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“Our Sorry State!” Al-Būṣīrī’s Lamentations on Life and an Appeal for Cash

Sharaf al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Būṣīrī is the most celebrated poet of the Mamluk period, having composed *Al-Burdah*, the “mantle ode” to the prophet Muḥammad. The *Burdah* has been the focus of many commentaries, imitations, and translations, and it is arguably the most famous poem in the Arabic language today.¹ Its author was born on 1 Shawwāl 608/7 March 1212 in Upper Egypt, at either Abū Ṣīr or Dalāṣ. As a young man, al-Būṣīrī studied Arabic and some religious sciences in Cairo, while following the Sufi teachings of Abū al-‘Abbās Aḥmad al-Murṣī (d. 686/1287) and the Shādhiliyah order. He settled for a time in the Delta city of Bilbays, where he was a minor administrator, serving as a steward (*mubāshir*).² Al-Būṣīrī later returned to Cairo, where he composed poems in praise of the prophet Muḥammad, al-Murṣī, and various Mamluk officials. He died there sometime between 694/1294 and 696/1297.³

Al-Būṣīrī was regarded as a fine poet by several of his contemporaries, and his poems were collected in his *Dīwān*. This work contains over fifty poems employing a range of rhymes and meters as well as various literary devices (*badī‘*) for clever word-plays. The influence of earlier poets, particularly the Egyptian Sufi poet Ibn al-Fāriḍ (d. 632/1235), is apparent in several poems, including the *Burdah* in praise of the prophet Muḥammad.⁴ In this poem’s 160 verses, al-Būṣīrī recounts events in the life of Muḥammad including his birth, the washing of his heart by

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¹Over the years, Professor Carl Petry has conveyed his high scholarly standards and enthusiasm for the Mamluks to his students at Northwestern University and at the University of Chicago, where I had the privilege of studying with him. His studies are always insightful and stimulating, and I dedicate the following essay and translation to him with gratitude.

For an English translation of the *Burdah* and brief analysis see that by Stefan Sperl in *Qasida Poetry in Islamic Asia and Africa*, ed. S. Sperl and Christopher Shackle (Leiden, 1996), 2:388–411, 470–76.

²Concerning the profession of *mubāshir* in the Mamluk domains see Carl Petry, *The Civilian Elite of Cairo in the Later Middle Ages* (Princeton, 1981), 209–11.

³Al-Ṣafadī, *Al-Wāfi bi-al-Wafayāt*, ed. Sven Dederling (Wiesbaden, 1981), 3:105–13; al-Maqrīzī, *Al-Muqaffā al-Kabīr*, ed. Muḥammad al-Ya‘lāwī (Beirut, 1991), 5:661–69; and also see Muḥammad Sayyid Kīlānī’s useful introduction to al-Būṣīrī’s *Dīwān*, 2nd ed. (Cairo, 1973), 5–24.

⁴Al-Ṣafadī, *Al-Wāfi*, 3:107, and al-Būṣīrī, *Dīwān*, 238–48. Regarding al-Būṣīrī’s poems in praise of Muḥammad see Zakī Mubārak, *Al-Madā‘ih al-Nabawīyah fī al-Adab al-‘Arabī* (Cairo, 1935), and Kīlānī’s introduction to al-Būṣīrī, *Dīwān*, 24–48.

angels, his receiving revelation from God, his ascension to heaven on the mythical steed al-Burāq, and his struggles with the infidel Meccans. Al-Būṣīrī also relates many of the Prophet's miracles and blessed virtues and then ends his poem by praising the Prophet's family and companions, while praying for Muḥammad's intercession on Judgment Day. As Suzanne Stetkevych has argued persuasively, al-Būṣīrī's *Burdah* lauds the eternal triumph of Islam over unbelief as manifest destiny.⁵ More significantly for believers, perhaps, is that the poem also presents a ritual spiritual exchange, as the poet offers his prayers and praise to the Prophet, who in turn may grant his intercession on Judgment Day. The intercession invoked by the *Burdah* was extended to others in a frame story that came to accompany the poem within a century of its composition, no doubt enhancing the poem's popularity.⁶

According to this story, al-Būṣīrī once suffered a debilitating stroke. He prayed and cried out to God for help, and composed a new ode praising Muḥammad. Then he fell asleep and dreamed of the Prophet Muḥammad, who touched his face and wrapped him in his cloak (*burdah*). Upon waking, al-Būṣīrī found that the effects of the stroke had vanished, and he had been restored to health. As he walked out of his house for the first time after his dream, he was met by a Sufi who asked him for a copy of his poem in praise of Muḥammad. Al-Būṣīrī had composed several such odes, so he asked the man which poem he meant. The Sufi replied that he wanted the poem that al-Būṣīrī had composed during his recent illness. Al-Būṣīrī was stunned because he had told no one about the new ode or the miracle. The Sufi replied that the night before he had dreamed of the Prophet and saw him listening to and enjoying the poem. After the recitation, the Prophet threw his cloak over its author. Al-Būṣīrī gave the man a copy of his new ode, and as word spread of this miracle, others made copies and recited the poem. Soon, more instances of prophetic intercession occurred after the poem's recitation; copies of al-Būṣīrī's ode, now named the *Burdah*, were believed to possess miraculous healing powers. As a result, this poem has been copied many times, and its verses have been used in amulets and inscribed on walls to ward off misfortune.⁷

In one of the earliest biographies of al-Būṣīrī, the biographer and litterateur Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Ṣafadī (696–764/1297–1363) cited the frame story of the *Burdah* in which al-Būṣīrī speaks in the first person. Unfortunately, al-Ṣafadī did not give a source for the story, though he did note that he had learned all of al-Būṣīrī's

⁵ Suzanne P. Stetkevych, "From *Sīrah* to *Qaṣīdah*: Poetics and Polemics in al-Būṣīrī's *Qaṣīdat al-Burdah* (Mantle Ode)," *Journal of Arabic Literature* 38 (2007): 1–52.

⁶ Suzanne P. Stetkevych, "From Text to Talisman: al-Būṣīrī's *Qaṣīdat al-Burdah* (Mantle Ode) and the Supplicatory Ode," *Journal of Arabic Literature* 37 (2006): 145–89.

⁷ Al-Ṣafadī, *Al-Wāfi*, 3:112–13. Also see al-Maqrizī, *Al-Muqaffá*, 5:666–67, and Stetkevych, "Text to Talisman," 146–53.

poetry from his teacher Athīr al-Dīn Abū Ḥayyān (654–745/1256–1354), who had received the poems directly from al-Būṣīrī. Abū Ḥayyān also related that al-Būṣīrī was of Berber ancestry and was “short in stature, but of great nobility.”⁸ Al-Ṣafadī and most later biographers present al-Būṣīrī as an accomplished poet and pious supplicant blessed by the Prophet, but some sources also reveal another side to the man. The historian and biographer al-Maqrīzī depicted al-Būṣīrī as a frustrated poet who was forced to work as a scribe because he could not find sufficient patronage for his verse.⁹ Significantly, al-Būṣīrī does not appear to have ever held one of the many teaching positions in the various educational establishments in Cairo or elsewhere in Egypt, suggesting that he either lacked an extensive training in the religious sciences or the proper contacts to secure a position as a religious scholar. As a result, he was forced to adapt his extensive Arabic poetic skills to menial secretarial work, which he hated. Supporting this view is one of al-Būṣīrī’s poems in which he declared that he served as an administrator only to support his family. He then offered a scathing critique of minor bureaucrats, particularly Christians and Jews who, he claimed, were rapacious in order to support their opulent lifestyles replete with wine and fine clothes.¹⁰

Al-Būṣīrī harshly criticized the beliefs and practices of Jews and Christians in other verse as well, and perhaps this was due to a professional rivalry with Christian and Jewish scribes. But al-Būṣīrī’s polemics may also reflect the religious tensions in Syria and Egypt during his lifetime, resulting from on-going Crusades and the Mongol invasion of Iraq and Syria.¹¹ Nevertheless, Muslims, too, felt the wrath of this misanthrope. Invective poetry was among al-Būṣīrī’s specialties, and al-Maqrīzī quoted one of al-Būṣīrī’s contemporaries, Shihāb al-Dīn Abū al-Thana’ Maḥmūd,¹² as saying: “Despite (al-Būṣīrī’s) many virtues, he was loathed for loosing his tongue against people with any insult, and he would say

⁸ Al-Ṣafadī, *Al-Wāfi*, 3:111. For Abū Ḥayyān see the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 3rd ed., 1:40–41 (S. Glazner/T. E. Homerin). Al-Ṣafadī’s account of al-Būṣīrī was slightly abridged by al-Kutubī, *Fawāt al-Wafayāt*, ed. Iḥsān ‘Abbās (Beirut, 1974), 3:362–69.

⁹ Al-Maqrīzī, *Al-Muqaffá*, 5:666, 669.

¹⁰ Al-Būṣīrī, *Dīwān*, 266–71, and see Kilānī’s introduction to it, 11–16.

¹¹ Al-Būṣīrī, *Dīwān*, 175–219. Also see Carl Petry, “Copts in Late Medieval Egypt,” in *Coptic Encyclopedia*, ed. Aziz S. Atiya (New York, ca. 1991–), 3:618–35, esp. 618, 622–25; Norman A. Stillman, “The Non-Muslim Communities: The Jewish Community,” in *The Cambridge History of Egypt, 640–1517*, ed. Carl Petry (Cambridge, 1998), 198–210, esp. 208–9; Linda S. Northrup, “The Bahārī Mamluk Sultanate,” in *Cambridge History of Egypt*, 242–89, esp. 265–73, and Robert Irwin, *The Middle East in the Middle Ages* (London, ca. 1986), 54.

¹² This may be the poet and scholar Abū al-Thana’ Maḥmūd ibn ‘Umar al-Shaybānī, known as Ibn Daḥiqah (564–635/1169–1238). See Ibn al-‘Imād, *Shadharāt al-Dhahab* (Cairo, 1931), 5:177, and ‘Umar Kaḥḥālah, *Mu‘jam al-Mu‘allifīn* (Damascus, 1957), 12:185.

bad things about them in the company of amirs and viziers."¹³ Moreover, when Abū al-Thana' Maḥmūd visited al-Būṣīrī, the latter complained bitterly about his poverty and many needs, and how one of his patrons was haughty and thought little of the scribal class.¹⁴ In line with his account, al-Būṣīrī depicted himself in some of his poems as penniless and hen-pecked, with hungry children to feed and a nagging wife who gave him little respect:¹⁵

*in zurtuhā fī-l-ʿāmi yawman antajat
wa-atat li-sittati ashhurin bi-ghulāmi*

If I visit her for only a day per year, she gets pregnant
and brings forth a boy in six months!

Not surprisingly, al-Būṣīrī directed such poems and their complaints to perspective patrons among the Mamluk ruling elite, including Bahā' al-Dīn 'Alī ibn Muḥammad, known as al-Ṣāhib Ibn Ḥannā. He had served as a vizier to the Ayyubids and was reappointed to that position by the Mamluk sultan Baybars I in 659/1261; Ibn Ḥannā held the position until his death in 677/1278.¹⁶ Ibn Ḥannā was said to have been quite wealthy and generous, and this, together with his position and power, undoubtedly drew al-Būṣīrī to him. According to the frame story of the *Burdah*, al-Būṣīrī would compose poems in praise of the prophet Muḥammad for Ibn Ḥannā, who greatly admired the *Burdah*.¹⁷ Moreover, al-Būṣīrī addressed several poems to him and recited a short elegy at the funeral of one of Ibn Ḥannā's sons.¹⁸ In the following poem to Ibn Ḥannā, al-Būṣīrī describes his troubled family life and his desperate need for support, for which he begs the vizier:¹⁹

*yā ayyuhā-l-mawlā-l-wazīru-lla-dhī
ayyāmuḥu ṭāī'atun amrah*²⁰

¹³ Al-Maqrīzī, *Al-Muqaffā*, 5:664.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 5:664–66, and also see Kilānī's introduction to al-Būṣīrī's *Dīwān*, 8–11.

¹⁵ Al-Būṣīrī, *Dīwān*, 254, and also Kilānī's introduction, 22–24.

¹⁶ Al-Kutubī, *Fawāt*, 3:76–78; al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-Sulūk*, ed. Muḥammad Muṣṭafā Ziyādah (Cairo, 1934–58), 1:2:447, 649; Ibn al-ʿImād, *Shadharāt*, 5:358; and Irwin, *Middle East*, 20.

¹⁷ Al-Ṣafadī, *Al-Wāfī*, 3:112–13.

¹⁸ Al-Būṣīrī, *Dīwān*, 135–44, 164–67, 280, and al-Maqrīzī, *Al-Mawāʿiẓ wa-al-F'tibār bi-Dhikr al-Khiṭaṭ wa-al-Āthār* (Baghdad, 1970), 2:299.

¹⁹ Al-Būṣīrī, *Dīwān*, 164–67; al-Ṣafadī also gives an abridged version of the poem, *Al-Wāfī*, 3:108–9.

²⁰ I follow al-Ṣafadī's reading of *ṭāī'atun* for *ṭā'ī'atun* to fit the meter *sarīf*. For the Arabic text, see

O my lord, the vizier,
whose days obey his command,

Whose rank on high
exhausts the mind to describe!

Your spotless character called us
to make a plea unexpectedly,

For you still pardon those who offend
and deem forgiveness with power to be wise.

So, perhaps, people do not know
what it is you love and what you despise.

5

To you we appeal about our state:
we are a family big as can be.²¹

I will speak to my lord in pen and ink
telling the tale of what came to pass.

They fasted like others,
but they are a warning for all who see.

When they drink, their well remains
earthen jugs and jars of clay.

Everyday they eat boiled bread
like dead grass revived by rain.

10

Whenever they gather round it, I say:
“Tarry awhile amid the water on the green!”

The holiday drew near, and they had
no pastry, no bread, no wheat.

the appendix.

²¹ I follow al-Ṣafadi's reading of *ʿāīlatun* for *ʿāʾīlatun* to fit the meter.

Have mercy on them, for when they spy a child
with a little cake in hand, or see a date,

Their eyes fix on it, gasping,
followed by a sigh.

How oft I have suffered their torment; 15
how often I have felt their grief.

How often they have said: "Daddy,
You've cut off our bread again!

"You never give us money,
not a dollar, not a dime, not a cent.

"And you're in service to the folk, daddy.
How can you serve them? You're a joke!

"O, what a waste it is if we never get
your wages or the rent."

I am amazed how sharp this boy is; 20
it comes to him so naturally.

Yet why shouldn't he be clever,
for everyone born has their nature.

One day their mother called on her sister,
who is as jealous as a second wife,

And she came in complaining of her state
and her patience with me in our poverty.

Her sister said: "Why do women act with their husbands so?
O, such a disgrace!"²²

"Get up and demand your rights from him. 25
Do it now; don't wait,

²² Following al-Ṣafadī who gives *yā ʿurrah* in place of *yā ghirrah*.

“And if he says no, then grab his beard,
and hair by hair jerk it out!”

Their mother said: “That’s not my way;
my husband gets annoyed.

“I fear if I say a word, he’ll divorce me.”
“Bullshit!” her sister said.

So my wife thought less and less of me,
and when she came home was she ticked,

When she got in my face, I threatened her,
so she bashed my head with a brick.

30

Then from early eve till morning light,
we went round and round in a fight.

The slave never sees his salvation
until he cries himself dry,

So on one whose sorry state is this,
O, my lord, please cast your eye!

Al-Būṣīrī begins his poem in praise of the vizier whose authority is so grand that time itself submits to his decree.²³ Though powerful, the vizier rules with forbearance and forgiveness, and so the poet takes the liberty to plead his case to him (vv. 1–7). Al-Būṣīrī depicts his large family as destitute, lacking even fresh water, and forced to eat stale, moldy bread. Though they fast during Ramaḍān, this is due more to poverty than piety, and when the ʿĪd al-Fiṭr occurs, his family cannot enjoy the festivities and sweets because they have no flour; they can only look on in envy of others (vv. 8–14). Al-Būṣīrī concludes this section and moves to the next with his lamentations on their dire condition (vv. 15–17). Then one of his young children complains of their plight and their penniless father. His son points out that al-Būṣīrī is poorer than the Sufi ascetics (*qawm*) whom he claims

²³ Cf. a verse by Abū Tammām cited in S. Stetkevych, *Abū Tammām & the Poetics of the ʿAbbāsīd Age* (Leiden, 1991), 24, from Ibn al-Muʿtazz, *Kitāb al-Badīʿ*, ed. I. Kratchkovsky (London, 1935), 23, and also see Stefan Sperl, *Mannerism in Arabic Poetry* (Cambridge, 1989), 9–27.

to serve, making him a laughingstock (*sukhrah*; vv. 17–19). Al-Būṣīrī marvels at how perceptive his son is at such a young age, and then he ends this section with an allusion to the hadith that all children are born with a natural disposition (*fiṭrah*; vv. 20–21).²⁴

Al-Būṣīrī next moves from his children to their mother, who visits her sister and bemoans her impoverished life with her husband. Her sister denounces such ne'er-do-well men in general and tells his wife to stand up and demand her rights. When his wife frets that he may then divorce her, her sister rebukes her and urges her to disgrace al-Būṣīrī publicly by pulling out his beard (vv. 22–28). Buoyed by her sister, al-Būṣīrī's wife returns home angry and fired up, and when al-Būṣīrī does indeed threaten her with a divorce, she clobbers him with a brick, and they fight throughout the night (vv. 29–30). Al-Būṣīrī then concludes his poem, citing another maxim—that the slave is never set free until he has suffered greatly, perhaps unto death—and he begs the vizier to look upon him with mercy (vv. 32–33).

Although al-Būṣīrī's begins this poem as an ode of praise and supplication, his focus quickly shifts from the vizier and his exalted rank to al-Būṣīrī's own debased and desperate condition. The editor of al-Būṣīrī's *Dīwān*, Muḥammad Sayyid Kīlānī, cites this poem as evidence that al-Būṣīrī's home life was a living hell.²⁵ While that is always a possibility, al-Būṣīrī clearly intended the poem to be a humorous parody, as he reverses various family roles and relationships. Ideally, fathers should be wealthy and wise, and children happy and innocent; yet here the poet is poor and powerless, as his young son sagaciously discerns when he worries about the family's lack of food and rent. Traditionally, husbands are to be in charge of obedient wives and family members; yet here al-Būṣīrī is demeaned by his sister-in-law, who riles up his wife, leading to a nasty fight that leaves the poet reeling and feeling not like a king in his castle, but like a suffering servant desperately in need of the vizier's beneficence. The poem, then, is not so much a panegyric (*madīh*) as it is an example of a witty poem (*mulḥah*), which tells of a disagreeable wife and harried husband.²⁶ Given the references to fasting and the ʿĪd, perhaps al-Būṣīrī offered Ibn Ḥannā this poem as an amusing tale at the end of Ramaḍān, when Muslims are to give alms and be generous to the less fortunate. While the *Burdah* sought prophetic intercession on the Judgment Day, this poem on al-Būṣīrī's sorry state aimed for intercession of a more material sort. For al-Būṣīrī's sake, I hope he received it.

²⁴ Al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, ed. Muḥammad Muḥsin Khān (Medina, n.d.), 2:249–50 (“*janāʿiz*,” 78, #443).

²⁵ Kīlānī's introduction to al-Būṣīrī's *Dīwān*, 22–24.

²⁶ See Geert Jan van Gelder, “Against Women and Other Pleasantries: the Last Chapter of Abū Tammām's *Ḥamāsa*,” *Journal of Arabic Literature* 16 (1985): 61–72.

APPENDIX

يَا أَيُّهَا الْمَوْلَى الْوَزِيرُ الَّذِي
 وَمَنْ لَهُ مَنْزِلَةٌ فِي الْعُلَى
 أَخْلَاقُكَ الْغُرُّ دَعْتَنَا إِلَى الْإِذْلَاءِ فِي الْقَوْلِ عَلَى غِرَّةِ
 إِذْ لَمْ تَزَلْ تَصْفَحُ عَمَّنْ جَنَى
 حَتَّى لَقَدْ يَخْفَى عَلَى النَّاسِ مَا
 إِلَيْكَ نَشْكُو حَالَنَا إِنَّا
 أَحَدْتُ الْمَوْلَى الْحَدِيثَ الَّذِي
 صَامُوا مَعَ النَّاسِ وَلَكِنَّهُمْ
 إِنْ شَرِبُوا فَالْبُرُّ زِيرٌ لَهُمْ
 لَهُمْ مِنَ الْخُبْزِ مَسْلُوقَةٌ
 أَقُولُ مَهْمَا أَجْتَمَعُوا حَوْلَهَا
 وَأَقْبَلَ الْعَيْدُ وَمَا عِنْدَهُمْ
 فَأَرْحَمَهُمْ إِنْ أَبْصَرُوا كَعَكَّةً
 تَشْخَصُ أَبْصَارُهُمْ نَحْوَهَا
 فَكَمْ أَقَاسِي مِنْهُمْ لَوْعَةٌ
 كَمْ قَائِلٌ يَا أَبْتَا مِنْهُمْ
 مَا صِيرْتَ تَأْتِينَا بِفَلْسٍ وَلَا
 وَأَنْتَ فِي خِدْمَةِ قَوْمٍ فَهَلْ
 يَا خَيْبَةَ الْمَسْعَى إِذَا لَمْ يَكُنْ
 لَقَدْ تَعَجَّبْتُ لَهَا فَطِنَةٌ

أَيَّامُهُ طَائِعَةٌ أَمْرُهُ
 تَكِلُ عَنْ أَوْصَافِهَا الْفِكْرَةَ
 وَتُؤَثِّرُ الْعَفْوَ مَعَ الْقُدْرَةَ
 تُحِبُّ مِنْ أَمْرِ وَمَا تَكْرَهُ
 عَائِلَةٌ فِي غَايَةِ الْكَثْرَةَ
 جَرَى لَهُمْ بِالْخَيْطِ وَالْإِبْرَةَ
 كَانُوا لِمَنْ يُبْصِرُهُمْ عِبْرَةَ
 مَا بَرِحَتْ وَالشَّرْبَةَ الْجَرَّةَ
 فِي كُلِّ يَوْمٍ تُشْبِهُ النَّشْرَةَ
 تَنْزَهُوا فِي الْمَاءِ وَالْخَضْرَةَ
 قَمَحٌ وَلَا خُبْزٌ وَلَا فَطْرَةَ
 فِي يَدِ طِفْلِ أَوْ رَأْوَا تَمْرَةَ
 بِشَهْقَةٍ تَتَّبِعُهَا زَفْرَةَ
 وَكَمْ أَقَاسِي مِنْهُمْ حَسْرَةَ
 قَطَعْتَ عَنَا الْخُبْزَ فِي كَرَّةِ
 بِدِرْهِمٍ وَرِقٍ وَلَا نَقْرَةَ
 تَخْدُمُهُمْ يَا أَبْتَا سُخْرَةَ
 يَجْرِي لَنَا أَجْرٌ وَلَا أَجْرَةَ
 أَتَى بِهَا الطِّفْلُ بِلَا جَرَّةِ

وَكَيْفَ يَخْلُو الطُّفْلُ مِنْ فِطْنَةٍ
 وَيَوْمَ زَارَتْ أُمُّهُمْ أُخْتَهَا
 وَأَقْبَلَتْ تَشْكُو لَهَا حَالَهَا
 قَالَتْ لَهَا كَيْفَ تَكُونُ النِّسَاءُ
 قَوْمِي أَطْلُبِي حَقَّكَ مِنْهُ بِلَا
 وَإِنْ تَأَبَّى فَخُذِي ذَقْنَهُ
 قَالَتْ لَهَا مَا عَادَتِي هَكَذَا
 أَخَافُ إِنْ كَلَّمْتُهُ كَلِمَةً
 فَهَوَّنَتْ قَدْرِي فِي نَفْسِهَا
 فَاقْبَلْتِي فَتَهَدَّدْتُهَا
 وَبَاتَتْ الْفِتْنَةُ مَا بَيْنَنَا
 وَمَا رَأَى الْعَبْدُ لَهُ مَخْلَصًا
 فَحَقٌّ مَنْ حَالَتُهُ هَذِهِ
 وَكُلُّ مَوْلُودٍ عَلَى الْفِطْرَةِ
 وَالْأَخْتُ فِي الْغَيْرَةِ كَالضَّرَّةِ
 وَصَبَّرَهَا مِنِّي عَلَى الْعُسْرَةِ
 كَذَا مَعَ الْأَزْوَاجِ يَا عُرَّةُ
 تَخْلَفُ مِنْكَ وَلَا فَتْرَةَ
 ثُمَّ أَنْتَفِيهَا شَعْرَةً شَعْرَةَ
 فَإِنَّ زَوْجِي عِنْدَهُ ضَجْرَهُ
 طَلَّقَنِي قَالَتْ لَهَا بَعْرَهُ
 فَجَاءَتْ الزَّوْجَةَ مُحْتَرَةً
 فَاسْتَقْبَلَتْ رَأْسِي بِأَجْرِهِ
 مِنْ أَوَّلِ اللَّيْلِ إِلَى بُكْرِهِ
 إِلَّا وَمَا فِي عَيْنِهِ قَطْرَهُ
 أَنْ يَنْظُرَ الْمَوْلَى لَهُ نَظْرَهُ