
THE BURDA'S ANTIPHON AND REFRAIN: A DESCRIPTIVE STUDY

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Abstract:

The Arabic poem *al-kawakib al-durriyya fi madh khayr al-bariyya* (celestial lights in praise of the best of creation), known as *al-Burdha* (The mantle) is arguably the most popular poetic text in the Islamic world still actually sung, studied and learned by heart by scholarly elites and common people alike. Being a major literary expression of devotion to the prophet Muhammed, the *Burda* is conceived as a classical Arabic praise poem integrating lyrical, hagiographic, and invocatory elements. Written in 13th –century Egypt, it has inspired a vast corpus of commentaries, adoptions, and translation in probably every language spoken by Muslims communities around the world. Here in this article, I would like to draw upon the technique of *Burda* including an antiphon/refrain. This technique, which is central to most of the poem's performances, is hardly mentioned in any of the written material about the *Burda*. The origin and timing of the antiphon/refrain are not quite clear the fact is that the *Burda* was performed and listened to repeatedly very early on. There are even indications that the *Burda* was performed by specialists, a group of professional reciters called *qurrā' al-burda* (reciters of the *Burda*)⁵². This version has a further episode added, including a dialogue between the poet and the prophet. This article also highlights some of the important facts and its implications which surround in the early accounts of the composition of the *Burda*. the objective of this article is to indicate how the *Burda* play a significant role in creating an uncannily alluring sweet music which strikes the chords of our souls.

Key words: *Antiphon*, *Refrain*, *Origin and timing*

1.INTRODUCTION

Qasīdat al-Burda in Arabic: "قصيدة البردة" or *al-Burda* in short, is a poem praising of the Islamic Messenger Muhammad composed by the prominent Sufi mystic of Imam al-Basiri from Egypt. The poem whose actual title is *al-Kawākib ad-dhurriyya fī Madh Khayr al-Bariyya* ("لكواكب الذرية في مدح خير البرية"), is very famous mainly in the Sunni Islamic world. It is entirely in praise of Muhammad, who was said to have been praised non-stop by the afflicted poet, to the point that the Prophet appeared in a dream and wrapped it in a cloak or mantle ; in the morning, the poet discovered that God had healed him.

Banat Souad, a poem written by Kaab bin Zuhair originally called "Al-Burda". This poem was read in front of Muhammad after converting to Islam. Muhammad was so moved that he removed his cloak and wrapped it on him. Its original flower is not as famous as that written by Imam Al-Basri, although Muhammad used to wrap his mantle over a heel and not in a dreamlike in the case of Imam Al-Basri.

The poem has seen several different translations, into a variety of languages.^[4] Arguably the most important translation of recent times is that by Timothy Winter into English. Sunni Muslims usually revere the poem. These are preserved and read in gatherings, and their verses decorate the walls of public buildings and mosques. This poem decorated Al-Masjid al-Nabawi (the mosque of Muhammad) in Medina for centuries. Over 90 comments on this poem have been written and translated into Hausa, Persian, Urdu, Turkish, Berber, Punjabi, English, French, German, Sindhi, Saraik, Norwegian, Chinese (called *Tianfangshijing*) and other languages. It is known and recited by a large number of Sunni Muslims, usually on special occasions, such as Mawlid, which makes it one of the most recited poems in the world.

Here in this article, I would like to draw upon the technique of *Burda* including an antiphon/refrain. This technique, which is central to most of the poem's performances, is hardly mentioned in any of the written material about the *Burda*. Including rhythm of *qaseeda al burda* in a way how it will be a relief of heart for Sunni Islamic world and how it will a contraviasial subjeti between *ahlusunna* and *ahlul bida*. The origin

and timing of the antiphon/refrain are not quite clear the fact is that the *Burda* was performed and listened to repeatedly very early on.

2. MEANING OF ANTIPHON AND REFRAIN

The looser term antiphony is generally used for any call and response style of singing, such as the kirtan or the sea shanty and other work songs, and songs and worship in African and African-American culture. Antiphonal music is that performed by two choirs in interaction, often singing alternate musical phrases.^[1] *Antiphonal psalmody* is the singing or musical playing of psalms by alternating groups of performers.^[2] The term “antiphony” can also refer to a choir-book containing antiphons. ‘dialogus’, from Greek ‘dialogos’, from ‘dialegethai’ meaning ‘to converse with’ (‘dia’ for ‘through’ and ‘legein’ for ‘speak’).¹

Antiphon, in Roman Catholic liturgical music, chant melody and text sung before and after a psalm verse, originally by alternating choirs. Antiphon, in greek liturgy. —The Greek Liturgy uses antiphons, not only in the Office, but also in the Mass, at Vespers, and at all the canonical Hours. Nor is this all; antiphons have their prescribed place in almost every liturgical function.²

In *qaseeda al burda* there will be an antiphon and refrain after every line of *burda*. So, we use this word for antiphon and refrain. in Arabic *jawabul qasida* (جواب القصيدة) as all reciters of *qaseeda al burda* (known as *qurra al burda*) selects the refrain that will differs according to their culture and places.

3. BURDA’S ANTIPHON

We have to discuss about this technique, which is central to most of the poem’s performances, is hardly mentioned in any of the written material about the *Burda*? Or it had any authenticity? Or it had mentioned in any material related to *burda*?

The origin and timing of the antiphon/refrain are not quite clear. What is clear is the fact that the *Burda* was performed and listened to repeatedly very early on, starting with the aforementioned *Bahā’ al-Dīn* and his family³. There are even indications that

¹ J. McKinnon, *Music in early Christian literature* (Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 10.

² Roman Catholic liturgical music

³³ beiruter texte und studien herausgegeben vom orient-institut beirut, band 122, Performing Religion: Actors, contexts, and texts Case studies on Islam, Edited by Ines Weinrich

the Burda was performed by specialists, a group of professional reciters called *qurrā'* *al-burda* (reciters of the Burda). And there is a second version of *al-Būṣīrī's* dream which is reported by Mubārak and Kīlānī.

3.1 Opinion of Mubārak and Kīlānī

Only we can find about the refrain and antiphon in *burda* is from Mubārak and Kīlānī⁴. it is -according to researcher- only one source for refrain and antiphon in qaseeda al burda he says that

“And the dream of al-Būṣīrī has (produced) phantasms in the minds of the Sufis They liked one to recite after every verse: *Mawlāya ṣalli wa-sallim dā'imān abadan / 'alā ḥabībika khayri l-khalqi kullihimi*. [مولاي صل وسلم من أبدا على حبيبك خير] They said (qālū): The underlying reason to choose this verse and not another one is that he, may God have mercy upon him [i.e. al-Būṣīrī], when he composed this poem, he saw the prophet in a dream: [al-Būṣīrī] recited the poem in front of him, and [the prophet] swayed out of delight like a bough. When he finished saying “*Fa-mablaghu l- 'ilmi fīhi annahu basharun*” [the first hemistich of v. 51 فمبلغ العلم فيه أنه بشر] he could not complete the verse. [The prophet] pbuh said: “Recite!”⁵³, and [al-Būṣīrī] answered: “I can't execute the second hemistich, oh messenger of God.” The messenger told him: “Say ‘*wa-annahu khayru khalqi llāhi kullihimi*’”, and al-Būṣīrī inserted this hemistich [وأنه خير خلق الله كلهم] into the preceding verse. And he made it a prayer (ṣalāt) to be repeated after every verse, out of consideration for the prophet's words”

In short, from their opinion the antiphon for qaseeda al burda is: *Mawlāya ṣalli wa-sallim dā'imān abadan / 'alā ḥabībika khayri l-khalqi kullihimi*. As it is very famous at refrain for burda and other *moulids* and denotes that from the meaning of a verse which had reviled by prophet Muhammed for imam al busoori he made the refrain for the burda including that meaning.

3.2 From early compositions

The version of the dream including the refrain is not found in the early accounts of the composition of the Burda: neither al-Ṣafadī⁵ nor al-Kutubī nor al-Maqrīzī⁶ mention

⁴ Muqaddima”, 30, without mentioning a source.

the episode. In the commentary by Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī (d. 1567) who remarks with reference to the 14th century scholar al-Zarkashī⁷: “This verse is, as al-Zarkashī said, one of the best and most praiseful (amdaḥ) verses of the poem.” The commentaries by al-Azharī, al-Ghazzī, and al-Bājūrī make no reference to the refrain. The German translations from the 19th century used early commentaries, but do not refer to any refrain. In short, we didn’t can find out any other evidence for burda’s refrain from another composition

3.3 Burda’s refrain is a later addition

Therefore, it is safe to assume we are dealing with a later addition. If it did stem from an earlier period, there is no reason why these authors would not have mentioned it in the same way as the other stories they related. A systematic evaluation of the commentaries is beyond the scope of this article. The earliest hint of a special position of verse.

Besides his criticism of the inventions with respect to the Burda, Kīlānī offers an explanation: the hemistich stems from one of al-Ṣarṣarī’s (d. 1258) poems, he suggests: *Muḥammadun khayru khalqī llāhi kullihimi / wa-huwa lladhī li-fakhāri lmajdi yantasibu.* (محمد خير خلق الله كلهم-وهو الذي في فخر المجد ينتسب). Various similar expressions, as in the first hemistich quoted by Kīlānī, can also be found in other praise poems for Muḥammad, including the Qaṣīda al-muḥammadiyya by al-Būṣīrī. This may provide a possible origin of the words, but it does not explain why the refrain was introduced and why its introduction was so successful.

The answer to this question may be better approached if we take the recitation practice into consideration. If we take the label of “Sufī” in Mubārak and Kīlānī as an allusion to a broader historical period, we can try to contextualize this practice within other religious developments during that period. In the 13th century, Sufism started to feature more prominently as a religious, social, and political force. At the same time, the commemoration of the prophet’s birthday became a widely followed practice. In

⁵ Ḥalīl ibn Aybak al-Ṣafadī, or Salah al-Dīn al-Ṣafadī; full name - Salah al-Dīn Abū al-Ṣafa Khalīl ibn Aybak ibn ‘Abd Allāh al-Albakī al-Ṣafarī al-Damascī Shafī’i. (1296 – 1363); he was a Turkic^[1] Mamluk author and historian. He studied under the historian and Shafī’i scholar, al-Dhahabī.

⁶ Al-Maqrīzī or Makrīzī (Arabic: المقرئ), he was Taqī al-Dīn Abū al-‘Abbās Aḥmad ibn ‘Alī ibn ‘Abd al-Qādir ibn Muḥammad al-Maqrīzī

⁷ Abū Abdullāh Badr ad-Dīn Mohammed bin Abdullah bin Bahādir az-Zarkashī (1344–1392/ 745–794 AH), better known as Az-Zarkashī, was a fourteenth century Islamic scholar. He primarily resided in Mamluk-era Cairo

this context, a genre of narratives emerged about the life and birth of Muḥammad which was predominantly meant to be recited publically. Some of these narratives feature the invocation of blessings upon Muḥammad which are inserted into the text, often at the end of a section. It is safe to assume that these are not merely employed as a means of dividing the text into sections or as an embellishment but are meant to be recited collectively, to be performed as a prayer between sections.

3.4 Tasliya refrain

Marion Katz⁸ defines the *taṣliya* formulas as “a participatory element of mawlid performance”. Although no instructions for the recitation are included in the texts and the *taṣliya* may very well only be included later in the related manuscripts and printings, it appears obvious that its inclusion reflects the reading practice. In a contemporary collection of mawlid texts from the 13th to the 20th century, almost every text features *taṣliya* formulas; further, more recent texts in this collection have quite detailed instructions for recitation roles

Taṣliya was already a feature of an early repertory of pious utterances. However, it gained more public notability – or acoustic publicity – towards the end of the 14th century when it became common practice for muezzins to add eulogies after the call to prayer.⁶¹ Furthermore, various forms of *taṣliya* became central to Sufi congregations, culminating in the emergence of weekly meetings especially devoted to the recitation of benedictions for the prophet in the first half of the 16th century. Such developments were fostered by prayer books like the immensely popular *Dalā'il al-khayrāt* (Directives to Good Deeds) of al-Jazūlī (d. 1465).⁶² The *taṣliya*'s popularity and attractiveness was further nourished by the notion that its very recitation was a religiously meritorious act and would bestow blessing upon the reciter. The idea of receiving rewards for the invocation of blessings upon the prophet is illustrated by various sayings by the prophet. Two sayings, both quoted in the popular compilation *Riyāḍ al-ṣāliḥīn* (The Gardens of the Righteous) by the 13th-century scholar al-Nawawī, are particularly significant: “Whoever invokes a blessing upon me will be blessed by God ten times” and “Those people will be nearest to me on the day of resurrection who have invoked the most blessings upon me”.⁶³ In this

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light, the *taşliya* of the Burda performances even gains a triple function: it enables participation, it ensures its efficacy, and it constitutes in itself a reward-winning act

3.5 Tasliya as a later addition

The *taşliya* refrain seems to be a later addition, derived from new forms of piety and the recitation practices connected to these. It subsequently became legitimized by a dream account in parallel with the early stories related to the Burda. Several reasons suggest the thesis of a later addition, probably during the 15th century: the fact that the refrain dream is not included in early accounts about the composition and healing effect of the Burda; a growing veneration for the prophet from the 13th century onwards which is manifested in mawlid commemorations and public eulogies after the adhān; and the *taşliya* as powerful tool, developed and practiced especially but not exclusively in Sufi piety. This assumption is backed by the findings of Frederike-Wiebke Daub who found that the refrain was only included in later copies of the Burda.

3.6. Performance practices

How is a 13th-century qasīda (poem) of at least 160 verses performed? Qasīda also exists as a vocal genre in Arab musical culture. Here, it denotes a soloist genre, performed by a solo singer and a small instrumental ensemble. He or she can choose to insert repetitions of lines, phrases, or words and include melismatic passages as much as he/she feels necessary to deliver the text to its listeners.

Judging by the musical form, we can identify two different modes of rendition: the first mode is what I have termed the litany style, the second is the qasīda style (see figure 4). The litany style is characterized by syllabic and rhythmic singing and a moderate to fast tempo. The melodic line moves in small steps, including repetitions of tones and embracing only a narrow range (forth to fifth). The litany style is used for collective singing, in a responsorial technique between the congregation and the firqa or soloist, and includes the antiphon/refrain.

CONCLUSION

Here in this article we have discussed about qaseeda al burda and its author imam al busoori also we widely mentioned about the refrain and antiphon of burda as it is vary

widely used all over the world. If it had any authentic evidence or no? what is the opinion of Mubārak , Kīlānī and Marion Katz. also there discussed about of Tasliya refrain and it's authence .

Today, we encounter al-Būṣīrī's Burda in various manifestations and with different functions and, thus, as a versatile text. One of the most striking differences between the printed poem and the poem in performance lies in the refrain which has been connected to practices of piety towards the prophet Muḥammad that emerged from the 13th century onwards. The refrain is generally added when the Burda is collectively performed; it indicates the primary dividing line between the poem as general madīḥ and supplication. The Burda's function as a supplication does not require the entire poem. It is not the text, but the performance mode which primarily defines its function.