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ARABIC SUFI POETRY IN THE BALKANS: A STYLISTIC ANALYSIS OF SIXTEENTH - AND NINETEENTH-CENTURY BOSNIAN AND MACEDONIAN POETS

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ABSTRACT: This study examines the stylistic characteristics and thematic content of Arabic-language mystical Sufi poetry produced in the Balkan countries, particularly Bosnia and Macedonia, during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, addressing a significant gap in Islamic literary historiography and Balkan studies. While Ottoman Turkish and vernacular Aljamiado literatures have received scholarly attention, Arabic Sufi poetry from the Balkans remains virtually unexamined despite Arabic's role as the prestige language of Islamic scholarship. Focusing on poets affiliated with the Naqshbandiyya, Qadiriyya, and Khalwatiyya sufi tarias in Sarajevo and Skopje, this research employs descriptive-analytical methods, accompanied by close stylistic analysis, to investigate how non-native Arabic writers adapted classical Sufi topoi within frontier, multi-confessional contexts. Through systematic examination of rhetorical devices, symbolic systems, prosodic features, and Qur'anic intertextuality in selected poems, the study reveals distinctive characteristics: heightened emphasis on

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spiritual wayfaring (sulūk) over intoxication (sukr), frequent deployment of paradox and antithesis to negotiate dual cultural positioning, localised symbolic imagery reflecting tekke institutional culture, and simplified syntactic structures that nonetheless maintain classical rhetorical conventions. These findings demonstrate that Balkan Arabic Sufi poets were not passive imitators but creative adapters who inflected universal mystical themes with regionally specific concerns related to Muslim minority experience, confessional coexistence, and frontier piety. This study contributes to understanding regional variations in transregional Arabic literary production, challenges centre-periphery narratives in Islamic literary historiography and establishes methodological frameworks for analysing Arabic poetry composed by non-native writers in peripheral contexts.

Keywords: Sufism, Poetry, Arabic Literature, Ottoman Turks, Balkans.

BALKANLAR'DA ARAPÇA TASAVVUFÎ ŞİİR: XVI-XIX. YÜZYILLAR ARASINDA BOSNALI VE MAKEDONYALI ŞAİRLERİN ÜSLUP ÇÖZÜMLEMESİ

ÖZ: Bu çalışma, on altıncı ve on dokuzuncu yüzyıllar arasında Balkanlar'da, özellikle Bosna ve Makedonya'da kaleme alınan Arapça tasavvufî (mistik) sûfî şiirinin üslup özelliklerini ve tematik içeriğini incelemekte ve İslâm edebiyatı tarihçiliği ile Balkan çalışmaları literatüründe önemli bir boşluğu doldurmayı amaçlamaktadır. Osmanlı Türkçesi ve yerel Aljamiado edebiyatları akademik olarak ele alınmış olsa da, İslâm ilim geleneğinde prestij dili olarak merkezi bir konumda bulunan Arapça ile Balkanlar'da üretilen tasavvufî şiir neredeyse tamamen ihmal edilmiştir. Araştırma, Saraybosna ve Üsküp'te Nakşebendiyye, Kadiriyye, Mevlevîlik ve Halvetiyye tarikatlarına bağlı şairlere odaklanarak, yerel ve çok dinli sınır bölgelerinde ana dili Arapça olmayan şairlerin klasik tasavvufî temaları nasıl yeniden yorumladığını incelemeyi hedeflemektedir. Betimleyici-analitik bir yöntemle yapılan bu çalışma, seçilen şiirler üzerinde ayrıntılı üslup çözümlenmeleri yaparak, retorik araçlar, sembolik sistemler, aruz ve vezin yapıları ile Kur'ânî metinlerarasılığı sistematik bir şekilde incelemektedir. Analizler, Balkan Arapça sûfî şiirinin ayırt edici bazı özelliklerini ortaya koymaktadır: vecd ve sukr temalarından ziyade, mânevî seyr ü sülûk vurgusu yapılmaktadır; çift kültürlü aidiyet meselesinde paradoks ve karşıtlık unsurları yoğun şekilde kullanılmıştır; tekke kurum kültürünü yansıtan semboller ve klasik belâgat kurallarına sadık kalınarak daha sade ve işlevsel bir sözdizimi tercih edilmiştir. Bu bulgular, Balkanlar'da Arapça tasavvufî şiir yazan şairlerin klasik modelleri pasif biçimde taklit eden aktörler olmadığını; aksine, evrensel tasavvufî temaları bölgesel hassasiyetlerle, özellikle Müslüman azınlık tecrübesi, mezhepler arası birlikte yaşam ve sınır dindarlığı gibi konularla yaratıcı bir biçimde yeniden biçimlendirdiklerini ortaya koymaktadır. Çalışma, Arapça edebî üretimini bölgesel çeşitlenmesini daha derinlemesine anlamamıza katkı sağlamakta, İslâm edebiyatı tarihindeki merkez-çevre anlatılarını sorgulamakta ve periferik bağlamlarda ana dili Arapça olmayan yazarlar tarafından kaleme alınan Arapça şiirlerin incelenmesine yönelik metodolojik bir çerçeve sunmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Tasavvuf, Şiir, Arap Edebiyatı, Osmanlı Türkleri, Balkanlar.

Introduction

The expansion of Ottoman rule across the Balkans precipitated profound transformations in the region's linguistic and literary landscapes. While Ottoman Turkish served administrative functions and Persian dominated courtly literature, Arabic remained the primary medium of Islamic scholarship and religious expression. Combined with the proliferation of madrasas and Sufi institutions during

the sixteenth through eighteenth centuries, this created conditions for Arabic literary production among Balkan Muslim intellectuals, a phenomenon that remains virtually unstudied.

Mystical Sufi poetry in Arabic emerged particularly in Bosnia and Macedonia, where major Sufi *ṭarīqas*-the Naqshbandiyya, Qadiriyya, and Khalwatiyya-established networks of *tekkes* and *zāwiyyās* functioning as centres of devotional practice and literary cultivation. These institutions, concentrated in Sarajevo and Skopje, attracted scholar-poets who composed mystical verses in Arabic, employing classical Sufi literary conventions while responding to the specific conditions of Muslim communities in a frontier zone characterised by confessional diversity and intercultural exchange.

This study argues that Arabic Sufi poetry produced in Bosnia and Macedonia during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries represents a distinctive sub-tradition characterised by specific rhetorical adaptations reflecting the poets' dual positioning as participants in classical Islamic literary culture and members of frontier Muslim communities. The central question is: How do Balkan poets writing in Arabic adapt classical Sufi rhetorical topoi and symbolic systems to express spiritual concerns shaped by their particular geographical, institutional, and confessional contexts?

This encompasses four subsidiary inquiries: (1) What conceptual emphases distinguish Balkan Arabic Sufi poetry from contemporaneous poetry in Arab lands? (2) What rhetorical strategies do these non-native Arabic writers employ? (3) How do Sufi order affiliations and *tekke* culture shape poetic production? (4) What shared features enable identification of a "Balkan Arabic Sufi poetic profile"?

This study focuses exclusively on Arabic-language Sufi poetry for three reasons: First, Arabic's status as the language of Islamic scholarship meant that poets composing in Arabic were positioning themselves within transregional scholarly networks that were distinct from those in Ottoman Turkish or vernacular composition. Second, Arabic poetry remains the least examined component of Balkan Islamic literary heritage. Third, methodological coherence-including the use of multiple linguistic corpora-would require different analytical frameworks.

Geographically, analysis concentrates on Bosnia and Macedonia (Sarajevo and Skopje), where concentrated *tekke* networks and robust *madrassa* systems created

identifiable literary milieus with well-preserved manuscripts. Temporally, the study examines the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, a period of intense Sufi institutional development and documented Arabic literary production, before the nineteenth-century Tanzimat reforms altered traditional scholarly networks.

This research contributes by: (1) recovering a neglected corpus through systematic stylistic analysis, (2) challenging centre-periphery models by demonstrating creative adaptation rather than passive imitation, (3) illuminating Arabic as a transregional literary language, and (4) establishing methodological frameworks for analysing peripheral Arabic literary traditions.

Literature Review

The literature on Sufi poetry in the Balkans remains limited, particularly in its stylistic features and in the use of Arabic as a medium for mystical expression. Previous studies have primarily focused on the broader cultural impact of Ottoman rule and Islam on the Balkans. Yet, there is a distinct lack of detailed analysis of the stylistic elements of Balkan Sufi poetry and its relationship with Arabic literary traditions.

Scholars such as Saeid Abedpour (2013), who mentioned “Sufism and Ottoman cultural relations with the Balkans” (Abedpour 2013, p. 273) and Julianne Marie Hazen (2008), who describes “Contemporary Bosnian Sufism”, have explored the influence of Ottoman Turkish culture on Balkan poetry, emphasising the introduction of Islamic mysticism and the use of Arabic as a literary language. (Hazen, 2008, p. 34) However, these works focus more on general cultural diffusion and religious influence, offering little insight into the stylistic nuances of mystical poetry or into the integration of Arabic forms into the local poetic tradition. Similarly, while Enes Karic (2003) describes his writing, “The Arabic Cultural Influence on the Balkans: An Outline” (Karic, 2003, p. 107) and Ines Aščerić-Todd (2015), “Dervishes and Islam in Bosnia” have addressed the presence of Sufism in the region, they do not provide comprehensive stylistic analyses of the Balkan mystical poets (Todd, 2015, p. 58).

In addition, the research often treats Balkan mystical poetry as derivative or marginal, overlooking its distinctive stylistic features. Studies, such as those by Krenar Doli (2023) in “Investigation of Sufi music tradition in Kosovo in the 21st

century with an intercultural approach”, which investigate the Sufi music tradition in Kosovo in the 21st century with an intercultural approach, focus on important Sufi-based poets (Doli, 2023, p. 23). Still, they tend to examine individual works in isolation, without addressing the broader trends across the region. Furthermore, the influence of Persian and Turkish mystical forms is acknowledged, yet their intersection with local Balkan cultures remains underexplored.

This study addresses these gaps by offering the first comprehensive stylistic analysis of Arabic mystical poetry by Balkan poets. By examining rhetorical devices, symbolic language, and artistic imagery, this research highlights the unique features of Balkan mystical poetry that distinguish it from central Islamic traditions. It explores how Balkan poets synthesised Arabic literary conventions with local spiritual and cultural sensibilities, creating a distinct literary phenomenon.

By foregrounding the contributions of prominent poets and their creative works, this study recovers marginalised voices and contextualises them within the broader framework of Sufi philosophy and Ottoman cultural influence. Through a detailed analysis of both the artistic form and spiritual content of these poems, the research demonstrates how Balkan poets used Arabic to express Sufi consciousness in ways that resonate with both local and Islamic mystical traditions. This approach not only fills a critical gap in the literature but also contributes to a more nuanced understanding of Islamic literary history in the Balkans.

Methodology

This study employs a descriptive-analytical approach combining close stylistic reading with institutional contextualisation to investigate Arabic mystical Sufi poetry produced in Bosnia, Macedonia, and Serbia between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries. The research addresses the challenge of analysing a peripheral literary tradition by balancing representative coverage with rigorous textual analysis through a focused corpus approach.

The corpus comprises thirty-eight poems by eight Balkan poets, representing three and a half centuries of continuous Arabic literary production across major urban centres. This extended timeframe is justified by three considerations: the limited volume of preserved poetry from any single generation necessitates a longer perspective to identify consistent patterns; the continuity of tekke institutional

culture created relatively stable conditions for literary production despite political changes; and including both classical Ottoman (seventeenth-eighteenth centuries) and late Ottoman/post-Ottoman figures (nineteenth-twentieth centuries) enables analysis of how the tradition evolved.

Primary sources were drawn from the Gazi Husrev-beg Library (Sarajevo), the Oriental Institute (Sarajevo), and the National Library of North Macedonia (Skopje), supplemented by published critical editions where available. Poems were selected according to six explicit criteria: temporal distribution (covering three distinct periods), geographic coverage (Sarajevo, Skopje, Belgrade), Sufi order diversity (Naqshbandiyya, Qadiriyya, Khalwatiyya, Mevleviyya, Shādhiliyya), genre (qaṣīdas and mystical lyrics engaging Sufi themes), textual reliability (authenticated manuscripts or reliable editions), and representativeness (multiple manuscript copies or contemporary references indicating circulation within tekke networks).

The eight poets analysed-Ḥasan al-Qāḍī al-Busnavī (d. 1615), Ḥusayn Pasha of Belgrade (d. 1614), Ḥasan Qā'imī (d. 1691), Fawzī al-Mustarī (d. 1747), 'Abd al-Wahhāb al-Būsni (d. 1700), Muṣṭafā Bāshīsqī (d. 1809), Muḥammad al-Khānjī al-Būsni (d. 1944), and 'Abd al-Fattāḥ bin 'Abd al-Ra'ūf (d. 1963)-represent diverse backgrounds and affiliations, collectively illuminating the breadth of Arabic poetic production across Balkan centres

Analysis integrates three dimensions: formal-stylistic features examining rhetorical devices (isti'āra, kināya, tashbīh, muṭābaqa), prosodic patterns, syntactic structures, and Qur'anic intertextuality; thematic-conceptual content identifying dominant Sufi concepts (fanā'/baqā', 'ishq, sulūk, tawhīd) and their regional inflexions; and institutional-biographical context situating poets within Sufi orders, madrasa networks, and manuscript circulation patterns. Thematic categories emerged through iterative close reading, rather than being imposed by frameworks. To establish regional distinctiveness, selected poems are compared with contemporaneous works by Egyptian, Syrian, and Ḥijāzī poets, enabling identification of features characterising Balkan Arabic Sufi poetry as a distinctive sub-tradition.

Results and Discussions

The results of this study indicate that Arabic mystical Sufi poetry in the Balkans developed within a well-established Ottoman-era scholarly and religious infrastructure rather than emerging as an isolated literary phenomenon. Arabic did not function as a vernacular language in the region; instead, it operated as a sacred and scholarly medium closely linked to Islamic law, theology, and Sufi pedagogy (Norris, 1996, p. 297). The presence of Balkan scholars who received formal training in Istanbul and other Ottoman centres facilitated sustained engagement with Arabic grammar, rhetoric, and poetics, which in turn shaped poetic composition in Bosnia, Macedonia, and neighbouring regions (Mūfākū, 1982, p. 5).

The circulation of Arabic manuscripts through mosques, madrasas, and Sufi lodges (tekkes) created stable conditions for Arabic literary activity. As previous studies have shown, educational institutions attached to mosques served as primary sites for teaching Arabic linguistic sciences alongside Islamic jurisprudence and theology (Balaban, Çağlayan ve Ombashi, 2015, p. 117). Manuscript evidence further confirms that most surviving Arabic texts preserved in Balkan libraries date to the Ottoman period, underscoring the historical depth of Arabic literary engagement in the region (Kūsūfī, 2003, p. 27).

Within this institutional context, Arabic Sufi poetry functioned less as courtly literary display and more as a didactic and devotional medium (Clayer, 2007, p. 45). The stylistic features identified in the analysed poems—clarity of diction, reliance on Qur'ānic allusion, frequent imperative constructions, and maxim-like formulations—reflect the pedagogical needs of tekke environments, where poetry was used to transmit ethical norms, spiritual discipline, and doctrinal clarity (Ārūtshī, 2005, pp. 95-107). These findings are consistent with broader observations on Balkan Sufism, which emphasise moral instruction and communal guidance over ecstatic excess (Sezikli, 2018, p. 1657; Al-kūsūfī, 2016, p. 37).

A significant result of the stylistic analysis is the predominance of didactic sobriety. Rather than extended metaphorical imagery or intoxication-centred discourse, Balkan Arabic Sufi poets favoured direct address, antithetical moral reasoning, and Qur'ānic intertextuality to reinforce themes such as asceticism (zuhd), spiritual wayfaring (sulūk), divine unity (tawhīd), and proper conduct (adab) (Gharāhūfātis, 2019, p. 9). This stylistic orientation reflects the poets' social roles as

preachers, teachers, and Sufi guides operating in multi-confessional frontier contexts, where clarity and authority were essential (Norris, 2007, p. 201; Kuehn, 2024, p. 12).

Overall, the results challenge the assumption that Arabic literary production in the Balkans was merely derivative of other traditions (Todorova, pp. 99, 101). While poets clearly drew upon classical Arabic and Sufi models, they adapted these conventions to local religious and social conditions, using Arabic as a functional spiritual language rather than an elite aesthetic register (Terzioğlu, 2011, pp. 86-93). This sustained and purposeful engagement confirms that Balkan Arabic Sufi poetry constituted a coherent, regionally inflected literary practice embedded within transregional Islamic intellectual networks.

A Tapestry of Spirituality and Inner Dimension: Arabic Sufi Poetry in the Balkans

Before delving into the details of this research, it is imperative to define the concept of mystical poetry. Mystical poetry seeks to articulate the poet's spiritual and inner experiences, employing symbolic language and intricate imagery to convey profound emotions and meanings associated with Sufi and cognitive experiences. As an integral component of Islamic literature, mystical poetry seamlessly integrates elements of philosophy, Sufism, and literary expression, thereby enriching the understanding of both Islamic and literary traditions. This unique blend provides a rich tapestry that reflects the depth and complexity of the poet's spiritual journey and intellectual contemplation (Biegan, 2009, p. 45).

The impact of Sufism and sufi tarīqa, which expanded across the area under Ottoman control, is reflected in the mystical Sufi poetry written in the Balkan nations from the Middle Ages to the nineteenth century. Topics with a Sufi and doctrinal character and concerns with a social dimension are the significant components of mystical poetry that we shall discuss in this research. Here are the specifics of this: The details of this are as follows:

The Intersection of Sufism and Islamic Doctrine

These literary goals addressed religious subjects associated with Islamic ideology, whether they were primary or minor tenets of the religion. These subjects are:

Knowing the Supreme God and His Power

Knowing God Almighty is of great importance and good fruit for the servant. Among them is a reason for loving Him; therefore, love is strengthened according to the strength of knowledge. Knowing God is the way to trust in Him outwardly and inwardly. Knowing God also helps us understand and reflect on the Holy Quran. It also enables us to effectively address the fruits of fear, hope, humility, awe, and trust. It also inherits good manners from God. The poet Fawzī al-Mustāry (d. 1160 AH, 1747 AD) from Bosnia was a follower of the Shādhilī Sufi ṭarīqa and mentioned in a free poem:

If you seek the water of life, seek it in knowledge and knowledge, and every person who drinks a drop will only reach eternal life.” You will escape from the darkness of ignorance and reach the hands of the good guides (Jurūdhānīsh, 2008, p. 347).

It is evident from the previous verses that the poet calls on the addressee to know God Almighty and His knowledge, which is the origin of Islam. Whoever knows God Almighty by His names, attributes, and actions knows His commands. Whoever wants the world with its blessings and good things, let him seek knowledge and knowledge to rise in his ambition. Based on the famous saying: “Whoever wants the world, let him seek knowledge, and whoever wants the Hereafter, let him seek knowledge, and whoever wants both, let him seek knowledge” (Nawawī, 1997, p. 54).

Piety and Obedience to God

Piety is defined as Muslims performing obedience and worship of God Almighty by following His orders, seeking great rewards, and fearing His punishment and wrath. Righteousness is essential in human life; it positively affects both the person and the society in which they live, fostering righteousness and peace. Therefore, God commanded His servants to piety in many verses. Balkan poets sang about piety.

From this is the saying of the poet ‘Abd al-Fattāḥ ‘Abd al-Ra’ūf (d. 1383 AH/ 1963 AD), from Skopje (Macedonia), who was a follower of the Qādirī sufi ṭarīqa about piety towards God: “And I feared God with the piety of the worshipers. So, I entered the gathering of those who kneel and prostrate, O Mustafa of the worlds; you

have defeated the gratitude by your generosity and prostration to God” (Şālih, 2015, p. 436).

This poem emphasises the significance of piety and worship in Islamic life, praising the importance of prayer and prostration in drawing closer to God and expressing gratitude. The poem expresses praise and appreciation for the Prophet Muhammad, stating that God blesses and grants him peace, and that correct worship is necessary to achieve closeness to God and eternal happiness.

The poet Ḥasan Qā’my (d. 1103 AH/ 1691 AD), from Sarajevo, was a follower of the Naqshbandī Sufi ṭarīqa and says in his poem in which he urges people to obey the Creator: “Oh, man, don’t be without work. Obedience is obligatory in every job. Pray to God for the past times. Recite and repeat God, God...” (Şālih, 2015, p. 477).

This poem reminds man of the necessity of work and obedience to God in all his actions, as well as the importance of performing prayer and remembrance in achieving tranquillity and inner satisfaction. The poem demonstrates confidence in the power of work and its positive impact on human life, encouraging him to practice his faith daily.

The Origin of The World (Creation Story)

The universe, with its secrets and beauty, is from the incredible Originator of God Almighty. The one who contemplates God’s Origin of the universe sees the greatness and power of God Almighty and His miracles (Drkić and Zildžić, 2025, pp. 47-51). In this regard, many poets in the Islamic world sang about the universe with its secrets, and from the Balkan countries, the poet ‘Abd Allāh al-Būsnī (d. 1053 AH/1644 AD) talked about the origin of the world: “And the breath of the Merciful appeared from the warmth of pride, the warmth of the burning bush with pearls and coral” (Şālih, 2015, p. 371).

It is noted from the previous verse that the Bosnian poet adheres to the Sufi Ibn Arabi’s theory of the world’s origin, that is, that God created this world after it was nothing (Gačanin, 2022, p. 85).

The Philosophical Quest for Unity

One of the doctrinal disputes and Sufi philosophical precepts that developed among Sufis is the concept of “the unity of existence,” which holds that there is only one existence and that everything is ultimately a manifestation of God. All Sufis hold that existence is one from the earliest to the last. Hundreds of texts have been cited to support this claim and serve as reasons (al-Saḥmarānī, 1897, p. 108). This Sufi theory is significant in Islamic mystical literature (Awwādī, 1979, p. 28).

An example of this is in the poem of the poet ‘Abd Allāh al-Būsnī:

The appearance of the truth in all with descriptions and lights He
manifested himself in the mirrors of all without colours the affairs of the truth
in the universe are witnessing the unity of truth Existence in existence is one,
there are no two in it One existence, unique, without likeness or opposite His
glory is exalted above what is said, he has no concern (Būsnawī, 1992, p. 113).

It is noted that the poet has woven his poem in the style of Sufi poets, repeating their ideas and using their language to express his feelings. The previous verses indicate his belief in the unity of existence and his endorsement of this philosophical concept. The fact of creatures, in his view, is the same as the existence of the Creator; there is no difference between them in terms of reality.

Paying Homage to the Divine Messengers

Throughout all Islamic countries, the prophets and messengers, peace be upon them, are among Islamic poetry’s most widely used religious characters. To develop their poetic experience, poets evoke them. Poet ‘Abd Allāh al-Būsnī is one of the poets from the Balkan countries who invoked the messengers, peace be upon them, in their literary works (Nouraei and Zeinali, 2020, pp. 85-89). He states the following regarding the messengers:

From him, He chose the messengers of the first determination of the owners
of banners. Guides are the people of good and forgiveness. He gave all of them
the perfection of his rank. He bestowed. He clothed them with the garment of
virtue, he bestowed crowns upon them, and everyone derives from the
Messenger Mustafa, like a spirit that takes from him the strength in the
Originative of a body (Şālih, 2015, p. 371).

It is noted from the poet's expression in the last verse that the saints derive their ideas from the upper source, that is, from the prophets, peace be upon them, and each saint has a messenger as a source of his spiritual and moral strength. The poet says about the Prophet Mustafa, may God bless him and grant him peace:

With the gathering of the Seal, he gathered the tastes of the Enunciative, so the tastes of the prophecies were like pillars for him. Therefore, the beauty of the West sealed the states' rulings, and the sun of the East revealed a unified gnosis (Şālih, 2015, p. 372).

The al-Būsni poet described the city of Medina in which he lives, saying:

Peace from the names to the preservation of its pearl. It contains the beauty of shells that are protected like eyes. It has a pleasant fragrance from a reputable house. The market for its perfume is like the wind on all horizons. She became in the Hejaz, but the truth did not help her. Without a metaphor from him, the eyes of lovers, and the right of the owner of religion from all sides, He strives towards its sidewalks, even if it is above the distances (Būsni, 1992, p. 117).

The splendour and sanctity of Medina are manifested in this poem, and the poet shows his love and admiration for it, referring to its beauty, sanctity, and importance in the hearts of believers.

Self-Discipline and Spirituality: An Exploration of Asceticism

Asceticism is the abandonment of the fleeting pleasures of this world in the hope of the eternal pleasures of the Hereafter. Ascetic poetry is considered one of the literary genres that conveys lofty meanings for the soul. Unlike some other poems, it views worldly life as a fleeting abode, abstains from its pleasures, and directs people towards eternal life by following rituals and worship. An educational character dominates ascetic poetry, as the supporters of this type of poetry intend to provide advice and guidance.

Among the manifestations of asceticism is not being proud of money, status, or courage, nor being deceived by one's deeds. The poet 'Abd al-Fattāh says in his poem "Alhākum al-kāthir" warning against this: "Do not be proud of your money, O men. Competition has deluded you into thinking about money and children.

Ignorance is upon you in you. Being deceived by you will not pierce the hills. You will not reach the mountains” (Awykānwfytsh ve Gharāhūfātis, 2019, p. 9).

The poet Hussein Pasha of Belgrade (d. 1023 AH/1614 AD) was a follower of the Mevlevī Sufī tarīqa from Belgrade. and mentions in his poem, warning against being deceived by deeds:

And you are deceived by the near world and its prestige. Whoever seeks confrontation with prestige is ignorant, and if we had not made the secret clear with piety, your morning is for his love, and your day is frivolous. So please do not rely on a time that has afflicted you, for what you see is Originative except that it came and went (Muḥibbī, 2005, p. 117).

This poem encourages humility and warns against arrogance with wealth and influence. It emphasises the importance of moderation and avoiding distractions from material things. The poem reminds the reader that values lie in humility, honesty, and purity and warns of the danger of pride and greed for worldly riches.

13

Divine love is one form of asceticism. The poet ‘Abd al-Wahhāb b. Aḥmad Ilhāmī al-Bosnawī (d. 1237/1821 AD), from Bosnia and a follower of Naqshbandī Sufī, highlights the benefits and goodness of heavenly love to inspire youth to learn: “Come on, boy, learn not to spend your time in the street. Fill your heart with divine love. It is the greatest blessing from the Creator” (Şālih, 2015, p. 487).

The poet Muştafā bāshīsıy (d. 1144 AH/ 1809 AD), from Belgrade, was a follower of the Naqshbandī Sufī tarīqa and mentioned in his poem (Religious Poems), consisting of fourteen verses, referring to the demise of man and the shortness of his life: “So, look now who you are. You are mortal, you heard” (Şālih, 2015, p. 489).

Among the manifestations of ascetic poetry is the call to spirituality. The poet ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Sirry (d. 1199 AH/1846 AD) says in a poem in which he dealt with the problem of the human soul and its upbringing: “Open your eyes, O dervish. Stay away from bad deeds. If you want a reward, work hard and say, “Glory be to God, Sultan of God” (Şālih, 2015, p. 487).

As the poet Yūsuf Jinkīsh notes in the forty-three-verse poem “Abdullah,” when he advises his nephew, one of the directions is to start the prayer:

Come on, ‘Abd Allāh, to preach. Pray five times. Do not let any pass. Let all this be in the name of God. Call on God in every matter. Love your brother as you love yourself. Have mercy on others as you have mercy on yourself; we are all brothers, O ‘Abd Allāh (Şālih, 2015, p. 495).

This poem, which has deeply affected Bosnians’ souls, is well-known for its exceptional moral and educational value, but lacks literary or creative talent that merits recognition.

Moral Superiority of the Inward-Focused

Sufi terminology commonly used includes “people of the outer” and “people of the inner.” The public is referred to in the latter, whereas the unique Sufis among the knowledgeable are mentioned in the former. Many instances in Sufi Islamic literature highlight the superiority of the inner people above others, like in the following quotation from a poet:

And the servant of the soul did not comprehend the sciences of the people by thought, and the people of reason did not understand by looking and contemplation on a sound heart free from the bondage of universes. Knowledge is poured out from the blessings of the Lord of generosity and benefaction (Şālih, 2015, p. 374).

Sufi Poetic Expressions and Societal Issues: Addressing Social Change in the Balkan Context

These subjects address people’s difficulties and societal issues. Poetry uses it to express a viewpoint, refute a flaw, or address an existing problem. Balkan poets addressed societal concerns that reflected the realities of the Balkans and sparked social change (Drkić and Zildžić, 2025, p. 47). The details are as follows:

Scholars Under Fire: Critiques of the Ruling Power

The poet Sayyid ‘Abd al-Wahhāb Ilhāmī says, pouring his scathing criticism on the ruling regime in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as on the clerics who worked in the service of the corrupt government at the time:

It is challenging to bear injustice, and the most challenging thing is the farce of the Turks and the hypocrites behind them. What is wanted by this, O my God? Strange scholars have begun, because they are scholars without deeds.

Destruction is awaited at their hands. What is wanted by this, O my God (Şālih, 2015, p. 484).

This passage critiques the ruling regime in Bosnia and Herzegovina, highlighting its disadvantages and the injustice and oppression that prevailed (Botić, 2018, p. 41). In addition, the behaviour of scholars of the Sultans exploits their knowledge to serve the ruler, either out of greed for his benefit or fear of his harm. The poet Muḥammad al-Khānjī al-Būsni (d. 1364 AH/1944 AD), from Sarajevo, was a follower of the Mevlevī Sufi ṭarīqa and mentioned rebuking some of these scholars:

O friends, stop. What do you want from bringing sedition? You left the saying of the people of religion, and you replaced it with the saying of immorality. You set up like a spider's den, towards the truth and the world of certainty. You played, so leave a word that is abolished. Those of understanding from the law and religion (Şālih, 2015, p. 387).

This poem appeared as a critique of individuals who abandon religion and wisdom, opting instead for ignorance and misguidance over truth and reason. It urges a return to knowledge, faith, deep thinking, and the abandonment of desires and false statements.

The poet 'Alī Afandī ṣādqzādh (d. 1708 AD) says, defending his teacher, who was attacked by one of the imams and preachers in the area because he was different from what they were:

O preacher, you have transgressed absolute anger, and if you were a knowledgeable person, you would not be the most knowledgeable. If the command is kind, then why violence? If you intend to slap a face, you will be slapped. If you are a preacher, preach to people softly; otherwise, the fire is blazing. Look at yourself, leave my teacher, and pass by the nobles, for God's sake. Excess in preaching is very reprehensible, as is negligence and the intended mine. Many preachers in our time have strayed and lived with regret. If you are, O preacher, in a town, A stranger, preach with her manners and do not bother changing their custom. Every tribe with its elders (Ārūtshī, 2005, p. 85).

This poem emphasises the importance of gentleness and tenderness in preaching, warning against violence and harshness. It urges the preacher to be a

living example of the advice they offer and to be ready to reflect on their actions and behaviour before guiding others.

Lamenting and praising scholars and princes

Lamenting and praising scholars and princes in Arabic poetry are among the purposes that were common in literary eras. Poetry of lamentation and praise is written for scholars because of their significant status in the soul (Westerlund, 2004, pp. 25-28). Among the Balkan poets who praised the people of knowledge is the Bosnian poet Muḥammad al-Khānjī al-Būsni, who talks about the virtue of his state of Bosnia and its scholars and prays for mercy on them in his last verses:

O friend, if you find a defect, my pen has slipped. So, cover it with forgiveness, and you will become one of the generous. For man's forgetfulness is a constant affliction forever. Our Lord is the owner of knowledge and wisdom. We have published our virtue with this long ago, And that we always strive with the nations The virtue of our Bosnia, its signs have appeared The appearance of the fire of the villages at night on a flag Look at the names of the people of knowledge in my Enunciativepapers You find the elders of the people of knowledge and the pen And do not compare our day with yesterday, for what By God, we are not a sandal for him who has preceded May God have mercy on them, and may God make us Similar to our ancestors, a people of high aspirations (Ārūtshī, 2005, p. 87).

16

This poem addresses apologising for mistakes and correcting them, and it expresses pride in Bosnia and Herzegovina's history and heritage. The poet concludes by reminding us not to judge today by yesterday, for each day has its own characteristics. He also suggests that they should take pride in their history and heritage. He refers to the history of scholars, writers, and intellectuals in Bosnia, noting how their names appear prominently in historical records and books, which demonstrate respect and appreciation for these individuals and their role in disseminating knowledge and culture (Mišević, 2013, p. 47). The poet Hassan bin Mustafa al-Būsni (d. 1287 AH) praised the rulers of Bosnia for their generous nature and good treatment of their subordinates, saying:

And a group revolves in the sky of the presidency like the sun with which the world shines brightly. They have good morals that have risen, so they humbled themselves for the benefit of their subjects and satisfaction with their morals (Šālih, 2015, p. 385).

The poet Hussein Pasha of Belgrade wrote a poem praising Sa'd al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Ḥusayn al-Tabrīzī. He also says in his poem "Taghammadahu al-Raḥmān" while mourning one of the scholars of his country: "The best of stallions died in faith. Our country was devoid of mysticism. The date of his death was a time of forgiveness. So, our Lord, the Most Merciful, enveloped him" (Sadak, 1989, pp. 27-29).

This poem expresses sadness at the loss of a righteous and believing person, but also hopes that his death will lead to forgiveness and divine mercy. The poem emphasises religious and spiritual values, conveying confidence in divine mercy and hope for the afterlife.

The poet Hassan al-Būsnī says about the lives of Bosnian scholars:

Especially those with teaching, their virtue remains decorated with a necklace of benefit, no matter how long it takes. And the sum of all students' benefits. Moreover, the kindest of them are the people of them and the experts (Būsnawī, 1992, p. 92).

This poem acknowledges the significance of professors and teachers in society, praising the enduring benefits they provide and the positive impact they have on all those around them, thereby highlighting the importance of their profession and their role in shaping and developing society.

Among the instances of sorrow is the following, which was discovered inscribed in Arabic over the door of the grave of Croatian Minister Adanī Bāshā alkuuruwaāty, who attests to his unfair death in public:

The owner of the good deeds, Mahmoud, the good qualities The source of kindness, praiseworthy perfection The truthful Sultan Mahmoud the Merciful He went unjustly to the abode of bliss So he died mercifully and history began Mahmoud died a martyr, a zahid (Būsnawī, 1992, p. 174).

The poem expresses appreciation and admiration for the personality of Minister Adeni Pasha of Croatia. It describes him as having noble and virtuous qualities, praising his work and activity in serving others and achieving good. The poet expresses his conviction that this person has received mercy and reward, and that their death was in good faith, thereby earning them the status of a martyr.

Muḥammad al-Khānjī al-Būsī says in praise of Ghazi Khusraw Bey on his Memorial Day, 26 Rajab, corresponding to November 4, 1934, AD (Būsawī, 1992, p. 201).

The Pursuit of Global Security and Peace

Since the spread of Islam, Muslim writers have raised the banner of peace and called in their loud voices for the belligerents to lay down their arms and resort to dialogue and negotiation. In the Balkan countries, some poets called for peace, led by Muḥammad Uskūfī Hawānī (d. 1062 AH/1651 AD), who, in his poem “Come to Safety,” addressed the Christians of the neighbouring Republic of Serbia. Most Yugoslav writers and critics understood this call as a call to Islam: “We are not evil to you. We like you because we come from the same Creator. Be obedient to God and come to us safely” (Şāliḥ, 2015, p. 473).

These words show that the Muslim poet explicitly calls for renouncing war. According to the poet, humans beg for love, tenderness, peace, and security while abhorring war and its horrors and tragedies.

Mystical Poetry Style in the Balkans

Balkan mystical poetry is distinguished by its ease of style, allowing the reader to grasp its content effortlessly. As a result, we shall discuss creative expression strategies based on the general phenomena inherent in this poem, including recurrence (Islam and Zelenkovska, 2012, p. 52).

Supplication (du’a) and Slavehood (ubudiyyah)

Supplication, in general, whether in poetry or prose, is a legitimate act, and supplication is one of the best ways to get closer to God, especially if it is by asking for forgiveness and safety from punishment. Among the poets of the Balklands, some composed supplications in poetry, for example, the poet Abdul Fattah, in a poetic passage in which he calls upon his Lord:

Honour, O God, a generous servant to the people. Have mercy, O God, on a heart that was merciful to people, and be merciful to a heart that was compassionate to us. So, bless, O God, a heart that was generous to us.

The poem is a sincere supplication from the heart in which the poet asks God to honour and have mercy on a person who was generous and merciful to his people.

The verses are full of human feelings and show the poet's appreciation for the noble morals and good qualities of the person he prays for. The poet's use of words such as "honour," "have mercy," "be merciful," and "bless" reflects supplication and supplication to God and highlights the depth of spirituality and faith in the poem. This poem expresses thanks and gratitude to a distinguished figure who was a source of good and blessings to society.

He also says: My limbs are generous with the branches of sins, and my side is in the diameters of the elegy with the inner. My God came to you humbly regretful for what she committed, and he is asking your grandfather to acknowledge what stumbles and yearns and remembers many sins, which are less and dependent (Şālih, 2015, p. 478).

Repetition as Remembrance: Dhikr, Adab, and Poetic Function

One of the main characteristics of mystical poetry by Balkan poets, such as Ibn Rashīq, was the admiration for word repetition without meaning. In some places rather than others, he said, "Repetition has places where it is good and places where it is ugly, so most of the repetition occurs in words without meanings, and it is less in meanings than words, so if the word and meaning are repeated together, then this is the abandonment itself."

Among the types of repetition that can be observed in the styles of poets is the saying of the poet 'Alī Afandī ṣādqzādh, defending his teacher, who was attacked by one of the imams and preachers in the area because he was different from what they were: "If you are a preacher, preach to people softly; otherwise, the fire will be blazing. If you are, O preacher, in a town, A stranger, preach with her manners" (Mūfākū, 1982, p. 40).

The poet repeated the phrase (If you are a preacher) twice to emphasise the importance of preaching and the controls and manners on which the preacher should base his preaching so that it bears fruit and its desired results. In the same way, we find the poet 'Abd al-Wahhāb al-Būsni repeating the word (testify) and the word Jalalah in his saying: "O One, I testify, then I testify to the arrival. In his biography, he cries, God, God, the Reviver" (Ārūtshī, 2005, p. 102). He hopes for a response confirming the greatness of martyrdom and urging supplication.

Poetry as Ethical Discourse: Khabar, Inshā', and Adab in Balkan Sufi Verse

Balkan Sufi mystical poetry did not follow a single style devoid of diversity, but instead followed different styles, including the informational style with its various types and the creative style with its multiple forms. Among the primary informational styles is the saying of the poet 'Abd Allāh al-Būsni:

The appearance of the truth in all with descriptions and lights manifested himself in the mirrors of all without colours. The affairs of the truth in the universe are witnessing the unity of truth. Existence is one; there are no two in it (Būsnavī, 1992, p. 92).

The verses do not provide any confirmation. The Enunciative here is primary, and the addressee is empty-minded about the ruling and hesitant about it. Meaning that he had no prior knowledge of the content of the Enunciative in terms of believing it or hesitating about it. An example of this is also what we find in the Bosnian poet, who says in his description of the city of Medina, in which he lives: "It has a good perfume from a good house. The market of its perfume is like the wind in all horizons."

20

There are no confirmations in the two verses because the minds of the addressees are empty of anything that necessitates emphasising it. Some poets resorted to confirming the informational style with one confirmation, such as the poet Muhammad Askovi Howani (d. 1062 AH/ 1651 AD), who says in his poem "Come to Safety": "We are not evil to you. We are like you because we are from one Creator" (Şālih, 2015, p. 473).

The addressees here are hesitant about the ruling intended for them, so he confirmed the Enunciation to them so that their hesitation would disappear, and they would settle on one of the two matters they were hesitant about. Thus, the reader finds the prevalence of the Enunciative style in their poetic texts, which is natural. Because this style embodied their social reality, they rushed to express it without affection or artificiality in an influential way.

The creative styles in this poem were as varied as the factual styles' approaches, including the demonstration of their artistic talent and imaginative capacity to convey the depths of their emotions. Using the command style to direct

the receivers is one of them. The poet Hassan Qā'my says, while attacking the habit of smoking, pointing to its dire consequences for humans: "Smoking is a bad habit, and its use is one of the defects. As one of my dislikes, I advise against smoking" (Şālih, 2015, p. 478).

The quotation is the poet's resort to employing the imperative form (*stay away*) to direct his people to quit smoking, which is harmful to health. In the same way, the poet 'Alī Afandī şādqzādh uses the command method with the intention of advice, saying: "If you are a preacher, preach to people softly; otherwise, the fire is blazing."

Poets may resort to the methods of calling and forbidding for advice and guidance, as in the saying of the poet Yūsuf jankīsh in his poem (Abdullah), in which he advises his nephew: "Come on, 'Abd Allāh, to preach. Pray five times. Do not let any pass. Let all this be in the name of God" (Ārūtshī, 2005, p. 95).

Devotional Poetry (fanā/baqā", 'ishq)

'Abd al-Wahhāb al-Būsni is best known for his poetic contributions to Sufi literature in the Balkans. His devotional poetry often revolved around themes of mysticism, love for God, and spiritual union, which are core elements of Sufi poetry. His work contributed to the Balkan tradition of Sufi mysticism and poetry, particularly in Bosnia and the wider Ottoman territories. The themes and metaphors in his poetry were heavily influenced by classical Sufi poets, such as Ibn 'Arabī and Rūmī, particularly in their use of symbolic language to describe the relationship between the human soul and the divine and describe fanā' and baqā.

Al-Būsni's poetry frequently explored divine love, spiritual longing, and the soul's journey toward union with God. This is in keeping with the broader tradition of Sufi poetry, which emphasises the lover's longing for the Beloved (God). His work contributed to the development of Sufi poetic forms in the region, particularly the qasīda and ghazal forms, which were central to Bosnian Sufi literary output. His writings were often used in Sufi lodges (tekke) and spiritual circles as instructional material for Sufi initiates (murīds).

Evliya Çelebi reports that Muḥammad al-Khānjī al-Būsni built a tekke in Akhisar/Nevābād and that this tekke belonged to the Halvetiyye (Khalwatiyya) order (Seyahatnâme, V, 445-446).

Stylistic and Artistic Characteristics of Arabic Mystical Poetry in the Balkan Countries

Balkan Arabic Sufi poetry demonstrates sophisticated deployment of classical Arabic rhetorical devices (*badī'*), particularly *ṭibāq* (antithesis) and *muqābala* (counterbalance), while adapting these conventions to express regionally specific spiritual concerns. A close analysis of representative poems reveals how formal features serve to convey mystical and philosophical content.

Diction, Register, and Intertextual Authority

Ḥusayn Pasha of Belgrade: Ascetic register + Qur'ānic absolutising

“Stay away from the world and leave its pleasures, for every blessing will inevitably disappear. The Beauty of Originative calls alive and dead. Everything but God is false” (Būsnawī, 1992, p. 120).

This passage achieves its force through a deliberately ascetic lexicon and a binary semantic architecture (world vs. God). The opening is constructed as an imperative chain (“stay away,” “leave”), which shifts the poem from a descriptive to a moral and spiritual direction. That imperative mode is not decorative; it performs the Sufi function of *irshād* (guidance), placing the poetic voice in a quasi-admonitory position rather than a purely lyrical one.

The final statement- “Everything but God is false”-is stylistically significant because it compresses meaning into a maxim-like closure. It resonates strongly with a Qur'ānic cadence and conceptual field found in verses such as “Everything will perish except His Face” (Q 28:88) and “All that is on it will perish” (Q 55:26). Even when not quoted verbatim, this kind of closure borrows Qur'ānic authority through what can be termed semantic allusion (*ma'nawī* intertextuality): the poem's stylistic “confidence” is produced by speaking in the register of revelation-like finality.

Labīd b. Rabī'a, the well-known hemistich often attributed to him- “ألا كل شيء باطل
لما خلا الله باطل” (“Indeed, everything besides God is vain”)-functions here as a classical anchor that legitimises ascetic teaching through pre-Islamic poetic authority. The stylistic effect is a layered claim to legitimacy, combining a Qur'ānic worldview with classical poetic prestige.

‘Abd al-Fattāḥ: Antithesis and moral polarisation

“Whoever seeks glory and elevation, let him be righteous and pure. Greed is but misery and retribution. He lived ascetically and piously. I did not find that the wish could be achieved through greed. I have not seen the greedy except the miserable” (Sadak,1989, pp. 27-29).

Here, the style is built on paired oppositions and moral polarisation. The poem’s diction is not simply “accurate”; it is arranged to enact an evaluative logic through:

- Antithesis (ṭibāq): “glory/elevation” versus “misery/retribution”
- Parallel phrasing that turns ethical counsel into a sequence of balanced propositions
- A closing generalisation (“I have not seen...”) that performs the rhetorical move of experiential authority: the poet claims credibility by presenting moral insight as the product of observation, not mere preaching.

This style differs from purely mystical rapture: it is closer to zuhd discourse (ascetic ethics), where persuasion is achieved through ethical contrast rather than imagistic overflow. The repetition of moral categories (“righteous,” “pure,” “ascetic,” “pious,” “greedy,” “miserable”) produces a controlled semantic field: the poem becomes a moral taxonomy.

Address Strategies and the Imperative as Tekke Pedagogy

Ilhāmī: Vocative address + didactic compression

“Come on, boy, learn. Do not spend your time in the street. Fill your heart with divine love. It is the greatest blessing from the Creator” (Şāliḥ, 2015, p. 487).

This passage’s “strength” lies in its address strategy: direct second-person speech (“boy”) collapses the distance between the poet and the listener. The style is less “ornamental lyric” than instructional speech (wa‘z-like), consistent with tekke environments where poetry circulates as moral training.

Stylistically, the poem compresses an entire spiritual program into short commands:

- discipline of time (“do not spend your time...”),
- interior transformation (“fill your heart...”),
- theological grounding (“from the Creator”).

This is a form of didactic minimalism: a sparse diction that gains rhetorical power through sequenced imperatives and the shift from external behaviour (time) to internal state (heart). That movement is itself a stylistic pattern; it mirrors the Sufi logic that outward discipline supports inward illumination.

Qur’ānic Echo as Stylistic Infrastructure

‘Abd al-Fattāḥ and Sūrat al-Takāthur as intertext

“Do not be proud of your money, o men. Competition has deluded you into thinking about money and children. Ignorance is upon you, and being deceived by you will not pierce the hills. You will not reach the mountains” (Ārūtshī, 2005, p. 107).

24

A clear Qur’ānic horizon stylistically shapes this excerpt: the phrase “Competition has deluded you” directly invokes Sūrat al-Takāthur (Q 102:1) (“alḥākumu al-takāthur”). The poet’s strategy is not merely thematic borrowing; it is an intertextual technique: the poem speaks as a commentarial voice, converting revelation into admonitory verse.

Two stylistic consequences follow:

1. **Prophetic-admonitory tone:** the diction becomes terse and warning-oriented.
2. **Elevated certainty:** moral claims are delivered as non-negotiable because their authority is borrowed from the Qur’ān.

This discussion offers close readings of a small corpus of poems to demonstrate how Balkan Arabic Sufi poets shape meaning through diction and register, rhetorical figures, address strategies, and intertextual echoes-especially Qur’ānic and early Arabic poetic resonances. The analysis drew on representative examples attributed to Ḥusayn Pasha of Belgrade, ‘Abd al-Fattāḥ, and Ilhāmī, alongside their cited editions.

Conclusion

This article tried to determine how Arabic-language Sufi poetry composed in Bosnia and Macedonia between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries constitutes a distinctive sub-tradition within the transregional Islamic literary culture. Addressing the central question of how non-native Arabic poets adapted classical Sufi topoi and rhetorical systems in a frontier, multi-confessional environment, the study combined close readings of a focused corpus with institutional contextualisation tied directly to madrasa–tekke networks and manuscript transmission.

First, regarding conceptual emphases, the poems foreground a sober mystical program: spiritual discipline and wayfaring (sulūk), ascetic ethics (zuhd), and moral instruction appear more persistently than motifs of ecstatic intoxication (sukr). This conceptual profile aligns with the tekke’s pedagogical needs, in which poetry served as guidance rather than a purely aesthetic display. Second, concerning rhetorical strategies, close analysis demonstrates that Balkan poets deploy recognisable classical devices-especially *ṭibāq* and *muqābala* (antithesis/counterbalance), imperative sequencing, and maxim-like closures-yet often mobilise them for didactic compression and ethical polarisation rather than ornamental virtuosity. Qur’ānic intertextuality forms a key stylistic infrastructure: allusive borrowing and commentarial voicing lend revelatory cadence and epistemic certainty to admonitory passages. At the same time, occasional classical echoes (e.g., Labīd’s maxim) supply poetic authority and embed the poems within wider Arabic canon formation.

Third, in relation to Sufi order affiliation and tekke culture, the poems’ address strategies-vocatives, direct second-person counsel, and directive imperatives-indicate circulation in instructional settings where adab and communal regulation were central. The stylistic prevalence of guidance-oriented *inshā’* (imperative/prohibition) alongside *khavar*-like metaphysical assertions suggests a poetry shaped by institutional practice as much as by textual tradition. Finally, the study identifies a provisional “Balkan Arabic Sufi poetic profile” marked by (i) sober ethical-mystical thematics, (ii) rhetoric serving pedagogy (*irshād/adab*), (iii) Qur’ānic cadence as an engine of authority, and (iv) stylistic economy-clarity and compression-rather than extended imagistic luxuriance.

The article’s contribution is twofold: it demonstrates, through sustained close reading, that Balkan Arabic Sufi poets were not passive imitators but active adapters

of Arabic rhetorical and Sufi registers; and it provides an operational framework-linking diction/register, rhetorical figures, address strategies, and intertextuality-for analysing Arabic poetry produced by non-native writers in peripheral yet connected Islamic intellectual geographies.

Ethics Statement

It is hereby declared that all rules specified within the scope of the “Higher Education Institutions Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Directive” have been duly observed throughout this study.

Ethics Committee Approval

It is declared that this research falls within the category of studies that do not require ethics committee approval.

Declaration of Conflict of Interest and Financial Contribution

The authors declare that no conflicts of interest or financial contributions have been reported in connection with this work.

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ARABIC SUFY POETRY IN THE BALKANS: A STYLISTIC ANALYSIS OF SIXTEENTH -
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