



The Friends of God-Sufi Saints in Islam: Popular Poster Art from Pakistan

By Jurgen Wasim Frembgen

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Within the Muslim world, Pakistan is a heartland of Islamic mysticism where this "path of love" is distinctive and especially alive in its popular manifestations. The inspirational vitality of Sufism and related forms of vernacular Islam is reflected in the life worlds of charismatic saints and mystics who undertake a journey to God and strive for the experience of unity with the divine. Modern poster-portraits depicting Sufi saints and their shrines are a vivid medium of piety and devotion. These colourful, visually fascinating and powerful prints are particularly significant for the study of those contemporary views of the South Asian Sufi tradition shared by the common people. Unfolding a world of imagination, they reflect the visual aesthetics of folk art and pop art steeped in exuberance and playfulness. Devotional pictures of Muslim saints and shrines are similarly attractive as the much better known Hindu posters of gods and goddesses from India. Through comprehensive documentation and analysis, this book aims to introduce this genre of popular Sufi poster art for the first time to a wider readership.

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Editorial Review

Review

This book adds volumes to the meagre resources available about this significant aspect of Islam in Pakistan. Saad Akhtar, Newsline The author has done a great service in bringing knowledge of these posters to a wider audience Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, Volume 70/2

About the Author

Juergen Wasim Frembgen is Chief Curator of the Oriental Department at the Museum of Ethnology in Munich as well as Privatdozent (Private Lecturer) in Islamic Studies at the University of Erlangen-Nuernberg. Since 1981 he is teaching anthropology and Islamic Studies at different universities in Germany; in addition he has been a visiting lecturer at the Quaid-i-Azam University in Islamabad (National Institute of Pakistan Studies), the National College of Arts in Lahore and Ohio State University in Columbus. Since 1981 he annually conducts ethnographic fieldwork in Pakistan. He has published over ninety articles and fifteen books and catalogues, many of which deal with Islam, Sufism, veneration of Muslim saints, material culture, the anthropology of the body, social outsiders, and popular culture in the Eastern Muslim world between Iran and India, particularly focusing on Pakistan.

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