Visiting Speaker Series

The Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies is
pleased to present a talk by esteemed academic

Dr Roderick Grierson
Rumi Institute, Nicosia, Cyprus

"The Significance of the Mevlevi Sufi Order In Ottoman Culture and Civilisation"

Wednesday 2 November 2016, 5.15 pm

LT1, IAIS Building, Streatham Campus, Exeter EX4 4ND

Tea & Coffee to be served from 4.30 pm in the Common Room,

Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies.

All are welcome – no registration required.

The culture of the Ottoman Empire has been described as a culture created by the Mevlevi, the Sufi order founded to preserve and nurture the teachings of the mystical poet Mevlana Jalal al-Din Rumi.

The lecture will explore the validity of the claim, describing the origin of the order in Konya after the death of Rumi in 1273 and considering the reasons why it was able to rise to such prominence in a highly competitive milieu, especially in Istanbul. It will assess the influence of the Mevlevi on Ottoman music and on Ottoman literature in both Persian and Turkish by introducing the achievements of the most famous composers and poets.

It will also examine the wider context of the society in which the Mevlevi lived, their position as an elite and sophisticated order, their relationship with successive Ottoman sultans, many of whom were themselves Mevlevi dervishes, and the limits of their influence among adherents of other versions of Islam or those who belonged to less privileged or more rural or nomadic societies under Ottoman control.

It will also discuss the fascination that the Mevlevi aroused among European travellers and will conclude by explaining the catastrophe of the presidential decree in 1925 and the reasons why it proved more devastating for the Mevlevi than for other dervish orders.

Roderick Grierson is a Menteşezade Research Fellow and Director of the Rumi Institute at Near East University, Nicosia, Cyprus. He holds a doctoral degree from the University of Oxford where he researched the Ethiopic New Testament.

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