

Original article

TRADITIONAL PROFESSIONS DURING THE ABBASID CALIPHATE: A STUDY BASED ON AL-WASITI'S MINIATURES THAT ILLUSTRATED AL-HARIRI'S MAQAMAT

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Abstract:

Al-Hariri's Maqamat, widely regarded as one of the most celebrated works in Arabic literature, has inspired numerous artists to create miniatures that depict and interpret its stories and events. Among these artists, Yahya al-Wasiti stands out for his exceptional miniatures, which not only visually narrate the tales within the Maqamat but also illuminate various aspects of Abbasid society. While much scholarly attention has been given to al-Wasiti's artistic style and thematic elements, the representation of traditional professions in his miniatures remains underexplored. This study examines a wide range of fields to demonstrate the significance of these jobs as both economic activities and cultural symbols, reflecting the values of Abbasid society. In addition, the study stresses the beauty and historical importance of al-Wasiti's miniatures, which paint a vivid picture of everyday life and the culture of the Abbasid era. Al-Wasiti's intricate and dynamic compositions not only highlight the economic roles of these professions but also situate them within broader cultural and social contexts. This study examines a wide range of fields to demonstrate the significance of these jobs as both economic activities and cultural symbols, reflecting the values of Abbasid society. Moreover, the research underscores the aesthetic and historical significance of al-Wasiti's miniatures, which provide a vivid visual documentation of the daily life and cultural ambiance of the Abbasid era. This paper adds to the history of Islamic art by looking at these representations. It also broadens the field of cultural studies by showing how art, economy, and society interacted during the Islamic Golden Age.

1. Introduction

Most of the ancient Arab manuscripts include miniatures. In 1237/634 AH in Baghdad, an art school emerged, named the Baghdad School of Art. This school became well-known through the book "Maqamat Al-Hariri," in which the tales of the Maqamat were illustrated by the skilled artist, Yahya ibn Mahmud al-Wasiti [1,2]. al-Wasiti was one of the most famous painters of the Abbasid Caliphate. Several manuscripts include miniatures that represent al-Hariri's Maqamat. However, eleven manuscripts of those manuscripts remained. The first of those manuscripts is in the library of Suleymaniye mosque in Istanbul. It holds the following code (Esad Efendi 2961). Baghdad drafted and decorated it during the period of 1242-1258 AD. (1242-1258 AD). One of the later manuscripts' miniatures drew an Abbasid Caliph named Al-Musta'sim Bellah [3]. The copies of the latter manuscript displayed distortions. The second manuscript exists in the Academy of Oriental Sciences Institute in Leningrad. It holds the following code. (MS.S. 23) [4]. It is suggested that the latter manuscript was drafted during the first half of the thirteenth century A.D. Researchers suggest that they found the latter manuscript in Cairo [3]. The third manuscript exists in the National Library of Vienna. It holds the following code: (A.F. 9), and three other manuscripts exist in the national library in Paris. They have the following codes: (Arab 3929, 5847, 6094). The seventh manuscript in The Bodleian Library, Oxford, contains the following code: (Marsh 458) [5]. The

other four manuscripts are in the British Museum. They have the following codes: (BM. Add. 1200, 7293, 9718, 22114) [6]. The miniatures in those manuscripts represent the ideas and feelings of the painter. They make the manuscripts look more beautiful and enjoyable to read. Therefore, they entice readers to read those manuscripts. In this regard, the present study explored the traditional professions in Al-Wasiti's miniatures that represent al-Hariri's Maqamat. Therefore, it aimed to identify the meaning of (Maqamat) and present information about al-Wasiti and his miniatures. The study by Dabbous and Alsharida (2022) [7] looked at how society is shown through art and how it shows Abbasid society (358-516 AH) as described by al-Hamathani and al-Hariri. It did this by looking at different pictures that show the community's values in different areas of life, including joyful and sad times. The interval between al-Hamathani and Hariri's Maqamat illustrates numerous shifts and modifications seen within the Maqamat itself. The study determined that the Maqamat of both al-Hamthani and al-Hariri provided extensive elucidation of diverse representations from the public life of a particular community segment during their respective eras by observing numerous depictions that serve as a mirror reflecting the prevailing values, customs, traditions, and rituals shared among them at that time. That era dominated their time since it was regarded as a significant historical record, and they addressed various prevailing conventions, traditions, and social elements.

Pakzad and Panahi (2016) [8]. "Hariri's Maqamat" is a distinguished and intricate work of Arabic literature from the Middle Ages that has significantly influenced the development of narrative fiction in global literature. In addition to its aesthetic style, literary rhythm, and diverse instructional elements, it depicts social life and human behavior in the Arab world during the Middle Ages graphically and graphically. Hariri's Maqamat is an extensively illustrated narrative from the Baghdad School, authored by Hariri and drawn by Mahmoud al-Wasiti. Al-Wasiti's miniatures offer extensive visual insights into human behavior and their surroundings. This research seeks to comprehend the framework of social criticism during that period through the collaboration of text and imagery. Consequently, several Maqamat and miniatures containing additional social information were chosen and analysed using a descriptive analysis technique. The findings indicated that al-Wasiti had distinctly identified Hariri's socially critical perspective underneath the intricate language and underscored that notion. He has also included material that would only be easily comprehensible to a reader of the Maqamat book with illustrations. Roxburgh's [9] essay re-examines the interaction between al-Hariri's text and al-Wasiti's interpretation, focusing on the renowned 1237 Maqāmāt, copied and illustrated by Yahya b. Mahmud b. Yahya b. Abi al-Hasan b. Kurriha al-Wasiti (Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris, Ms. Arabe 5847), through a series of narrative paintings. The lack of this technique can be attributed to academic evaluations originating from D. S. Rice's 1959 essay, wherein he contends that the images serve as a distraction, a notion reiterated in later works by Richard Ettinghausen (1962), David James (1974), and Oleg Grabar (1984). Grabar determined that "the purpose and success of the story reside solely in its language, not in its narrative," an evaluation that permitted the interpretation of al-Wasiti's paintings as indicators of current culture and society. This essay analyses the diverse impacts of the paintings on the text and its significance while exploring the interaction between truth and fiction. This dynamic has been relevant since the initial reception of al-Hariri's work.

1.1. The definition of maqamat

The term (Maqamat) refers to the dialogue held in an assembly. It refers to a short story that involves a narrator and a protagonist. The protagonist in this literary genre employs manipulative methods to obtain money and is proficient in writing literature. This story is based on an event or an adventure that involves sarcasm or criticism [10].

1.2. The creator of maqamat

Badee' Al-Zaman al-Hamathany is the one who created the genre called (Maqamat). His full name is (Ahmad bin Al-Hussein bin Yahya bin Saeed Hamathany). He was born in 358 AH and died in 398 AH. Badee' Al-Zaman Al-Hamathany's literary works are well-known. However, the latter author's Maqamat is the most well-known among his works. It refers to stories in which Abu Al-Fateh Al-Iskandar is the protagonist. The narrator in those stories is Issa bin Hashim. The latter protagonist is rich at the beginning of the story. However, he becomes poor later on. Therefore, he uses manipulative means to obtain money [11].

1.3. The goal behind writing maqamat

Several goals were sought in writing Maqamat during the Abbasid Caliphate. The first goal is represented in the social goal. To illustrate more, poverty and begging were prevalent during the latter caliphate. Many people obtained money through manipulative methods during the Abbasid Caliphate, and scholars were deprived of appreciation. Thus, Maqamat was drafted to address the latter issues. The

second goal is represented in the educational goal. For instance, Maqamat was drafted during the Abbasid Caliphate to teach people the arts of the Arabic language. They were drafted to promote values and give people puzzles [11].

1.4. Al-Hariri's maqamat

Many authors drafted works falling under the literary genre called (Maqamat). However, al-Hariri's Maqamat is considered the most well-known work in this literary genre. The full name of al-Hariri is (Abu et al. bin Ali bin Mohammed bin Othman al-Hariri Al-Basri). He was born in a village named (Al-Mashan) which is located near Al-Basrah. He was born in 446 AH and died in 516 AH. He wrote many literary works, such as a book titled (Surat Al-Gh'awas) and (Malhet Al-E'rab). In addition, he was known for his Maqamat [10]. Al-Hariri wrote 50 Maqamat. Most of them shed light on a male homeless beggar's manipulative acts and adventures [12]. Al-Hariri's Maqamat was drafted professionally. They indicate that the author is proficient in writing literature. They include puzzles for entertainment. They possess wisdom and promote social values. The protagonist in al-Hariri's Maqamat is Abu Zaid Al-Sorooji. Abu Zaid Al-Sorooji is intelligent and eloquent and earns money using manipulative methods. The narrator in al-Hariri's Maqamat is al-Hareth bin Humam. al-Hareth bin Humam is sometimes involved in the events. He often criticizes the acts of Abu Zaid Al-Sorooji. Finally, he narrates the events [10]. Al-Hariri's Maqamat is more known than al-Hamathany's Maqamat. That is because al-Hariri is more proficient in writing literature than al-Hamathany. It's because al-Hariri writes creatively and does not bind himself to the rules of language [13].

1.5. The goals sought from adding miniatures to manuscripts

The goals sought from adding miniatures to manuscripts are listed below: 1) Illustrative goals: Miniatures are added to the manuscript, including Maqamat, to illustrate the meaning and ideas of Maqamat. They may represent the drawer's virtual ideas [14]. 2) Miniatures are added to a manuscript to make it special and unique. They attract rich people and encourage them to buy the manuscript. 3) Miniatures are added to a manuscript to make it more beautiful and to increase readers' interest in reading it. Miniatures served as an essential element of Islamic art during the ancient ages. They are rich with beautiful details [5]. They represent people's moves, facial gestures, and body language [15]. They include images of people in various poses.

1.6. Al-Wasiti: A copier, decorator and elastrator of al-Hariri's maqamat

Yahya bin Mahmoud bin Yahya bin Al-Hasan al-Wasiti [16]. resided in a city called (Waset). He used to practice the profession of (drawing) since his early childhood. He was influenced by Eastern Christian art school and Persian art school. The Islamic Arab touch manifests in most of his works, and many artists trained him. al-Wasiti mastered mi-xing colours [17]. He copied and decorated all of al-Hariri's Maqamat, except for Maqama No. 27 and Maqama No. 35. He succeeded in presenting details about life. His drawing style is based on the Arab Islamic school [3]. Some of his drawings represent some psychological states. Some of his drawings represent a stand on a specific issue. The quality of the materials used for making the manuscripts by al-Wasiti is very high. That is why Al-Wasiti's manuscripts remain till today. Such high quality indicates that al-Wasiti was provided with much financial support to make

his manuscripts. Such financial support was provided by the Caliph or a wealthy person who loves art and has cultural interests. al-Wasiti was given colours that used much of the golden, red, and Azure colours in his miniatures. He was provided with high-quality paper.

1.7. Al-Wasiti's manuscript place and making date

Al-Wasiti's manuscript was created using high-quality materials. It was created under Caliph al-Musta'sim Bellah Al-Abbasi [18]. That is because the name of the latter Caliph was drafted on a miniature that represents al-Hariri's Maqamat No. 50. The latter miniature was imitated on a wall in Mustansiriyah School in Baghdad [3,19]. Caliph al-Musta'sim Bellah Al-Abbasi, in the miniature, indicates that al-Wasiti drafted his manuscript in Baghdad. al-Wasiti signed his manuscript in 1237 AD [16].

2. Methodology

The study is based on the descriptive analysis of chosen miniatures: all the selected miniatures reflect various aspects of the professional activity of people from the upper stratum of society to market sellers, artisans, and religious workers. The study builds on prior research conducted on Islamic art and literature that offers a comparative evaluation of the society and history depicted in the work of al-Wasiti. With a focus on the relationship between the text of the Maqamat written by al-Hariri and the images drawn by al-Wasiti.

3. Results

This study will examine the traditional professions that manifest in Al-Wasiti's miniatures in the manuscript in the National Library in Paris. Through drawing miniatures, al-Wasiti presented people's daily lives during his era. He drew mosques, markets, pubs, khan, orchards, deserts, assemblies of learners, seas, rivers, shops, houses, and women. He presented various aspects of life during daylight and night. He added virtual elements [20]. He presented the traditional professions that were practiced during his era. Such jobs include the ones listed below:

3.1. Religion-related professions

3.1.1. Preaching about Islam

This profession appeared during the Abbasid Caliphate. The sayings of preachers during this era are based on the Holy Quran, Hadith, and the wise men who lived during the Umayyad Caliphate. Muslim preachers during the Abbasid Caliphate used to inform people that life on earth was temporary and narrate religious stories. Ibn Samak is the most famous Muslim preacher during the Abbasid Caliphate [21]. Muslim preachers during the Abbasid Caliphate used to hold assemblies to preach to people about Islam. In addition, however, they used to advise people and promote religious awareness and values at gatherings. The role of Muslim preachers during the Abbasid Caliphate appears through the miniatures of Al-Wasiti. Some miniatures present the assemblies held by preachers at the mosque, fig. (1-a), the market, or the rest of the travellers, fig. (1-b). Based on, fig. (1-a), it can be noticed that people used to enjoy listening to Muslim preachers. Men and women were separated from each other while listening to Muslim preachers. They used to listen to Muslim preachers without concentrating much and being quiet. Based on the miniature representing Maqama No. 31, fig. (1-b), the Muslim pre-

cher appears standing among a group of people who stopped while traveling on pilgrimage to rest. He is dressed simply in the miniature fig. (1-b), and looks keen on preaching to people and advising them. Based on the miniature fig. (1-b), the listeners' facial expressions indicate that they admire the sayings of the Muslim preacher. This profession appears in the manuscript representing Maqama No. 50 [22]. The manuscript saved in the library of Suleymaniye Mosque in Istanbul includes a miniature of many horses ridden by people. The latter miniature indicates that people have arrived at the place where they will rest. It demonstrates that Abu Zaid shall start preaching to people [4].



Figure (1) **a.** the miniature representing Maqama No. 21 (Alrazeye), it represents a preacher with a group of men and women, **b.** the miniature representing Maqama No. 31 (Al-Ramleye); presents a group of travellers taking a rest and listening to a preacher (After: Grabar, 1984).

3.1.2. Speech giving

Speech giving is a religion-related profession. Public officers practice it. It is a significant art that Arab people mastered during the ancient ages. It received much attention during the Abbasid Caliphate. Politicians gave speeches to inform people about their right to rule. Muslim preachers gave speeches during this age. Governors listened to the speeches given by Muslim preachers. The speeches given by Muslim preachers were considered significant. Thus, many speeches were given by Muslim preachers in the mosques in Baghdad, Basrah, Kufah, etc [21]. Al-Wasiti draws many miniatures for this profession (i.e., speech-giving). For instance, he drew a miniature for a speech giver preaching at a mosque [17]. In this miniature, he drew a Mihrab [17]. The mosque walls in this miniature are decorated and include Arabic writing [3]. The speech giver in the miniature held a sword in his right hand. The speech giver preaching to people on Friday must have a sword during that age. That is because that is seen in several miniatures. Holding a sword makes the speech giver preaching to people look more respectable. Everyone listened carefully to the speech giver preaching to them in the latter miniature. As for the speech giver preaching to people, he appears to be moving his hands while talking fig. (2). Adding body language to the miniature characterizes Al-Wasiti's miniatures. It should be noted that this profession (i.e., speech giving) appears in a manuscript representing Maqama No. 7 (Al-Burqu'eya) [22]. The latter Maqama No. 7 was represented through the manuscript saved in the library of Suleymaniye mosque in Istanbul. It includes the name of the Caliph, Al-Musta'sim Bellah, on the mosque [4]. This indicates that the latter manuscript was drafted during (1242-1258) A.D. This period is the period in which Al-Musta'sim Bellah was ruling.



Figure 2) maqama No. 28 (Al-Samarqandeyah (After: Grabar, 1984).

3.2. Public service-related professions

3.2.1. Professions related to ruling and judiciary

The judiciary-related professions are considered significant professions in any country. Al-Wasiti's miniatures shed presents such professions. al-Wasiti aimed to shed light on the oppression and corruption many officials practiced in the judiciary by drawing such professions. He sought to shed light on the sadness resulting from such oppression and corruption [20]. The role of the judiciary during the Abbasid Caliphate changed. Such change is attributed to being influenced by politics. It is attributed to the poor discretionary decisions issued by the judiciary. It is attributed to increasing the powers granted to the judiciary [23]. al-Wasiti shed much light on -through his miniatures- the assemblies held by judges and rulers. He drew 14 miniatures representing such assemblies [3]. The judges during the Abbasid Caliphate sometimes issued judgments that met their interests. That is represented in one of Al-Wasiti's miniatures. This miniature depicts the ruler looking and sitting sarcastically at a boy standing before him, fig. (3-a). It can be noticed that the size of the bodies of the judges and rules is more significant than the size of the other people in Al-Wasiti's miniatures, fig. (3-a & b) [23]. al-Wasiti drew judges and rulers from the front side. However, when drawing other people, he removed them from the side. That was done to indicate how important the positions of judges and rulers are. In Al-Wasiti's miniatures, judges usually sit on a big, decorated chair. That was done to indicate how important the position and profession of judges are. In Al-Wasiti's miniatures, judges are usually wearing expensive clothes. In Al-Wasiti's miniatures, male and female adversaries generally stand before the judge, trying to convince the judge by moving their hands and showing facial gestures, fig. (3-b). The judges' profession appears in the manuscript representing Maqamat No. 9 (Alexandria), the manuscript representing Maqamat No. 34 (Al-Zubaideya), and the manuscript representing maqamat No. 93 (Al-Omaneya) [22]. In Al-Wasiti's miniatures, rulers sometimes served as judges. That can be seen through the manuscript representing maqamat No. 38 (Al-Mororeya). In the latter manuscript, the ruler's size is bigger than the size of other people. In the latter manuscript, the ruler was holding a scepter. In the latter manuscript, a person called Al-Sorooji was complaining to the ruler about poverty. In the latter manuscript, guards stood around the ruler, fig. (3-a) [3]. In most of Al-Wasiti's miniatures that represent judges and rulers, no signs represent the building or where the event was taking place. However, other painters

added such characters when drawing judges and rulers [4]. Al-Wasiti used the decorated high chair to represent the ones in power and distinguished the one sitting on it from others. In Al-Wasiti's miniatures, the ruler differs from the judge. For instance, the ruler usually holds a scepter or a spear in his right hand. A Turkish coif covers the ruler's head. As for the judge's head, it is covered with a turban. As for the ruler's dress, it has a tight sleeve. It has a slit on the top. The bottom of the ruler's dress is decorated with ribbons. The ruler's shoes are long and black, fig. (3-a). Some rulers' shoes reach the knee. The judge's shoes are short and straightforward.



Figure 3) a. the miniature representing Maqama No. 10 (Al-Rahbeye), it represents a ruler who loves children, b. the miniature representing Maqama No. 8 (Al-Ma'areye) i represents an assembly for a judicial council (After: Grabar, 1984).

3.2.2. Guarding and equestrianism

Guard equestrians are equivalent to police officers today. During the Abbasid Caliphate, they were recruited by the ruler or Caliph. They were responsible for maintaining security in the state [23]. They were also responsible for protecting the ruler. They were also responsible for protecting public facilities, arresting thieves, and assisting the judiciary in enforcing judgments. During the Abbasid Caliphate, equestrians engaged in the show made during Eid and celebrations. al-Wasiti presents them through, fig. (4-a). al-Wasiti drew equestrians holding flags in the presentation of Eid [15]. In Al-Wasiti's miniatures, al-Wasiti portrayed guards holding their swords and spears. The size of guards in such miniatures is more significant than the size of others. al-Wasiti drew equestrians while they were riding the horse, fig. (4-b). Based on al-Wasiti's miniatures, the guards are equestrians with no unique costume. The miniature representing Maqama No. 23 (Al-She'reye) shows guarding and equestrianism [22].



Figure 4) a. the miniature representing Maqama No. (Al-Barqa'deye), it defines a set of equestrians and players of music who are engaged in the celebration of Eid, b. the miniature representing Maqama No. 21 (Al-Razeye): It represents the guards around the ruler for protecting him (After: Grabar, 1984).

3.2.3. Teaching profession

During the Abbasid Caliphate, the teaching profession was considered significant. For instance, many Kuttab (elementary schools) were founded to teach various students about various scientific fields. The teachers working in Kuttab received low earnings from students. There were schools and institutes for teaching youth. Students held assemblies in mosques, schools, and institutes to discuss religion, language, poetry, literature, and others [21]. Based on Al-Wasiti's miniatures, informed and educated people practiced teaching during the Abbasid Caliphate. He drew a miniature that presents the assembly of learners in a library, fig. (5-a). The latter miniature shows a big book cabinet [17]. In fig. (5-a), a group of learners sits with an informative person and holds a book. The informative person's facial expressions indicate that he convinced learners with his view. In fig. (5-b), the students sit in a classroom whose door includes an arch. This arch is probably Persian [17]. The size of the teacher is bigger than the size of others due to the significant role of teachers. In fig. (5-b), the teacher sits on Mastaba and holds a wooden stick to attract students' attention and meet disciplinary-related goals. The teaching profession also manifests in the miniature representing maqamat No. 6 (Al-Muragh'eya) [22]. It manifests in a miniature in the manuscripts in the Suleymaniye mosque library in Istanbul. The latter miniature represents Maqamat No. 46 [4]. In the last miniature, the teacher appeared sitting on a wooden chair, holding a stick and moving it in front of a student. This student is trying to avoid getting hit by the stick. The latter miniature also portrays a group of children playing and a man entering from the school door while holding a basket.



Figure (5) **a.** the miniature representing Maqama No. 2 (Al-Halawaneya), it presents an assembly for learners in a library, **b.** the miniature representing Maqama No.46 (Al-Halabeye): It presents a classroom that includes a group of students and their teacher (After: Grabar, 1984).

3.3. Economical professions

3.3.1. Trade

Trade is presented in several of Al-Wasiti's miniatures. It is presented in the miniature presented in fig. (6-a). The latter miniature presents the enslaved person in the market. In the latest market, slaves are displayed for sale. They were brought from India, Central Asia, and the countries, including black people. They used to serve people in houses and palaces and do handicrafts. Enslaved women were displayed for sale [21]. al-Wasiti drew a miniature that presents a market where male and female slaves are displayed for sale [17]. The latter miniature shows looking at the enslaved people and talking with them to identify which one to buy. It presents the person responsible for

weighing while holding a weighing scale and talking to a buyer. It shows another seller on the left. The clothes of the traders are expansive and expensive and made from silk [24]. The colors used by al-Wasiti make the scene vivid and full of life. In fig. (6-b), a woman talks to a trader and tries to convince him to reduce the price of his goods [20]. In the latter figure, the trader's goods are placed on the table standing between them. The latter trader is trying to convince the woman, whereas the woman is thinking about what the trader has said. Al-Wasiti drew a village and its houses, shops, and arches. It presents a mosque decorated with writings in the Kufian writing style. It presents the mosque's dome, which is in a turquoise color. It presents the minaret of the mosque, whose shape is cylindrical. The mosque is decorated with writings in the Kufian writing style [3].

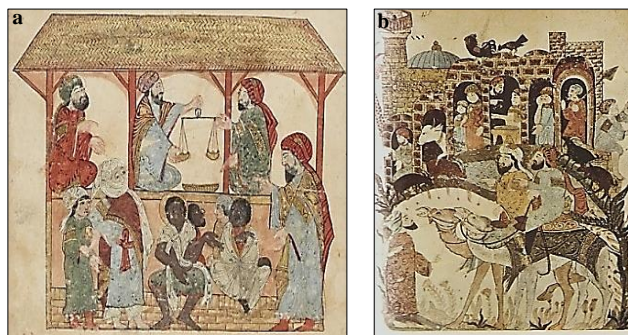


Figure (6) **a.** the miniature representing Maqama No.34 (Al-Zubaydeya), it presents the traders who display enslaved people for sale in the slave market, **b.** the miniature representing Maqama No. 43 (Al-Bakreya) (After: Grabar, 1984).

3.3.2. Butchery

Al-Wasiti drew a miniature for butchers, fig. (7). In the latter miniature, the butcher is rolling up his sleeves and intending to slaughter a sheep.



Figure (7) the miniature representing Maqama No. 44 (Al-Shataweya), it presents the process of slaughtering and cooking a sheep (After: Grabar, 1984).

3.3.3. Cooking

During the Abbasid Caliphate, the cooking profession is known. Cooks during the latter age used to bake bread and roast food [21]. The cooking profession manifests in Al-Wasiti's miniature, fig. (7). In the miniature appearing in fig. (7), the cook is mixing the food in a pan. He is holding the cover of the pan in the other hand. The latter miniature presents a cook assistant keeping the fire lit to continue cooking. It also presents the processes of cooking and slaughtering jointly.

3.3.4. Baking

This profession is ancient. al-Wasiti drew the baker in his miniature fig. (6-b), [20]. In the miniature in fig. (6-b), the baker stands at the bakery door to rest.

3.4. Medical professions

Special attention was paid to the profession of medicine in the Abbasid Caliphate, and many inventions and developments in the field of medicine took place. Medical inventions such as construction and development of hospitals, the production and use of surgical wound sutures, the appointment of medical professionals and scholars from the various parts of the globe, first time eye, nose, and tonsillectomy surgeries happened during the Abbasid Caliphate. Also, the training of some famous medical professionals and doctors like Abu Bakr al-Razi, Abul Qasim al-Zahrawi, Ibn al-Nafis, Ibn Sina, Ibn al-Haytham, and Mahzab al-Din al-Baghdadi were the developments and inventions during the era of Abbasid Caliphate [25]. The Abbasid caliphs attached immense importance to medicine, and they nourished and nurtured a galaxy of brilliant scientists and scholars who made their most valuable contributions to the culture of the world. Though the Umayyad rulers encouraged medical study, real progress in Arab medicine began with the Abbasids [4]. This study foc-used only on the medical professions illustrated in Al-Wasiti's miniatures.

3.4.1. The cupping therapy

Cupping therapy has been practiced for treating patients since ancient ages. It is used for treating furuncles. The ones who practice this profession use tools that are like cups. Prophet Mohammed recommended practicing this profession [26]. This profession was practiced much during the Abbasid Caliphate. Some shops offer such services. This profession appears in one of Al-Wasiti's miniatures, fig. (8). In the miniature in fig. (8), al-Wasiti drew a shop offering such services. The latter miniature presents the shop owner talking to some people waiting for their turn, and many people are waiting for their turn. This means that this treatment method was highly used at this age. However, the latter miniature presents a child whose facial expressions express fear because the cupping therapy is painful. This profession manifests in a miniature manuscript saved in the library of Suleymaniye mosque in Istanbul [4]. There was a prevalent misconception that the barber practiced cupping therapy. This misconception was prevalent because the barber delivered some treatments in some areas. Barbers kept doing that till the beginning of the 20th century. In other words, there is a difference between barbering and the profession of practicing cupping therapy.



Figure (8) the miniature representing Maqama No. 47 (Al-Hajareye), it presents the shop that delivers the cupping therapy with having crowds waiting for their turn (After: Grabar, 1984).

3.5. Professions related to entertainment and leisure

3.5.1. Manufacturing and delivering wine

During the Abbasid Caliphate, their people belonged to the wealthy class and lived in luxury. Thus, traders and manufa-

cturers were working to meet the requirements of those people's luxurious lives. For instance, there were people responsible for manufacturing wine of several types. In addition, some traders were responsible for importing expensive wine. Finally, some traders were responsible for importing the materials needed to manufacture expensive wine for rich people [21]. Due to the prohibition of wine to Muslims, the manufacturing, dealing, offering or serving of it, was exclusive to Christians, males and females were engaged in this field [27]. Having wine was prevalent among people. Significant amounts of wine were offered for sale in shops. The wine was manufactured from honey and many fruits, such as figs, dates, and cooked raisins [21]. In this regard, al-Wasiti drew a miniature representing a pub [17]. The latter miniature presents a person making wine. This person appears to be holding a jar and pouring wine into a pot to filter the drink and make it drinkable, fig. (9). The latter miniature presents the profession of pouring wine; the ones who practice this profession work in places where wine is served. During the Abbasid Caliphate, many people were practicing this profession. That is attributed to having many pubs. It is attributed to holding many entertainment assemblies. The ones who practiced this profession during the Abbasid Caliphate held jars of wine and poured wine into cups. The ones who practiced pouring wine during the Abbasid Caliphate were mainly Christians, Jews, and Majus (Zoroastrians). They used to wear flower wreaths on their heads [21]. The latter miniature presents people who practiced the profession of pouring wine. Those people are moving to serve customers and meet their demands. One of those people is holding a jar of wine to send it to the customers on the upper floor. Some customers used to sit on the pub's upper floor to enjoy privacy [28]. In the last miniature, the table in front of Abu Zaid Al-Sorooji appears to have many cups of wine. Abu Zaid's friends appear surprised by his excessive wine consumption. The people on the upper floor are smaller than those on the lower floor. This indicates that the people on the upper floor want to drink wine secretly.

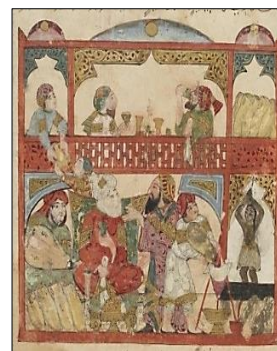


Figure (9) the miniature representing Maqama No. 12 (Al-Demashkeyah), it presents Abu Zaid Al-Sorooji in a pub (After: Grabar, 1984).

3.5.2. Dancing

Dancing was widely spread during the Abbasid Caliphate. Enslaved women were taught the way they should sing and dance. They memorized poetry. They used to wear unique clothes and spray perfume on their bodies. They danced to attract people [21]. During the Abbasid Caliphate, dancers were not Arabs. The dancing profession appears in a miniature drawn by al-Wasiti, fig. (9). The latter miniature presents a pub and a dancer wearing a short dress. This dancer has a hair pleat and is dancing on the bar's platform. Her skin color indicates that she is not an Arab. In the latter miniature, a music player plays music for the dancer to dance.

3.5.3. Playing music

During the Abbasid Caliphate, playing music wasn't a hobby only. It was a profession that was practiced to earn money. The profession of playing music was practiced in the palaces of the Caliph. It was practiced in an individual or group manner. Music abominable and painting disclaimer was ineffective; Haroon Al Rashid court and his successors had stunning effects on ineffective acts, and half of it was due to musician groups, singers and dancers and other entertainers in which were present in simultaneous musical celebrations handled by Caliph Haroon Al Rashid. Based on heard stories, there were about 2000 performers' participations. His son Amin (809-813 A.C) prepared a celebration so that there was the applause of men and women to the doom just for show off. As shown in many Islamic miniatures, playing music was not restricted to males; it was practiced by males and females. Al-Wasiti drew music plays through several miniatures. In Al-Wasiti's miniatures, music players appear in a good appearance. That is because the Persian civilization influenced people. During the Abbasid Caliphate, music players used to play music in shows, pubs, and orchards. In fig. (4-a), music players are playing music during the celebrations of Eid. In the miniature in fig. (4-a), music players wear elegant clothes, ride horses, and hold drums and trumpets. Those musical instruments are convenient for the celebrations of Eid and the festivals in open-air public places. In another miniature fig. (9), al-Wasiti drew music players holding "Oud" in a bar. The sound of oud is less loud than drums and trumpets. This is because the number of listeners in the pub is less than the number of people attending celebrations in public places. In addition, the pub is not an open-air place. Thus, it requires using a quiet musical instrument. In the miniature in fig. (9), the music player plays music in the corner of a pub. In the last miniature, the size of the music player is bigger than the size of the female dancer. That is because the presence of the music player is more important than the presence of the female dancer in pubs. In fact, some music players were public figures in society. Maqamat No. 24 presents an assembly where musicians play music and singers sing. Other painters have drawn such an assembly in other manuscripts, such as the manuscript in the library of Suleymaniye Mosque in Istanbul [4]. In the miniature, fig. (10-a) al-Wasiti drew music players walking with the crowds, leaving the city to make the pilgrimage. He drew music players holding musical instruments. In the latter miniature, the presence of music players indicates that people are happy about the departure of pilgrims. In the miniature in fig. (10-b), al-Wasiti drew an oud music player sitting with a group of people to enjoy their time. People in the latter miniature liked the music being played.



Figure 10 **a.** the miniature representing Maqama No. 31 (Al-Ramleyeh), it presents the procession celebrating the departure of pilgrims to do pilgrimage, **b.** the miniature representing Maqama No. 24 (Al-Qatee'ah) it presents a group of friends listening, sitting in an orchard, and enjoying their time (After: Grabar, 1984).

3.6. Professions related to traveling

3.6.1. Al-Hadi

Al-Hadi refers to the person who guides travelers on the path they walk through to reach their destination. Practicing this profession requires being intelligent and having visionary thinking. Al-Hadi informs travelers about the shortest route to travel across the desert. In addition, he must know about astronomy (e.g., the location of stars and planets). In the miniature fig. (11), Al-Hadi appears to be walking before the convoys. In the latter miniature, the size of the Al-Hadi is big. He is wearing a distinguished turban that differs from the turbans of other people. The presence of Al-Hadi promotes a sense of relief among travelers. That is because the people in the miniature in fig. (11) appear happy and relaxed. In the miniature fig. (10-a), al-Wasiti presents the procession celebrating the departure of pilgrims to make the pilgrimage. In the latter miniature, he presents a person (i.e., Al-Hadi) walking at the front of the convoy of pilgrims. He shows Al-Hadi holding a long stick to assist him in walking.



Figure 11 the miniature representing Maqama No. 12 (al-Demashqeyah), it presents Al-Hadi while he is walking at the front of the convoy of pilgrims (After: Grabar, 1984).

3.6.2. A profession called Al-Khafarah (i.e., guarding the convoys)

This profession, al-Khafarah (i.e., guarding the convoys), was considered essential during the Abbasid Caliphate. For instance, a Khafer (convoy guard) walked with business and pilgrim conveyors. In addition, Khafer is responsible for protecting convoys from thieves and predatory animals. In the miniature in fig. (10-a), al-Wasiti presents Khafer walking behind the pilgrim convey and holding a wooden stick. In the miniature in fig. (12), al-Wasiti presents Khafer resting to guard the convey effectively. The latter miniature presents the people in the convey sleeping and feeling safe and secure due to the presence of Khafer.



Figure 12 the miniature representing Maqama No. 4 (Al-Domyateyah), it presents the people in the convey while they are taking a rest (After: Grabar, 1984).

3.6.3. Navigation

The navigation profession is the oldest profession practiced in ancient Arab civilizations. The latter people practiced navigation in rivers and seas. In the miniature fig. (13-a),

al-Wasiti presents navigators practicing navigation in a river. The latter miniature shows a small boat and a few navigators in a river. Those navigators are local people due to their dress and skin color. The latter miniature presents navigators using paddles to move the boat. It shows the passengers relaxed and enjoying the trip. In the miniature fig. (13-b), al-Wasiti presents a big boat with sails and an anchor. A captain leads the latter boat. The captain is standing on the left side of the boat. The size of the captain is more significant than the size of other people. That indicates that the role of the captain is substantial. The latter miniature, a navigator, sits in the middle of the boat and informs the other navigators about what he sees. It presents navigators shirtless and walking in an ongoing manner on the boat. It can be noticed that navigators in Al-Wasiti's miniatures are not Arab [15]. That can be concluded from their skin color and dress; this is because navigators—in miniatures—are not wearing anything on their heads. However, Arabs used to cover their heads.



Figure (13) **a.** the miniature representing Maqama No. 22 (Al-Forateyah), **b.** the miniature representing Maqama No. 39 (Al-Omaneyah), it presents a boat in the sea and a staff of navigators (After: Grabar, 1984).

3.7. Professions practiced by women

This period produced masterpieces of art, crafts, and architecture, in addition to science. Architects and artisans were very active and skillful due to the respect, value, and wide demand for their works. New cities have been built, industrial areas and workshops were established, and masterworks of metal, wood, and glass have also been produced [29,30]. In 762, Baghdad, the circular City of Peace (*madinat al-salam*), was founded as the new capital. The Abbasids later also established another city north of Baghdad, called Samarra (an abbreviation of the sentence “He who sees it rejoices”), which replaced the capital for a brief period (836-92) [30]. Crafts and professions that women specialized in during Abbasid Caliphate, especially those professions that men cannot do due to religious and social customs at that time, like wool-spinning, bakery, cooking, beautification, nursing, and midwifery. Women enjoyed all rights, especially the right to work, in the Abbasid age. They were active in the economic sphere as they were viewed as part of the society and a better spouse and supporter for their family. Women, for the public, suffered from poverty and need after the deterioration of the Abbasid caliphate and the rise of prices which forced women to work and be apprenticed to a craft or profession to support themselves and their families [31]. This study focused only on some of these professions illustrated at Al-Wasiti's miniatures.

3.7.1. Spinning

Spinning was a common and thriving profession for women during the Abbasid Caliphate, valued for its privacy and

lucrative returns. Al-Wasiti's miniatures provide valuable insights into the practice of spinning among women during this period. Two of his miniatures illustrate women engaged in this craft, each reflecting different aspects of their work and socioeconomic conditions. In the miniature depicted in fig. (14), a woman is shown sitting comfortably in her home, utilizing a spinning wheel. Her demeanor conveys a sense of ease and satisfaction, suggesting that the use of a spinning wheel was not only more efficient but also a more accessible method of spinning compared to traditional techniques. This portrayal underscores the practicality and convenience of spinning wheels, which likely appealed to women of relatively stable economic means. In contrast, the miniature in fig. (6-b) illustrates a woman employing a simpler spinning tool, a drop spindle. The posture and effort depicted in this scene imply a more labour-intensive process. This difference in tools and techniques highlights the impact of economic status on the methods employed for spinning. Women with fewer resources likely relied on simpler, more manual instruments like the drop spindle, requiring greater physical exertion than the spinning wheel. The two miniatures vividly depict the diversity of spinning practices in the Abbasid era, influenced by economic and social factors. Al-Wasiti's artwork thus serves as a valuable historical record, shedding light on the lives and labour of women during this time.



Figure (14) the miniature representing Maqama No. 5 (Al-Kofeyah), it presents a woman sitting in her house practicing the spinning profession through a wheel (After: Grabar, 1984).

3.7.2. The profession of (midwives)

Midwives assist pregnant women in delivering babies. The profession of (midwives) was practiced by women only [31]. It is presented in the miniature in fig. (15). In the latter miniature, a midwife assists a woman in delivering the baby. This midwife is assisted by the female servants working at the house. A servant is putting her hand on the shoulder of the woman giving birth to support her. The servants brought things to assist the midwife in delivering the baby. It can be noticed that the female servants and the midwife are worried and trying to make the woman giving birth feel relaxed. It can be noticed that the woman giving birth is not feeling pain, which is inconsistent with the situation. The woman giving birth is the wife of the ruler. That can be concluded through the jewellery (e.g., bracelet and necklace) she wears while giving birth. It can be concluded through the house decorations [17]. It can be noticed that the size of the woman giving birth in the miniature is more significant than the size of others. That is because this woman is the essential character in this situation. It is because this woman represents fertility [15].

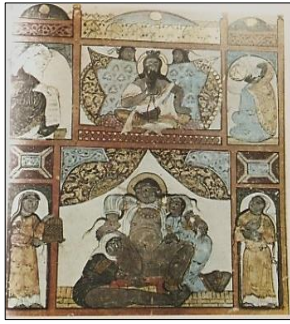


Figure (15) the miniature representing Maqama No. 93 (Al-Omaneyah), it presents a midwife assisting a woman in giving birth (After: Grabar, 1984).

3.8. Professions related to serving (people in houses, pubs, and markets)

During the Abbasid Caliphate, people recruited female and male slaves to work in houses, pubs, and markets. Female and male slaves did agriculture and took care of livestock. In Al-Wasiti's miniature, the enslaved women are well-dressed, and their hair is well-dressed fig. (15). That indicates that the Persian civilization influenced enslaved people during the Abbasid Caliphate. It can be noticed that the enslaved women are not Arab. Female and male slaves were brought from India, Central Asia, and countries including black people. There was a unique market for selling male and female slaves fig. (6-a). Al-Wasiti presents the serving profession in miniature in fig. (16-a). The latter miniature shows servants while they are delivering food. The miniature in fig. (7) presents an enslaved woman holding food to deliver it. The miniature in fig. (15) shows several enslaved women. Based on Al-Wasiti's miniature, it can be noticed that the socio-economic status of individuals affects the number of enslaved people recruited by them. Female and male slaves did not have any unique costumes. However, the skin color of female and male slaves indicates that they are not Arab fig. (16-b).



Figure (16) **a.** the miniature representing Maqama No. 18 (Al-Senjayeh), it presents a servant delivering food, **b.** the miniature representing Maqama No. 39 (Al-Omaneyah): It presents enslaved people in front of the house they work at (After: Grabar, 1984).

3.9. Professions related to agriculture

3.9.1. Plowing

Plowing is one of the oldest professions human beings practice to obtain food. Enslaved people and poor people practiced it. The miniature in fig. (10-b) presents a farmer who looks tired and covering his head with a simple fabric. This farmer is practicing the plowing profession and moving the water-wheel using animals. He is holding a short stick to stimulate the animals to move. It also presents a group of friends sitting in an orchard and enjoying their time [19].

3.9.2. Grazing

Grazing is one of the oldest professions practiced by human beings. It provides humans with food. In the miniature fig. (17), al-Wasiti presents a group of camels with a female grazer holding a stick with her hand. This female grazer is wearing a cloak and covering her head with a scarf to protect herself from the sun and heat while working. The latter miniature indicates that the female grazer has an emotional bond with the camels [32]. Based on Al-Wasiti's miniatures, it can be noticed that many people practiced the grazing profession during the Abbasid Caliphate. That is because practicing this profession shall provide people with a source of food. For example, in fig. (6-b), al-Wasiti presents a chicken and a rooster on a house roof. The latter miniature also shows sheep and a cow. It indicates that the grazing profession generates money and has a food source.

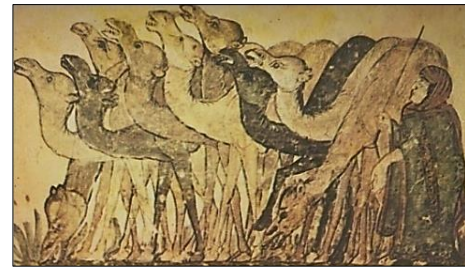


Figure (17) the miniature representing Maqama No. 32 (Al-Tabibah), it presents a female grazer with a group of camels (After: Grabar, 1984).

4. Discussion

According to the results of this study, based on the analysis of al-Wasiti miniatures, the traditional professions of the Abbasid Period can be classified as follows:

4.1. Religious professions

This kind of careers were much acceptable and respected by the majority of Abbasid society because if based on Islamic religion, the religion of majority of the Caliphate people. Preaching profession was very common and popular. The popularity of this career can be recognized easily by the huge number of audiences at the time of preaching, as it shown in fig. (1-a & b). The other religious career was the speech delivery, this profession is very common and popular also because it is an essential part of Islamic religion because if must be repeated weakly in Friday and other Islamic religious occasions, as it shown in fig. (2). The Third religious profession is the judiciary, it is one of the most important pillars of governance in Islamic religion and is everyone's refuge in the event of disputes between people fig. (3-a & b).

4.2. Economic professions

A group of economical professions were represented in al-Wasiti Miniatures, as trading, fig. (6-a & b) Manufacturing and pouring wine fig. (9). Serving people in houses, markets, and pubs, fig. (15, 16-a & b). Baking, fig. (6-b). Cooking, fig. (7). Al-Hadi^(a), fig. (10-a & 11). They also present the profession of Khafeer^(b), fig. (10-a & 12). Guarding, fig. (4-b). Navigation, fig. (13-b). And spinning, a profession practiced by women, fig. (6-b,14).

4.3. Cultural professions

History has recorded that during the reign of the Abbasid dynasty, Muslims were truly at the peak of their glory and led world civilization at that time. The reign of the Abbasid dynasty was a "golden age" in the history of Islamic civil-

zation, especially during the reign of Caliph Harun al-Rashid and al-Ma'mun. This dynasty achieves progress and glory in the fields of politics, economy, trade, and science. Islamic intellectual progress at that time was due to the caliph's love of science, the establishment of the Baitul Hikmah library, and the movement to translate various books and literature into and out of Arabic played a major role in shaping the Islamic intellectual world at that time [27,29,30]. And because teaching is an essential part of Islamic religion, it asked its followers to continue learning from cradle to grave, and because it is the base for all progress in different aspects of life, schools were established, and rules were created to improve this field. The artistic legacies of the Abbasid caliphate are varied. Some of the monuments described in this essay were short-lived; impressive as they were, the palaces of Samarra barely lasted for two generations. But many visual and techno-logical innovations of the period, from lusterware ceramics to "Kufic" script to the engagement with classical scientific literature, continued to be significant components of Islamic culture—and influences on surrounding cultures—for centuries to come [29,30]. The profession of teaching is presented at the miniatures in fig. (5-a & b). Although playing music and dancing professions were not popular due to restrictions in practising them in Islam religion, but they represented in a group of miniatures, fig. (4-a, 9, 10-a & b). As it shown in the Miniatures, Music played some times in popular religious ceremonies and sometimes in a privet place with dancing and drinking wine in a pub.

4.4. Medical professions

A few of medical professions were presented at the miniatures such as cupping therapy, fig. (8) Those who practiced cupping therapy were considered doctors during the Abbasid Caliphate. The midwives' profession, fig. (15).

4.5. Agricultural professions

Agricultural professions were presented also at the miniatures, plowing, fig. (10-b) and glazing, fig. (17).

4.6. Sport professions

One of the prominent professions in Islamic society was equestrianism, a practice integral to various aspects of life within the Islamic world. Horses played a significant role in agriculture, industry, trade, transportation, and hunting, highlighting their multifunctional importance. Additionally, they were central to sports and horse racing, activities that required horses to undergo extensive training and preparation. The mastery of horsemanship was not only a practical skill but also a symbol of the knight's courage and valor. Islam strongly encouraged the practice of equestrianism, emphasizing its importance in warfare, as fighting against enemies was considered an obligatory duty for Muslims until the Day of Judgment. Equestrianism is notably depicted in the miniatures of Yahya al-Wasiti, where scenes of equestrians and musicians are portrayed during the celebration of Eid, one of the most significant religious occasions in Islam. These representations reflect the central role of horsemanship in Islamic culture, showcasing its connection to both religious and social festivities. Through such depictions, al-Wasiti captures the cultural and symbolic significance of equestrianism, highlighting its prominence in both the practical and ceremonial life of the Abbasid society.

5. Conclusion

One of the main professions in Islamic society was equestrianism, horses are used in various aspects of life in Islam. Equestrianism was

represented in al-Wasiti miniatures showing group of equestrians and players of music engaged in the celebration of Eid, fig. (6). It can be noticed that al-Wasiti's miniatures that decorated and illustrated al-Hariri's Maqamat, provide much information about different aspects of life during Abbasid Caliphate. These professions have been practiced to generate income for daily life expenses and varied in its kinds and importance in Abbasid culture. Some of them were popular, and admired by the majority of society such as the religious professions like delivering speeches in occasions, preaching, and judiciary. While others were unusual, strange and do not accept in Islamic teachings like making wine and serving it in private ceremonies where dancing and music are presented also. Each profession whether it is social, economic, health, cultural or religious reflects the social status of its owner. Some of these professions were practiced by males and females such as dancing, cooking and grazing, while others were restricted into females such as spinning and midwives while others to males only such as judiciary and guarding. The majority of these professions were practiced at the day time, while few like in parties where dancing, playing music and serving wine have been practiced at night in a private place or in a pub.

Endnotes

- (a) The person who guides travellers to the path to walk through to reach their place of destination
- (b) The person who works as a guard of convey

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