Ḍayf asserts that with *Majmaʿ al-Bahrayn*, al-Ŷāzījī won “first place” among his contemporaries and predecessors.  

While Ḍayf's discussion places al-Ŷāzījī in the orbit of his two canonical predecessors both implicitly and explicitly, the concluding pages of this final chapter (which also serve as the conclusion to the book) are a harsh, multifaceted critique of *Majmaʿ al-Bahrayn* and what Ḍayf

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705 Shalaq provides no specific examples of this assessment in his short stub on al-Ŷāzījī, which, while praising him and placing him first among his Lebanese contemporaries, is more of a compact encyclopedia entry than a proper exposition of his role and literary merit. 'Ali Shalaq, *Al-Nathr al-Arabī fi namadhijihi wa-tajawwurihī li-ṣray al-Nahḍa wa-l-hadīth* (Beirut: Dār al-Qalam, 1974).


sees as the aesthetic underlying al-Yāzījī's maqāmāt.

As mentioned above, Ḍayf's major contribution to the study of Majma' al-Bahrayn is his argument that al-Yāzījī's maqāmāt are a “precise emulation” (taqlīd daqīq) of al-Ḥarīrī's. He identifies many facets of Majma' al-Bahrayn as emulations of al-Ḥarīrī's text. These include what he sees as the similarities between the tricks and disguises of al-Yāzījī's adīb, Maymūn bin Khizām, and those of al-Ḥarīrī's adīb, Abū Zayd al-Sarūjī; the fact that both collections open with an episode in which the characters first meet one another; and that both collections conclude with an episode in which the adīb, with ostensible sincerity, repents for his sins. Ḍayf's central argument, however, is that al-Yāzījī emulated al-Ḥarīrī's elaborate language games, from poems comprised of alternating dotted and undotted letters to those which could be read forward and backward like palindromes. Ḍayf makes similar arguments about al-Yāzījī's employment of riddles (al-alghāz), discussion of grammatical issues, and what he describes

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709 Ḍayf, Al-Maqāma, 87.
710 Ḍayf, Al-Maqāma, 85.
711 Ḍayf, Al-Maqāma, 85-86.
712 Ḍayf reads al-Yāzījī's penultimate maqāma, al-Makkīyya (#59), as an expression of the adīb's sincere repentance and regret. He accordingly says that al-Makkīyya "prepares" the reader for the final maqāma, al-Qudsīyya (#60), in which Maymūn preaches to the people in the al-Aqsā Mosque and refuses their gifts. Ḍayf, Al-Maqāma, 86-87.
713 Ḍayf identifies two episodes, al-Ramāliyya (#15) and al-Basīriyya (#20), as the “stage” (marṣāḥ) upon which al-Yāzījī demonstrates his love for al-Ḥarīrī's language games. Al-Ramāliyya (#15), frequently if superficially discussed by scholars, features al-Yāzījī's twenty-six-line poem consisting entirely of words comprised of Arabic letters without dots, a style known as al-'awātīl. It also includes examples of a poem that employs only dotted letters, one in which every other hemistich is embellished with dotted letters, one in which every other word is comprised of dotted letters, and one in which every other letter is dotted. From here, Ḍayf turns to al-Yāzījī's "invention" (ibtakara) of what he (al-Yāzījī) named "āṭil al- āṭil. In this poetic game, al-Yāzījī composed verse with those letters that neither contained a dot in their calligraphic form nor in the spelling of their name (so, for instance, he could use the letter dāl but not ʾayn, as the latter is spelled with the dotted letters yāʾ and nūn). Al-Basīriyya (#20) revolves around a different type of language game. Ḍayf argues that al-Yāzījī emulates al-Ḥarīrī's penchant for poems that can be read forward and backward, like a palindrome. Moving beyond al-Ḥarīrī's model, al-Yāzījī also composed verse which was a panegyric when read forwards and an invective when read backwards. Ḍayf notes that al-Yāzījī repeated this game in al-Rajabiyya (#18), and another variant of it in al-Taghlībiyya (#13), in which a character mispronounces certain letters of a given line of verse transform its meaning into something uncouth. Ḍayf, Al-Maqāma, 89-91. For further discussion of āṭil al- āṭil, see Zaydān, Bundāt al-Nahḍa, 169. For numerous examples and a basic typology, see Sābā, Al-Shaykh Nāṣīf Al-Yāzījī, 26-28.
714 Ḍayf mentions al-Laghāziyya (#26) and al-Halabiyya (#9) as two episodes which contain riddles in poetry, while al-Humawīyya (#50) contains a prose riddle. Al-Iskandariyya (#56) contains legal riddles, Ḍayf says, but ones that are mixed with matters of language and rhetoric (masā’il lughawīyya wa fiqīhīyya). Ḍayf, Al-Maqāma, 92.
715 Praising al-Yāzījī's status as a grammarian, Ḍayf lists those episodes in which al-Yāzījī presents grammatical matters: al-Baḥdādiyya (#8), al-Kūfiyya (#10), al-Baḥriyya (#43), and an episode Ḍayf mistakenly calls “The Maqāma of Sudan” or al-
as the twelve episodes which focus on “the knowledge of language” (ʿilm al-lugha).716

Ḍayf’s determination to prove that al-Yāzījī emulated his predecessor leads him to make some faulty comparisons, however. On the one hand, he argues that al-Yāzījī's portrayal of Laylā and Rajab can be reduced to an emulation of al-Ḥarīrī's portrayal of his adīb, Abū Zayd, arguing with his wife, his students, and his followers.717 On the other, he identifies a number of genre-wide features as signs of al-Yāzījī's emulation of al-Ḥarīrī. These include both authors' use of alternating verse and rhyming prose, their extensive quotations from the Qurʾān, their employment of sayings (amthāl) and maxims (ḥikam), their shared use of religious imagery and an admonitory style (waʿẓ), and their use of the figure of the judge as an audience for the characters’ disputes.718 Each of these features, while present in the works of al-Ḥarīrī and al-Yāzījī, are also present in many other maqāma collections, and could properly be considered features of the genre, not features of al-Ḥarīrī’s contribution alone.

There are other problems with Ḍayf’s work. Methodologically, Ḍayf’s approach is little more than to quote the original compositions and append a few scattered comments. He makes no attempt to catalogue the episodes based on their stylistic, characterological, thematic, rhetorical, or other features. This leads him to significantly flatten the text by grouping together, for instance, those episodes which deal with a given theme (such as grammar) without attending to the various ways in which such episodes differ through different types of performance,

716 Ṣūdānīyya. Ḍayf almost certainly means al-Sawādīyya (#54), “The Maqāma of Iraq”, given the similar spelling of the two titles, the grammatical riddles at the heart of al-Sawādīyya’s performance, and the fact that Ḍayf lists the episodes in the order that they appear in the original 1856 printing. Ḍayf, Al-Maqāma, 92.
717 Ḍayf does not list them, he mentions the following twelve episodes interspersed with quotations and sparse commentary: al-Khuzrajīyya (#6), al-Taghlībiyya (#13), al-Khatībiyya (#19), al-Tā’īyya (#36), al-Ḥīmyariyya (#38), al-Tīhāmīyya (#41), al-Furādiyya (#45), al-Rusāfīyya (#47), al-Lubnāniyya (#49), al-Umāniyya (#52), al-Najdiyya (#57), and al-ʿUkāzīyya (#58). Ḍayf, Al-Maqāma, 92-99.
718 Ḍayf, Al-Maqāma, 85-88.
performed by different characters before different audiences with different reactions and different rewards. Furthermore, Dayf's primarily descriptive approach does not allow him to see Majma' al-Bahrayn as a commentary on al-Ḥarīrī's Maqāmāt, let alone a source of historical insight, literary innovation, or a theory of language and identity during the Nahḍa.

Perhaps Dayf's reductive method of reading al-Yażījī explains the many opportunities he misses to explore the dynamism of the text. For instance, Dayf notes that al-Yażījī composed a “long primer” (arjūza ṭawīla) on grammar in al-Dimashqīyya (#21), but does not explore the patterns or significance of incorporating multiple genres of writing into the text. This despite the frequency and sophistication of such cross-genre incorporations, not only from primers, but from sermons (waʿẓ), orations (khūṭba), and riddles (al-alghāz).719 Likewise, Dayf makes multiple passing observations about the purpose of Majma' al-Bahrayn. At one point he speculates that al-Yażījī wanted to teach “the student” an esoteric lexicon as well as literary style.720 Elsewhere, he says that the maqāma was transformed into what resembled a “foundational text on language” (matn min mutūn al-lughā), aspects of which could be used for memorization (li-l-hifẓ) and recitation (li-l-tasmī).721 At yet another point, he repeats multiple times that al-Yażījī was a teacher (muʿallim) and suggests that specific episodes in Majma' al-Bahrayn were intended to teach student readers specific topics.722 While these observations could be the source for an account of the multiple functions of Majma' al-Bahrayn, Dayf himself does not substantiate his suggestion that al-Yażījī's maqāmāt were exclusively or primarily intended as a pedagogical text, but simply dismisses this function as a divergence from the original (and therefore, for him, the...
legitimate) function of the genre: to present “literary styles” \((\textit{asālīb adabiyya})\).\(^{723}\)

Dayf’s study, like much of the scholarship on \textit{Majma’ al-Bahrayn}, is governed by a set of powerful aesthetic prejudices that are both presentist and Eurocentric. While these prejudices seem to have originated in the \textit{Nahḍa}-era discourse of decline, they have endured in the works of generations of literary historians and critics who adopt the binaries of tradition and modernity in their studies of nineteenth century Arabic literature. For Dayf, these prejudices are expressed in his narrow, implicit definition of the literary; his unsubstantiated claim that al-Yāzījī’s excellence is exclusively or even primarily in the fields of linguistic knowledge rather than literature; and his suggestion that the literary (\textit{adab}) is superior to the linguistic, the latter of which lacks “spirit”. Dayf writes:

There is no doubt that this facet of the Yazijian \textit{maqāma} points to its author's excellence, despite it being a linguistic or epistemological excellence; for we have turned away from the gardens of \textit{adab} and art to the parched lowlands of language and knowledge in which it is so rare to find spirit or sweet basil.\(^{724}\)

\(^{723}\) Dayf, \textit{Al-Maqāma}, 97-98.

\(^{724}\) Dayf, \textit{Al-Maqāma}, 100.
To grasp the source of these aesthetic prejudices, one need look no further than Ğayf’s shifting description of the significance of al-Yāzījī’s “stance” (mawqif) toward Arab culture in his own time. In the opening pages of his study of Majmaʾ al-Bahrayn, Ğayf argued that al-Yāzījī saw the Arabic language as “sufficient” (kāfiya) for “the culture of the litterateur” (thaqāfat al-adīb), and he was accordingly “content (qāni’) with the Arabs and their culture”. Ğayf is not upholding al-Yāzījī as an anti-colonial or even a non-colonized figure, but rather identifying his resistance to European mores as rooted in a deep satisfaction (or perhaps “complacency”) with his own culture and language. When Ğayf returns to al-Yāzījī’s stance toward Arab culture in the following paragraphs, he describes it as an “ardent zeal” or even “fanaticism” (taʾṣṣub shadīd) for “the Arabs”, linked to his “refusal (abā) to learn a foreign language or adopt European literary mores (yatathaqqaf bi-l-adāb al-urubbiyya). Ğayf then switches gears. Not wanting to leave the reader with the impression that al-Yāzījī’s maqāmāt are all lifeless vocabulary exercises (at one point he describes al-Yāzījī as a “living dictionary” (muʾjam hayy)), he concludes his study by turning to an example of what he initially calls an entertaining episode, al-Hazliyya (#14). He reproduces the entire episode, complete with footnotes. However, the conclusion he reaches is that al-Yāzījī’s humor is “dull”

725 Ğayf, Al-Maqāma, 84.
726 Ğayf, Al-Maqāma, 100.
727 Ğayf, Al-Maqāma, 94.
or “inanimate” (jāmīda is the Arabic term he uses), “as if” the author’s “serious nature” (ṭabī‘a jiddiyya) stood between him and the spirit of play and jest (rūḥ al-du‘āba wa-l-fukāha). He adds that al-Yāzījī’s jest lacks “levity” (khiffā) and “gracefulness” (rashāqa).

7.2 Imitation

The same concerns can be raised all the more forcefully about those scholars who have dismissed Majma‘ al-Baḥrayn as a work of imitation. Despite the standing he enjoyed during his lifetime, and his enduring if modest recognition in Arabic language historiographies, much of the English language scholarship has neglected and even maligned al-Yāzījī. This can be explained in part by subsequent shifts in literary taste and criticism. For our purposes, the two most salient literary-historical trends are the search for the origins of the Arabic novel and the narrative of post-classical literary decline.

As manifest in the work of scholars like Roger Allen, J. Brugman, Matti Moosa, and Salma Jayyusi, the search for the origins of the Arabic novel has led literary historians to disregard the aesthetic context in which Majma‘ al-Baḥrayn was composed, received, and gained its initial significance. The search for the origins of the novel derives its legitimacy from the growing desire among cultural elites from the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries to craft a “modern” Arabic literature that resembled, to varying degrees, the formal structures and thematic concerns of English and French literary genres. As such, the literary historiography frequently conflates the Arabic novel with literary modernity, relegating those such as al-Yāzījī who participated in other literary genres to the realm of tradition and pre-modernity.

728 Ḍayf, Al-Maqāma, 107.
The literary historical works discussed in this section apply twentieth century aesthetic standards to eighteenth- and nineteenth-century works of Arabic literature. They privilege novelty over the emulation of the literary past; the subversion of cultural and aesthetic conventions over the preservation of a tradition; psychological over typological characters; contemporary over neo-classical settings; and an explicit concern with the social issues of the day over generic tropes. In this way, the historiography confers anachronistic and Eurocentric judgments of taste and value. Likewise, literary historians have frequently attributed aesthetic features to Majmaʿ al-Bahrayn that are, as this project makes clear, demonstrably inaccurate.

In English language scholarship, especially that concerned with the origins of “modern” Arabic literature, al-Yāzījī has been relegated to the realm of passing mention, background information, marginalia and footnotes. He is frequently invoked as emblematic of the “traditionalists” of his time, a judgment justified by recourse to biographical claims about his parochialism, often defined in terms of his lack of familiarity with “the West”. He is described as being less inclined towards the West than his contemporaries (and hence, by implication, less modern). Paul Starkey, writing the entry on al-Yāzījī in Essays in Literary Biography (edited notably by Roger Allen), writes:

[A]l-Yaziji shared few if any of the attitudes and experiences of his more progressive contemporaries...he had not travelled to Europe; he showed no apparent interest in the formal or structural development of the traditional Arabic forms of literary expression; he knew no European languages; and he could thus make only an indirect and probably marginal contribution to the “translation movement” that was soon to play such a crucial
Starkey’s synopsis captures the dominant view of al-Yāzījī: a man out of touch with European cultural mores and literary trends, in part because of his lack of knowledge of European languages. For Starkey, the lack of knowledge of European languages and travel to Europe are implicitly connected to al-Yāzījī’s lack of “apparent interest” in the development of Arabic literature. Moreover, Starkey privileges translation and the “translation movement” while simultaneously devaluing what he calls “traditional Arabic forms of literary expression”. Yet even a cursory reading of Majma‘ al-Baḥrayn puts on display al-Yāzījī’s “apparent interest” in Arabic literary forms and their “development” — although not their transformation into the features of the novel.

Salma Jayyusi is more explicit about the link between monolingualism and traditionalism, arguing that:

Al-Yāzījī’s attempt to create a new literature based on tradition was only possible because he had not had a Western education. The rest of the revivalists were all men who had come into direct contact with Western culture. A direct link with modern life had to be forged and the two men most responsible for this achievement were Ahmad Faris al-Shidyaq and Butrus al-Bustani.  

In Jayyusi’s view, al-Yāzījī did not choose to “create a new literature based on tradition,” nor did

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729  Starkey, “Nasif Al-Yaziji,” 381.
he succeed in doing so (as one gleans from the word attempt). On the contrary, his engagement with Arabic literary history was the result of his deprivation of a Western education and “direct contact” with Western culture and “modern life.” Not only does she conflate Western and modern, but she treats al-Yāzījī’s extraordinary knowledge of Arabic as the unfortunate consequence of his alleged parochialism as opposed to a principled and inspiring engagement with a tradition that al-Yāzījī, unlike many of his contemporaries, refused to see as inadequate to the demands of colonial modernity.

Matti Moosa takes Jayyusi’s point further, interpreting al-Yāzījī’s monolingualism as a sign of an active disinterest in Europe: “Probably because he considered Arabic sufficient for literary accomplishment, al-Yāzījī never bothered to learn a European language.” Whether due to inability, disinterest, and lack of resources, al-Yāzījī’s monolingualism, along with the fact that he never travelled outside of Lebanon, are taken as confirmation of his opposition to European modernity.

For Moosa, the particular claims about al-Yāzījī’s monolingualism fit into a much broader narrative in which Western literary genres — especially the short story, novel, and drama — are taken as the sine qua non of literary modernity. In The Origins of Modern Arabic Fiction, Moosa argues:

Unlike the West, the Arab Middle East did not have a tradition of recognizable and generally accepted literary forms like the short story, novel, and drama. The development of modern Arabic literature came late and did not evolve to a reasonably sophisticated

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level until very recently. Accordingly, when one attempts to deal with the concept of Arabic fiction during the nineteenth century one finds it a nebulous and elusive one. This problem is further compounded by the fact that Arab writers did not have widespread viable literary modes for the sustained and intelligent representation of their ideas, reflections and criticisms of Arab society.\(^\text{732}\)

Moosa’s search for the origins of modern Arabic fiction conflates “success” with the degree of concordance with trends in the development of the English and French novel. This approach sees divergence from ascendant European literary standards as shortcomings rather than assertions of creativity or independence. By approaching Arabic literary history through the lens of the novel, Moosa links literary modernity to the emergence of recognizable European genres in Arabic, namely, the short story, novel, and play. It is on these grounds that Moosa can claim that Arabic literary modernity “came late,” a proposition that is only coherent once non-European literary genres are excluded \textit{a priori} from the canon of modern literature. In this way, modernity is territorialized in Europe and embodied by European languages, such that those who neither travel to nor learn the languages of the distant continent could not participate in literary modernity.

Moosa associates literary modernity with a particular relationship to the past, namely, one which the privileges innovation over emulation; originality over fidelity; and the subversion of tradition rather than its transmission. This view conflates literary modernity with aesthetic conventions that were, at al-Yāzījī’s time, the object of fervent debate — as even a brief

comparison of the critical reception of *Majmaʿ al-Bahrayn* and al-Shidyāq’s *Al-Sāq ʿala al-Sāq* demonstrates.

Whereas al-Yāzījī has been relegated to the margins of contemporary historiography, al-Shidyāq’s “iconoclastic”\(^{733}\) approach is praised in the critical literature and upheld as a text that, in the words of Roger Allen, “look[s] ahead to the emergence of a fictional tradition in the 20\(^{th}\) century”.\(^{734}\) Of *Al-Sāq ʿala al-Sāq*, Roger Allen writes approvingly:

> [T]he entire book is intended, much in the style of Rabelais, to be a deliberate act of confrontation, and no more so than in his anti-clerical comments...which include a listing of a large repertoire of Arabic terms for the private parts of the body. *Al-Sāq ala al-Saql* is thus thoroughly subversive and ironic, as al-Shidyāq flaunts his linguistic virtuosity as a means of challenging many of the cherished norms of his society. The fictionalisation of the autobiographical, the evocation of the individual voice, and the focus on societal issues, these all look ahead to the emergence of a fictional tradition in the 20th century.\(^{735}\)

The standard by which Allen comes to see al-Shidyāq as “forward looking” is informed not so much by the literary debate of the mid-nineteenth century as it is by subsequent shifts in the literary-historical discourse. This includes the ongoing and perhaps cumulative effect of generations of Arabic-speaking elites being educated in European capitals and reproducing their varied understandings of European literary modernity, as well as the work of the Translation

\(^{733}\) Starkey describes al-Shidyāq as having an “iconoclastic approach” and “an attempt to subvert the traditional maqāmahh format in the interests of a somewhat eccentric modernity.” Starkey, “Nasif Al-Yaziji,” 379.


Movement, the Dīwān School in Cairo, and the Mahjar poets in New York. All served to translate the evolving features and aesthetic standards of the short story, novel, and play into the world of Arabic letters. These genres privileged a unified (rather than episodic) plot, psychologically dynamic characters (as opposed to idealized, typological ones), and elements of surprise, suspense, and mystery (rather than familiarity). In temporal terms, modern literature becomes literature that deals — explicitly, in its content — with the contemporary world, and there is a stated preference for works that make that world recognizable.

Such ascriptions lead the aforementioned scholars, with varying degrees of nuance, to place al-Yāẓījī squarely in the traditionalist camp, in contrast to representations of his contemporaries as pioneers of Arabic literary modernity. As indicative of this trend, J. Brugman, in *An Introduction to the History of Modern Arabic Literature in Egypt*, calls al-Yāẓījī “an almost rigid imitator” and a “neoclassicist” whose work “is often a pure pastiche of al-Mutanabbi and sometimes looks like a mere lexicological exercise.” In contrast, Brugman describes the poetry of Maḥmūd Sāmī al-Bārūdī (1839-1904) as “full of life” and “highly topical” “in spite of [his] strongly classicist traits.” Similarly, Starkey dismisses *Majmaʿ al-Bahrayn* as “in no sense original” and al-Yāẓījī’s approach as “essentially imitative.”

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737 Jan Brugman, *An Introduction to the History of Modern Arabic Literature in Egypt* (Leiden: Brill, 1984), 13, fn 14. Brugman’s comment is part of a response to Shmuel Moreh’s article “Poetry in Prose”, which holds that Christian Arabs “were more inclined” to modern poetic techniques due to their liturgical literature. In essence, Brugman views al-Yāẓījī as an imitator despite his Christianity (which would otherwise have made him more inclined to “modern” poetic techniques). See Shmuel Moreh, “Poetry in Prose (al-Shīr al-Manthūr) in Modern Arabic Literature,” *Middle Eastern Studies* 4, no. 4 (1968): 333ff.
739 Starkey, “Nāṣif Al-Yaziji”, 379.
741 Moosa
labels al-Yāzījī “a perpetuator rather than a modifier of medieval Arabic literary models,” calling his maqāmāt “largely anachronistic, primarily because of their blindly imitative use of pre-Islamic and Islamic settings and themes.” Moosa argues that al-Yāzījī’s “prime purpose, as his introduction to Majma‘ al-Baḥrayn implies, was purely conservative and didactic.” Starkey agrees that al-Yāzījī is “an essentially conservative scholar, with few, if any, of the popularizing or progressive tendencies of contemporaries such as Faris al-Shidyaq or the Egyptian Rifa‘ah Rafi’ al-Tahtawi.”

Al-Yāzījī was writing within a set of aesthetic standards determined by the specific history of the maqāma genre. This genre has served as a social commentary on contemporary issues since the time of al-Hamadhānī, a role curiously denied to Majma‘ al-Baḥrayn on account of its author’s alleged lack of originality and purely imitative approach to Arabic literary history. Historicizing the text within the particular circumstances of political and cultural turmoil in mid-nineteenth century Beirut can help to peel away the layers of subsequent meaning applied to the terms “tradition” and “modernity.” In so doing, we can decenter (although not dismiss) the powerful but misleading historiographical narrative that links the emergence of the European novel with literary modernity in the Arabic-speaking world. Decoupling literary modernity from the production of the novel, or in other words, challenging the English historiography of Arabic literary modernity, allows us to see literary modernity as a site of contest and debate in which al-Yāzījī was immersed.

742 Moosa, The Origins of Modern Arabic Fiction, 95.
7.3 Innovation

*Majmaʿ al-Bahrāyn* is a magisterial product of the *Nahḍa* for a number of reasons, not least among them its sophistication and beauty as a work of literature. The work is distinguished by its vast field of allusions, subtle innovations, stylistic grace, and a measure of chaste humor. Moreover, it makes pointed and early interventions in a number of key intellectual debates of the period, from questions of language reform to sectarianism, and from women's role in society to the relevance of Arabic cultural heritage (*turāth*). Finally, the text deftly navigates the tensions of the debate about tradition and modernity which preoccupied many of al-Yāzījī's peers and continues to haunt the scholarship on the *maqāma* and Arabic literature to this day. In particular, as I have argued in the preceding chapters, *Majmaʿ al-Bahrāyn* weaves back and forth between the emulation of the *maqāma*’s generic conventions, the subtle but systematic introduction of literary innovation, and the repurposing of familiar formal features with new and often quite contemporary relevance for an audience attempting to reconcile the contradictions of colonial modernity.

Seen in this light, it is difficult to agree with those influential scholars who have dismissed *Majmaʿ al-Bahrāyn* as “in no sense original”\(^{746}\) and “blindly imitative”\(^{747}\). Rather, *Majmaʿ al-Bahrāyn* should be treated as a striking experiment to test the limits of old narrative forms and new modes of textual reproduction in a period when the manner, site, and audience of *maqāma* performance were dramatically changing. It introduces new characters, including the female protagonist Laylā, into roles previously reserved for adult male characters. In so doing, it


decouples the long-standing link within the *maqāma* genre between male homosociality and eloquence. Furthermore, Majmaʿ al-Bahrayn presents a dizzying array of formal structures, many multiplied by the new characters and the additional narrative stages and elaborate performance types introduced to accommodate them. Such innovations not only broaden the scope of a *maqāma*’s structure, but also allow al-Yāzijī to comment, persistently if obliquely, on pressing contemporary social questions, from the role of women in Levantine society to the value of the past for a modern literary language—if only we can hear him.

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Sedgwick, Eve Kosofsky. Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire. New York:


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Appendix A: Maqāma Authors, 1750-Present

This index comprises authors of the maqāma genre from 1750 to present. The names of those authors central to this study are in bold. Those entries that display maqāma-like features but may not fully satisfy the formal conditions of the genre are presented in brackets. Those entries not listed in Hämeen-Anttila (2002) are indicated with an asterisk before the name of the contributor or the text.

1. Aḥmad al-Aركالī (d. in Medina, 1749)
2. Muṣṭafā al-Bakrī al-ṣadīq (d. 1749, in Egypt)
   a. Twelve maqāmāt
3. Abū ʾl-Barakāt Jamālādīn ʿAbdallah ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn Marʾī al-Baghdādī al-Suwaydī al-Dūrī (b. in Karkh 1692, d. in Baghdad 1760)
   c. Ms: Ahlwardt (1980), no. 8577 and no. 8578
4. Yūsuf bin Salīm bin Aḥmad al-Ḥifnī al-Shāfīʿī (d. 1764)
   a. Two maqāmāt:
      i. Maqāmāt al-muḥākama baynaʾl-mudām waʾl-zuḥūr (copied 1759, according to Ahlwardt)
      ii. Al-Maqāma al-ḥifnīyya (composed, 1756)
5. Muṣṭafā Asʿad ibn Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Luqaymī al-Dimyāṭī (d. 1764)
   a. Naḥfat al-ṣafā bi-bushr al-ṣiḥḥa waʾl-shafā
6. Muḥammad ibn Riḍwān al-Suyūṭī ibn al-Ṣalāḥī (d. 1766)
   a. Maqāma fī madh rusūl Allāh

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7. Abū’l-Ḥasan ‘Alī al-Ghurāb al-Safāqasī (Tunisia, d. 1766 or 1769)
   a. Three maqāmāt:
      i. al-Maqāma al-Hindiyya (composed 1766)
      ii. al-Maqāma al-Bāhīyya
      iii. al-Maqāma al-ʿAbāʾiyya (or al-ṣābāniyya)
8. ʿAbdallāh ibn ʿAbdallāh ibn Salāma al-Idkāwī al-Miṣrī al-Shāfīʿī (b. in Idku 1692, d. 1770)
   a. Two maqāmāt:
      i. al-Maqāma al-Taṣḥīfiyya (also called al-Maqāma al-Sikandariyya)
      ii. al-Maqāma al-qumudīyya (?)
   d. Note: Peter Gran claims that these maqāmāt were written in praise of the author’s patrons, ʿAbdullah al-Shubrāwī and Muḥammad al-Ḥifnāwī (Gran 1998: 59).
9. Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Warghī Abū ʿAbdallāh (d. in Tunis, 1776)
   a. Three maqāmāt:
      i. al-Maqāma al-Bāhīyya
      ii. al-Maqāma al-Khitāniyya
      iii. al-Maqāma al-Khamrīyya
   c. Edition: Tunis 1972
10. ʿUthmān ibn ʿAlī ibn ʿUmar (or Murād) al-ʿUmarī al-Daftarī Abūʾl-Nūr ʿĪṣāmaddīn (b. in Mosul, 1721, d. in Istanbul, 1779)
    a. al-Maqāma al-Dujaylīyya wa-l-maqāla al-ʿUmariyya
    c. Ms: See Ziriklī (1990) 4:211
11. Aḥmad ibn Ibrāhīm al-Rasmī al-Ḥanafī al-Karīdī Shihābaddīn Abūʾl-Kamāl (b. in Crete, 1694, d. 1783 in Istanbul)
    a. Al-Zulālīyya al-Bishārīyya
    c. Ms: Ahlwardt (1980), no. 8581:3 [fol. 21b-23a]
12. ʿAbdarrahmān ibn Jārālālah al-Banānī al-Maghribī (d. 1784)
    a. Taʾīq on al-Maqāma al-Taṣḥīfiyya of ʿAbdallāh al-Idkāwī (listed above)
    c. Ms: Ahlwardt (1980), no. 8581: 2
13. Ahmad al-Armanāzī (perhaps 18th cent.)
   a. *Maqāmāt

   a. Jāmiʿat al-amthāl azīzat al-amthāl
   c. Ms: Ahlwardt (1980), no. 8582

15. Murtaḍā al-Zabīdī (b. in Baljram, India 1732, d. in Cairo, 1790)
   a. Nine maqāmāt:
      i. Isʿāf al-ashrāf
      ii. *Maqāma* for Ḥasan b. Salāma al-Ṭayyibī al-Fuwwī
         1. Ref: Reichmuth (2009): 116, No. 93
      iv. *Al-Maqāma al-Dajwiyya*
      v. *Al-Maqāma al-Naqiyya*
         1. Ref: Reichmuth (2009): 116, No. 95
      vi. *Al-Maqāma al-Sundusiyya*
      viii. *Rawḥ al-Rūḥ bi-mā jarā lanā bi-Maḥalla*
         1. Ref: Reichmuth (2009): 126, No. 152
         1. Ref: Reichmuth (2009): 139, No. 220 and 61–2, 96 (fn 48), 139
         2. Notes: Ziriklī (1990: 7:297–8) reports the title as Tuhfat al-Qamāʾīl fī madh sayykh al-ʿArab Ismāʾīl and also claims it is an autograph copy. Gran (1998: 258) asserts it is held in manuscript in Dar al-Kutub, Cairo, 616 Taymūr Adab, 1770/1184.

16. *Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Qawwās* (From Damascus or Aleppo, d. 1789)
a. Nine maqāmāt, entitled Riyyād al-āzhār wa nasīm al-āshār. The contents of the Zakiyya ms. listed below are as follows:
   i. ʿAl-Makīyya (pp. 11-31)
   ii. ʿAl-Qāhirīyya (pp. 31-70)
   iii. ʿAl-Damyāṭiyya (pp. 71-91)
   iv. ʿAl-Ṣafidīyya (pp. 91-128)
   v. ʿAl-Dimashqīyya (pp. 128-167)
   vi. ʿAl-Ṭarablusīyya (pp. 167-226)
   vii. ʿAl-Ḥamawīyya (pp. 226-280)
   viii. ʿAl-Anṭākiyya (pp. 280-325)
   ix. ʿAl-Ḥalabiyya (pp. 325-375)

b. Ref: Ḥasan (1974): 64

c. Ms: This collection of nine maqāmāt is available in three manuscript copies at Dār al-Kutub in Cairo:
   (1) 286 Zakiyya (375 pp); (2) 2359 Adab (96 folio pages, 192 pp); (3) 619 Adab Taymur (p. 217)

17. Abūʾl-Maḥāmīd Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn Abīʾl-Barakāt ʿAbdallāh ibn Ḥusayn ibn Marījī al-Suwaydī al-ʿAbbāsī al-Baghdādī (b. 1740, d. 1795)
   a. One maqāma
   c. Ms: Ahlwardt (1980), no. 8579 [fol. 52b-64]

18. Abū Muḥammad ʿAbdallāh al-ʿAzārīfī (d. 1799)
   a. One maqāma

19. Ḥasan ibn ʿAlī al-Badrī (d. 1800)
   a. One maqāma
   c. Ms: Nemoy (1956), A-420 [7 fols.]

20. Ahmad bin ʿAlī al-Yāfī (d. 1806 [1221])
   a. ʿAl-Maqāma al-Yāfawiyya (composed in praise of Muḥammad Khalīl al-Murādī)

   a. Maqāmāt (probably Sufi)

22. Ahmad al-Barbīr (b. in Damietta, Egypt 1747, d. in Damascus 1811)
   a. Two maqāmāt:
      i. Maqāmāt al-Barbīr
      ii. Maqāma fī l-mufkhara bayna l-māʾ waʾl-hawāʾ (digital)

23. ʿAbduḷqādir ibn ʿAbdallāṭīf ibn ʿUmar ibn Abī Bakr ibn Luṭfī al-Ṭabarulusī al-Ḥamawī,
known as al-Râfiʿī (b. in Tripoli, Syria, d. there in 1815)

a. Two maqâmât:
   i. Al-Maqâma fi ṣifat al-safina wa-qad ṣażuma ṣalayhā mawj al-bahr wa l-rîh al-ʿāṣif
   ii. Maqâma fi l-mufâkhara bayna ḥims wa-ḥamâh

24. Muḥammad al-Ḥifnî al-Mahdî (1737-1815)
   c. Note: translated into French by J. Marcel as Contes du Cheykh el-Mohdy.

25. Abūʾl-Fayḍ Ḥamdûn ibnʿ Abdarrahmān ibn Ḥamdûn ibnʿ Abdarrahmān ibn al-Ḥājj al-Sulamî al-Mirdâsî al-Fâsî (b. in Fâs 1760, d. 1817)
   a. Al-Maqâmât al-ḥamdûniyya

26. Ḥanânîyyâ al-Munayyâr (1756 – 1823)
   a. Four maqâmât

27. Muḥammad Ghiyâthaddîn ibnʿ Alî al-Qūnawi al-Ḥanâfî al-Khalwatî (wrote in 1809)
   a. Maqâla durriyya fi maqâma fâriyya

28. Niqûlâ al-Turk (d. 1828)
   a. Eleven maqâmât (composed 1804-1815, first (?) printed in 1858)
      i. Al-Maqâma al-Dayriyya, begun on 12 Nîsân 1804
      ii. Al-Maqâma al-Labnâniyya
      iii. Al-Maqâma al-Kânûniyya, begun on 26 Kânûn al-Thânî 1811
      iv. Al-Maqâma al-Maghîriyya (?), begun on 4 Kânûn al-Thânî 1813
      v. Al-Maqâma al-Shamaṣṭâriyya (or Shamaṣṭâriyya), begun on 21 Ādâh 1806
      vi. Al-Maqâma al-Qâdiyya, begun on 11 Ādâh 1807
      vii. Al-Maqâma al-Kasrawâniyya, begun on 16 Shubâṭ 1809
      viii. Al-Maqâma al-ʾAkâwiyya, composed after al-Dayriyya (1804) and al-Qâdiyya (1807)
      ix. Al-Maqâma al-Shûfiyya
      x. Al-Maqâma al-Ṣaydâwiyya, begun on 3 Kânûn al-Awwal 1815
      xi. Al-Maqâma al-ʾĪsâwiyya

29. Abūʾl-Fawz al-Shaykh Muḥammad al-Suwaydî al-Baghdaḍî (d. 1831)
a. *Maqāmāt*

30. ʿĪsāʾil al-Tamīmī (d. 1832)
   a. *Maqāma fī ḥaqq al-shaykh sayyidī ʿĪsāʾil qāḍī al-ḥaḍra al-ʿaliyya bi-Tūnis*

31. Al-Zayyānī (b. 1734, d. 1833)
   a. *Maqāma fī dhamm al-rijāl*

32. Muḥammad Nūraddin ibn ʿAbd al-Razzāk ibn ʿĪsā ibn Aḥmad al-Tirmānī al-Ḥalabī (b. in Tirmānīn, near Aleppo, 1784, d. 1834)
   a. *Fī wasf zalzāl bi-Ḥalab sana 1237*

33. Ḥasan ibn Muḥammad al-ʿĀṭṭār (b. in Cairo, 1766, d. 1834 or 1835)
   a. *Al-Maqaṭāma fī 'l-Faransūs*
   c. Ms: al-Ḥulw (1986), no. 360
   d. Note: Hafiz (1993: 282, fn. 20) claims that al-ʿĀṭṭār wrote multiple *maqāmāt*, of which only one was published in print form along with the *maqāmāt* of al-Suyūṭī. He reports that the others are held in manuscript form at the Egyptian National Library, no. 7574.

34. ʿAmīn al-Jundī (1766-1841)
   a. Note: Ziriklī (1990: 2:16) makes no mention that al-Jundī, who was born and died in Homs, ever travelled to let alone resided at Dayr al-Qamar. See also al-Bayṭar's *Ḥilīyat al-Bashr*, Cheikho's *Al-ʿĀdab al-ʿArabiyya*, 1:50, and Zaydān's *Adab*, 4:233.

35. ʿAbdallāṭīf ibn ʿAlī Fathallāh (d. 1844)
   a. *Maqāmāt*
   c. Ms: See Ziriklī (1990): 4:60

36. ʿAbdallāḥ al-Sukkārī (19th cent.)
   a. *al-Maqaṭāma al-saniyya fīmā takalamahū ḥāl al-risāla al-durriyya*

37. Mīrāzī Riyāḍ Jaʿfar al-Hamadānī (d. 1852)

38. Abūʾl-Ṭanāh Maḥmūd ibn ʿAbdallāḥ al-Alūsī al-Haṣanī al-Ḥusaynī al-Baghdādī Shihāb al-Dīn (b. in Baghdad, 1802 – d. there in 1854)
   a. *Maqāmāt* (Composed in 1822; published in 1854)
I wish to thank Dr. Hilary Kilpatrick for bringing this author and the related references to my attention.

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748 I wish to thank Dr. Hilary Kilpatrick for bringing this author and the related references to my attention.

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39. Naṣīf al-Yāẓīḥī (b. in Kafīr Shīmā, 1800; d. in Beirut, 1871)
a. Majma’ al-Bā’hrayn (Beirut, 1856)

40. *Rifā’ah Rāfī’at al-Ṭaḥtwā’ī (1801-1873)
   a. [Mawāqī’ al-āflāk fī waqā’ī telīmāk (1867)]

41. Al-Sayyid Mājid al-Bā’hānī (19th cent?)
a. Maqāmāt (ms written in 1864)

42. Muṣṭafā Rushdī ibn Ismā’īl, known as al-Adakdak (alive 1864)
a. One maqāma

43. Muṣṭafā ibn Bayrām al-Rūmī, known as Mu’aṣīrāt-zāde (late 19th cent?)
a. Maqāmāt al-‘akīf (10 maqāmāt in the style of al-Ḥarīrī)

44. ’Abdallāh ibn Muṣṭafā al-Fayḍī al-Mawṣīlī (late 19th cent)
a. One maqāma

45. Al-Ḥasan bn Aḥmad al-Ḍamaḏī, a.k.a. ‘Ākīsh (From Tihama, d. 1872)
   a. One maqāma

46. Abū ’Abdallāh Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad Akānsūs (or al-Kānsūsī) al-Marrākushī (b. in Sūs
   1796, d. in Marrakesh 1877)
a. One maqāma

47. Śāliḥ Majdī (1827? – 1880/1)
a. Dīwān, published 1311H.
c. Note: Moosa lists Śāliḥ Majdī twice as a contributor to the maqāma tradition. In
   Majdī’s Dīwān, there are three very short instances of rhyming prose: the first is
   praise for the Khedive Ismail (p. 280), the second a note sent to him by a
   contemporary (p. 323), and the third a eulogy (p. 358). I have been unable to find
   any evidence that he wrote a maqāma.

48. Yusuf al-Ḥānī al-Ghazīrī (b. in Aleppo, d. 1881 or 1885)
a. Al-Maqāma al-ghazīriyya wa l-qāfiya al-ḥamāsiyya (Beirut, 1872)
c. Note: This author was born Manṣūr al-Hamsh. Hafiz (1993: 110) mistakenly treats the two as separate authors.

49. Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn ʿAlawi al-Ḥusaynī al-ʿAlawi al-Mihdār (b. Ḥḍramawt, 1802, d. in al-Quwayra, 1886)
   a. Maqāmāt (undetermined number)

50. Aḥmad Fāris al-Shidyāq (b. in ʿAshqūt, 1801; d. in Qāḍikūy, 1887)
   a. Five maqāmāt
      i. Four maqāmāt in Al-Sāq ʿalā al-Sāq (Paris 1855)
      ii. Al-Maqāma al-Bakhshishiyya (Reprinted in Kanz al-Gharāʾib, 1872)

51. ʿAbdallāh Bāshā Fikrī (b. in Mecca, 1834 – d. in Cairo, 1889 or 1890)
   a. Taʿrīb al-mamlaka al-bāṭiniyya and others (translated from Turkish?)

52. ʿAlī Riḍā ibn Maḥmūd al-ʿUmarī (b. 1832, d. in Baghdad 1890)
   a. Maqāmāt (undetermined number)

53. Ibrāhīm al-Aḥdab (b. in Tripoli, 1826, d. in Beirut, 1891)
   a. 88 maqāmāt in the style of al-Ḥarīrī

54. ʿAlī ibn Maḥmūd al-Sūsī al-Simlālī Abūʾl-Ḥasan (d. in Fās 1893)
   a. Maqāmāt (undetermined number)

55. ʿAbdallāh Nadīm (1845 - 1896)
      b. Ref: Moosa (1997): xi, 127, 398 (fn. 9)
      c. Print text: Printed in 1316H/1898 or 9, by Jūrjī Kartashī al-Miṣrī in Egypt.

56. Amīn Shumayyīl (b. in Kafr Shimā, 1828; d. in Egypt, 1897)
   a. Al-Mubtakīr. Contains five maqāmāt interspersed with qaṣāʾid:
      i. Al-Maqāma al-ṭafāliyya (pp. 9-23)
      ii. Al-Maqāma al-ʿAlawīyya (pp. 33-45)
      iii. Al-Maqāma al-ʿAdamīyya (pp. 61-75)
      iv. Al-Maqāma al-Ḍalāliyya (pp. 108-115)
      v. Al-Maqāma al-Shukūkiyya (pp. 125-143)
      c. Note: Completed in Liverpool, England, in 1867. Printed (or reprinted?) in Beirut, 1869.

57. Abū Naṣr Yaḥyā al-Salawī (?) (fl. 1884)
a. Two *maqāmāt*
   

58. Niqūlā al-Zanānīrī (fl. 1895)
   
a. *Shajarat al-ḥaqq: Maqāma fī al-dīn* (Published in Alexandria, 1895)
   

59. ‘Abd Allāh al-Sukarī (fl. 1878)
   
   

60. Idrīs ibn ‘Alī ibn al-Ghāfīl al-Sinānī (b. in Fas, d. there 1901)
   
a. *Al-Maḥqama al-mughniyya ‘an al-mudāma*
   

61. *‘Aḥsha Taymūriyyah* (1840-1902)
   
a. [*Natā’ī j al-Abwāl fī l-Aqwāl wa l-Af’āl* (1888)]
   

62. Ḥasan Efendi Tawfīq ibn Ḥadīth Mūsā Ibn ‘Īṣām (nine episodes)
   
a. *Al-Maḥqama al-‘adliyya wa l-маqāma al-‘adhūliyya*
   

63. Ibrāhīm Muwayliḥī (d. 1906)
   
a. *Mīrā’ Al-‘alām, Aw, Hadīth Mūsā Ibn ‘Īṣām*
   
   

64. Khalīl ibn Sālih al-Ḥashamī al-Khālidī (b. in Tilimsān, d. in Fāṣ 1908)
   
a. One *maqāma*
   

65. Muḥammad Nūrī ibn Aḥmad ibn ‘Abdalwahhāb al-Kīlānī (d. 1908)
   
a. *Al-Maḥqama al-zaytiyya*
   
   
c. Note: Includes an autocommentary
   

66. Muḥammad Khayr Abū’l-Ḥasan (b. 1880, d. 1911, both in Damascus)
   
a. *Maqāma khīyāliyya*
   

67. Muḥammad al-Mubārak (b. 1847, Beirut; d. 1912, Damascus)
   
a. Multiple *maqāmāt*:
      i. *Abhā maqāma fī l-mufākhara bayna l-ghurba wa l-iqāma*
      ii. *Al-maḥqama al-adabīyya*
      iii. *Al-maḥqama al-lughzīyya*
iv. *Maqāmāt al-munāzara bayna l-ʿilm wa-l-jahl*

68. Nāfiʿ ibn al-Jawhari (b. 1834, Tilbana, Egypt, d. there 1912)
   a. Two *maqāmāt*:
      i. *Murūj al-Dhahab*
      ii. *Al-Maqaṣma al-Saʿfāniyya* (fukāhiyya)

69. Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī al-Ṭāhir al-Jabari (d. before 1913)
   a. *Maqāmāt al-ʿAwālī* (12 *maqāmāt*)
   b. Ref: Hämeen-Anttila (2002): 407; Katsumata (2002: 123) claims these *maqāmāt* were composed in the Moroccan dialect.

70. ʿAbdassalām al-Mukāib (d. 1913)
   a. Two *maqāmāt* in the style of al-Ḥarīrī

71. Muḥammad Makkī (1854-1916)
   a. *Maqāmāt al-mufākhara bayna l-ṣayf wa-l-shitāʾ*

72. Saʿīm al-Bishrī (1867-1917)
   a. *Al-Maqāma al-saniyya fiʾl-radd ʿalāʾ l-qāḍiḥ fiʾl-ḥadhaʾ al-nabāwīyya*

73. Maḥmūd Efendi Ḥasanī (?)
   a. *Al-Maqāma al-ḥasaniyya wa-l-shadhara al-dhahabiyya al-adabiyya*
   c. Composed: 1872; Printed: ~1887 [1304 H], Būlāq

74. Maḥmūd Rashīd Efendi (20th century)
   a. *Maqāmāt al-ḥaqīqa wa-l-khayāl*
   c. Printed: 1913, Cairo

75. Muḥammad Sharīf al-Bayyūmī (1861-1925)
   a. *Al-Maqāma al-sharfiyya fi mazāyā al-lughā al-ʿarabīyya*
   c. Printed: ~1889 [1306 H], al-Maṭbaʿa al-khayriyya
   d. Note: Hämeen-Anttila notes that this figure might be confused for another figure of unknown dates

76. ʿAbdallāh Bāḥasān (1861-1928)
   a. Untitled *maqāmāt*

77. Aḥmad ibn al-Maʿmūn al-Bilghīthī (d. 1930)
a. *Al-Maqāma al-firāqīyya

78. Muḥammad al-Muwayliḥī (1858-1930)
a. Ḥadīth ʿĪsā bin Hisbām, ʿAw Fatra min al-Zaman (1898-1902)

79. *Sulaymān Faydī al-Mawṣilī (?)
a. *Al-Riwaḥa al-īqāzīyya (1919)

80. Ḥāfīz Ibrāhīm (1872-1932)
a. Layāli ṣafīḥ (1909)

81. Amīn al-Rīḥānī (1876-1940)
a. *Al-Maqāma al-Kabkayyīyya
b. Published: Al-Muqtaṭaf 88, no. 3 (March 1936): 312-314

82. *Sāliḥ al-Suwaysī (1871-1941)
a. Multiple maqāmāt
b. Ref: Katz (2012)

83. *ʿAlī al-Dūʿājī (1909-1949)

a. Al-Rihla al-Marākushīyya aw mirʾāt al-maṣāʾ il al-waqtiyya

85. *Muḥammad Luṭfī Jumā (1886-1953)
a. Layālī al-Rūḥ al-hāʾ ir (1912)

86. Muḥammad Farīd Wajdī (1878-1954)
a. Al-Wajdiyyāt
c. Published: 1910, Cairo

87. *James Sanua (b. 1839 - d. 1912, Paris)
a. *Al-Maqāma al-Hazaliyya* (known as *Al-Maqāma al-Inkliziyya*)

b. Published in Abū Naẓṣara in 1897

88. Bayram al-Tūnisī (1893-1961)

a. *Maqāmāt Bayram al-Tūnisī*


89. Shaʿūbī Ibrāhīm Khalīl (b. 1926-)

a. *Al-Maqāmāt*


90. Muḥammad al-Bashīr al-Ibrāhīmī (d. 1965)

a. Two works

i. *Munājāt mabtūra li-dawāʾi al-ḍarūra* (1941)

ii. *Sajʾ al-kuhhān* (1949)


91. Najīb Ḥankash (d. 1977)

a. *Al-Maqāmāt al-hankashiyya* (Beirut, 1964)


92. Abbās al-Aswānī (d. 1979)

a. Two works:

i. *Al-Maqāmāt al-Aswāniyya*

ii. *Aʾid min al-akhira*


a. *[Al-Waqāʾiʿ al-gharība fīʾl-ikhtifāʾ Saʿīd Abī al-naḥs al-mutashāʾīl]*


b. Ref: Young (1978)


96. Ḥabd al-Salām al-ʿUjaylī (Al-Raqqa, Syria 1917?-2006)

a. 12 *maqāmāt*, including one by Nizār Qabbānī (see above) and another by an anonymous author (1963, Damascus)

b. Ref: Young (1978)

97. *Najīb al-ʿAṭṭār (?)

a. One *maqāma*

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749 My gratitude to Hana Sleiman for first bringing this *maqāma* to my attention.
b. Ref: Nasrallah (1958): Vol. 4, Nos. 122.8 and 122.9


98. *Rājī al-Yāzijī (?)

a. *Al-Maqāma al-Ḥadītha

b. Ref: Nasrallah (1958): Vol. 4, No. 166.6

c. Ms: Majmūʿa mukhtalifat al-mawdūʿāt min ṣāḥīh al-mashāyiḥ al-Yāzijīyyīn (ʿĪsā Iskandar Ma’lūf Collection, AUB Archives, No. 1875 or 1873), pp. 419-430.
Appendix B: Corpus Authors' Bibliographies

1. Aḥmad al-Barbīr

1. Maqāmāt al-Barbīr
   b. Ms: Dār al-Kutub al-Maṣriyya, Cairo, Egypt, No. 480 Adab

2. Maqāma fī l-mufākhara bayna l-māʾ wa-l-hawāʾ (1195/1781 or after)
   a. Desc: A dialogue between water and air. Each element asserts its superiority over the other and claims to be more necessary for life, citing Qurʾānic verse and poetry. Water is the ultimate victor. Al-Walī (August 1972: 18) argues that a qaṣīda at the end of the text suggests it was dedicated to ʿAbd al-Raḥman al-Murādī.
   b. Ms: Vatican Library, Rome, Italy, No. 1741. The catalogue record reports the date 1 Rabīʿ al-Awwal 1298 (January 31, 1881), likely the date the text was copied.

3. Zahr al-ghayda fī dhikr al-fayḍa (1206/1791 or after)
   a. Desc: A risāla that describes in prose and verse the flood of Damascus when the Bardā River overflowed in 1206/1791.

4. Al-Sharḥ al-jāliʿ alā baytay al-Mawṣīlī
a. Desc: A work of literature (adab), language (lugha), and criticism (naqd).


5. Al-Faṣīḥa al-ʿajmā fī l-lalām ʿalā ḥadīth: “Aḥbab ḥabībaka hawnan mā”
   b. Ms: According to the print edition, the Ms. can be found in the Zāhiriyya catalogue, Majmūʿ 10049, pp. 139-142. (I have been unable to substantiate this citation.)

6. ‘Iqd al-jumān wa-l-shuzūr al-yāqūt wa-l-marjān fī-l-mazāyā allatī yadullu ʿalayhā ism Sulaymān
   b. Ms: Cheikho (1913): 110 (Ms. no. 114).750

7. Dalāʿīl al-iʿjāz fī l-ḥājājī wa-l-muʿamman wa-l-alghāz
   a. Desc: An epistle (risāla) for the Emīr Ḥasan al-Shihābī which begins with a riddle (muʿamman) on the word “ḥasan”.
   b. Ms: Zāhiriyya Catalogue, Majmūʿ number 10049 (pp. 178A – 181B). Al-Maʿlūf (1914: 349) claims that al-Barbīr composed the text for his student, Qāsim ibn Bashīr Junblāt.

8. Iqtibās āy al-Qurʿān fī madh ʿayn al-aʿyān

9. Sīrat ḥayāṭīti al-dhātiyya

750 Note that the same page is referred to as 110 and 470.
10. *Qasīda hadī’iyya*
   b. Note: Muṣṭafā bin ‘Abd al-Wahhāb bin Sa‘īd al-Ṣalāḥī (d. 1265/1849) wrote a commentary on this poem.

11. *Tashṭīr al-Burda*

12. *Sharḥ ‘alā qasīdat al-Shaykh Muḥiy al-Dīn bin ‘Arabī*
   a. Al-Ma‘lūf (1914): 349

   a. Al-Ma‘lūf (1914): 349


15. *Risāla fī tahqīq zuhūr al-mahdī* (composed 1223/1808)
   a. Ref: Al-Ma‘lūf (1914): 349
   b. Ms (2 copies):
      i. Qazmā (1985): 482. (Appendix I: entry 185, section 9b)


2. *Niqūlā al-Turk*

1. *Maqāmāt* (composed 1804-1815)
   a. Ms (7 copies):
      i. Al-Maktaba al-Sharqiyya at the University of al-Qadīs Yūsuf, No. 298. This is the manuscript which Fu‘ād al-Bustānī selected as the matn or principal text, due to its completeness, despite not being the oldest extant witness. The scribe was a certain Yūsuf bin Jarjis, originally from Aleppo, who
settled in Dair al-Qamar. He completed copying the manuscript on 29 Āẓār 1859 (24 Shubāṭ 1275 H.)

ii. Al-Maktaba al-Sharqiyya at the University of al-Qadīs Yūsuf, No. 285. Completed in 1852 by the scribe Ibrāhīm Ṭawdā.

iii. Dār al-Kutub al-Lubnāniyya, No. 69. Name of copyist and date unavailable, however the text was in the possession of a certain ḥanā Abī Rāshid on 21 ḥazīrān, 1912.

iv. The American University of Beirut (AUB), MS 892.71/T93. Text was transferred to AUB from the library of ʿĪsā Iskandar al-Maʿlūf in 1928, and is distinguished by an introduction and marginalia penned by al-Maʿlūf himself. Name of copyist and date are not recorded.

v. Maktabat Dair al-Qadīs Būlis in Ḥarīṣā, No. 99. This is the oldest manuscript, dated 16 Āẓār 1845, however it contains many errors and lacks sections (although the maqāmāt are extant).

vi. Maktabat ʿĪsā Iskandar al-Maʿlūf, No. 1705. Completed on 21 April 1850. Copyist’s name is reported as Mīkhīyāl ʿArab al-Shalfūn. Al-Bustānī speculates that perhaps this is Ibn ʿArab al-Shalfūn, who had served the Amir ḥasan ʿAlī al-Shihābī and was a friend of Niqūlā al-Turk.

vii. The seventh manuscript, discovered during the course of research, has been miscataloged under the name of the adīb, Abū l-Nawādir, rather than the author (a mistaken attribution that the wily adīb might have appreciated). For the manuscript, see Dīwān Maqāmāt wa Qaṣāʾid, attributed to Abū l-Nawādir, in the catalogue of The High Institute for Islamic Studies, Beirut, Lebanon, 14/27, p. 149.

2. Miscellaneous literary works

a. Nuzhat al-khawāţir

i. Desc: A collection of entertaining anecdotes and expressions


b. Ode Arabe sur la Conquête de l'Égypte

i. Print Edition: Marcel, Jean Joseph, trans. Ode Arabe sur la Conquête de
3. Historical accounts

a. Ḥawādith al-zamān fī Jabal Lubnān
   i. Ms. listed in the AUB Appendix 3:393

b. Dhikr tamalluk jamhūriyyat al-Faransawiyya al-āqṭār al-Maṣriyya wa-l-Bilād al-Shāmiyya
   i. Desc: Account of Napoleon’s invasion of Egypt. This account covers the period from the death of the French monarch Louis XVI in 1793 until the death of Napoleon in 1821. The first half of this text (until 1801) was translated into French by Alix Desgranges, who came to know al-Turk in Dayr al-Qamar, and printed in Paris in 1839 under the titled *Histoire de l'Expédition des Français en Egypte, par Nakoula El Turk*. Aḥmad Ḥaydar al-Shihābī included al-Turk's account until 1801 in his history, entitled *al-Ghurar al-ḥisan fī akhbār ābnā’ al-zamān*, published in Fu’ād al-Bustānī and Asad Rustum, eds., *Lubnān fī ’ahd al-‘umarā’ al-Shihābiyyin* (Beirut: Publications of the Lebanese University, 1969), II: 213-340. It seems that the second half of al-Turk’s history remained, as of the early twentieth century, in manuscript.

c. Majmū’ ḥawādith al-ḥarb al-wāqi’ bayna al-Faransawiyya wa’l-Nimsāwīyya fī awākhir sanat 1804
   i. Ref: Cheikho
   ii. Print Edition: Published in Paris in 1807

d. Nuzhat al-zamān fī hawādith Lubnān
   i. Desc: an account of the Shihābī Emirs until the events which brought Bashīr al-Shihābī to power.
   ii. Ref: Cheikho
   iii. Ms: Cheikho (24) notes that *Nuzhat al-zamān* is available in manuscript in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, Fonds arabe, no. 1684.

e. Mudhakkirāt Niqūlā al-Turk: Akhbār al-mashīkha al-Faransāwīyya fī al-Diyār al-Miṣrīyya
3. Nāṣīf al-Yāzījī

Texts with an asterisks before the title includes an auto-commentary (sharḥ) by the author himself or a commentary by another writer, frequently his son Ibrāhīm al-Yāzījī.

1. *Kitāb faṣl al-khiṭāb fī uṣūl lughat al-īrāb* (1836)
   a. On syntax and morphology (nahū and šarf). Tarāzī (1913: 84) claims al-Yāzījī wrote an auto commentary on this work.
   b. Notes: According to Auji (2016: 37), “this 168-page pocket-sized book may have been the first full-fledged production to come off the press”

2. *Epistola Critica Nasīfī Al-Iāzījī* [Sic].

3. *Nabdha min dīwān al-Shaykh Nāṣīf al-Yāzījī* (1853)
   a. A 128-page collection of poetry. Auji (2016: 96, fn. 32) claims it was funded by Anṭūnīyūs al-Amyūnī.
   b. Sābā (1965: 22) reports that a second edition of this collection was edited by Ibrāhīm al-Yāzījī with a biographical introduction by Amīn al-Ḥaddād; it was printed in 1904.

4. *Lamḥat al-ṭarfī uṣūl al-šarf* (composed 1854; printed 1870)
   a. A seventeen-page primer on morphology, with an auto-commentary according to Sābā (1965: 19).

5. *Al-Jāmī’a fī ʿilm al-ʿarūḍ wa-l-qawāfī* (completed 1853)
   a. An urjuza on the poetic meters, with a commentary by his eldest son, Ḥabīb al-Yāzījī (d. 1870), entitled *Al-Lāmī’ā fī sharḥ al-Jāmī’a* (printed 1869), according to Sābā (1965: 21).

a. This text was completed in 1848 and printed in 1855, according to Sābā (1965): 20-21. It is comprised of two volumes:
   i. ‘Iqd al-jumān fī ʿilm al-bayān, on semantics and rhetoric (al-maʿānī wa-l-bayan)
   ii. Nuqṣat al-dāʿira, a study of the poetic meters and rhymes

7. *Majmaʿ al-Bahrāyn (1856)
   a. Auji (2016: 99) reports that this text was sponsored by “the renowned Greek Orthodox literary elite Nakhla al-Mudawwar (d. 1899)”

8. *Al-Hajr al-karīm fī al-tibb al-qadīm (composed 1856)
   b. Ms: A manuscript copy is held in the ʿĪsā Iskandar Maʿlūf collection (IM 253/No. 1739) at the American University in Cairo. Dhiyāb (1871: 151) claims that al-Yāzijī composed a commentary on this text.

9. *Qubṭ al-ṣanāʿa fī al-mantiq (1857)
   a. 37-page primer on the principles of analogical reasoning, published four times beginning in 1857.
   b. Al-Tadhkira fī usūl al-mantiq is likely an auto-commentary on this text. Auji (2016: 98, fn 43) reports the text is 48 pages.

10. *Al-Ṭarāz al-muʿallim (completed 1861, printed 1862)
    a. A 35-page summary of rhetoric (balāgha or bayan). Tarazī (1913: 84) reports that al-Yāzijī wrote an autocommentary on this text.

11. *Jawf al-farā fī ʿilm al-naḥū (completed 1861, printed 1863)
    a. Al-Yāzijī’s autocommentary on this longer primer was entitled “Nār al-qirā fī sharḥ Jawf al-Farā”. Auji (2016: 127, fn 150) reports that this commentary was published in 1863. The text is 339 pages long. Sābā (1965: 20) calls it “the first modern book composed on the subject.”

12. Naḥḥat al-rayḥān (1864)
    a. A 138-page collection of poetry. Edited and reprinted in 1898 by Ibrāhīm al-
Yāzījī, according to Sābā (1965: 22).


13. *Al-Jawhar al-Fard (1865)

14. Ṭawq al-ḥammama (published 1865)
   a. A twenty-page prose work on the principles of grammar (mabādīʿ al-naḥū).

15. Fākiyat al-nudāmāʾ fī murāsalat al-udābāʾ (1870)

16. *Al-Khizāna (published 1872)

17. Thālith al-qamarayn (1873 or 1883)
   b. Note: for variant publication dates, see Badawi (1969: 230, fn 1) and Sābā (1965: 20).

18. *Al-Lubāb fī uṣūl al-ʿirāb (printed 1889)
   a. A 28-page primer (arjūza) on the principles of syntax.

19. Al-ʿArf al-ṭayyib fī Dīwān Abī al-Ṭayyib (completed by Ibrāhīm al-Yāzījī)
Appendix C: Narrative Structure for *Maqāmāt al-Barbīr* (in Arabic)

مراحل الورد في مقامات الزيت

- «حكى يبلغ هذا الزمن والعصر» [١ب]
- الحوار مع النفس [١ب]
- «طوف الوادع» [٢ب]
- سطوح الْمُرْأة ومدح دمشق [٣أ]
- الدهر
- المنيّة [٤أ]
- «ضرع الدهر» [٤أ]
- «صبر ليبيي جِلْشَا» [٤ب]
- تَعْدِّي الحمق [٥أ]
النسخ والمسح [دب]

وصف مدينة دمشق وروضها [٢١]

«إذا بشخص»: قدم الأدب [٢١]

وصف الهيكلة [٢١]

«فما أحسن الأنيس قبل الإياس» [٢٦]

ما سلّك؟ [٢٧]

مسألة «ال» في «الذين آمنوا» [٢٨]

الأعماز وزيادة الخير [٨١]

خير وخير [٨١]

عمر النبيّ والتناقض [٨١]

«أنت من العرب العارية أو المستعرة؟» [٩٠]

«أنا من صميم العرب ومحضها» [٩٠]

الأدب والنسب [١٠١]
• تعرف الفنى [101أ]

• البادية والحاضره [101أ]

• «أخبرني أيُّ العرب أروملك وأيُّ القبائل جرىمتك» [101أ]

• «هل أنت من أطراف العرب أو من أشرافها؟» [101ب]

• «عواصف المنيّة» [111ب]

• «غرضي...تحصل المعاش» [111ب]

• قيح قومي [111ب-131أ]

• قصيدة «كم وجه شخص يبيه» [123-131ب]

• معارضة الرأوي على نفس الوزن [131ب]

• مضاعفة: «ولقد ساجشتني في هجو قوم» [141أ]

• «أخبرني ما الذي ألقحك بعد اختيار العزلة إلى السفر؟» [141ب]

• وصف شقائق سفره

• ألم الفراق [151أ]
• وفاء أهل الأديب وتأثره عليه [153ب]

• ميزات للمسفر [116آ]

• مسألة الأسباب واللوكل [116-163ب]

• الشباب والشيب [163ب]

• رؤية تنوّن الراوي عند الأديب [176ب]

• الأبوية، الصحابة، والأخوة (وسببية الأخوة) [176ب]

• «فقلت زنبي فقال»: حكم الأديب [185-200أ]

• السكرات الخمس [196ب]

• « وبهج غريب في الدنيا طار غرابه » [201أ]

• « الدنيا هَّرَّةُ تأكل أولادها » [204ب]

• قصيدة «وأكبر ما يضرك ما تحب » [211ب]

• حكم العاقل والظالم والبخيل والكرم [216ب]

• مناظرة الفضيل والمال [222ب]
العافية [٢٤٠]

السهول والهمو [٢٤٢]

«لا زيادة على الكفاية» [٢٤٢-٢٥٠]

شكر الراوي ومدحه للأديب [٢٥]

مقارنة الأديب بأشهر المسلمين وغيرهم [٢٥-٢٥٢]

الطيفيلي

يدعو الراوي الأديب إلى النزول في داره [٢٥-٢٦٢]

«فلما وصلنا إلى الندار دخل معنا شخص...» [٢٦]

«خذ ما شئت من هذا الطعام وانصرف عنا بسلام»

رأى الشيخ الأديب في هذا الطيفيلي [٢٧]

قصيدة الأديب في الطيفيلي [٢٧-٢٨]

مدح الراوي لقصيدة الأديب وتشجيع الأديب له [آخر]

معارضة الراوي لقصيدة الأديب [٢٨٠]
• المرأة الصالحة والزواج (28-323ب)

• «كم من حليلة وطيلة وريض ريحنة؟» (28ب)

الزواج

• الحبّ والشهوة

 المرأة الصالحة: "أغبر من الزرّاب الأعصم" []

• "والمرأة حبيبة" (29ب)

• الحاجة

 خيرات الزواج في الزواج (130ب-أ)

• "ما الذي أُلْجِأَ إلى التَّوْزِي، في تلك الحفر؟" (30ب)

• "أجمِل النساء خلقًا وأحسنهم طعاً" (31ب)

• الزوجة المثالية

• الحبّ (32ب-373ب)

• "هل مارست في زمانك الحبّ؟" (32ب)
- أول الحب وأخوه [33ب]
- «أسباب الحب الثلاثة» [33ب]
- مراحل الحب [33ب]
- وإثباتها شعر
- علامات الحب الأربعة [34ب]
- نمرات الحب [35ب]
- حب الصور البشرية عائد إلى حب الله العلي [35آ]
- حب مجنون ليلي وحكي لخالق ليلي [35ب]
- المحب والمحبوب [36آ]
- جارية الأدبي [36ب]
- وجارية أخرى ووليمة الجراد [37آ]
- رئيس من السودان [37ب]
- «إن الله تعالى لا يكمل حسن الحور العين إلا بسواه بالاذكيم»
• الغلام [37-38ب]

• فصاحة اللسان [38ب]

• "أنشدني بعض غزلك" [38ب]

• الأحاجي والأنغام [39ب]

• لغز الشعر من الأديب

• لغز ال؟ من الراوي [حتى 40ب]

• مطوية كالبرق

• "ما خير المال؟" [41ب]

• [41ب]

• انتقاد الدهر والعصر [42-44ب]

• وهل مسن الفساد دمّشق؟ [42ب]

• مكانة دمشق المخصصة [42ب]

• مدح درويش أغا الشهر بابن جعفر [43ب]

359
• ما اسمه؟ (٤٣)  

• وهو أجر من أسامة: المقارنة (٤٣)  

• الصفات السبعة (٤٣)  

• بيتان في مدحه (٤٣)  

• مدح الخطاب والربابة (٤٤)  

• بعض الفصول (٤٤)  

• الحويجة والرُّوَّجُل  

• الحكاية مال معاوية  

• حكاية ابن عباس  

• لولا هذا الجود ما سكنت دمشق: استضافة الممدوح للراوي (٤٤)  

• فساد الوقت ومشقة الغربة  

• أخبار الممدوح (٤٤)  

• كنتي بِه أجلس بحولتي: قصيدة في فقدان الأموال وبلاغ الله (٤٤-٤٥)
• جائزة الممدوح للراوي [٤٥ب]

• مرض الراوي ومساعدة الممدوح [٤٦أ]

• دعاء الراوي لإقامة الممدوح [٤٦أ]

• قصيدة في ذكر الممدوح [٤٦ب]

• قصيدة في حدودي بز الراوي [٤٦ب]

• README الممدوح بالبي والايتز [٤٦ب]

• قصيدة شكر الراوي على عطاء الممدوح [٤٦-٤٧ب]

• تأليف الأديب ومعارضته القصيرة [٤٨أ]

• يشكو الشيخ من الدهر [٤٨أ]

• مدح الأديب للممدوح [٤٨-٤٩أ]

• قصيدة الراوي رداً [٤٩أ]

• قصيدة رينا سمع الشيخ هذه الأبيات هزه الطرف وأخذه العجب» [٥٠أ]

• «فانهضنا لزيارة بحر الكرم» [٥٠أ]
• "ثمّ أنني رجعت إلى حمّي فوجدتني أخاطب نفسي ولا بدوي ولا بدير" [505]
Appendix D: Plot Summaries for *Majmaʿ al-Baḥrayn*

1. **Al-Badawiyya:** The narrator Suhayl bin ʿAbbād meets the *adīb* Maymūn al-Khizāmī, his daughter Laylā, and his servant boy Rajab in the desert. Maymūn invites Suhayl to spend the night, which they pass in pleasant conversation. In the morning, they set out together and are accosted by a group of robbers. Maymūn tricks the robbers into following Rajab into town, while he himself rides into town from another direction and alerts the population to the threat. The townspeople pour forth, arrest the thieves, and beat them. The prisoners are then taken to an emir, who offers to reward Maymūn and his party with the thieves' booty. Maymūn chastises the emir's “generosity” in gifting what is not his; the next morning, the emir's messenger arrives with a purse. Once they leave, Maymūn is gripped by joy (*ṭarab*) and recites a poem. The poem announces his name and pedigree, brags of his capacity for disguise, his love of dressing sincerity in the guise of jest, and his courage, and makes other claims typical of a wily *adīb*. When they make camp, Maymūn approaches Suhayl's camel, unties its bridle, and sends it galloping away. Suhayl gives chase, and when he returns, he finds everything gone, and a note in verse which reminds Suhayl that Maymūn saved him and owes him nothing, but leaves the she-camel regardless. The episode ends with Suhayl praising Maymūn and lamenting his departure.

2. **Al-Ḥijāziyya:** Suhayl arrives with a group of companions in al-Ḥijāz. They travel through the desert until they reach the city of Yathrib, where they spend a month. One night, they hear a long sigh followed by a despairing (*kaṭīb*) voice reciting an ode about loss and despair. The group is impressed and they invite the poet to join their group (making him an *anīs*). Unbeknownst to them, this poet is Maymūn. He tells them of his former generosity and the hardship which forced him to beg. He sought to marry his son to a girl (*jāriya*) who could care for them; her family, however, demanded a dowry. Maymūn asks his newfound companions for assistance. Each man gives him a *dīnār*, and he departs gratefully. The next morning, Suhayl goes to the poet's home, seeking the pleasure of his speech. Suhayl recognizes Maymūn, and asks if Rajab is his son the fiance (*al-khaṭīb*). Maymūn replies that he hopes Rajab will become a *khaṭīb*, in the sense of a preacher. Suhayl lingers for the whole day, enjoying Maymūn's stories and accounts of trickery. After a poem in which he curses their age (*dahr*) and cautions against unawareness, Maymūn and Suhayl share a meal in silence, then exchange more speech and finally fall asleep. When Suhayl awakes in the morning, Maymūn is gone.
3. *Al-ʿAqīqiyya*: Suhayl wakes as early as a soothsayer (zājīr) to avoid the midday summer heat and travels until he reaches the sunny plains. He sees a group (katība) and rides to catch them. It is a funeral party, with a shaykh giving a moralizing requiem (khīṭāb) about the dangers of worldly desires. His eyes fill with tears in a performance of devotion, and he is moved to recite a poem on the same topic. The funeral goers race up to kiss his hands and receive blessings by touching his cloak (burda). Each gives him a reward, and he departs with them in tow. He then meets a beautiful woman (Laylā), described as one of the hur al-jinān. Her presence irritates him (taʿaffā), and he grumbles that he would have divorced her if he did not need companionship. He tells the audience he married her during his travels, but she has fallen ill and has trouble keeping up. A boy comes forward and offers his horse, a second reward. The crowd returns home proud of their good deed. It is at this point that Suhayl recognizes the adīb. He pretends to be among the departing crowd so he can observe and follow Maymūn and Laylā as they head to a farm (daskara) on the road, next to a spring (ʿaqīq). As he watches, they spread out a blanket in the shade and begin to imbibe. Maymūn teases (yughāzala) his daughter. As the wine begins to take effect, Maymūn composes a poem in praise of the wine and justifying his trickery and theft by saying that the funeral goers benefited from his sermon. When he finished his “suspicious composition” (inshādihī al-murīb), Suhayl reveals himself, demanding to know if the woman is Maymūn's wife (ḥalīla) or his girlfriend (khalīla). Maymūn responds, “There is but a dot between them”. The alcohol has reached his head, he adds, and tied his tongue; he promises to reveal what is hidden another day. The episode concludes with Suhayl confiding that he realized that this was just Maymūn’s “khāza ‘balāt” (empty words meant to arouse laughter). Suhayl forgives his friend and departs.

4. *Al-Shāmiyya*: Suhayl visits a sick friend in Syria (al-Shām). He asks after him and listens to his complaints until the doctor arrives in a robe and with a cane. Suhayl recognizes the doctor as Maymūn in disguise, but the latter gestures to Suhayl not to reveal his identity. The patient tells the “doctor” what ails him, and Maymūn quotes the Greek physician Hippocrates (Buqrāṭ, d. 370 B.C.) and a made-up expert named Ibn ʿAtika, before recommending that the patient take a particular serum called sharāb al-malʿīka, which Maymūn sells to him for one hundred dirham. The patient's family, however, is skeptical of Maymūn and call in a medical expert. When the expert arrives, Maymūn introduces himself as a doctor from the Arabian Peninsula (jazīrat al-ʿarab) who studied treatments and the making of medicine, and is now searching for medicinal plants in the mountains and valleys. Impressed, the expert quizzes Maymūn with a half dozen or so technical questions about medicine. Maymūn praises the questions, claims he has written epistles on the topics, and suggests they meet another day to discuss. When he leaves, Suhayl follows him and finds him reciting a poem expressing his relief for not being caught in a shameful lie. Suhayl confronts Maymūn about being an orator yesterday and now a physician. Maymūn justifies his trickery by saying he entered the country as a stranger (gharīb), learned that adab had little value, and took to medicine. In the distance, people start crying in mourning, suggesting that the patient has died. Suhayl curses him and then Maymūn justifies himself in verse, saying that there is no good in people, so the less living, the less disobedience, which lightens their load in the afterlife and lessens nonsense. Maymūn tells Suhayl to accept his excuse if he wishes, or stop his prying.
5. *Al-Ṣaʿīdiyya*: Suhayl visits the chambers (*majlis*) of a judge in Upper Egypt during a holiday (*ʿīd al-iftār*). Laylā, described as a supple (*ghadda*) woman, appears before the judge to claim that her husband has married her under false pretenses. She claims he described himself as “the owner of treasure” (*min ashāb al-kunūz*), offered her an endowment (*waqf*) and promised to put her in charge of his household. In reality, she claims, his house was no bigger than a spider's web, with nothing in it, and he forced himself on her. The judge orders the husband brought before his court, and demands he justify himself. The husband disputes his wife's claims, first arguing that her claims are a lie (*firya*) whispered to her by Satan. He then offers a second argument, saying that his wife has misunderstood the esoteric meaning of his words and therefore misinterpreted the meaning of his dowry. The audience is pleased by the husband's eloquence and agrees with his interpretation. They offer her some coins. This infuriates the husband, who demands twice the compensation of his wife. Each then threatens the judge with a further case, and he further rewards them with money and a promissory note. As the man leaves, he leans toward Suhayl and winks, indicating that he should keep Maymūn's identity secret. Suhayl follows him and recognizes him outside the judge's house, expressing his joy at the reunion. He inquires about Maymūn's marriage, and Maymūn tells him that she is his daughter in the house, and his wife in the courtroom. Maymūn then recites two lines of poetry about the decline of the age (*khabutha l-dahru*), the stinginess of people, and the value of trickery for those in a difficult position. He grips Suhayl's elbow (*mirfaq*), kisses the part in his hair (*mafraq*), and bids him farewell.

6. *Al-Khazrajīyya*: Suhayl encounters Maymūn among a group (*nādī*) from the tribes of Aws and Khazraj. The *adīb* boasts of his eloquence and issues an invitation to join him to hear stories like Juhayna and verses like the poet Muzayna. An antagonist stands up and warns him not to brag. Maymūn tells him he can ask or be asked to see what fortunes (*al-anṣiba*) the diving rod (*al-qidāḥ*) brings. The antagonist then challenges Maymūn to compose poetry on the following subjects: the names of popular dishes for well-known occasions (from childbirth to circumcision, Quran memorization to death), types of fire, the hours of the day and then the night, the winds, the seven days of cold at the end of winter (*bardu l-ʿajūz*), and racing steeds. The man congratulates Maymūn, who tells him to answer quickly lest he forfeit a red she-camel (the finest kind) and his people a horse with a white blaze on its forehead. Maymūn then poses a question about the lands of the ancient Arabs which the other man is unable to answer. In exchange for a sheep from each household, Maymūn explains the poetic meters behind his question. Before departing with his reward, he composes a longer poem in which he praises his hosts' knowledge and hospitality, for which they give him money for his trip. Maymūn then takes his leave, and Suhayl follows him to a valley. Suhayl asks where he learned his *sijāl* and his improvisation (*irtijāl*). Maymūn claims to have visited the market of ʿUkāz, where he heard the exchange of poetry and the recollection of words and deeds. He then points his staff at Suhayl and offers a parting poem, in which he says that his daughter, Laylā, is waiting for news of him, and that he intends to bring her back the herd of livestock so that one day she might host the girls of the neighborhood (*bināt al-hāyy*) as he has done with the boys. Maymūn bids Suhayl farewell, leaving him with anxiety (*qalaq*) and hoping for rain to grace him after his departure.
7. *Al-Yamanīyya:* Suhayl departs from Yemen in search of companionship. He encounters Maymūn and his servant Rajab disguised as a pair of travellers having a dispute over a debt. As they take their case before a judge, Suhayl recognizes Maymūn and, overjoyed, follows him to the court. Maymūn greets the judge, who does not return the greeting. Maymūn then berates the judge for his rudeness, earning the latter's respect and an apology. The judge asks Maymūn if he has come to bring a case, and Maymūn indicates it is Rajab who wishes to express a complaint. Rajab says that Maymūn rented a camel from him in Egypt and promised to pay him upon arrival in Yemen, which of course Maymūn does not do. The judge then asks Maymūn what he has to say. Maymūn laughs and replies that he agreed to pay when he returned the mount. The judge is amazed by Maymūn’s artistry (*iftinān*) and wary of his sharp tongue, so he suggests to Rajab that they split the difference, as it were: Maymūn returns the camel but does not pay his debt. When Rajab leaves, the judge orders one of his servants to follow Rajab and demand payment for judgement (*manʿ*). Maymūn threatens to soil the judge’s reputation by composing an invective. The judge bribes Maymūn with twenty dinār (a nisāb), after which Maymūn demands a further dinār in compensation for the dinār of *manʿ* which the judge sought from Rajab. After this, Suhayl invites Maymūn to his house in the market (*al-khān*), but Maymūn demurs with the excuse that he must reclaim his she-camel and his servant boy. Maymūn then explains how he planned to exploit the judge’s greed. He invites Suhayl to *his* house, where Rajab is waiting at the door. Maymūn recites a poem in which he explains that he pressed Rajab into servitude to use him to make money, and pays him back with clothing and food. He says he puts Rajab in the place of a son. Suhayl is duly impressed by Maymūn’s cleverness (*makr*), and changes his mind about leaving. He stays with Maymūn until the latter leaves for Syria.

8. *Al-Baghdadiyya:* Suhayl travels to Baghdad, where he explores the city as a stranger. One day, he enters a school where he immediately recognizes Maymūn, surrounded by eager male students. They embrace as old friends. Laylā appears in the guise of a girl selling milk. She calls out her wares, playing with the case endings of her cry as she does. Laylā’s playfulness tempts her father's students, who are amazed by her artistry. They call her over to buy milk and discuss grammar. She approaches the door and raises her niqāb, seemingly without revealing her identity to the narrator. Laylā and the schoolboys exchange a number of adages (*amthāl*), at the end of which each boy gives her a dirham. They then offer her dinars if she solves her riddle—which she does. Maymūn then offers further examples of the same phenomenon. With Suhayl in tow, Maymūn then returns to his house (*dār*) in al-Ruṣāfa. There he meets his now-undisguised daughter at the door. His face breaks into a smile and he recites a short poem in praise of her. They then speak until the morning hours and spend time together until they separate.

9. *Al-Ḥalabiyya:* Suhayl receives a letter (*biṭāqa*) from an intimate friend outside of Aleppo who “belongs to the pure Arabs” (*yantamī ilā al-ʿarab al-ʿarbā*). The friend asks Suhayl to bring him medicine. He gathers the requested medicines and heads off. On the road, Suhayl sees Maymūn and Laylā with a handsome young man (*fātā*). When he approaches to greet Maymūn (notably excluding Laylā), the *adīb* replies in Persian. Suhayl dismisses this as one of Maymūn's tricks, and hides where he can see but can't be seen. As he watches, Maymūn turns away from Laylā and the young man, “muttering in the language of the
foreigners” (yudamdimu bi-lughat al-ājām). The young man begins to flirt with her, and when she signals her interest, he suggests they send Maymūn off to the desert. Laylā laments that they do not have a horse, and the young man offers his own. Left “alone,” the young man asks Laylā to introduce herself. She does so with a poem that indicates her willingness to follow the young man, and they return to her house together. This turn of events distracts Suhayl from his mission to bring medicine to his sick friend. He follows “the two friends” (al-ṣāḥibayn) to her house, where the boy begins to pack her stuff and Laylā gathers provisions. At this moment, Maymūn falls upon them, accusing the young man of being morally corrupt (fāsiq) and a thief (ṣāriq) and threatening him with the punishment of the adulterer (al-hadd) and the thief (al-qaṣ’). The young man is terrified and begins to beg Maymūn, who responds by turning up his nose, shaking his hips, stabbing with his legs and pointing with his palms. The young man is mortified, nearly dissolving from shame (al-ḥiyā’), and offers Maymūn a second reward in the form of dinars. Maymūn accepts on condition that the boy does not approach “the girls of foreigners” (bināt al-ājām). Through this hint, the boy realizes that the “father” is actually the Persian-speaker he met on the road. When Maymūn has chased the boy off, he calms down and recites a poem lamenting Suhayl's absence. He recounts his tricks and the boy's reaction, and then justifies his theft of the boy's money first to feed the horse he stole, and then as a moral lesson to the boy about his behavior. Suhayl then appears and composes a poem in response spontaneously, announcing that he was a witness.

10. Al-Kūfiyya: After announcing he has been keen on ‘ilm al-adab and the language of the Arabs (lughat al-‘arab) since childhood, Suhayl says he met a group (‘usba) of scholars while visiting Kūfa. He decides to join the group and recognizes Maymūn as their shaykh. They are immersed in a discussion of Arabic (ḥadīth al-‘arabiyya) and the problems of its cases/declension (wa masā’iluhā al-i rābiyya). As the scholars speak, Maymūn writes on a sheet of paper (qirṭās). When they finish their discussion, he asks them to check what he has written for errors. What he has written is a set of difficult grammatical questions. Having read the riddles, the group then asks Maymūn to solve them. At first he objects to both posing and answering his own questions, but ultimately he relents. To ensure they remember what he says, the group asks that his comments be transcribed, a task Maymūn assigns to Suhayl. When he is finished, Maymūn composes a short poem praising knowledge over prayer and linking knowledge to the afterlife. He accepts a reward of dinars and dirham and asks the audience to provide for Suhayl as well, which they dutifully do, and then he departs.

11. Al-‘Irāqiyya: Suhayl arrives at the majlis of the emir of Iraq, where he stands like a stranger (wa waqāftu mawqīfā l-gharīb). The wine is flowing and the breeze has died down when a shaykh in desert garb arrives with a boy. Maymūn accuses the boy of stealing (saraqa) half of the verses with which he praised an emir and changing them into invective (ḥijā’). Maymūn claims he was arrested for the invective, and despairing in prison nearly killed himself. Now that he has been released, he wants the emir to force the boy to compensate him and be punished like a thief (qaṣ’ al-ṣāriq). He then reminds the emir of his responsibility to “educate” every transgressor (ta’dīb kull tāghin wa fāsiq). The emir, who claims the authority to make determinations in fiqh, commands Maymūn to recite his poem in praise of Nawfal bin Dārim. The emir then asks how the boy stole the poem, and
Maymūn says “like one reading Chinese writing” (mushajjar al-ṣīn). The boy has apparently taken the first hemistich of each line. The boy claims the composition as his own, and asserts that if there was an emulation (tawārud), the emir will need to determine the first poet (al-sābiq) from the thief (al-sāriq). Maymūn turns up his nose and insults the young man, demanding that he compose a series of poems on the Arabic meters (al-buḥūr), the metrical feet (al-ʿarūd), the end rhymes (al-qawāfī), the ajzāʾ and their names, the harakāt, and finally the ʿuyūb. Maymūn then demands to know what would stop the young man from claiming another poet's work as his own (al-intihāl). He demands the young man praise the emir. The young man responds that he would rather compose an invective attacking Maymūn, which he then does. The invective mocks Maymūn's last name and then his first, associating him with the Turks rather than the Arabs. It convinces the emir of Rajab's authentic poetic abilities, absolving him of Maymūn's accusations; the emir then adds that Maymūn has wronged the boy, and offers Rajab dinars in compensation and invites him to stay at his house as a guest. Maymūn then composes a short poem in which he laments the current age (dahr), his lack of support and the failure of his complaint. The emir, afraid for his reputation, silences Maymūn for a demonstration of his ghulām and himself as the ghulām of Rajab for all he has served him. Maymūn describes Suhayl as his “narrator” (rāwiya) and offers to reward him and urges him to speak well of him. Suhayl bids Maymūn farewell, thanking him and seeking refuge from his wickedness (makr).

12. Al-Azhariyya: Suhayl travels to Cairo from Syria (Bilād al-Shām) in a caravan (rakh) with Maymūn. There is a lengthy description of their travel across the desert wastes (qufar), their long grueling days and their general state of exhaustion. Fearing desert marauders (tawāriq al-bādiya), Maymūn recites a two-line poem warning the group of the dangers of the road ahead, making puns on the letters ʿayn and nūn. The warning makes the travelers more aware, and they ride on to the Nile, where Maymūn pleases the audience by explaining the first part of his riddle. They then travel on to Cairo, reaching the mosque of al-Azhar. Maymūn has a private word with Suhayl, and then enters the mosque; the narrator waits momentarily outside and then enters as well. Maymūn greets Suhayl as if they did not know one another. He announces he has received a letter (ruqʿa) and that he needs help from the group (al-nādi) to determine its meaning. Suhayl reads what is written (a grammatical riddle) which leaves the audience inside the mosque uncertain. A teacher (al-ustādh) offers to pay a large sum of money to know the answer to the riddle, which thrills Maymūn. He then recites a second poem, addressed to Ibn ʿAbbād (i.e. Suhayl), which amazes the audience. The audience offers to reward him if, indeed, his second composition and solution to the riddle is authentic. A man steps forward and identifies himself as someone interested in prosody (ʿilm al-ʿarūd). He asks Maymūn for a demonstration of his knowledge of poetry, to which Maymūn readily agrees. Maymūn poses a series of technical questions, which the man working on prosody answers partially incorrectly. This angers the teacher, who demands to know from Maymūn the “makhārij al-hurūf” and a series of phonological questions. Maymūn replies, if I err in my answer, you owe me nothing; if I am correct, you owe me more. After he has satisfied the audience with his answers, the
teacher (al-ustadh al-kabīr) gives him a purse. Maymūn departs with Suhayl, offers him some of the reward but also says that Suhayl benefited from learning the answer to the riddle. Suhayl stays with Maymūn until the sign of the lion, at which point they part ways.

13. Al-Taghilibiyya: Suhayl travels in a group (nafar) of people from the desert region of Al-ʿAlīya. They are captured by a group of horsemen and taken to an encampment (halla) with many tents and domes. They are taken to a cotton tent “like Qubbat Najrān” where they find a shaykh like ʿAbd al-Madān with an enormous dish (qaṣʿa) before an impoverished crowd. Near dawn, Suhayl hears a voice reciting poetry and recognizes Maymūn. Maymūn is led before the emir, who demands to know if he has insulted the Arabs (tahjū l-ʿarab). The emir praises the Arabs as the source of poetry and oration, grammar and eloquence, courage and hospitality and so forth. The emir then articulates his concern, which is that Maymūn, in his poem, addressed the morning (al-ṣubh) as the night (yā layl) and the sun (al-shams) as the star named “Suhayl”. Suhayl watches from hiding, and convinces the guard that the emir has called him to approach. The emir calls a boy (fatā) from his retinue to recite one of Maymūn’s alleged poems, in which he insults the Arabs’ moral character and literary abilities. Maymūn claims they have changed his poem, and then he recites the “correct” version. After this, the emir asks him to compose on the famous Arabs, their mounts (al-khayl), their homes, the types (alwān) of their food, the containers for their food, and finally the names of the arrows used in pre-Islamic divination (azlām al-maysir fī l-bādiya). The emir is surprised (ʿajaba) by Maymūn’s abilities and compliments him by saying that he has proved wrong the poet who said “he whose house it is knows best”. The emir recognizes that Maymūn belongs to the true desert Arabs (ṣamīm al-ʿarab al-ʿarbā’). He apologizes for imprisoning Maymūn, orders food and drink to be brought, and after a pleasant night, sends him off with rewards.

14. Al-Hazliyya: Suhayl reports that his wife passed away, and after mourning her, he leaves home in search of a new wife. He rides his steed until nightfall, and as he is making camp in a mountain pass, he hears a strange noise like snoring or the groan of an animal. He hides beyond the moonlight, and a girl (Laylā in disguise) appears and begins to recite. The poem laments her state of captivity and expresses her desire for freedom from her marriage to a disgusting shaykh. She promises to compensate the good man (karīm al-nafs) who can secure her divorce. Suhayl is drawn to her eloquence (fuṣāḥa), and does not notice her looks. Thinking that he has found his wife, Suhayl recites a few lines praising God for the happy coincidence. Maymūn the “husband” then appears and recites a poem, after warning Laylā and Suhayl that he is aware of what both have said. In his poem, Maymūn praises the beauty of his wife, and then says if Suhayl can provide two dowries, he will divorce Laylā by morning. Suhayl is overjoyed and asks Maymūn to identify himself; Maymūn replies that his name is “al-Mubārak bin Rayḥān” from “butūn Qaḥtān”. Maymūn claims his “wife” has fallen for Suhayl, and encourages the narrator to gather the dowries. When Suhayl pays Maymūn, he asks to take his new wife, but Maymūn convinces him with an appeal to companionship to stay the night. In the morning light, he recognizes Laylā and Maymūn. Maymūn bursts into laughter and recites a poem bragging of his trickery and theft, and justifying himself with claims of severe hunger and need. Maymūn then promises

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to pay Suhayl back once he has tricked someone else. Suhayl responds with ambivalent praise, saying he is the most wicked (amkar) and the most capable (aqdar) of both good and evil (al-zayn wa l-shayn). They spend more time together, Suhayl falls asleep and awakes to find Maymūn and Laylā gone, and a note addressed to him. The note concludes with two startling points: that Maymūn takes credit for Laylā's eloquence (fusāha), and then jokes about Suhayl marrying him with the two dowries if he wants an eloquent partner. Suhayl admits that Maymūn will never change, and returns the way he came for lack of money to continue his travels.

15. Al-Ramlīyya: Suhayl travels to the town of Ramla to attend to an affair and repay a debt. He spends a month there, at the end of which he falls into uncertainty about which direction to travel. At this point, a group (rakh) led by a shaykh appears, reciting in a clamorous voice (bi-sawt zajil). The shaykh recites a short poem in which he calls out for sustenance (rizq) and guidance (hudā). Suhayl is afraid to respond and be made the source (i.e. the victim) of their sustenance. When the group discovers Suhayl, they aim their lances at him and the shaykh demands he surrender his goods. A girl (jariya) takes the reins of the shaykh's camel and intercedes, asking for his mercy. Suhayl recognizes them and the group spends a merry evening together. In the morning, they decide to travel together to Ramla. After Maymūn prepares his magic (sahara), he takes Suhayl and the two search the city and eventually find a school brimming with students. An elderly shaykh at the school challenges Maymūn to compose ʿawāṭil verses. He then demands that Maymūn produce muʾjama verses, at which point a handsome servant boy (ghulām) appears and recites; then mulammati verses, which a nicely-formed boy (yāfa') from the Nabateans (anbāt) recites; then khayfā verses; and finally raqtā verses. When this has been done, the elderly shaykh praises Maymūn and his companions. Maymūn steps forward and offers to recite another type of poem, which he calls ʿāṭil al-ʿaṭil; he describes what it is in the text, and this description is supplemented in the footnotes. The elderly shaykh promises to reward him handsomely (making him hālī al-hālī). When Maymūn recites, the students gather around him in amazement, and he is rewarded with a payment (nafāqa) and told that if he stays at the school, the “water” (i.e. rewards) will not end. Maymūn says that he owes a debt of one hundred dinars to Suhayl. The audience pays Suhayl, and Maymūn composes a poem in gratitude (which has two possible readings). When the two depart, Maymūn encourages Suhayl to leave the country, and says he will do the same, reciting a poem to justify his trickery by recourse to the fallen state of human nature before they part ways.

16. Al-Ṣūrīyya: Suhayl travels to the city of Tyre (Ṣūr), where he spends a month in a year of drought (sanna jardā'). He travels extensively until one day he enters a garden for litterateurs where he encounters a judge. As he is greeting the judge, Laylā appears in disguise. She commands the audience's attention (istar ʿat al-samā') and recites a poem in which she complains to the judge that her father has prohibited her from marrying and deprived her of the basic necessities. As she is reciting, she sways in such a way as to seduce the judge, who begins to steal glances in her direction. When she finishes her recitation, the judge expresses his sympathy for Laylā's case and demands to know the identity of the “transgressor” (al-zālim). Laylā identifies her father as the transgressor, describing his physical appearance and financial state in colorful, unflattering ways. Laylā then asserts that she is a young woman who would not be satiated with the fat of a reptile
(dabb) nor with torn clothes. Maymūn arrives and tells the judge that Laylā is not wrong and did not lie, but explains himself as a poor man, far from home (gharīb al-dār), trying to protect his daughter. Maymūn curses his misfortune and says death would be better than humiliation. The judge, however, has fallen for Laylā, and tells Maymūn to leave Laylā with him in exchange for “five hundred”. Maymūn bids his daughter farewell, crying and reciting lines of verse in which he refers to her as “Laylā”. Suhayl says that Maymūn had been disguised (qad tanakkara), but once he mentioned his daughter, Suhayl recognizes him. When Maymūn leaves, Suhayl reports that the judge orders one of his attendants to take Laylā to the women's quarters of his home (dār haram). They travel until they reach a farm (daskara) where Laylā claims fatigue and asks the attendant to gather things to help her recover; with him gone, she confronts Suhayl with a poem which she asks him to give to the attendant for the judge. The poem asserts her cleverness and informs the judge that he's been tricked. She then departs. Suhayl writes down the verses and leaves them for the attendant (al-ghulam) when he returns.

17. Al-Ḥikamiyya: Suhayl departs in a caravan (qāfila) that arrives on the banks of the Tigris River. They make camp, enjoying the river and the fresh fruit for three days. They then prepare to leave but are delayed by the holiday of Nīrūz. They enter Baghdad, where they have a huge feast with meat, wine, and song throughout the day. As they are returning, they meet a second group (mawkiḥ) of men who have gathered around Maymūn. He dispenses advice on morals, refined speech, frugality, religiosity and other topics to one of the men, at the end of which he attributes the advice first to Solomen and then Luqmān. Maymūn then recites a long poem in which he expresses a pessimist view of human morality and disparages al-Dahr. When he finishes, he cries and collapses on his bed. The audience takes pity on him and offers his servant money (ṣadaqa). They say that if Maymūn dies, use the money for his burial; if he lives, for his expenses. They then turn their backs and issue supplications. When they depart, Suhayl reports that Maymūn brushes off the “dust of death” (ghubār al-maniyya). Suhayl recognizes him and reproaches him for his contradictions. Maymūn offers a justificatory two-line poem, and then claims he helped people and advises Suhayl to drop the topic. Suhayl remains with him in Iraq for some time and then departs.

18. Al-Rajabiyya: Suhayl visits a group of Arabs during the month of Rajab. There is a huge gathering, and Suhayl spends a few days among the various tribes, listening to poets and prose stylists, feeling ecstasy (jarab), and admiring the armies and campsites. A thin shaykh appears, followed by an enormous woman. Maymūn describes his extensive travels, great wealth, and generosity and then the hardship he has fallen upon. When he finishes his speech, he leans on his cane while the old woman comes forward like a ghoul (si'ālāh). She addresses the audience, asking for donations, which they provide. Maymūn then recites a two-line poem praising the audience and departs, after which Suhayl reports there emerges an arrogant boy (fātā shādīd al-khnuzūtāna). This young man, Rajab in disguise, encourages the audience to “reverse” the two lines of praise that Maymūn has recited. When an anonymous member of the audience does so (after writing them down, we are told), he discovers that in reverse, the couplet is an invective. The audience is infuriated, and demands to know who can bring Maymūn back to them to “make a lesson (adab) of him for the people”. Rajab volunteers and the audience gives him a steed to ride. Suhayl
acknowledges in text and footnote that he knows the trick (ḥila), and follows the boy. He finds him sitting between Maymūn and his daughter. Rajab gets up to greet Suhayl and then Maymūn recites extemporaneously. In it, he identifies Rajab as his servant and takes responsibility for training him, and justifies Rajab's theft based on the audience's miserliness. He then offers another justification, before they realize that the audience might not see it in the same way and take flight. Suhayl concludes the maqāma admitting he is afraid of the horsemen during his time in the company of Maymūn.

19. Al-Khaṭṭībiyya: Suhayl spends a spring in the desert (al-bādiya), traveling extensively and visiting many people. When he is in the Iraqi town of Ḫilla, a caller (munādīn) climbs a hill and calls the people to hear an oration. An audience gathers around a shaykh who begins his speech with markers of Islam, and then turns to praising the Arabs. He praises their nobility, generosity, virtuosity in warfare, reliability, literary abilities, political independence, and so on. An elderly antagonist “like a snake” stands up from the audience and asks Maymūn why he neglected the “days of the Arabs”. Maymūn reflects, apologizes, claims he forget, and composes an urjūza on their wars. The audience praises him and asks him to identify himself. Maymūn introduces himself as Sarandal bin Gharandal, from the people of Shamardal. The audience is impressed and ask him to record what he said. Maymūn responds that he has a scribe (kātib) who is faster than a stream, and he calls Suhayl. He commands Suhayl to write and begins to recite. They are rewarded, although the reward appears to be inadequate. Maymūn, once recognized, flees. Suhayl follows and confronts him, but Maymūn refuses to divulge where he is going, leaving Suhayl with money for his travels but no companion.

20. Al-Baṣrīyya: Suhayl arrives in Baṣra in the prior year in a group (rakb). He explores the city until he reaches al-Marbad, a market where poets and others congregate. There he finds a group (qawm) who invite him to join a discussion which ultimately reaches the art of bādi’ (tajnīs and tanwī). At the center of the circle (al-ʿalāqa), there is a shaykh who claims that the best jinās is what can be reversed. The audience challenges him to recite lines of this sort, which he claims to have composed as a young man. He recites a fourteen-line poem that can be read backwards. When he finishes, the audience claps and claims they have not heard a poem of this sort before, noting that al-Ḥarīrī had only written four such lines, not fourteen. An antagonist with salt-and-pepper bangs stands up to contest Maymūn, claiming that accomplishment is in the impact (al-athīr) not the length (al-kathīr) of a given composition. Maymūn acknowledges this point and recites a two-line poem that, when reversed, is transformed from maddāh to hijā’. The audience is amused/aroused (istafazzat) by this “virgin” composition (al-ṣānā a al-ʿadhūrā). They ask him who he is, and he responds in verse, claiming his wealth was exhausted by his generosity and he is now full of regret. He sighs and weeps and the audience takes pity on him. They ask where he left his family; he says he left his children (jurubba) in an area called al-Shirabba, awaiting his return. They reward him with gold and silver. Suhayl then acknowledges that he recognized Maymūn earlier but was uncertain due to his grey hair. When they leave, Suhayl greets Maymūn and addresses him as Abū Laylā. Maymūn recites a short poem about choosing a middle ground in terms of the color of his hair, and they embrace. Suhayl remains with Maymūn for a long time, until ghurāb al-bayn separates them.

21. Al-Dimashqiyya: Suhayl arrives in Damascus. After touring the city and searching its ruins,
he goes into a school and joins a study circle (halaqa). When the students turn to the “Khilasa” (i.e. the Alfiyya) of Ibn Mālik, the teacher praises it. Maymūn, who is participating in the circle, says that those who recognize the greatness (fuḍl) of Ibn Mālik are like those who recognize the light of the sun. He proposes to read his own compilation of Ibn Mālik's work, which he refers to as Khilasat al-Khilasa. This 29-line poem contains the basic rules of Arabic declension. The audience is pleased (‘ajiba) by the precise collection (al-jamʿ al-dābiṭ). They ask Maymūn to identify himself, and he makes clear that the composition is his own. The audience offers to reward him if he is willing to have it transcribed. Maymūn asks Suhayl to take dictation, at the end of which dirhams pour down on Suhayl and dinars on Maymūn. They then take their leave and race to Bab al-Barīd. Maymūn invites Suhayl to his home, which is described as spacious. Maymūn calls to Laylā, playing on Suhayl's name and Quranic verse (Surat al-Najam). Laylā responds in a short verse welcoming Suhayl, to which the narrator responds with two further lines. Laylā encourages him to stay in Damascus, which he does for a month of winter until travel calls them to return.

22. Al-Sarājiyya: Suhayl wants to travel to Sarūj, a town in Iraq and the birthplace of Abū Zayd al-Sarūjī. Suhayl says he is looking for traces of Abū Zayd, the hero of al-Harīrī's maqāmāt, as a footnote makes clear. He describes his travels briefly, and then reports that a rider (rākīb) recites a poem addressed to his she-camel. The last line says that “Suhayl” will keep me company if the moon disappears. Suhayl reports that he senses Maymūn and responds in verse, asking if the speaker means “Suhayl” of the earth (i.e. himself) or Suhayl of the sky (falak) (i.e. the star). When Maymūn reveals himself, they have a warm reunion. They spend the night together, and at daybreak, travel together, with Suhayl leading the way. After a second description of travel, they arrive in Sarūj, dismount, and take a big room (ghurfa fasiha) for several nights. They search for traces of the past until the festival of Mahrajān. Maymūn declares that on this day, people and jinn intermingle; he then takes Suhayl to a gathering (muntadā) of people (qawm). Maymūn addresses a body of advice to Suhayl, the esoteric meaning of which contradicts the apparent meaning. The audience rejects what Maymūn says, but allows him to finish his tawṣīya before grabbing him by the forelocks (nāsiya). They curse him and accuse him of commanding wrong (al-sū') and prohibiting the good (al-iḥsān). Maymūn grows angry and when they offer a reward to know how to understand the esoteric aspect of his speech, he demands a larger payment on account of their mistaken assumptions about him. His explanation, however, pleases them so much that they claim al-Sarūjī has risen before The Day (yawm al-mahshar) and reward him generously. Maymūn then asks them to give to Suhayl as well, which they do. Maymūn brags as they leave, and then Suhayl responds with a work of praise for Maymūn. Suhayl remains in his company on the way to Sawād in Iraq.

23. Al-Mawsūliyya: Suhayl leaves Aleppo for Mosul, where he goes to the market (al-khān) and recognizes Maymūn sitting at a table before the food is laid down. Maymūn rises to greet him, and Suhayl reports that their reunion is a source of joy and causes him to forget the hardships of the road. Laylā serves them a meal as they all play on words. Suhayl notices there is a young man (fatā) from the caravan sitting with them; he has fallen for the girl (fa-'aliqa al-jāriya wa ʿiftatana bihā) due to her ẓarf and adab. They exchange a few words hinting at their desires, which Maymūn indicates he understands. He tells them that
he turned down a suitor for Laylā offering a thousand dinar dowry. The young man replies that he has one hundred dinar, if that would suffice. Maymūn says no, but takes the money anyway and asks the suitor to wait. When the young man returns for the wedding (al-zafāʾ), he finds Maymūn preparing to leave. He demands to know why, and Maymūn admits he has spent all the money on food and drink and has nothing left to prepare the wedding. He adds that he wants to go to the town of al-Ḥillā to reclaim a debt. The young man suggests they go to a judge to sign the marriage contract, and Maymūn and Laylā follow him. When they arrive, Maymūn accuses the suitor of trying to marry his wife, whom he has not released nor divorced. The young man protests, saying she is his offspring (ṣalīla). The judge demands evidence (bayyana), and when the young man can't provide it, the judge orders him evicted from the court. He decries Maymūn's misbehavior (ṣīʿ taṣarrufihi). Maymūn dissimulates crying, and then points to the judge and recites a poem. In the poem, he attests to his poverty and the hardship it has caused his wife (i.e. Laylā), and then asks the judge for financial assistance. The judge is moved to tears, and then the group departs from his chambers. Maymūn dictates a note (ruqaʿ) mocking the young man and telling him they can share his “wife” year by year according to Islamic law, and then he asks Suhayl to hang it on the gate outside the market. They plan to meet at the city gate, but when Suhayl arrives, he finds neither Maymūn nor his horse.

24. Al-Maʿariyya: Suhayl travels to Maʿarṭ al-Nāʾmān in the past (fī mā marra min al-zamān). He meanders through its streets and fields, wafting the stories (akhbār) of the scholars and shaykhs. He is “pushed” (dufī ʿatu) to the grave of Abū l-ʿĀlāʾ al-Maʾrī. There is a group of distinguished men (fiḍālāʾ) listening to a shaykh give a sermon. The shaykh reminds his audience of the afterlife and then inquires about their ability to distinguish between virtues and vices, and specifically Abū l-ʿĀlāʾ’s poetic virtues from the degraded age in which they themselves live. He encourages them to embrace religion, and then recites a poem. The audience is under his sway, and offers him a substantial reward before he departs uttering the names of God. Suhayl acknowledges he recognized Maymūn from the outset, despite his disguise. He follows the adīb and finds him in the company of Laylā and Rajab, dividing the money for meat (al-jazūr) and drink, and for musical instruments (the ʿūd and rabāb). Suhayl confronts him, saying: you order the people to be devout and God knows your secret. Maymūn reproaches Suhayl, saying that while Suhayl is young, Maymūn is old and will soon be departing. Suhayl defers and disregards his friend's infractions, remaining with him until they leave Maʿarṭ al-Nāʾmān.

25. Al-Tamūniyya: Suhayl travels to a barren stretch of desert (al-bādiyya) where there is no water and no chance of rain. After much hardship, Suhayl hears a rider sing out verse, recalling the “tears” of longing for a woman named Laylā. Suhayl races towards him and asks for water. The rider offers to sell him a drink, and when he leans forward, his mask falls off and Suhayl recognizes him. They embrace and Suhayl spends the night. In the morning, they depart together and by night they reach the lands of Banī Tamīm. They leave their mounts to graze, and spend the night in conversation. In the morning, Maymūn’s she-camel is missing. Maymūn and Suhayl search all day, finally finding her among a shepherd's herd. He realizes that the shepherds will not return the camel and that making demands may come to blows, so he turns to his wits. “I have something to do in the spring
of al-Jifār,” he tells them, “and this is the only ride I trust.” Maymūn offers Suhayl, whom he calls his “ghulām”, as ransom (rahn). Maymūn departs, leaving Suhayl in the hands of the shepherds. They claim Suhayl as theirs until Maymūn returns, but Suhayl objects and indicates he was not Maymūn's to give. Suhayl takes his case to the emir, and asks that they recall Maymūn to confirm Suhayl's free status. The shepherd says Maymūn is long gone and impossible to catch. The emir asks who Maymūn is, noting that he seems like the trickiest of man and jinn. Suhayl claims he does not know from where or whom Maymūn is from. He then recites a poem which greatly pleases the emir, who orders the camel and another returned. After Suhayl departs, he finds Maymūn asleep in the road and leaves him a note which says he is keeping both camels as compensation for Maymūn having ransomed him.

26. Al-Laghaziyya: Sickness drives Suhayl to travel. When he wishes to return home, he gets lost and wanders around. He hopes to find something to “entertain his people” (laʾallī ʿazfaru bi-mā ʿūrifu bi-hi qaʾimi) until he stumbles upon a gathering (mahfal ḥāfil). He sits on their outskirts, as if he were a party crasher (ṭafayl al-ʿarās). He looks around the audience, and sees a shaykh dressed in an Arab fashion. They exchange speech (āṭrāf al-ʿāsānīd) and stories (alṭaf al-ʾānāshīd), when a burning-eyed boy (ghulām) throws down a note (ruqa’) written in a script as beautiful as that of Ibn Muqṭa. Someone reads the note, which contains a three-line riddle in verse, which stumps the audience. Maymūn steps forward to solve it, composing a poem in which he claims that the answer to the riddle lies in the riddle itself. The audience is impressed, and Maymūn brags he can best Rajab's riddle. He composes a riddle in verse on outer space (al-falak), the moon (al-qamar), the aura of the moon (al-ḥāla), a rainbow (qaws al-sahāb), the clouds (al-ghaym), rain water (al-māʾ), and fire (al-nār). When Maymūn has finished, he makes to leave, and the audience insists that he stay to explain his compositions and then rewards him. Suhayl insists he had recognized Maymūn from the moment he stepped forward, but when he goes to greet Maymūn, the latter dissuades him with a sign of his lips. Maymūn then announces that he saw a sign of the stranger (al-gharīb) in Suhayl, and gives him a dinar. This shames the audience into giving Suhayl gifts, after which they depart. They meet Rajab, and Maymūn composes a short poem calling him a “son” and asking him to relay the good news of the trickery to his “sister,” Laylā. Suhayl spends some time with the family and then departs with the coins he won.

27. Al-Sāhiliyya: When he was young, Suhayl went to a coast (baʾd al-sawāḥīl). There he explored the natural setting and attended the gatherings (al-maḥāshīd). One day, he was in the majlis of an emir, full of poets and scholars, when Maymūn arrives, dragging Rajab along. Maymūn addresses the emir, saying that he raised the boy and took him for support in ease (rikhāʾ) and hardship (shidda). Recently, however, he sent Rajab with a praise poem (taqrīz) to a judge, and he changed it into invective. The judge had Maymūn arrested and fined, and Maymūn now asks the emir to command Rajab to compensate him. The emir asks Maymūn to recite the poem he composed, which is a four-line work of praise for a judge named Abū Hasan. In Maymūn's version, the lines end with “act justly” (ʾadala), “give freely” (badhala), “be great” (jabala), and “be a model” (mahala). In Rajab's alleged version, they end with “do injustice” (zalama), “be stingy” (laʿuma), “be grotesque” (sanama), and “be nothing” (ʿadama). The judge criticizes Rajab, who blames Abū Hasan
28. Al-Falakiyya: Suhayl loses his camel in the desert. He goes out to find it in the middle of the night, but it has disappeared. He encourages himself (portrayed as a dialogue) but he loses hope. On his way home, he gets lost and finds himself amidst a gathered crowd (qawm thubīn). There he finds Maymūn swearing on the planets, stars, and bursting meteors, all the while reading the cracks in people's skin, the lines on their hands, and their fortunes. A man (rajul adram) approaches, mocking Maymūn and demanding that he justify his knowledge of astronomy and astrology by answering a series of quyūd questions. After he has done so, the audience calls Maymūn the pole (qaṭb) of the earth and the sky. They ask him to read their fortunes, predict births, distinguish the fortunate from the unfortunate (al-shaqī), until they begin to suspect he had esoteric knowledge (ʿilm al-ghayb). They gather around him with gifts. Maymūn claims that he has discerned (tatāyyurtu) the ill-omen (nahs) of an “unpleasant figure” (al-khurūtīm), referring to Suhayl. He commands the audience to send Suhayl away on a camel. Suhayl describes Maymūn as looking at him like a soothsayer (al-ʿāʾif) and a spiritual tracker (al-qāʾif). They give Suhayl a camel and tell him to become a stranger (āghrib). Maymūn throws stones and chases after him “like a ghoul”, offering a few lines of poetry about how he is willing to use the sky (i.e. the stars) for his tricks if the earth is not available. Maymūn offers Suhayl the camel, and then departs, leaving Suhayl grateful for the ill-omen (al-manāḥīs).

29. Al-Miṣriyya: Suhayl travels to Egypt (al-Kināna) in a group (rakb) from Banī Kināna. He packs and heads to the caravan, where he meets a dark man (rajul adham), who offers to rent him a horse for a dirham per day. Suhayl accepts and they travel together. The horse's owner angers Suhayl, who takes revenge by lowering the price, and they fall into an argument that leads them to approach a judge. As Suhayl and the horse renter near the judge, Maymūn and Rajab approach. Rajab steps forward to address the judge, complaining about Maymūn's stinginess. He reports he was pressed into servitude; he has neither cloth to wear nor good food. Maymūn charges him with carrying great burdens and the humiliation of begging (dhull l-suʿāl). Rajab is forced to step outside his role as the “son” and provide for himself and Maymūn, leaving him to bitterly ask the judge to intervene or else he will kill himself. Rajab's tale displeases the judge, who asks Maymūn to explain himself. The adlib sighs, tears up, and composes a poem in which he confirms Rajab's complaint but claims that he cannot release his servant boy. The judge pardons him but accuses him of having wronged the boy, and demands that Maymūn sell Rajab and use the money to hire a servant. An antagonist offers to buy Rajab, unwittingly falling into
Maymūn's trap. Maymūn weeps and complains, and ultimately relents to a contract and accepting payment. Maymūn bIDS a tearful farewell to Rajab, recites two lines of poetry urging him not to forget, and cries again as he leaves. The audience feels sympathy for Maymūn and gives him a reward. He then disappears to a place where Suhayl can not find him, leaving the narrator to spend the night between longing (shawq) to see him and a desire (tawq) to know what happened to him. The next day, Suhayl finds them dressed in each others clothes. They greet one another, and Maymūn recites a poem in which he explains the trick: he sold Rajab even though Islamic law prohibits the selling of free men, and therefore the sale was illegitimate. He explains that Rajab escaped and returned at night, and that because he — Maymūn — had raised and taught him, he deserved the reward. Suhayl then departs, but not before remarking on the ʿajb between Maymūn and Rajab. As he is leaving, he applauds Maymūn's magic and seeks the forgiveness of God for his trickery.

30. Al-Ṭibbiyya: Suhayl travels hard until he needs to rest. He looks to exchange his she-camel for a steed when a shaykh descends upon him like a hawk. This shaykh recognizes him as Suhayl, and then Suhayl likewise recognizes him as Maymūn, who proclaims that their meeting was preordained. Maymūn calls his servant (ghulām) to bring food and they spend a night together better than a thousand months. In the morning they travel until they reach an area (balada) in which there is a school for the medicine of al-Ḥarth bin Kalda. There is a shaykh with a long nose (jawāl al-arnaba) and an enormous septum (ʿażīm al-ʿartaba). This shaykh begins to praise the science of medicine and bemoan its decline. Suhayl says there was a “strikingly courteous” young man (bāhir al-latāfa) in the audience (al-ḥādra). He claims to have suffered from the ignorance of those who claim to be doctors, and asks the shaykh for advice. The shaykh offers a long discourse on proper eating, exercise, and moderation, and calls his discourse “al-mawāʾiz”. At the end, Maymūn challenges him, claiming he is not a real doctor. Maymūn claims to have stumbled upon some questions (masāʾil) in old books. He asks permission to dispel any doubts by putting the questions to the shaykh, who agrees. Maymūn's questions stump the shaykh, who is ultimately driven to silence. The audience says that Maymūn deserves to be an imam, and asks if he would stay among them. He asks for a bit of money, which they provide in the form of dinars. When they depart, Maymūn gives Suhayl an envoi (ṭirs makhṭūm) and instructs him to give it to the people (al-qawm) in the morning. The envoi admits he is not a doctor, but that he seeks remedies for his own poverty. When they read it, the people ask Suhayl to bring Maymūn back, which he says he cannot do.

31. Al-ʿAbsiyya: Suhayl is forced to flee in the Ḥijāz and goes to the land of the Banī ʿAbs, where he stays for a period of time. One day he was with a judge (ḥakam) on a hilltop. Maymūn appears, foaming at the mouth (tuzbad shafatāhu), followed by his girl (fatātuhu) and his boy (fatāhu). He calls for an audience and praises the Banī ʿAbs, recalling two of their famous men, the war of Sībāq, and the seven muʿallaqāt. Maymūn then introduces himself as a broken-hearted man near the end of life who had asked God for a good son. His son, he says, turned against him and caused him much grief, disobeying him and increasing his burdens. He then asks the judge to consider the case and judge with or against him. Rajab swears by the haramayn that Maymūn is lying, and that he has asked of Rajab something that he cannot provide. The disagreement confuses the audience, who call for
each to give an account before the judge. Layla steps forth to resolve the issue. She recites a poem in which she claims that Maymūn had been generous and kind until al-Dahr struck him and he lost his wealth and was forced to make his son turn to begging. Rajab acknowledges this is true and describes Maymūn as a man with a great spirit, “as if from the line of `Abs”. Maymūn's poverty. Rajab acknowledges, forced him into the humiliation (dhull) of begging but to no avail. Rajab praises the Banū `Abs as the rains of generosity and the salvation of the despairing, and says they are the destination of the caravans and the end rhymes (i.e. the poets). Maymūn sighs and recites a poem which causes the audience to moan out of compassion for him and sympathize with his sorrows. They reward both Maymūn and Rajab with camels, which resolves their conflict. Yet Laylā howls and frowns and grows angry, and issues two lines of poetry complaining that the audience gave her brother and her father something without giving her. The audience is convinced that Laylā is right to feel wronged, and they compensate her with a sum of money.

32. Al-ʿAṣimiyya: Suhayl meets Maymūn (referred to here as Abū Laylā) on some vague travels. He is reading the Qurʾān and his righteousness (al-tuqā) pleases Suhayl. The audience (al-qawm) is illuminated by his “lantern” and he cycles through prayers and Qurʾānic recitation. He tells stories of the unique individuals (al-afḍād) until they enter the “capital” (al-ʿāṣima). They go to the market, where Maymūn continues to entertain them with stories sweeter than wine (al-salsābīl). A group gathers around him (akhlāṭ al-zumār), as if he were between `Uthmān and `Umar. The ruler (dihqān al-qawm) hears of him and his desire (shawq) leads him to summon Maymūn. When Maymūn arrives, the ruler smiles (hashsha ʿilayhi) like a friend and asks Maymūn to give him advice. After a moment's pause and a tear, Maymūn offers his extended advice. Maymūn encourages his audience to record his advice on their hearts and write about it to their relations and friends. The ruler finds the advice of high quality (istajādāḥu) and to be sweet (istahalāḥu), and has it repeated (istaʿādahā), dictated (istamlāḥā), and distributed to each worker and agent (nāʿib). He then orders a wool cloak for Maymūn and rewards him with dinars. When they depart, Suhayl reports that he praised God for the gifts. Maymūn, he says, laughed at him scornfully and then recited a poem reminding Suhayl that he was from the men of the age (al-dahr) who look into matters with a thoughtful eye (ʿayn al-fikrī). When his renown spreads along with his trickery (makr), he tricks (ghulāṭa) those who know and those who don't. With a sign of goodness (al-ṣalāḥ) that disseminates among the people like the wind of dawn, he settles into a country. Suhayl realizes Maymūn's nature hasn't changed, and he remains with him for as long as God wills it, crying for his [lack of] religion and laughing for his worldly pursuits (dunyāhu).

33. Al-Rashīdiyya: Suhayl is in the Nile town of Rashīd when he sees Maymūn in the market. Suhayl attempts to follow him, but loses him and retires to a tavern (funduq) where he encounters an old man surrounded by people. Upon inspection, Suhayl sees it is Maymūn in disguise, along with his daughter (ibnatuḥu), who are fighting. When Maymūn sees the crowd gathering, he dispenses with the propriety of the Book (adāb al-kitāb) and the Sunna and begins to curse Laylā. An antagonist emerges from the crowd, inquiring about Maymūn's relationship to the girl (al-jāriya). Maymūn responds that she is a girl he married, thereby exchanging pleasure (ladhdha) for pain. The antagonist demands that Maymūn offer evidence of his wife's infractions; Maymūn gives an insulting portrayal.
Laylā responds by denouncing Maymūn and demanding that he offer an account of her alleged wrongs and excesses. Maymūn replies that his “wife” was not satisfied with bread and water; and that she turns up her nose at walking barefoot and sleeping without a blanket as if she were Māʾ al-Samāʾ and Fatīma al-Zahrāʾ. He says he is a poor man who eats simple food and waits for charity (zakāt). Maymūn declares his inability to provide, even if the four imams “ruled it necessary” (ḥakamat bi-hā). Then he cries and sighs before reciting a poem on his misfortune and asking for alms from the audience. When he finishes his enchantment (iftitānīhi), they audience is infatuated (iftatana) by the merrymaking of his tongue (fakahat lisānīhi) and his intelligence (nahabat janānīhi). They reward Maymūn and extend their sympathies for his difficult situation; then he and Laylā depart. When Maymūn retires to himself (khalā bi-nafshihi), Suhayl approaches him and greets him with “There is no god but God,” to which Maymūn responds jubilantly. Suhayl comforts Maymūn and encourages him to bear his hardships, at which Maymūn turns up his nose and acts arrogantly (fa-shamakha wa-stakbara) and recites a poem proclaiming his prowess and comparing himself to al-Saffāh and Imru al-Qays. Suhayl stays with him for a period of time, as if he were in heaven (ḥadiqat al-jīnān). Then Maymūn mounts a she-camel like al-ʿadrafūṭ and says: “Let us meet in Manfalūṭ”.

34. *Al-Adabiyya*: Suhayl travels through the desert with a group of Arabs. When they reach a valley, they find an encampment where they dismount to rest, drink, and prepare a meal. From the tents, however, they hear a voice reciting a poem in which the speaker brags of his martial prowess. Fearing for their possessions, they watch their mounts for a third of the night until they hear a voice addressing a boy (vā ghulām). This is later revealed to be Maymūn addressing Rajab. Maymūn offers advice on a wide array of moral and social topics. When Maymūn finishes delivering his advice, Suhayl says that he and his companions were pleased (rāʿinā) by his adāb and longed (nahfū) to make his acquaintance. In the dawn light, they recognize Maymūn, who the group claims to know and rushes to greet with affection. They stay with him for a day that is sweeter than the old wine of the monastery (muʿattaqat al-dayr). When Maymūn and his family ready their mount, Suhayl asks him about the whereabouts of his spear. Maymūn points to his pen and recites a poem. Suhayl is so impressed with the poem, and Maymūn's stylistic and persuasive abilities, that he asks to join Maymūn's group (saḥba), even if his affection (mahabba) for Maymūn distracts him from his goals. Maymūn, however, says he has committed to battling everyone, and says he fears the impact on Suhayl. With that, he turns his horse and departs, giving Suhayl a taste of the burning torture of his absence.

35. *Al-ʿAntākiyya*: Suhayl travels with a group of companions (išāba) to Antioch (Anṭākiyyat al-Rūm), where he goes to a judge's chambers to take care of a small matter (murāsha). There he sees Maymūn and Laylā and makes to greet them. Maymūn indicates with a glance that Suhayl should not identify them. Laylā addresses the judge, complaining of her “husband's” poverty and abuse. She goes on to assert that she is a young woman (anā fatāʾin gharīdat al-ṣabā') who cannot “live on the dust illuminated in the sun's rays”. Many good men sought to marry her, she claims, and offered her generous dowries. But due to Fate, she ended up with Maymūn. She asks the judge to either command him to meet her needs or divorce her from her husband (yuṭalliqunī) and free her (yuṭliqunī) lest she kill herself. Maymūn responds “like one possessed”, accusing his “wife” of only recalling the
difficulties and hardships, and gesturing briefly to his own loss of wealth and prestige. Laylā replies that she was not trying to furnish a palace nor wait on the fire like a Phoenix; and then she reiterates her request to either provide or divorce, referring to the pronouncement of the Qur’ān. Having heard their complaints, the judge is uncertain whether to blame them or forgive them. Suhayl observes that the girl has seduced (ḥajalathu) the judge with the iftitān of her speech (kalāmihā) and the curve of her legs. Seeking Laylā, the judge advises Maymūn to trade her for someone who suits his passions. Maymūn refuses, so the judge gives him twenty gold dinār (niṣāb) and tells him to release his “prisoner” (al-asīra) and make use of the gold. Maymūn then divorces his “wife” and the judge takes her to his den (ʿarīn). Maymūn tells Suhayl to meet him at the tavern (khān) that evening. When Suhayl arrives, Laylā is by Maymūn’s side disguised in boy’s clothing. Maymūn celebrates his victory over the judge and invites Suhayl to travel with him. Suhayl agrees enthusiastically, and after a few more curses upon the judge, they depart. By morning, they had travelled many miles until they reached the border of Iraq and parted ways.

36. Al-Ṭā’īyya: Suhayl reports he was in Yemen in ancient times (fī sāliḥ al-zaman) when he himself was very young. He travels through the deserts (bawārūd) until he reaches the lands (ahyā”) of the Banī Ṭayy. He describes their encampment: the tents and fires, bowls of provisions, horses and lances, camels and sheep, girls like gazelles and boys like the edge of swords (wa jawsānūn ka-l-zibaʾ wa ghilmānūn ka-l-zubbā). This is during ḥaǰj and there is a terrible clamor as the assembled people begin to race as if toward some idol (našab). Suhayl follows them to a sand mound where a shaykh (Maymūn) is standing. He addresses the crowd in the language of Ṭayy, issues blessings upon the prophets, and praises their horsemanship, dress, military prowess, flag, and famous figures. Maymūn describes himself as an old man who has travelled very far and learned an immense amount. He had once been a powerful and wealthy man (mīn aṣḥāb al-dawla), and he bemoans the loss of those who knew how to distinguish poetry. Rajab approaches him disguised as a beautiful, tall boy from the Banī Ṭayy and announces he will test Maymūn. If Maymūn fails, the boy threatens to throw him from the heights; if he succeeds, the boy will be his guarantor among the people. Maymūn smiles the smile of “majūn” and accepts the challenge, chastising the boy for his youth. The boy asks Maymūn about the qiyūd of creatures, the speeds of a horse, the paces of a camel, the movements of other animals, and the groupings of soldiers. Maymūn’s compositions lead Rajab to declare that he does not see the adīb as a stranger in the desert (mā arāka fī ʾl-bādiya bi-l-dakhīl) nor as someone selfish in granting benefit (wa lā fī ʾl-ifāda bi-l-bakhīl). He asks Maymūn to tell him the types of palm trees and then their fruits. The boy exalts Maymūn above his own people and gives him a dinar as a reward. He then encourages his people to give (like a tax collector: ka-jābī ʾl-wadīʾa). Suhayl recognizes the boy as Rajab as the two depart; he follows them and watches as Maymūn recites lines of verse proclaiming his chameleon-like nature and warning Suhayl from reproaching him. Suhayl then leaves and continues his travels.

37. Al-ʿAdaniyya: Suhayl enters Yemen and, after being waylaid by a rain storm, arrives in Aden. There he finds a shaykh and a servant boy (ghulūm) surrounded by a crowd. Maymūn begins to speak, first praising God and then addressing the people of Yemen as the “origins of the Arabs” (jurthūmat al-ʿArab) and “with sturdy lineage” (arūmat al-
He attributes the origins of the Arabic language, writing, poetry, and oration to the area and its famous early figures and praises many other aspects of Yemen's contribution to Arab history. Maymūn then says that prayer and meager sustenance have made him weaker than a spider's web, so he left his country (waṭanī) and abandoned his companions (hajartu al-samīr wa-l-nadīm) to seek the face of God. He reports that he also bought the boy (al-ghurānaq al-wadāḍ) for a thousand pieces of silver (al-riqa). He paid half up front, but the seller could not wait for the other half so he ransomed his she-camel and took the boy with him to Yemen. He praises the boy's attributes, comparing him favorably to important literary figures, and then asks him to recite his praise poetry. Rajab's poetry praises the people of Yemen and then asks for their help retrieving the she-camel or paying the ransom. A ruler (zā'im) replies, invoking magic to describe the state of hardship that Maymūn and Rajab are in. He gives them a she-camel and the audience provides monetary gifts. Maymūn then bids the group (al-nafar) farewell and recites a poem. The ruler pulls off one of his cloaks and Suhayl recognizes Maymūn and Rajab, whom he follows when they depart. When he catches up with them, Maymūn has put away his staff and is playing with Rajab. Suhayl reproaches them in verse, to which Maymūn responds that if Suhayl is not learning adab, he mine as well leave them alone. Maymūn then adds in prose that people have become evil and urges them to take to the road. They arrive at a house at dusk, and spend the evening exchanging speech. In the morning, Suhayl finds that Rajab and Maymūn have departed.

38. Al-Ḥimariyya: Suhayl is headed by night to Ṣanʿā with unnamed companions when they come upon the lands of the people of Himyar. They stay among them to explore their dialect, way of writing, and the ruins. When they make to leave, the people demand they stay three days out of hospitality. They relent and make their rounds, visiting their hosts, until at noon they encounter Maymūn and his two companions (ṣāhibay), Laylā and Rajab. They are happy to see one another. They are taken to the emir of the area (al-hilla). One of the emir's attendants recognizes Maymūn as a brilliant and wily adīb, and calls for his wit to be tested. Maymūn gladly rises to the occasion, asking the antagonist two grammatical questions that stump him. A boy (fatā) takes the man's place, and asks Maymūn eight quyūd questions about the stages of human (i.e male) life, a woman's life stages, the types of gestures, the rain, the rivers, the mountains, the dust, and types of thread or cord (al-khuyūt). The audience's reaction is to praise Maymūn, calling him the Nābigha of the Ages. They ask him to recite to them line by line, and Maymūn requests that Suhayl take dictation. The emir rewards Maymūn with a Yemeni gown (hulla) and the audience gives him a type of sheep (al-naqad). They then reward Suhayl with a smaller amount (durayhimāt) and identify it in the text as a gift for the secretary (kātib) of the second order (thāniyat al-marāṭib). Maymūn then bids them farewell and departs alone.

39. Al-Anbāriyya: Suhayl travels with a group (rakk) from Banī l-Qayn “who fill the ear and eye”. They stop after a long journey in a barren desert. There is a man among the people described as a “wide-ranging narrator” (wāsī al-riwāya) and “shrewd minded” (baʿīd al-ghāya). This man's recitation evokes Suhayl's arrogance (al-hāmiyya). The narrator demands to know how this man compares to al-Shaykh al-Khīzāmī, i.e., Maymūn. The man responds with a reference to thunderclouds that do not bring rain and a figure named Bāqil bin Rabīʿa, proverbial for his stupidity, in comparison to Quss bin Sāʿīda. Suhayl
tells the man of Maymūn's anecdotes (nawādir) and insights (bawādir), until the latter says that his arrow has struck the mark. Suhayl observes he has “nearly melted from longing [to meet Maymūn]” (awshaka an yadhūba min ghaytihi), so he invites the man to join them and feast on Maymūn's speech (ḥadīth), and they continue their travels until they arrive in Anbar. The next day, Suhayl approaches the governor's majlis (majlis al-wālī, also referred to below as the “emir”) in order to seek a favor. There he encounters Laylā disguised as a woman in a loose-fitting niqāb, holding on to a boy (fatā) whom she accuses of tricking and then murdering her father. The wālī asks for proof, so she departs and quickly returns with Maymūn and Rajab. Suhayl recognizes them immediately. They give their testimony and depart again (their testimony is not reported). The wālī imprisons the boy and urges Laylā to accept blood money in repayment (al-diyya). Laylā praises her deceased father and asserts his wealth, and then accepts the blood money. Thus rewarded, her sighs lull, her tears dry up, she praises and offers prayer and then recites a short poem. In the poem, she hints at the way her father (al-maqūl) has defeated his “killer” (al-qātil). Suhayl wants to test his intuition that she is Laylā, so when she departs, he follows her. When they reach an open area (khilā'), she turns to him and confronts him in verse. In the poem, she addresses him by name, showing that she, too, recognizes him. He then recognizes her as Laylā and mocks her for her lack of honesty. Laylā justifies her actions and then takes Suhayl to a tavern, where they meet Maymūn and the Qaynī man. Suhayl is (or more likely, pretends to be) surprised. Maymūn then engages in an exchange with the Qaynī man, who he bests and wins recognition and a reward.

40. Al-Jadaliyya: Suhayl is struck by a powerful sickness (ašābatnī wa'katmus) that emaciated him. When he recovers his vitality, his famished state drives him to gluttony and his restlessness to entertainment. He eats with the greed of someone lacking adab (iltihām al-nā'īt) and travels short distances (khurāj al-dāfīt) until one day he enters a beautiful garden where a “sublime group” ('isāba jālima) has settled. The scent of roasting meat drives Suhayl to barge in on the group. There he finds Rajab and Maymūn in disguise, performing a staged debate. Rajab claims that wealth makes life good, meets needs in this world while also making good deeds possible in preparation for the next. He calls it the beloved (al-habīb) for which anyone would sacrifice their soul; and even those who do not suffer when leaving their son would suffer when bidding farewell to their wealth. Wealth is the ultimate goal, he argues, and the condition of possibility for human society. Maymūn responds in defense of knowledge (ʿilm). He argues that knowledge makes a human, not wealth; and describes knowledge as the ladder (al-mīrqāa) along the stages of moral completion (kamāl). Knowledge leads to truth and eternal recognition, while the wealthy and powerful are forgotten by history. Knowledge is only acquired by the best of men (afādīl al-rijāl), saves those who master it from destruction and brings them closer to God, whereas wealth is gathered by the lowly and exposes them to destruction and immorality (al-mahālik wa-{l-arjās) and leads them into conflict with one another. Suhayl reports that the audience (al-qawm) tells Maymūn that his “friend” had gone astray. This makes Rajab furious, and pointing to Maymūn's poverty, first he says his children are like orphans and his wife is like an unmarried woman. Rajab then questions Maymūn's belief in the value of knowledge, and asks if he could dress himself in his writing paper. He points to Maymūn's torn gown (al-ghadāfīl) and the way he has barged into the party to eat (al-wārish) and
drink (al-wāghil), and claims that if knowledge really brought prosperity, he would not appear in such desperate poverty. Rajab recites two line of verse saying that while Maymūn may have learned the human sciences (ʿulūm al-warāḥ), he has not learned the other knowledge (ʿilm), i.e. the knowledge of the value of wealth. Maymūn doubles over with humiliation, and the audience (al-qawm) feels some of the shame of the old man's defeat. In response, they reward him with some coins. Suhayl then says that the crowd blocked his view of the two disputants. When he spies them again, he recognizes them as Maymūn and Rajab and he nearly whistles in surprise. Maymūn makes him sit, and tells him to wait until they return, but they never do.

41. Al-Tihāmiyya: Suhayl arrives in the lowlands of Tihāma in Arabia, where he joins a sagacious group (qawm min uwlī l-shihāma). They pass the time entertaining one another in a majlis ṭarāb. It is said that “the orator of the Arabs” (khaṭīb al-ʿarab) has arrived. A youthful man (rajul muqtabil al-shabāb) appears on a stallion (yaʿbūb), followed by a shaykh in a dark jubbah. The shaykh is Maymūn in disguise, speaking with a foreign accent. Once the audience has gathered, Maymūn crouches, working his jaw like a black snake. When he speaks, he mixes the ʿadd and the zāʾ. The audience thinks less of him and ignores him, rendering him “less than a kitten” (ahwana min dirṣ) and “more humiliated than a Qaysī in Homs”. Suhayl reports there was a conflict (fitna) between the people. The orator stands upon a mount (hadaba) and addresses a sermon on reconciliation (ṣulḥ) to the assembled crowd. The framework for reconciliation is Islamic, as the audience is referred to as “the purest of Muslims” (ṣafwat al-muslimīn), not the Jahāliyya nor the mukhadrāmin who worship pre-Islamic gods. After reminding the audience that they have received revelation and the sayings of the Prophet Muḥammad, he distinguishes them from the disobedient figures of pre-Islamic mythology such as Aḥmar ʿAd and Pharaoh, as well as numerous warring tribes in the history of Arabia. The orator then recites a long string of adages (amthāl), described as such at their conclusion. He reminds the audience that they can repent, that God is forgiving, and that the “voice of the warner” (sawt al-nadhīr) should not be like “the voice of the camel” (sawt al-baʿīr). When the orator has finished his sermon (waʿz), Maymūn gropes (dalāfa) towards him. In a voice that needs a translator, he informs the orator that every sound has a particular name; this is a correction to the imprecise language used by the orator to describe the “voice” of the camel. The orator replies that he used the word “voice” intentionally to stir up debate (li-l-mushākala), and challenges Maymūn to share what he knows. In the most captivating cadence (ashjā al-nagham), Maymūn delivers a twenty-line catalogue of the sounds, from the caw of a crow to the scratching of pens on paper. When he finishes, he says: “Take your language from a foreign man”, quoting Ḥammād bin Ismaʿīl al-Jawhari, the author of al-Ṣihāḥ. The audience is amazed by his excellence (nażāba) despite his foreignness (gharāba). They ask him to identify himself, and he replies that he is ʿAmr bin ʿAmira from the Aḥmara, a tribe of non-Arabs who settled in Kufa. He blames al-Dahr for his misfortunes. The audience claims that his accent (al-ʿujma) distracted them from his wisdom (al-hikma), and they apologize for not standing up for his dignity (ḥurma). They approach him like a child looks to breastfeed (al-ṭafl ʿalā l-raḍāʾ) and say that knowledge is lost unless it is committed to paper. Maymūn nods to Suhayl and tells him to take up the pen, and then begins to dictate. When he finishes, he bends over with happiness and prays for the orators.
42. *Al-Mudariyya*: Suhayl is thrown by the deserts of the earth to visit the settled areas of Muḍar. There he searches the gatherings of men and women (māḥīf al-rija'il wa-l-nisā' ), listening to what is pleasant (al-mā' nūṣ) and esoteric (al-gharīb), and enjoying the amorous poetry for boys (al-ghazal) and girls (al-nasīḥ). Speaking of the people of Muḍar, Suhayl says that he “gathered what I could of their Jāhili languages” and their poetry, good and bad (al-hawthariyya and al-hawlajiyya). One day Suhayl encounters a tall shaykh (tawīl al-nijād), dressed in a particular striped garment worn by the Arabs (bijād). Suhayl scrutinizes the shaykh and realizes it is Maymūn, who has mounted a hill to give a sermon. Suhayl is filled with love and approaches his old friend, but the latter dissuades him with a glance. Maymūn then delivers a sermon in which he claims that his “sabiya”, which can mean either a young woman or a bottle of wine, has been stolen and asks for donations to pay her ransom. The audience is sympathetic (maṣḥah al-ḥadi), and Maymūn invites Suhayl to join him if he likes to drink or leave him alone. Then he recites a poem in which he urges Suhayl to carefully consider his words on the sabiyya and he will see that Maymūn was telling the truth and accurate in his description. He then denies that he stole, saying instead that he was compensated for his praise, and that he will soon repent. Suhayl responds by admitting that Maymūn's trickery intoxicates him and submits himself to his friend. He says that he drinks wine with water, which means it does not violate Islamic law. Uttering protective prayers from the Qur'ān, Suhayl drinks with him and passes a night “more pure than al-Zulāl”. Maymūn then asks Suhayl to write down a poem that he dictates, in which he asks for forgiveness from the people of Muḍar for using their money to drink red wine on account of the fact that their name comes from Muḍar al-Ḥamrā', or Muḍar the Red. Maymūn then seals the paper and gives it to the wine merchant for safe keeping, saying to take it as a letter (mughalghala) to the lands of Muḍar bin Nizār. Then he bids all farewell, and Suhayl returns from whence he came.

43. *Al-Bahriyya*: Suhayl says that he saw Abū Laylā (i.e. Maymūn) during Eid al-Adhā on a farm by the sea. There was a blessed gathering (al-mashhad al-maymūn) as full as Noah's ark (ḥāfilaw ka-l-fulk al-mashhūn), with people streaming out in hoards (afwājau) by themselves (afrājau) and in pairs (aṣwājau). When the commotion had died down, and the proverbial wheat had been separated from the chaff, the educated (al-mutā'addibūn) from among the people sit on the earth and discuss the nuances of Arabic (ḥaqā'iq al-'arabiyya wa daqā'iq al-'irāb). A shaykh appears, with weak and runny eyes (a'mash al-'ayn) and six fingers to each hand (a'nash al-yadayn). With his hands, he wipes the edges of his moustache and addresses the group, praising God for making Arabic the most eloquent of languages, ennumerating the many features of the language, and then decrying its decline in his contemporary world. Finally, he urges his audience to revive Arabic and promises to dedicate himself to aiding them as long as he lives. Suhayl then reports that Maymūn, feigning modesty, poses a series of intricate questions which the shaykh cannot answer. He asks to postpone his answers by a day, but Maymūn responds that it would not take an hour to come clean about his posturing (al-ṣīnā'a). The audience then pulls on his sleeves and
he asks them for money to free a “prisoner” who would otherwise die of his disease. They give him a reward and he thanks them and turns to leave. Suhayl wants to know his story, and so he stands in his way, demanding to know who his prisoner is. The shaykh replies that he drank in the tavern of a certain Suwayd bin al-ʿAdbat, who is holding his musical instrument (a barbat) for ransom. The shaykh invites Suhayl to join him to free the “prisoner”. Suhayl declines, saying that freeing a slave is better than freeing a musical instrument, and they part ways.

44. Al-Ḥalliyya: Suhayl comes to stay in a house (bi-ḥilla) in the town of al-Ḥalla. There he is overjoyed to encounter Abū Laylā, i.e. Maymūn. He comes under Maymūn’s protection and stays in his company until ʿĪd al-ʿAḍhā, when Maymūn suggests they go for a ride. They ride their horses hard and go into the side roads, passing by the “riff raft” until they encounter a group of scholars (ʿulamā’) drinking wine and exchanging riddles. Maymūn asks the group what they are up to, and they turn away from him frowning. They ask him who he is, observing caustically that he sits in someone else’s saddle and drinks from a pond not his own. Maymūn introduces himself as Al-Raqma’ bin ʿĀṣma’ from Banī al-Sama‘ma’. The group is frightened by the eloquence of his introduction, and Maymūn threatens them. He then recites riddles (nuʿ amman) on the Prophet Muḥammad, ‘Ālī, and ʿUtmān. He then recites riddles (muḥājī) on wine (fī salsabil), water jugs (abārīq), and coconuts (nārajīl). The audience praises Maymūn, who cries out like a woman in mourning and asks God to ease his life of begging. He asks for “a red, embroidered turban” (ʿimāma muḍarraja) and a “carved necklace” (hulla mudabbaja) so that God's servants will know his proper station. When the audience fulfills his wishes, he returns home with Suhayl; his home is a site of poverty and want.

45. Al-Furāṭiyya: Suhayl and his companions (he just says “we”) come to the bank of the Euphrates (al-Furāṭ). They linger for a few days, enjoying the cold water and verdant trees. When the time to depart comes close, Maymūn appears, and the people (al-nās) approach him. Maymūn is accompanied by a bedouin shaykh. They begin to debate, reaching the topic of maʿn al-lughā, or the knowledge of utterances without morphology or declension. Maymūn pretends to be disinterested (taghāfala), which leads them deeper into debate, until Maymūn asks the shaykh a question. The shaykh cannot answer and so Maymūn does, reciting a long poem in which words with dād and zā’ are compared and explained. The audience reacts positively, and Maymūn then recites a second poem, in which he chronicles his losses and misfortunes. The audience has sympathy, including the shaykh he outsmarted; they each give him a gift, again including the shaykh, who gives him a good camel. The shaykh praises Maymūn, saying that an elderly man (or shaykh) is not the one who has advanced in age, but the one who has advanced in effort. Suhayl reports that they spent the night enjoying Maymūn's company and the “wine” (ṣahbā') of his glass. Then he left in the last of night, on the camel he was given, leaving them all missing him.

46. Al-Sukhrīyya: Suhayl goes hunting with a group of seven friends in the desert of al-Khalsā’, an area in Bilād al-ʿArab. Their hunt is successful, and then they make a campfire and begin to cook the meat as the sun sets. They then wander the desert until they get lost, but are guided by a voice crying out that the campfires are ready for the hungry (al-qirā yā khimāṣ). They are astonished by the virtues (makārim) of the Arabs and follow the voice until they reach a spacious house (dār qawrā’). There a white-faced group greets them and
welcomes them to a feast. They spend the night in great pleasure, as if they were the guests of Qa‘qā‘ bin Shaur. The next day, the whole neighborhood (al-hayy) gathers and Maymūn appears disguised as an old man in torn clothing. As he is greeting the assembled crowd, Rajab approaches him, disguised in a turban made of many-colored rags. Maymūn curses Rajab, and the crowd asks for God to bless the man (i.e. Rajab) whose appearance would make a bereaved mother laugh. Maymūn accuses Rajab of speaking nonsense. As Rajab is wavering too and fro and stamping his feet, an ember from the fire burns his bare foot causing him to scream and hop up and down. Rajab curses Maymūn, asking if he thinks the audience cannot also see his poverty. They have a scuffle and Rajab runs away like al-Buḥṭūrī. The people (al-nās) watch and the children clap (yusaffiqūn). When Rajab falls, the boys snatch the cloth from his turban and Rajab chases them as the whole crowd laughs uproariously. Rajab is furious, calling out curses and quoting the Qurān. The audience promises to compensate him, but Rajab then issues a two-line poem. Suhayl reports that when his master encountered Maymūn, the latter says that entertainment (maẓḥ) in speech is like salt in food and reproach (al-ilzāz) generates boredom (al-malal), even on honey (al-ʿasal). He then says he has grown tired of sincerity and longs for jest (malīṭu al-jīdd wa-shṭāqtu ilā al-hazāl), and asks Suhayl if he has perhaps grown tired of blaming and reproaching? So Suhayl retreats.

47. Al-Ruṣāfiyya: Suhayl stays up late (samartu) to listen to the exchange of speech in the neighborhood of al-Ruṣāfā in Baghdad. The discussion goes in many directions, ultimately leading to the recollection of the well-known people of the age (afrād al-ʿasr). One person (baʿd al-qawm) announces that Maymūn arrived today. The speaker praises Maymūn’s eloquence, saying he is incontestable and his speech makes his audience seem drunk. The group is impressed and ask how they might meet him. The man replies that he can guide them. In the morning, they depart with the “guide” in the lead until they reach a caravan (al-qāfila) where they find Maymūn. Maymūn demands a literary debate. He is with another man with scattered and broken teeth (adram athram). The man says they should wager their horses, and asks Maymūn, if he is really from the marauders of the night (tawāriq al-layl), then what are the types (quyūd) of horses according to their ages and colors? He then poses quyūd questions about the qualities of a camel. When Maymūn has finished, the man acknowledges Maymūn’s mastery and says that he should remain silent and give Maymūn his horse. The audience is impressed, and give Maymūn a camel on top of the man’s horse. Maymūn then issues a two-line poem. Suhayl reports that when his friends leave, he asks Maymūn if he can stay, and is welcomed to stay in Maymūn’s company in Umm al-ʾIrāq, i.e. Baghdad, until it was fated for them to part ways.
48. **Al-Lādhiqiyya:** Suhayl goes to Latakia to take care of something. He travels from the town of al-Khunāşira outside of Aleppo with a boorish man (rajul ṣunāfīra) and arrives without knowing anyone. There is a school on the lower level of the home where Suhayl is staying. He visits occasionally and serves as the imam. Maymūn enters the school disguised as a blind man (shaykh kaḍīf) led by a slender servant boy (ghulām kaḍīf). Maymūn greets the people at the school and launches into a laudatory speech. The speech begins by praising the value of schools as the “doors of heaven” (abwāb al-jānna), and then cites a number of Qur’ānic phrases regarding reading, and, through the metaphor of the pen, writing. He then praises reading and writing as the most trustworthy (arjāḥ) of trades and profitable (arbah) of goods, the pivot of the Qur ‘ān and the Sunna, the site of the enlightenment of the mind, the location of authority and the source of happiness, a sign of success, and the goal of righteousness and reform. Without it, history would be lost and relics would disappear. He then warns the students to read carefully and dedicate themselves to their studies, and not to waste their time whispering. He quotes ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd al-Kātib, warns the students to copy correctly and be diligent, and write their lines properly, and know that the teacher will be watching them. He warns them to have pure hands and tongues, clean clothes and hands, and good manners; and he urges them to recall the verses (ayāt) of the Qur ‘ān in order to be the beautification of this world. Maymūn then addresses the teachers, guiding them morally and reminding them of their responsibilities towards their students. He recites a tahjiyya poem in which the second half of each line is comprised of three letters that form a word. When he finishes his poem, the boys (al-ghilām) in the school cling to him (ta’allaq bihi). They declare him the best teacher and say they want none other. The teacher is scared that he will lose his financial base, and whispers to Suhayl for help. Suhayl says that he had recognized Maymūn, and instructs the teacher to give him a handful (qabṣa) of dinars. Suhayl then invites Maymūn to speak privately (ilā khulwā), and tells him the full story. Maymūn laughs and complains that he is always treated with suspicion. Suhayl asks Maymūn why he made himself appear blind, and Maymūn explains in verse that it was so as not to see the moral shortcomings of his fellow man. Maymūn subsequently invites Suhayl to his house (mathwā), giving him half the reward. Suhayl spends the night, which is more refined than fine cloth and sweeter than al-jāshiriyya. In the morning, Maymūn bids Suhayl farewell, leaving him with a burning desire (al-lahab).

49. **Al-Lubnāniyya:** Suhayl travels with a group (nafar) from Ma’add bin Ḥadān to Mount Lebanon (Jabal Lubnān). They are pleased by its pathways and valleys (al-shīʿāb wa-l-awdiya), and its circles and gatherings (al-majālis wa-l-andiya). One day they encounter a group of great people (qawm min al-ʿuzamāʾ) who have surrounded a young scholar. The scholar, Rajab in disguise, recites lines of poetry and entertains them (yuṭrifuhum) with esoteric tales (gharāʾ ib) and signs (al-ayāt). As they stop to listen, a traveling shaykh (min abnāʾ al-sābīl) joins the group without issuing a greeting. This shaykh, Maymūn in disguise, sits there frowning until the people began to feel annoyed with his presence. They complain that despite reaching old age, this shaykh had not learned the etiquette (adab) of a child. They then turn away from him. Rajab addresses Maymūn as “Abī al-Shaqaʿ maq," which earn’s him the latter’s disdain and reproach. They have a tense exchange of words, and then Rajab poses a series of riddles which Maymūn cannot answer. Agitated, Maymūn then demands that Rajab answer quyūd questions on the categories of cutting (al-qat’),
breaking (\textit{guyūd al-kisr}), and broken things (\textit{al-ḥiṣas}). The audience is impressed by Rajab's replies and announces that the courageous man has distinguished himself from the coward. They compare Rajab to Abū ʿUbaydā and al-Asmāʾi and reward him for preserving \textit{adab} with a bracelet and a handful (\textit{qabṣa}) of gold. Maymūn leaves in disgrace, and Rajab follows him. Suhayl is afraid of Rajab's harshness (\textit{ṣawla}) and he follows the two of them to resolve the dispute between them. He finds them by a spring (\textit{ʿaqīq}). Maymūn is wearing the bracelet and Rajab is standing as if he were his slave (\textit{ka-l-raqīq}). Suhayl studies them and when he recognizes them, he shouts in astonishment. Maymūn leans on his elbow as he recites, glee (\textit{al-bishr}) apparent in his face. Maymūn's poem says that his youth has passed and old age looms, and expresses his intention to travel. He then addresses Suhayl and says that he is determined to ride the boat until he dies or gains his reward. He commands Suhayl to return to his friends and keep to himself (\textit{aktum}) what Maymūn said to his servant. Suhayl leaves Maymūn, oscillating between forgiveness (\textit{al-ʿudhr}) and reproach (\textit{al-laum}), and returns to his friends, keeping Maymūn's secret until then.

50. \textit{Al-Hamawiyya}: Suhayl meets Maymūn in Hama, and the two go to a splendid garden (\textit{ḥadiqa bahīja anīqa}) with water wheels and fruit trees. A group (\textit{qawm}) of dignified, devout Muslims appears. Their foreheads bear the marks of prayer, and they roll the prayer beads between their fingers in praise of God and seek his forgiveness for their sins. Maymūn sees them and quotes the Qurʾān (114:1) and prepares a trick. Maymūn then turns to Suhayl and says that he had decided to take a vow of silence that day, but not every plan comes to fruition. The group approaches and sits within earshot, and Maymūn approaches Suhayl and begins to speak aloud. Maymūn gives an oration that appears to make no sense unless the esoteric meaning of each word is considered. When he has finished, his audience reproaches him for senseless and improperly declined speech (\textit{laghū and lāhn}). They call him a possessed poet and turn away from him. Maymūn gets agitated (\textit{ṭhāra}) as if he were a lion from 'Ifrīn and asks if it is himself or his audience who is misguided. He then accuses them of judging and casting blame based on their own ignorance. He mocks them and reminds them that God is the ultimate judge and that they will suffer for their arrogance. The audience senses his great intelligence (\textit{duḥā}) and decides to hear him out, ultimately rewarding him for his eloquence after observing his impoverished state. They apologize to Maymūn and express their affection. Maymūn leaves satisfied with what he won, and Suhayl goes with him. They return to the city and Maymūn brings Suhayl to his nest (\textit{uḍhūs al-qatā}). Suhayl stays a night more delightful than childhood and sweeter than the breeze. When Maymūn departs, he encourages Suhayl to return to his family, and bids him the farewell of a lover (\textit{widāʾ al-ḥāʾim al-mushṭāq}). Suhayl leaves, urging his camels along with the song of Maymūn's memory (\textit{wa anā aḥḍū bi-zikrihi al-niyāq}).

51. \textit{Al-Yamāmiyya}: Suhayl wants to travel to the homes (\textit{diyār}) of the “authentic Arabs” (\textit{al-ʿarab al-ʿarbā}) because of their poets and orators. He arrives in the town of Ḥajr in the lands of al-Yāmama, where he sees a group (\textit{katība}) toward which he directs his steed (\textit{jawād}). When he gets closer, he finds the group circled around two men. These men are Maymūn and Rajab, disguised as an older man and his servant. Maymūn curses Rajab and berates him for his lisp, complaining of all the effort and money he has wasted on the boy's upbringing. After offering some humorous anecdotes about the consequences of Rajab’s
lisp to the audience, the shaykh insists he wants to cultivate (tahdhīb) the young man, not torture him (ta’dhib). If the audience doubts him, he says, they can test him; and if not, he will do so. They audience asks him to do so, and he recites a poem. The boy then emulates the poem, changing the letters to create new meanings. When the audience sees how Rajab’s mispronunciations lead to inappropriate meanings, they seek refuge in God from “that lisp” (lathgha). They ask Maymūn what is the purpose of a servant who could not be sold for “the marrow of a sugar cane” (fashgha). He says if he could do without the boy, or find some wealth, he would sell him for half his value and buy another servant. Rajab then composes a poem on a piece of paper (ruq’a) asserting that despite his lisp, he is of value as a servant. The audience offers Maymūn a reward, and the two depart happy. Suhayl recognizes the two as the two “friends” (al-ṣāhibayn) whose evil deeds (al-sayyiʿāt) exceed the writings of the angels who record sin (al-kātibayn). Suhayl follows them, and inquires where Rajab is. That night, Rajab comes riding by on a horse and they follow him, leaving the people (al-qawm) to break the tips of their arrows (an expression of anger).

52. Al-ʿUmāniyya: Suhayl is thrown by the vicissitudes of Time (ṣurūf al-zamān) to ʿUmān. He hears the call to prayer and goes to the mosque, where he sees Maymūn standing by the entranceway, reveling (rāṭiʿ) with the people (al-nās) around him like in various sites on pilgrimage. Suhayl joins them for an evening revelry (al-sumar), while Maymūn reads to them the myths (asāfīr) of the early and later predecessors. They grow tired as the stars of morning appear and sleep the rest of the night until the time between morning prayer and dawn, when an elderly antagonist comes upon them. This antagonist has inflamed eyelids and runny eyes (armash aghfash). He greets those who are gathered and says that he sees the turbans of the bedouin on city folk. Maymūn claims that the antagonist is seeing “the crowns of the Arabs” (tījān al-ʿarab) on the noblemen (aʿyān) of Muḍar. The antagonist challenges them with a series of quyūd questions to determine if they are really from Muḍar: the types of houses (quyūd al-masākīn), widths (al-sāʿā), the measures of fullness (al-imtilāʿ), and finally the types of absence (al-kilāʾ). The audience asks him to be their orator and their hasīb (or wakīl), and Maymūn responds that if they can relieve his poverty and quench his thirst, he would join them. They give him some coins, and promise him more. Maymūn leans on his elbow on his prayer mat (musallāhu) and reads from Qur’ān (3:159). Suhayl reports that a little while later, a veiled woman (multāthima) arrives and announces that she needs Maymūn and Suhayl to provide testimony in the court. When they reach an open area, the woman speaking to Maymūn uncovers her face (asfarat kalīmatuḥu) and reveals she is his daughter (or karīma). Suhayl is blown away (mutadahdih) by her trick. Maymūn scolds Suhayl and recites a poem in which claims that he is not to blame for leaving the people, as he only promised to stay with them if they provided for his needs. Maymūn then invites Suhayl to join them on the road, which Suhayl does until they part ways at Diyār ʿUthayya (an area, ḥayy, from Banī Tamīm).

53. Al-Ghazziyya: Suhayl reports that “we” left al-ʿAwāṣim for Ghazza Ḥāshim, modern-day Gaza City. They arrive in the evening, fatigued from travel, and find beds in which to sleep. In the morning, they explore the area until they pass before a court (dār al-qaḍāʾ). Maymūn has dragged Rajab before a judge, claiming that he had a friend whom Rajab tore apart. He praises his friend’s intelligence, generosity, loyalty, and knowledge extensively, and then describes his mourning for his loss. Rajab shakes with fear and appears to cry. Rajab
protests, expressing regret and saying what happened was the will of God. He offers Maymūn blood money (diya aw qawad) or the opportunity to torture him. Maymūn chooses blood money, the proper punishment for a mistake (khaṭa’a) or negligence (farāṭ). Rajab does not have the money, so he solicits from the audience with a poem. He returns to Maymūn with what he had gathered, and offers himself as further compensation if it will not suffice. When Maymūn leaves, Suhayl follows to where no one is watching and demands that Maymūn identify the murdered one (al-qatil) before he lets him go. Maymūn responds that it was a book which Rajab had tossed in a corner of the tavern, where mice tore it apart, and it was covered with dirt and grime. Maymūn gives Suhayl a Sabani cloth (lifāfa sabaniyya) and tells him to give it to the judge in the morning and then departs without looking back. Suhayl opens the cloth and finds the book. In the margin, Maymūn has written a poem which identifies the book as the qatil and asks the judge to bury it in his home. Suhayl follows Maymūn's orders and speaks with the judge, who laughs until his headgear falls off. He asks if Suhayl can bring Maymūn back. Suhayl says it is unlikely given how much Maymūn travels, and says that this exchange made him friends with the judge.

54. Al-Sawādiyya: Suhayl departs alone on a sturdy she-camel and travels until he reaches a barren stretch (tanūfa) full of people and mounts. He joins them for a night of drinking, where he encounters and recognizes Maymūn. The two greet one another as old friends. In the morning, Suhayl joins the group and they travel to Iraq, where they strike camp. They are visited by an elderly scholar from the two cities (min ʿulamāʾ al-baladayn). One day the scholar happens upon Maymūn as he was reciting a two-line poem in which there seemed to be grammatical mistakes. The shaykh says that such mistakes in declension (al-ʿirāb) make one seem like a stranger (al-īghrāb). Maymūn leaps up like a lion (al-sabandā), and says to the shaykh, if you were al-Farrāʾ or Muʿādh al-Harrāʾ, then answer me this. He proceeds to enumerate a long list of grammatical puzzles. The shaykh falls silent out of inability (fa-akhrada l-shaykh min al-iʿyāʾ), and Maymūn curses him and says that even if he gave him two days, he would be unable to answer. The shaykh is unable to even make a frog’s croak (naqīq al-ʿuljūm). When Maymūn sees this, his heart takes pity on the shaykh, and he begins to treat him with kindness and sympathy (al-talaṭṭuf wa-l-taʿṭṭuf) and do away with boasting and oppressive speech (al-ṭasaṣṣuf wa-l-taʿṣṣuf). When the shaykh regains his calm, he confides in Maymūn that he is worried that his reputation could be harmed and that the people might abandon him if they were to know of what transpired. He offers Maymūn a cloak (ṭaylasān) in exchange for his discretion. Maymūn swears to him, claiming to be more trustworthy than ʿAwf. Maymūn then struts around in his new cloak like a full-figured woman and recites a poem in which he says that he received the cloak from the “imām” out of need, not out of love, in order to tie his tongue. Suhayl reports that when the people learned of the shaykh’s machinations, they offered to make Maymūn their leader, relieving him of every expense and providing food until he decided after a few days to depart.

55. Al-Damyātiyya: Suhayl says that “we” were determined to see Damietta and travelled in a group (rakb) of the al-Anbāt, a people (qawm) who lived between al-BAṣra and al-Kūfa. They reach the town (al-balad) as the sun was setting and join a gathering (baʿd al-ṭandaʿiyā). There they encounter Maymūn and Rajab followed by “a hunchback” (bādiyyat al-ḥadab).
Rajab comes forward like someone possessed, frowning (basara) and glowering (tajahhama) as if he were a jinn from Jayham. He complains bitterly about his “wife” (i.e. Laylā, disguised as the hunchback); she then replies in kind. At the end of her speech, she implicates Maymūn, calling him Rajab's father and holding him accountable for the shortcomings of his “son”. Maymūn then enters the argument, advising his “son”, Rajab, to divorce Laylā. They ask for donations from Suhayl and his companions to compensate Laylā. Once Laylā has left, Maymūn asks the audience for a second reward for himself and Rajab.

56. Al-Iskandariyya: Suhayl and his companions travel from Cairo to Alexandria. The heat is so severe that they sleep by day and travel by night. One night, they see a black ghost (shabah aswad) on a high-backed camel. The people (al-qawm) jump upon him and tie him up. When the sun rises, Suhayl studies “our darkened prisoner” (asīrinā al-ẓalāmī) and realizes he is Maymūn, although his beard is matted and he is dressed in a worn out shirt with no sleeves. Suhayl chastises his companions for defiling the minbar and praises Maymūn. The audience gathers around him and seeks to vindicate themselves. When Maymūn's anger subsides, he addressed his former captors in mockery as “the falcons of the night” (buzāat al-layl) and “mounted assailants” (ghuzūat al-khayl) and claims that they have attacked the dawsar of King al-Nu’mān. He eventually forgives the group, attributing the attack to fate. When they take off again on their travels, Maymūn accompanies them, providing entertaining speech. When they reach their destination, they stay in a house (manzil ma‘hūl) for the known (al-ma‘lūm) and the unknown (al-majhūl). A shaykh arrives and begins to speak eloquently. A short, thickset man disagrees with the shaykh, and the two have a long conversation which leads to a fight. The thickset man accuses the shaykh of having weak opinions like al-Musta‘ṣim among the caliphs. He then poses a series of legal riddles which cause the shaykh to lower his head in puzzlement. When the victor displays his pride, Maymūn chastises him. Maymūn then claims the man mixed applied knowledge with the theoretical when he waded into logic (al-ma‘qūl, glossed as al-mantiq) and rhetoric (al-maqūl, glossed as al-bayān). Maymūn poses a set of questions which stump the man. Maymūn then poses a second set of questions which he claims are not “theoretical” (al-nazā‘ir). The man squints and glares, and is overtaken by pride (al-anafa) and says not a word. When he turns on his heels and departs more confused than a blind camel. Maymūn says that this man tried to scare them with a children's trick (al-dabbaghīṭā). The shaykh praises Maymūn, and seeing his difficult situation, offers him a reward (jadiwā) that the adīb can rely upon in his travels. Maymūn replies with a bit of advice (wasiyya) about the superiority of knowledge over wealth. His advice circulates among the people (al-qawm), each of whom gives him a small reward. Maymūn then bids them farewell and goes along his way.

57. Al-Najdiyya: Ardent desire (lawā‘ij al-wajd) tempts Suhayl into visiting and exploring Najd. One morning, he finds himself in the gathering (muntadā) of the leader of the people (za‘īm al-qawm). Maymūn and Rajab arrive, appearing to be a shaykh and his servant; Suhayl does not recognize them. Rajab complains that Maymūn has pressed him into servitude but does not provide for him; he also mocks Maymūn for his pedantry. Maymūn issues a rebuttal replete with obscure language which makes the audience laugh. An antagonist steps forward to challenge Maymūn by posing questions about quyūd. The
audience is impressed when they see the breadth of Maymūn's knowledge (ittisāʿ ṭiwaṭihi). Perceiving this change in the audience's attitude toward him, Maymūn tells them of his poverty. Maymūn claims that al-Dahr has stripped him of his wealth, and that he had once been generous. He would have released Rajab from his service, he claims, if he himself was not so poor. He concludes with a wish that God would provide for him. The audience finds his speech pleasing, decry some of the people of their age, and invite Maymūn to join them and thereby gain material relief, or take a reward (al-nilhla). As a pretext to decline their invitation, Maymūn says that he promised his family he would return. Each member of the audience gives Maymūn a dinar and they collectively gift him a she-camel. It is at this point that Suhayl claims to have wafted the scent of his lavender (khuzāmihi) but restrained himself from embracing the adīb (wa żalaftu nasfī an iltizāmihi). He follows Maymūn upon his departure. When Suhayl makes to confront Maymūn, however, the latter accuses him of being from among the “muwalladīn” who are raised in cities and do not know the proper Arabic of Ya rub bin Qahtān. He then tells Suhayl to return (presumably to the city?) until Maymūn comes across a “translator” (turjumān). Maymūn then races off, “abandoning me like one bitten by a snake” (wa ghādāranī ka-l-salīm). Suhayl returns astounded by Maymūn's artfulness in “jiddīhī” and “majūnīhī”.

58. Al-ʿUkāziyya: Suhayl and a friend (who entertains him) travel across the lands of the Arabs (al-bawādī) until they reach the ʿUkāz market. The people in the market are like “spread-out locust” (al-jard al-muntashar), performing a wide array of speech acts. They finally find a group (laʃif) of noble Arabs (mīn nawāsī al-ʿarab), among whom are Maymūn and Rajab. Maymūn and Rajab were so enthusiastic in their exchanges that they had attracted a large audience. When Maymūn notices the crowd, he puffs himself up (akhranshama wa akhrantama) and issues a challenge to Rajab, littered with insults and obscure words. He proposes to test Rajab's knowledge; if Rajab passes the test, Maymūn will strip down and give Rajab his rags (atmārī). However, if Maymūn stumps Rajab, the latter must strip off his clothes before the people (al-gawm). Rajab happily accepts the challenge and warns Maymūn to ready himself to be shamed (wa-stahdīf li-sihām al-ʿār). Maymūn asks Rajab three quyuūd questions. Rajab answers each in rajāz, and then demands Maymūn's clothing, which leads the two men to wrestle. Their fighting makes the audience feel ashamed for them, and they are offered three rewards in succession. After each reward, they exploit the audience's desire to resolve their conflict and secure a further reward.

59. Al-Makkiyya: Suhayl arrives in Mecca and explores the places of sacrifice and worship, and passes among the people. He sees a group of riders (rakb) and recognizes them as Maymūn, Laylā, and Rajab. They greet one another warmly and go together to the city where people are gathering for Ḥajj. They wander among the pilgrims for a day or two, until they happen upon a group comprised of many tribes. Maymūn assumes the role of an imām and addresses this group of pilgrims with an oration. After customary greetings replete with Qurʿānic quotations, Maymūn says that God is not satisfied with gifts and sacrifices from sinners, nor with a visit to Mecca and Medina from those who spread gossip and lies. He continues in this vein, admonishing those who would perform religious practices without acting in a religious and moral manner. “Indeed, a hajj of the heart is better than a hajj of the feet,” he says. He then turns to the theme of impermanence,
reminding his audience that they are mortal but their deeds on earth will be treated justly in the afterlife. He urges them not to be tempted by worldly rewards nor forget the future for the sake of the present, followed by a lengthy supplication to God for forgiveness and salvation. Maymūn then begins to depart but the audience blocks his way, praising his sermon and asking him to stay. He assents and returns to his place. His audience (al-qawm) gathers around him like the Doha trees of the Damascus neighborhood of al-Barīṣ (dawḥ al-Barīṣ). They expend the efforts (juhd) of a greedy or eager man (al-ḥarīṣ) on his companionship (suhba). Yet Maymūn does not return immediately to preaching, but rather regales them with novel stories and anecdotes. When the time to perform the duties of ḥajj comes, the audience bids Maymūn farewell and sends him off on a strong-shouldered she-camel (shimilla wathīqat al-mankib).

60. Al-Qudsiyya: Suhayl encounters Maymūn surrounded by an audience in al-Masjid al-Aqsā. Maymūn preaches and admonishes them until they begin to cry. When he sees Suhayl, he makes to rise. The two men have a lengthy embrace and greet one another like lovers. Maymūn then continues his sermon. The first section is full of Qurʾānic quotations and Islamic tropes of praise of God. Then he acknowledges, in general, his own shortcomings and sins, claims he has no authority to admonish others but must direct that admonishment to himself (an ironic claim to make in the course of a sermon), and finally announces that he wishes to repent. He asks his audience to pray that God treats him with generosity (fadī) and not justice ('adl). Maymūn then begins to wail and cry until the entire audience (both Bedouin and city-dwellers) joins him in weeping. The audience (al-qawm) comfort Maymūn (taskīn irtī 'āshihi) and when he had calms down, each audience member offers him a dinar. Saying that he is done with the rewards of this world, Maymūn declines their gifts. He then takes Suhayl and departs. They spend a sleepless night together in which Maymūn does not tire of recalling God's name and praying until morning, when he stands upon a mount and recites a poem. After this impassioned performance, Suhayl then stays with Maymūn for a month, learning from him. When it is time to depart, Maymūn bids him farewell and says their next meeting will be in eternity (dār al-biqāʾ). Suhayl reports that this was their last meeting and the maqāma (and the collection) conclude.
Appendix E: Geography and Settings in *Majmaʿ al-Baḥrayn*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Episode Name</th>
<th>Geography</th>
<th>Setting(s)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Al-Badawiyya</td>
<td>The desert of al-Ahwāz (as noted in the opening of the second <em>maqāma</em>).</td>
<td>First in Maymūn's tent, then on the road where they encounter the thieves, then in the emir's town, and finally in the campsite that night and the following morning.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Al-Ḥijāziyya</td>
<td>Yathrib</td>
<td>Maymūn's house the following day.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Al-ʿAqīqiyya</td>
<td>Desert</td>
<td>Suhayl first encounters the <em>adīb</em> preaching on a small hill (<em>kāthīb</em>) in the sun-struck plains (<em>al-ghiyṭān</em>). Suhayl follows Maymūn and Laylā to a farm (<em>daskara</em>) on the road, next to a spring (<em>ʿaqīq</em>).</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Al-Shāmiyya</td>
<td>Syria (al-Shām)</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Al-Ṣaʿīdiyya</td>
<td>Upper Egypt (al-Ṣaʿīd)</td>
<td>A judge's chambers</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Al-Khazrajīyya</td>
<td>Bilād al-ʿArab</td>
<td>A gathering (<em>nādī</em>) of the people of Aws and Khazraj</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Al-Yamaniyya</td>
<td>The heights of Yemen (<em>mashārīf al-Yaman</em>).</td>
<td>Suhayl leaves the heights of Yemen, having tired of staying there (<em>malaltu al-iqāma fīhā</em>), and goes to a judge's chambers. They then go to Maymūn's house. At the end of the episode, Suhayl says that Maymūn wanted to depart for</td>
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<tr>
<td>Region</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<td>8.</td>
<td>Al-Baghdadiyya</td>
<td>Baghdad (al-Zawrāʾ)</td>
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<td>9.</td>
<td>Al-Ḥalabiyya</td>
<td>Aleppo</td>
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<td>10.</td>
<td>Al-Kūfiyya</td>
<td>Kūfā</td>
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<td>11.</td>
<td>Al-ʿIrāqiyya</td>
<td>Iraq</td>
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<td>12.</td>
<td>Al-Azhariyya</td>
<td>Cairo</td>
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<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Al-Taghlibiyya</td>
<td>The desert in al-ʿAliya</td>
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<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>Al-Hazaliyya</td>
<td>N/a</td>
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<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>Al-Ramaliyya</td>
<td>Ramla, Palestine</td>
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<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>Al-Ṣūriyya</td>
<td>Tyre (Ṣūr)</td>
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<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>Al-Ḥikamiyya</td>
<td>Baghdad</td>
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<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>Al-Rjabīyya</td>
<td>The desert</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>Al-Khaṭībiyya</td>
<td>Al-Ḥilla</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Syria, although the next episode begins in Baghdad.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>20. Al-Baṣriyya</th>
<th>Başra</th>
<th>Sūq al-Marbad</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21. Al-Dimashqīyya</td>
<td>Damascus</td>
<td>A school, a circle (<em>halaqa</em>) of students. They take their leave and go to Bāb al-Barīd in Damascus.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Al-Sarūjīyya</td>
<td>The city of Sarūj between the Tigris and the Euphrates in Iraq.</td>
<td>Suhayl stays with Maymūn in a comfortable room (<em>ghurfa fasiha</em>) in Sarūj. At the end of this episode, Suhayl claims he accompanied Maymūn to Sawaḍ in Iraq and that he would have remained with him to Burak al-Ghimād (glossed as the end of the world, 22.182.8).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. Al-Mawṣūliyya</td>
<td>Mosul (Suhayl departs from Aleppo at the beginning of the episode)</td>
<td>The khān (in the sense of market) and then the judge's chambers. Then the gate of the market and finally the gate of the city.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. Al-Tamīmiyya</td>
<td>The lands of Banī Tamīm</td>
<td>Meet in the desert, and go to a <em>hilla</em> (glossed as a <em>manzila</em>).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. Al-Laghazīyya</td>
<td>N/a</td>
<td>Suhayl gets lost and wants to return home (to his <em>hayy</em>).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. Al-Sāḥiliyya</td>
<td>A coast (<em>ba’d al-sawāhil</em>)</td>
<td>The <em>majlis</em> of an emir (full of poets and scholars).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. Al-Falakiyya</td>
<td>The desert (<em>al-bādiya</em>)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>29. Al-Miṣriyya</td>
<td>Egypt (<em>al-Kināna</em>)</td>
<td>A caravan, before a judge</td>
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<tr>
<td>30. Al-Ṭibbiyya</td>
<td>An unspecified country (<em>balada</em>)</td>
<td>A school for medicine (<em>madrasa li-l-ṭibb</em>).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31. Al-ʿAbassīyya</td>
<td>The lands (<em>diyār</em>) of the Banī ‘Abs</td>
<td>A hilltop where Suhayl is meeting with a judge (<em>ḥakam</em>).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32. Al-ʿAṣīmiyya</td>
<td>An unspecified capital</td>
<td>A market (<em>khān</em>), and then the majlis of the wālī and back to the manzil in the market.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33. Al-Rashīdiyya</td>
<td>Rashīd, Egypt</td>
<td>Suhayl first claims to be sitting in a “palace” (<em>sarḥ</em>). Then he goes to a market and then a tavern (<em>funduq</em>).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34. Al-Adabiyya</td>
<td>A valley in the desert</td>
<td>At an encampment</td>
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<tr>
<td>35.</td>
<td>Al-Anṭākiyya</td>
<td>Antioch (<em>Antākiyyat al-Rūm</em>), then they travel near the end until they reach the border of Iraq.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36.</td>
<td>Al-Ṭā’iyya</td>
<td>Yemen (<em>bilād al-yaman</em>) in early times (<em>sālīf al-zaman</em>). Suhayl travels through deserts and valleys until he reaches the homes of the people of Banī Tayy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37.</td>
<td>Al-ʿAdaniyya</td>
<td>Aden, Yemen</td>
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<tr>
<td>38.</td>
<td>Al-Ḥimyariyya</td>
<td>On the way to Ṣanʿāʾ, Suhayl and his companions come upon the lands of Ḥimyar.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39.</td>
<td>Al-Anbāriyya</td>
<td>Barren desert, and then to Anbar, a “city” on the Euphrates.</td>
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<tr>
<td>40.</td>
<td>Al-Jadaliyya</td>
<td>Unspecified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41.</td>
<td>Al-Tihāmiyya</td>
<td>The lowlands of Tihāma</td>
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<tr>
<td>42.</td>
<td>Al-Muḍariyya</td>
<td>The settled areas (<em>ḥawādir</em>) of Muḍar</td>
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<tr>
<td>43.</td>
<td>Al-Baḥriyya</td>
<td>Some countryside by the sea (<em>baʿd aryaḥ al-bahr</em>)</td>
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<td>44.</td>
<td>Al-Ḥallayiyya</td>
<td>The town of al-Ḥalla on the banks of al-Furāṭ.</td>
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<tr>
<td>45.</td>
<td>Al-Furātiyya</td>
<td>A bank of the River Euphrates near Kufa (45.334.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46.</td>
<td>Al-Sukhiyya</td>
<td>The desert of al-Khalşā’, an area in Bilād al-ʿArab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47.</td>
<td>Al-Ruṣāfiyya</td>
<td>Al-Ruṣāfā, the eastern part of Baghdad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48.</td>
<td>Al-Lādhiqiyya</td>
<td>The town of Latakia in Syria, distinguished from the ancient Roman city by the term “Lādhiqiyyat al-ʿarab” (glossed at 48.345.6). Suhayl reports that he travels to Latakia from the town of Khunāṣira (48.345.7) outside of Aleppo.</td>
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<tr>
<td>49.</td>
<td>Al-Lubnāniyya</td>
<td>Mount Lebanon</td>
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<tr>
<td>50.</td>
<td>Al-Ḥamawiyya</td>
<td>Hama in Syria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51.</td>
<td>Al-Yamāniyya</td>
<td>City of Ḥajr in al-Yāmama (51.362.4), a region in Bilād al-ʿArab.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52.</td>
<td>Al-ʿUmāniyya</td>
<td>The city of Ḫumān in Yemen. At the end of the episode, they part ways when they reach Diyār</td>
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<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<tr>
<td>53.</td>
<td>Al-Ghazziyya</td>
<td>Suhayl says “we” left al-<code>Awāṣim for Ghaṣza Hāṣhim, modern-day Gaza City. Al-</code>Awāṣim is glossed as the country (bilād) the capital of which is Antioch. (53.374.8)</td>
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<td>After exploring the verdant and desolate lands, they come upon a court (dār al-qadā').</td>
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<tr>
<td>54.</td>
<td>Al-Sawādiyya</td>
<td>Sawād al-`Irāq</td>
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<td>An encampment in Iraq. Maymun recites poetry in the entranceway of a mosque.</td>
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<tr>
<td>55.</td>
<td>Al-Damyāṭiyya</td>
<td>Damietta, Egypt</td>
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<td>They are exhausted and travel worn, and after entering the city, they reach a gathering (baʿd al-andiya).</td>
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<td>56.</td>
<td>Al-Iskandariyya</td>
<td>Alexandria, Egypt</td>
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<td>Suhayl and his companions seem to have tied Maymūn up in a mosque, as he chastises them for defiling the minbar. With Maymūn in tow, the group travels until they reach their destination and take lodgings in an “inhabited house” (manzil maʿhūl).</td>
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<tr>
<td>57.</td>
<td>Al-Najdiyya</td>
<td>Najd</td>
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<td>a gathering (muntadā) of the leader of the people (zaʾīm al-qawm).</td>
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<td>Suhayl travels through the lands of the Arabs (al-bawādī, 58.410.1).</td>
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<td>Bakka, glossed as the “heart” (baṭn) of Mecca (59.416.3)</td>
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Appendix F: Number of Footnotes by Page in *Majmaʿ al-Baḥrayn*

The below chart lists the number of footnotes per page, using the pagination of the 1856 edition of *Majmaʿ al-Baḥrayn*. Note that every single page of the text has footnotes; accordingly, those pages listed below with the number “0” are entirely comprised of a footnote from the previous page. For instance, page 50 in its entirety is a continuation of the sixth and final footnote from the preceding page. The total number of footnotes in the 1856 edition of *Majmaʿ al-Baḥrayn* is 5,880.
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Appendix G: References Between Episodes of *Majma‘ al-Bahrayn*

This list includes the 122 instances in which a footnote in one episode refers to another episode. The ten entries in bold refer to a subsequent episode in the text; the remaining references all refer to previous episodes. The fourteen episodes that contain no references to other episodes are marked “N/a”. To identify those episodes to which other episodes refer, I put their episode number in parentheses after their title.

I have made a number of small decisions about how to group the references. First, in the handful of cases where it was unclear whether a footnote was referring to earlier in the same episode or in an earlier episode, I simply mark it as an unspecified previous mention. Second, in the handful of cases where a single footnote contained reference to two different earlier episodes, I treated them as two separate mentions, as they refer back to two separate points in the larger work.

1. Al-Badawiyya (#1)
   - N/a

2. Al-Ḥijāziyya (#2)
   - (2.11.13) A gloss of the name Ibn al-Khizām, explaining that it is Maymūn, Suhayl's “companion from the first trip” (*ṣāḥibu hu min al-safra al-uwlah*)
   - (2.11.14) A gloss of “that ghulām” as Rajab who “was with him [i.e. Maymūn]”,

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presumably also in the first episode.

3. Al-'Aqīqiyya (#3)
   - (3.18.5) A stub on the historical figure behind al-Ṭufaylī, mentioned in the introduction.

4. Al-Shāmiyya (#4)
   - (4.22.5) Explanation of the phrase al-ḥadīth dhū shujūn, in the sharḥ of al-'Aqīqiyya (#3). NB: the reference here is to “the preceding maqāma”.
   - (4.24.8) A reference to Quʿays, previous unspecified mention.

5. Al-Ṣaʿīdiyya (#5)
   - (5.28.6) Gloss of arjāz, previous unspecified mention.
   - (5.28.7) Gloss of al-alghāz, which will be discussed.

6. Al-Khazrajiyya (#6)
   - N/a

7. Al-Yamaniyya (#7)
   - N/a

8. Al-Baghdadiyya (#8)
   - (8.47.8) Biographical gloss of Luqmān bin ʿAd, unspecified previous location.
   - (8.52.8) Asʿad am saʿīd, an expression in the sharḥ of al-'Aqīqiyya (#3)

9. Al-Ḥalabiyya (#9)
10. Al-Kūfiyya (#10)

- N/a

11. Al-ʿIrāqiyya (#11)

- (11.3.67) A gloss of the word *al-mukātam*, in which al-Yāzijī says that an explanation of why this is an error in prosody would come (*sayāṭ*) in the *sharḥ* of this same *maqāma*.

12. Al-Azhariyya

- (12.75.9) A gloss of the phrase *yaḥmilunā bi-ḥadīthihi*, taken from a figure named Shann, as will come in the *sharḥ* of al-Hazliyya (#14)

13. Al-Taghlibiyya (#13)

- (13.84.1) In a gloss of the phrase *ka-ʿabd al-madān*, al-Yāzijī first identifies ʿAbd al-Madān and then mentions his father-in-law, noting it was previously mentioned.

- (13.87.1) A clarification of a question about whether a character was insulting the Arabs, “as you will see” (*kamā satarā*).

- (13.88.9) A biographical stub on Nizār, the grandfather of Banī Taghlab, as previously mentioned (*madhkūr anfān*).

- (13.92.2) A reference to how al-Ḥarth murdered Khālid bin Jaʿfar al-Kalābī, as will be explained in the *sharḥ* of al-Sarūjiyya (#22).

- (13.93.1) A stub on Luqmān, previous unspecified location.
14. Al-Hazliyya (#14)
   - N/a

15. Al-Ramliyya (#15)
   - (15.114.2) A gloss of *alqaynā al-ʿaṣā*, previous unspecified location.
   - (15.120.18) A gloss of a darkness of the lips, previous unspecified location.
   - (15.121.6) Gloss of *shanafat*, previous unspecified location.
   - (15.122.9) Gloss of *al-manūn as al-mawt*, previous unspecified location.
   - (15.125.8) Gloss of *mā fāt*, previous unspecified location.

16. Al-Ṣūriyya
   - (16.127.4) Stub on al-Buḥṭuri, the *kalām on whom will come in the sharḥ of al-Sukhriyya (#46).

17. Al-Ḥikamiyya
   - (17.136.10) Stub on Luqmān, previous mention.
   - (17.141.1) A gloss of *ahl al-hudā*, one of seven sayings mentioned in the *sharḥ of al-khazrajiyya (#6)

18. Al-Rajabiyya
   - (18.144.16) Gloss of *al-ardān*, unspecified previous location.

19. Al-Khaṭṭibiyya (#19)
   - (19.148.7) Gloss of *nādī*, unspecified previous location.
• (19.154.3) In a gloss of Abū l-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī, al-Yāzījī mentions his history of the wars of the Arabs, “as previously mentioned”.

20. Al-Baṣriyya (#20)

• (20.156.5) An explanation of a saying by Fāṭima bint al-Ḥawbāsh which references her seven sons, who will be discussed in the sharḥ of al-'Absiyya (#31).

• (20.157.6) Gloss of al-mīḏmār, unspecified previous location.

• (20.161.7) Gloss of al-‘ānqā’, unspecified previous location.

• (20.162.5) Gloss of al-naʿāma, which can have (at least) two meanings, as mentioned in the matn of al-Khazrajīyya (#6).

• (20.162.12) Stub on Kaʿb bin Māma, as mentioned in the sharḥ of al-Kūfīyya (#10).

21. Al-Dimashqīyya

• (21.172.7) Stub on Zuhayr, mentioned in the matn of al-khazrajīyya (#6).

• (21.173.9) Gloss of the dish tharīd, mentioned in the matn of al-Taghlibīyya (#13).

22. Al-Sarūjiyya (#22)

• (22.176.4) Stub on Iyyās, mentioned in the matn of al-Taghlibīyya (#13).

• (22.181.8) Reference to al-Sarūjī, as previously mentioned (earlier in the same episode).

23. Al-Mawṣūliyya (#23)

• (23.184.2) Laḥn, unspecified previous location.
• (23.187.10) Anā bi-ibdāl al-alif bi-hā’, which will be discussed in the sharḥ of al-
Anbāriyya (#39).

• (23.188.12) Khuffi Maymūn, as mentioned in the matn of al-Hazliyya (#14).

24. Al-Ma’ariyya

• N/a

25. Al-Tamīmiyya (#25)

• (25.197.1) Stub on al-Sulayk bin Sulaka, mentioned in the matn of al-Taghlibiyya (#13).

• (25.199.13) Stub on muḥī al-wa’idāt, mentioned previously.

26. Al-Laghaziyya

• (25.202.5) Gloss of al-qidāḥ, mentioned previously.

• (25.203.1) Stub on Ṭufayl al-‘Arās, mentioned previously.

27. Al-Sāḥiliyya

• N/a

28. Al-Falakiyya

• (28.213.7) An explanation of the phrase al-ḥāqq bi-l-qāriz, which says that an
explanation will come in al-Jadaliyya (#40)

• (28.219.2) A gloss of the term al-‘ā’if as someone who makes predictions based on
the flight of birds, explained in the matn of al-Khaṭibīyya (#19).
29. Al-Miṣriyya

- (29.222.14) Biographical stub on al-ʿAsmaʾī, mentioned in the body of *al-Taghlibiyya* (#13).

- (29.222.16) Biographical stub on Qaṣīr bin Saʿd, mentioned in the body of *al-Taghlibiyya* (#13).

- (29.225.4) A statement on *inna kull al-ʿajb * bayna Maymūn wa-Rajab. First, the footnote says it is like what is said in *al-Mawṣiliyya* (#23). Then it says that the expression (*mathal*) is mentioned in the *sharḥ* of *al-Shāmiyya* (#4).

30. Al-Ṭibbiyya

- (30.226.9) An explanation of how Luqmān raised seven eagles, only one of which survived, named Lubad, mentioned (*al-madhkūr*) in *al-Khaṭibiyya* (#19).

31. Al-ʿAbsiyya (#31)

- (31.234.1) A biographical gloss of Qays bin Zuhayr, in the *sharḥ* of *al-Taghlibiyya* (#13).


- (31.236.12) A gloss of the phrase *mukallala l-jifān*, previous unspecified location.

- (31.237.4) A reference to Mālik bin Zuhayr, the sayyid of Banī ʿAbs, “mentioned above” (*al-madhkūr anfūn*), presumably in the same episode; indeed, I believe it is a
reference to (31.234.1) above.

- (31.237.10) A story of how Qays bin Zuhayr left his people when he grew poor near the end of his life, as explained in the sharḥ of al-Taghibiya (#13).

- (31.238.6) An explanation of the expression wa qad šārat al-fatayān ḥumamān, in which al-Yāzījī says “we referenced this story” in the sharḥ of al-‘Irāqiyya (#11).

32. Al-ʿAṣimiyya

- N/a

33. Al-Rashīdiyya

- (33.245.17) Explanation of laḥn, unspecified previous location.

- (33.246.19) Biographical stub for Māʾ al-Samāʾ as Umm al-Mundhir, the king of Iraq, unspecified previous location.

34. Al-Adabiyya

- (34.250.11) Explanation of jamarāt al-ʿarab, explained in the sharḥ of al-ʿAbsiyya (#31).

- (34.250.12) Biographical stub on al-Ṭalahāt, explained in the sharḥ of al-Ḥijāziyya (#2).

35. Al-Anṭākīyya

- (35.259.1) Explanation of adḥhabī ilā ḥaythu, an expression in the sharḥ of al-Halabiyya (#9)

36. Al-Ṭāʾiyya
• (36.262.5) Explanation of the expression *qad ataytuki bi-mā ṣaʿā wa ṣamat*, in the *sharḥ* of al-Taghlibiyya (#13).

• (36.263.9) Biographical stub on Ḥātim, mentioned in al-Taghlibiyya (#13).

• (36.264.1) Discussion of *shuʿūb*, in the *sharḥ* of al-Hazliyya (#14).

37. Al-ʿAdaniyya

• (37.271.13) the mountain *al-athāfī*, in the *sharḥ* of al-ʿIrāqiyya (#11)

• (37.272.3), a biographical reference to Samauʿāl bin ʿAdiyāʾ al-Ghassānī, who was mentioned in al-Taghlibiyya (#13)

38. Al-Ḥimyariyya

• (38.282.9), a gloss of *qiṭr*, a type of striped gloss, unspecified previous location.

• (38.282.11), a gloss of *al-ṭimirra*, a type of fast horse, unspecified previous location.

39. Al-Anbāriyya

• (39.286.1) Biographical stub on al-ʿIṣāmī, mentioned in the body of al-Ṣaʿīdiyya (#5).

• (39.286.3) Biographical stub on Qiss bin Sāʿīda, mentioned in the *sharḥ* of al-Taghlibiyya (#13).

• (39.288.8) An explanation of ʿ*alā al-hawāyā* with reference to ʿUbayd bin al-Abraš, unspecified previous location.

• (39.289.15) Suhayl is an allusion to a star, unspecified previous location.

• (39.290.1) An allusion to Ḥadhām, explained in the *sharḥ* of al-Taghlibiyya (#13).
40. Al-Jadaliyya

- (40.293.15) Gloss of the word ḥadīqa, unspecified previous location.

41. Al-Tihamiyya

- (41.300.8) A gloss of Wāʾil and ḤAmr, explained in the sharḥ of al-Taghlibiyya (#13).
- (41.303.6) A gloss of al-mirjal, a copper pot, unspecified previous location.

42. Al-Mudariyya

- (42.306.6) Gloss of bijād as a striped garment (kīsāʾ mukhṭṭat), unspecified previous location.
- (42.306.9) Gloss of taʿjamū as the practice of biting a reed to determine the tree which was its source, unspecified previous location.

43. Al-Bahriyya

- (43.312.4) This footnote makes two references
  
  i. The term al-muşānafa, explained in the sharḥ of al-Kūfiyya (#10)
  
  ii. A reference to Aisha bin ḤUtham in the body of (madhkūrī fī) al-
      Yamaniyya (#7)

- (43.312.6) The term al-badīʿ, explained in the sharḥ of al-Baṣriyya (# 20)

- (43.312.8) This footnote makes two references
  
  i. The unique status of Arabic poetry, as “you saw” in the sharḥ of al-
     ʿIrāqīyya (#11)
ii. Exemplified in *al-Ramlīyya* (#15) and other episodes.

- (43.313.1) In praise of *ʿirāb*, as exemplified in the body of *al-Baghdadiyya* (#8)

- (43.318.9) A gloss of *hamyān*, a purse, unspecified previous location.

44. Al-Ḥallīyya

- (44.320.1) Defines a *muʿamiyyāt* and *al-aḥāji*, and then says that this definition will become clear in what follows. (Unclear if this refers to the examples forthcoming in this episode or another later point.)

- (44.320.11) Referring to “a war of Dāḥīs”, explained in the *sharḥ* of *al-ʿAbsiyya* (#31)

45. Al-Furāṭiyya

- N/a

46. Al-Sukhriyya

- (46.334.1) A reference to Shanfara, explained in the *sharḥ* of *al-Ramlīyya* (#15)

- (46.337.2) “More ill-fated than Sarāb” (*ashʿam min Sarāb*), in the *sharḥ* of *al-Taghlibiyya* (#13)

- (46.337.3), on Ḫunayn, in the *sharḥ* of *al-Hazaliyya* (#14)

- (46.338.4) the story of how Mālik and ‘Aqīl found the nephew of Jadhīma al-Abrash, in the *sharḥ* of *al-Yamaniyya* (#7)

47. Al-Ruṣāfiyya
• (48.342.6) Gloss of the word *al-thanī*, referring to the age at which different animals lose their front teeth, unspecified previous location (but is ambiguous as to whether it refers to the information in the footnote itself or a previous point in the text).

48. Al-Lādhiqiyya

• N/a

49. Al-Lubnāniyya

• (49.352.5) Definition of *ṣaf*. Unspecified previous mention.

• (49.354.1) Biographical note on al-ʾAṣmaʿi in the *sharḥ* of *al-Taghlibiyya* (#13)

• (49.354.7) Definition of *qabṣa*, the amount one carries between two hands. Unspecified previous mention.

50. Al-Ḥamawiyya

• (50.357.9) Definition of *yarmaʾ*, unspecified previous mention.

• (50.360.3) Definition of *asārīr* as *khūṭṭ*, unspecified previous mention.

51. Al-Yamāmiyya

• N/a

52. Al-ʿUmāniyya

• (52.370.9) Biographical stub on Abū ʿĪbāda, in the *sharḥ* of *al-Sukhriyya* (#46)

• (52.371.2) Gloss of *al-qarīḍ* as *al-shiʿr*, unspecified previous mention.

• (52.371.4) Gloss of *ghilāʾ* as the plural of *ghulwa*, the distance an arrow can travel,
unspecified previous mention.

• (52.373.19) Gloss of al-sāriya as al-ʿumūd, unspecified previous mention.

• (52.374.2) Gloss of khalla as faqr, perhaps referring to its use (and gloss) on the previous page (52.373.4)?

53. Al-Ghazziyya

• (53.376.4) Al-Nuʿmān's two companions, in the sharḥ of al-Baghdadiyya (#8).

• (53.377.3) Gloss of al-āl as a mirage, unspecified previous location.

54. Al-Sawādiyya

• (54.380.10) Gloss of two stars, Suhayl and al-Shiʿrā, in the sharḥ of al-Ṣaʿīdiyya (#5).

• (54.384.3) Gloss of tanḍub, a tree which the chameleon attaches itself, unspecified previous location.

• (54.384.10) Al-Ḥarth's revenge on al-Muhalhil, in the sharḥ of al-Ḥalabiyya (#9).

55. Al-Damyātiyya

• (55.393.7) Nuʿaymān, mentioned (marra zikruhu) in al-Tamīmiyya (#25).

56. Al-Iskandariyya

• (56.397.2) Biographical stub on Sulayk bin Sulka, in the sharḥ of al-Taghibiyya (#13).

57. Al-Najdiyya

• (57.409.8) Gloss of the expression shaqq al-ʿaṣā, unspecified previous location.
• (57.409.11) Biographical stub on Ya’rub bin Qaḥṭān, the grandfather of the Arabs, unspecified previous location.

58. Al-ʿUkāziyya

• (58.410.7) Gloss of the market of al-ʿUkāz, in the shahr of al-Khazrajyya (#6).
• (58.410.12) Gloss of al-muḥājaah, unspecified previous location.
• (58.415.4) Gloss of the verb iḍṭabana, unspecified previous location.
• (58.415.12) Gloss of al-ṣaf”, unspecified previous location.

59. Al-Makkiyya

• (59.416.11) Zarqāʾ al-Yamāma, in the shahr of al-Taghlibiyya (#13)
• (59.417.10) Definition of the term lafīf, unspecified previous location.
• (59.418.1) Gloss of al-Haramayn, unspecified previous location.
• (59.418.6) Ramī l-jimār, mentioned in al-Falakiyya (#28).
• (59.418.17) Gloss of al-āl, unspecified previous location.
• (59.419.15) Gloss of ḥabl al-warīd, unspecified previous location.
• (59.420.1) Gloss of khayl al-barīd, unspecified previous location.

60. Al-Qudsiyya

• N/a