

Poetic Evidence and Rhetorics:

Dynamics of Stability, Stereotyping and Repetition

الشاهد الشعري في درس البلاغية بين الثبات والنظية والتكرار

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Abstract:

Those who study rhetoric will notice that rhetorical examples, especially poetic ones, have been repeated in books on rhetoric from Abd al-Qahir al-Jurjani to the present day. The question that arises is: why have these examples, which rhetoricians have faithfully inherited and passed on to their students, been repeated? Why did rhetoricians not renew their poetic examples? Even though the Arabic poetic heritage is rich in expressive poetic models and abounds in rhetorical phenomena such as eloquence, beauty, and various styles... This research aims to uncover the reasons why examples of Arabic poetic rhetoric have remained unchanged, unrenewed, and repeated in most sources of Arabic rhetoric.

key words *Rhetorical Evidence, Poetic Evidence, Arabic Rhetoric, Abd al-Qahir al-Jurjani, Al-Baqillani.*

ملخص باللغة العربية:

إن الدارس لعلم البلاغة يلاحظ أن الشواهد البلاغية خاصة الشعرية منها تكررت في كتب البلاغة من لدن عبد القاهر الجرجاني إلى يومنا هذا، والسؤال الذي يطرح نفسه هو: لماذا تكررت هذه شواهد، التي ورثها البلاغيون بأمانة وورثوها لتلامذتهم؟ لماذا لم يجدد البلاغيون شواهدهم الشعرية؟ مع أن التراث الشعري العربي غني بالنماذج الشعرية المعبرة والزاهرة بالظواهر البلاغية من بيان وبديع وأساليب متنوعة... لقد جاء هذا البحث ليميط اللثام عن الأسباب التي جعلت شواهد البلاغة العربية الشعرية لا تتغير ولا تتجدد وتكرر في معظم مصادر البلاغة العربية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الشواهد البلاغية، الشاهد الشعري، البلاغة العربية، عبد
القاهر الجرجاني، أبو بكر محمد بن الطيب الباقلائي.

1. INTRODUCTION

Poetic evidence stands as the memory of a nation, storing a wealth of knowledge that reflects the social, cultural, psychological, political, and religious dimensions of people's lives. These poetic references have served as foundational pillars upon which linguists and rhetoricians built their rules and principles, whether drawn from the Qur'an, the Hadith, Arabic poetry, or the eloquent speech of the Arabs.

Perhaps the heightened attention of linguists to poetic evidence, more so than other forms, stems from the birth of Arab culture in the fertile soil of eloquence and textual expression particularly poetic texts. The Arabs' deep affinity for poetry is rooted in its esteemed position within ancient Arab culture. Poetry was the foremost cultural and linguistic phenomenon among the Arabs, often referred to as the "Diwan of the Arabs" (their collective memory). The poet held a revered status, occupying a lofty and distinguished place, especially within the tribe during the pre-Islamic era. The reliance on poetic evidence over other forms can also be attributed to the ease of memorizing poetry due to its rhythmic patterns. The use of poetry as evidence emerged early in the history of Arab civilization. However, scholars of Arabic rhetoric observe that the same poetic references have been repeated across most rhetorical sources. The examples chosen by Abdul Qahir al-Jurjani were inherited by later rhetoricians, who made little effort to innovate or renew them. This raises a critical question: What is the reason behind this stability, stereotyping, and repetition of poetic evidence in Arabic rhetoric?

Among the plausible explanations for this stereotyping and repetition is the critique launched by Imam Al-Baqillani against poetry, as he sought to diminish its stature to prove that the Qur'an is more deserving of being cited as evidence. Another factor lies in the tendency of later rhetoricians to condense and summarize earlier works, often opting for the briefest and most concise texts that aligned with their tastes, which were heavily influenced by the art of verbal craftsmanship.

Moreover, the stability of poetic evidence can be attributed to the stagnation of rhetorical arts themselves. Arabic rhetoric, since the time of Abdul Qahir al-Jurjani, has remained largely static, failing to evolve. What Al-Sakkaki accomplished was little more than reorganizing, categorizing, and classifying the rhetorical foundations that al-Jurjani had already established.

To my knowledge, no study has directly addressed this issue. However, I have come across related research by Dr. Fathouh Mahmoud, titled "Al-Baqillani's Method in the Analytical Criticism of Ancient Literary Texts from the Perspective of Text Linguistics." In this work, the author connects Al-Baqillani's analytical criticism with text linguistics, examining manifestations of textual cohesion in Al-Baqillani's critique of the poetry of Imru' al-Qais and Al-Buhturi. These manifestations include repetition, substitution, moderation, and skillful transitions. The study concludes that Al-Baqillani's analytical criticism of the two poets' works was misplaced, as he was overly harsh and unjust in his evaluation. He disregarded the merits of their poetry and imposed a biased critique. In contrast, his analysis of the Qur'anic text presented it as a cohesive and harmonious model, characterized by repetition, substitution, moderation, and skillful transitions.

Dr. Fathouh Mahmoud's focus was on Al-Baqillani's methodological approach to analytical criticism and the elements of textual cohesion in ancient poetic texts, comparing them to the Qur'an. My aim in this research, however, is to uncover the injustice Al-Baqillani inflicted upon poetic evidence and the harm he caused to Arabic rhetoric. His excessive and exaggerated criticism of ancient poetic texts, particularly the works of Imru' al-Qais and Al-Buhturi, led to a great injustice, he unfairly transformed the virtues of their poetry into flaws.

2 - The Concept of "Shahid" (Evidence) in Language and Terminology:

Al-Qasimi succinctly encapsulates the numerous and evolving linguistic meanings of the term "*Shahid*" (evidence) found in Arabic lexicons. He states: "In the Arabic language, *Shahid* is a polysemous term with multiple meanings. For our purposes here, two meanings are particularly relevant, the second of which derives metaphorically from the first:

- (a) *Shahid* (as a sentient being; plural: *Shuhud*, *Ashhad*, or *Shuhada*): This refers to a evidence who informs a judge or similar authority about what they have seen or known.
- (b) (b) *Shahid* (as a non-sentient entity; plural: *Shawahid*): This denotes evidence or proof. In the field of lexicography, such evidence typically consists of a quoted sentence, drawn from selected prose or poetry, to clarify the meaning and usage of a word, or to support an opinion, rule, or similar construct."

(Al-Qasimi, *The Science of Terminology: Its Theoretical Foundations and Practical Applications*, 2008, p. 715)

3 –The Functions of Poetic Evidence:

In this discussion, it is essential to address the functions of poetic evidence, which can be summarized as follows:

- Poetic evidence serves to affirm grammatical principles, providing concrete examples that solidify linguistic rules.
- Utilizing previous linguistic texts aids in the transmission and exchange of ideas from one generation to another and from one place to another (Al-Qasimi, *Dictionary of Citations*, 2001, p. 22).
- It provides proof that the word under study is indeed used in the Arabic language or in the dialect of one of the Arab tribes, despite its apparent strangeness to the reader. It is not a fabrication of the lexicographer but rather a genuine part of the Arabs' own language (Al-Qasimi, *Dictionary of Citations*, 2001, p. 19).
- Poetic evidence is used "to demonstrate the meaning of the word under study or one of its meanings, as the meaning of a word—as is well known—can change depending on the context in which it appears (Al-Qasimi, *Dictionary of Citations*, 2001, p. 19).
- It provides an idea and a depiction of the environment in which the evidence was composed, reflecting the civilization of its speakers (Al-Qasimi, 2004, pp. 140-141).
- They provide enjoyment through their beauty, elegance, and imagery, transporting the reader from one era to another, from one environment to another, and from one magnificent art form to another (Matlub, *Dictionary of Poetic Rhetorical Evidence*, 2012, p. 9).
- They allow scholars to benefit from the words, structures, imagery, and meanings carefully selected by rhetoricians from both classical and modern poetry.
- They are used as a resource in writing and teaching (Matlub, *Dictionary of Poetic Rhetorical Evidence*, 2012, p. 9).

Poetic evidence is the most frequently employed and the most prominent in the works of grammarians, linguists, and lexicographers—not just rhetoricians. However, the objectives of rhetoricians differ from those of grammarians and linguists. Rhetoricians are not concerned with explaining a word, proving its Arabic origin, or confirming its existence in a particular dialect, nor are they focused on affirming grammatical rules. Instead, what rhetoricians seek are the styles and arts of speech.

For this reason, rhetoricians did not confine themselves to specific places or time periods when dealing with poetic evidence, as linguists did. Linguists, for instance, set the end of the period of valid evidence at the year 180 AH. In contrast, rhetoricians approached poetic evidence based on its eloquence, rhetorical power, and persuasive authority.

4 –Poetic Evidence in the Works of Abdul Qahir al-Jurjani:

The rhetorics of Abdul Qahir al-Jurjani were distinguished by their literary and aesthetic character, which stood alongside their intellectual and persuasive nature. Consequently, his approach to poetic evidence was unique. His evidence was diverse, drawn from the Qur'an, Hadith, sayings of the Companions, poetry, proverbs, and speeches. Poetry, however, constituted the lion's share of his citations. "He cited 260 Qur'anic verses and 472 poetic examples from 160 poets" (Ali, 2020, p. 39).

He also cited the poetry of his contemporaries, with a particular emphasis on poets from various eras. Among the pre-Islamic poets he referenced were Imru' al-Qais, Al-Nabigha, Zuhayr, and Al-A'sha. From the Umayyad era, he cited Jarir, Al-Farazdaq, and the Udhri poets. From the Abbasid era, he drew on the works of Abu Tammam, Al-Mutanabbi, Al-Buhturi, and Abu Nuwas.

Al-Jurjani justified his choice of Al-Buhturi's poetry, stating: "You will hardly find a poet who provides you with the same level of subtlety, ease, and ability to bring the distant and unfamiliar close to the familiar as Al-Buhturi does, or who reaches his level in this regard." (Al-Jurjani, Asrar al-Balagha, 1991, p. 146).

In the opinion of Ahmad Ahmad Badawi, the reason for this lies in the fact that "he wanted his book *Dala'il* to be solely dedicated to explaining the standard by which the inimitability of the Qur'an is measured—its eloquence, which reaches the highest levels. He explained the meaning of eloquence and left the practical application to the Qur'an for the reader." (Badawi, n.d., p. 299).

Additionally, poetry allows for comparisons between the good and the bad in speech, which is not permissible in the case of the Qur'an. This is why he celebrated poetry and used it as evidence. Moreover, memorizing poetry is easier than memorizing prose, "because its rhythms aid in this, and its constant presence in the memory of scholars of linguistic studies, who established linguistic rules at various levels, ensures its preservation. The transmission of poetry is also more precise because precision is an element of its rhythm." (Jabal, n.d., p. 52).

Al-Jurjani was criticized for relying on poetic evidence at the expense of Qur'anic evidence. At the beginning of his book *Dala'il*, he defends poetry over 24 pages, presenting evidence, proofs, and arguments from the Qur'an,

the Sunnah, and his own analysis, clarifying his reasoning and opinion on the matter. He responds to those who discouraged the narration and memorization of poetry and criticized engaging in its study, saying: "Those who hold this opinion cannot escape the following possibilities:

- 1) One of these possibilities is that their rejection and criticism of poetry stem from the frivolity, vulgarity, satire, insults, lies, and falsehoods they find in it.
- 2) The second is that they criticize it because it is metered and rhymed, considering this alone a flaw that warrants disdain and avoidance.
- 3) The third is that they focus on the behavior of poets, which is often unseemly, and argue that poets have been criticized in the Qur'an.

Whoever holds any of these opinions is clearly mistaken and gravely in error (Al-Jurjani, 1992, p. 11)

He then refutes these three points one by one, defending poetry by saying:

As for those who claim that their criticism of poetry is due to the frivolity, vulgarity, lies, and falsehoods they find in it, they should criticize all speech and prefer silence over speaking...

(LIT: ama man min zaem 'ana naqdah lilshier raje 'iilaa ma fih min ebth wswqyt wkdhb wabatila, faealayh 'an yuntqd alkalam kilahu, wyufddl alsamt ealaa alkalam)

Scholars have cited verses containing obscenity and references to indecent acts to explain rare Qur'anic expressions and their grammatical structures, yet they were not faulted for this, as they did not intend or seek that obscenity... It is said that Al-Hasan al-Basri (may God have mercy on him) used to quote poetic verses in his sermons, and among the most poignant to him was:

Today, her charm and conversation are yours,

But tomorrow, her hand and wrist belong to another." (Al-Jurjani, 1992, p. 13)

LIT : (alyawm sihraha wahadithuha lika, wghdan yadaha wamiesamaha lighayriki).

In his response, he speaks of the beauty and wisdom in poetry, stating:

" If it embodies truth, sincerity, wisdom, and eloquence, if it harvests the fruits of intellect and wisdom, and brings together the finest virtues... If it preserves noble meanings for people and grants them great benefits... It transmits noble morals from parent to child and conveys the legacy of honor from the absent to the present, so that the traces of the past are immortalized in the present, and the intellect of the ancients is revived in the moderns. For anyone who seeks refinement, aspires to honor, and

pursues excellence in speech and action, poetry stands as a raised banner, a guiding light, a teacher, and a corrector..." (Al-Jurjani, 1992, pp. 15-16)

LIT: (iidha kan fih sidq wa'amanat wahikmat wabayan qatae, wa'idha kan yahmil thamarat aleaql walhikmata, wajame 'arwae al'akhlaqi... wa'idha kan yuhfaz lilnaas maeani karimatan wayamnahum manafie eazimatan... fa'iinah yanqul al'akhlaq alkarimat min al'ab 'iilaa alwalda, wayurith 'iirth alsharaf min alghayib 'iilaa alhadiri, fayakhlud 'athar almadi fi alhadira, wayuhyi fikr alqudama' fi almuhdithina." likuli man talab alahdhibu, wasaeaa 'iilaa alsharaf, wasaeaa 'iilaa alkamal fi alqawl waleimla, falshier rayat marfueatun, wamanaratun, wamuealima, wamusahah...)

As for his response to the third objection, he says:

"How can you cite the hadith, 'It is better for one of you to fill his stomach with pus than to fill it with poetry,' and emphasize it, while ignoring the Prophet's (peace be upon him) saying, 'Indeed, some poetry contains wisdom, and indeed, some speech is magic'? How can you forget his (peace be upon him) command to recite poetry, his promise of Paradise for it, his saying to Hassan, 'Speak, for the Holy Spirit is with you,' his listening to poetry, his citing of it, his knowledge of it, his approval of it, and his delight in hearing it?" (Al-Jurjani, 1992, pp. 16-17)

LIT: (kayf tastashhid bihadithi: "li'an yamla 'ahadukum batnah qyhan khayr min 'an yamla'ah sheran" watuakidahu, watatajahal qawl alnabii salaa allah ealayh wasalama: "'iina min alshier hikmatun, wa'iina min alqalam shran"? kayf tansaa 'amrah salaa allah ealayh wasalam bitilawat alshaera, wawaedih bialjanat ealayhi, waqawlih lilhasani: "takalim fa'iina ruh alqudus maeka", wastimaeah lilshaera, wadhakaruh lah, wamaerifatah bihi, waridah eanhu, walidhath bihi?)

Al-Jurjani recounts numerous anecdotes and stories to argue for the Prophet's (peace be upon him) approval and enjoyment of poetry, as well as that of his Companions (may God be pleased with them). Among these is the following:

From these is the story of Al-Nabigha al-Ja'di, who said: I recited to the Messenger of God (peace be upon him) my verse:

Our glory and our forebears have reached the heavens,
And we aspire to a place even higher.

LIT: (balagh majdunan wa'aslafuna alsama'a, wanatmah 'iilaa 'aelaa minha).

The Prophet (peace be upon him) asked,

'Where is this higher place, O Abu Layla?' I replied, 'Paradise, O Messenger of God.' He said, 'Indeed, God willing.' Then he said, 'Recite to me.' So I recited to him:

LIT: (ayn hadha almaqam alrafie ya 'aba laylaa?" qiltu: aljanat ya rasul allahi. qala: 'iin sha' allahu. thuma qala: aqra ely. Faqaratuh :

There is no good in forbearance if it is not accompanied

By bursts of anger to protect its purity from being tainted.

Nor is there good in ignorance if it is not accompanied

By a patient one who, when faced with a matter, resolves it).

LIT: (la khayr fi alhulm 'iidha lam yusahibh thawrat ghdb tusan safa'ah min aldinsu. wala khayr fi aljahl 'iidha lam yusahibh sabr 'iidha wajah alamr hasmahu).

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, 'You have done well. May God never break your teeth.' The narrator said: I looked at him, and his mouth was like a flowing spring—no tooth had fallen or broken." (Al-Jurjani, 1992, pp. 21-22).

As for his response to those who criticize poetry for being metered and rhymed, he says in astonishment:

"It is as if meter is a flaw, and as if speech, when composed as poetry, diminishes in value and changes in nature. This is far-fetched and nonsensical, and it contradicts the scholars' statement: 'Poetry is merely speech—its beauty is beautiful, and its ugliness is ugly.' This has also been attributed to the Prophet (peace be upon him)." (Al-Jurjani, 1992, p. 24).

For those who dislike meter and rhyme because they are sung, the citation of poetry is not for its meter but for the eloquence of its wording, "the decisive speech, the good logic, the clear expression, the beautiful imagery and metaphor, the subtle hints and allusions, the craft that elevates the lowly, magnifies the insignificant, raises the humble, and brings attention to the obscure... Let them say what they will about meter and place it where they wish, for it is of no concern to us, nor is it our aim." (Al-Jurjani, 1992, p. 24).

As for those who criticize poetry because of the behavior of poets, who have been criticized in the Qur'an, Al-Jurjani responds:

"I do not think any rational person would accept this as evidence to condemn poetry, belittle it, prohibit its memorization and recitation, or deny its eloquence and the unique wisdom and refinement it contains." (Al-Jurjani, Dala'il al-I'jaz, 1992, p. 27).

5 –The Use of Poetry in Explaining Obscure Qur'anic Terms:

The use of poetry to explain obscure Qur'anic terms and clarify their meanings is a subject of great importance. This practice dates back to the early days of Arab civilization and its scholarly traditions. Abdul Qahir al-Jurjani states that whoever discourages poetry is effectively preventing people from understanding the evidence of God's greatness. Such a person is like one who stands in the way of people, preventing them from

memorizing, upholding, reciting, and teaching the Book of God (Al-Jurjani, 1992, p. 9).

The use of poetry in explaining obscure Qur'anic terms and clarifying their meanings is a subject of great importance and has been a part of Arab civilization since its early scholarly endeavors. It is reported that Ibn Abbas, when asked about the Qur'an, would often recite poetry. He said, "If the Arabic language of the Qur'an confuses you, seek its explanation in poetry, for poetry is the archive of the Arabs." He also said, "Poetry is the archive of the Arabs. If a word in the Qur'an, revealed in the language of the Arabs, is unclear to them, they should turn to their archive and seek its understanding there." (Abbas, 1993, p. 8).

An example of this is the question posed by Nafi' ibn al-Azraq, who asked, "Tell me about God's saying: 'On the right and on the left, in groups' (Qur'an 70:37)." He replied, "'Izzun refers to circles of companions." Nafi' asked, "Do the Arabs recognize this meaning?" He answered, "Yes. Have you not heard Ubayd ibn al-Abras say:

They rushed to him until they gathered around his pulpit in circles."
(Abbas, 1993, p. 85)

LIT: (fandafaeu 'iilayh hataa ajtamaeuu hawl minbarih halaqati.)

Nafi' also asked, "Tell me about God's saying:

'He will send upon you flames of fire and smoke' (Qur'an 55:35).

LIT: (yursil ealaykum lhan min nar wadukhani)

What is 'shuwaz'?" :

- He replied, "It is the flame without smoke."

Nafi' asked, "Did the Arabs know this before the Book was revealed to Muhammad (peace be upon him)?"

- He answered, "Yes. Have you not heard Umayyah ibn Khalaf, when he satirized Hassan ibn Thabit, say:

O, will someone convey to Hassan

A message that crawls to Ukaz?

Was your father not among us a blacksmith,

Working at the anvils, a stallion among mares?

He would stoke the bellows, blowing constantly,

*Kindling the flame of shuwaz."

LIT: (ya hasanu, hal yublgah and rsaltan tazhaf 'iilaa eakazi? 'alam yakun 'abuk baynana hdadan, yaamal ealaa alsandan, fhlan bayn al'afrasi? kan yuq alkir, yanfukh fih biastimrari, yuq lahab alshawazi).

Nafi' said, "You have spoken the truth." (Abbas, 1993, pp. 35-36).

6 —Poetic Evidence in Rhetoric: Stereotyping and Repetition:

Poetic evidence in rhetoric has been accused of stagnation after its golden age under Abdul Qahir al-Jurjani (d. 471 AH). It fell into the

stereotyping seen in many Arabic linguistic examples, with scholars repeating the same memorized evidence without deviation or innovation, even in their methods of analysis and interpretation. "There is no doubt that while stability and stereotyping may be acceptable in grammatical and morphological evidence, they are entirely unacceptable in rhetorical evidence. While other types of evidence may suffice with identifying the example and its point of reference, poetic evidence requires deep analytical insight and an explanation of the secrets of beauty, without being constrained by time or a specific pattern. Those who studied rhetoric noticed the decline that befell poetic evidence after its flourishing era under Abd al-Qahir al-Jurjani, as they pointed to repetition, stereotyping, and copying... Scholars began to repeat specific, memorized examples without deviation or distinction, even in their methods of analysis and interpretation." (Murabit, 2016, p. 79).

Muhammad Amin al-Mu'addib states: "Anyone who examines the fields of poetry, prosody, grammar, and rhetoric will easily recognize the manifestations of this stagnation. Based on this, rhetoricians throughout the history of rhetoric have defined the subject matter of Arabic rhetoric and outlined its framework. They also determined the material on which rhetorics are based, foremost among which is poetic evidence." (Al-Mu'addib, 2001, pp. 384-385).

Many researchers emphasize that "many of Abdul Qahir's examples in his book *Dala'il* found their way into the books on rhetorical sciences written after him." (Badawi, n.d., p. 369).

Among the reasons that led to the reduced reliance on poetic evidence or the search for new examples is "the tendency of later rhetoricians to condense and summarize earlier works... opting for the briefest and shortest texts that aligned with their tastes, which were dominated by verbal craftsmanship. As a result, their examples remained limited to a sentence or two, without extending to longer passages that form a complete artistic unit and convey clear meanings with profound impact." (Matlub, Rhetorical and Critical Studies, n.d., p. 2).

However, the real reason behind this lies in what Al-Baqillani did by criticizing poetic models to undermine their beauty and eloquence, thereby proving the Qur'anic text's superiority as evidence.

7-Examples of poetic testimonies frequently cited in the books of rhetoricians:

Table No.: 01

Poetic Testimony	Subject of Citation	Sources in Which It Appears Number of Times	Number of Times the Testimony is
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		the Testimony is Repeated in Rhetoric Books, and in a Single Book	Repeated in Rhetoric Books, and in a Single Book
Zuhayr ibn Abi Sulma: 'And I do not know, yet I think I shall know Are the people of Husn men or women?'	Feigned Ignorance	Al-Badi': 62, Al-Umda: 2/66, The Law of Rhetoric: 134, Tahrir Al-Tahbir: 136, Modus Eloquence: 232, Al-Wafi: 295, Kifayat Al-Talib: 197, Al-'Uddah: 379, Al-Talkhees: 386, Explanation. Al-Talkhees: 4/405, Al-Mutawassul: 2/220, Hasan Al-Tawasul: 231, Explanation of 'Uqd Al-Juman: 131, Al-Taraz: 3/81, Treasures of Literature: 124, Anwar Al-Rabi' 5/131, Nafhat Al-Azhar: 43 (Required, Dictionary of Evidence of Poetic Rhetoric, 2012, p. 18).	17 times
Al-Muhallab al-Wazir: 'The sun has risen from the east Shining bright, without a veil. It is as if it were a	Simile	Asrar al-Balagha:165, Nihayat al-Ijaz:111, Al-Burhan al-Kashif:131, Al-Taraz:1/175, 355, Anwar al-Rabi':5/206, Al-Idah:228, Hasan al-Tawassul:124	7 times

crucible heated up With molten gold swirling inside.'		(Required, Dictionary of Evidence of Poetic Rhetoric, 2012, p. 25).	
Al- Mutanabbi: 'It does not kill his enemies, But rather fears failing the expectations of the wolves.'	Elegant Justification	Asrar al- Balagha:369, Anwar al-Rabi':6/138, Al- Idah:369, Al- Talkhis:376, Commentaries on Al-Talkhis:4/377, Al-Mutawwal:437, Al-Atwal 2/211.	7 times
Dhu al- Rumma: 'Her eyes are dark like antimony, her pupils golden, As if she were silver touched by gold.'	Simile & Ornamentation	Asrar al- Balagha:157, Kifayat al- Talib:107, Al- 'Umda:2/29, Al- Badi' fi al- Badi':171, Mawadd al-Bayan:136, Hasan al-Tawassul:317, Al-Tibyan fi al- Bayan:167, Al-Aqsa al-Qarib:116, Al- Taraz:1/345, 2/376 (Required, Dictionary of Evidence of Poetic Rhetoric, 2012, p. 28).	9 times
Al-Buhturi: 'He is close at hand for the needy but distant from every peer in generosity.	Illustrative Simile	Asrar al- Balagha:103, Al- Idah - Commentary on Maqamat al- Hariri:8, Hasan al- Tawassul:146, Al- Taraz:1/176, Anwar	6 times

Like the moon, high above, yet its light is close to travelers in the night.'		al-Rabi':5/195, Al-Idah:214 (Required, Dictionary of Evidence of Poetic Rhetoric, 2012, p. 31).	
Abu Nuwas: 'She weeps, shedding tears from narcissus eyes, And slaps rose-colored cheeks with jujube hands.'	Exquisite Simile	Al-Badi':74, Dala'il al-I'jaz:450, Al-'Umda:1/293, Al-Misbah:58, Al-Taraz:1/291 (Required, Dictionary of Evidence of Poetic Rhetoric, 2012, p. 32).	5 times

8 –Al-Baqillani and His Stance on Poetry

Imam Al-Baqillani incorporated in his book *I'jaz al-Quran* (The Inimitability of the Quran) harsh critical judgments against poetic texts, critiquing their style, structure, and meanings. His aim was to demonstrate that the miraculous composition of the Quran surpasses all other forms of Arabic literary discourse, including poetry. Among the poetic examples Al-Baqillani analyzed in his critical examination were verses from the Mu'allafa of Imru' al-Qais, which begins with (*Qifa nabki min dhikra habibin wa manzili*), and much of Al-Buhturi's poem starting with (*Ahlan bi-dhalikum al-khayal al-muqbil*). This selection of the two models was not arbitrary; rather, it was driven by significant motives and reasons, some related to the composition of the poems and others to their poets.

The Mu'allafa of Imru' al-Qais was unanimously agreed upon by critics as one of the finest and most excellent works produced by the leading Arab poets of that era. Its author was regarded as one of the most advanced and skilled poets, pioneering many poetic themes (Mahmoud, 2020, p. 1166). One of the compelling reasons I find for Al-Baqillani's critique of these two poets is that they were among the most frequently cited by Abd al-Qahir al-Jurjani in his works. Al-Baqillani sought to dismantle this poetic model, wielding his critical tools to undermine their poetic stature.

In his critical approach to poetic texts, Al-Baqillani focused on identifying flaws and shortcomings inherent in human composition, attempting to negate many of the qualities of excellence and beauty that distinguish these poems. Ultimately, he aimed to prove the superiority of the Quran's miraculous composition over human efforts, even those represented by the

finest works of Arab poets, such as the Mu'allāqa of Imru' al-Qais and the poetry of Al-Buhturi. He states: *"If anyone presumes or imagines that the genre of poetry could rival the composition of the Quran, it is as if they have fallen from the sky, only to be snatched by birds or swept away by the wind to a distant abyss"* (Al-Baqillani, *I'jaz al-Quran*, n.d., p. 216).

Al-Baqillani summarized his methodology by revealing the flaws in poetic compositions, the disparities in their structure, the inconsistencies in their sections, the excessiveness in their content, the severity of their arbitrariness, and the occasional artificiality. He also highlighted how they combine elevated language with base expressions, pairing refined diction with vulgar or servile phrases (Mahmoud, 2020, p. 1167).

Here are some examples of his critique of the Mu'allāqa of Imru' al-Qais. He begins his critique line by line, starting from its opening verses:

"Pause, let us weep at the memory of a beloved and an abode,
By the edge of the sand dunes between Dakhul and Hawmal.
At Tawdih and Miqrāt, the traces have not faded,
For what the south and north winds have woven over them."

LIT: (qifa nabki min dhikar habibin wamanzili
bisaqt alliwa' bayn aldakhli fahawamili
fatawdihuha falmaqarati lam yafu rasamuh
"lamaa nasijatuha min janub washamali.)

He states: "Those who are biased in his favor and claim the merits of poetry say that this is exquisite because he paused and made others pause, wept and made others weep, recalled the memory, the abode, and the beloved, and expressed grief and lamentation—all within a single line... Observe, may God guide you. You know that there is nothing in these two lines that surpasses other poets in their field or advances beyond their craftsmanship. There is a flaw in both their wording and meaning. The first issue is that he asked others to weep for the memory of a beloved, yet such a memory does not necessitate weeping from a companion. It would only be appropriate to request companionship in such a situation... As for weeping over the beloved of one's friend or the lover of one's companion, this is an impossibility... It is foolishness to not feel jealous over one's beloved and to invite others to flirt with them or share in the grief over them." (Al-Baqillani, 1349 AH, p. 131).

Muhammad Abu Musa responds, saying: "What Al-Baqillani has presented is not valid, for standing by the ruins is a state in which the poet is overwhelmed by emotion and sorrow, transforming their usual demeanor. They ask and implore those who cannot answer or speak, pouring out their grief and longing to stones and playgrounds, embracing the wild plants and

the remnants of a fire. Thus, it is no surprise that they would ask a companion to pause and weep with them." (Musa, 1997, p. 285).

Muhammad Abu Musa further states: "These openings in poems are charged with emotion and anguish, and they are among the finest ways to begin poetry. This refutes another objection to his subsequent line, 'Fahal 'inda rasm darisin min ma'ul' (Is there any tool left for a fading trace?), which is said to contradict his earlier line, 'Lam ya'fu rasmuhu' (Its trace has not faded). This is a well-known technique among the great poets of his era and is frequently used by Zuhair, who would ponder over his poem for an entire year. If this were a contradictory flaw, he would have avoided it. Rather, it is one of the subtleties that poets employ when standing by ruins, intending to convey the overwhelming emotions in their souls and to signal the extraordinary worlds, scenes, visions, and states they enter. It is as if it were an opening and preparation to enter the vast and fertile world of poetry." (Musa, 1997, p. 286).

Al-Zawzani explained Imru' al-Qais's use of addressing one person with the dual form: "He addressed his two companions, though it is said he addressed one but framed his speech as if addressing two. This is because it was customary among the Arabs to use the dual and plural forms when addressing a single person. An example of this is the poet's verse:

If you rebuke me, O son of 'Affan, I will desist,
And if you guide me, I will protect a fortified honor.

LIT: ('Fa-in tazjirani ya Ibn 'Affan anzajar

Wa-in tar'iani ahmi 'arḍan mumtani'a.')

Here, the poet addresses one person using the dual form. The Arabs did this because a man's closest supporters are often two."* (Al-Zawzani, 1997, p. 63).

Regarding Imru' al-Qais's line, "Lima nasajatha" (For what the winds have woven over them), Al-Baqillani comments: "He should have said 'Lima nasajaha' (For what the wind has woven over it), but he forced the feminine form because it refers to the wind, which is metaphorically feminine. However, the masculine form would have been more appropriate. The exigencies of poetry led him to this forced usage." (Al-Baqillani, 1349 AH, p. 132).

Al-Baqillani also criticizes the poet's mention of place names ("Ad-Dakhul, Hawmal, Tawdih, Al-Miqrat, Siqt al-Liwa"), arguing that it adds no value and is merely verbose, which he considers a flaw. He says: "What benefit is there in informing us that the traces of his beloved's abode have not faded? What meaning does this redundancy serve?" (Al-Baqillani, 1349 AH, p. 131).

However, Muhammad Abu Musa holds a different view: "This is not a flaw, for the poet only mentions places where memories and poignant emotions resurface. Enumerating them reveals the depth of their connection to his soul and his sorrow. Poets often mention places extensively. For instance, Zuhair would meticulously describe the journey of his companions, tracking the caravan's movement so precisely that it was as if he were drawing maps. It is noteworthy that the listing of places in poetry is often connected by the conjunction 'fa' (and), indicating their significance and hierarchy, whether in terms of past memories, as seen in Imru' al-Qais's verses, or in the progression of a journey from one stop to the next." (Musa, 1997, p. 287).

Al-Baqillani continues his critique of Imru' al-Qais's Mu'allaha, stating: "His line, 'Lam ya'fu rasmuhu' (Its trace has not faded), should have been 'Lam ya'fu rasmuhu' (His trace has not faded), as he refers to the abode. If he meant to attribute it to the surrounding areas, that is a flaw, for he intended to describe the abode of his beloved, not its surroundings. If he meant the house itself and used the feminine form, that is also a flaw." (Al-Baqillani, 1349 AH, p. 132). As we can see, his critique is heavily biased and unjust toward this Mu'allaha.

Now, observe his commentary on the following two lines:

My companions halted there, their mounts above me,
Saying, 'Do not perish from grief; be steadfast.'

Indeed, my cure is a shed tear,
But is there any tool left for a fading trace?

LIT: ("Wuqufan biha saḥbi 'alayya maṭiyyahum
Yaqluna la tahlik asan wa tammali
Wa-inna shifa'i 'abratun muhraqatun
Fahal 'inda rasm darisin min mu'awwali.")

He says: "There is no exquisite meaning or beautiful phrasing in these two lines, unlike the previous ones... This is forced and deviates from balanced speech. The second line is flawed because he considers tears sufficient for healing, so why does he then seek another remedy?" (Al-Baqillani, 1349 AH, p. 133).

Abu Musa responds: "What Al-Baqillani says—that the poet considers tears sufficient for healing but then expresses a need for another remedy—is not a flaw in poetry. Rather, this tension is sometimes at the heart of poetic expression. This verse is built on such tension and contradiction, making it some of Imru' al-Qais's finest and noblest poetry. It reveals the intensity of his emotions, as he resorts to weeping, his tears overflowing and overwhelming him. Consider his phrase, 'Wa-inna shifa'i 'abratun muhraqatun' (Indeed, my cure is a shed tear).

Observe the emphasis and its indication of his profound feeling. Then note the possessive in 'shifa'i' (my cure), which embodies his illusion of being healed. Next, consider the predicate 'abratun' (a tear), which aligns with the subject and transforms the cure into a shed tear. How can a cure be a tear? Soon, the poet awakens from this illusion and cries out in despair, 'Fahal 'inda rasm darisin min mu'awwali' (But is there any tool left for a fading trace?). This cry only deepens his anguish, for he knows there is no tool left for a fading trace." (Musa, 1997, p. 288).

Al-Baqillani also critiques Imru' al-Qais's verse:

Then the tears of my eyes overflowed with longing,

Streaming down my chest until my tears drenched my saddlecloth

LIT: ("Fa-fadat dumū'u al-'ayni minni ṣabāba

'ala an-naḥri ḥatta balla damī maḥmalī.")

He says: "His use of 'minni' (from me) is a weak artifice borrowed from later poets, and it is redundant, neither elegant nor exquisite. His phrase 'ala an-naḥri' (down the chest) is another redundancy, as his statement 'balla damī maḥmalī' (my tears drenched my saddlecloth) suffices and implies it. This is not a good redundancy. Moreover, his repetition of 'damī' (my tears) is yet another redundancy. It would have sufficed to say, 'ḥatta balla maḥmalī' (until my saddlecloth was drenched). He needed all this to maintain the meter. His implication that he excessively shed tears until his saddlecloth was drenched is an exaggeration and a shortcoming. Had he been more creative, he would have said, 'ḥatta balla damī maghānīhim wa 'arāṣīhim' (until my tears drenched their pastures and courtyards). It seems his aim was merely to maintain the meter and rhyme, for tears are unlikely to drench a saddlecloth. Tears only drip from someone standing or sitting on the ground or on a garment! If they do drench it, it is due to their scarcity, not their abundance." (Al-Baqillani, I'jaz al-Quran, 1349 AH, pp. 133-134).

Muhammad Abu Musa responds to Al-Baqillani's critique of the redundancy of the word "minni" (from me), saying: "This is not as he claims, for the phrase 'minni' specifies that the tears flowed from him. While the context implies this, explicitly stating it is more impactful, as it highlights the grieving self and the sorrowful, longing individual. A similar example is found in the Quranic verse: 'Qāla Rabbi innī wahana al-'aẓmu minni wa-sha'ala ar-ra'su shayban' (He said, 'My Lord, indeed my bones have weakened, and my head has flared up with gray hair.') There is no doubt that the context indicates that the weakness of the bones is his own, as it is illogical to interpret it as the weakness of someone else's bones, especially given the subsequent verse:

And never have I been in my supplication to You, my Lord, unhappy

LIT:(Wa lam akun bi-du'ā'ika Rabbi shaqiyyan)

This is preceded by:

The mention of the mercy of your Lord to His servant Zechariah

LIT: ('Dhikra rahmati Rabbika 'abdahu Zakariyya')

Both ends of the passage clearly reveal the intended meaning. Yet, the phrase is not devoid of the need for the qualifier 'minni' (from me), as it imbues the speech with a profound sense of weakness and frailty, reflecting the deep emotion of the speaker, peace be upon him." (Musa, 1997, p. 291).

Al-Baqillani examines these two poems "to demonstrate that, although they are among the finest examples of poetry, they are not free from lapses and flaws, as is the case with all human speech... In contrast, the Quran contains no lapses or weaknesses, nor does it offer any opportunity for criticism." (Musa, 1997, p. 284).

This unjust critique by Al-Baqillani of Imru' al-Qais's Mu'allaqat attempts to overlook the aesthetic values in Imru' al-Qais's poetry, which is considered a quintessential model of pre-Islamic poetry. Al-Baqillani strives to affirm the superiority of the Quran's eloquence and its distinction from human composition, even when represented by the finest poetic texts, such as the Mu'allaqat, and the finest of the Mu'allaqat, the Mu'allaqat of Imru' al-Qais.

9 –Findings :

At the end of this research, which has lifted a veil from my eyes, I have come to realize the following truths:

- Abd al-Qahir al-Jurjani relied heavily on the Quran, Hadith, sayings of the Companions, poetry, proverbs, speeches, and maxims in his two books, with poetry dominating his selections. He was criticized for prioritizing poetic evidence over Quranic evidence.
- In his book *Dalail al-I'jaz* (Proofs of Inimitability), al-Jurjani passionately defended poetry and highlighted its significance in linguistic studies, dedicating more than 24 pages to this endeavor.
- Al-Jurjani frequently cited the poetry of his contemporaries, as well as poets from various eras, including pre-Islamic poets like Imru' al-Qais, Al-Nabigha, Zuhair, and Al-A'sha; Umayyad poets like Jarir, Al-Farazdaq, and the 'Udhri poets; and Abbasid poets like Abu Tammam, Al-Mutanabbi, Al-Buhturi, and Abu Nuwas.
- Al-Jurjani deviated from the conventions of grammarians and linguists of his time regarding the criteria for citing evidence. He relied on pre-Islamic, Islamic, and contemporary poets, not to explain a word, confirm its Arabic origin, or validate a

grammatical rule, but to explore rhetorical styles and the art of speech.

- The use of poetry to explain rare Quranic terms and elucidate their meanings is an ancient practice, dating back to the early days of Arabic studies. It is reported that Ibn Abbas, when asked about the Quran, would often recite poetry, saying, "If you are puzzled by the Arabic of the Quran, seek it in poetry, for it is the archive of the Arabs." His responses to Nafi' ibn al-Azraq's questions are a prime example.
- Imam Al-Baqillani, in his book *I'jaz al-Quran* (The Inimitability of the Quran), included harsh critical judgments against poetic texts, critiquing their style, structure, and meanings to prove that the miraculous composition of the Quran surpasses all other forms of Arabic literary discourse, including poetry. Among the poetic examples he analyzed were verses from the Mu'allaqah of Imru' al-Qais, which begins with (Qifa nabki min dhikra habibin wa manzili), and much of Al-Buhturi's poem starting with (Ahlan bi-dhalikum al-khayal al-muqbil). Al-Baqillani sought to dismantle this poetic model, wielding his critical tools to undermine their poetic stature and strip them of all beauty and eloquence. His unjust critique of Imru' al-Qais's Mu'allaqah attempted to overlook the aesthetic values in his poetry, which is considered a quintessential model of pre-Islamic poetry. Al-Baqillani strove to affirm the superiority of the Quran's eloquence and its distinction from human composition, even when represented by the finest poetic texts, such as the Mu'allaqat, and the finest of the Mu'allaqat, the Mu'allaqah of Imru' al-Qais.
- Imam Al-Baqillani committed a grave injustice against Arabic rhetoric by unfairly and prejudicially critiquing the finest Arabic poems. He drew comparisons between the Quran and poetry to prove that the Quran is the unparalleled model of eloquence.
- For this reason, rhetoricians have largely confined themselves to the poetic examples cited by al-Jurjani, making little effort to incorporate new evidence from different eras. These examples have been repeated and recycled in rhetorical works for centuries, even up to the present day. Later rhetoricians, who focused on summarizing and abridging earlier works, may have contributed to the decline in citing poetry, opting instead for ready-made examples to avoid the effort of research. They

settled for the shortest and most convenient examples that aligned with their taste, which was influenced by artificial speech.

- The stagnation in poetic evidence can also be attributed to the stagnation of rhetorical arts themselves. Arabic rhetoric has remained largely unchanged since Abdul Qahir al-Jurjani, with later scholars like Al-Sakkaki merely organizing and classifying the foundations he established.

9 Recommendation:

In light of the findings reached in this study, the following recommendations are proposed:

- **Renewing Poetic Evidence in Rhetorical Studies**
Scholars of Arabic rhetoric should move beyond exclusive reliance on the poetic examples cited by ‘Abd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī and actively incorporate poetic texts from later periods, including post-Abbasid and modern Arabic poetry, where appropriate, to revitalize rhetorical analysis.
- **Rebalancing Qur’ānic and Poetic Evidence**
Future research should strive for a balanced methodological approach that integrates Qur’ānic, Hadith, and poetic evidence without privileging one at the expense of the other, while respecting the distinct nature and function of each type of discourse.
- **Reassessing Classical Critical Judgments**
Classical critiques—particularly those of Imām al-Bāqillānī—should be re-evaluated within their historical, theological, and polemical contexts, distinguishing between apologetic objectives and objective rhetorical analysis.
- **Encouraging Independent Rhetorical Analysis**
Modern rhetoricians should engage directly with primary poetic texts rather than relying on inherited examples, applying al-Jurjānī’s rhetorical principles creatively rather than treating them as closed, immutable doctrines.
- **Reviving the Dynamic Nature of Arabic Rhetoric**
Arabic rhetoric should be treated as a living discipline open to development, refinement, and expansion, rather than as a finalized system completed in the classical period.
- **Integrating Rhetoric with Literary Criticism**
Greater interaction between Arabic rhetoric and modern literary criticism is recommended, particularly in areas such as stylistics, discourse analysis, and aesthetics, to enrich rhetorical theory and methodology.

- **Developing New Educational Approaches**
University curricula should reconsider how rhetoric is taught, shifting from rote memorization of traditional examples to analytical engagement with diverse texts across historical periods.
- **Promoting Comparative Rhetorical Studies**
Comparative studies between Arabic rhetoric and other rhetorical traditions may help uncover new analytical tools and broaden the scope of Arabic rhetorical inquiry without compromising its linguistic and cultural foundations.
- **Establishing Updated Rhetorical Corpora**
Scholars are encouraged to compile new, well-documented corpora of poetic and prose texts for rhetorical analysis, categorized by period, genre, and rhetorical function, to serve as accessible resources for future research.

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