HAFIZ AND HIS CRITICS*

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One of the great experiences in Iran is a visit to Shiraz and the delightful garden that is laid out around the tomb of Hafiz; to enter under the white marble baladchin that covers the tombstone on which some of the poet’s verses are engraved in elegant nastalig; and to open the Divan-i Hafiz to look for a faqir, an augury, according to well established rules, as it has been done for centuries. During such a moment the visitor may perhaps recall the beautiful lines written by the ‘last classical poet’ of Turkey, Yahya Kemal Beyatli (1881-1958), who uses one of Hafiz’s central concepts, that of rind, ‘vagrant’, in his poem Rindlerin dölmü:

In the garden at Hafiz’s tomb there is a rose
Which opens every day with blood-like colour;
At night, the nightingale weeps until dawn turns gray,
With a tune that reminds us of ancient Shiraz.

Death is a calm country of spring for a vagrant;
His heart fumes everywhere like a censer—for years...
And over his tomb that lies under cool cypresses
A rose opens every morn, every night a nightingale sings.

During the long history of Islam, Shiraz was always an important centre of learning, mysticism and poetry. In spite of the frequent changes in government, numerous wars and internecine feuds of its rulers the city can boast of a long-standing cultural tradition. To be sure, the 14th Century, when Hafiz lived, was no longer the time of Ibn-i Khaﬁ’s (d. 982) asceticism nor of Rûzbihân Baqli’s (d. 1209) high-soaring mystical experiences; and the days of Sa’di, whose works

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made the name of Shiraz known in the West precious to that of most other places in Iran, had long passed. But the religious tradition was embodied in one of the leading Ash'arite theologians of the later Middle Ages, .ptrAḍūd al-Dīn Ījī (d. 1355), who held the office of chief qādi under Abū ʾIsḥāq Injū, although he later withdrew from Shiraz. His Mawāqif, a kind of summa theologica, were to become a standard work in scholastic theology, and it is said that Ḥāfiz too studied it. The Mawāqif was often commented upon by later theologians; among them was—still during Ḥāfiz’s lifetime—al-Sā'īyīd al-Shārīf al-Jurjānī (d. 1413) who, after long wanderings in Egypt and Turkey, was called to the Muzaffarid capital in 1377 as a professor in the Dār al-Shifā madrasa, and returned once more to Shiraz after a prolonged stay in Samarkand where Timūr had carried him. Jurjānī’s Taʾrifāt is still a helpful instrument for our understanding of theological definitions.

Poets were not lacking either in Shiraz and other Persian cities around 1350. E.G. Browne goes so far as to call the 14th Century the richest period of Persian literature, a fact which he ascribes to the existence of numerous small courts that competed with each other in attracting literati. Salmān Sā’ūājī (d. 1376), the panegyrist of the Jalāʾirids in Baghdad and Tabriz, is noted for his ‘fluency of language’ and his skillful use of thām (amphibiology) which he displayed in artistic qaṣidas (qaṣīda-i maṣnūʿ). His contemporary Kamāl ad-Dīn Khwājū Kirmānī settled finally in Shiraz, where he died in 1352 or 1361; he left a diwān with enjoyable ghazals. Certain similarities between his verses and those of Ḥāfiz have been pointed out by the critics. Besides lyrical poetry he composed a Khamsa out of whose five—mostly mystically tinged—epics the story of Humāy and Humāyūn has attracted the scholars because of the exquisite miniatures that adorn one of the manuscripts which can be dated to the early 15th Century.1 Somewhat later we find Kamāl Khujandī (d. 1391 or 1400) in Tabriz; he and Ḥāfiz seem to have been acquainted, although Kamāl, an interpreter of the theory of waḥdat al-wujūd, is blamed as ‘abstruse’ by the sober commentator Sūdī in the 17th Century.

In Shiraz itself the poetry of ʾImād al-Dīn Faḍlī Khirmanī (d. 1371) was widely acclaimed. He was the chief panegyrist of the Muzaffarids, a fertile lyrical author, and produced also five mystical mathnawīs. ʾImād al-Dīn and Ḥāfiz were allegedly not on very friendly

1 Reproduced most recently in A. Papadopoulos, Islamische Kunst (Freiburg, 1977); L’Islam et l’Art Musulman (Paris, 1967), pl. 41.
terms, as some biographers assume, who spin out a story from Ḥāfīz's verse:

غَرْبَةْ مُشْوَّهَةْ كَجَرْهَةْ ْعَابِدٌ نَبَازُ كَرْدِ

*Don't be duped by the devotee cat that performs the ritual prayer.*

which is interpreted as referring to ʿImād’s well trained cat. However, as E.G. Browne has already pointed out, Ḥāfīz’s expression can be more safely traced back to a verse in ʿUbayd-i Zākānī’s *Mush wa gurba*. This little Cat-and-Mouse epic is still widely read in Iran and has often been lithographed or printed with simple illustrations. Its author, ʿUbayd-i Zākānī (*d.* 1371), a citizen of Shiraz which he dearly loved, is mainly noted for his satires; his prose satire *Akhlāq al-ashrāf* offers an interesting picture of the vices of Persian society in the 14th Century.

However, to speak of Shiraz in the 14th Century, even to mention the city’s name at all among educated Westerners, means to recall immediately the one name that has become the epitome of Persian lyrics for both Oriental and Western readers, that of Muḥammad Shams al-Dīn Ḥāfīz. Superseded in popularity, particularly in the English speaking world, only by ʿUmar Khayyām, the name of Ḥāfīz stands in the West for everything Persian; for the apogee of uninhibited sensual delight; enjoyment of the prohibited wine; and the predominance of love in all its shades, while most of the Oriental interpreters see in him ‘the tongue of the Unseen World’ singing of Divine Love and spiritual intoxication. In the German speaking world, Ḥāfīz’s name has become almost a household word since the days of Goethe.

But famous as Ḥāfīz is in both East and West—interpreted as embodiment of sensuality and free thinking on the one hand and of highest mystical enthusiasm on the other—it is difficult to give a satisfactory account of his life; and the orientalist views with envy his colleagues in the field of German or English philology who can follow the development of their great writers step by step, almost day by day. In the case of Oriental poets it is next to impossible to transgress the narrow framework offered by the biographers and to infuse real life into the numerous anecdotes which are repeated time and again by the

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1 H. Brockhaus, *Die Lieder des Ḥāfīz*, Leipzig 1854-60, repr. 1969, Nr. 122; *Dīwān-i-Ḥāfīz*, based on a manuscript dated 824 A.H., ed. by Dr Nazir Ahmad and Dr S.M. Reza Jalali Naʿīnī (Tehran, 1971), Nr. 102.
writers. A few remarks in contemporary historical sources, perhaps a tombstone, or some scattered hints in the poetry itself may prove helpful for the chronology of a Persian lyrical poet’s life. On the whole, however, our knowledge of Ḥāfiẓ’s life is woefully inadequate.

The Preface of one of the oldest manuscripts—used intensely for the first time by Qāsim Ghānī and Muḥammad Qazwini—contains at least some biographical material. But even the date of Ḥāfiz’s birth is not yet established. Some authors, like Qāsim Ghānī, put it in 717/1317-18 while others (so M. Muḥsin) plead for 725/1326-27, a date which would fairly well agree with the statement in ʿAbd al-Nabi’s Maikhānah (written in 1626) that Ḥāfiẓ died at the age of 65 lunar years. Most European scholars seem to have accepted a date of circa 719/1319-20.

Ḥāfiz’s father, a merchant, had migrated from Isfahan to Shiraz. He died early, leaving the family in straitened circumstances. Yet, young Ḥāfiz apparently enjoyed the traditional education in a madrasa. Some sources speak of his poverty, and tell that he apprenticed himself to a doughmaker to earn his livelihood. It seems that he worked as a copyist for quite some time, for the library in Tashkent owns a copy of Amīr Khusrau’s Khamsa by his hand, dated 9 February 1355. That means that even in his thirties he had to do some menial work. However, he must have been very well versed in the Qurʾānic sciences—hence his nom-de-plume Ḥāfiẓ. His Arabic was excellent, and in later years he taught exegesis and other theological courses in Shiraz. According to the Preface he studied Zamakhshari’s Kashshāf (to which he incidentally alludes in one of his ghazals), Sakkākī’s Miṣṭāḥ and several other Arabic works. According to A. Krimsky, some of his Arabic works are extant in autographs.

A charming story tells that he received his initiation in the art of poetry at Bābā Kūhī’s tomb on the hillside near Shiraz, where ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib appeared to him and offered him some heavenly food. The beautiful ghazal:

دش وقت سحر از غمه نجاتم دادند
واضاف آن ظلمت شب آب حیاتم دادند

1 Qasim Ghani and Muhammad Qazvini, Diwān-ʾi Ḥāfiz, Tehran, 1320 sh/1941-2.
3 Rypka, p. 277 note 95.
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Yesterday at dawn I was given relief from my grief,
And in the darkness of the night I was administered the elixir of
life. . . . .

is taken as an allusion to this event, although the story was most probably invented to fit the poet into the Shi'a tradition. But in spite of A. Krimsky’s opinion, he was not an avowed Shi'ite, for no authentic Shi'a verse appears in the Diwān.

Several invitations from rulers outside Fars show that his poetry attracted some interest quite early. Aḥmad Jalāʾir, himself a skilful poet, talented calligrapher, etc., invited him to Baghdad—perhaps after Shāh Shujā’s death (1385). But before that the ruler of the Bahmanid kingdom in South India sent for him (as one century earlier the ruler of Multan, Prince Muḥammad ibn Balban, the maecenas of Amir Khusrau, had invited Saʿdī to leave Shiraz for India). Ḥāfīz did not follow any of the invitations, but in one of his ghażals he speaks of far away Bengal where his poetry was appreciated—poetry which, like a perfected ṣūfi, can perform the miracle of ṭawī al-makān (ubiquity) and, though only a child one night old, can immediately make one year’s journey. . . . In this poem he says in a line that connects in a clever murād-āt al-naẓīr three items from the geographical sphere and the traditional combination of the sweet-speaking parrot with sugar:

شاکر شکن همه طوطیان هند
زین قند فارسی که به گناهه میرود

All the parrots of India become sweet-spoken
From that Persian candy that goes towards Bengal—

a line in which we find a subtle allusion to his superiority even over Amir Khusrau, commonly called ṭut-i Hind, whose works Ḥāfīz himself had copied.

Very little is known about Ḥāfīz’s personal life. He must have been married, and one of his ghażals is interpreted as an elegy for his son who died probably in 764/1462-63. According to Firishta, who is followed by the 18th Century Indian polyhistor Āzād Bilgrāmī, in Burhanpur.

We do not know whether Ḥāfīz belonged to one of the numerous ṣūfī orders which were then quite active in the Middle East. The area

1 Brockhaus Nr. 218; Ahmad-Nāʔini Nr. 112.
2 Brockhaus Nr. 158; Ahmad-Nāʔini Nr. 149.
of Shiraz was the first part of Iran where a more closely knit community of dervishes had been formed by Abū Ishāq-i Kāzarūnī (d. 1035) and his followers, who were active in helping the needy not only in Fars but soon extended their activities as far as India and China.1 Ḥāfiẓ’s colleague, Khwājū, was a member of the Kāzarūniyya. No name of any of the leading ūṣṭī masters—be it ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Gilānī, the Suhrawardī or Maulānā Rūmī—occurs in his verse, at least not openly. Maybe that the frequent use of musical terms and allusions to the sanāʿi point to Ḥāfiẓ’s knowledge of Rūmī’s poetry in which such imagery abounds. But this is only a vague supposition. If it is correct that one Pir Muhammad ʿAṭṭār was his shaikh, he would be connected with the sitāla of Rūzbihān Baqlī, as Hellmut Ritter has stated.2 The poet apparently used to attend the sessions of Maulānā Qawām al-Dīn ʿAbdallāh. That is stated not only in the Old Preface, but also in an account according to which the mystical leader Saiyid Ashraf Jihāngir Simnānī (d. 1405), the patron saint of Kichhua in Eastern Awadh, met Ḥāfiẓ around 782/1380.3

The only way to find out more details about Ḥāfiẓ’s life is, as has been done recently, to look for the overt and covert allusions to political figures whom he praises or blames with subtle allusions. H. Ritter has summed up his various mamdūhs in his admirable article in the Turkish Islam Ansiklopedisi.

When the poet was still very young, the Ilkhan Abū Saʿīd died (1335). One should not forget that eight months later Timūr was born. Abū Saʿīd’s successor executed Sharaf al-Dīn Maḥmūd Shāh, who had been semi-independent in Shiraz since 1325. After a struggle of seven years Maḥmūd Shāh’s son, Abū Ishaq Injū, took over. Some of Ḥāfiẓ’s poems praise the tolerant and artistically-minded prince and his vizier Qiwām al-Dīn Ḥasan. But soon, in 1353, Shiraz fell to the Muzaffarids whose first ruler, Shāh Mubāriz al-Dīn, was orthodox, harsh, and not inclined to spare human life. He in turn was deposed and blinded by his own son Shāh Shujāʿ after five years of reign. One usually understands those poems in which Ḥāfiẓ derides or attacks the detested muhtasib, the market police inspector, as pertaining to

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2 Ritter, in Islam Ansiklopedisi, p. 67.  
3 Rypka according to A.A. Hikmat, ‘Manābī-i jadīd dar pirāmūn-hayār-i Ḥāfiẓ,’ in Majalla-i Dastakhbada-i Adabiyyat (Shiraz, 1341 sh/1962) VII, pp 3-38; the source is Niẓām al-Dīn Gharib-i Yamani’s Laṭīf-i ʿashrāf.
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Mubâriz al-Din’s reign. The most famous of these poems:

اگرچه یاده فرح بخش و یاد کلیپیزت
بیانگ چنگ منوره که محبوب تیزت

Even though the wine is pleasure-granting and the wind scattering rose-petals,
Don’t drink wine at the sound of the harp, for the muhtasib is impetuous

alludes in its last line

پیا که نوبت بنداد و وقت تبریزت

for now it is time for Baghdad and Tabriz

to the two Jalâ‘irid capitals as more congenial places for the poet to sing. Incidentally, both cities were later conquered by Shâh Shujâ”a. It seems however difficult to place all muhtasib poems in Mubâriz al-Din’s time: how should one explain a verse like this?

یا محبوب عمی رگویید که ای بنی
پیونم چهما در طلب شرب (فیش) میامست

Don’t tell the muhtasib my faults
For he, too, is continually, like me, in search of wine (or: of good life)

The solution of these problems is left to the interpreters’ understanding.

When Shâh Shujâ”a ascended the throne, times changed for the better, and Hàfiz sings cheerfully:

سره زهات فی شیم رسد، موده پیگویش
که دور شاه شجاعت می دلبر پنوش

At dawn, glad tidings reached my ear from the voice of the Unseen world:

It’s the time of Shâh Shujâ”a — drink, boldly, wine!

Shâh Shujâ”a himself, an educated man, was a mediocre poet; his court poet proper was ʻImâd al-Dîn Faqîh, but Hàfiz belonged to his eulogists too, and it seems that shhâsuvâr, who repeatedly represents ‘the beloved’, is a subtle allusion to this ruler’s surname Abû’l-Fawâris.

1 Brockhaus Nr. 57; Ahmad-Nâjîni Nr. 68.
2 Brockhaus Nr. 34; Ahmad-Nâjîni Nr. 57; here the reading is ʻaish instead of ʻâda.
The whole poem speaks of enjoyment and drinking.
3 Brockhaus Nr. 327; Ahmad-Nâjîni Nr. 251.
When the prince left Shiraz between 1363 and 1366 Ḥāfīz composed some poems that complain of the separation from the friend. During those years Shāh Shuṭān had to fight his own brother Maḥmūd who in 1365 even laid siege to Shiraz, along with Uwais Jalāʾīr. For some time the relations between the ruler and the poet apparently cooled down; at least the biographers hold that Ḥāfīz’s verse

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\text{گر مسلمانی از آنست که حافظ دارد}
\]
\[
\text{وای گر از پی اروز بود فردالی}
\]

*If the state of a Muslim is such as Ḥāfīz possesses—
Woe, if there were a tomorrow after today!*  

estranged him from the ruler because of its apparently non-Islamic character. *Fardā* has of course to be interpreted as the Day of Judgment, which in the *Qurʾān* is often called ‘tomorrow’, just as *dāsh* or ‘yesterday’ in Persian poetry usually points to the time before creation, the Day of the Covenant (*raż-i alast*, see *Qurʾān* 7:17) when ‘the angels kneaded Adam’s clay’:

\[
\text{دوش دیدم که ملانکچ در میخانه زندن}
\]
\[
\text{گل آدم برشته و به پیمانه زندن}
\]

Ḥāfīz may have travelled to Isfahan and Yazd during the ‘estrangement’ around 1337, but the relevant traditions are weak.

Shāh Shujāʾ was succeeded in 1385 by Zain al-ʿĀbidin, and the latter, after a brief reign, by Shāh Yahya. During this time the inter-necine feuds in the Muʿazzafarīd family continued. More importantly, Timūr, in the course of his incessant conquests, reached Shiraz in 1378, the same year when he massacred 70,000 people in Isfahan. He stayed in Shiraz for two months and may well have met Ḥāfīz, interested as he was in gathering learned men and artists from all over the Muslim world. The anecdote about the dialogue between the world-conqueror and the poet has been told and retold—probably spun out for the famous *maṭlaʾ* about the *Turk-i shirāzi*.

\[
\text{اکر؛ آن ترک شیرازی بیست آند دل مارا}
\]
\[
\text{بخال هند ویش پخش سمرفه و بخارا}
\]

The story is found in a rather early source, Shujāʾ-ī Shirāzi’s *Ants al-nās* of 830/1426-7 so that it may contain some truth. It was then

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1 Brockhaus Nr. 525; Ahmad Naṭīmi Nr. 374.
2 Brockhaus Nr. 222; Ahmad Naṭīmi Nr. 115.
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popularized by Daulatshāh, from whom Eastern and Western writers alike took it over. ¹

Hāfīz died in 791/1389, to which the chronogram khāk-i muṣallā would fit, or in 792/1390—thus the chronogram b-s-dh in the Old Preface. It is said that the orthodox refused to have him buried in a Muslim cemetery because of his anti-orthodox, sensual poetry, but by means of an oracle taken from his poetry they finally agreed to a correct burial. The story may or may not be true—the custom of asking the Dīwān for good advice in every situation has continued.

Since Hāfīz had been too busy with teaching and scholarly work he had no time, according to the early sources, to collect his Dīwān himself—this work was left to later scholars. And here the major problem for every interpreter of Hāfīz’s poetry begins, e.g. the lack of an authentic text. We do not even know exactly how the ‘friend’ was—usually called Muḥammad Gulandām—who speaks in the Preface about his acquaintance with the poet. After E. Boelke had made, in 1958, some inquiries into the oldest available manuscripts,² Robert M. Rehder discussed in 1974 once more the textual tradition of Hāfīz’s poems in a brief, well-documented article³. He gives an account of fourteen dated manuscripts which predate the year 827, which is the date of the Ghani-Qazwīnī edition. Was the ‘friend’ the only collector of Hāfīz’s verse? Or did independent collections exist soon after the poet’s death? That seems more likely. Single ghazals of Hāfīz are found in manuscripts written during his lifetime, for example in a collection written in Baghdad in 781/1379-80. A safina, collected one year later in Shiraz, contains four of Hāfīz’s ghazals. In 1937, Christian Rempis drew the attention of the scholars to a manuscript dated 810/1417 that belongs to one Muẓaffar Ḥusain in Hyderabad/Deccan,⁴ but as Rehder states with regret, the whereabouts of this manuscript, which was taken to Pakistan by its owner in 1948, are at present unknown. It is not found in the library of Khairpur Mīr, which acquired the bulk of Muẓaffar Ḥusain’s library. The National Museum in Delhi has a manuscript dated 818/1415

¹ Jamalzadeh, in ‘Rauḍ-i bāzār-i shīr u shā’ in Armağād 46/3, pp 129-142 offers a text that speaks for the truth of the meetings.

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with 385 ghazals (on loan from Hyderabad). Another manuscript, mentioned by Rehder as Nr. 13, consists of an anthology and was formerly in Gawanpur; since it contains the Preface it seems to be the same manuscript which has been carefully edited by Dr Nazir Ahmad and Dr S.M. Reza Na'imi in 1971. It contains 435 ghazals. H. Ritter had studied two very valuable manuscripts in the Aya Sofya Library in Istanbul (AS 3945 and 3857) dated 1410 and 1413 respectively. One of them was written for the library of the Timurid prince Iskandar ibn 'Umar Shaikh from whose library another copy is preserved in the British Museum which contains 152 ghazals and was edited by Dr Khanlari in 1337 sh/1958.1 The Revan Kōshk in the Topkapi Sarayi, too, owns a pre-827 manuscript of Ḥāfiz’s poems, and an important manuscript is preserved in the library of the Tajik Academy of Sciences (N. 555). It was described by Dr G. Galimova.2

That the text of Ḥāfiz’s Divān was rather garbled as early as about a century after his death is understood from the statement of the many-sided Timurid author, Sharaf al-Dīn Marwārid,3 who writes:

through the transcribing of the text by various scribes of defective understanding many of the pearls and precious stones of the Pattern of the Praiseworthy and Eminent (i.e., Ḥāfiz) became the prey of the plundering fingers of a handful of fools...4

and that one of Ḥusain Bāiqara’s sons, Prince Farīdūn Khān, decided in 907/1501-2 to produce a better edition, which has found its way later into the British Museum.5

Almost every Persian Divān has a tendency to become inflated, but in the case of Ḥāfiz’s poems this process is even more natural. After all, it was the only book besides the Qurʾān out of which prognostication was taken. Therefore poets, scholars and eager copyists may have inserted their own verses or fitting poems in Ḥāfizian style

2 Dr G. Galimova, ‘The oldest manuscript of the poems of Hafiz’ in Sovetskoye vostokovedeniye, 1959, pp 105-112.
3 H. R. Roemer mentioned this information first in his ‘Probleme der Hafiz-forschung und der Stand ihrer Lösung’ in Abh. Akad. der Wissenschaften, Kl. der Literatur (Mainz, 1951) pp 97-115; the text is published in facsimile in his Staatsarchiven der Timuridenzeit (Wiesbaden, 1952) pl. 97g, the German translation id. pp 134-141.
for the sake of gaining fame under his name or of participating in the
baraka of the book. Others may have tried to improve verses accor-
ding to their own taste. Besides, we cannot exclude the possibility
that a certain number of variant readings exist because Ḥāfiz may
have written more than one version of a poem or revised his words
(thus Rehder’s assumption). The commentary of Südi comprises,
in one print, 575 poems, in the Brockhaus edition, 692 poems; the
dition princeps (Calcutta, 1791) has no fewer than 725 poems. The
inflation of the text is most conspicuous in areas where Persian was a
living language, as was the case in Iran and India.

People’s admiration for Ḥāfiz is reflected in the care the calligra-
phers took to transcribe his verse on beautiful coloured paper, sur-
rounded by margins full of delicate golden drawings. His poems were
not only repeated by the masters of nastalīq but also by the specialist
in shikastah. Did the artists perhaps think of the poet’s clever use
of letter images of his complaint that the friend did not send him a letter
to catch his heart’s bird with chainlike script?

Transaction of letters:

Several copies of the Diwān have been decorated with miniatures,
one of the finest being the one in the Fogg Art Museum (Cambridge,
Mass.) datable to circa 1527; it originally contained two miniatures
by Shaikhzādah and five by Sultān Muḥammad. The most attractive
and at the same time intriguing picture is the one by Sultān Muḥammad
which shows the various stages of heavenly and mundane intoxication,
where “Ḥāfiz himself, poyeed with booze or religious inspiration,
sits in a window about the huge wine jar closely beneath the roof on
which angels are dancing and drinking while in the lower level wild
looking dervishes produce a strange music. It is indeed a picture
which demolishes the conventional split between the effects of wine
and divine ecstasy. In this extraordinary transcendent painting,
low comedy and high religion meet.” And thus the problem
that has puzzled generations of scholars and admirers of Ḥāfiz,

1 Brockhaus Nr. 247; Ahmad-Nādīrī Nr. 203.
2 Stuart Cary Welch, Persian Painting (New York, 1976) text to pl. 18; the three
other extant miniatures are pl. 15 ‘Lovers Picknickimg’, pl. 16 ‘Scandal in a
mosque’, and pl. 17 ‘The Feast of 61d begins’.
3 Id., Introduction, p. 20.
whether to interpret his poetry as sensual or mystical, seems to be solved by the brush of one of the greatest Persian painters.

About the time when Ḥāfiz passed away in 1389, the Ottoman Sultan Murad I defeated the Serbs at Kosovo Polye and thus subdued the Balkans. Subsequently, the representatives of the developing Turkish literature began to take a more intense interest in the works of Persian poets, who became their literary masters and whose style deeply influenced the so-called Divan edebiyati. Shaikhi (d. circa 1451) and even more Ahmad Pasha (d. 1496) are obviously influenced by Ḥāfiz’s lyrical style. Ottoman interpreters and commentators carefully preserved the Ḥāfizian heritage without interfering too much with the actual text. Yet, Ḥāfiz’s poetry was apparently viewed with some suspicion in orthodox Turkish circles, otherwise it would not have been necessary to ask the famous mufti Abū Suʿūd (d. 1578) for a fatwā concerning the poet’s religious stance. The wise mufti gave an elegant ambiguous answer, explaining that Ḥāfiz’s poetry on the whole was not really objectionable but that some expressions were prone to a wrong interpretation; it was left to the reader’s discrimination to select the correct interpretation. This fatwā inspired one of Goethe’s poems in the West-östlicher Divan. Abū Suʿūd’s judgment is important because during and shortly after his time three most widely used commentaries were written to elucidate Ḥāfiz’s verse. Shamʿī and Surūrī took to the mystical interpretation while the Bosnian Südī gives sober, grammatical explanations. His dry but useful commentary was to form later the basis for most European interpretations of the Shirazi poet. The mystical understanding of his Divān was prevalent in Šafavīd Iran and the countries east of Iran. There, his admirers allegorized his verse by applying the standard equations as laid down by authors like Muḥsin Faiḍ-i Kāshānī: every curl of the beloved means the dark manifestations of contingent beings which veil and yet enhance the radiant Absolute Beauty of the Divine Face, or may pertain to God’s jalāl-side, His Majesty and Wrath, while every wine was only the Wine of Love, every tavern represented non-qualified Unity, etc. This kind of mystical interpretation is the reason for some Indian šūfī leader’s keeping only three books in their libraries, viz. the Qurʾān, Maulānā Rūmī’s Mathnawī, and the Divān-i Ḥâfiz. Europe heard of Ḥâfiz probably for the first time in 1650 when Pietro della Valle mentioned his name in his travel account

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HAFITZ AND HIS CRITICS

(Viaggi, printed in Venice). Almost half a century after Della Valle's remark, in 1697, the Austrian orientalist Franz Meninski, author of a useful Turkish lexicon, translated one of his ghazals. Shortly before him, Thomas Hyde of Oxford had translated the first ghazal from Hafiz's Diwan (1690), but it was published only about a century later. The next steps in discovering Hafiz's poetry were made by an amateur orientalist, the young Austrian diplomat Count Rewiczki, and a British scholar, the learned and versatile William Jones (later of Fort William, Calcutta). They enthusiastically exchanged their views about oriental poetry in general and Hafiz in particular in a correspondence that lasted from 1768-1770, the year that William Jones offered thirteen Hafizian ghazals in an elegant French version. A year later, in 1771, Rewiczki produced a Latin verse translation of sixteen ghazals with a literal paraphrase and explanatory notes in his Specimen Poeseeos Asiaticae. Three years later, his British friend published his Poeseeos Asiaticae Commentariorum libri sex (1774), the first survey of Arabic and Persian poetry. In a special chapter he turns against the mystical interpretation of Persian love lyrics, and especially of Hafiz's verse. William Jones, who went so far as to offer Hafiz in Latin and Greek verse translation to his readers, composed also a free variant of the Turk-i shtraet, i.e., his well known 'Persian Song':

Sweet maid, if thou would'st charm my sight....

Jones's services to oriental literature during his stay in Calcutta are unforgettable. During his lifetime, in 1791, Upjohn produced the first edition of Hafiz's Diwan, printed in Calcutta in nasta'ilq characters. Although this edition is highly inflated, it nevertheless gave the scholars a first basis for their work. Still quite a few of them preferred to go back to manuscript sources, which were found in many libraries, or they relied upon Sudi's text.

In 1800, a British orientalist, J. H. Hindley (d. 1837) published his 'Persian Lyrics', a collection of Hafiz's poem, but he deliberately

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2 Karl Emerich Graf Revitzky, Freiherr von Revisions, Specimen poeseos Persicae sive Muhammadis Schems-eddini notoris agnomine Haphyzi ghazaelae, sive Odae sexdecim ex initio Divani de promptiae, nunc primum latinitate donatae, cum metaphrasti sagittae et soluta, paraphrasti item ad notis. Vindobonae 1771.
3 For the English school of translations in general, see A. J. Arberry 'Hafiz and his English translations' in Islamic Culture XX, 1946, pp 111-28, 229-49.
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avoided in his translations the form of the ghazal because he was of the
opinion that

The constant recurrence of the same rhyme...is not suited to our language,
which...will not bear reiterated monotonies.

The British and also many German translators henceforward
preferred a looser, truly 'European' style, often inflating a single verse
into a whole stanza and thus blurring the peculiar character of Ḥāfīz's
crystal clear, succinct verse.

Briefly after Rewiczki's and William Jones's works had appeared,
we read with some amazement the judgment of J. G. Herder, who
endeavoured to realize his dream of Weltliteratur, of poetry as the
common language of the human race, and has therefore eagerly
collected every available translation of foreign poetry. He wrote:

An Ḥāfīz' Gesänge haben wir fast genug, Sadi ist uns nützlicher
gewesen

We have almost enough of Ḥāfīz's songs; Sa'di has proved more
useful for us.

The erudite German clergyman Herder preferred the moralizing
tone of Sa'di's Gulistān, known in Europe for more than a century
(first in Adam Olearius's fine translation of 1651) to the elegant playfulness
of Ḥāfīz's lyrics as offered by his first translators.

But in spite of Herder's grudging verdict, Ḥāfīz attracted the best
minds in those early days of European Orientalism. Even the leading
French authority on Arabic and things Islamic, Silvestre de Sacy,
devoted some studies to him.¹ But it was left to the indefatigable
Austrian orientalist Joseph von Hammer (1774-1856) to translate the
whole Divān into German. Hammer, who had studied Ḥāfīz in
Istanbul during the late 1790, relied upon Sūdī's commentary and,
contrary to Silvestre de Sacy, could not find anything mystical in the poet
of Shiraz. His translation appeared in two volumes in Stuttgart in
1812/13,² marred by all too many printing mistakes which often
change the meaning, but can easily be corrected by everyone who knows
the Persian original. The translation cannot claim to be poetry,
although Hammer thought it was, yet this very book inspired Goethe
to compose his Westöstlicher Divan.³ Hammer's introduction is

¹ Silvestre de Sacy, Notices et extraits 4, p. 238 ff.
² J. von Hammer, Der Divan von Mohammed Schemsed-din Hafis. Aus den
Persischen zum erstenmal ganz übersetzt.
³ See Ingeborg H. Solbrig, Dem Meister das Werkzeug (Bern, 1974) about the
relations of Hammer and Goethe.

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still valuable because he points out some stylistic peculiarities of Ḥāfiz, such as the frequent change of acting persons in a ghazal, a feature that contributes to the alleged 'lack of unity' in his poetry. Hammer was also honest enough to translate the object of love as male, for he was 'afraid of getting entangled in contradictions by praising girls for their green sprouting beards.' Here, he is certainly superior to most of the translators and imitators of Ḥāfiz in the 19th and early 20th centuries.

Five years after this translation had been published, Hammer once more turned to Ḥāfiz in his Geschichte der schönen Rede künste Persiens (Vienna 1818), a history of Persian literature mainly based on Daulatshah. Ḥāfiz is called here "the most beautiful and fiery aromatic flower in the wrath of Persian poets in the eighth century hijri," and he is for Hammer a 'preserver' (ḥāfiz) "not only of the Qurʾān but also of the holy fire on the altar of poetical art." Punning in good oriental fashion on the poet's name and sobriquet, Hammer claims that he did not at all deserve to be called 'Sun of Religion' (shams al-dīn) and 'translator of mysteries', tarjumān al-āsrār:

For badly did he beacon to religion as a sun, and his tongue translated
only the doctrines of sensual pleasure and not the mysteries of divine love.

Only in the Sāq-t-nāma, a small maznavī, Hammer found true mystical meaning.

Hammer's interpretation remained a model for most German lovers of Ḥāfiz during the 19th Century. Briefly after Goethe’s Westöstlicher Divan (1819) had been published, part of the Ḥāfizian poetry of Friedrich Rückert (1788-1866) appeared. Rückert, for one term a student of Hammer in Vienna, plucked out first poetical selections from Hammer’s translation and then, about 1820, turned to the original text. His Östliche Rosen (1822), free adaptations, carry the fragrance of Shirazian poetry and are the only congenial adaptation of Ḥāfiz in German. If one wants to understand how Ḥāfiz may sound to a native speaker of Persian, the elegant and singable Östliche Rosen with their perfect harmony of images, masterly ghazals and hidden

1 Der Diwan von Mohammed Schemsed-din Hafis, pp 261-62.
2 Friedrich Rückert, Briefe, hersg. von Rüdiger Rückert, Schweinfurt 1977, 2 vols, Nr. 98, dated 12 December 1819. See also, Orientalische Dichtung in der Übersetzung Friedrich Rückert's, hersg. und eingeleitet von Annemarie Schimmel (Bremen, 1963) (Sammlung Dietrich 286); O. Paul, Die Verform in Rückerts Hafis-Übersetzung (Studia Indo-Iranica), 1931.
puns are the best introduction. In later years, Rücker translated altogether 85 Ḥāfīzian poems into German ghazals, a form which he had successfully introduced in Germany by his renderings of Mau- 
laná Rúmí's ghazals in 1819 and which, contrary to the development in English literature, became a legitimate poetical form in German. However, Rücker's translations, faithfully reproducing both the rhyme and the spirit of the originals, never became popular in Germany; they were published only long after the translator's death—43 ghazals and 28 rubā'iyāt by Paul de Lagarde in 1877;¹ the complete selection by Herman Kreyenborg in 1926;² Wilhelm Eilers added an edition of Rücker's versions of Ḥāfīzian rubā'iyāt in 1940.³ During Rücker's lifetime two major scholarly works appeared in Germany and Austria respectively. One was the edition of the Divān of Ḥāfīz with the commentary of Südi added to the first eighty ghazals by Herman Brockhaus (1854-60);⁴ the other was the three volumes of text and verse—translation by Vincenz von Rosenzweig-Schwannau, a remarkable achievement of one of Hammer's compatriots.⁵ These two works remained indispensable for most students of Ḥāfīz until the first truly critical edition was published in 1927/8 by S. A. Khakhāli in Iran.

A gifted linguist and versatile poet, Rücker had been able to interpret Ḥāfīz most correctly, and a brief ghazal in his Poetisches Tagebuch proves that the poet of Shiraz was his companion in some lonely hours towards the end of his life. Rücker's young friend Count Platen (d. 1835) used the form of the ghazal and the name of the Persian poet in his 'Spiegel des Hafs' (1821) to express his melancholia and his homoerotic feelings under a foreign garb, thus hiding his own problems from the suspicious eyes of his compatriots. His introducing line:

_Wach auf, wach auf, o Hafs—wir lieben den Wein, wie du——_

sets the stage for an exclusively wordly interpretation of the poet

² Herman Kreyenborg, (Herausgeber) Ghaselen des Hafs. München, 1926.
³ Wilhelm Eilers, Ḥafsische Vierzeilen, persisch und deutsch. Dessau und Leipzig, 1940.
⁵ Der Divān...im persischen Original, herausgegeben, ins Deutsche metrisch übersetzt von Vincenz Ritter von Rosenzweig-Schwannau, 3 vols. Vienna, 1856-64.
of Shiraz. This anacoretic interpretation remained the rule for all the later poets who used the name of Shiraz, threw in some roses and nightingales, proclaimed free love and drinking, and poured out their aversion to the clergics under the mask of Ḥāfīz. The most famous representative of this trend is G.F. Daumer (d. 1875). A man with great technical skill in writing ghazals, he read into Ḥāfīz his own aversion to the established church with which he, a trained theologian and philosopher, had just broken. Yet, some of his alleged ‘translations’ have inspired even Brahms to beautiful music, as Rückert’s Östliche Rosen have been set to music by more than one leading composer of the 19th Century—an appropriate homage to the spirit of Ḥāfīz, whose poetry is widely sung in Iran.¹

A strange echo of Ḥāfīz’s poetry is found in a place where one would barely expect it: Nietzsche sensed the poet’s more than worldly intoxication and addressed him:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Die Schenke, die du dir gebaut} \\
\text{ist größer als jedes Haus,} \\
\text{Die Tränke, die du drin gebräunt,} \\
\text{die trinkt die Welt nicht aus...} \\
\text{Bist aller Hohen Versunkenheit,} \\
\text{bist aller Tiefen Schein,} \\
\text{Bist aller Trunkenen Trunkenheit——} \\
\text{wozu, wozu dir—Wein?}
\end{align*}
\]

Many orientalists, too, followed the purely ‘worldly’ interpretation of Ḥāfīz. The leading German authority on Persian literature around 1900, Hermann Ethis, who calls Ḥāfīz, “one of the greatest lyrical poets of all times,” quotes with approval the saying of the noted historian of literature, Johannes Scherr, that Ḥāfīz sang “songs which

—jestingly but inexorably—make war upon every kind of zealotry," and he himself held that Ḥāfīz wrote his poetry

to celebrate the moderate enjoyment of nature and life, and to praise that frankness that relentlessly fights against fraudulence and hypocrisy, and to extol the indefatigable striving after the highest spiritual values of men.

Such words from an outstanding orientalist were certainly directed against the British Lieut. Col. H. Wilberforce Clarke who had just translated Ḥāfīz's Diwān in prose 'with critical and explanatory notes' (1891) but had completely taken to a cumbersome mystical interpretation of the Persian poet. Ethé’s words also implicitly refuse the tendency of Adalbert Merx who claimed in a famous university address in Heidelberg in 1893 that everyone in the East understands Ḥāfīz in a mystical sense.¹

While the interest in Ḥāfīz came to a certain standstill in Germany by the turn of the century, the British once more took up the thread. One of the finest essays on Ḥāfīz is that by E.G. Browne in his A Literary History of Persia (vol. III, 1920), where he places the poet in his historical environment; much of his aesthetic judgment is based on Shibli Nu'mâni’s valuable Urdu work Shir'r al-ʿajam, a mine of information². Later, A. J. Arberry has supplemented Browne, and with his wide knowledge of the history of oriental studies also projected Ḥāfīz as seen through the eyes of Western, mainly British, translators.³

Arberry proves that Fitzgerald discussed Ḥāfīz with Lord Tennyson in 1854, and that they approached Carlyle who, however, showed no interest in the Persian poet. The poetical translations by young Gertrude L. Bell, published in 1897, were highly praised by both E.G. Browne and A. J. Arberry;⁴ formally, they follow the tradition of 'inflated' poems. But her versions certainly read better than the 189 versified adaptations by Herman Bicknell, who had taken great pains to stay for some time in Shiraz to imbibe the atmosphere, but did not live to see his labour of love published in 1875. And when J. H. Hindley in 1800 had warned his compatriots against the ghazal form

¹ Adalbert Merx, Idee und Grundlinien einer allgemeinen Geschichte der Mystik. Heidelberg, 1893.
⁴ The book is accompanied by notes after Südl’s commentary; it was reprinted in 1977.
then the translations of eighteen ghazals by Walter Leaf (An Essay in Persian Metre, 1898) showed that he was right. John Payne, too, produced a version of Hāfiz’s poems in perhaps even less satisfactory ghazal form in 1902; he rejected, however, the mystical ideas which had been popularized by H. Wilberforce Clarke. The English version by R. le Gallienne in 1905 can also not be considered to be really successful. In the same line belongs a French version by A. Guy (1927), as can be understood from its very title: Les poèmes érotiques ou ghazals de Chems ad-Din Mohammad Hafiz en calque rhythmique et avec rythme à la persane.

In 1924, A Krimsky offered an introduction to the works of Hāfiz and showed how they found their way to the West; his book, Khafiz to yoho pisnt, published in Kiev, contains an excellent bibliography that points to many rare works and would, in an English translation, form the basis for a much needed bibliography of Hāfiz studies, including translations.¹

Hāfiz was more and more becoming a truly international poet. The first Czech translation appeared as early as 1881, and the Danish scholar Rasmussen devoted a study of Hāfiz in 1892;² a Norwegian version was published much later, in 1927. The number of minor English and German translations grew, and between the two World Wars and after 1945 several Russian and Polish translations appeared. In 1960 a Hungarian version of Hāfiz came out, and a first attempt to make Hāfiz popular in the Arabic-speaking world dates back to 1944. It goes without saying that the countries where Hāfiz had been studied throughout the centuries—India and Turkey—produced many translations and commentaries in the indigenous languages. Urdu offers quite a few poetical or interlinear translations from the late 19th Century onwards. Some of the prints have even a fa‘l-nāmah attached to them. Numerous editions of or selections from the Dīwān have been brought out by Indian devotees of Hāfiz, sometimes with an English translation. We know of a Hindi interlinear version as well as of several Panjabi poetical renderings of Hāfiz.³ material in Sindhi is likewise available. In Turkish, the last major attempt was that of

¹ An excellent survey in Rypka, Selected Bibliography VI b, pp 784-85.
² Harald Rasmussen, Studier over Hafiz med sideblik til andre persiske Lyriker, Diss. Copenhagen, 1892.
Abdulbaki Gölpinarlı, whose *Hafiz Divani* in Turkish translation (Istanbul 1944) proves his amazing erudition.¹

The chain of translations into English continued after World War II. A.J. Arberry has elegantly put together various versions in his *Fifty Poems of Hafiz* (Cambridge 1947, 1953), a book that is a fine introduction to the poet’s style. Five years later, a selection of thirty poems in translations by Peter Avery and John Heath-Stuabbs followed (London 1952).

In France, it was primarily Henri Massé who dealt with Hâfiz in his *Anthologie Persane* (Paris 1950),² the Persian scholar and poet Dr Khanlari contributed an article on ‘Hafiz de Chiraz’ to the collection L’âme de l’Iran (Paris 1951). It is to him that Vincent Monteil dedicated his annotated translations of *Neuf ghazals de Hafiz* in 1954,³ which he transcribes in order to evoke the impression of the sound of the recitation.

In Germany, Hâfiz’s work incited Georg Jacob—always interested in the realia of oriental poetry—to devote a study to the Tavern and its Implements according to Hâfiz in the *Nöldeke Festschrift* (1906) and later joined those who translated Hâfiz into German verse.⁴ When the time came to present a *Festschrift* to Georg Jacob, Hellmut Ritter contributed some fine German verse translations from Hâfiz’s Diwân.⁵ Ritter's magistral article about Hâfiz in the *Islam Ansiklopedisi* has already been mentioned. The last major attempt to translate Hâfiz into modern German is that of Rudolf Keil in 1957; J. Christoph Bürgel, then, issued a useful anthology in 1972⁶ which is in some way comparable to Arberry's *Fifty Poems*, and gives a survey of Hâfiz studies and a fine account of Hâfiz’s poetical art. In a small booklet, *Drei Hafis-Studien* (Bern 1975) Bürgel continues his

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¹ Gölpinarlı relies upon the Khalkhalı edition and the Manuscript Aya Sofya 3945 of 813/14/1410-12.
² French prose—translations on pp 160-167; see also his ‘Vingt poèmes de Hafiz’, *Cinquantenaire de la Faculté des Lettres* (Alger, 1932) pp 343-59.
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translations and interpretations, devoting special attention to the concept of ri nale, which he translates as Freisinn, a meaningful word from Goethe’s West-östlicher Divan.

A new vivid interest in Ḥāfīz is visible in his native country, beginning with Sayyid Ābd al-Raḥīm Khalkhālī’s publication in 1927–8 of the first truly critical edition based on a manuscript written only 35 years after the poet’s death. His pioneer work formed the basis for a new, widely enlarged edition by Qāsim Ghānī and Muḥammad Qazvīnī who corrected the text with the help of a considerable number of other old manuscripts and published extensive and most useful studies about Ḥāfīz and his time most of which appeared during World War II.1 By their painstaking studies, both scholars discovered that Ḥāfīz’s poetry contained many more allusions to contemporary events than had been previously realized. A number of studies by leading Persian scholars such as Muḥammad Muʿīn,2 Saʿīd-i Nafīsī3 and Dr Khanlārī4 prove the growing interest in the textual reconstruction of the Divān and its correct interpretation on modern scholarly lines. The work of these Persian scholars has, of course, great importance for the solution of problems which have been discussed over and over again in the West, particularly that of the alleged incoherence of Ḥāfīz’s lyrics. A solution of this problem was attempted also by European scholars during World War II, a time during which communication with colleagues was largely impossible so that duplications are not infrequent. Tradition has it that already the contemporaries of the poet, headed by Shāh Shujā,5 criticized a certain incoherence in his verse, and European critics of the 18th and 19th centuries followed them in complaining of the lack of a higher logical order. As Hindley wrote in 1800:

Ḥāfīz ... takes the liberty of glancing with the frenzied eye of inspiration from earth to heaven, from heaven to earth, in search of objects adapted to the subject of his composition.

Gertrude L. Bell, who tried in the foreword to her translation to evaluate Ḥāfīz’s greatness from a Western viewpoint, wondered why

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2 Muḥammad Muʿīn, Ḥāfīz-i shirin sukan. Tehran 1319 sh/1940.
4 Khanlārī, Chand nāṭa dar taṣḥīh-i divān-i Ḥāfīz (a series of articles in Yaḡma).
there is 'almost no echo' of the political and martial events that occurred during his lifetime. She touches here a point that was to arouse major discussions fifty years later. But she concluded:

It is as if his mental eye, endowed with wonderful acuteness of vision, had penetrated into those provinces of thought which we of a later age were destined to inhabit.

Friedrich Veit, who wrote his thesis 'Des Grafen von Platen Nachbildungen aus dem Diwan des Hafis' in 1908, found a 'unity of thought' in the poems; but his interpretation is mainly concerned with the homoerotic aspects of Ḥāfīz's and Platen's verse. H. H. Schaeder, in his masterly book Goethe Erlebnis des Ostens (Leipzig 1938) expressed the opinion that in a Ḥāfīzian poem several themes are combined as a kind of leitmotifs; he is thus not too far from A. J. Arberry who saw in Ḥāfīz's poetry a progress towards a kind of polyphony: beginning as a poet who is almost 'a perfect Sa'di' in his one-lined ghazals, he then develops the art of inserting two or more themes and elaborates them in an intricate pattern whose various 'melodies', so to speak, stand in a contrapunctual relationship; this art would have become more and more refined in the poet's later years.

H. H. Schaeder remained faithful to the 'classical' interpretation of Ḥāfīz's lyrics and harshly contradicted Karl Stolz who had claimed in an article in 1941 that one could understand Ḥāfīz's spiritual development to a certain extent by observing the changes in emphasis, allusions to persons etc.¹, referring to Maḥmūd Humān's study Ḥāfīz chi migyād?² which points to the same direction of research. Schaeder's question: "Lässt sich die 'seelische Entwicklung' des Dichters Ḥafiz ermitteln?"³ was answered by himself without hesitation in the negative; Stolz, however, insisted upon his, though slightly modified, thesis on very acceptable grounds.⁴ He found strong support—though unwittingly—in the work of the French scholar, R. Lescot, who wrote a Chronology de l'oeuvre de Ḥafiz, which appeared in 1944 in the Bulletin des Etudes Orientales.⁵ Lescot, basing his

² Tehran 1371 sh/1938.
³ Orientalische Literaturzeitung 45/1942, pp 201-10.
⁴ id. pp 97-120: 'Die seelische Entwicklung des Dichters Ḥafiz lässt sich ermitteln'.
⁵ Vol. X, Beirut 1944.
research mainly on Qāsim Ghani and Muḥammad Qazvini, found that un fil conducteur, a chain of associations, connects each verse with the previous and the following one, and ascribed much of the apparent incoherence to negligent copyists. Like Stolz, Lescot discovered in Ḥāfiz’s poetry certain cycles that can be ascribed to different phases of his life, and detected a relative chronology by disclosing the identity of people alluded to in the ghazals. Now for the first time the idea was put forth that Ḥāfiz was in reality a panegyrist who had cleverly used the more or less lyrical introductory part of the qaṣida for his panegyrics so that the invoked maʿṣhūq, ‘beloved’, is in reality the mamādhūh, the object of the poet’s praise, e.g. the prince or the vizier.

When H. R. Roemer published his lecture on Probleme der Hafizforschung in 1951 he came close to Lescot’s theories and defended the possibility that at least parts of the poems are datable. The problem is, however, that the application of Lescot’s and Arberry’s methods sometimes places the same ghazal in two completely different categories of time so that neither of the approaches can offer a perfect solution of the chronology.

One year after Roemer’s useful survey of ‘Hafizology’ two articles by G.M. Wickens in the Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies deeply disturbed the students of Ḥāfiz.¹ In his brief note on the ‘Persian Conception of Artistic Unity’ Wickens stresses convincingly the lack of significant or ‘dramatic’ development in Persian poetry, a fact which he explains in the context of the Islamic way of thinking in general; his example of interpretation reads as if he were simply over-extending one principle of Persian rhetorics, e.g. that of murāḍāt al-naẓr from one verse to a whole ghazal. In his second article, however, ‘An Analysis of Primary and Secondary Significations in the Third Ghazal of Ḥafiz’ he tried to find in each and every word of the oft mistreated Türk-i shrāzī every conceivable and inconceivable connotation of the written word in order to establish the underlying ‘Turkish’ feeling of the ghazal. Mary Boyce wrote a very outspoken rebuttal of this interpretation and the learned scholar’s preoccupation with the ambiguities of written Persian.² She rightly stressed the fact that in the east poetry is usually recited or sung, rather than read, so that the sound is more important than the script; and indeed, how

many semi-illiterate people in Indo-Pakistan or among the elder generations in Turkey used to know their Ḥāfīz by heart and could insert fitting quotations from his Diwān in every conversation! Mary Boyce correctly stated that many words which at first reading may convey only one meaning prove to carry secondary and associate ideas; but these ideas are either implicit in the meaning of the word itself or conveyed by delicate punning—an observation that brings her close to Schaedler’s position. As a working hypothesis, Wickens’s ‘focal theory’ can prove helpful; but it should not be taken as an absolute norm.

Schaedler’s viewpoints were taken over—though with slight modifications—by the Italian scholar A. Bausani in 1958. He emphasizes the elemento non emozionale, finemente razionale, which distinguishes Ḥāfīz’s verse from lyrics in the Western, romanticizing tradition. Bausani, however, lays special stress on the two small mathnavis which are ascribed to Ḥāfīz, e.g. the Sāqt-nāmah and the Ahū-yi waḥshi, which he translates and counts among the most personal and inimitable compositions of Ḥāfīz. Both mathnavis, however, are missing in some of the oldest manuscripts. H. H. Schaedler had branded the sweet and delicate Wild Gazelle—which is indeed much more ‘personal’ than the ghazals—as much inferior to Ḥāfīz’s lyrics. The Sāqt-nāmah, again, contains the praise of the wine of ecstasy, and stands in the line derived from Ibn al-Farid’s (d. 1235) famous Khamriyya, the Wine Ode.

Lately, American scholarship has turned to Ḥāfīz, thus Michael Hillman with a very critical approach, criticizing Masʿūd Farzād’s work, an attempt to collate all versions of Ḥāfīz’s Diwān in seven big volumes. Hillman has also devoted a study to ‘Unity in the Ghazals of Ḥafiz’ (Chicago 1976), which was critically reviewed by Gernot Windfuhr. Hillmann’s criticisms of the Turk-i shirāzi seems unfounded. We also meet with a structuralist interpretation of the Turk-i

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shirāzi by Iraj Bashiri\(^1\) who discovers numerous astrological and mythical concepts in the poem. And in Finland, Henri Broms has tried to see Ḥāfiz in a certain relation to French symbolist poetry; but has also taken the first steps towards a much needed Ḥāfiz bibliography.\(^2\)

Contrary to these more and more abstract interpretations, the discovery that Ḥāfiz was probably more of a court poet than we had realized and that his verse was neither erotic nor mystical but rather panegyric, even ‘political’, led some Persian and Russian scholars to the assumption that wine, beloved, and muhtasib should all be interpreted afresh, thus turning Ḥāfiz into a political poet. I. S. Braginski follows Muḥammad Bahār in this interpretation; he claims that he can almost feel from Ḥāfiz’s verse the horrors of the period, and that his alleged mystical ideas were rather ‘tricks of style’ than expressions of his genuine conviction. Ḥāfiz becomes for him the exponent of a longing for personal liberty—the word rind, ‘vagrant’, means for him “the personification of his imagined heroism” (thus Jan Rypka). Braginski is followed, if not surpassed, by another Soviet scholar, Shoislam Shomuhamedov, who claims that Ḥāfiz put his great talent into the service of common man.\(^3\) According to him “man was on the lowest steps in both the feudal hierarchy and the Ṣūfī tariqat.” But Ḥāfiz’s common man, the true rind, wants to enjoy real life, and not dream of a Paradise beyond imagination. Ḥāfiz’s line:

\[
\text{غلام هست آنام که زیر خرگ کود}
\text{زهر چه رنگ تمیق پرورد آزادست}
\]

*I am the servant of the high soaring intention of him, who under the dark blue sky is free from everything that accepts the colour of relationship.*\(^4\)

is taken by him to prove that Ḥāfiz’s work is “of great importance for the liberation of human spirit from religious narcotics”—although the

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\(^4\) Brockhaus Nr. 32; Ahmad-Na"ini Nr. 55.
dition of the verse, particularly the word *himmat*, and the goal of complete freedom from everything created is a most typical expression of Şūfī ideals. Ḥāfiz becomes Shomuhamedov’s Renaissance Man, and embodies the most progressive tendencies of his times.¹ This article was published in the second Festschrift dedicated to Jan Rypka, whose comprehensive chapter on Ḥāfiz in his *History of Iranian Literature* (1968) with its extensive bibliography is a mine of information.

There are critical voices, too. Muḥammad Iqbāl, the poet of Indo-Pakistan, vehemently revolted against Ḥāfiz in the first edition of his Persian *mathnavī Asrār-i khūdī* in 1915; here, the Shirazi poet, venerated for ages in the Persian speaking world, becomes a model of that brand of beautiful but basically meaningless poetry which is more dangerous for the masses than the hordes of Attila of Jenghiz Khan, and his sweet verse is really opium for the people because it lulls them in happy dreams and does not raise them to active participation in the struggle for a better life. Later, Iqbāl deleted this passage from the *Asrār* and even alluded to some of Ḥāfiz’s lines in his own lyrics; but he certainly created a new attitude towards Ḥāfiz in the minds of quite a few of his compatriots.² In Iran, Aḥmad Kasrāvī would agree with Iqbāl’s early criticism; he speaks against the corrupt morals of Ḥāfiz and goes so far as to claim that Ḥāfiz is the favourite Oriental poet in the West because he very well reflects the depraved image of the sensual, unproductive Oriental which the Westerners love to see....³

But what is it that makes Ḥāfiz so incomparable? He has relied upon the poetical tradition as it has been perfected by his compatriot Saʿdī, and a comparison between the motifs and metaphors used by him and his contemporaries—poets like Salmān, Khwājā, and others—prove a great similarity in their use of words and images. However, it was Ḥāfiz who was able to weave the best threads of the tradition into a perfect, colourful fabric.

We have to beware of interpreting Ḥāfiz too much according to our own, Western understanding of poetry. H.H. Schaedler, followed

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¹ *Yadnamye Jan Rypka*, p. 137.
by A. Bausani, has put his finger upon the main problem when he says:

For the German the understanding of Persian poetry begins by his attempt to forget all his ideas about poetry as an expression of personality or of experience (Erlebnis)¹ and he advises the reader to go back to Baroque poetry (incidentally, Mas'ud Farzād, too, drew a comparison between Ḥāfiz and John Donne,)² or even to the medieval minnesingers who followed prescribed conventions and images to express their feelings in a stylized form. Ḥāfiz is after all a master of rhetorics, a poeta doctus, and one of the great difficulties for the Western reader is to disentangle the complicated web of allusions and rhetorical figures that make a line of Persian poetry true 'poetry'. In his numerous studies, Jan Rypka has given fine examples of this important art of correct interpretation.³ For only when the rhetorical figures have been understood a verse can be interpreted according to its various levels. Verses of a supreme master of this art, like Ḥāfiz, are like diamonds, hard and well polished so that they send out rays of different colours every moment. Among the German translators, Rückert was the only one to catch some of this 'un-romantic' hue of the Ḥāfizian lyrics, and when R. M. Rilke says in the Sonette an Orpheus:

Singe die Gärten, mein Herz, die du nicht kennst...  
wie in Glas  
eingegossene Gärten von Isfahan oder Schiras...

thus praising the gardens which are, so to speak, kept motionless in glass, he has intuitively caught this aspect of classical Persian poetry. We should not expect our poet to pour out his feelings in sheer lyricism as it is usually done in post-enlightenment poetry in Europe; rather, the highest art is to condense a personal experience so perfectly that

² Quoted by Arberry, Classical Persian Literature, p. 359. Mas'ud Farzad had published in 1935 a study 'To translate Hāfiz'; in 1949 his Hafez and His Poems appeared in London.
it always remains valid, just as one drop of rose-oil represents the 'spirit' of hundreds of roses. The reader can use it at every moment, whether he needs a line for a drinking party or a verse that consoles him by speaking of the beloved's wisdom or God's inscrutable will. As Arthur Christensen puts it:

As the love-verses of a poet be applied by every lover to a new individual (which differs from the person of whom the poet was thinking), thus these verses can express moods which offer analogies to a love relationship and, vice versa, mystical verses can be filled with individual contents.¹

Christensen compares the poetry of Ḥāfīz to the dreamlike play with rapidly changing images and thoughts; they are thus similar in character to the faience ornaments on Persian mosques where letters, arabesques, geometrical and floral decorations grow out of each other and—as we may add—change colour at every moment according to the light of the sun. This comparison, incidentally, brings the Danish scholar close to Wickens's statement about the 'non-dramatic' character of Persian poetry, a distinctive feature which one also may call 'carpet-like'—as Goethe addresses Ḥāfīz in the Westöstlicher Divan:

*Dass du nicht enden kannst, das macht dich gross,
Und dass du nie beginnst, das ist dein Los...*

thus pointing to the circular movement of the Persian ghazal.

H. H. Schaeder largely relied upon Goethe's interpretation of Ḥāfīz whose greatness the German poet discovered even through Hammer's not exactly poetical translation. Goethe was aware that the very character of Persian poetry is determined by the form of the ghazal; for the given rhyme scheme makes the poem assume 'a tinge of quodlibet' because the poet's mind does not focus on one point but is rather directed towards different directions in order to comply with the exigencies of the rhyme and, as Goethe continues:

We forgive him the most daring metaphor for the sake of an unexpected rhyme and enjoy the presence of mind which the poet can maintain in such a complicated position.²

¹ Kulturskitser fra Iran (Copenhaguen, 1937) pp 88-90, quoted in Schaeder, Goethes Erlebnis des Ostens, p. 177.
² Noten und Abhandlungen zum West-östlichen Divan: Übergang von Tropen zu Gleichnissen.

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Goethe recognized the ‘guiding spirit’ (Das Vorwalten des oberen Leitenden) as characteristic of this poetry, and he admired the readiness to establish human contacts in Hāfīz’s poetry. Such poetry can lift up problems which fill the soul with extreme tension, transporting them into a realm where tension and calmness are no longer valid, namely into the realm of pure spirit. Sensing this deeply spiritual character that underlies great Persian poetry, he knew that Hāfīz’s verse should not be interpreted exclusively at face value; for the word—as Goethe thinks—is a fan that hides a beautiful eye and yet makes the observer feel that it exists and may suddenly smile at him.

One may claim that Hāfīz is perhaps the first poet in the Persian speaking world who perfectly realized the unity of the mundane and the spiritual sphere. To be sure, Maulānā Rūmī had taken his images and symbols from every walk of life, changing even pebbles into poetical rubies, but his poetry was so deeply tinged by his experience of mystical love that it became regarded, for centuries, as the veritable Qur’ān in the Persian tongue. Mystical poetry had developed particularly in Iran. The introduction into ṣūfī thought of the shāhīd, the human ‘witness’, of Divine beauty, (e.g. the charming human object of love) and not to forget the maxim al-majāz qaṭarat al-ḥaqīqa, that metaphors, and thus metaphorical, i.e. human, love forms the bridge to the Divine Reality, had deeply permeated literature. Already the early ṣūfī in the time of Kharrāz (d. c. 890) and his disciple Junaid of Baghdad (d. 910) had developed the art of speaking in subtle hints, ishārāt. It would be surprising if Hāfīz, who lived in the city where Rūzbihān Baqli had composed one of the most important works on chaste love, the Abhar al-āshiqin, and had contributed to our understanding of the theoplastic utterances of early ṣūfis, particularly Hāllāj, in his Sharh-i shahāiyāt—if Hāfīz, living in Shiraz and perhaps even related to Baqli’s silsilā, had not been familiar with the finest mystical ishārāt. He would certainly have agreed with Maulānā Rūmī who states in the beginning of the Mathnawi that “the secrets of the loved ones can better be expressed in the stories of others”

خوشتر ان باشد كه سر دلبران
گفتته آید در حديث دیگران

e.g., by veiling the truth under poetical symbols. It was this art which Hāfīz has led to perfection.¹ In almost each of his verses a constant

oscillation between the wordly and the spiritual level can be discovered. That is why his poetry can be interpreted and, what is more, enjoyed on two, if not on three levels (and there may be even more hidden meanings). The object can be the beautiful beloved, preferably a fourteen-year old boy who is as cruel as he is charming and hence called with the traditional term, a *Turk*; or the object can be the Divine Beloved Who Acts as He Wills, and who is loved by the poet because He combines *jamāl* and *jalāl*, Beauty and Majesty, and in spite of the fact that He is ‘the best of rulers’ (*Sura* 3:47); the object can also be the prince, whose whims are endured by the subject and who has to be flattered in terms of utter subjection (as has the beloved) and expects high praise. In every case the poet remains the *‘abd*, the loving, admiring and obedient servant. This intended double entendre does not exclude, however, the possibility of discovering historical data in the lyrics.

If we approach a poem like the ever-present *Turk-i shirāzi* by a simple analysis of the rhetorical devices in the first verse we certainly do not find the ‘charming maid of Shiraz’, although the basic idea is as simple as can be—the lover would give away even the most precious things imaginable for a single moment of kindness from his beloved; or for a moment of Divine grace, or for a sign of royal favour. The charm of this line does not consist in the rather commonplace idea but in the expression: Ḥāfiz produces a complete *murāzat al-naẓir* of five geographical concepts—Turk, Hindu, Shiraz, Samarkand, and Bukhara, and another one from three parts of the body, *i.e.*, heart, hand, and mole. Besides, there is the juxtaposition of Turk and Hindu, which is quite common in Persian poetry, particularly since the days of Niẓāmī. The Turk supplied, from Ghaznavid times onwards, the model for the beloved with his round, light-coloured moon face, a mouth like a *mlm* or a dot, and slightly slanting eyes—an ideal that appeared in Persian miniatures. The Hindu again was the black, lowly and often cunning slave; so much so that mystics like Majd al-Dīn Baghdaḍī could compare angels and devils to Turks and Hindus respectively. Given this extremely lowly position of the Hindu in Persian imagery, Ḥāfiz’s claim to give away two major cities in the Turkish area for the Hindu mole of his friend gains even more momentum. Besides, the reader may think of the *turk-i falak*, the planet Mars, and the *hindā-yi falak*, Saturn, stars connected in astrology with minor and major misfortune, and with bloodshed and melancholia.
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respectively. The clever combination of this verse has often been imitated, but never surpassed. But a translation that leaves out the meaningful puns can never capture its real charm.

Another line that has been quoted by Oriental poets time and again, and in which mystical and profane meanings are most skilfully intertwined, comes from the ghazal that starts with the daring outcry:

| فاش می گویم و گفتی ' عود دلشادم |
| بنده عشقم و از هر دو چهان آزادم |

*I declare it openly and am happy about my saying:*
*I am the slave of love, and free from both worlds—*

a *mašla* that makes the reader immediately think of the imminent danger of *ifshā al-sirr*, the divulging of the secret of loving union which, according to the *ṣūfī* tradition, was Ḥallāj’s sin and caused his death on the gallows. The line in question reads:

| نست بر لوح دلم چز الف قامت دوست |
| چه کنم حرف دگر یاد نداد استادم |

*On the tablet of my heart there is nothing but the alif of the friend’s stature—*
*What can I do? My master did not give me any other letter to memorize.*

To play with letters is common in Persian and related poetry, and Ḥāfiz is no exception. The importance of the letter alif has always been stressed: as the first letter of the alphabet with the numerical value One, and consisting of a slim vertical line, it was interpreted as the symbol of Allah’s unity and unicity, but is at the same time the cypher for the elegant slender stature of the beloved. Why should one go farther than this letter? The *alif* represents everything that is needed—as the Turkish mystic Yunus Emre (d. c. 1321) says in one of his poems:

*The meaning of the four holy books*
*is contained in one alif.*

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2 Brockhaus Nr. 416; Ahmad-Nāsini Nr. 315.
Verses like this form the basis for the claim of quite a few mystics in Iran, Turkey, and Muslim India to be illiterate and to know only the alif which the great master of ‘ilm ladunt, immediate wisdom from God (Sūra 18:65) has taught them. For the mystic it is enough to remember God’s unity as expressed in the alif; as for the lover, the reminiscence of the slender body of his beloved completely fills his heart and mind.

One more example is taken from a poem in which Ḥāfiz complains of the separation from the friend.¹ The last line mentions his pen, this instrument which he so often praises with grand hyperbolae because of its miraculous powers:

کلک زبان بیده حافظ در انجم
باکس کم چاک راز تو تا ترک سر نکرد

the pen, with cut-off tongue, reveals the friend’s secret only after its head is cut. Just as the reed-pen has to be cut for proper writing—which means: telling the mind’s secret—thus the lover will rather give his head than reveal the secret entrusted to him: ‘I give the head, sar, but not the secret, sīr’ is a common saying. It does not matter whether the poet thinks of the secret of loving union with a human being whom he does not want to expose to blame, or of revealing, as Ḥallāj did, the secret of divine love and the experience of ecstatic extinction of the self; or whether he is one of the confidants of his prince who has entrusted him with information that should be kept secret—be it a political consideration, be it, as in the story of King Midas with the donkey’s ears, a personal problem of the ruler (the pen, made of reed, is cut off from the reed-bed like the reed-flute, which revealed, according to the legend, Midas’s pitiable state to the world.² On whichever level we interpret the seemingly pleasant and easy verse, it makes perfect sense.

There is no doubt that Ḥāfiz “composed some of the world’s most sublime and technically exquisite poetry”, as G.M. Wickens states.³ It is a sign of truly great poetry that every reader tries to explain it according to his own understanding, and therefore the manifold interpretations have a certain legitimacy. But it would mean

¹ Brockhaus Nr. 130; Ahmad-Naqibini Nr. 105.
injustice to Ḥāfiz to interpret his verse exclusively as an expression of a
hedonist and lucky-go-merry attitude, as much as it would be wrong
to see him exclusively as the Tongue of the Unseen world by applying
to his verse an overall allegorical interpretation. The greatness of his
poetry lies in the unsurpassable balance between the world of senses
with its wine and beauty, but also its politics, and the world of un-
changing Perfect Beauty, which is reflected in the changeful manifold.
His 'deep optimism' (Ritter) has probably to do with his talent to offer
the perfect Glasperlenspiel, and we can see him, as Ritter did, as the
perfect rind, a man who represents a life style in which fit al-qalbi,
cheerfulness and goodness of the heart, is preferred to everything else—
an attitude that is certainly contrary to every kind of fanaticism.

Perhaps only a poet can fully understand the secret of Ḥāfiz’s
verse as Goethe certainly did. Therefore we owe the best explanation
of Ḥāfiz’s poetry to Rückert, the Orientalist poet who sings in truly
Ḥāfizian style of the double-sided fabric of Ḥāfiz’s colourful lyrics
in which sensual and supra/sensual experience are inextricably woven
together:

Hafis, wo er scheint Übersinnliches
nur zu reden, redet über Sinnliches,
oder redet er, wo über Sinnliches
er zu reden scheint, nur Übersinnliches?
Sein Geheimnis ist tunübersinnlich,
denn sein Sinnliches ist übersinnlich.

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