

THE INFLUENCE OF THE LETTER OF THE SWORD AND THE PEN BY IBN BURD ON THE MAḤBAROT OF ALHARIZI AND IBN ARDUTIEL

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ABSTRACT

This article examines Arabic literary influence on medieval Hebrew literary forms, specifically comparing three examples of Andalusian dispute literature (الجدل والماظرة), which was a popular genre in medieval times. It thus contributes to the overall body of research on the linguistic contact between Hebrew and Arabic literature in Andalusia and the meeting point between the two cultures.

The study examines the dispute literature of Andalusian Arab poets and the form this genre in the writing of Jewish poets. The works examined here are: Ibn Burd's letter titled The Letter of the Sword and the Pen— *risālat s-sayf wa-lqalam*² (رسالة السيف والقلم). Ahmad ibn Burd the Younger was an Andalusian poet whose early life is largely unknown (d. 1053)³. Ibn Burd was the first Islamic poet to analyze the respective merits of the sword and of the pen. This work was esteemed so highly that no one dared criticize it. The second work is The Pen and the Sword by Judah Alharizi who lived in Spain about a century after ibn Burd. Since Alharizi wrote the Pen and the Sword after ibn Burd he was likely influenced by the latter⁴. The third work is the debate between the Scissors and the Pen by Shem Tov ibn Yitzhak Arduziel, who was born at the end of the thirteenth century in the northern Castile city of Carrion, and was a scholar of Arabic and Castilian literature⁵. Ibn Burd's work represents the letter genre (راسائل), which flowered in Andalusia and the two Hebrew works represent the maqama genre. The article explores the common characteristics shared by these three works as examples of literary debate and maqamas, focusing on their themes and linguistic devices.

1. INTRODUCTION

The period 950-1492 witnessed the blossoming of Hebrew poetry. In the tenth to fifteenth centuries, Spain was a very affluent country ruled by the Muslims who were very tolerant towards the Jews. Spain thrived under the early period of Islamic rule and all forms of culture and art were encouraged and flourished. This remarkable period was given the name the Golden Age. The period provided Jewish literature with a completely new type of poetry: the secular poetry of the court which poets dedicated

¹ There is no significance to the order in which the authors are listed.

² The word "risāla" means "letter" in Arabic and describes a theoretical treatise (Arazi & Ben Shammai, 1991, pp. 533-539).

³ What we do know is that as a young man, ibn Burd left Cordova and settled in the court of the Mujahid, king of Dania. He returned to Cordova towards the end of his life.

⁴ Dishon, 2012, p. 36.

⁵ Ratzhabi, 1974, p. 31.

to their patrons, heralding a brand new genre of Hebrew poetry. This new genre was a wonderful blend of the Jewish on the one hand and the Islamic on the other and reflected the culture of its authors, who were both pious and learned Jews on the one hand, and had a deep understanding of the wisdom of Arabic poetry and science on the other hand. Cooperation between the two nations moved from the area of culture to the cycles of social life. The verses of Arabic poetry which are embedded in the Hebrew poetry of the Jewish poets of Spain show that when the fancy took them, they wrote Arabic poetry⁶.

Alongside this poetry, we find the development of the literary form of the maqama (maḥberet in Hebrew). Maqama means “meeting place”⁷ and it evolved to mean “assemblies” in the sense of an assembly for listening to an orator or storyteller. A maḥberet or maqama⁸ is a short rhyming tale written in a specific form. The earliest forms had two characters: a storyteller (representing the poet) and the chief protagonist, whose exploits are recounted by the narrator. The most famous maqama writer in Arabic literature was al-Hariri of Basra (1054-1122), whose works were widely read and translated into Hebrew by Judah Alharizi (1165-1234).⁹ The first Hebrew poet who wrote maqamas was Shlomo ibn Saqbal (twelfth century) who wrote a maqama titled “The Speech of Asher Ben Yehuda” and described the games and exploits of lovers. But, the most famous work in this genre, one which is considered the crowning glory of Hebrew maqama literature, was Judah Alharizi's monumental work, the *Book of Taḥkemoni*¹⁰. Thanks to Alharizi's translations and work, the maqama became part of secular Spanish poetry and was given the Hebrew name “maḥberet”.

Judah Alharizi had both a Jewish religious education, a secular Arabic education, and had an excellent grasp of Arabic. According to Fleisher,¹¹ he was the only Jewish poet to be regarded an Arabic poet without converting to Islam. This article suggests that just as Alharizi he was influenced by the maqamas of Alhariri and al-Hamadani¹². he was familiar with and influenced by ibn Burd's *Letter the Pen and the Sword* which he incorporated in his *Book of Taḥkemoni*. There are similarities between the *Pen and the Sword*, the *Book of Taḥkemoni*, and ibn Burd's

⁶ Ratzhabi, 1994, p. 331.

⁷ The first Arabic maqama was written by the great Persian-born Arab Islamic poet, Abu Firas al-Hamadani (967-1007) (Ratzhabi, 1994, p. 15).

⁸ The word maqama means assembly and seat in Arabic. The Jewish poets translated maqama as “book” and in Spanish Hebrew poetry it connotes society, audience, seat (Dishon, 2012, p. 21).

⁹ Ratzhabi, 1974, p. 22.

¹⁰ Hazan, 2013, pp. 89-90.

¹¹ Schirmann, 1996, p. 214.

¹² Dishon, 2012, pp. 14-15.

Arabic letter¹³. Later on, of course, we find an argument between a pen and a scissors in Shem Tov Arduziel's book. This article suggests that Shem Tov Arduziel knew and was influenced by the two earlier works by ibn Burd and Alharizi.

Note that in Andalusia, there was an intermixing of the letter genre and the maqama (maḥberet), where the latter opened with rhymed verse while the remainder was in rhymed prose. There are various differences between the two genres: in the maḥberet the story is presented via a special framework which has dramatic structure, whereas the maḥberet and letter are writing as direct reports with no stylistic framework. The two kinds of maḥbarot—the classical and the Spanish—resemble one another in their outward form but differ in terms of the characters of the hero and the storyteller and in the narrative structure.¹⁴

This influence is evident on several levels: Alharizi's book has the same title as ibn Burd's letter. Arduziel made a slight change by using a scissors instead of a sword and by centering his story on a debate between the pen and the poet.

2. LITERARY DISPUTE

The literary dispute is an ancient genre, first seen in ancient Egyptian writing and classical Greek literature,¹⁵ and found in European and Hebrew literature. Hebrew literature contains more than a hundred dispute poems from the ancient eastern period—the period of Yossi ben Yossi (6th century, Eretz Yisrael) – through the medieval period to the twentieth century¹⁶.

In the middle ages, renowned poets wrote disputes in both poetry and maqama form. They included Abraham ibn Ezra, Yehuda ibn Shabtai, Judah Alharizi, Shem Tov ibn Arduziel, and others.¹⁷ Lesser-renowned poets also wrote disputes, several of which were found in the Cairo Genizah¹⁸. There are examples of the genre throughout the Jewish spersion¹⁹: in Italy,²⁰ Ashkenaz,²¹ Greece,²² Turkey, France, and Yemen.²³

¹³ The discussion of Alharizi's treatise *The Pen and the Sword* is based on the new edition of the text by Yahalom and Katsumata.

¹⁴ Mar'ī, 1995, pp. 15-18; Mar'ī, 2013, pp. 1-13.

¹⁵ Spiegel, 1996, pp. 397-399; Turniansky, 1983, p. 4.

¹⁶ Dishon, 2012, p. 253.

¹⁷ Turniansky, 1983, p. 4.

¹⁸ Two scholarly disputes were found in the Cairo Genizah. In one, the scholars argued for twelve months about the redemption. This poem was meant to be read on Passover. The second dispute was a debate between the month of Nisan and the other months of the year. See also Turniansky, 1983, p. 3, fn. 7.

¹⁹ An incomplete list of these dispute poems was compiled by Habermann. See Habermann, 1943, pp. 59-62.

²⁰ For example in the book by Emanuel Haromi.

²¹ For example, Spiegel, 1996, pp. 407-410.

In dispute poetry, two or more protagonists argue about which should be preferred to the other. At the end of the dispute, a compromise is usually proposed by a judge or arbitrator. The judge is a third party to the dispute and may be someone important or the author himself. The participants in the disputes are very diverse: poets, a man and a woman, stock types such as a city-dweller and a town-dweller, a soldier and a farmer, a rich man and a poor man. There are arguments between facets of nature such as summer and winter, abstract concepts such as happiness and poverty, and between such as things wine and water, between coffee and qāt²⁴, between rice and pomegranate seeds²⁵, between the pen and the sword, or the pen and the scissors.

There are generally two sides to the argument, although additional participants may be involved, such as in the dispute between the tongue, the stomach, and other organs, the argument between the letters of the alphabet, etcetera. The disputants vary in how they present matters and the essence of the idea they support. The argument goals also differ. They can have theological and religious goals, moral or didactic goals. Some are satirical or humorous; several maqama-style arguments are like this. Sometimes the purpose of the argument is simply to entertain; other times it is serious and scholarly. Some dispute poems depict vulgar fights with swearing, cursing, and even fistfights²⁶.

Dispute poetry structure also varies. Sometimes the dispute concerns one discrete issue. Other times it may be a chain of connected arguments. One dispute launches into the argument immediately; another has a framework. One is careful to give participants equal columns of text; another does not, and the participants do not even speak in a particular order. There are also different forms of dispute poetry: some contain a variety of rhymes and meter, others are written in rhymed verse or prose interspersed with verse.

Alharizi put considerable emphasis on the dispute, devoting about one-fifth of his book to it. He organized the dispute maḥbarot into two equal groups containing six maḥbarot each. The dispute in Taḥkemoni is discrete. Each maḥberet discusses a single topic, the discussants are given the same amount of space, and the discussants speak in turn. The winner is the one with most speeches and closes the argument²⁷.

In Alharizi's arguments, the argument is sometimes in verse and each party presents its own side. In the other maḥbarot, it is in rhymed prose

²² Turniansky, 1983, p. 4.

²³ And see also Steinschneider, 1908, *The Literary Dispute*, whose book presents the dispute works of different peoples, including Hebrew dispute works.

²⁴ Tobi, 2008, pp. 301-310.

²⁵ Geries, 1997-1998, pp. 143-164.

²⁶ Turniansky, 1983, p. 5.

²⁷ Dishon, 2012, p. 267.

interspersed with verse that reiterate and underscore the narrator's point of view. This style is used in ibn Arduziel's *the Pen and the Scissors* and ibn Burd's letter, which present each position in rhymed prose. The Letter concludes with the arguments of the pen, which are presented as a long poem in which it is hinted, but not said explicitly, that the pen wins. Like the authors of the Arabic *maqamas*, ibn Burd inserts quotations or allusions from the ḥadīḫ (Kor'ān and religious Islamic law) as shown below.

Alharizi used different Arabic literary themes in his *maḥbarot*, such as the argument between the pen and the sword. He typically Judaized the *maqamas* and gave them Jewish themes, often embedding biblical quotations and allusions. Later, Arduziel too used biblical allusions and idioms extensively in his *maqamas*.

3. THEMATIC INFLUENCES BETWEEN THE THREE WORKS

It is important to note that there is a strong resemblance between storylines of the three works. In each one, the storyteller begins with an introduction where he describes the situation he finds himself in and prepares the reader for the argument that breaks out between the two characters in the title. All three works are constructed from the characteristic material and motifs found in Arabic poetry and *maqamas*. The poetic form and writing style both involve dialog and verbosity, which is a characteristic style found in dispute and argument poetry in Arabic literature. We also find another resemblance in the syntactical-rhetorical structure of the phrases / sentences used by the three writers.

3.1 Argument Structure

In classical *maqamas*, it is necessary for the narrator and the hero to meet. Alharizi introduced this idea into the dispute *maqamas*, giving each argument a framework tale which is divided into two parts: a beginning and an end. The framework tale opens with the Haezrachi retelling what happened between him and Heber the Kenite, the hero, when they met. The dispute writings all have the same structure, which is also used in the *Taḥkemoni*: the character that begins the dispute usually ends it, has the most columns of speech, and wins the argument.

3.1.1 Introduction

The *maqamas* opens with the typical kind of preface found in the dispute genre. In one preface, Heiman Haezrachi meets Heber the Kenite (after the latter reveals his identity) and Heber recounts wise sayings and riddles encapsulating the core of the argument. In another form of introduction, Heber the Kenite is one of the parties in the dispute, and appears in the framework tale introduction as an old man who argues with

a rival, who is usually a young man²⁸. The introduction to the framework tales in the three maḥbarot contains allusions to the remainder of the maḥberet, in other words to the argument's main theme. In the framework tale in Alharizi's maḥberet, the Pen and the Sword, Heber the Kenite describes the story of the debate either at Heiman's request or as part of the story.

In this maḥberet, Alharizi allows both sides the same number of speeches—three columns each—although, the Pen has the last word in a lengthy section of verse and, it seems that Alharizi regards the pen as the winner. In ibn Arduziel's maḥberet, the Pen and the Scissors,²⁹ the storyteller's tale opens with a description of a snowy day on which he decided to relieve his boredom by writing. However, his efforts are in vain and the angry storyteller attacks the pen for its inadequacy. The storyteller curses and yells at the pen, which loses its patience and answers the storyteller back. A lengthy dialogue ensues where each hurls accusations at the other until the pen pressures the writer to try to do what the pen could not do and dip his finger into the frozen ink. The writer then admits to the pen that he was wrong. The storyteller realized that “the pen was right, and sat ashamed / sad and silent”. In the second part of the maḥberet, the writer-storyteller is sitting alone and feeling downcast, when the scissors appears and begins a new tale. In this part, the pen and the scissors meet once more³⁰, but this time the wise pen proposes that they should try to resolve their argument. As the rebuker, the scissors exploits the storyteller's loneliness to offer its services instead of the pen “Grasp a pen of iron / It will give you more strength than a dozen (ordinary) pens”. Happy with this proposition, the storyteller announces: “This is a happy day / Because the pen can be replaced” and from here we have a turning when the pen demonstrates its resourcefulness and proposes to resolve the problem amicably resolution by asking a judge to decide between it and the scissors and determine their function and purpose. Both parties accept the compromise. The judge then “examined every household item and found a shiny green pen, which he used / and became a writer and reached a quick judgment...”. “The pen hero will defeat the scissors and write a hundred books / while reviling and cursing the scissors / which it will defeat. The pen emerges triumphant from the judgment and the whole community of reeds (pens) assembled / and there was a shout throughout the camp”. “By order of the

²⁸ Dishon, 2012, p. 255.

²⁹ The scissors were seen as a sharp and offensive weapon, resembling the sword in the other letters.

³⁰ The first time was when the pen broke and did not accomplish what the writer wanted, then the scissors arose and offered itself as a substitute for the pen.

king and his nobles: Everyone shall use his tools for the purpose for which they were made—the pen to write and the scissors to cut hair”.

In most of the Hebrew maqamas—maḥbarot the two sides express mutual scorn. In some of the maqamas this scorn is moderate. For example, in one of the arguments in Alharizi's maḥberet, the sword tells the pen: “There is nothing to reply to your argument / and lying tongue”, which makes the pen “Feel proud”. In this maḥberet, the Pen and the Sword, the issue of which side is right is left open. But, based on the structure and number of speech columns given to each disputant, the winner is clear. In the maḥberet of the Pen and the Scissors, the storyteller clearly curses and abuses the pen, which he says is useless and “bent” (as it failed to live up to the expectations of the writer). In ibn Burd's letter, the storyteller introduces the dispute through a rhymed preface, which discusses the two objects and the importance they were ascribed since ancient times. In the letter, the argument between the sword and the pen is balanced. The pen begins the argument, which it ends with a poem about compromise, and sends it to the king, Danyah Abu al-Jaish ibn Mujahid (1009-1044), asking him to use the pen and the sword for their rightful purposes. However, one senses that pen is preferred over the sword and it receives praise, although the sword is praised too just to be fair. Ibn Burd ends his letter with a poem praising Mujahid Abu Al-Jaish who is considered the head of the military and literary community.

3.1.2 Summary and ruling

In the conclusion and decision sections of the maḥberet / maqama story framework, Heber the Kenite sheds his disguise and appears as himself. Heiman Haezrachi is delighted with Heber's poetic eloquence and writes down his speech with an iron pen. Most of the disputes end in a compromise declared by the adjudicator or arbitrator, who as noted above, is a third side in the dispute. Both sides in the argument are good / right and ought to live together in peace. In some maḥbarot, one party concludes this itself—namely, that the other side is right. In other maḥbarot, like that by Alharizi for example, no ruling about which side is right is reached and the question remains open. However, in Arduziel's work the Scissors and the Pen, the pen is ruled the winner, while in ibn Burd's Letter no clear decision emerges. Instead, we find a sort of compromise between the two symbols, inclining towards the pen, which chose to answer the sword with a paean to the king demonstrating the pen's skill and force of expression.

3.2 The stories found in the three works

Judah Alharizi wrote the maqama-maḥberet the Pen and the Sword in rhymed prose. It opens with a description of Heiman Haezrachi, who wishes to record the words of Heber the Kenite using a pen. However, the pen is broken and an argument erupts between the sword and the pen. The argument which introduces this maḥberet deals with the argument between books and war—between intellectual pursuit and humanism versus brutality and cruelty. This ancient argument is found in Arabic, Hebrew, and general literature. The opening argument regarding the importance of the sword versus the pen is delivered by the king's most eminent scribes who have an argument with the king's generals who represent the sword. “The scribes argue that they are the true heroes and that the pen defeat those men who draw arms / and reduce nobles to nothing”. The military leaders naturally disagree with their contention that the pen is important.

Shem Tov ibn Arduziel wrote the Scissors and the Pen as a parody and sent it to a rogue who did not understand that ibn Arduziel had deceived him so as to avoid wasting ink in writing to him. The narrator provides a very nice description of the weather at the time and the narrator-poet's mood. The description is very long and poetically extravagant but it is also very entertaining and draws the reader into the mood of the text so that he wishes to continue reading and see what happens in the end.

The maḥberet describing the war between the Pen and the Scissors is very entertaining. It relates that on one of the coldest days in the winter of 1345, the poet was shut up in his house without company or visitors so he decided to try to occupy himself with writing. However, when he tries to dip the pen in the inkwell the pen bends against the ink which has frozen. When the poet vents his annoyance on the pen the scissors comes to the poet's rescue suggesting that he could use it to write on the page instead of the pen by cutting out letters. A heated dispute takes place between the pen and the scissors which the pen wins. Arduziel did not invent the story of the pen and the scissors but he does succeed in presenting it as a flowing and entertaining lecture. The maḥberet is an epic written in rhymed prose interspersed with metered verse. It is mainly told in the first person by the storyteller on behalf of the author.

Ibn Burd's letter is an example of a literary dispute which, as noted, preceded the other works two. The letter begins with an introduction by the narrator who introduces different pairs of objects created by God, between which there is a dispute or rivalry regarding which has the greatest merit. The letter was sent by ibn Burd to Abu al-Jaish ibn Mujahid. The narrator presents the pen and the sword as two important symbols with a long history. The two objects set about arguing amongst themselves. The pen begins by presenting its power and skills using

quoting from the Kor'ān. This lends it sacredness and bestows it with a special spiritual status in the eyes of the nation. The sword responds and boasts of its exploits and cruelty. This response is presented in military and militaristic language. The pen condemns and criticizes the sword, which it holds responsible for different types of destructiveness from bloodshed to dividing people. The pen, on the other hand, is characterized by its good deeds which are inspired by God. The argument between the two rises in intensity and the pen challenges the sword and defeats it through its skilled use of poetic expression.

3.3 Disguise and Self-Revelation

This is a core motif in the maqamas. In most maqamas, it is the hero who disguises and reveals himself. In one he may appear as a woman, in another a horseman, a physician, or a teacher; he may be a wise old man or a silver-tongued youth man with brilliant rhetoric. Sometimes the hero is disguised as a beggar or a demon, a worn out man, a preacher, or a pretty woman. In ibn Burd's letter, the author is disguised as the judge, "the king", who concludes the argument, who rules that no one has the right to interfere in the matter as long as the king is alive and well in the city; both objects are important and the king will use them both as he sees fit. In Alharizi's work on the other hand there is a fierce debate between the pen and the sword which is designed to show which is the winner and has superior status and most merit. Towards the end of this maqama, Heber the Kenite, the storyteller-hero, reveals himself and rules that the pen has won the battle.

And when I listened to its riddles / and poetic proverbs, I took its words to my heart / and wrote its words with an iron pen. / And it lived with me for several days until time wounded me with the arrows of separation / and weaned me from its company³¹.

The maḥberet in the Taḥkemoni in which the storyteller identifies the hero, Heber the Kenite, from the outset, is typical of the maḥbarot of the Taḥkemoni³².

In the dispute between the pen and the narrator in the debate of the Pen and the Scissor, the dispute reaches a climax and the pen and the narrator hurl accusations at each other. The pen rebukes the narrator and shrewdly manipulates him into declaring it the winner. The narrator has writers block and concedes to the pen after learning the truth. The narrator concludes that the pen is truthful and a loyal ally. When the storyteller hurts his finger, he is ashamed and silenced. The scissors now enters the story and offers its services. The scissors makes a point. It wishes to replace the pen. With the appearance of the scissors, an argument

³¹ Alharizi, 2010, p. 410.

³² Yahalom and Katsumata, 2010, p. 19.

develops between the scissors and the pen, until they eventually agree on a solution (compromise). The argument is resolved by a pauper. The arbitrator is disguised as a downtrodden individual who comes to judge the arguments, decide the winner, and end the dispute. Unable to contain its joy, the triumphant pen rises, and grasping the poor man, kisses him. “And the nation shall live in peace”. “And everyone heard the news / And joy was everywhere / All instruments paid attention to it / And their usual, customary way of doing things remained unchanged / And there was peace for forty years”.³³ The moral of the story is: “Do not attempt to do your neighbor's work”. In Ibn Burd's work too, the letter concludes with a verse which praises the pen as being superior to the sword: “تقد أن للسيف ألا يفضل القلما منذ سخرا لفتى حاز العلى بهما” — “The sword lost its advantage over the pen on the day it became subordinate to the young man who achieved high status”.

All three maqamas has a narrative foundation, even if its main content is rhetorical or descriptive. The story is either a whole story that develops through the maqama or it may have additional basic elements added to it such as poems, arguments, or a combination of arguments, tales, and anecdotes.

The language and style of the two works (The Maḥberet of the Pen and the Sword and the Debate of the Pen and the Scissors) are full of artistic devices. Some of the main ones follow next.

3.4 Old and new in the Jewish maḥbarot

Alharizi's Letter of the Sword and the Pen draws many topics from medieval Hebrew poetry which he with supplements either new themes or with themes dealt with by earlier poets which were forgotten and which he resurrects. The main subject is war. No Hebrew poetry had been written on this subject since the time of Shmuel Hanagid.

3.5 Social Criticism

A central theme in the maqamas is social criticism, which is addressed at some length and offers us a rich source of information about contemporary life. Three critical approaches are used in particular: *hiḡā'* or derogatory verses borrowed from Arabic literature, satire borrowed from Arabic and Latin literature, and social criticism European class literature³⁴. In the three works discussed here, the criticism targets the object-characters which try to intervene in the functions of others and diminish their value by changing the purpose of their creation. In the three works, the pen is the preferred character and wins all the battles. The pen engages in a battle over its status and how it is used by writers.

³³ Schirmann, Part 1, 2006, pp. 538-581.

³⁴ Dishon, 2012, p. 27.

In these works, social criticism is additionally reinforced by the satire aimed at exposing hypocrisy and fraud.

4. LINGUISTIC SIMILARITIES BETWEEN THE THREE WORKS

4.1 Rhymed prose

A typical and obvious form found in both the letters and maqamas and similar genres is the use of rhyming, mostly rhymed prose. Also noteworthy is the use of biblical passages, which are one of the main stylistic ornaments found in maqamas. Creative use is made of these passages in the discourse, which provide an element of surprise when they are taken out of context and put in an entirely new setting very different from the original. These biblical passages and phrases may be used in a completely different way to the original. Embedding quotations in the text adds considerable charm, wit, and entertainment to the writing for a readership that is familiar with the Hebrew language and the biblical sources:

1. השחיר מה שהלבין הטוהר, והקדיר מה שנתנו בו אימון האחים (אבן ברך, עמי 437).

‘It blackened what the pure made white, and darkened what the brothers believed in’ (The Maḥberet of the Pen and the Sword, 35 (40), p. 437).

Original: تسود ما بيض الصفاء , وتكدر ما أخلص الإخاء (رسالة السيف والقلم، أ، ص 437).

2. למה יגרע / מעץ הדעת טוב ורע (מלחמת העט והמספריים, א, עמי 532).

‘Why will it take away from / The Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil’ (The Debate of the Pen and the Scissors, 1, p. 532).

3. כי אני איש תם וישר / וכל תומכי (מחברת העט והחרב, לה (מ), עמי 407).

‘Since I am a simple and honest man / and all my supporters’ (The Maḥberet of the Pen and the Sword, 35 (40), p. 406).

4.2 Rhetorical Devices

Rhetoric is the art of persuasion as opposed to a simple communication of information. The aim of rhetoric is not to spread truth and present it plainly and openly but to convince an audience to accept a speaker's position - one which not necessarily congruent with that of the audience. The arguments alone cannot persuade, but when presented in a certain way, they become acceptable to the audience³⁵.

Language is a device that enables us to understand the world. Speech is the expression of understanding (Sophia) which lets us explain situations, construct dialogue, and clarify and investigate the world. The word is the most powerful expression of human ability; without it human beings

³⁵ Gitay, 2011, p. 55; Tsur, 2004, p. 64; Carpenter & Thompson, 1999, p. 7.

would have accomplished no more than animals intellectually³⁶. Communication is the essential activity that links the various parts of society together and allow them to function as an integrated whole.³⁷ Rhetoricians understand the importance and power of words. They use strategies that rely on words, which they see as a tool to be used to effect, often in sophisticated ways. They seek to fashion a new reality, which the audience can accept as genuine. Rhetoricians generally do this by eliciting a sense of agreement with the listener and once that feeling of understanding has been established, the task of persuasion can begin.³⁸

4.2.1 Stylistic rhetoric

A common analytical approach when studying rhetoric is to examine the wording of persuasive messages and the tools of persuasion that speakers and writers use. Influential figures who express their ideas publicly use a variety of argumentation approaches and methods to appeal to their audience's logic and emotions. Stylistic rhetoric targets the emotions and is known as rhetorical appeal.³⁹ When appealing to the emotions, speakers' use specific elements and structures in their messages in order to arouse given responses in their audience, such as sympathy, empathy, hesitancy, or rejection⁴⁰.

According to Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, "persuasive arguments" are arguments which claim things that are only valid for a particular audience. "Convincing arguments" on the other hand are arguments that seek the agreement of all rational people. In other words, a "persuasive argument" is an argument which takes the viewpoint, beliefs, and needs of a particular audience into account.⁴¹ This might include addressing a particular audience's emotions, which might not be effective if addressed to a universal audience that does not share those particular beliefs or needs. The goal of a speech which is addressed to a universal audience of listeners is to persuade while the goal of a speech which is addressed to a specific audience is to convince.⁴²

4.2.1.1 Sentence parts which convey the same meaning by using synonymous words / expressions or words from the same semantic field

Landau discussed the semantic relationships within expression, for example: synonyms, antonyms, and same semantic domain. She stressed

³⁶ Searle, 2002, p. 18; Gitay, 2010, p.27.

³⁷ Mio, 1997, p. 113; Graber, 1993, p. 305.

³⁸ Gitay, 2013, p. 120.

³⁹ Tsur, 2004, p. 78.

⁴⁰ Tsur, 2011, pp. 74-75.

⁴¹ Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca, 1969, p. 28.

⁴² Perelman, 1994, p. 20.

that symmetrical repetition, involving not only structural and verbal repetition, is also a persuasion device, since we know that repeating an idea often can slowly break down opposition or at least gain the agreement of listeners with no definitive view on a matter⁴³. Words possessing a high semantic load can also help to communicate a message since the text's inherent emotional force contributes to conveying the idea.⁴⁴

There are many examples of synonyms and words from the same semantic field in the Debate of the Scissors and the Pen, the Maḥberet of The Pen and the Sword, and the Letter of the Sword and the Pen:

4. מיטב הדיבורים הוא אמירת צדק, ומיטב הסגולות הוא אמירת האמת (איגרת החרב והעט, א, עמ' 436).

'Speech is used best for Justice and the highest merit lies in speaking Truth' (The Letter of the Sword and the Pen, 1, p. 436).

Original: خير الأقوال الحق، وأحمد السجايا الصّدق (رسالة السيف والقلم، أ، ص 436).

5. אין רע ואין חֶבֶר / לסַפֵּר עמי ולדַבֵּר (מלחמת העט והמספרים, א, עמ' 417).

'There is no companion and no friend / to talk to me and speak' (The Debate of the Pen and the Scissors, 1, p. 417).

6. כי היא פֶּתֶר למלכים / ועֶטֶר לנסיכים (מחברת העט והחרב, לה (מ), עמ' 406).

'He is a crown of kings and a diadem of princes' (The Maḥberet of the Pen and the Sword, 35 (4), p. 406).

4.2.1.2 Figures of speech

Among the textual ornaments which have received a respected place in literary writing we find the various types of figures of speech. They include similes, metaphors, personification, allusion, metonymy, etc. What they share is a semantic shift from one area to another based on similarity between analogous ideas.⁴⁵

4.2.1.2.1 Metaphor

For at least three decades, researchers and political theorists have been interested in how metaphors are used as persuasive devices.⁴⁶ The metaphor is the most recognized figure of speech. It is a linguistic device that is used to transfer meaning from one sphere to another⁴⁷. It is a semantic deviation from the original meaning of a word, any word, taken from any part of speech. For example, the word "gap" in the phrase "he has a gap in his education" means "a lack" metaphorically.

In contrast to their traditional linguist counterparts, cognitive linguists see metaphors not as rhetorical embellishment but as part of human

⁴³ Landau, 1989, p. 117.

⁴⁴ Livnat, 2001, p. 139.

⁴⁵ Weinberg, 2006, P.52.

⁴⁶ Mio, 1997, p. 114.

⁴⁷ Landau, 1966, pp. 307-308; Lakoff, 2002, p. 63.

thinking⁴⁸. Metaphorical expressions are seen as expressions that nourish our world view and form our thinking, and thus our actions themselves⁴⁹. These are metaphors that grasp concepts in one sphere via another sphere: a sphere that borrows, and is the goal, uses a different sphere that lends, and is the source. Thus, for example, the identification “Time is money” allows us to relate to time metaphorically in terms of money: e.g., ‘waste of time’, ‘investment of time’, ‘valuable time’:

7. החרב והעט כאשר היו שני אורות... (איגרת החרב והעט, א, עמ' 436).

‘The Sword and the Pen were two lights...’ (The Letter of the Sword and the Pen, 1, p. 436).

Original: وإن السيف والقلم لَمَّا كانا مصباحين... (رسالة السيف والقلم، أ، ص 436).

8. אם ימלאו עטני גשם דיו – על המגלה אריקנו (מלחמת העט והמספרים, א, עמ' 535).

‘If my pens were filled with ink like rain I would flood them on the parchment’ (The Debate of the Pen and the Scissors, 1, p. 535).

9. אנחנו כפירי קרבות (מחברת העט והחרב, לה (מ), עמ' 406).

‘We are young lions in battle’ (The Maḥberet of the Pen and the Sword, 35 (40), p. 406).

4.2.1.2.2 Personification

Personification is an artistic device which portrays inanimate objects, plants, or animals as human. In other words it ascribes human qualities to non-human things:

10. אמר העט: הקשבה פסיבית ולא פעילה גורמת לתשובה לא נכונה ובלתי הולמת (איגרת החרב והעט, א, עמ' 438).

‘Said the Pen: Passive not active listening leads to wrong and inappropriate answers’ (The Letter of the Sword and the Pen, 1, p. 438).

Original: فقال القلم: من ساء سمعاً ساء إجابةً (رسالة السيف والقلم، أ، ص 438).

11. והעט ירד אל ירְכְתִי קֶסְתוֹ וישכב על מיטתו (מלחמת העט והמספרים, א, עמ' 532).

‘And the Pen descended into the inky depths and lay on its bed’ (The Debate of the Pen and the Scissors, 1, p. 532).

12. וינְעֵדוּ החרב והעט שניהם / לערוך דין ביניהם (מחברת העט והחרב, לה (מ), עמ' 407).

‘And the Pen and the Sword jointly decided to hold a discussion’ (The Maḥberet of the Pen and the Sword, 35 (40), p. 407).

4.2.1.2.3 Simile

Similes are based on analogy. According to logicians, an analogy is basically a comparison portraying one or more similarities between one

⁴⁸ Abadi, 1988, pp. 47-56; Richards, 1965, p. 89-138; Abdul latif, 2012, pp. 117-118; Gitay, 2010, 74-75.

⁴⁹ Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, pp. 3-6; Carpenter & Thompson, 1999, p. 83.

or more things⁵⁰. Perelman noted that analogies help to explain the object of a comparison using the basis for comparison, where the basis for comparison has to be better known and more familiar to the reader than the object, because then it can explain the lesser familiar object. To do this, the two things must be from heterogeneous spheres so that they can mutually affect each other and further underscore their shared similarity⁵¹.

With similes, this reciprocity is used to illustrate a quality/appearance/action of the object of comparison by providing a vivid picture. Rhetorically speaking, the simile transfers an explicit or implied quality usually from the basis of comparison to the object of comparison. It is generally a subjective-emotional quality, which seeks to influence an audience's feelings⁵²:

13. כאילו כיסתה אותי כלנית, או שתיתי מי הברקת (איגרת החרב והעט, א, עמ' 439).

'It was like an anemone had covered me or I had drunk from emerald water' (The Letter of the Pen and the Sword, 1, p. 439).

Original: *كأنما اشتملت بالشقيق، أو شربت ماء العقيق (رسالة السيف والقلم، أ، ص، 439).*
14. וכשמיני לשונו מלוטש כתער ... (מחברת העט והחרב, לה (מ), עמ' 405).

'And when you hear his language, slick as a razor' (The Maḥberet of the Pen and the Sword, 35(40), p. 405).

15. זכר נא כי כחמר עשיתני לצרף הכתיבה / עד כי תשש כחי כנקבה (מלחמת העט והמספרים, א, עמ' 534).

'Please remember that you molded me like clay so you could write / Until my strength dried up like an underground water tunnel' (The Debate of the Pen and the Scissors, 1, p. 534).

4.2.1.2.4 Paranomasia

There are many examples of word juxtapositions and wordplay in these works and in no small way they help in creating the debate's light, amusing tone. These devices often appear in the maqamas and their specific purpose is to entertain:

16. שניהם רחמניים ורחמנותם לא מאחרת לבוא, ומחוברים עד כי לא ניתן להפריד ביניהם (איגרת החרב והעט, א, עמ' 436).

'They are both merciful and their mercy does not delay in coming. They are connected so closely that it is impossible to separate them' (The Letter of the Sword and the Pen, 1, p. 436).

Original: *وشفيعين لا يؤخر تشفيعهما, ومجمعين لا يفرق تجميعهما (رسالة السيف والقلم، أ، ص 436).*

17. ולנו הגדולה הגדולה (מחברת העט והחרב, לה (מ), עמ' 406).

⁵⁰ Weddle, 1978, p. 138; Tsur, 2004, p. 83.

⁵¹ Perelman, 1994, p. 91.

⁵² Landau, 1988, p. 89.

‘We felt this great greatness’ (The Maḥberet of the Pen and the Sword, 35(40), p. 406).

18. וְזָבְדְתִּי זָבֵד טוֹב זָבֹד (מלחמת העט והמספרים, ב, עמ' 533)

‘And the gift of a fine gift was gifted’ (The Debate of the Pen and the Scissors, 2, p. 533).

4.2.1.2.5 Pleonasm

Pleonasm is one of the chief devices used in maqamas, where infinitive constructs, synonyms, and sequential verbs with different forms and tenses often abound. Pleonasms emphasize and heighten irony through the exaggerated use of expressions of praise. Exaggerated praise heighten the listener's impression of the object of the praise:⁵³

19. גומל רעה תחת טובה, וגוף חולה, ומערב יחלוף, ודם מתגלה, ודמעות נוהרות (איגרת "העט והחרב", א, עמ' 439).

Original: وجه لئيم، وجسم سقيم، وغرب يفلّ ودم يطل، ودموع سجام (رسالة السيف والقلم، أ، ص 439).

‘Nefarious face and sickness, the end of the domination of the west will come and there will be blood and rivers of tears’ (The Letter of the Pen and the Sword, 1, p. 439).

20. והנה הוא חברנו הרב / ושמחתי בו כמוצא שלל רב... (מחברת העט והחרב, לה (מ), עמ' 405)

‘And our friend the Rav is there / and I felt delight in him just like someone who finds a great treasure’ (The Maḥberet of the Pen and the Sword, 35(40), p. 405).

21. אין רע ואין חבר / לספר עמי ולדבר (מלחמת העט והמספרים, ב, עמ' 531).

‘There is no companion and friend / to talk and speak with me’ (The Debate of the Pen and the Scissors, 2, p. 533).

4.2.2 Argumentative Rhetoric

Argumentative rhetoric applies logical argumentative devices and is known as persuasive rhetoric. Rhetoric of this sort generally targets audience reason. When presenting a reasoned argument, speakers seek to establish a basis for their views or defend an action.⁵⁴

4.2.2.1 Use of external sources

In order to convince their audiences, speakers may draw on the literary, religious, or folk sources associated with that audience's society or culture. These sources consist of poetry, sayings, proverbs, sacred writings, and myths.

According to Aristotle, these sources fall into two categories⁵⁵:

⁵³ Hazan, 2013, p. 98.

⁵⁴ Tsur, 2011, p. 74.

⁵⁵ Spiegel, 1993, p. 73.

A. Sources that are accepted and taken for granted, whose validity needs no proof. They include laws, contracts, and sacred writings. These sources are termed “arguments outside the art of speech”.

B. Intellectual or emotional sources, such as sayings, proverbs, and myths which are quoted in order to prove things that are not obvious.

Myths nourish argumentation. According to Sivan's definition, myths are a form of political allegory, handed down in writing through the generations⁵⁶. A myth is structured as a dramatic story with heroes and villains and usually depicts an historical event. The mythical historical event is presented as larger than life; its heroes having the aura of epic heroes, despite being ordinary mortals. Myths speak to the emotions, carry the masses along, and leaving rationality behind. Their stories are handed down to subsequent generations, and form the basis of an organized belief whose believers have no need for logical persuasion⁵⁷.

Sivan suggested that political myths have two functions⁵⁸:

A. Interpretive function - Myths allow people to turn to the past for precedents and archetypes that will help them understand and interpret contemporary ideals. This involves drawing inferences from past events to present day issues.

B. Behavioral function—Myths rouse people to political action. For example: to defend a political or social order warranted by the myth.

Cassirer wrote regarding the interpretive function, that myths arise at times of crisis when human logic fails and people turn to the power of the mysterious⁵⁹. Regarding the behavioral function, Cassirer argued that political myths drive political action.

These persuasion devices are divided into two groups according to Arabic linguistic rhetoric⁶⁰: 1. *ʿqtibās* - verses from the Qurʾān or Ḥadīḫ; 2. *ṭaḍmīn* - quotations from songs / poetry, prose, proverbs. According to Al-Ḥamwiy, the quotation which is used retains the same structure, order of words, and original meaning as the Qurʾān, though it might not retain the Qurʾānic form, say, by adding a word or letter; deleting a word or letter; or changing the word order of a sentence. The original meaning of the Qurʾānic quotation can also be altered to transmit a different teaching, the one the speaker wishes to transmit to his or her audience⁶¹. When a speaker uses quotations he or she relies on the reader's acquaintance with the cultural tradition underlying the quotation. If the reader is unfamiliar with the cultural tradition he will not understand it fully, and it will

⁵⁶ Sivan, 1988, p. 9.

⁵⁷ Sivan, 1988, pp. 9-11

⁵⁸ Sivan, 1988, p. 73, pp. 78-79.

⁵⁹ Cassirer, 1955, pp. 350-351.

⁶⁰ Darshan, 2000, p. 109.

⁶¹ Al-Ḥamwiy, 2001, pp. 442-443.

usually seem quite strange. As known, in Arab culture, the Qur'ān is regarded as the highest form of Arabic. Its style and language defy all efforts at imitation. Its absolute truth is made holy by seal of Allah; its verses are perceived as truths requiring no proof. It is easy to understand why speakers seek to harness these verses for their own ends and exploit their effect on the audience⁶².

Citing ancient sources returns the reader to the ancient historical situation. Readers now have to compare the text in the present with the original text they recall, thus enriching and deepening the present text. Thus, when people quote verses in their writing they are relying on the reader's familiarity with the cultural tradition which is cited. Readers who are unfamiliar with that tradition cannot grasp it fully.

According to Landau there are several reasons for quoting sources such as sacred writings⁶³:

A. To reinforce the speaker's message by offering proof and support from the sources that his opinion or actions are justified; to disprove the opponent's position, and to criticize the opponent for an action linked to the quotation.

B. For purely stylistic reasons, to beautify the text—the speaker has a tendency to use these quotations when speaking and either consciously or unconsciously and sprinkles his speech with them. They have no persuasive rhetorical value.

C. Manipulation - the speaker quotes a verse out of context and interprets it symbolically so that it fits in with new ideas on contemporary issues. For example, Darshan⁶⁴ cites Bengo's ideas regarding the manipulative use of quotations from outside sources. Bengo recalled that Sadaam Hussain quoted verses from the Al-Anfal Surra in order to justify his genocidal campaign against the Kurds, which involved the use of chemical weapons, and was known as the Al-Anfal campaign⁶⁵.

D. Architectonic use - establish ideas by citing verses. Each new idea in a speech is preceded by a new verse. Another structure involves the use of several verses to pre-sent a single idea.

4.2.2.1.1 Biblical, Talmudic, and Qurānic quotations and allusions

The main literary device in the Debate and Maqama consists of biblical, Talmudic, and Qurānic quotations. But while this is typical of all Hebrew poetry, in the debate and the maqama, quotations and allusions are used very frequently and have a different meaning from that of the original. Their main purpose is to surprise and entertain the reader. Ibn Burd's

⁶² Darshan, 2000, p. 110.

⁶³ Landau, 1988, pp. 182-185; Landau, 1993, pp. 50-51.

⁶⁴ Darshan, 2000, p. 110.

⁶⁵ Bengo, 1996. p. 246.

Debate of the Sword and the Pen contains Qurānic quotations and allusions:

22. אשבע בקולמוס ובכל אשר ירשמו⁶⁶ (איגרת החרב והעט, א, עמ' 436).
'I swear by the pen and all that they write' (The Letter of the Sword and the Pen, 1, p. 436).

Original: والقلم وما يسطرون (رسالة السيف والقلم, أ, ص 436).
23. קרא הן ריבונך הוא רב חסד, אשר לימד בקולמוס, לימד את האדם אשר לא ידע⁶⁷ (איגרת החרב והעט, א, עמ' 436-437).

'Cry out that your God is full of kindness because he taught through the pen—he taught ignorant human beings' (The Letter of the Sword and the Pen, 1, p. 436-437).

Original: إقرأ وربك الأكرم الذي علم بالقلم، علم الإنسان ما لم يعلم (رسالة السيف والقلم, أ, ص 436-437).

Ibn Ardu'ti'el's Debate of the Pen and the Sword is full of biblical connotations and quotations. For example, he refers to the story of Moses and quotes from the Book of Proverbs:

24. כצורר אבן במרגמה / כן הנותן לכסיל כבוד (משלי כו, ח).
'Giving honor to a fool is like tying a stone in a sling' (Proverbs 26, 8).

Alharizi also frequently uses quotations from the bible:

25. כי אני איש תם וישר / וכל תומכי מאושר (איוב א, ח; מש ג, יח).
'I am blameless and upright / Those who hold her fast will be blessed' (Job 1, 8; Proverbs 3, 18).

4.2.2.1.2 Use of proverbs and idioms

One of the central rhetorical features used by the Maqama authors, and which Ibn Burd uses at the height of the debate between the sword and the pen, is when the pen pours out a whole flood of idioms and proverbs in order to defeat the sword:

26. אם חשבת לרגע שיש לך עוצמת הרוח אתה תפגוש סופה (איגרת החרב והעט, א, עמ' 439).

'If you thought for one moment that you have the strength of the wind – you will face a storm' (The Letter of the Sword and the Pen, 1, p. 439).

Original: إن كنت ريحا فقد لاقيت إعصارا (رسالة السيف والقلم, أ, ص 439).
27. אל תחשוב שכל צבע לבן הוא שומן, ולא כל בעל צבע שחור הוא תמר, וגחליך הבוהרים הם צוננים (איגרת החרב והעט, א, עמ' 439).

'Do not think that everything white is fat or that everything black is a date or that your hot embers are cold' (The Letter of the Pen and the Sword, 1, p. 439).

Original: ما كل بيضاء شحمة, ولا كل سوداء تمر (رسالة السيف والقلم, أ, ص 439).
Ibn Ardu'ti'el often used idioms in the Debate of the Pen and the Scissors:
28. במקום שאין אנשים תשתדל להיות איש (מלחמת העט והמספרים, א, עמ' 532).

⁶⁶ Rubin, 2005, Sora 68, p. 481.

⁶⁷ Rubin, 2005, Sora 96, p. 527.

‘In a place where there are no human beings try to be a human being ...’
(The Debate of the Pen and the Scissors, 1, p. 532).

29. מענה רך משיב חמה (מלחמת העט והמספרים, א, עמ' 534).

‘A soft answer turns back anger’ (The Debate of the Pen and the Scissors, 1, p. 534).

And Alharizi in the *Mahkberet* of the Pen and the Sword:

30. איך יתגאה קנה רצוף \ כסרפד ונעצוף? (מחברת העט והחרב, לה, עמ' 407).

‘How can the broken reed (weak thing / person) be as proud as a nettle or a thorn (strong person / thing)?’ (The *Mahkberet* of the Pen and the Sword, 1, p. 436).

4.2.2.2 Rhetorical questions

Among other things, a speaker's arguments in political ideological discourse are based on patterns of indirect speech and rhetorical questions, which are part of a textual tapestry and an intentionally woven argumentative fabric. The rhetorical question is one of the most important aspects of argumentative rhetoric. It is an indirect speech act that seeks to express a emphatic assertion, with no expectation of a reply in most cases.⁶⁸

Landau discussed rhetorical questions at length highlighting three central types of rhetorical question⁶⁹: “Yes-No” questions that open with the question “Have / Has?” etc., for example: the questions “Could it be that...?”, “Is it true that...?”. Positive rhetorical questions like this express strong negative assertions while negative rhetorical questions express strong positive assertions⁷⁰, for example: “Could it be that they actually have the right to speak for this country's residents?”. Rhetorical questions that start with a completion question word, such as “What?” “How?”, “Why?” etc., apart from the question word “Have / Has?”, for example: “Which country besides Israel has compromised so much?” And choice questions that are basically assertions which reject the first option and strongly approve the second option, For example: “Could it be that you are genuinely worried about citizens' welfare, homes, and children, or do you just want their money *perhaps* in order to control and go on controlling and eat your fill at our expense?”

Landau suggested that of the three types of rhetorical questions, rhetorical choice questions provide the most emphasis. She discussed at length the impact of including these questions in the text—rhetorical questions at the end of a sequence of declarative sentences, a series of rhetorical questions on one subject, putting a rhetorical question in a complex sentence, and splitting rhetorical questions.⁷¹

⁶⁸ Shaked, 2009, p. 139; Tsur, 2004, p. 83.

⁶⁹ Landau, 1988, pp. 68-72.

⁷⁰ Quirk & Greenbaum, 1989, p. 200.

⁷¹ Landau, 1988, p. 209.

Livnat⁷² discussed Fruchtman's basic distinction between emotive and presentational texts⁷³. According to this distinction, persuasive texts are also emotional and their emotional character helps to convey their concealed message of persuasion. The writer uses the implicit information to convey his or her attitude toward the events and to try to influence the reader's views. Livnat identified several linguistic stratagems that expose the implicit information encoded in the text and divided them into four categories: syntactic stratagems, poetic stratagems, semantic stratagems, and stratagems linked to logical structures. According to Livnat, a rhetorical question is a linguistic stratagem that is linked to logical structures and aimed at increasing the text's emotiveness and directing the emotions produced in the reader in the particular direction the writer wishes:

31. היש ערך לפנינה כל עוד היא נמצאת בתוך הצדפה? (איגרת החרב והעט, א, עמ' 438).

'Can a pearl have value if it is still inside the oyster?' (The Letter of the Sword and the Pen, 1, p. 438).

Original: وهل يصلح الدر حتى يطرح صدفه؟ (رسالة السيف والقلم، أ، ص 438).
32. כי הקרח הולך וחזק מאד, לפני קרתו מי יעמד? (מלחמת העט והמספרים, א, עמ' 531).

'Because ice becomes stronger all the time and who can withstand its coldness?' (The Debate of the Pen and the Scissors, 1, p. 531).

33. למה תשליכהו והאל בחר בו? (מחברת העט והחרב, לה (מ), עמ' 405).

'Why do you reject him when God has chosen him?' (The Maḥkberet of the Pen and the Sword, 35 (40), p. 405).

4.2.2.3 Irony

In the writings in question, irony is a stylistic device which mostly involves words of praise that sound straightforward but indicate the opposite is meant. Irony can be based on deliberate exaggeration which produces the opposite meaning. Other times it stems from a gap between what is said and actual reality:

34. אתה מנסה למתוח את קומתך אך הזרוע קצרה ... (איגרת החרב והעט, א, עמ' 438).

'You try to make yourself taller but the arm is short...' (Maḥberet of the Pen and the Sword, 1, p. 438).

Original: لقد تحاول امتدادا بباع قصيرة... (رسالة السيف والقلم، أ، ص 438).
35. כי בצאתך מתערך כל רואיך יפחדו ממך... (מחברת העט והחרב, לה (מ), עמ' 408).

'When you withdraw from your sheath you will be feared by all who see you' (The Maḥberet of the Pen and the Sword, 35(40), p. 408).

36. ובצמר גפן נשכה שנג \ ונס לחד (מלחמת העט והמספרים, ב, עמ' 533).

⁷² Livnat, 2001, p. 134.

⁷³ Fruchtman, 1990, pp. 17-19.

‘With your teeth you have bitten cotton wool / And your strength disappeared’ (The Debate of the Pen and the Scissors, 2, p. 533).

5. SUMMARY

The paper shows that there is an overlap and intermingling of the letter and maḥberet genres and that they both copy the Arabic maqama format of the Arab Andalusian poets. The maḥbarot of Judah al-Harizi and Shem Tov Arduziel copy the format of the Arabic maqama. The study demonstrates unequivocally that the theme, structure, and subject of the two Hebrew maḥbarot were influenced by ibn Burd's letter written 200 years before. The three works are examples of the dispute literature which was a popular form among medieval writers of the Arabic maqama. The pen and the sword stand at the center of Ibn Burd's letter, al-Harizi's maḥberet, and the third maḥberet of Arduziel, which contains a debate between the pen and the scissors in which the scissors is depicted as an instrument which seeks to take the place of the pen. In all three works the pen comes out on top, although ibn Burd's letter manages to achieve a sort of balance between the status of the pen and the sword through a compromise whereby on each plays an important role in human life.

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