



Arabic and Hebrew Love Poems in Al-Andalus (Culture and Civilization in the Middle East)

Shari Lowin

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Arabic and Hebrew Love Poems in al-Andalus investigates a largely overlooked subset of Muslim and Jewish love poetry in medieval Spain: hetero- and homo-erotic love poems written by Muslim and Jewish religious scholars, in which the lover and his sensual experience of the beloved are compared to scriptural characters and storylines.

This book examines the ways in which the scriptural referents fit in with, or differ from, the traditional Andalusian poetic conventions. The study then proceeds to compare the scriptural stories and characters as presented in the poems with their scriptural and exegetical sources. This new intertextual analysis reveals that the Jewish and Muslim scholar-poets utilized their sacred literature in their poems of desire as more than poetic ornamentation; in employing Qur'anic heroes in their secular verses, the Muslim poets presented a justification of profane love and sanctification of erotic human passions. In the Hebrew lust poems, which utilize biblical heroes, we can detect subtle, subversive, and surprisingly placed interpretations of biblical accounts.

Moving beyond the concern with literary history to challenge the traditional boundaries between secular and religious poetry, this book provides a new, multidisciplinary, approach to existing materials and will be of interest to students, scholars and researchers of Islamic and Jewish Studies as well as to those with an interest in Hebrew and Arabic poetry of Islamic Spain.

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