

Call for Papers

International and Interdisciplinary Conference:

“Philosophy and Poetry in Islamic Contexts”

Location: Erlangen, Germany

Date: 14-17 January 2026

Organizers: Orient-Institute Beirut & Chair of Oriental Philology and Islamic Studies, FAU Erlangen-Nürnberg

The Chair of Oriental Philology and Islamic Studies, led by Prof. Dr. Georges Tamer at the Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg, is pleased to announce the conference “Philosophy and Poetry in Islamic Contexts” to be held in Erlangen, Germany, from 14 to 17 January 2026, in cooperation with the Orient-Institute Beirut.

We invite contributions from scholars working on various aspects of the intersection of philosophy and poetry in Islamic contexts, past and present.

Conference theme:

This conference is part of the series “Philosophy in the Islamic World in Context”, which explores the connections and exchanges between philosophy and several intellectual domains in Islam, past and present. The resulting volumes are published by Walter de Gruyter.

The upcoming conference will explore the interrelations between philosophy and poetry in Islamic contexts. By “Islamic contexts” we refer to geographical regions traditionally seen as centers of Islamic culture, including Egypt, Iraq, the Levant, Persia, and Central Asia, as well as relatively “peripheral” areas such as Africa, the Indian subcontinent, Southeast Asia, and, more recently, Islamic diasporas in Europe and the Americas. The intellectual debates and production of poetic and philosophical texts in these areas is not limited to the Arabic language, although the development of this medium during the Umayyad and Abbasid rules and the *Nahda* was indeed reflected in a parallel development of poetic and philosophical expression.

The reception of Greek philosophy flourished in the Islamic world through the Arabic translations and commentaries on Plato and Aristotle, among others. One important topic of the conference is therefore the reception of Aristotle’s Poetics and other theories by Islamic philosophers. Another topic is the intersection between Neo-Platonism and *Sufi* poetry. However, this does not preclude reflections on the reception and echoes of Hindu, Zoroastrian and Manichean influences through the medium of Sanskrit and Persian texts.

Poetry, which has been a highly valued form of expression in Arabic language and the larger Islamic context since pre-Islamic times, served as a medium for various “philosophical” worldviews. With the later respective translations of Greek, Sanskrit and Persian philosophical traditions, poets often entered into implicit and sometimes even vocal dialogues with philosophers. Moreover, poetry was an important vehicle for interreligious debates on metaphysical matters in Islamic contexts, as Jewish, Christian, Zoroastrian and Manichean poets engaged in debates that often took poetic form. These intercultural and interreligious debates continued into modern times, as poets took part in the reception of modern and contemporary philosophical theories.

Therefore, the conference will welcome papers in the following and other related areas of research:

- Different historical periods, ranging from pre-Islamic poetry and the worldviews conveyed in the *mu‘allaqāt*, to contemporary poetic forms that address philosophical questions, as well as aesthetic theories and mystical perspectives.
- The classical period, marked by explicit dialogues between philosophy and poetry, and the modern period, focusing on the influence of European philosophy on poets in Islamic contexts.
- Christian, Jewish and other non-Islamic poetic traditions in Islamic contexts.

Sub-themes of the conference:

1. Philosophical theories of poetry

- We encourage reflections on the philosophical analysis of poetry in the Islamic world, emphasizing the reception of Aristotle’s *Poetics* by Islamic philosophers and other philosophical influences.
- Papers may also explore modern and contemporary intellectual contributions to the reflection on philosophical dimensions of poetic expression, namely the aesthetic, the political and the metaphysical dimensions.

2. Poetic expressions of philosophy

- Investigations of poets who have identified themselves as philosophers or who have been regarded as having a philosophical voice.
- Analysis of poets who either explicitly or implicitly acknowledged philosophical influences.
- Exploration of philosophers who adopted verse form and its implications for the reception of their work.

3. Poetry and Philosophy in Dialogue

- Case studies of explicit or implicit dialogues between poetry and philosophy, such as the confrontation between Abū Nuwās and the *Mu‘tazila*.
- The study of poets such as al-Mutanabbī, al-Ma‘arrī and Adūnīs, who implicitly refer to philosophical theories.
- Analysis of implicit intertextuality and imagined interactions between poets and philosophers in literature. In addition to the treatment of modern and contemporary developments, such as debates on the theory and function of Poetry in journals like *Shi‘r* and *Al-Ādāb*.

Submission details:

Interested scholars are invited to submit titles and abstracts (up to 500 words) to georges.tamer@fau.de and bouchra.saab@fau.de. Travel and accommodation costs will be covered for active participants.

Important Dates:

- Submission deadline for titles and abstracts: February 1, 2025
- Notification of selection decisions: March 15, 2025
- Submission deadline for handouts: December 31, 2025
- Submission deadline for completed papers for publication: April 30, 2026

For technical inquiries, please contact bouchra.saab@fau.de