

Walking in the Steps of Poets: Evoking Past Poets in Sufi Poetry

Authors : Bilal Orfali

Abstract : It is common practice in modern times to read mystical poetry and apply it to our mundane lives and loves. Sufis in the early period did the opposite. Their mystical hymns often spun out of the courtly poetic ghazal, panegyric, and wine songs. This paper highlights the relation of the Arabic courtly poetic canon to early Sufism. Sufi akhbār and poetry evoke past poets and their poetic heritage. They tend to quote or refer to eminent poets whose poetry must have been widely circulated and memorized. However, Sufism places this readily recognizable poetry in a new context that deliberately changes the past. It is a process of a metaphorization in which the reality of the pre-Islamic, Umayyad, and Abbasid models now acts as a device or metaphor for the Sufi poetics.

Keywords : Sufism, Arabic poetry, literature, Islamic literature, Abbasid

Conference Title : ICAIS 2017 : International Conference on Arabic and Islamic Studies

Conference Location : Zurich, Switzerland

Conference Dates : April 20-21, 2017