

Poetic oppositions in Fatimid Arabic literature: Ibn Hani's Pastiche of Al-Mutanabbi as a model

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Abstract

This study examines the nature and effectiveness of poetic oppositions in Fatimid literature through an analytical comparison of Ibn Hani' Al-Andalusi's praise of the Fatimid caliph Al-Muizz li Din Allah and Al-Mutanabbi's praise of Saif al-Dawla Al-Hamdani. This comparative analysis highlights the distinctive ways Ibn Hani' adapted Al-Mutanabbi's poetic style to suit his ideological and political context, revealing several critical insights into the interplay of influence and innovation. While the Fatimid rulers valued poetry as a political and ideological tool, Ibn Hani's poetry diverges from Al-Mutanabbi's in its structure and thematic emphasis. Rather than following Al-Mutanabbi's journey-focused, introspective approach, Ibn Hani' emphasizes Fatimid accomplishments and authority over Egypt, reflecting ideological convictions rather than personal ambition. Both poets employ artistic exaggeration, elevating their patrons to near-mythical status; however, Ibn Hani's praise resonates with a deeper commitment to affirming the Fatimids' legitimacy. Ultimately, this study underscores how opposition poetry served as a medium of ideological expression in Fatimid literature, positioning Ibn Hani' not only as a poet but as an advocate for the Fatimid state's political and religious narrative.

Keywords: Ideological Poetry; Poetic Influence; Literary Comparison; literature

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1. INTRODUCTION

Poetry in the Fatimid era held a distinctive significance due to the Fatimid rulers' deep interest in literature as a whole. The caliphs actively attracted poets and encouraged both the composition and critique of poetry, as evidenced by historical sources that highlight the Fatimids' fondness for this art form, even going so far as to assign officials to oversee poetic endeavors (Anas, 2010). While this interest in poetry stems from a broader appreciation for literature, it is evident that political struggles and sectarian conflicts played a crucial role in the flourishing of the poetic movement during this period. The Fatimids recognized the important function of poetry in promoting their political and sectarian ideologies.

Within this vibrant literary environment, poetic oppositions emerged as a key feature of poetic expression. The poet Al-Andalusi (1980) notes that his birth and upbringing in Andalusia greatly influenced his engagement with the poetry of Al-Mutanabbi (2001), capturing the imagination of many. Although Ibn Hani was born and raised in Andalusia, he became primarily affiliated with Fatimid literature due to his political and sectarian ties. His close relationship with the Fatimid caliph Al-Muizz li Din Allah (345 AH) positioned him as a court poet and a staunch defender of the Fatimid cause, which led many scholars to categorize him as a significant figure in the state's literary court.

A critical factor motivating Ibn Hani to leave Seville for Al-Muizz's court was his pride in converting to Shiism in an Umayyad society, where his beliefs were met with resentment. His extremist views and adherence to doctrines that diverged from prevailing Islamic teachings made him a target for accusations of infidelity and apostasy among his fellow Andalusians (Al-Andalusi, 1980). For instance, Al-Zarkali (2002) describes him as having been born in Seville, where he faced accusations of philosophical doctrines and a prominent Ismaili inclination in his poetry, which led to misunderstandings about his king. This tension prompted him to travel through Africa and Algeria until he connected with Al-Muizz Al-Obaidi Ibn Ismail, remaining with him in Al-Mansuriya near Kairouan. Following Al-Muizz's departure for Egypt, Ibn Hani returned to Seville, where he met a treacherous end upon reaching Cyrenaica (Al-Zarkali, 2002).

Poetic oppositions stand out as a significant purpose within Arabic poetry, integral to the creative process. They rely on various characteristics that lend them unique importance in the study of Arabic poetry at multiple levels, particularly regarding patterns of influence and the resultant values, whether positive or negative (Lahiani, 2022). These oppositions facilitate inspiration and the reproduction of poetic legacies, reflecting the awareness later poets have of their predecessors' achievements. This dynamic offers literary scholars ample opportunities for comparison and exploration of the cultural frameworks that have historically contributed to the evolution of this poetic form.

The history of Arabic literature necessitates a similar poetic model in the mind of the opposing poet, who seeks to draw inspiration from past experiences on artistic, intellectual, and psychological levels. Poetry, in this sense, serves as a means of psychological healing (Zhang, 2022). This paper aims to engage with this experience, striving to either surpass it or employ it within a context that aligns with the poet's unique orientation.

Based on this perspective, poetic opposition embodies a deliberate influence on poetic texts. Scholars of Arabic literature largely agree that opposition occurs when "a poet composes a poem on a particular topic, employing any meter and rhyme. A subsequent poet then admires this poem for its artistic qualities and superior formulation, proceeding to create a new poem that mirrors the meter, rhyme, and subject of the original" (Al-Shayeb, 1998).

One crucial foundation for defining the overall framework of poems classified as oppositions, beyond merely sharing meter, rhyme, and subject is the conscious inspiration drawn from the emotional experiences expressed in the original work. This connection can be assessed based on the validity of a poem's alignment with this purpose, indicating that the current poetic text is a conscious invocation of a previous text across various dimensions, including subject matter, emotional experience, ideas, meanings, and vocabulary. On this level, it is essential to address a point raised by Abbas, who argues that limiting the definition of opposition to shared meter, rhyme, and subject expands the category so much that numerous Arabic poems sharing these

characteristics could be classified as oppositions even when they do not exhibit true oppositional qualities. Abbas notes, "The poetic works may align in their meter, rhyme, and subjects, yet they do not signify an opposition of the latter to the previous; the meter of Arabic poetry, rhyme, and syntactic diacritics all fall under multiple possibilities. If we consider such examples as oppositions, a significant portion of Arabic poetry could be labeled as opposition poetry" (Abbas, 1994).

It is clear that poetic oppositions, with their interconnected texts, have paved the way for modern critics to recognize them as a form of intertextuality. Gérard Genette describes this as a relationship of joint presence among two or more texts, which evokes a sense of imitation, representation, or transformation (Hafez, 1996). Following this framework, Muhammad Bennis characterizes opposition as a unique reading conducted by the creator of the absent text, primarily governed by three principles: rumination, absorption, and dialogue.

In the first principle, rumination, the present text is viewed as a continuation of the absent text, essentially reimagining and depicting it. The author's role in this context is to present the absent text while adhering to specific poetic meters. The second principle, absorption, involves the acceptance, sanctification, and rewriting of the absent text in a manner that preserves its essence. The author operates from a steadfast conviction that this text is not open to criticism or dialogue, thus serving to validate and define the absent text within its historical context. The third principle is characterized by the absence and dismantling of all backward concepts, culminating in the obliteration of the text's ideal structures. This final principle represents the highest and most elevated form of intertextuality, which does not entertain the notion of appeasement (Aloka Network, 2012).

1.1. Purpose of study

This study employs a descriptive and analytical approach to provide a comprehensive overview of the poetry of opposition within Fatimid literature. It focuses on a specific poem by Ibn Hani', composed in praise of the caliph Al-Muizz li Din Allah, as a representative example of this poetic form. By analyzing this poem, the study aims to illuminate the distinctive characteristics and nuances of opposition poetry during the Fatimid era. The beginning of the poem is:

taqul banu alebbas hal futht msr faqul libani alebbas qad qudy alamr

Of course, it should be noted that this poem came as a form of opposition to the poem of Al-Mutanabbi, which he composed in praise of Ali bin Ahmed Al-Antaki, and its beginning:

'Utaen khytan min fawarisiha aldhr whydan wama qawli kadha wamaei as-sbr

2. METHOD AND MATERIALS

This study is based, on the formulation of its topic, on the effectiveness of the analytical comparison between two poems belonging to the poetry of oppositions. Opposition is represented by observing the formulas of textual distinctions between a poetic model of Ibn Hani' in which he praises the Fatimid caliph al-Muizz li Din Allah, and another poetic model of Al-Mutanabbi in which he praises Saif al-Dawla Al-Hamdani. The first opposes the second and corresponds to it in rhythm, rhyme, and subject. In the context of seeking to understand the nature of opposition poetry in Fatimid literature, as reflected in Ibn Hani's poem, the study concludes that the circle of poetic opposition is not only complete with the availability of its apparent elements (weight, rhyme, and subject (Abboushi & Azzeh 2023). Rather it needs to be inspired by the emotional experience in the poem that is opposed. Then adapted to the specificity of the current experience of the opposition poet. It is the condition that Ibn Hani's poem fulfilled within its semantic level, and poetically takes it out of the category of copying and imitation, which was often associated with the concept of poetic oppositions.

For this study to provide the objective basis on which it is built, it begins with a brief definition of poetic oppositions, and then it looks at the nature of the relationship between Ibn Hani and Al-Mutanabbi, reaching the discovery of the most important incentives that direct the Fatimid poet's approach towards the poetry of Abu al-Tayyib.

Finally, the study attempts to monitor the most important features that show the impact of Al-Mutanabbi's poem as an absent text that somehow relates to Ibn Hani's poem on the technical and semantic levels. The study does not miss interpreting Ibn Hani's praise painting in light of its purely ideological foundations. As it seems clear that the Fatimid poet emanates from a complete belief in the Ismaili doctrine, and the excessive glorification of the ruler in a way that raises him above human ranks.

3. RESULTS

3.1. Between Al-Mutanabbi and Ibn Hani Al-Andalusi

Poetic oppositions were at their peak in Andalusia. The Andalusian poets were preoccupied with reading the poetic heritage of the Arab East as the supreme model that Andalusians sought to emulate and try to transcend and surpass. At a time when the Andalusians tried to draw inspiration from oriental models and imitate them, he opposed them. Al-Mutanabbi (2001) was witnessing the most prominent presence in their poems, to the extent that prompted the Spanish orientalist Gumeth (1974) to describe Al-Mutanabbi (2001) as the idolized poet. He advances: "Andalusia did not lag behind the rest of the Arab world in its worship of Al-Mutanabbi. This happened at a very early time. To say that it happened while the poet was alive, and when we read an Andalusian collection or an anthology of Andalusian poetry, we notice in some cases, and we think in other cases, that behind poetry lie the ideas and images of the great artist of Kufa" Gumeth (1974).

Perhaps this observation of Gumeth (1974) was not based on a personal impression, as much as it was the result of his tracking of many opinions. That was mentioned in the Arab heritage sources and confirmed the great influence of Al-Mutanabbi (2001) on the poets of Andalusia (1998), and Al-Shantarini (1997) refers to that by saying: "As for Al-Mutanabbi (2001), Andalusia was preoccupied with him, and the eyes watched in his poetry, so many copied his poetry and carry on mentioning his name, Al-Shantarini (1997).

Abu al-Tayyib garnered significant attention from literary circles in Andalusia, particularly among poets who admired his work. Among these poets, Ibn Hani' stands out as the most influenced by al-Mutanabbi, frequently invoking his poetry. This observation is supported by numerous scholars who have studied Ibn Hani'. For instance, Daif (1960) notes that Ibn Hani' is often associated with al-Mutanabbi, with Andalusians referring to him as the "Mutanabbi of Morocco." Those who read Ibn Hani's collection will notice his emulation of al-Mutanabbi in many of his poems. Furthermore, in a poem comprising twenty-one verses, Ibn Hani' explicitly expresses his engagement with al-Mutanabbi's work, mentioning that he spends nights immersed in reading and interpreting it (Gumeth, 1974).

The influence of Al-Mutanabbi on Ibn Hani was not limited to the stage in which the latter was living in Andalusia, which is the stage of youth and the formation of the intellectual mood. Rather, he exceeded it and perhaps increased his presence in the Fatimid court, when Ibn Hani' came to the Fatimid court of al-Mu'izz li Din Allah, who wanted to attract to his court a poet speaking on behalf of the Fatimid state, which he found with Ibn Hani in particular. Despite that, fate did not allow Ibn Hani' to play a vital role in the court of al-Mu'izz, as the sources are unanimous that he died before he was over forty years old. However, the following phrase uttered by al-Mu'izz when he was informed of the death of Ibn Hani' summarized the position the poet occupied in his court: "This is what we hope to be proud of by the poets of the East, but it was not possible for us." Yaqoot al-Hamawi (1995) Perhaps, this saying that sums up the importance of Ibn Hani' to the Fatimids did not come until after the poet fulfilled the justifications for his entitlement, such as defending the Fatimids, glorifying their deeds, and praising their caliph, who approaches the limits of sanctity and perfection in the eyes of the followers of the Ismaili Shiite school of thought.

3.2. Al-Mutanabbi's poem vs. Ibn Hani's poem

The first feature that we can notice in the two poems, the subject of study here, is their shared meter, rhyme, and subject, and these foundations can be easily extrapolated. Because they represent broad features in any poem they can be properly classified within the framework of poetic opposition. The two poems are from the Al-taweel meter. Their unified rhyme has the same letter (the letter ra) they share their main subject. The two poems were organized in praise of a person whom the poet reveres and aspires to gain favor with, represented

by the persons; Ali bin Ahmed Al-Antaki (344 AH) in the poem of Al-Mutanabbi (2001), and Al-Ḥūsī (1970) in the poem of Al-Andalusi (1980).

The second formal note, shows a clear difference between the two poems, as Al-Mutanabbi's (2001) poem is composed of forty-two lines, while Al-Andalusi's (1980) lines amounted to one hundred and eight. On another formal level, it is noticed that Ibn Hani repeated quite a few of al-Mutanabbi's (2001) rhymes, either in their original form or in any of their forms.

If we go beyond these initial formal remarks, we can see through a quick reading of the two poems that Ibn Hani' did not identify himself with Al-Mutanabbi's (2001) text to the extent that it made him an imitator. Rather, he tried to draw inspiration from it, drawing from the emotional and intellectual experiences of Al-Mutanabbi, (2001) which gives his text a broader space to confirm its significance, bypassing copying and imitation that may degrade the value of the poetic experience.

Perhaps the first thing that confirms this is the comparison of the two styles adopted by both poets in their introduction before ending with praise. Al-Mutanabbi (2001) began his poem in a purely subjective manner, which is evident in the beginning of the poem, which establishes Al-Mutanabbi's (2001) deep sense of his uniqueness, and reveals his great pride in himself, saying:

utaein khaylan min fawarisiha aldahru wahydan wama qawly kadha wamaei alsabru
w'ashjau minni kull yawmin salamati wama thabatat 'illa wa fi nafsiha 'amru
tamarrast bialafat hatta taraktuha taqwl 'amat almawt 'am dhueir alth'uru

Al-Mutanabi (2001)

The poet portrays life as a battle in which he fights large armies, the strongest and most powerful of which is 'time' that will pass over a person and defeat him, sooner or later, but Al-Mutanabbi (2001) as usual portrays himself steadfast, strong, despite his loneliness, and he has no weapon but patience before he moves to poetry. As in wisdom, he presents a summary of his experience in life within a framework that expresses the human experience in general:

'lidha alfadl lam yarfaek an shukr naqisun ala hibatin fal-fadlu fymun lahu alshukr
wa mun yunfiq alsa'ata fi jami malihi makhafat faqr falladhy fa'al alfaqr

Al-Mutanabbi (2001)

If the bounty does not relieve you of incomplete gratitude for a gift, then the bounty is for the one to whom thanks are due. Whoever spends hours collecting his money out of fear of poverty, then, did poverty.

It can be seen that Al-Mutanabbi (2001) did not deviate from the structure that characterized the praise poem in Arabic poetry in his poem. He takes a journey to reach the praiseworthy. As usual, this journey took place in the vast and desolate desert, which could not be traversed except with great hardship and difficulty. This implicitly reflected his great suffering, and his overcoming of many obstacles and hindrances before reaching his goal. Perhaps this is an objective indication of the importance of the praised one on the one hand, and the poet's entitlement to gifts and endowments as a result of traveling all these distances to meet the praised one on the other hand:

wakharq makan alees minhu makanuna min alees fyhi wasit alkurt waz-zahr
yakhdn bina fi jawzihi waka'anana ala kuratin 'aw 'arduhu ma'ana safaru
wa yawm wasalnah bilaylin ka'annama ala 'ufqih min barqihi hulalun humru
walaylin wasalnah biaumin ka'annama ala matnih min dajnihi hulalun kuudru
waghaythun zananna tahtuh 'ann amiran ala lam yamut 'aw fi alsahab lahu qabru
'Aw abn abnih albaqi Ali bn 'ahmad yajwd bih law lam 'ajzi wayady sifru

In this way, Al-Mutanabbi (2001) avoids praising Ali bin Ahmed al-Antaki, which is not found in Al-Andalusi's (1980) poem, which began in a declarative manner by reviewing the facts of the Fatimids' control of Egypt by Jawhar al-Saqili and the accompanying humiliation of the Abbasids:

taqul banu alabbas hal futihat msru fa'qul libani alabbas qad qudya alamr

waqad jawaz al'iskndryta jwhru tutalieahu albushra wa yqadimuh alnnsru
waqad 'awfadat misr 'iilayh wufudha wzeed 'iilaa almequd min jisriha jsru

Al-Andalusi (1980)

In the midst of this, Al-Andalusi (1980) is not satisfied with calling the Fatimid control of Egypt a conquest. Rather, makes it a victory for the religion of God, and the upholding of the truth, until he ends his introduction with a quick and smooth disposal of the praise of (Al-Hūsi, 1970). The poet tells us that he is the son of the Messenger of God and that the conquest of Egypt and the expansion of the state of The Fatimids were nothing but revenge for the suffering of the family of the Prophet, peace be upon him.

waqad 'ashraqat khyl al'ilah twaleuha ala aldin wa-dunya kama tala' alfjru
wadha bn nbi illahi yatlubu wtrahu wakan har 'in an la yadie lahu watr
faqad dalt alddnya li'al mohmmadin waqad jrarrat 'athyaluha aldawlatu albkru

Thus, it seems clear that Al-Andalusi's (1980) focus is on the subject of the conquest of Egypt by the Fatimids, and on promoting al-Mu'izz as God's caliph on earth, and the bearer of the right that he returned to after it was lost to the Abbasids. This made him lax attention to the structure of the traditional praise poem, as is the case with Al-Mutanabbi, which shows that Ibn Hani not only proceeds from a political perspective but also appears to be faithful to his Ismaili faith.

Moreover, if we look at the image of praiseworthiness between the two poets, we notice that there is a remarkable similarity in dealing with it within the two poems. A similarity imposed by the nature of the lexicon of Arab praise poetry, which often revolves within the framework of describing the praiseworthy with generosity, courage, strength, and other features.

Al-Mutanabbi (2001) relied on his imagination to establish artistic images that contain much of the usual exaggeration in Arab praise poetry. As he returns with gains and generosity to a time scale that extends to the grandfather of the praised one, he aims from that to indicate the continuity of generosity, and giving as qualities rooted in the offspring to whom his praised one belongs. However, this comes within the framework of exaggeration that establishes a picture of this grandfather as if he rose to the sky and did not die, or that his grave, due to his high status, is located in the sky and not on the earth. He says:

wghyth zinana tahtahu an amran ala lam yamut 'aw fi alsahab lahu qabru
'Aw ibn ibnuh albaqi Ali ibn Ahmd yajud bihi law lam ajz wa yadi sfru
w'in sahban judahu mithl joudhi shab alaa kl al-sahiab lahu fakhru

Al-Mutanabbi (2001)

Al-Mutanabbi (2001) uses the inverted analogy here in a different way. He sees that the clouds that bestow abundant goodness and resemble the goodness that comes from Ali bin Ahmed Al-Antaki are undoubtedly the most benevolent and beneficial to people among all the clouds. Al-Mutanabbi (2001) confirms that when he makes the praiseworthy like cold water without which no life exists:

kannk bard alma'a la aish dunhu wa-law knta bard alma'a lam yakun al-shr

Al-Mutanabi (2001)

Perhaps what seems clear in the praise written by Al-Mutanabbi, (2001) at the level of the qualities he attributes to his praises, is that he did not deviate from the overall qualities we often read in Arabic poetry. They are qualities, no matter how exaggerated they are - that remain realized within the reasonable that can be explained within the framework of literary creativity based on images, imagination, and metaphors. Al-Mutanabbi (2001) who is known for his heightened sense of self, acquiesces - in the end - to the objective conditions imposed on him by time and place, which are the circumstances that made poetry go beyond being a literary genre through which person expresses his susceptibilities and feelings, and conveys his thoughts and visions, to be a craft for making money.

Accordingly, this poem, as in all of Abi al-Tayyib's praise poems, achieves a conflict between a sense of pride and self-esteem and the reality that forced him to praise the people of prestige and authority who could bestow money on him.

Al-Andalusi (1980)

However, the situation differs with Al-Andalusi (1980), who seems to believe in his political and doctrinal convictions and has directed his approach to the praise board in a different direction. He focused on those characteristics that promote the Fatimid rule in general, and the reign of al-Mu'izz in particular, and what appears is that the praise board at Ibn Hani' is radically based on doctrinal and political visions that express his convictions.

It is the first observation that distinguishes it in this context from Al-Mutanabbi's (2001) poem, and based on that, the reason can be understood from Al-Andalusi's (1980) depiction of Al-Mu'izz as the Imam, who must be obeyed, with what this description carries of religious meanings first, and secondly political:

'Imam ra'aytu ad-din mrtbtaan bih fata'athu fawzun wa-eisyanahu khsru

Al-Andalusi (1980)

Al-Mu'izz is not only a man of politics, generosity, and wars, but also the Imam of the sect, with the characteristics and connotations that the term Imam carries that go beyond the boundaries of what is earthly, and reach the limit of holiness according to the adherents of the Ismaili sect. Perhaps Ibn Hani's preoccupation with confirming the value of the Fatimid caliph and his right to the caliphate, and then his starting from Shiite foundations in that, is what prompted him to bestow on this caliph with qualities that almost make him transcend human limits, placing him in a position that transcends with transcendence until he reaches the limits of holiness and perfection:

*faya malkan hada almalayiki hadihi walkin najur lahu al'anbia' lahu nijru
waya razqaan min kffh nasha'a alhayia wa' iilaa famin 'asrariha naba'a albahar*

Al-Andalusi (1980)

Rather, he makes the praising of al-Mu'izz parallel – in some way – to praising God, The Almighty, and the Highest, which is a gross exaggeration and a crude transgression in bestowing attributes on those who praise Him:

'Araa madhah kalmidhi lilahi 'innh qunutun watasbihun yhut bihi al-wizr

Al-Andalusi (1980)

Perhaps such qualities, with their exaggeration and transgression, should be placed in the general political/doctrinal context in which they were said. The poet proceeds from his conviction of the legitimacy of the Fatimid rule that he advocates for, and from his Ismaili faith that makes Imam's ranks close to the limits of prophecy and may even exceed them.

And Ibn Hani, in his quest to prove the Fatimids' right to rule, tries to present logical arguments and evidence based on Sharia as the final decision in determining that, he says:

*'Afi abn 'abi alsubtin 'am fi taliqikum tnzzlat alayaat walsuwr alghur
fdwnkum ya 'ahl bayt mohammad sifat mu'izz aldiin jmmatha alqadar*

Al-Andalusi (1980)

The two grandsons are Al-Hassan and Al-Hussein, and their father is Ali bin Abi Talib (may God be pleased with them). As for the 'Taleeqe', it is the name given by Al-Andalusi (1980) here to Al-Muttalib (2001) (may God be pleased with him) the grandfather of the Abbasids.

In this comparison, Ibn Hani tries to derive legitimacy for the rule of the Fatimids based on their descendants extending back to Ali bin Abi Talib, at the same time slandering the Abbasids and their descendants extending back to Abbas bin Abdul Muttalib that is the base of the Fatimid state.

The intellectual focus on a political and doctrinal issue caused Al-Andalusi (1980), as is evident, to some degree of determination and distancing the text from its poetic atmosphere. Several images reveal an outstanding poetic talent but it was lost amid political and sectarian ideas. From that, his depiction of Al-Ḥūsī (1970) in a way that is filled with strength to the extent that it is reflected in time with its days and nights. Rather, the "Imam" transcends the limits of human capacity, as if he is holding the reins of the entire universe:

wmqtbl ayamh mthalillun 'iilayh a-shbab alghdu wa'azzaman alnidru
'Adar kama shaa' alwaraa wathyrat alaa alsabeatu al'aflaku 'unmilat al-share

Al-Andalusi (1980)

In his depiction of the glory of Al-Mu'izz and his presence that brings abundant goodness to people, he approaches the meaning of al-Mutanabbi, who linked the presence of goodness to people with the presence of Ali Ibn Ahmad al-Antaki. Al-Andalusi (1980) divides the days into two halves, glory to Al-Mu'izz, and abundance of goodness to the people. This is what the poet expressed figuratively, as he wanted all the good, so he mentioned some related ideas:

'ala 'inama alayam ayamuk al-lati laka alshatr min ni'mayiha walana alshatru
lak almj d minha yalika alkhayr wal ulaa watabqaa lana minha alhulubatu waldru

Al-Andalusi (1980)

Perhaps starting from the political vision that Al-Andalusi (1980) adopted in promoting the Fatimids is what made him focus on the quality of justice that is manifested in its best form in the person of al-Mu'izz. The latter recommended the Jawhar al-Saqili with justice and made it a Sunnah (norm) for him to deal with people. The Fatimids, when they conquered Egypt, did not violate its sanctities and did not oppress anyone, but rather their concern was to establish security and stability:

suninatu lahum fihim min al-adl snnatunt hi alayatu almijli biburhaniha alsihru
wa'awsiatuh fihim birifqka mrdfanun bi-judika ma'qudun bihi ahduka albru
yaqul rjalun shahaduu yawm hakmahu bith' a tamuru addnya walaw annha fqr
fhsbukum ya ahl misr bi-adlahi dlylaan alaa al-adl alla'thii anhu yftaru

Al-Andalusi (1980)

If justice is the basis of kingship, then it must be the basis of governance in the Fatimid state, and an attribute, that, according to Al-Andalusi (1980) view cannot take place except with a person such as Al-Ḥūsī (1970).

4. CONCLUSIONS

This study sought to offer a comprehensive understanding of poetic oppositions during the Fatimid era by analyzing a specific instance in which Ibn Hani Al-Andalusi's poetry counters that of Aba Al-Tayyib Al-Mutanabbi. The primary aim was to identify the impact of Al-Mutanabbi's style and themes on Ibn Hani's work, especially in terms of ideological and stylistic choices. The results reveal several significant aspects of this influence and divergence, helping clarify Ibn Hani's role in Fatimid poetry.

Fatimid rulers held poetry in high esteem, viewing it as an essential tool for political and ideological promotion. This cultural value elevated Ibn Hani' Al-Andalusi to prominence as one of their most influential poets, much as Al-Mutanabbi became essential to Saif al-Dawla's court. Ibn Hani's relationship with the Fatimid caliph Al-Mu'izz li Din Allah thus mirrors Al-Mutanabbi's connection with his patron, though in a distinctly Fatimid ideological context.

While Al-Mutanabbi's influence on Ibn Hani' is evident, their works diverge in both structure and style. Al-Mutanabbi's praise of Saif al-Dawla is deeply personal and reflective, often infused with self-pride and philosophical musings. In contrast, Ibn Hani's praise focuses primarily on the Fatimid conquest of Egypt, intended as a reminder to the Abbasids of Fatimid strength. His poem departs from Al-Mutanabbi's introspective and wisdom-centered opening, choosing instead to foreground political themes that highlight the Fatimids' achievements.

The structural choices of each poet further illustrate this divergence. Al-Mutanabbi traditionally begins his poems with reflections or personal journeys that lead him toward his object of praise. In contrast, Ibn Hani opens with pride in Fatimid's achievements, quickly transitioning to his praise of Al-Mu'izz without following conventional poetic structures that recount a personal journey.

Both poets employ artistic exaggeration to elevate their patrons to near-mythical status, portraying each as a source of global good. These hyperbolic portrayals showcase their poetic skill, even if the exaggerations may challenge logical or religious interpretations. However, the purpose behind these portrayals differs: Al-Mutanabbi's praise often reflects his pursuit of personal gain, while Ibn Hani's praise aligns with ideological conviction. His depiction of Al-Mu'izz stems from a deep belief in the Fatimid leader's legitimacy, using poetic praise to advocate for the Fatimid cause.

In summary, while Al-Mutanabbi's influence on Ibn Hani is evident, Ibn Hani crafts a poetic voice deeply rooted in his political and ideological beliefs, enhancing the Fatimid caliph's image in a way that reflects an unwavering commitment to the Fatimid state and doctrine. This study thus illustrates how poetry served not only as a means of artistic expression but also as a vehicle for political ideology and sectarian loyalty in the Fatimid era.

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