



The Reception of the Poem *al-Burda* in the Far Maghrib: From the Classical Qaṣīda to Ritual Practice and Musical Performance (1st/7th Century–15th/21st Century)

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ABSTRACT

This article examines the Moroccan reception of *al-Burda* as a historically mobile text whose meaning was reshaped by changing regimes of use rather than by textual variation alone. Focusing on the Far Maghrib, it traces the poem's passage from scholastic reading and devotional memorisation to collective recitation, Sufi *samāʿ*, Mawlid settings, and selected forms of performance associated with the Moroccan-

Andalusian *nūba*. The argument situates *al-Burda* within a wider genealogy of prophetic praise while giving particular attention to the Moroccan devotional environment formed around works such as *al-Jazūlī's Dalā'il al-Khayrāt*. It then considers how manuscript circulation, nineteenth-century printing, oral performance, and later sonic mediation altered the relations between reader, listener, text, and community. Rather than treating the Moroccanization of *al-Burda* as a narrow linguistic adaptation, the article defines it as a sequence of pragmatic relocations through which the poem

moved between lesson, ritual gathering, musical time, and public memory. This approach clarifies how classical Arabic poetry became embedded in North African religious practice, performative culture, and changing media of transmission.

Keywords: *al-Burda*; praise of the Prophet; Far Maghrib; *Dalā'il al-Khayrāt*; *samā'*; Moroccan-Andalusian *nūba*; reception; printing.

Introduction

This article studies the reception of *al-Burda* in the Far Maghrib as a history of situated uses rather than as the linear survival of a celebrated poem. The distinction is not secondary, because the Moroccan trajectory of the ode cannot be reduced to the conservation of a classical Arabic text within a learned archive. Once inserted into North African religious culture, *al-Burda* was handled through several regimes of presence: it was read, memorised, recited, sung, ritualised, and later reactivated through sound and public performance. Suzanne Pinckney Stetkevych situates *al-Būṣīrī's* poem within the broader corpus of the Mantle Odes, a genealogy that begins with Ka'b ibn Zuhayr's poem in the Prophet's lifetime and reaches the late thirteenth-century Mamluk period with *al-Būṣīrī's* composition (Stetkevych, 2010, p. xi). Yet the Moroccan reception of the poem requires a separate analytical lens, since its life in the Far Maghrib was not confined to literary admiration or philological commentary. It gradually entered institutions of learning, Sufi devotional gatherings, Mawlid seasons, *samā'* circles, and selected forms of performance associated with the Moroccan-Andalusian *nūba*. Rachida Chih's work on prophetic devotional literature helps clarify this wider environment: Arabic devotional texts dedicated to the Prophet took shape from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries onward, before acquiring new intensity in the fifteenth century through Sufi institutions and political elites (Chih, 2022, p. 462). The problem addressed here therefore concerns not only the poem's transmission, but the ways in which Moroccan settings reassigned its functions from textual discipline to collective affect, and from the stability of the written form to the temporality of voice.

The Moroccan case deserves this specific treatment because prophetic praise acquired there a dense social existence in which literary memory, saintly devotion, urban ritual, and musical transmission intersected without merging into a single practice. *Al-Burda* belongs to a long Arabic tradition of praise poetry, but its reception in the Far Maghrib was shaped by local devotional institutions and by the circulation of texts centred on prayer upon the Prophet. Among these works, Muḥammad ibn Sulaymān al-Jazūlī's *Dalā'il al-Khayrāt* occupies a decisive place, since Chih identifies it as a

fifteenth-century Moroccan prayer book that remained in use and contributed to the wider circulation of Arabic literature devoted to the Prophet (Chih, 2022, p. 462). This devotional corpus did not circulate only as doctrine. It entered homes, mosques, Sufi weekly sessions of *dhikr*, public religious gatherings, and oral environments where recitation and listening shaped religious memory (Chih, 2022, p. 463). From this angle, Moroccanization should not be understood as a narrow modification of wording, nor as a local commentary appended to an inherited poem. It designates a sequence of pragmatic relocations through which *al-Burda* moved from the page to the gathering, from the gathering to musical time, and from ritual performance to wider forms of public circulation. We read this trajectory as a transfer of function rather than as a simple change of support.

The central question may be formulated in precise terms: how did Moroccan institutions of learning, Sufi lodges, Mawlid practices, and musical traditions transform *al-Burda* from a canonical poem of praise into a recurrent performative resource? A second question follows: what happens to meaning when selected verses are no longer encountered as parts of a continuous written composition, but as chantable units inserted into pauses, refrains, modal progressions, and collective responses? Carl Dávila's research on the Moroccan *nūba* is especially useful here, because it places prophetic piety within a musical tradition that dates at least from the seventeenth century and includes devotional themes alongside love poetry, travel motifs, wine imagery, and mystical registers (Dávila, 2022, pp. 219–246). In the Moroccan-Andalusian repertoire, the poem's meaning is not simply preserved by being sung; it is segmented, prolonged, repeated, and heard through inherited melodic and rhythmic structures. A final question concerns mediation. Manuscript circulation, print, sound recording, broadcasting, digital platforms, and festivals did not merely transport the poem from one audience to another. Each medium modified the scale of reception, the authority of the performer, the memory of the listener, and the balance between devotional intimacy and public display. Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin define remediation as the representation or refashioning of one medium in another, a process they consider central to the history of new media (Bolter & Grusin, 1999, p. 45). Applied to *al-Burda*, this notion helps us understand how the poem's religious force was not erased by later media, but redistributed across new forms of presence.

Methodologically, the study combines historical-textual reading with attention to performance and mediation. Its first level reconstructs the place of *al-Burda* within the long tradition of prophetic praise, while avoiding the reduction of Moroccan reception to a passive continuation of an eastern

model. Stetkevych's reading of al-Būṣīrī is relevant at this level because she does not treat the Mantle Ode as a merely decorative panegyric, but places it within a ritualised poetics where praise, supplication, and symbolic exchange contribute to the poem's efficacy (Stetkevych, 2010, pp. 70–71). Its second level follows the devotional and ritual conditions that made the poem available to collective recitation, especially through Sufi practices of *samāʿ* and the social importance of Mawlid settings. Chih's analysis confirms that devotional literature dedicated to the Prophet was doctrinal, literary, performative, ritual, thaumaturgic, and artistic at the same time, which makes it a privileged field for crossing textual history with social practice (Chih, 2022, p. 463). Its third level examines the effect of the Moroccan-Andalusian *nūba* on the poem's reception, since this musical form does not merely accompany a text; it reorganises poetic material according to musical time. Its fourth level reads modern media as part of the same historical process, because print, recording, broadcasting, digital circulation, and festival staging reassign the poem's audience while transforming the conditions under which devotional language is heard.

The article proceeds through a controlled periodisation. It begins with the classical foundations of prophetic praise and the distinction between religious praise and acquisitive panegyric, since that distinction clarifies the ethical status of al-Burda before its Moroccan uses are examined. It then turns to the spiritual and institutional conditions that prepared the reception of praise poetry in the Far Maghrib, with particular attention to devotional textuality and collective recitation. The discussion subsequently moves toward the material supports of reception, from manuscript culture to print, before analysing *samāʿ* and the *nūba* as frameworks in which poetic meaning becomes inseparable from voice, rhythm, and shared response. The final sections address recording, broadcasting, digital platforms, and festivals as later moments in which al-Burda and related forms of prophetic praise entered new publics without losing their attachment to ritual memory. In this perspective, the contribution of the article lies in reading al-Burda not only as a canonical Arabic poem, but as a North African performative archive whose history is written through the changing relations between text, community, and medium.

1. From the Islamic Foundations of Praise Poetry to Its Distinction from Acquisitive Panegyric within the Horizon of Moroccan Reading

The earliest formation of prophetic praise in Arabic poetry cannot be separated from the older economy of the *qaṣīda*, where praise was not a neutral ornament but a regulated act of address, exchange, and recognition. In pre-Islamic and early Islamic poetic culture, the panegyric ode established a relation

between speaker and addressee, often placing poetic excellence within a social contract governed by patronage, protection, rank, and reward. Suzanne Pinckney Stetkevych shows that the first poem to bear the name *Burda*, Ka'b ibn Zuhayr's *Bānat Su'ād*, belongs to this inherited panegyric form, while the tradition surrounding it transfers that form into the Prophet's presence and gives it a new symbolic status (Stetkevych, 2010, pp. 30–33). The decisive point lies in the transformation of the old poetic pact. In the pre-Islamic model, praise negotiates the relation between poet and patron; in Ka'b's conversion narrative, the poem becomes a ritual act of submission and supplication before the Prophet (Stetkevych, 2010, pp. 59–65). This shift does not abolish the panegyric mechanism; it reorients it. The exchange of *qaṣīda* and *jā'iza*, formerly attached to royal or tribal authority, is recoded as an encounter between poetic speech and prophetic legitimacy, since the mantle given to Ka'b seals a bond in which poetry receives recognition only after it has submitted to a new religious order (Stetkevych, 2010, pp. 86–87). Such an origin explains why prophetic praise later preserved the rhetorical power of *madīḥ* while distancing itself from the purely acquisitive logic of courtly praise.

A sharper distinction appears when al-Būṣīrī's seventh/thirteenth-century *Burda* is placed after Ka'b's poem within the same genealogy. Stetkevych reads al-Būṣīrī's ode as a deliberate appropriation of Ka'b's mantle myth, with one crucial difference: the earlier worldly encounter between poet and Prophet is displaced into the realm of the dream, cure, repentance, and miracle (Stetkevych, 2010, p. 107). The poem therefore no longer functions as a request for material reward from a ruler. It becomes a supplicatory and devotional composition in which praise, confession of weakness, longing, intercession, and poetic self-correction converge. This feature matters for the Moroccan reception examined here, because it clarifies the ethical separation between prophetic praise and acquisitive panegyric. The addressee is not a temporal sovereign whose favour must be won through verbal magnificence; he is the prophetic model through whom the poet, the reciter, and later the listening community reorganise their relation to salvation, memory, and belonging. The difference is not merely thematic. It touches the status of speech itself: courtly panegyric seeks proximity to power, whereas *madīḥ nabawī* binds eloquence to reverence and makes poetic beauty answerable to devotional sincerity. In this sense, al-Burda arrives in Morocco already marked by a double inheritance, since it carries the form of the Arabic praise ode while redirecting its social energy toward prophetic veneration.

Medieval and early modern devotional literature widened this transformation by linking prophetic praise to Sufi institutions,

saintly authority, and collective recitation. Rachida Chih notes that Arabic devotional writing dedicated to the Prophet took shape from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, particularly with the rise of major Sufi figures who claimed prophetic descent and composed prayers and litanies of blessing upon him (Chih, 2022, p. 462). By the fifteenth century, the Maghreb and the Mamluk sultanate witnessed an intensified production of books encouraging devotion to the Prophet, under the influence of Sufi milieus and political elites (Chih, 2022, p. 462). Within this historical movement, the Moroccan *Dalā'il al-Khayrāt* of Muḥammad ibn Sulaymān al-Jazūlī occupies a crucial place, not because it replaces *al-Burda*, but because it stabilises a devotional environment in which prayer, praise, repetition, and recitation become ordinary modes of attachment to the Prophet (Chih, 2022, pp. 462–463). Chih further observes that this literature was not designed only for silent reading; it was recited or chanted by individuals and groups in mosques, Sufi lodges, shrines, private homes, weekly dhikr sessions, and public religious celebrations (Chih, 2022, p. 463). The Moroccan horizon of reception therefore changes the analytical scale: *al-Burda* is no longer approached only as a text belonging to the Arabic literary canon, but as a poem available for vocalisation, memorisation, ritual insertion, and communal affect.

This first distinction prepares the argument of the article. In the Far Maghrib, the movement from panegyric to prophetic praise did not remain a matter of genre classification; it became a condition for social use. Once the poem entered learned circles, Mawlid practices, Sufi gatherings, and later musical performance, its authority depended less on the isolated prestige of al-Būṣīrī's authorship than on the ability of its verses to sustain repeated devotional situations. The difference from acquisitive praise is therefore not a moral claim added from outside; it is visible in the poem's mode of circulation. The courtly panegyric tends toward the event of reward, while Moroccan prophetic praise moves toward recurrence: it is taught, repeated, sung, remembered, and reactivated within collective time. We may then define Moroccan reception as the historical passage through which inherited Arabic *madīḥ* becomes part of a North African practice of devotional memory. This passage will be followed, in the next stage, through the spiritual and institutional conditions that made the Far Maghrib especially receptive to forms of praise grounded in saintly devotion, Sufi discipline, and ritual performance.

2. The Far Maghrib and Asceticism as a Threshold for the Formation of Spiritual Discourse before the Flourishing of the Almohad Qaṣīda

Medieval Moroccan poetry developed in a religious landscape where political authority, saintly prestige, juridical normativity, and Sufi discipline constantly intersected. This environment matters for the reception of prophetic praise, because poetic discourse did not circulate in an empty literary space. It moved through institutions, audiences, ritual calendars, and forms of authority that shaped what could be heard, repeated, authorised, or remembered. Vincent J. Cornell argues that the veneration of saints, whether living or dead, should not be treated as a heterodox residue in premodern Morocco, since it was validated by mainstream Sufism and revalidated by many jurists; he further insists that living sainthood functioned as a social phenomenon whose public recognition depended on shared standards of legitimacy (Cornell, 1998, p. 94). This observation helps us understand why poetry close to ascetic or devotional sensibility found a receptive ground in the Far Maghrib. A society in which sainthood was not merely tolerated, but institutionally narrated, ritually visited, and textually codified, offered favourable conditions for poetic forms that joined moral correction, emotional intensity, and religious exemplarity. In such a setting, ascetic themes were not decorative additions to poetic speech; they became a means of shaping the listener's disposition before praise of the Prophet could be received as a collective act of memory and reverence.

The hagiographical corpus produced in the Almohad and early Marinid periods clarifies this connection between saintly authority and literary reception. Cornell identifies Abū Ya'qūb al-Tādīlī's *al-Tashawwuf ilā rijāl al-taṣawwuf*, completed in 617/1220, as a collection of 279 hagiographical notices and as one of the most influential works of its kind in the Muslim West (Cornell, 1998, pp. 97–98). More precisely, this literature did not simply preserve biographies of pious figures; it promoted what Cornell calls a typified « theology of behavior », through which sainthood was made visible as an ethical model capable of organising collective ideals (Cornell, 1998, p. 98). The importance of this point for the present article lies in the fact that prophetic praise later drew part of its force from the same moral economy. Before *al-Burda* could become a poem of repeated recitation in Moroccan settings, the social imagination of the Far Maghrib had already been trained by texts that associated sanctity with conduct, bodily discipline, tears, renunciation, public recognition, and exemplary speech. The ascetic poem, in this horizon, prepares not only a vocabulary of detachment but also a mode of reception: the audience is invited to hear poetry

as a vehicle of ethical transformation rather than as a display of verbal skill.

This ascetic background should nevertheless be distinguished from fully developed Sufi devotion. Christopher Melchert's work on Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal's *Kitāb al-Zuhd* is useful here because it reminds us that zuhd literature formed one of the largest extant bodies of early renunciant sayings from the first Islamic centuries and circulated before later mystical systems gave renunciation a more elaborate doctrinal place (Melchert, 2011, p. 345). The distinction is decisive. Zuhd first designates a disciplined relation to the world, marked by restraint, fear of moral loss, and preference for the hereafter; Sufi devotion later deepens this attitude by linking renunciation to love, spiritual hierarchy, ritual companionship, and the authority of the shaykh. Within Morocco, this movement from renunciant discipline to Sufi organisation did not erase the ascetic tone. It gave it institutional continuity. Cornell's analysis of the *Jazūliyya* shows that daily recitation of prayers upon the Prophet from *Dalā'il al-Khayrāt* became a cornerstone of devotional practice, accompanied by other litanies and performed aloud in circles of *fuqara'* chanting in harmony (Cornell, 1998, pp. 182–184). Such evidence explains why prophetic praise could pass from an individual poetic utterance into a collective technology of remembrance: the poem became effective because the audience was already habituated to recited devotion, vocal repetition, and the pedagogical discipline of the circle.

Later Moroccan prophetic piety further consolidated this passage from ethical renunciation to vocalised devotion. Rachida Chih observes that Arabic devotional literature dedicated to the Prophet expanded from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries and acquired particular intensity in the fifteenth century through Sufi institutions and political elites (Chih, 2022, p. 462). Her reading of *Dalā'il al-Khayrāt* is central for our argument, since she describes it as a fifteenth-century Moroccan prayer book that remained in continuous use and circulated through mosques, Sufi lodges, shrines, private homes, weekly dhikr sessions, and public religious celebrations (Chih, 2022, pp. 462–463). This history does not concern *al-Burda* alone, yet it defines the devotional ecology into which *al-Burda* could be inserted. The poem's Moroccan reception therefore becomes intelligible through a layered sequence: early renunciant ethics shaped a taste for moral purification; medieval hagiography gave sanctity a public and narrative form; Sufi orders organised prayer and praise into repeated vocal practice; then prophetic poetry found in this environment the conditions for becoming a chantable and memorable text. At this stage of the argument, asceticism functions less as a separate theme than as an affective

preparation for praise, because the self that learns to renounce worldly attachment is also the self that can approach the Prophet through supplication, humility, and longing.

This transition prepares the later flourishing of the *qaṣīda* in Moroccan religious culture. The movement from zuhd to Sufi-inflected praise does not produce a rupture; it produces a reorientation of poetic energy. Ascetic discourse disciplines desire, whereas prophetic praise redirects that disciplined desire toward the figure of the Prophet as model, intercessor, and horizon of imitation. In the Far Maghrib, the poem could therefore become both a literary object and a ritual instrument, because its reception was sustained by a society where saintly memory, collective recitation, and the authority of devotional texts had already acquired institutional depth. The next stage of the article follows this same logic into the Almohad period, where political legitimacy, urban space, and poetic speech begin to meet in a more visible configuration.

3. In the Almohad Period, from “Movement between Morocco and al-Andalus” to the Anchoring of the Poem in the Space of Rabat

The Almohad period occupies a necessary place in this study, although it does not yet correspond to the full Moroccan reception of *al-Būṣṭī's al-Burda*. Its relevance lies elsewhere. Between the sixth/twelfth and seventh/thirteenth centuries, the Far Maghrib became a field in which political authority, doctrinal reform, urban construction, learned mobility, and poetic performance were tied to the same economy of legitimacy. Amira K. Bennison describes the Almohad project as a radical programme in which power was expressed through Tinmall, Taza, Marrakesh, Gibraltar, and *al-Mahdiyya* or *Ribat al-Faṭḥ*, with architecture and ceremonial display serving the claim to reshape public life under the sign of divine order (Bennison, 2016, p. 313). Within this horizon, poetry cannot be reduced to literary embellishment. It belonged to a wider apparatus of address, ceremony, patronage, and symbolic ranking. The interest of Ibn Khabbāza, therefore, is not that he anticipates *al-Burda* in a direct textual line, but that his itinerary displays the conditions under which Moroccan poetic speech moved between court, city, ascetic inflection, and Andalusian circulation before later prophetic praise found its more stable ritual forms.

The biographical frame already indicates this mobility. 'Abd Allāh Kannūn identifies the poet as Maymūn ibn 'Alī ibn 'Abd al-Khāliq al-Khaṭṭābī, associated with Fez and known as Ibn Khabbāza through his link to a maternal uncle bearing that name (Kannūn, 1960, p. 170). The information is brief, yet it gives the poet a spatial and genealogical density: Fez appears as a place of formation, the lineage fixes a social inscription,

and the nickname records a mode of literary affiliation. Shawqī Dayf later places him among the poets of the Almohad age and, following Ibn ‘Abd al-Malik al-Marrākushī, presents him as a man of letters, poet, prose writer, quick improviser, participant in kalām and legal theory, and, at certain moments, a figure marked by asceticism, Sufi inclination, and preaching (Dayf, 1995, p. 480). This profile matters because it unsettles any rigid division between courtly panegyric and religious speech. Ibn Khabbāza belongs to a milieu in which a poet could praise rulers, practise ornate literary composition, cross toward moral exhortation, and still remain legible within the institutional culture of his time.

The movement toward al-Andalus deepens this reading. Dayf reports that Ibn Khabbāza crossed to al-Andalus and remained for a period under the patronage of the governor of Seville, Abū al-‘Alā’ ibn al-Manṣūr, for whom he composed many panegyrics (Dayf, 1995, p. 480). Such a notice should not be read as a marginal anecdote. It places the Moroccan poet inside a western Islamic space where authority was not confined to one capital and where poetic legitimacy was produced through movement between Fez, Marrakesh, Seville, and the Atlantic frontier. Bennison confirms this broader cultural pattern when she observes that poets, writers, physicians, and other learned men clustered around Almoravid and Almohad rulers, while many of them spent their careers between al-Andalus and North Africa (Bennison, 2016, p. 264). In this context, crossing the Strait was not only a geographical displacement; it was a test of eloquence within a competitive literary field and a way of inserting Maghribi talent into an Andalusian arena already charged with older traditions of poetic refinement. The Almohad poem, viewed from this angle, emerges from contact, rivalry, patronage, and translation between regional idioms of prestige.

The return to Rabat, or more precisely to Ribat al-Faṭḥ, gives this mobility a different meaning. Bennison notes that in 1150 ‘Abd al-Mu‘min summoned Andalusian notables to Salé while he was building the citadel of Ribat al-Faṭḥ, also called al-Mahdiyya, opposite Salé; the meeting of 20 April 1151 transformed the site into a place where submission, intimidation, hospitality, and political incorporation were performed before the caliph (Bennison, 2016, p. 78). The city was not an ordinary setting. It functioned as a military, ceremonial, and symbolic threshold between the Moroccan interior and the Andalusian campaigns. Bennison further records that Ribat al-Faṭḥ began as a coastal citadel and later expanded under Ya‘qūb al-Manṣūr into a much larger imperial city, with the great mosque and the Hassan project designed to rival the major sanctuaries of the Islamic West (Bennison, 2016, pp. 323–324). When Ibn Khabbāza’s memory is attached to this space, the biographical notice becomes more

than a place of death. It situates poetic speech within a city built for mobilisation, visibility, and imperial representation.

At this point, the argument must be stated with precision. The Almohad example does not prove a direct reception of al-Burda in Rabat during Ibn Khabbāza’s lifetime. Rather, it identifies the institutional and spatial grammar that later made such reception possible. Ribat al-Faṭḥ gathered several functions that would become decisive for the Moroccan afterlife of prophetic praise: the movement of scholars and poets, the ceremonial use of language, the fusion of political legitimacy with religious symbolism, and the transformation of urban space into a theatre of collective memory. The link with al-Burda is therefore indirect but analytically useful. Before the poem could enter Moroccan ritual and musical practice, the Far Maghrib had already produced settings in which poetic speech circulated between praise, admonition, doctrinal display, urban ceremony, and transregional performance. The next stages of the article will show how this older grammar of movement and anchoring later intersects with manuscript culture, devotional recitation, samā‘, and the Moroccan-Andalusian nūba.

4. The Materiality of the Text

The reception of prophetic praise in the Far Maghrib cannot be explained only through themes, doctrines, or poetic forms, because the material support of the text also shaped the ways in which devotion was read, memorised, carried, recited, and eventually performed. The manuscript book was not a neutral container. It fixed the order of passages, distributed blank space, guided the eye, preserved traces of ownership or use, and offered a visible architecture through which the reader could approach a devotional composition before giving it voice. François Déroche and his collaborators define codicology as the study of the material aspects of codices, that is, manuscript books made of gatherings of leaves, while distinguishing the history of the book from the history of the text it contains (Déroche et al., 2005, pp. 11–12). This distinction is crucial for the present article, since al-Burda and the neighbouring corpus of prayers upon the Prophet did not circulate as abstract verbal units alone. They acquired force through copies, scripts, layout, decoration, marginalia, and repeated handling. In Moroccan learned and ritual environments, such material features helped transform devotional language into a practice of reading that was already close to recitation.

A concrete example may clarify this point. Ruling, spacing, lineation, coloured headings, and ornament do not merely embellish a manuscript; they prepare a regime of attention. Déroche notes that the decision to draw ruled lines is proof of

a scribe's concern for page layout and that such concern appears early in Islamic manuscripts, including Qur'anic copies written in *Hijāzī* script from the late first/seventh or early second/eighth century (Déroche et al., 2005, pp. 159–160). The page therefore participates in the discipline of reading. It organises the movement from one line to another, helps stabilise pauses, marks the distinction between principal text and paratextual elements, and supports the mnemonic work required by devotional practice. When this principle is applied to the Moroccan reception of prophetic praise, the manuscript becomes a silent instructor. It does not chant, yet it prepares chanting by arranging the text into visible units. It does not prescribe a melody, yet it creates visual thresholds that can later correspond to pauses, repetitions, or transitions in oral performance. The move from written form to voice begins here, in the ruled and ordered page.

The case of *Dalā'il al-Khayrāt* sharpens the argument, because this fifteenth-century Moroccan prayer book occupies the same devotional ecology in which *al-Burda* became available for repeated use. Rachida Chih identifies *Dalā'il al-Khayrāt* as a Moroccan work still in use, devoted to prayer upon the Prophet, and situated within a wider growth of prophetic devotional literature from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries onward (Chih, 2022, p. 462). She also stresses that this literature was not designed only for silent reading; it was recited or chanted by individuals and groups in mosques, Sufi lodges, shrines, private homes, weekly *dhikr* sessions, and public religious celebrations (Chih, 2022, p. 463). This observation gives the material question a stronger function. A prayer book or praise poem becomes effective because it moves between the page and the voice. The manuscript copy stabilises the sequence of formulas, but the ritual gathering converts that sequence into shared sound. Between these two moments, the book works as an instrument of devotional regularity: it allows repetition, authorises collective memory, and protects the order of recitation against dispersion.

This material dimension also modifies how we understand Moroccanization. The local reception of prophetic praise was not produced only by commentary, translation, or oral custom; it was also shaped by the physical forms through which texts were made available. Large script, coloured divisions, illuminated headings, marginal indications, and portable formats could alter the reader's relation to a devotional text by making some passages easier to locate, repeat, or remember. The Metropolitan Museum's description of a *Dalā'il al-Khayrāt* prayer book connected to the North African tradition records large black Maghribi script, ten lines per page, gold and polychrome rulings, coloured important words, and illuminated chapter headings in a manuscript devoted to prayers in praise of the Prophet (Metropolitan Museum of Art,

2026). Although this museum record cannot replace a full codicological study, it supports a limited but useful point: North African devotional books often joined textual use to visual organisation. Such features gave the manuscript a practical role in recitation, because the page did not simply display piety; it helped structure access to it.

The passage from manuscript to later forms of circulation will therefore not be treated here as a rupture, but as a redistribution of material authority. The manuscript prepared devotional performance by stabilising sequence, visibility, and handling. Print would later increase reproducibility and extend access, while sound media would shift authority toward the voice and its repeatable trace. Yet the first mediation remains the book itself. In Moroccan contexts of praise, the page organised the conditions under which the poem could become memorable; the gathering transformed that memory into sound; performance then gave the written unit a temporal body. The materiality of *al-Burda* and related devotional texts consequently belongs to the history of reception, not to its margins. It explains how a poem of praise could pass from manuscript culture into collective recitation before being reconfigured by *samā'*, the *nūba*, recording, broadcasting, and public performance.

5. Printing and the Reshaping of Reception

The passage from manuscript to print altered the reception of prophetic praise in the Far Maghrib by changing not only the support of the text, but also the conditions under which textual authority could be stabilised, reproduced, owned, and reread. In manuscript culture, the devotional poem lived through copying, vocal transmission, marginal traces, audition, and localised practices of recitation; the printed book, by contrast, introduced a stronger tendency toward formal repetition and wider reproducibility. Elizabeth L. Eisenstein's notion of typographical fixity remains useful here, since she links the development of print to the possibility of preserving and circulating identical textual forms across distance and time (Eisenstein, 1979, p. 113). Applied to *al-Burda*, this argument does not mean that print suppressed oral use. It means that recitation began to rely increasingly on copies that produced an impression of textual stability and therefore helped regulate memory, commentary, and performance. The poem could still be chanted, taught, or inserted into devotional gatherings, but the printed form modified the relation between eye and voice: the reader no longer approached only a copied witness marked by the hand of a scribe; he encountered a reproducible artefact that fixed the order of verses and made repeated consultation easier. Within this change, Moroccanization becomes less a matter of verbal alteration than a reorganisation of the sites,

rhythms, and uses through which inherited praise poetry entered social life.

The chronology of nineteenth-century devotional printing confirms this shift. Rachida Chih records that al-Burda was printed at the Būlāq Press in 1844 and again in a private Cairene printing house in 1863, while Dalā'il al-Khayrāt appeared in lithographic form in 1840 and the commentary of Muḥammad al-Mahdī al-Fāsī was printed as early as 1865 (Chih, 2022, p. 482). These dates are important because they place prophetic praise and prayer upon the Prophet among the texts that entered early into the age of mechanical and lithographic reproduction in the Arabic-reading world. The fact that Dalā'il al-Khayrāt preceded or accompanied several printed forms of al-Burda is not accidental. Chih had already shown that al-Jazūlī's work was organised into sections for daily recitation, that its first collective recitations were associated with 'Abd al-'Azīz al-Tabbā' in the Madrasa al-'Aṭṭārīn in Fez toward the end of the fifteenth century, and that the text had to be recited aloud before spreading rapidly through the Maghreb (Chih, 2022, p. 469). Print therefore intervened in a devotional field where recitation was older than the printed object itself. It did not create the practice from nothing; it gave a new material regularity to practices already structured by memorisation, vocal repetition, and communal discipline.

The Moroccan situation adds another layer to this history because printing arrived there through a different institutional rhythm. Fawzi Abdulrazak studies Moroccan printing between 1864 and 1912 as a process tied to state involvement, religious authority, book production, and the management of knowledge in a society still deeply shaped by manuscript culture (Abdulrazak, 2015, pp. 44–64). This chronology indicates that Morocco did not simply receive printed devotional texts as passive imports from Cairo, Istanbul, or Beirut. Rather, it entered print culture through selective appropriation, regulation, and adaptation to local scholarly expectations. Such a context matters for the reception of al-Burda and neighbouring texts of prophetic piety. When a Moroccan commentary, a prayer collection, or a praise poem became printable, the text acquired a new public form while remaining attached to older institutions of learning and devotion. The printed copy could circulate beyond the circle of the scribe, yet it did not detach itself from the mosque, the lodge, the madrasa, or the family setting. It extended them.

This extension also affected the relation between commentary and performance. In manuscript culture, commentary often remained tied to a particular scholarly milieu, a chain of reading, or the authority of a local teacher. With print, exegetical framing could be multiplied and transported with

the text itself. Chih's reference to the printed commentary of Muḥammad al-Mahdī al-Fāsī in 1865 is especially significant, because this Moroccan commentary contributed to the wider popularity of Dalā'il al-Khayrāt and shows how explanation, recitation, and devotion could travel together in printed form (Chih, 2022, p. 482). The commentary no longer functions only as a secondary apparatus. It becomes a mechanism for directing use: it clarifies formulas, organises reading, frames the benefits of prayer upon the Prophet, and supports the transition from individual consultation to shared devotional practice. By analogy, al-Burda's printed circulation made the poem more available to repeated reading and to the selection of passages suitable for chanting. Print therefore did not replace performance; it prepared new conditions for its stabilisation.

The reshaping of reception can finally be understood as a gradual redistribution of authority between manuscript, printed page, and voice. The manuscript carried the memory of copying and local use; print reinforced the fixity of the text and widened access; recitation reactivated the written form through sound. In the Far Maghrib, this sequence did not erase the ritual life of prophetic praise. It made that life more transferable. A poem or prayer collection could now move more easily between Fez, Rabat, Salé, Cairo, and other centres of circulation, while retaining enough formal stability to be recognised across different settings. The later passage toward recording and broadcasting will continue the same movement by shifting the centre of authority from the reproducible page to the reproducible voice. For this reason, printing should be read as a decisive intermediary stage in the Moroccan reception of al-Burda: it did not merely increase the number of copies; it transformed the balance between text, commentary, memory, and performance.

6. *Samā'* and the *Nūba*

The reception of al-Burda in the Far Maghrib changes in kind when the poem leaves the exclusive space of reading and enters the shared temporality of the voice. In that passage, meaning is no longer carried only by semantic sequence, rhetorical image, or inherited prestige; it is also produced by breath, repetition, response, bodily attention, and the collective rhythm of listening. The relevance of *samā'* lies precisely in this shift. Within Sufi practice, listening is not a passive reception of beautiful sound, but a disciplined situation in which poetry, remembrance, and affect are measured against the ethical disposition of the participants. Vincent J. Cornell's analysis of the Jazūliyya shows that the daily recitation of Dalā'il al-Khayrāt became one of the central practices of the order and that the *fuqara'* recited their litanies aloud in a circular formation, chanting in harmony and

sustaining a vocal order that linked text, discipline, and group cohesion (Cornell, 1998, pp. 182–184). This evidence helps clarify the Moroccan reception of al-Burda. The poem did not merely pass from manuscript or print into sound; it entered a social grammar already organised by collective recitation, authorised repetition, and the transformation of devotional language into shared memory.

The performative dimension of Moroccan Sufi chant further confirms that the voice acts as a medium of religious experience rather than as a simple acoustic ornament. Earle Waugh's study of Moroccan Sufi chanting, based on fieldwork among chanters, argues that dhikr, bodily posture, ritual movement, baraka, and health or well-being are linked within a larger performative field (Waugh, 2013, p. 247). This observation permits a more precise reading of al-Burda's Moroccanization. The poem is not only recited because it contains praise of the Prophet; it becomes suitable for *samā'* because its images, supplicatory movement, and internal rhythm can be inserted into a ritual order where the community listens, repeats, and responds. The listening subject is not identical with the solitary reader. He or she belongs to a collective body in which the leading voice gives direction, the chorus stabilises response, and the repeated phrase turns poetic meaning into remembered sound. In this setting, the verse functions as a performative unit: it gathers reverence, organises emotion, and gives the assembly a shared temporal form.

The insertion of prophetic praise into the Moroccan-Andalusian *nūba* expands this transformation beyond the Sufi circle without severing it from devotional memory. Carl Dávila's chapter on prophet-piety in the Moroccan *nūba* tradition identifies the presence of al-madīḥ al-nabawī within a repertoire that dates at least from the seventeenth century and probably earlier, while showing that praise of the Prophet coexists there with other poetic registers, including love, wine imagery, travel, and mystical expression (Dávila, 2022, p. 219). This coexistence is analytically decisive, because it prevents us from treating the *nūba* as a neutral musical frame into which sacred texts are merely inserted. The *nūba* reorganises poetic material through modal progression, rhythmic sequence, sectional arrangement, and patterns of repetition. When a verse of praise enters such a structure, it is no longer received only as a written line belonging to a continuous *qaṣīda*; it becomes a segment placed within musical time. Its devotional force is therefore mediated by cadence, melodic placement, collective response, and the memory of previous performances.

The consequences for al-Burda are considerable. A poem traditionally valued as a complete composition can be

received, within performance, through selected passages whose suitability depends on vocal movement and ritual effect. Dávila's work on poetry, performance, and the Prophet in Moroccan Andalusian music stresses that this tradition combines al-madīḥ al-nabawī with the performed art of the *nūba*, so that poetic material is shaped by musical delivery rather than by textual sequence alone (Dávila, 2023, p. 115). Such a perspective explains why Moroccanization should not be reduced to the adaptation of wording. The local transformation occurs when the poem is segmented, repeated, prolonged, or placed within a sonic order that changes how it is remembered. A verse used at an opening does not have the same function as a verse placed in a more developed musical section; a passage sung by a soloist does not produce the same reception as one reinforced by collective response. The text grants prophetic memory and symbolic authority, while the *nūba* gives that memory a temporal body.

This overlap between *samā'* and *nūba* also clarifies the role of Sufi lodges and related devotional settings. They were not merely places where texts were preserved; they were institutions in which the suitability of a poem for performance could be tested, remembered, and transmitted. Chih's account of *Dalā'il al-Khayrāt* confirms that devotional literature dedicated to the Prophet circulated through mosques, Sufi lodges, shrines, private homes, weekly dhikr sessions, and public religious celebrations, often through recitation or chanting by individuals and groups (Chih, 2022, p. 463). The same ecology helps explain the performative afterlife of al-Burda. Once a poem enters such a circuit, its authority no longer depends only on its author, commentary, or written prestige. It depends also on its capacity to return at the right moment, to sustain a rhythm of participation, and to hold together memory and affect. The chanting circle creates a standard of reception different from the lesson: the lesson secures comprehension, whereas performance secures recurrence.

The passage from *samā'* to later sound media will therefore appear less abrupt if it is read from this older performative ground. Before recording fixed the voice and broadcasting widened the audience, Moroccan devotional culture had already transformed prophetic praise into a repeatable sonic practice. Al-Burda could become a performed text because the Far Maghrib possessed institutions, repertoires, and listening habits capable of making a poem live beyond silent reading. In this respect, *samā'* and the *nūba* form the central hinge of the article. They show how classical Arabic praise becomes a North African archive of sound, how text becomes communal time, and how the poem's meaning is redistributed between written memory, vocal discipline, and musical form.

7. Recording and Broadcasting

The passage from *samāʿ* to recording and broadcasting does not mark a simple technical enlargement of audience. It changes the conditions under which devotional sound can be detached from its first situation, stored, replayed, and heard again in another place. In the Sufi lodge or the Mawlid gathering, al-Burda receives its force from presence: the leading voice, the group response, the shared breath, the ritual hour, and the bodily disposition of listeners. Sound recording modifies this economy by making the voice repeatable outside the circle that first produced it. Charles Hirschkind's analysis of cassette-sermon audition remains useful here, because he treats listening to recorded religious speech as an exercise of ethical self-discipline rather than as passive consumption (Hirschkind, 2001, p. 623). This model helps us read the later reception of prophetic praise in Morocco. The poem, once attached to a living assembly, can become an object of repeated audition; its authority no longer depends only on the immediate presence of the shaykh, the munshid, or the learned reciter, but also on the listener's capacity to return to a recorded voice and incorporate it into daily rhythms. The verse is then remembered not only through writing or memorisation, but through tonal familiarity. A line from al-Burda can be recalled as melody, cadence, timbre, and affect before it is recovered as a written sequence.

The wider question concerns the political and religious forms created by media. Charles Hirschkind and Brian Larkin argue that contemporary religious life cannot be studied apart from the media forms through which practices, publics, and authorities are organised (Hirschkind & Larkin, 2008, p. 1). In Morocco, this argument becomes especially relevant after the emergence of specialised religious broadcasting. Hamid Nabil records that Radio Mohammed VI of the Holy Koran was launched in 2004 and was followed by Assadissa TV, both devoted to the religious sphere (Nabil, 2024, p. 81). The station's significance does not lie only in its official status. It lies in the way broadcasting transforms religious sound into a regular domestic presence. A devotional text or chant no longer requires the gathering of bodies in one place. It may enter the house, the taxi, the shop, the mobile phone, or the solitary moment of listening. In such circumstances, Moroccanization refers less to the alteration of al-Burda's wording than to the national reorganisation of listening: the poem and neighbouring repertoires of Qur'anic recitation, prayer, *madīh*, and religious instruction are inserted into a soundscape where repetition is scheduled, transmitted, and familiarised.

Audience data give this transformation empirical weight, even if they must be treated cautiously because they concern Radio

Mohammed VI rather than al-Burda alone. Nabil's field study combines audience-rate data with semi-structured interviews, using a sample of 50 participants divided between 40 listeners and 10 media professionals (Nabil, 2024, p. 82). The reported audience figures show that the station ranked among the leading Moroccan radio channels from the first wave of audience measurement in 2012, with rates such as 15.25% in the first trimester of 2012 and a peak of 18.77% in the seventh wave of 2013 (Nabil, 2024, p. 83). These numbers do not prove the reception of any single poem. They do, however, demonstrate that religious sound acquired a large mediated public in the Moroccan radio landscape. For the present argument, that public matters because it changes the scale of devotional listening. The audience is no longer the limited assembly of a lodge, nor the classroom of memorisation, nor the urban circle of *samāʿ*. It becomes dispersed, indirect, and simultaneously connected through the same transmitted sound. The community of reception is therefore no longer formed only by co-presence; it is also produced by recurring auditory exposure.

Radio also modifies the relation between authority and accessibility. In a lodge, authority often remains attached to the shaykh, the chain of transmission, the local reputation of a chanter, or the ritual knowledge of the group. Broadcasting transfers part of that authority to programming, institutional selection, voice quality, and the scheduling of religious material. Nabil notes that Radio Mohammed VI developed religious programmes concerned with Qur'anic recitation, explanation, the Prophetic biography, and topics linked to listeners' everyday life, while relying on selected scholars, journalists, and religious authorities (Nabil, 2024, pp. 84–85). Such mediation does not erase older religious legitimacy. It filters it. A poem of praise, when placed beside Qur'anic recitation, sermons, biography, and devotional music, becomes part of a broader auditory pedagogy in which the listener learns to associate religious knowledge with a stable institutional sound. The reception of al-Burda in this environment should therefore be read as a passage from ritual recurrence to broadcast recurrence. The poem may still belong to Mawlid, *samāʿ*, and *nūba*, yet its sonic neighbourhood changes when radio makes religious listening a repeated feature of ordinary time.

The same process opens a bridge toward popular musical culture, where spiritual language circulates beyond strictly ritual settings. This does not mean that popular song becomes equivalent to *samāʿ* or that al-Burda dissolves into entertainment. It means that Moroccan audiences can encounter religious affect through several sonic forms, some liturgical, others para-ritual or aesthetic. El Houcine Ben Cherki's study of Nass El Ghiwane describes the group's

artistic experience through trance, social representations, pain, suffering, poverty, and a spiritual predisposition toward al-ḥāl, the state associated with heightened affective reception (Ben Cherki, 2022, p. 80). Such material does not provide direct evidence for al-Burda's performance, but it clarifies the wider Moroccan capacity to hear spiritual intensity in modern musical forms. When invocations, saintly references, prophetic memory, and Sufi echoes pass through popular sound, they create affinities of listening that may return audiences to older devotional corpora. The movement is not linear. A listener may approach prophetic praise through radio, a recorded chant, a festival performance, a nūba excerpt, or a popular melody charged with religious resonance.

The reception of al-Burda in the age of recording and broadcasting therefore becomes a history of auditory relocation. Manuscript and print had stabilised the visible form of the text; recording stabilised the voice; radio expanded the conditions of access; popular song widened the affective environment in which devotional motifs could be heard. The poem's authority is not lost in this passage. It is redistributed. A verse may now live as written text, memorised fragment, chantable formula, recorded performance, broadcast sound, or recalled melody. This multiplication prepares the next stage of the article, where digital platforms intensify segmentation and circulation by allowing devotional sound to move through clips, reposts, playlists, comments, and algorithmic visibility.

8. Digital Platforms and the Redistribution of the "Authority of Samā'" between the Community and Algorithms

The trajectory of al-Burda's reception in the Far Maghrib reaches another threshold when devotional sound enters digital platforms, because listening is no longer governed only by the ritual time of the lodge, the Mawlid gathering, or the radio schedule. The sonic scene once produced by the proximity of the munshid, the responding group, and the shared discipline of samā' is reconfigured through screens, phones, playlists, reposts, comments, and short video fragments. This shift does not cancel earlier forms of reception; it folds them into a new regime of visibility. Heidi Campbell's work on religious authority and the Internet is helpful here because it argues that online religion must be analysed through several layers of authority rather than through a vague claim that the Internet simply challenges tradition (Campbell, 2007, pp. 1045–1046). Applied to al-Burda, this means that digital reception affects more than access. It touches the authority of the text, the authority of the performer, the authority of the platform, and the authority of users who select, circulate, subtitle, comment on, or detach a passage from its longer ritual sequence.

The listener, in this environment, becomes a user whose devotional identity is partly displayed through acts of selection. A verse of praise, a fragment of samā', or a short performance linked to the Prophet can be posted during the Mawlid, shared as a blessing, inserted into a personal page, or attached to an image, a caption, or a prayer formula. Campbell notes that online contexts require attention to authority as hierarchy, structure, ideology, and text, since each level may be affected differently by digital communication (Campbell, 2007, p. 1058). This distinction clarifies why the authority of samā' is not simply displaced from the shaykh to the Internet. It is redistributed. The lodge, the chant master, the inherited repertoire, and the written poem continue to matter, yet their public legibility increasingly depends on platform circulation. A performance that was once validated by attendance, repetition, and recognised lineage may now acquire visibility through views, reposts, recommendations, and comments. The older collective response does not disappear; it is partly translated into likes, invocations, emojis, written blessings, and chains of sharing.

Algorithms intensify this redistribution by selecting what becomes visible, repeatable, and memorable. Tarleton Gillespie argues that algorithms play a central role in choosing which information appears relevant to users and in managing interactions on social networking sites (Gillespie, 2014, pp. 167–168). This point is crucial for understanding the recent digital life of al-Burda. A passage may circulate not because it is theologically more central, musically more complex, or philologically more representative, but because it is short, affective, visually adaptable, and suited to platform timing. The poem is therefore exposed to a double movement. Ritual memory tends to preserve sequence, duration, and discipline; platform memory favours segmentation, repetition, speed, and recognisable affect. Moroccanization, at this stage, is no longer confined to local recitation or musical insertion. It also concerns digital habit: the poem becomes a mobile sonic archive, repeatedly cut, reframed, and reattached to new situations of listening.

This transformation should not be read as a complete break with Moroccan devotional practice. Rachida Chih's study of *Dalā'il al-Khayrāt* reminds us that prophetic devotional literature had long circulated through mosques, Sufi lodges, shrines, private homes, weekly dhikr sessions, and public religious celebrations, often through individual or collective recitation and chanting (Chih, 2022, p. 463). Digital platforms extend this older plurality of sites, but they also alter the relation between presence and memory. The lodge remains a symbolic source, the Mawlid remains a ritual frame, and samā' remains a recognised mode of devotional sound; nevertheless, the platform allows these signs to be consumed

outside their original duration. A long *nūba* performance, a collective chant, or a praise sequence may be reduced to a fragment that circulates more widely than the full ritual from which it was taken. The effect is ambivalent: access expands, but the internal architecture of performance may be weakened.

The concept of remediation helps name this ambivalence. Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin define remediation as the refashioning of one medium through another, a process by which older media forms are preserved, transformed, and displayed inside newer ones (Bolter & Grusin, 1999, p. 45). Digital al-Burda is precisely such a case. The manuscript page, the printed copy, the chant circle, the recorded voice, the radio programme, and the online clip do not replace one another in a simple succession. They overlap. Each medium carries a different authority and produces a different listener. The manuscript trained the eye, print stabilised access, *samāʿ* organised the body of the group, recording fixed the voice, broadcasting widened the audience, and platforms convert devotional sound into searchable, shareable, and algorithmically ranked fragments. At this stage, the reception of al-Burda becomes a negotiation between ritual legitimacy and digital circulation. The poem keeps its capacity for praise and blessing, yet its public memory is increasingly shaped by the unstable economy of attention.

9. Festivals and the “Heritagization” of *Samāʿ*: From the Embrace of the Lodge to the Public Sphere and the Internationalization of Praise-Based Affect

The festival phase marks a decisive displacement in the Moroccan reception of prophetic praise, because *samāʿ* no longer remains confined to the lodge, the Mawlid night, or the ritual circle governed by a shaykh and a trained community of listeners. It enters a public space organised by programming, staging, amplification, ticketing, press discourse, cultural sponsorship, and international spectatorship. The Fez Festival of World Sacred Music, created in 1994, offers the clearest site for reading this shift, not because al-Burda is always performed there as a full poem, but because the festival created a new grammar through which sacred sound could be displayed, translated, and circulated beyond its immediate ritual community. Maria F. Curtis describes the festival as the formal stage on which national and international sacred music’s are presented in response to world conflicts, while also tracking how local sound practices become recognised genres prepared for tourists, commercial circulation, and global outlets (Curtis, 2007, pp. 2–3). Within such a frame, praise poetry and Sufi sound acquire a new mode of existence. Their legitimacy is no longer measured only by lineage, devotional competence, or fidelity to ritual duration; it is also measured by their capacity to represent Moroccan spirituality

before audiences who may not share the doctrinal, linguistic, or ritual codes of the original performance.

The transformation is especially visible when the city itself becomes part of the performance. Fès is not a neutral venue. Its medina, scholarly memory, craft traditions, *zawiya* networks, and imperial architecture give the festival a spatial authority that reinforces the sacralisation of sound in public view. Deborah Kapchan begins her analysis with an outdoor concert at Bab Makina, where the announcement is translated from Arabic into French and English before the ritual of *samāʿ* becomes, in her words, a shared ritual for thousands (Kapchan, 2008, p. 467). This scene condenses the logic of festival reception: the sacred is not merely transported from the lodge to the stage; it is reframed through multilingual mediation, lighting, seating, cameras, official presence, and a public trained to hear difference as spiritual value. In this setting, the audience does not receive prophetic praise as a continuous textual composition in the manner of a lesson or a complete recitation. It encounters selected sounds, voices, formulas, refrains, and gestures placed within a designed experience. The result is not the disappearance of devotion, but it’s reformatting according to the spatial and sensory demands of a festival.

Kapchan’s concept of the « festive sacred » gives this reformatting a precise theoretical name. She defines it as a configuration of aesthetic and embodied practices in which people of different religions and nations cohabit an experience of the sacred through heightened attention to auditory and sensory forms of devotion (Kapchan, 2008, p. 467). Her formulation is useful for reading the festival afterlife of al-Burda and neighbouring forms of prophetic praise. When a praise text is placed in such an environment, it no longer depends only on internal poetic sequence or ritual completeness. It becomes available as a segmental reservoir: a verse, a melody, a refrain, or a supplicatory formula may be extracted because it produces immediate effect, because it fits the time of the performance, or because it can be translated into a public emotion that exceeds the initial circle of believers. Kapchan further argues that sacred music festivals produce a « promise of sonic translation », founded on the belief that auditory codes can cross linguistic and cultural boundaries more effectively than texts (Kapchan, 2008, p. 470). This helps explain why prophetic praise in festival settings may be heard before it is understood, and felt before it is philologically interpreted.

The heritagization of *samāʿ* should therefore be read as an ambivalent process. It protects and disseminates devotional repertoires, yet it also alters their scale, temporality, and audience. Kapchan observes that traditions presented at the

Fez Festival have often undergone decontextualization from their ritual settings, although their recontextualization in a festive environment is accompanied by affective re-enchantment rather than simple secularisation (Kapchan, 2008, pp. 479–480). This distinction prevents a reductive critique. The festival does not merely empty *samāʿ* of religious meaning; it makes that meaning pass through other mediations. A chant that once required the discipline of a lodge may now be framed by a stage, introduced by a programme note, photographed, broadcast, recorded, and later remembered through a festival album or digital archive. In the case of *al-Burda*, Moroccanization is therefore not located in the wording of the poem alone. It lies in the conditions under which praise becomes audible as heritage, spirituality, and cultural representation at the same time.

This public staging also produces new networks around sacred sound. Curtis argues that the Fez Festival promotes the Moroccan state and functions as a site of global cultural diplomacy, while presenting a regional Sufi-influenced practice of spiritual music through the language of multiculturalism and global circulation (Curtis, 2007, p. 13). Her dissertation later describes the festival as a Moroccan event that generated positive publicity, attracted tourists, and contributed to a broader landscape of major Moroccan festivals such as the Essaouira Gnawa Festival, the Rabat Jazz Festival, and the Marrakesh International Film Festival (Curtis, 2007, pp. 40–43). The relevance for *al-Burda* is indirect but significant. Once sacred sound becomes part of an international festival economy, prophetic praise may circulate not only as devotion but also as an emblem of Moroccan Islam, urban memory, artistic refinement, and diplomatic hospitality. The poem becomes less a single textual object than a sign within a larger scene where religion, heritage, tourism, and national image meet.

The festival does not replace the lodge. It depends on it. Curtis notes that the Fez Festival draws on Moroccan Sufi music and projects its diversity onto a global stage, while giving certain Moroccan musicians access to international attention and audiences they would not otherwise reach (Curtis, 2007, pp. 186–189). Kapchan similarly stresses that the Fez Festival draws on concepts of heritage and tradition while orienting them toward a universal sacred vocabulary (Kapchan, 2008, p. 480). This double movement clarifies the new position of *samāʿ*. The lodge continues to serve as a reservoir of ritual legitimacy, but the festival converts that legitimacy into event, image, audience, and circulation. A praise verse once held within devotional recurrence becomes part of a staged soundscape where Moroccan Islam is heard as both local inheritance and transnational offering. The authority of speech

is therefore redistributed between spiritual actors, cultural organisers, media devices, and spectators.

The reception of *al-Burda* in this context becomes a reception by fragments, atmospheres, and signs. The complete poem remains available in manuscripts, printed copies, lessons, and ritual recitations; yet the festival privileges moments that can be performed, recognised, and affectively shared within limited time. A selected passage may function as invocation, opening, climax, or sonic emblem. Such segmentation does not necessarily weaken the poem. It creates another mode of presence, one shaped by scenography, rhythm, translation, and audience expectation. At this stage, the Moroccanization of *al-Burda* reaches a public and international threshold: the poem and its neighbouring repertoires of prophetic praise pass from scholastic and ritual memory into a heritage economy where sacred sound is made visible, audible, repeatable, and exportable. The next movement of the argument can therefore return to the whole trajectory and gather its main stages, from manuscript and lesson to *samāʿ*, print, broadcast sound, digital circulation, and festival display.

10. Toward a Synthetic Reading of the Trajectory of the “Moroccanization of *al-Burda*” as a History of Remediation between Text, Station, and Medium

The trajectory reconstructed in this article suggests that the Moroccanization of *al-Burda* cannot be reduced to a local variation of wording, a secondary commentary on an eastern poem, or a simple transfer from manuscript to performance. It is better understood as a long process of functional relocation. At each stage, the poem changes because the place of use changes, the medium of circulation changes, and the recipient changes. In its classical genealogy, *al-Burda* belongs to the wider tradition of prophetic praise, where the poem’s authority is attached to praise, supplication, imitation, and symbolic proximity to the Prophet. Suzanne Pinckney Stetkevych shows that *al-Būṣṣīrī*’s ode inherits the earlier mantle tradition associated with Kaʿb ibn Zuhayr while transforming it into a devotional poetics of cure, dream, intercession, and spiritual address (Stetkevych, 2010, pp. 107–110). When this poetic inheritance moves into the Far Maghrib, it acquires a more layered social life. It may be read in learned environments, remembered through recitation, inserted into Mawlid practice, sung in *samāʿ*, selected within the *nūba*, and later mediated by print, recording, broadcasting, platforms, and festivals. Moroccanization therefore names a redistribution of the poem between three interwoven circles: scholastic reading, which disciplines the text; collective remembrance, which turns verse into repetition; and performance, which gives meaning a sonic duration.

The material history of the text clarifies the first layer of this redistribution. Before the poem becomes sound, it is already shaped by the visible order of the page. François Déroche and his collaborators define codicology through the study of the material aspects of the codex, insisting that the history of the book must be distinguished from the history of the text it carries (Déroche et al., 2005, pp. 11–12). This distinction is crucial for devotional poetry, because manuscript form participates in reception. Script, ruling, headings, divisions, coloured signs, marginal notes, and portable formats can guide the eye, prepare memorisation, and make certain passages easier to locate or repeat. Déroche further notes that ruling and page layout show an early concern for organising the written surface in Islamic manuscripts (Déroche et al., 2005, pp. 159–160). In the Moroccan devotional environment, such organisation does not remain visual only. It prepares a discipline of reading that can pass into recitation. The manuscript, especially when used for prayers upon the Prophet or praise poetry, becomes a material threshold between silent consultation and vocal performance.

The second layer emerges when devotional texts enter recurrent practice. Rachida Chih's study of *Dalā'il al-Khayrāt* is decisive here because it shows that this fifteenth-century Moroccan prayer book remained in use and circulated through mosques, Sufi lodges, shrines, homes, weekly dhikr sessions, and public religious celebrations (Chih, 2022, pp. 462–463). This devotional ecology explains how *al-Burda* could be received not only as a literary monument but as a text available for collective activation. A poem of praise becomes a practice when its verses are placed inside repeated situations: the lesson, the lodge, the Mawlid gathering, the chanting circle, and the musical sequence. Carl Dávila's work on prophetic piety in the Moroccan *nūba* confirms that praise of the Prophet belongs to a performed musical tradition in which poetic material is reorganised through modal, rhythmic, and sectional structures (Dávila, 2022, p. 219). The poem is then no longer encountered only as a continuous *qaṣīda*. It can be heard through fragments, refrains, melodic placement, and collective response. Its authority is preserved, but its mode of presence is transformed.

The third layer concerns technical media. Print, recording, broadcasting, digital platforms, and festivals do not merely add new channels to an old poem; they redefine the balance between text, authority, and audience. Elizabeth Eisenstein's account of typographical fixity helps explain how print strengthens textual stability and reproducibility (Eisenstein, 1979, p. 113). In the case of *al-Burda*, this means that the poem becomes easier to consult, compare, teach, and reproduce beyond the limits of manuscript transmission. Recording shifts attention toward the repeatable voice.

Broadcasting widens listening by detaching devotional sound from the physical gathering and inserting it into domestic and national time. Digital platforms add a further change, since visibility becomes partly governed by circulation, selection, and recommendation. Tarleton Gillespie argues that algorithms help determine which information becomes relevant to users and how public visibility is organised online (Gillespie, 2014, pp. 167–168). In this environment, a verse or chant may circulate because it is short, affective, recognisable, and easily shareable. The chain of transmission does not disappear, yet it must coexist with the logic of the clip, the playlist, the comment, and the repost.

The concept of remediation gives this whole trajectory a more precise vocabulary. Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin define remediation as the representation or refashioning of one medium in another, and they argue that new media repeatedly rework older media rather than simply replacing them (Bolter & Grusin, 1999, p. 45). The Moroccan reception of *al-Burda* follows exactly this pattern. The manuscript prepares the page as a space of reverent reading; print refashions manuscript authority through reproducibility; *samā'* refashions written praise as collective sound; the *nūba* refashions poetic material as musical time; recording refashions the living voice as repeatable trace; broadcasting refashions devotional audition as dispersed simultaneity; platforms refashion chant as searchable and shareable fragment; festivals refashion ritual sound as public heritage. Deborah Kapchan's analysis of the Fez Festival of World Sacred Music shows how sacred sound can be recontextualised within a festive public sphere without simply losing its religious charge (Kapchan, 2008, pp. 467–483). In such a setting, prophetic praise becomes both devotion and representation.

The synthetic reading proposed here rests on three connected levels. The first is the level of medium: manuscript, print, voice, recording, radio, platform, and festival each impose different patterns of repetition, stability, segmentation, and circulation. The second is the level of station: lesson, lodge, Mawlid gathering, *nūba* performance, broadcast schedule, digital page, and festival stage each assign the poem a different social frame. The third is the level of response: the recipient is successively a reader who learns, a disciple who repeats, a community that chants, a listener who recognises a melody, a user who shares a fragment, and a spectator who receives sacred sound as heritage. With this delimitation, Moroccanization is not an accidental effect of local taste. It is a history of remediated reception in which *al-Burda* moves between page, voice, and event, while its legitimacy is redistributed among scholastic authority, ritual authority, musical authority, media authority, and public heritage.

Conclusion

The trajectory examined in this article shows that the reception of al-Burda in the Far Maghrib cannot be explained by textual variation alone. Its Moroccan history is better understood through the changing situations in which the poem was read, recited, sung, heard, displayed, and circulated. In its classical genealogy, al-Burda belongs to the Arabic tradition of prophetic praise, where poetic address joins supplication, reverence, intercession, and symbolic proximity to the Prophet; Suzanne Pinckney Stetkevych's reading of al-Būṣīrī's ode as a devotional transformation of the mantle tradition clarifies this inherited structure (Stetkevych, 2010, pp. 107–110). Yet the Moroccan reception of the poem added another layer to that genealogy. Once placed within learned circles, Sufi gatherings, Mawlid practices, and later musical environments, al-Burda became more than a preserved qaṣīda. It became a usable devotional form. Rachida Chih's analysis of *Dalā'il al-Khayrāt* helps explain this broader ecology, since she shows that Moroccan prophetic piety relied on texts recited or chanted in mosques, Sufi lodges, shrines, private homes, weekly dhikr sessions, and public religious celebrations (Chih, 2022, pp. 462–463). The main result of the article follows from this evidence: Moroccanization should be defined as a history of pragmatic relocation, through which the poem moved among scholastic memory, ritual memory, and performative memory.

This conclusion also modifies the place usually granted to material supports in the study of prophetic praise. The manuscript and the printed book do not remain outside reception. They prepare it. François Déroche and his collaborators distinguish the history of the codex from the history of the text it carries, thereby making visible the role of script, page layout, ruling, headings, marginal signs, and book format in the social life of manuscripts (Déroche et al., 2005, pp. 11–12). In Moroccan devotional culture, such elements helped organise reading before voice took over. The page trained the eye, print stabilised access, and recitation transformed visible order into shared sound. Elizabeth Eisenstein's account of typographical fixity further clarifies the effect of print, because reproducibility strengthens textual stability while widening the conditions of consultation and circulation (Eisenstein, 1979, p. 113). The reception of al-Burda therefore passes through a material sequence: the manuscript gives the poem a localised and handled form; print multiplies its availability; performance detaches the verse from silent reading and gives it a rhythmic duration.

The analysis of *samā'* and the Moroccan-Andalusian *nūba* confirms that the poem's meaning is not preserved unchanged when it becomes sound. It is reorganised. In the lodge or the

chanting circle, the verse becomes a unit of collective repetition; within the *nūba*, it may be selected, prolonged, segmented, and placed inside a modal and rhythmic structure. Carl Dávila's study of prophet-piety in the Moroccan *nūba* tradition is decisive here, because it shows that praise of the Prophet belongs to a performed repertoire dating at least from the seventeenth century and that this repertoire combines devotional expression with other poetic registers such as love, travel, mysticism, and wine imagery (Dávila, 2022, p. 219). The implication is direct: when prophetic praise enters musical time, the unit of reception is no longer necessarily the complete poem. It may become a verse, a refrain, an opening formula, a melodic turn, or a passage whose force depends on repetition and response. The poem keeps its devotional character, but its authority is measured by its ability to inhabit performance without losing its link to prophetic memory.

Modern media extend this transformation instead of interrupting it. Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin define remediation as the process by which one medium refashions another, a concept that helps account for the passage from page to voice, from voice to recording, from recording to broadcast, and from broadcast to digital circulation (Bolter & Grusin, 1999, p. 45). Each medium changes the recipient. The reader becomes a listener; the listener becomes an audience; the audience becomes a user; the user becomes a participant in circulation. Radio and recording stabilise the voice and detach devotional sound from the gathering that first produced it. Digital platforms then introduce another criterion of visibility, since algorithms contribute to determining which fragments become relevant, searchable, shareable, and memorable (Gillespie, 2014, pp. 167–168). The religious meaning of al-Burda does not disappear through these passages. It is redistributed across new regimes of access, repetition, selection, and display.

Festival performance adds a public and international dimension to this history. Deborah Kapchan's notion of the « festive sacred » shows how Moroccan sacred sound can be staged for multifaith and transnational audiences without being reduced to entertainment or stripped of religious affect (Kapchan, 2008, pp. 467–483). In this setting, prophetic praise becomes simultaneously devotional memory, heritage, aesthetic experience, and cultural representation. The lodge remains a reservoir of ritual legitimacy, but the festival reframes that legitimacy through programming, translation, scenography, amplification, and audience management. Al-Burda and related forms of *madīḥ nabawī* may therefore circulate as signs of Moroccan Islam and as fragments of a broader soundscape associated with spirituality, tolerance, and public heritage. This development does not replace the older

forms of reception. It places them inside a larger economy of representation.

The contribution of this article lies in joining three levels that are often studied separately: the medium, the station, and the response. The medium includes manuscript, print, voice, recording, radio, platform, and festival stage. The station includes lesson, lodge, Mawlid gathering, nūba performance, broadcast schedule, digital page, and public event. The response includes memorisation, recitation, chanting, listening, sharing, and spectatorship. Once these levels are read together, the Moroccanization of al-Burda appears as a long history of remediated reception. The poem does not simply travel from one support to another; it changes function whenever its social location and its mode of audibility change. Further research could refine this argument through three directions: a comparative mapping of performances according to Moroccan cities, Sufi lodges, and Mawlid traditions; a close analysis of the verses most frequently selected in samā' and nūba contexts; and an inquiry into the digital segmentation of prophetic praise in contemporary Moroccan platforms. Such work would make it possible to describe with greater precision how classical Arabic poetry continues to inhabit North African ritual memory, musical performance, and media culture.

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