



Woman in Culture and Arts

Examining the Position and Performance of Women Poets in the Prophetic and Alawi Government and Comparing It with the Government of the Three Caliphs

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Article Info	ABSTRACT
<p>Article type: Research Article</p> <p>Article history: Received: 2 August 2023 Received in revised form: 23 June 2023 Accepted: 29 July 2024 Published online: 30 December 2024</p> <p>Keywords: <i>The Position of Women Poets, The Performance of Women Poets, The Prophetic Government, The Government of the Three Caliphs, The Alawi Government.</i></p>	<p>Introduction</p> <p>The role of poetry in Arab society, particularly before the advent of Islam, is indisputable. Poetry was not merely a form of artistic expression but also a central medium for communication, competition, and the establishment of social hierarchies. Tribes often relied on poets to enhance their prestige in competitive gatherings, particularly during the Hajj season. The Akaz market, a prominent cultural and economic hub, is a notable example where tribes would showcase their poets' work. In this context, poets, including female poets, occupied a position of influence and were deeply respected. Women poets played a significant role in this environment, contributing to the oral and literary traditions of pre-Islamic Arabia. With the rise of Islam, the importance of poetry did not diminish; however, the content and values embedded within it underwent a transformation. Islamic values replaced the often exaggerated and immoral themes of the Jahiliyyah period. What sets the Islamic era apart is the inclusion of women in these poetic traditions, and their contributions were endorsed by Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) himself. This stands in contrast to the reduced visibility of women poets during the caliphate of the three caliphs, who showed limited interest in preserving or promoting women's participation in public or artistic life.</p> <p>This study aims to explore the position and performance of women poets during the Prophetic and Alawi governments and to compare their status with the era of the three caliphs. By examining these periods, the paper seeks to understand how female poets navigated their social and political environments, the degree of their participation in public life, and the extent to which their contributions were valued or suppressed.</p> <p>Methodology</p> <p>This study employs a comparative historical method to examine the position and performance of women poets across three key periods: the Prophetic government, the government of the three caliphs, and the Alawi era. It aims to analyze the social and political factors influencing women poets in each era, using primary historical accounts, early Arabic poetry, and religious texts.</p> <p>Initially, the research explores pre-Islamic poetic traditions to understand the status of female poets before Islam. It then investigates how Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) supported women poets, highlighting figures like Khansaa bint Amr and Urwah bint Abd al-Muttalib, and analyzing their contributions to Islamic poetry. The study next examines the era of the three caliphs, identifying reasons for the decline in women poets' visibility and the lack of support from the caliphate.</p> <p>Finally, the Alawi period is explored, focusing on Imam Ali's (AS) rule, which saw a revival of female poetic voices during key events like the Battles of Jamal and Siffin. This</p>

comparative analysis across the three periods provides insight into the socio-political dynamics affecting women's roles in poetry and public life.

Results

The results of this comparative analysis suggest that female poets held an integral position during the Prophetic government, with active support from Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). Women poets were encouraged to contribute to the public discourse, and their work was seen as a valuable tool for promoting Islamic values and encouraging social cohesion. For example, Khansaa's elegiac poetry, which had been prominent in pre-Islamic times, was transformed in the Islamic period, reflecting themes of faith and sacrifice. The Prophet's direct engagement with these women, providing them platforms in gatherings and even public recognition, was a testament to his belief in their role in shaping the intellectual and cultural narrative of the Muslim community. In contrast, the era of the three caliphs witnessed a noticeable decline in the prominence of women poets. This could be attributed to the changing social and political landscape, where women's roles became more confined to domestic spheres, and public platforms for their expression were significantly reduced. Caliphs showed little interest in fostering the arts, especially poetry by women, who, despite their talents, found themselves sidelined. This period was marked by wars of expansion and conquest, where the focus was primarily on political consolidation rather than cultural development.

However, with the rise of Imam Ali (AS) to power, there was a revival of female participation in poetry. Imam Ali (AS) understood the cultural and spiritual importance of women's contributions to the arts and encouraged their involvement, particularly in times of political and military turmoil. During the Battles of Jamal and Siffin, several female poets emerged, delivering powerful and motivational poetry that both rallied troops and demoralized enemies.

Conclusion

The examination of the position and performance of women poets across the Prophetic, Alawi, and the three caliphs' governments reveals significant variations in how women's contributions to poetry were valued and utilized. Under Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), women poets were seen as integral to the Islamic mission, using their art to promote unity, moral values, and the teachings of Islam. Imam Ali (AS) continued this legacy, recognizing the importance of women's voices in the socio-political sphere, particularly in moments of crisis, such as during major battles.

However, the period of the three caliphs represented a regression in the recognition and participation of women poets, reflecting broader societal shifts that limited women's roles in public life. The caliphs' focus on military conquest and political consolidation resulted in a lack of emphasis on cultural development, thereby marginalizing female voices in the artistic domain.

This study highlights the crucial role that political and social contexts play in either fostering or stifling artistic expression, particularly for women. The Prophetic and Alawi governments serve as models for inclusive leadership, where women's contributions to the arts and public life were encouraged and celebrated. Conversely, the era of the three caliphs underscores the consequences of neglecting cultural and intellectual contributions, leading to the marginalization of important voices within society. Ultimately, the comparison shows that when given the platform, women poets not only contributed to the cultural richness of their time but also played a pivotal role in shaping the moral and ethical direction of their societies.

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