RESEARCH ARTICLE

The Critical Evidence in Hazem al-Qartajanni Between Craft and Emotion: A Critical Reading

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Abstract:

This research aims to highlight the distinctive nature of the "critical evidence" (al-shāhid al-naqdī) in the theory of Hazem al-Qartajanni, one of the prominent figures of Maghrebi-Andalusian literary criticism, and to shed light on his contribution to establishing a uniquely North African conception of poetic craftsmanship. The study is grounded in a central problem: the extent to which Hazem's conception of al-shāhid evolved within the intellectual traditions of the Islamic West. It analyzes his distinction between the craft-based evidence (al-shāhid al-ṣināʿī), used as a tool for systematizing poetic composition, and the emotive evidence (al-shāhid al-infiʿālī), which serves as a measure of the imaginative impact upon the recipient.

The findings reveal that Hazem's vision establishes an organic integration between craftsmanship and aesthetic effect, granting classical Maghrebi criticism its distinctive character and distancing it from the limitations of the Eastern perspective, which largely confines the concept of evidence to citation and documentation. Thus, al-shāhid emerges as a methodological cornerstone that unites rhetorical systematization with aesthetic engagement in the Maghrebi critical tradition.

Keywords: critical evidence, classical Maghrebi criticism, poetic craftsmanship, poetic imagination, emotion.

1. Introduction:

The issue of critical evidence (al-shāhid al-naqdī) is among the most central topics in classical Arabic rhetoric and literary criticism, as it serves as a starting point for verifying the soundness of poetic craftsmanship and distinguishing the degrees of beauty and effect in literary expression. For both Eastern and Western Arab critics, textual evidence constituted the primary means of affirming the validity of rhetorical rules and poetic construction. However, its use varied according to intellectual and methodological contexts, leading to significant transformations in both understanding and practice.

The concept of al-shāhid underwent fundamental shifts between the Mashriq (East) and the Islamic West. While Eastern criticism was dominated by a memorization-based and rule-oriented approach, Maghrebi criticism charted a different path, characterized by openness to rhetorical, logical, and

philosophical orientations. In this context, the function of textual evidence evolved from a mere tool of citation and argumentation into an epistemological component that reflects the interplay between poetic craftsmanship and psychological affect. Hazem al-Qartajanni expressed this transformation in his statement: "What is essential to the true nature of poetry is none other than imagination and imitation, in whatever meaning they may occur"[1]. "And he added, establishing a functional conception of textual evidence: 'The most exemplary evidences are those through which the utterance attains a fine position within the soul, reaching a level that stirs admiration and emotional response"[2], "…Thus, Hazem al-Qartajanni, through this critical approach, represented a decisive turning point in the cultural history of the Maghreb. He linked critical evidence to creative artistic craftsmanship and to the affective dimension. He did not suffice with employing it as an external proof; rather, he regarded it as an internal structural element that regulates aesthetic formulation and evaluates the literary work within the horizon of poetic composition.

In this context, Hazem distinguishes between two types of evidence:

the craft-based evidence, which establishes the rules of rhetoric and poetry, and the emotive evidence, which measures the effect of images and imaginings upon the soul. This means that evidence, in the Maghrebi conception, came to carry a dual function that combines artistic law with emotional impact. This is clearly reflected in several passages of al-Minhāj, such as his statement:

'Perfect imitation must encompass all the descriptions of the thing, and in wisdom it must encompass all the foundations of wisdom…"[3], "And he adds: 'Poetry is not evaluated on the basis of its truthfulness or its falsehood, but rather by the degree of imagination and imitation it contains.'[4]

This marks one of the most significant aspects of his innovation, for he led Arabic criticism out of the monotony that had overshadowed it for centuries restricting it to the narrow concern with truth and falsehood and into a broader rhetorical horizon concerned with imaginative and affective content. This new vision focuses on the impact of poetry upon the recipient through the mechanism of imitation."[5]

The importance of this topic is also linked to the scarcity of methodological studies that highlight the position of al-shāhid in classical Maghrebi criticism especially in the work of Hazem, who engaged with Eastern traditions in order to establish a Maghrebi aesthetic of criticism in which theory and practice converge. This interaction is reflected in later Maghrebi critical thought, where al-shāhid became a foundational element for constructing an advanced critical system.

Based on all this, the central problem of this research revolves around the following key question: To what extent does Hazem al-Qartajanni's conception of al-shāhid reflect the development of Maghrebi criticism in its interplay between poetic craftsmanship and affective impact? It is assumed that the evolution of the function of al-shāhid led to the surpassing of its traditional dimension, by activating its performative and affective meaning within the criteria of evaluating poetic expression.

The study focuses on achieving several objectives, including: analyzing the methodological transformations of al-shāhid between the Mashriq and the Maghreb; highlighting the function of uniting creativity with artistic law in Hazem al-Qartajanni's conception; and examining practical evidences within the Maghrebi critical corpus. The study relies on the conceptual analytical method, employing original texts and making use of historical comparisons to reinforce the results and offer a new reading of al-shāhid al-naqdī as a foundational phenomenon in Maghrebi rhetoric.

To achieve these objectives, the research adopts the descriptive-analytical method, benefiting from the tools and procedures of rhetoric and logic. It also employs the comparative method to trace differences between the Maghrebi and Eastern models in literary criticism, using textual and applied evidences that confirm the centrality of al-shāhid in constructing Hazem al-Qartajanni's critical theory.

2. The Concept of al-Shāhid: Its Linguistic and Terminological Definition, and Its Critical Importance

2.1. The Concept of al-Shāhid Linguistically and Terminologically:

Linguistically:

The word "shahida" in Arabic represents a root ric in meanings branching into the concepts of presence, knowledge, and testimony. Al-Khalil ibn Ahmad al-Farahidi (d. 175 AH) stated this meaning in his definition: "So-and-so testified to something, offering his testimony; he is a witness (shāhid) and a testifier (shahīd)"[6], Indicating thereby the informative and evidential function of the linguistic root in its original usage. The word al-shāhid is used to denote presence and indication. Ibn Faris affirms that the root sh-h-d fundamentally refers to the presence of a thing, informing about it, and knowing it, saying: "The letters shīn, hā', and dāl form a root that signifies presence, knowledge, and informing"[7], Its richness also appears in the poetic heritage, as al-A'sha said:

"So do not think me ungrateful for your favor,

For my witness O witness of God is my tongue, so bear witness."

This is explained by noting that "his witness" here refers to the tongue, while "the witness of God, exalted be His praise," refers to the angel.[8]

Lexicons mention multiple expressions derived from the root sh-h-d, yet they all converge upon the previously noted meanings of presence, knowledge, and indication. Among these is al-Shahīd, one of the Most Beautiful Names of God, denoting trust and testimony; al-shāhid, meaning the one who knows and makes his knowledge manifest; ashhād and shuhūd as plurals; istashhadahu, meaning he asked him to bear witness; al-shahāda, meaning decisive testimony; and al-tashahhud, the recitation of al-taḥiyyāt li-llāh. Also included is a person's testimony before a judge, signifying disclosure and clarification. This meaning appears in the Qur'anic verse: "bearing witness against themselves to disbelief" (Surat al-Tawbah, 17).

Terminologically:

From a technical perspective, the term al-shāhid was not common in grammatical, literary, or critical usage during the first Hijri century. Early usage was restricted to the word al-mathal (example), due to the novelty of the concept of al-shāhid during that historical period.[9] It is narrated that al-Hajjaj asked Samura ibn al-Ja'd al-Shaybani, who used to recite poetry. He said: "I indeed recite the proverb and the witness."

Al-Hajjaj replied: "We know the proverb, but what is the witness?"

He answered: "Today, the Arabs have in their annals a poetic testimony to it, and I recite that witness."[10] He explained to him that the witness is poetry that serves as evidence or proof for events or the historical days of the Arabs that is, poetry used as testimony for occurrences or for linguistic rulings.

With the development of linguistic and rhetorical sciences, the term "al-shāhid" began to acquire a specific technical meaning among early scholars. Al-Farrā' (d. 207 AH), for example, cites it as a text used for argumentation, saying: "God Almighty said: 'suhufan munsharah'this is evidence (shāhid) for those who pronounce it with tashdīd, and munshūr is an Arabic form."[11] Thus affirming the function of the shāhid as linguistic evidence relied upon to establish the correctness of a rule or opinion.

Based on the accumulated historical reports and scholarly statements, a precise technical definition of the shāhid may be derived:

It is an Arabic utterance produced by a speaker whose linguistic authenticity is trusted, and it is cited as proof and evidence in support of a linguistic or critical opinion or rule.[12]

The importance of citation in Arabic scholarship becomes evident as it serves as the primary factor in achieving persuasion and removing doubt from the mind of the recipient. When the author senses the possibility of ambiguity or uncertainty in his expression, resorting to citation becomes an effective means of reinforcing credibility and dispelling confusion for the audience. Scholars have agreed that a firmly established rule is one supported by a wealth of evidences and the soundness of their transmission, for "the shāhid is the backbone of the Arabic sciences in the stage of theorizing, and the substance in the stage of codification. The shāhid is a cultural and civilizational heritage of the nation that cannot be ignored, let alone neglected, because it is tied to the culture of the ummah."[13] It is narrated about ʿUmar ibn al-Khattab that he would not decide any matter without citing a piece of poetry as evidence, using it to settle the issue and argue by it an account transmitted by al-Jahiz.

Nevertheless, evidences and citations are not required for every rule or judgment; there are issues in which the foundational principle or general self-evidence suffices such as the subject (fāʿil) being a nominative noun, or the nominal nature of the mubtada' in grammar because scholars regard these as consistent and universally accepted matters that do not call for proof: "Whoever adheres to the fundamental principle is absolved of the obligation to provide evidence."[14] However, with the development of grammatical thought, primary judgments were no longer taken as absolutely unquestionable. Citation became a necessary tool for establishing the validity of any grammatical tendency or new opinion, and no view could be reinforced except through the abundance of evidences supporting it, foremost among them the shāhid and the practice of citation.

In the field of grammar, the role of the shāhid is manifested in both application and scholarly inquiry. In terms of application, the shāhid constitutes the foundation of grammatical methodology, to the extent that it was said: "In the science of grammar, the shāhid is grammar itself"[15.] "And the method of handling the shāhid and extracting it from the language of the Arabs is the grammarian's methodology"[16]. Among the signs of this is that grammarians, beginning with Sibawayh (d. 180 AH), made extensive use of Qur'anic, poetic, and proverbial evidences in their works, as did al-Mubarrad (d. 286 AH), Ibn al-Sarrāj (d. 316 AH), and others. The grammarian often employs several evidences for a single issue in order to broaden the sources from which a rule may be derived and to ensure its correctness.

The highest value of the shāhid appears in considering its rank during citation: the Qur'anic shāhid is given precedence, its obscure meanings explained, its incomplete parts supplemented, and its attribution corrected, for the Noble Qur'an is regarded as the most eloquent and most reliable text in the Arabic language, unanimously accepted by scholars.

As for the research dimension, later studies devoted great attention to the explanation and authentication of evidences. Dr. Muhammad Eid noted in his works the significant efforts made in collecting and explaining shawāhid even in later periods[17].and interest in grammatical studies expanded to the extensive use of evidence from the Qur'an, the Hadith, and Arabic poetry, as well as to comparing the methods of different grammatical schools in the practice of citation.

The shāhid represents a central axis in debate and argumentation among theologians and defenders of the Arabic language. For al-Jāḥiẓ (d. 255 AH), for example, we find him affirming that presenting the shahid directly and visibly to the proponents of Shuʿūbiyya[18]…is decisive proof of the authenticity of the language and its eloquence, as he says: "Whenever you take the hand of the Shuʿūbī, lead him into the lands of the pure Arabs the very source of perfect eloquence and place him before a masterful poet or a powerful orator, he will know that what you have said is the truth, and he will witness the evidence with his own eyes"[19]. Likewise, Ibn Rashīq al-Qayrawānī (d. 456 AH) noted: ''And whenever I multiply the evidences, it is only to reassure the learner and embolden him toward the refined and elegant matters"[20].

Based on the above, citation goes beyond being merely linguistic evidence; it becomes an essential agent in persuasion, knowledge-building, and cultural documentation, permeating the methodological structure of grammar, rhetoric, and literary criticism.

3. The Theoretical Foundation of Critical Evidence (al-shāhid al-naqdī) in Hazem al-Qartajanni's Project

3.1. Motivations Behind Writing Minhāj al-Bulaghā' wa Sirāj al-Udabā'

Among the most prominent motivations mentioned by Hazem al-Qartajanni for composing his book is that poetry in his era had lost the critical status it once held among the early generations. The modern poets (muḥdathūn) had deviated from the method (manhaj) of the masters in evaluation and selection, and many later critics began approving poetry without relying on sound critical standards.

Unlike the ancients who elevated the value of poetry, granted it a lofty rank, and judged it with rigor criticism in Hazem's time was dominated by leniency and superficiality. As a result, the standing of poets weakened, and their critical influence diminished.

For this reason, Hazem believed that what he called "poeticity in poetry" rests "upon the coherence of speech and the integrity of its structure, not on the mere arrangement of words or their ornamentation, which in his view expresses neither a defined rule nor a unifying artistic purpose"[21].

Building on this understanding, Hazem regarded the deteriorating state to which both poetry and criticism had fallen as the primary motive and driving force toward reform and restoration. Despite recognizing the difficulty of the task, he did not weaken or falter; rather, he carried a firm resolve for reform with dignity and determination. From this standpoint, he established a strict critical method in composing his book, seeking to outline a "pathway for eloquent speakers" and to light a "lamp for men of letters," thereby combining precision of insight with the formulation of aesthetic and critical standards.

Hazem built his theory on a foundation that combined the heritage of classical Arabic criticism with the essence of Aristotle's Poetics, establishing a new approach that makes the ultimate purpose of poetry correspond to Aristotle's judgment regarding it. However, he went beyond restricting himself to Greek poetry, as Ibn Sīnā had done when he expanded the concept of poetry to include Arabic poetry as well. Hazem alludes to this when he cites Ibn Sīnā's statement: "And it is not far-fetched

that we, too, strive to devise in the science of absolute poetry and in the science of poetry according to the custom of this age speech that is highly refined and detailed."[22]

Thus, one of the most important objectives of Hazem's book was the reform of poetry, the reorientation of criticism, and the restoration of poetry's critical stature.

The methodological depth in Hazem al-Qartajanni's use of critical evidence (al-shāhid al-naqdī) becomes evident through his understanding of the nature of rhetorical craftsmanship and the limits of critical composition. Al-Qartajanni does not view the shāhid as merely an ornamental element or an illustrative example; rather, he grants it a foundational function upon which the reader constructs processes of branching and inference, making the shāhid a dynamic pivot in understanding and criticism. Hazem affirms this orientation when he says: "Whoever possesses a mind capable of elaborating what I have summarized in this chapter, and of branching out what I have established, will benefit greatly from this section in this craft, for we were not able to branch out and detail and exemplify all of that, as it would require great length…"[23]

This conception reveals that the critical evidence for Hazem is not a closed conclusion at which all ideas end; instead, it is a methodological key that opens for the reader the path of independent reasoning and critical engagement. Thus, the shāhid shifts from being a final proof to becoming part of an ongoing process of renewed understanding. Al-Qartajanni also integrates the shāhid within the structure and architecture of his book, defining its function in a manner that serves persuasion without slipping into digression or excessive elaboration. He clarifies this by saying: "We only strive to maintain balance between the chapters, or to approximate balance in what we mention, so that each chapter contains a convincing share of what it must include."[24] To demonstrate that the value of the shāhid is not quantitative but functional completing the idea and structuring the epistemic framework of each chapter in order to achieve the highest degrees of persuasion and clarity.

The importance of critical evidence increases further when it is linked to the cultural context Hazem describes, for he sees that rhetorical craftsmanship in his time had fallen into stagnation and decline: "And the benefit of this craft given what time has cast upon it of the garments of humiliation… is scant and meager… therefore, it is fitting that the attention devoted to this craft is not great, or that attention is turned away from it altogether."[25]In this context, the shāhid becomes a means of reviving rhetoric and a cognitive pillar that restores to the craft its procedural and foundational value, adding a reformative dimension aimed at safeguarding critical proof and preserving the vitality of literary craftsmanship.

From here, Hazem's method in employing critical evidence is founded on the principles of conciseness, conscious selection, functional persuasion, and allowing the reader to complete the critical construction. Thus, the shāhid becomes not merely a quoted text, but an active and central building block in his rhetorical project, playing a fundamental role in shaping the concept and reinforcing its scholarly structure.

His method in employing the shāhid appears through his deep awareness of the nature of rhetorical craftsmanship and the limits of critical composition. For him, the shāhid is not an ornamental element or a mere illustrative example; it is a foundational unit upon which the reader builds processes of branching and inference. He affirms this in his statement: "Whoever possesses a mind capable of elaborating what I have summarized in this chapter and branching out what I have established will benefit greatly from this section in this craft, for we were not able to branch out and detail and exemplify all of that, as it would require great length"[26], It is clear from this that the shāhid for Hazem

is not presented as a final conclusion, but as a methodological key that enables the reader to engage in critical reasoning and broaden meaning.

Hazem also treats the shāhid according to the principle of balance and economy in presentation, saying: "We only strive to maintain balance between the chapters, or approximate balance in what we mention, so that each chapter contains a convincing share of what it must include"[27]. This confirms that, for him, the shāhid has a demonstrative rather than a quantitative function, invoked according to the demands of the idea and the need for evidence, contributing to persuasion without redundancy or excessive elaboration.

In his diagnosis of the state of rhetorical craftsmanship in his time, Hazem points to the stagnation and decline that had afflicted it, saying: "And the benefit of this craft given what time has cast upon it of the garments of humiliation… is scant and meager… therefore, it is fitting that the attention devoted to this craft is not great, or that attention is turned away from it altogether."[28] From this it becomes clear that the shāhid for him became a tool for reviving the concepts of rhetoric and restoring efficacy to its procedural foundations; it is a means for refining rules and recovering the strength of rhetorical argument in a historical context that threatened the extinction of this craft.

Building on the concept of "disposition" (al-istiʿdād), Hazem presents a precise view of poetry's impact on the recipient, distinguishing between two types of dispositions:

1. Emotional or inner disposition:

This is the readiness of the soul to be stirred and affected by speech according to how strongly it corresponds to one's desire or state, as expressed in al-Mutanabbī's verse:"A saying benefits a man only

when it accords with a desire in his heart."

Here, the shāhid is not mere documentation, but a testing tool that measures the poem's ability to produce emotional effect confirming that emotional responsiveness is a fundamental critical criterion in Hazem's view.

4. Social or cultural disposition:

This refers to the community's belief in the value and authority of poetry such as among the Arabs, who regarded poetry as a judgment to which noble souls readily responded because of the tremor and influence it produced. Hazem cites Ibn Sīnā in this context:"They used to place the poet in the rank of a prophet, submitting to his judgment and believing in his soothsaying"[29]. Thus, the shāhid here is a historical and cultural proof that reveals the depth of belief in poetry and its effectiveness within the collective consciousness.

Hazem maintains that the Arabs excelled in perfecting the craftsmanship of speech and its impact, due to their constant need for refinement in expression and the diversification of rhetorical styles, for they were "the nation most inclined to frequent disputes over matters that sustain their livelihood"[30], and therefore they adopted well-crafted speech as a means of counsel and encouragement toward beneficial actions.

Hazem concludes that restricting poetry to meter alone is a methodological error, because it neglects the essence of poeticity. He says: "…for what he considers is merely producing speech in meter and driving it toward a rhyme, and by doing so he does nothing more than expose its flaws"[31].

This statement indicates that poetry for Hazem is not merely a sonic structure, but an integrated semantic and affective system.

Accordingly, it may be said that Hazem al-Qartajanni, through his method of employing critical evidence, constructed a comprehensive conception that makes citation an instrument of inquiry and analysis, not a tool of embellishment or digression. The shāhid for him performs a dual function: an epistemic one that regulates concepts, and an affective one that revives rhetoric and restores its vitality within the critical and cultural consciousness.

4.1. Aristotelian Foundations and the Philosophical System:

The theory of critical evidence in Hazem al-Qartajanni's work underwent a qualitative development as a result of his engagement with the Aristotelian philosophical heritage, which entered Arab-Islamic culture through the commentaries of al-Fārābī, Ibn Sīnā, and Ibn Rushd. Dr. Muhammad al-Habīb Ibn al-Khūjah pointed to the influence of these foundations, saying:

"We can today put an end to earlier doubts and ambiguities by examining the book Minhāj al-Bulaghā' wa Sirāj al-Udabā', which holds great importance and depicts with utmost clarity the Greek influences on the art of criticism among the Arab"[32].

Hazem began from the philosophical conceptions concerning the nature and function of poetry, as presented in Aristotle's Poetics, which Muslim philosophers had translated into Arabic. From these conceptions he derived new laws for poetic craftsmanship that go beyond the traditional limits which had reduced poetry to meter and rhyme. Hazem rejected this simplified view of the poetic structure, denouncing the restriction of poetry to the regular arrangement of words within metrical patterns. He said:"And this one imagined that poeticity is merely the composition of whatever words happen to come together, in whatever way they happen to be composed… for what he considers is simply producing speech in meter and driving it toward a rhyme, and by doing so he does nothing more than expose its flaws"[33].This passage clearly expresses his Aristotelian-influenced position, affirming that the essence of poetry does not rest upon meter alone, but upon imagination (takhyīl) and imitation (muḥākāt), as the primary sources of beauty and effect. With this awareness, Hazem elevated the concept of poetry to a complex philosophical level that unites artistic craftsmanship with aesthetic impact, attempting to establish a new critical vision.

Jaber Asfour explained this theoretical dimension in Hazem's thought,saying: "Hazem benefited fully from the philosophers, and he was able to surpass his peers and predecessors, reaching what they did not reach… Indeed, he is distinguished by an important feature his attempt to establish a balance among the four elements without which no theory of poetry can be complete: the external world, the creator, the text, and the recipient"[34]. In light of this view, it becomes clear that Hazem's critical system was not confined to analyzing the text alone; rather, it extended to include the creator's relationship with his world and the effect of the artistic work on the recipient. This is what enabled him to establish an integrated structural conception of poetry and its criticism.

The aesthetic philosophy of imitation and emotional response in Hazem's critical thought becomes evident through his engagement with what Ibn Sīnā established in al-Shifā'. Ibn Sīnā explained that souls take pleasure in imitation and imaginative representation, even when the depicted images concern unpleasant things so long as they achieve the highest degree of perfection. In such cases, they become pleasurable, "not because they are beautiful in themselves, but because they are beautiful in their imitation of what is imitated, when compared to it"[35]. Ibn Sīnā attributes this effect to the fact that a person is connected to prior experiences that produce an emotional response when encountering

what imitates those experiences or renders them imaginatively. He further explains that "souls are stimulated and find delight in imitation… for what brings joy is not the image itself nor the engraved form, but the fact that it is an imitation of something else provided the imitation is perfected"[36], The second reason, he adds, is people's natural love for harmonious composition or melodious patterns, and since metrical structures were found to correspond to such melodies, souls inclined toward them and produced them. From these two causes, poeticity is generated.[37]

From this philosophical foundation, it becomes clear that Hazim al-Qartajanni employed the concepts of imitation and emotional affect to explain the centrality of the critical exemplar within the structure of poetic composition. For him, the criterion for accepting a poetic verse is tied to the unity of well-crafted artistry and the power of affective imitation, which together generate aesthetic pleasure and a psychological response achieved through the combination of technical mastery and imaginative capacity[38]. And thus, for him, the exemplar became an aesthetic testing tool that transcends traditional transmission toward a living act within sentiment and the psyche.

Hazim's view intersects with Aristotelian philosophy, which regarded imitation as the essence of literary work and an innate human instinct. Aristotle says: "People take pleasure in imitation… and their delight in seeing images and probing their meanings comes either from their knowledge of them or even from the craftsmanship with which they are made"[39.] Hazim affirms this meaning when he states: "From early youth, the soul's passion for imagination grew intense, and it became strongly affected by it, to the point that it sometimes abandoned belief for imagination obeying its imagination and suspending its belief; for it responds to imitation with an unreflective emotional reaction"[40].

It becomes evident from this intersection that Hazim did not merely draw on Aristotelian philosophy in a derivative manner; rather, he re-created it within a Maghrebi intellectual framework that combines demonstrative reason with aesthetic experience. Through this synthesis, he established a philosophical explanation for the function of the critical exemplar, turning it into a central tool for measuring beauty and impact in poetry uniting rational proof with imaginative logic. In doing so, Hazim al-Qartajanni laid the foundations for an original critical balance linking the four elements of the creative process: the poet, the text, the recipient, and the world, thereby shaping a distinctly Maghrebi criticism marked by philosophical and artistic depth.

5. The Exemplar Between Craft and Emotion:

Its Practical Use in Minhaj al-Bulagha

The concept of the exemplar in Hazim al-Qartajanni's thought constitutes a fundamental axis in the construction of his critical theory. It moves from being a mere tool of citation to a testing criterion that unites two complementary components: craft (ṣināʿa) and emotional impact. Hazim does not simply use exemplars to confirm rhetorical rules or illustrate artistic statements; he treats them as a means to judge the extent to which artistic beauty and psychological effect are realized in the recipient.

In Minhaj al-Bulagha, Hazim relies on a distinctive type of exemplar that differs from the familiar traditional citations. He does not limit himself to quoting Arabs or renowned poets; rather, he often resorts to inventing poetic or quasi-poetic models created by himself to demonstrate how a rhetorical rule operates or to reveal the mechanism of generating the poetic image. Based on this usage, this study proposes a modern procedural term the crafted exemplar to denote the constructed texts that Hazim produces in order to clarify a technical principle in poetic expression.

This type of exemplar does not appear in the context of linguistic proof; instead, it is presented as an illustrative model showing how the craft operates: the craft of meter, the composition of imagery, the arrangement of meanings, or the construction of imaginative representation. The importance of this kind of exemplar lies in its revelation of a clear systematizing tendency in Maghrebi criticism, wherein the exemplar shifts from being documentary material to becoming a tool for analysis, production, and rule-formulation. This function shows that Hazim does not view the exemplar as merely evidence of the eloquence of early poets, but as a methodological marker used to test the validity of a rule and the effectiveness of its application.

Thus, the crafted exemplar contributes to highlighting the systematic nature of Hazim's theory, wherein craft and imagination coexist: craft regulates the form, while imagination grants the discourse its affective power. From here emerges the uniqueness of Maghrebi criticism, which does not stop at reception but moves toward construction and operationalization.

Through this vision, Hazim turns the critical exemplar into an evaluative tool by which the value of a text is measured in terms of craftsmanship and precision of composition, as well as its emotional effect on the recipient. For this reason, he asserts that the excellence of poetry does not depend solely on meter or rhyme, but is achieved insofar as the text produces wonder and psychological impact, stating: "The finest poetry is that whose imitation and structure are excellent, whose fame or veracity is strong, or whose falsehood is subtle, and whose strangeness stands forth"[41].

This perspective rests on the view that the poet does not merely excel in craft; he also evokes aesthetic pleasure and emotional resonance born of imitation and representation. Hence Hazim's decisive stance in rejecting the confinement of poetry to mere meter, affirming: "…according to him, what is considered is carrying speech upon meter and driving it toward a rhyme; and by doing so, he accomplishes nothing more than revealing its flaws"[42].

This conception is consistent with Aristotle's philosophy in Poetics, which holds that imitation is the essence of creativity and an innate human instinct that arouses pleasure and learning: "People take pleasure in imitation… and their delight in seeing images and probing their meanings comes either from their knowledge of them or even from the craftsmanship with which they are made"[43]. Hazim affirms the same dimension when he says: "From early youth, the soul's passion for imagination grew intense, and it became strongly affected by it, to the point that it sometimes abandoned belief for imagination obeying its imagination and suspending its belief; for it responds to imitation with an unreflective emotional reaction"[44].

Building on this dual awareness, the exemplar in Hazim's thought becomes a living critical experience that connects the beauty of artistic craftsmanship with the effectiveness of aesthetic emotion, turning criticism into an applied practice in which the power of major texts such as the poetry of al-Mutanabbī is tested for their ability to stir the emotions and intensify artistic impact.

Hazim also gives particular attention to analyzing poetic meters from the perspective of their psychological and rhythmic effect, drawing on the musical principles presented by the philosophers. In his study of these meters, Hazim relies on philosophical sources, inspired by the musical foundations that allowed him to go beyond the traditional metrics scholars. Through his precise study of sound properties, the arrangement of long and short syllables, and the comparison between them according to poetic purposes, it becomes clear that the semantic value of meter derives from its rhythmic quality, which reinforces emotion and realizes the intended poetic effect[45].

Thus, Hazim does not view meter as a rigid technical component but as an artistic means to achieve the poetic purpose, since meter and rhythm contribute to reinforcing emotional impact and harmonizing with the literary intention. In this way, his analysis of metrical exemplars becomes an inquiry into the relationship between sonic structure and aesthetic response.

Hazim al-Qartajanni's applied method in using the critical exemplar is clearly reflected in his meticulous concern for placing meanings in their proper rhetorical positions. He believes that true eloquence is realized when the meaning fully matches its imagistic and semantic context. He affirms this principle by saying: "Among the factors that enable meanings to be placed in their appropriate, prepared positions is that they not be placed where other meanings would be more fitting, even if the meaning placed there has some relevance to that position; for it falls short of the place that another meaning would occupy more suitably"[46].

Within the practical application of this principle, Hazim analyzes verses by al-Farazdaq and Ibn Hurmah. He observes that the meaning of al-Farazdaq's second verse corresponds precisely to the meaning of Ibn Hurmah's first verse, just as the meaning of Ibn Hurmah's second verse aligns with that of al-Farazdaq's first verse. He demonstrates this by proposing an exchange of verse positions between the two poems, such that optimal semantic and imagistic harmony is achieved:

From what has been passed down in this regard are the verses of al-Farazdaq (ṭawīl – qāf – mutadārik)

And you, when you satirize Tamīm and seek gain…

are like the garments of Qays or the worn-out turbans.

Like someone pouring water in the open desert, deceived

by a mirage scattered by the scorching winds.

And Ibn Hurmah said (metre: al-mutaqārib – qāf – al-mutarādif):

And I, as I abandon the generosity of noble men,

while striking a miserly firebrand with my palms,

am like one who leaves her eggs in the open wasteland

and covers other eggs with a different wing.

"For the meaning of al-Farazdaq's second verse is appropriate to the meaning of Ibn Hurmah's first verse, and the meaning of Ibn Hurmah's second verse is suitable to the meaning of al-Farazdaq's first. So much so that if al-Farazdaq had said:

And you, when you satirize Tamīm and seek gain…

the garments of Qays or the worn-out turbans,

like one who leaves her eggs in the open wasteland

and covers other eggs with a different wing,

he would have placed the speech in the position most fitting to it, and the meaning would have been correct and firmly established. And if Ibn Hurmah had said:"

And I, as I abandon the generosity of noble men,

while striking a miserly firebrand with my palms,

am like one pouring water in the open desert, deceived

by a mirage scattered by the scorching winds

his speech would then have been correct, and his simile would have fallen exactly in its proper place[47].

From this application, the critical exemplar in Hazim's view ceases to be merely a text cited for support; it becomes an analytical material open to recomposition and critical testing. It is used to uncover the essential relationship between meaning and image and to demonstrate the necessity of fitting the meaning to its most appropriate context, rather than relying solely on imitation or transmission. Thus, the exemplar assumes its function as a dynamic criterion for rhetorical coherence and aesthetic value, moving from rigid citation to a living field of critical experimentation involving both craft and emotion.

5.1. Distinguishing the Crafted Exemplar and the Emotional Exemplar:

Hazim distinguishes between two types of exemplars: the crafted exemplar, by which the beauty of composition and the coherence of rhetorical structure are tested; and the emotional exemplar, which measures the effect of discourse on the psyche. In his analysis of muṭābaqa (antithesis), he divides it into pure and non-pure forms, stating: "Muṭābaqa is divided into pure and non-pure…

The pure type is when a word is confronted with its semantic opposite, as in Jarīr's verse:"

And one who spreads goodness among you with his right hand,

and with his left withholds harm from you.

And likewise Duʿbil's verse:

O Salm, I do not admire a man

whose gray hair laughed upon his head, so he wept.

As for the non-pure antithesis, he divides it into:

1. Opposing something with what occupies the place of its opposite, as in al-Sharīf al-Raḍī's verse:

I weep while he smiles, and the darkness lies between us …

until his mouth and my tears lit up the night.

2. Opposing something with what merely differs from it without being its full opposite, as in ʿAmr ibn Kulthūm's verse:

For we lead the banners forth white …

and send them back red after they have been soaked.

And al-Mutanabbī's verse is considered one of the finest examples combining both types:

I visit them, and the darkness of night intercedes for me …

and I turn away, while the whiteness of dawn incites them against me[48].

Hazim highlights through these exemplars that muṭābaqa is not to be studied merely as a linguistic phenomenon, but as an expression of the interaction between craft and emotion. In the case of pure antithesis (as in Jarīr and Duʿbil), the creative power of imagistic contrast appears clearly in the strong effect produced by opposition. In the non-pure antithesis, Hazim observes the flexibility of Arabic rhetoric in moving beyond simple binary contrast to more nuanced levels of divergence an effect that deepens the emotional resonance and enhances the recipient's response to poetic imagination.

From Hazim's analysis, it becomes evident that the exemplar does not serve a single function; instead, it unifies the scientific precision of ṣināʿa with the effectiveness of emotional impact. It acts as a criterion through which the balance between craftsmanship and psychological influence is tested, and as evidence of the degree to which imitation and imagination are present in the literary work. For Hazim, the creative poet is the one who employs rhetorical and metrical craft in a way that serves emotional effect, stirring in the soul a sense of wonder and astonishment. He states: "The imaginative utterance rarely lacks an element of amazement indeed,it is almost inseparable from it in its slightest form… And when amazement occurs from the two aforementioned sources at the highest level possible in each, that is the ultimate degree of amazement. The soul is powerfully moved by whatever reaches this level"[49].

Through this analysis, it becomes clear that Hazim's method in employing the critical exemplar is characterized by an integrated experimental nature that combines structural analysis of the text with emotional observation of its effect. For him, the exemplar is not a decorative illustration but a critical model through which the interaction between structure and sensation is tested between rational craftsmanship and emotional resonance. With this method, al-Qarṭājannī laid the foundations of a refined Maghrebi critical tradition that blends scientific rigor with aesthetic sensitivity, merging the codification of craft with the practice of emotional impact at the same time.

6. Comparison Between Hazim al-Qarṭājannī's Method and the Eastern Critical Approach to Collecting Exemplars:

Andalusian sources indicate that critics in the western Islamic world were keen on preserving ancient poetry and receiving it through written transmissions and local commentaries, due to their lack of direct contact with its transmitters in the East. This situation compelled them to adopt a selective method in choosing poetic exemplars one based on scrutinizing the transmitted texts and uncovering their aspects of beauty and craftsmanship. Thus, citation for them became a conscious critical act, not mere transmission or imitation. Hence, Hazim al-Qartajanni distinguished himself in his treatment of the critical exemplar, displaying a unique approach compared to Eastern critics, as his method reflects the influence of the Andalusian cultural environment on the construction of his own theory of the exemplar and on the precision of its critical employment.

The Maghrebi critical framework established by Hazim al-Qartajanni is characterized by a complex methodological tendency, wherein poetic exemplars become tools of critical examination that go beyond merely proving a rule or showcasing memorization. They are used instead to reveal the effectiveness of poetic craftsmanship and aesthetic imagination and their impact on the recipient and society.

The distinctiveness of the Maghrebi conception of the critical exemplar and rhetorical craft in Hazim's methodology becomes evident through his deep understanding of the poetic exemplar's function. Hazim begins from a radical critique of the Eastern experience especially its later phase and argues that Eastern poets drifted away from the path of the great masters, allowing their poetic

production to become marked by verbal affectation and a neglect of the foundational principles of poetic craft. This deviation, in his view, led them away from the essence of true poetry and immersed them in mere speech devoid of artistry. He expresses this view by saying:

"A veil settled upon the hearts of the later Eastern poets and blinded their insight into the reality of poetry for two hundred years. Throughout this long period, not one among them followed the path of the great masters or adopted their methods in grounding the principles of poetic discourse, perfecting its structure, and selecting the materials from which it must be crafted. Thus, they departed from the proper path of poetry and fell into mere utterance"[50].

Drawing on this critique, Hazim redefines the critical exemplar on the basis of firm craftsmanship and the quality of imaginative representation, making it a primary criterion that distinguishes the Maghrebi conception from other critical approaches. Not every poetic verse is suitable to serve as an exemplar for Hazim; the accepted exemplars are those in which the precision of craft, the elegance of selection, and the depth of imaginative construction appear clearly far from arbitrary or traditional citation.

Thus, Hazim's method establishes that the critical exemplar is not chosen on the basis of fame or circulation but according to its conformity with the standards of rhetorical craftsmanship and the strength of aesthetic effect. This reflects the height of Maghrebi critical awareness, which integrates rigorous artistic construction with the power of emotional response. This distinctiveness emerges clearly as a characteristic mode of reading poetry and gathering exemplars one that restores to craft and imagination their status as the essence of artistic value in Arabic poetry.

In light of this evaluation, Hazim differentiates between the acceptable exemplar and the familiar one: the true exemplar, for him, is the verse that combines precision of craft, careful selection of material, and the formation of an imaginative image not merely a verse cited through habit or imitation. Through this distinction, Hazim establishes the unique Maghrebi perspective on poetry and the exemplar, making the success of the exemplar dependent on its ability to elicit emotional response and on its grounding in rhetorical craftsmanship and direct aesthetic reception.

This vision reaches full coherence in Hazim's analysis of the poetry of al-Mutanabbī and other major poets, where the critical exemplar becomes a dual criterion for testing both compositional excellence and aesthetic effectiveness. This is reflected in his statement: "The finest poetry is that whose imitation and structure are excellent, whose fame or veracity is strong, or whose falsehood is subtle, and whose strangeness stands forth"[51].

From here, the value of Hazim's approach becomes evident in renewing the methodology of collecting textual evidences by integrating craftsmanship, creativity, and emotional resonance, so that the evidences become signs of artistic and aesthetic realization rather than merely traditional citations within critical texts.

In contrast, the methodology of Eastern rhetoricians especially Ibn al-Mu'tazz (in al-Badi') and al-Marzuqi (in his Commentary on the Diwan of al-Hamasah) reveals the dominance of a compilatory tendency in the collection of poetic evidences. The effort is directed toward demonstrating memorization of evidences and exhaustively gathering the largest possible number of them to support a specific rhetorical rule or to reinforce a linguistic judgment. Al-Marzuqi indicates that the textual evidence is necessary to establish the rule.[52]

But the role of the textual evidence in the Eastern conception often remains limited to memorization and verification, without contributing to the construction of a comprehensive critical and aesthetic vision concerning reception and emotional effect except for some individual efforts such as that of Ibn Qutaybah, who states in Poetry and Poets that poetry is judged by its quality and impact, not by its abundance or the fame of its author; for if it leaves a pleasing impression on the listener and is affirmed by sound taste, then he is the true poet[53],

Despite this attempt, the general tendency still leans toward quantity at the expense of qualitative analysis.

It should be noted that Hazim reflects the distinctive character of Moroccan criticism in transforming textual evidence into an active tool for weaving theory and shaping the trajectory of criticism. He says: "Whatever has no evidence from the speech of the Arabs in the place for which it was intended is not reliable for us in the craft; for evidences are useful in testing, and they reveal the standards of the craft and the quality of imitation."[54]

It becomes clear from this that the distinctiveness of the Moroccan method lies in venturing into the realm of aesthetic experience and making the textual evidence an expression of the dialectical interaction between craftsmanship and emotional effect. Thus, criticism becomes a practical exercise that goes beyond memorization toward examination and experimentation.

Meanwhile, the Eastern conception remains more closely associated with collecting and preserving evidences as proof of mastery in rhetorical knowledge and encyclopedic memorization, with a lesser degree of analytical use and limited influence of evidences in shaping the features of poetic craftsmanship and its critique.

Therefore, textual evidence in ancient Moroccan criticism constitutes one of the methodological pillars that shaped its specificity. It was not employed merely as an illustrative example, but as an epistemic tool upon which critical judgments are based and from which rhetorical, phonetic, and semantic rules are derived. Hazim al-Qartajanni was the most prominent figure in crystallizing this orientation, for he built a significant part of his rhetorical project on a precise reading of poetic evidences showing how the example becomes a "literary proof" that supports the rule and reveals the nature of the poetic process.

We may say that ancient Moroccan criticism is characterized by its inductive tendency deriving the rule from examining the evidences unlike the Eastern approach, which tends to establish the rule first and then search for supporting examples. This is evident in Hazim's statement: "Nothing from the vocabulary of crafts and sciences should be used in poetry except to the extent appropriate for poetry."[55] This judgment is not merely abstract theorization; it is based on tracing poetic examples that demonstrate the corruption of composition when a poet introduces scientific or technical terms in a context that does not suit them.

From this, it becomes evident that for Hazim, textual evidence is not a device for embellishment but a demonstrative tool that determines what is permissible and what is impermissible in poetic craftsmanship. This established a specifically Moroccan structure composed of: the text, then the evidence, then the rule an arrangement entirely opposite to the Eastern structure, which typically proceeds from the rule toward the evidence.

Hazim also maintains that understanding poetry is tied to the appropriateness of meaning to convention, that is, to the pragmatic context, which appears in his statement: "The distinguished poet

does not present meanings except in the forms that suit them according to convention and custom."[56] This conception makes the textual evidence an interpretive tool, not merely an example. The critic does not suffice with quoting a poetic verse; rather, he relies on it to determine the correctness of interpretation.

Thus, ancient Moroccan criticism differs from Eastern criticism, which tended to favor abstract rational or rhetorical interpretation (as in al-Jurjani), whereas the Moroccans combine context and evidence that is, the utterance and its situational frame. When refuting arbitrary readings of some poetry, he cites the verse of al-Farazdaq:

Until the sides of my saddle or the reins of my bridle

were stained with what had flowed from my blood.

He then uses the textual evidence to reject the interpretation that claims the intended meaning is "the blood of his people," commenting: "This is an excessive and forced interpretation… and the speech must be understood according to its proper meaning."[57]

Here, the textual evidence becomes a criterion for the validity of interpretation, not merely for establishing meaning revealing the pragmatic dimension of Moroccan criticism.

7. Textual Evidence in the Construction of the Ancient Moroccan Critical Mind:

In comparison with the East, which often made textual evidence subordinate to the rule (as was the case among grammarians and rhetoricians), ancient Moroccan criticism regarded textual evidence as a source for producing theory.

The textual evidence in Moroccan criticism performs the following functions:

– Evaluation: Revealing disruptions in imagery or weakness in structures, as in Hazim's critique of al-Farazdaq's verse because it "combined sensory elements that are far apart."
– Interpretation: Clarifying the intended meaning, as in his explanation of metaphors and complex meanings.
– Pragmatic Regulation: Determining the relationship between the utterance and its situational context.
– Refutation: Rejecting faulty interpretations, as he did in his critique of the interpretation of lam aṣib in Qatari's verse.

This multiplicity of functions is what shaped the "Moroccan identity" in criticism a balance between the theoretical and the applied, neither strict textualism nor pure subjectivism.

We may say that textual evidence in ancient Moroccan criticism with Hazim as its model represents the governing structure that organizes the relationship between the text, the reader, and meaning. It is not an example, nor documentation, nor ornamental material, but a cognitive tool that grounds judgment, regulates interpretation, and legitimizes aesthetic appreciation.

From here arose the structural difference from Eastern criticism, which was dominated by theoretical founding and rhetorical abstraction, while Moroccan criticism was dominated by analytical induction that is, building theory from within texts rather than from outside them.

Hazim al-Qartajanni's conception of textual evidence contributed to a profound structural transformation in the trajectory of Moroccan criticism, paving the way for a distinctively Moroccan

approach to engaging with poetic texts and evaluating their artistic criteria, and establishing a critical framework that combines strict rhetorical principles with deep aesthetic engagement.

Hazim made textual evidence a dual criterion through which the critic tests both the quality of poetic craftsmanship and the vitality of emotional impact, so that the presence of evidences was no longer limited to rule-based argumentation, as in Eastern criticism, but became a distinctive marker by which the value of creativity and the text's ability to evoke wonder and aesthetic acceptance in the receiver are measured.

8. Conclusion and Results:

When extracting the key findings regarding the centrality of textual evidence in Hazim's project and the new meanings he added to Arabic criticism, we uncover profound transformations that enriched classical Arabic criticism in general and made Moroccan criticism in particular a renewed space for aesthetic taste and experiential engagement.

The methodological induction, philosophical insight, and applied examples reveal that Hazim assigned textual evidence an operative status that transcends its traditional role as a tool for argumentation or preservation of tradition; it became a composite criterion through which the completeness of rhetorical craftsmanship and the authenticity of emotional impact in the poetic text are tested. The following results may be noted:

First: Hazim redefined the function of textual evidence so that it came to combine artistic codification with aesthetic innovation. In the accepted text, a creative unity is achieved, embodied in sound composition, effective imagery, realistic imitation, and the power to evoke emotional and psychological admiration in the recipient. Through his vision, textual evidence became a dynamic field for discovering the quality of the text and its ability to penetrate the listener's sensibility something confirmed by modern studies such as the research of Koushnan and Makawi, as well as Maghrebi university studies which demonstrated that, after Hazim, Moroccan criticism came to be characterized by an applied and philosophical tendency that does not celebrate craftsmanship alone but seeks a complete aesthetic experience.

Second: Hazim established defining boundaries between Moroccan and Eastern criticism. Instead of merely preserving evidences and texts, as is common in Eastern traditions, he made textual evidence in Morocco a tool for innovation and testing, expanding the scope of criticism to unite craftsmanship and emotional impact, placing the recipient, along with their culture and experience, at the heart of the critical process.

Third: This conception helped establish a distinct Moroccan school in Arabic criticism, one based on the continuous blending of aesthetic and philosophical theory with the technical foundations of poetry, granting taste and actual experience a decisive value in the process of literary judgment.

Therefore, Hazim al-Qartajanni's project represents a document of profound critical transformation one that combines the authenticity of heritage with the depth of aesthetic experience. It restores textual evidence as a structural pillar in the study of poetry and as a central axis of development and distinction in the trajectory of both Arabic and Moroccan criticism.

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[16]Muhammad al-Tantawi, Nash'at al-Nahw wa Tarikh Ashhar al-Nuhat, Dar al-Ma'arif, 2006, p. 192.

[17] 'Id, Muhammad, al-Istishhad wa al-Ihtijaj bi al-Lugha: Riwayat al-Lugha wa al-Ihtijaj biha fi Daw' 'Ilm al-Lugha al-Hadith, 1988, Dar al-Kutub, p. 113.

[18]Al-Jahiz depicts the Shu'ubiyya movement and its aims saying: "Most of those who doubted Islam were influenced by the Shu'ubiyya; it continues to lead its followers from one state to another until they detach from Islam because it was revealed to an Arab Prophet, and because the Arabs were its bearers when it descended."

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[48]Al-Qartajanni, p.

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[50]Al-Qartajanni, p. 10.

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[55]Ibid., p. 168.

[56]Ibid., p. 112.

[57]Ibid., p. 58.