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ABKÜRZUNGEN

- AMI = Archäologische Mitteilungen aus Iran.
- BSOAS = Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies.
- CHI = The Cambridge History of Iran.
- EncIr = Encyclopaedia Iranica (London/Costa Mesa).
- NPIIN = M. Alram, Nomina Propria Iranica in Nummis. Materialgrundlagen zu den iranischen Personennamen auf antiken Münzen, Wien 1986 (IPNB IV).
- OGIS = Orientis Graeci Inscriptiones Selectae.
- RE = Pauly-Wissowas Realencyklopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft.
- S = Sellwood 1980.
- VDI = Vestnik Drevnej Istorii.
- ZDMG = Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft.

BARBARA OSTAFIN

ADAB INFLUENCES ON MEDIAEVAL GEOGRAPHICAL ARAB LITERATURE

The term *adab* is used in modern Arabic for literature or belles-lettres, but such comprehension of this term is relatively new and was put into practice only in the nineteenth century to designate European works of literature. It was also employed in this context by the Arab translators of European literature and then by Ġurġī Zaydān who employed it with regard to Arabic literature, writing *The History of Literature of Arabic Language (Ta'riḥ al-ādāb al-luġa al-ʿarabiya)*. However in *ġāhiliya* and the Arab Middle Ages this term was used in considerably wide sense. The oldest meaning of the word, as Gabrieli maintains, „implies a habit, a practical norm of conduct, with double connotation; of being praiseworthy and being inherited from one's ancestors.”¹ This term is also often found in a variety of applications and its meaning was studied, described and commentated by Nallino, Pellat, von Grunebaum, Rosenthal² and many other scholars. I think that the nearest to the truth and the most accurate definition of this notion was given by A. Miquel who identifies it as a culture³. He understands the word culture as a moral and ethical attitude of a man, and what is important, such comprehension of the term is not in opposition to the results of studies of the above mentioned scholars. *Adab* literature is one of the important element of *adab* understood as culture.

¹ Gabrieli, F., *Adab*, EI², I, p. 175.

² Nallino, C. A., *Raccolta di scritti editi e inediti*, VI, Roma 1948; Pellat, Ch., „Variations sur le thème de l'adab”, *Correspondence d'Orient*, Etudes, 5-6, Brussels 1964; von Grunebaum, G. E. *Mediaeval Islam. A Study in Cultural Orientation*, Chicago 1947; Rosenthal, F. *Knowledge of Triumphant*, Leiden 1970.

³ Miquel, A. *La géographie humaine du monde musulman jusqu'au milieu du 11^e siècle*, p. 36.

The main subject of this paper will be therefore *adab* comprehended as a literary genre that came into being in the Middle Ages. Up till the present day there is no consensus as to the fact which works of Arab literature can be considered to be *adab* works and which of them can't. Any precise criteria which could determine *adab* works weren't established. Establishing of these criteria is very difficult because *adab* as a literary genre was not homogeneous and each author used to employ his own *adab* techniques, and what is worth stressing, *adab* was changing in the course of the time. So it is necessary to study *adab* literature synchronically and diachronically.

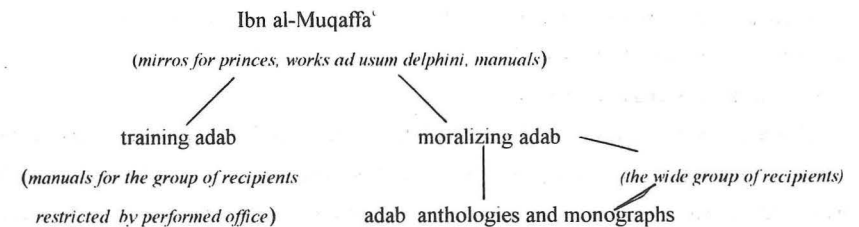
Still there is one common feature characteristic for all *adab* production, irrespective of the subject touched upon and the time of its creation - that common feature was its main aim - teaching, providing with knowledge.

On the one hand it was general knowledge which one who aspired to be considered cultured man should possess and this formed one type of *adab* writing, on the other hand, the second type dealing with more practice and precise knowledge directed to the narrow body of recipients, representatives of different professions - most often secretaries (*kuttāb*). The latter type of *adab*, which I call the training *adab* is of Persian origin. The *adab* enters to the Arab literature simultaneously with the birth of Arab prose. Both are connected with 'Abd Allāh ibn al-Muqaffa' who started to adopt and create manuals using Persian patterns. His work *Kitāb Ādāb al-Kabīr* commonly but incorrectly known as *Al-Adab al-Kabīr*¹ („The Comprehensive Book of Rules of Conduct") is partly a mirror for princes, work *ad usum delphini* and partly a kind of vade-mecum directed to the courtiers, ministers etc.

This method of teaching was undertaken in later centuries; for example by Ibn Qutayba in his manual for secretaries. The other type of *adab* literature turned to the wide group of readers was not uniform. However that lack of homogeneity is more a result of chronology of development of *adab* literature than its diversity in the same time. Nallino divides *adab* works into three types - manuals for secretaries, courtiers, ministers etc. (which I call the training *adab*); works on moral topics (moralizing *adab*) and anthologies or monographs.

It is easy to notice that this first type of *adab* distinctly differs from the two latter types. This training *adab* which sprang up from Ibn al-Muqaffa's was continued in later centuries as manuals for secretaries, ministers, jurists etc. The two latter types, separated by Nallino, are very similar and close to each other, and their forming resulted from such a way of evolution

of *adab* literature. The same recipient unites them, because both - works on moral topics and anthologies or monographs are directed to the wide group of readers while the manuals are intended for the group of recipients restricted by performed office. Such directions of development of *adab* is illustrated in the following diagram.



As it appears from the above diagram *adab* anthologies did not make the third, separate type of *adab*, but they had risen from the moralizing *adab* which at the same time started another branches of Arab writings. The training *adab* came from Iran, it cultivated Persian tradition for a long time. The moralizing *adab* is entirely Arabic though it was shaped upon Persian patterns the popularized ideas were Arabian - Bedouin, Arabian - Muslim. It can be said that there were some Greek influences but adopted and adjusted to the Muslim morality and Arabian tastes. Certainly such direction of development of ideas, return to the Bedouin ethic, was a result of *antyšū' ūbiyya* movement turned first of all against everything which was of Persian origin.

Al-Ġāhiz is one of the best-known, eminent and most prolific exponents of this type of *adab*. He is also a creator of a pure Arabian *adab* though he also wrote some books which fell under the heading of training *adab* for example his lost *Kitāb Aḥlāq al-wuzarā'*, which must have been a manual for the use of ministers (*wuzarā'*). Both Ibn Qutayba and al-Mubarrad, al-Ġāhiz's contemporaries, produced some works in the like spirit. In the later period the tenth, eleventh century at-Tawḥidī continued this type of *adab*, though that time *adab* covered a wider range than ever before.

The fundamental feature of *adab* literature was transmission of the general knowledge in such a way to avoid boring a reader. Many different endeavours were employed to attain this aim. These endeavours made learning easy and the knowledge was acquired without any efforts and given in a light, often droll form. I call all these endeavours which make the *adab*

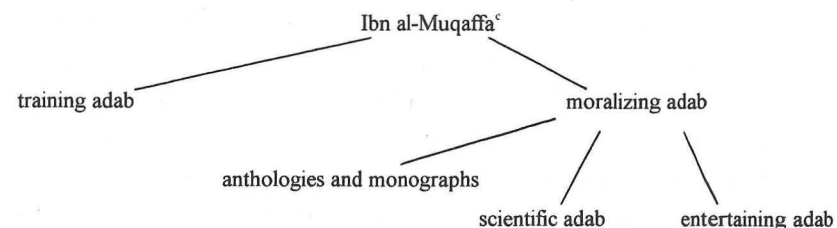
¹ cf. Latham, J.D. „Ibn al-Muqaffa' and early 'Abbasid Prose", in *The Cambridge History of Arabic Literature*, 'Abbasid belles-letters, p. 57.

work plain and intelligible, *adab* techniques. The ascertainment „*al-aḥd min kulli šayʿin bi-ṭaraf*” - „taking from everything just a little piece” illustrates it best. This ascertainment can be comprehended twofold. Firstly as taking, obtaining some information from a different field of knowledge, in other words, learning everything without redundant poring over details. This way of learning seems to be superficial and indeed it was so, but that method of learning agreed with the demand of recipients.

The mentioned ascertainment can also be interpreted in another way as taking and using different forms of artistic, literary expression i.e. illustrating the transmitted knowledge with miscellaneous samples which make *adab* work light and easy to acquire. The *adab* techniques, in this context, are citations of poetry, anecdotes, digressions, frequent changes in the course of narration, rambling and others.

Consequently one who aspired to be a possessor of *adab* - an *adīb*, considered that he ought to know something about everything, and there was no topic that did not merit investigation. In that case it can be assumed that the leading aim of *adab* works was to provide the reader with the general knowledge and the reader supposed that this knowledge would ensure him a status of a man of intellect and education, all the same it would be given in the light way employing different *adab* techniques. Al-Ġāhiz, who first started to teach employing citations of poetry, anecdotes and purposely inserting chaos, was a master in this domain.

Of this kind, first of all, was *adab* in the ninth century, though in the end of the century and in the beginning of the next, a new type of works started to appear, that was also directed at the wide body of readers and provided with knowledge. But that knowledge was no longer so general as it used to be earlier, though the authors of the works employed the same *adab* techniques as the *adībs* from the former period. Such an unconstrained way of teaching was taken over from the *adībs* by the authors of the works whose aim was no longer providing with the general knowledge but more precise chosen from one of fields of science - for example history or geography. On the other hand it would be a mistake to state that the works attributed to the mentioned fields of knowledge confined their subject only to the science they represented. Up till now there has been disagreement concerning which works „about geography” or „about history” can be included in *adab*. It seems that the thorough study of the process of evolution of *adab* literature could help in finding certain solution of the problem. I will try to describe this problem in the following diagram.



The given diagram does not show the time of the evolution but only its directions. The two new types of *adab* came into being - they are the entertaining *adab* and the scientific *adab*. The phenomenon like that was possible because a group of authors abandoned teaching while the others confined a subject matter of the work to the chosen knowledge, for instance the subject matter was close to the history or geography. Investigating that phenomenon of bifurcation in respect of the time it occurred, it is visible that the works representative of the scientific *adab* and the others representatives, of the entertaining *adab* appeared almost simultaneously. Abū ʿAbbās aṣ-Ṣaymarī wrote books that could be included in the entertaining *adab* but only the titles and some remarks in other writers' books have been preserved from his works to the present day but he is said to have met al-Mubarrad at the caliph I-Mutawakkil's court¹. Whereas the first surviving representative of the scientific *adab* works on geography were created at the turn of the tenth century. I mean here, first of all, two works - Ibn al-Faqīh's *Kitāb al-buldān* and Ibn Rosteh's *Kitāb al-a' lāq an-naḥṣa*. Though A. Miquel discerns some *adab* features in Ibn Ḥurraḍāḍbi's *Kitāb al-masālik wa'l-mamalik*.

Little is known of Ibn al-Faqīh's life. Scant information is found in Ibn an-Nadīm's *Kitāb al-Fihrist*, and *Aḥsan at-taqāsīm fī ma' rifat al-aqālīm* („The Best Classification on the Knowledge of the Provinces”) written in 990 by the geographer al-Muqaddasī, in Yāqūt's *Iršād al-arīb ilā ma' rifat al-adīb* („Guide of the Intelligent towards the Knowledge of the Men of Letters”) and smoe in his *Mu' ḡam al-buldān* („Dictionary of Countries”).

His full name was Abū Bakr Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Ishāq ibn Ibrāhīm ibn al-Faqīh al-Hamaḍānī. His nickname Ibn al-Faqīh shows that his father was a jurist, expert of *fiqh*, Yāqūt adds that he was also an expert of the Tradition. Ibn al-Faqīh came from the Persian

¹ Danecki, J. *Literatura i kultura w imperium kalifów. Studium twórczości adabowej al-Mudarrada*, p. 83.

town Hamadān, ancient Ekbatana, which had been the summer residence for Persian and Parthian kings. Both Yāqūt and Ibn an-Nadīm link Ibn al-Faqīh with *adab* describing him as „*min ahl al-adab*” „from among men of letters”. They add that Ibn al-Faqīh wrote a book on the best Arab poets, but this work has not survived. The exact date of his birth and death is not known. It seems to be well established that he had lived at the turn of the tenth century. *Kitāb al-buldān* was written approximately in 903/290 A.H. and was arranged as an encyclopaedia of the Muslim World in five volumes. Unfortunately it has not survived and we possess an abridgement (*muḥtaṣar*) made by one ‘Alī ibn Ġā‘far ibn Aḥmad aṣ-Ṣayzarī in 1022/413 A.H.¹ It could be censured on my next consideration that treating of the works of *adab* in the ninth and the tenth century I take as an example the work which indeed was created in that time but examining material comes from the later period. However as it was noticed and proved by A. Miquel, the work was abridged only in quantity and not in quality². The abridgement preserves the character and spirit of the original work, so, though prepared three centuries later, it can be regarded and examined in the preserved form as the work representative of Arab literature of the ninth and tenth century. Orientalists who were investigating the work Kračkovskiy or Miquel unanimously stress its *adab* character. However the title suggests that the work provides above all geographical material. Indeed there is much geographical information, but both the way of providing data and the body of the readers to whom the work is directed at, testify that Ibn al-Faqīh’s leading aim was to transmit general science of countries. Here he accomplishes the didactic purpose of *adab*. The author describes the character of the work best, addressing it both to *adīb*s and scholars - *ahl al-adab wa’l-ma’rifa* and next he continues „My work contains pieces of information of countries, miraculous stories of regions and edifices”³. Characterizing the method of the collecting material for the work he writes -” I linked in my work [everything] what my mind had preserved and had been present in my ears from among [riches] of information, citations of poetry, [pieces] of evidence and proverbs”⁴. Realizing this assumption Ibn al-Faqīh creates the *adab* work, which is close to the geography considering the predominating topic - science of countries. The work

¹ This abridgement was edited by de Goeje in 1895 as the 5 th volume of BGA but in 1923 in Meshed Zeki Validi Togan found, among others, a new manuscript of the abridgement of *Kitāb al-buldān*. This manuscript was studied in the eighties by dr. Zacharias van Laer under the supervision of prof. Ch. Pellat. Van Laer discovered that the new manuscript of the abridgement contains some more information, than that one edited by de Goeje, especially concerning Iraq and Turks of the Central Asia. What is interesting the title of that new manuscript differs a little - *Kitāb aḥbār al-buldān*. van Laer, Z.

² Miquel, A. op. cit., p. 154-160.

³ de Goeje, M. J. (ed). BGA, V, p. 2-3.

⁴ *ibid*.

is preceded by a pseudo-scholarly preface about the creation of the world, seas, their position over the world and miraculous stories connected with them. The primary text comprises Ibn al-Faqīh’s own observations, especially when he describes the regions which he knows at the first hand, for example the town of Hamadān, as well as extensive quotations taken from the former geographical or historical writings. *Kitāb al-buldān* is a compilation, and compilation can be also treated as one of *adab* techniques, which does not mean that each compilation is at the same time *adab* work.

Ibn al-Faqīh first of all based upon the written sources taking from the works of his predecessors historiographers and geographers or *adīb*s. He uses *Kitāb nasab al-asnān*, *Kitāb an-nasab al-kabīr* - both written by Hiṣām ibn al-Kalbī, Ibn Iḥṣān al-Balāḍurī’s *Kitāb al-masālik wa’l-mamālik*, also works of al-Balāḍurī and al-Ya‘qūbī and many others whose names he often omits. Characteristic for the *adīb* is the interest in linguistic matter and he offers etymologies for many toponymus. Then he interweaves such gathered material with the anecdotes, stories and proverbs and in the end the commenting matter illustrates with citation of poetry. All these endeavours, other words speaking, *adab* techniques, make the work interesting, not boring the reader and providing him with the general knowledge of countries in an entertaining way.

Undoubtedly the information from the field of geography constitutes the prevailing motif, but at the same time, there is a lot of historical, ethnographical data, elements of the Tradition as well as wonderful stories and curious details. So the work can be described as a popularized scientific compendium of knowledge of countries. Al-Muqaddasī who knew all five volumes of Ibn al-Faqīh’s work compares it to a short work of al-Ġāḥiẓ *Kitāb amṣār wa’ aḡā’ih al-buldān*. He maintains that the two works characterize the identical chaos in transmitting material, and the same method of deviation from the main course of the narration. Regarding al-Ġāḥiẓ’s work of which only a fragment has survived, Pellat states though it cannot be called a geographical treatise in the true sense of the word, it introduces the science of geography to *adab* when this science only started to develop¹. Unfortunately I don’t know the preserved fragments of al-Ġāḥiẓ’s treatise which was availed by Ibn al-Faqīh, but these fragments would constitute worthy comparative material for studies of *adab* influences of geographical literary output. If we however assume that al-Ġāḥiẓ introduced *adab* into the geography then Ibn al-Faqīh knowing al-Ġāḥiẓ’s work was a cognizant continuer of this way. Doing so he was not alone. The scholars acting in the later period, representatives of such branches like

¹ Pellat, Ch. *The life and works of Ḡāḥiẓ*, p. 22.

geography and historiography often were taking advantage of *adab* techniques in their works. Though those works did not stray so much from the prevailing subject matter.

About ten years later after *Kitāb al-buldān*, *Kitāb al-a' lāq an-naḥḥa* („The Valued Precious Things”) was written by Ibn Rosteh, only the seventh part has survived from his voluminous work. This seventh part does not possess any clear organization, it is a compilation and deals with geography and astronomy. That serious specialistic material is interwoven with stories, anecdotes, proverbs characteristic for *adab*. It also seems to be directed to the wide body of readers. These features make many scholars stress its literary and *adab* character, though it is rather difficult to acknowledge the work as a whole to be an *adab* work, but same *adab* techniques are employed there.

The tenth century is the next stage of entering *adab* to the science. The best example is al-Mas'ūdī who propagates geography and history and does it completely in *adab* way. Certainly that method of transmitting of information caused that it is almost impossible to ascribe his works to the definite branch of science, because his leading aim was to provide with general knowledge of countries, comprehended in the fullest sense of the word. It seems to be difficult to find the prevailing subject matter, he is interested in geography, historiography, ethnography, folk beliefs etc.

Presented examples clearly show the way of *adab* method into the science like geography, historiography. The tenth century of course did not stop *adab* influences to the works which were representatives of those fields of science. The *adab* method of transmitting the information has been introduced for good to the science. It does not mean that each work was of *adab* character, but many of them employed *adab* techniques. Such works were usually treated and studied only as scientific works and their literary values were not the subject of the investigation. I think that the reconsideration of certain opinions of works regarding their literary values would extend our knowledge of *adab* - that interesting phenomenon of Arabian mediaeval literature.

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