

REVIEWS

Hafiz and His Contemporaries: Poetry, Performance, and Patronage in Fourteenth-Century Iran. Dominic Parviz Brookshaw (London: I. B. Tauris, 2019). Pp. 392. \$40.95 paper. ISBN: 978-0755638345

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Dominic Parviz Brookshaw's study of Hafiz and the poets 'Ubayd Zakani and Jahan Malak Khatun is a well-researched, insightful, and detailed analysis of how Hafiz relates to these two major colleagues and the extensive culture of Persian literature. Brookshaw approaches the work of Hafiz through discussion of the poet's patrons, his use of genres and motifs, intertextuality with Arabic poetry, perspectives on religious devotion and worldly activities, and his allusions to kings, heroes, prophets, lovers, and locations. Brookshaw observes that in an anthology composed, probably in Shiraz, the home of Hafiz, at around the time the poet died, his poems are included with poems by predecessors and contemporaries. In particular, the book has the same number of poems by Hafiz and the poet Jalal Yazdi, which suggests that Hafiz was well known, and perhaps the anthologist or his patron viewed Hafiz and Jalal as equivalent in some way. Although the present volume focuses on the examination of poems in the broader cultural context of Persian literature, this kind of social context is a welcome contribution, as one sometimes gets the feeling that the poet Hafiz descended from heaven because of the unique position that is traditionally attributed to him. Brookshaw seeks to explain one possible contributor to this: the intense intertextual relationship between Hafiz and the later poet Jami.

Brookshaw's strategy for interpretation of these texts, whose variants and layers of meaning sometimes make a clear understanding elusive, is to engage with the recurring question of the order of lines in a sensible way in the introduction, again with recourse to solid research on the social context of Hafiz's poetry. He suggests that the large amount of editing, amalgamating, and repurposing of the poems led to a range of variants, and notes that the poems were collected in a *divan* after Hafiz died (so it would have been impossible for him to be consulted about which variants belonged or did not belong in the *divan*). The author also persuasively argues that variations may have been related to use of the poetry in performance settings, a topic to which he devotes one chapter. Regarding interpretation of the multiple layers of meaning, including love, patronage, mystical devotion, affinity with location, and intertextuality with other poets, Brookshaw emphasizes that ambiguity is central to the *ghazals* of Hafiz. However, he does not just shrug off this question, but uses close reading and the cultural context of Persian literature to gain insight into the poems that he considers. Although Jahan Malak and 'Ubayd sometimes seem more like backup singers than subjects of analysis, this discussion of Hafiz in conjunction with their work provides a convincing background for the broader context of Hafiz's work.

In chapter 1, Brookshaw follows the lead of Domenico Ingenito, demonstrating the urban focus in the poetry of Hafiz by looking at his work and that of others on Shiraz and the

beautiful young men there. However, Ingenito's portrayal of Sa'di's *ghazal* in his 2020 book *Beholding Beauty: Sa'di of Shiraz and Aesthetics of Desire in Medieval Persian Poetry*, including the role of erotic adventures, suggests that Brookshaw may be overstating the contrast between the adventurous attitude toward Shiraz of Hafiz and colleagues and Sa'di's interest in portraying it in a more subdued ("whitewashed") way (29). Be that as it may, discussion of the *ghazal* in and about Shiraz is a good starting point, as the *ghazal* may involve devotion to a range of objects of desire, including cities, just as the praise poem may involve praise to a range of people and places. In chapter 2, the author keeps central the location of Shiraz, with a discussion of performance that situates the *ghazal* in a gathering (*majlis*) in a formal, courtly or informal setting, depicting it as an aesthetic, multisensory experience. This description is apt, as the *ghazal* often benefits from description of one sensory experience that quickly shifts to another.

When it comes to patronage, the term "literary propaganda" (72) to describe poetry used in patronage discourse seems anachronistic; this discourse is more nuanced and invested in the tensions between convention and innovation than the political discourse called propaganda in modern times. Brookshaw observes in his introduction that the relationship between lines in a *ghazal* by Hafiz may be so nuanced as to be barely detectable (11). Discussion of the multiple terms used to depict social interaction in the *ghazal*—beginning with *uns* (companionship; 74) and concluding with *tamasha* (contemplating beauty while sitting or strolling through a garden; 77)—is typical of Brookshaw's attention to the cultural significance of philology.

Chapter 3, on evocations of the beloved, contributes a better understanding of the range of interpretation concerning this crucial figure in *ghazals* by Hafiz and his contemporaries and *ghazals* by other poets in Persian or other languages of Islamic culture. Brookshaw's idea that the lover and beloved can be viewed on a continuum, both derived from love, and that their duality is subsumed in the single reality of love—although it may be misunderstood or exaggerated by a novice reader of the genre—rings true to the experienced reader. Moreover, Brookshaw wisely observes that modern readers may focus on opposition between the serious and the playful, although these medieval poets and their audience would not have viewed the poems in this way.

Drawing on research by Dick Davis (146), Franklin Lewis (127), and Heshmat Moayyad (146) about mystical interpretation, Brookshaw clarifies that the symbolic universe of the beloved is sometimes overstated and always rooted in social experience. The attention to intertextuality between Arabic and Persian poetry is especially welcome, given the Arabic verse that opens the first poem in the *divan* of Hafiz and Hafiz's Islamic education, as Brookshaw notes. However, the distinction between Arabic and Persian may benefit from minor adjustment. Waist-down description of a beloved (male or female, typically a slave or another of lower status) in Arabic was probably not viewed as "bawdy," and followed an intertextual chain of transmission from its importance in the older, related *nasib* (devotion to a beloved who has departed, or to her abandoned abode). This longing for an absent beloved (typically female and free), with a description related more to higher status than to sex. As for the depiction of the figure who serves wine in earlier poetry, it may have been a young male, or sometimes a female, and may or may not have been the son of a non-Muslim winemaker. Instead of a tavern at the edge of town, it may have been a monastery; a cup-bearer working for a host at a private gathering was already common in earlier Arabic poetry. The oral culture of the *ghazal* was not necessarily bawdy, since the culture of musical performance was highly valued and refined. Only one category of the Abbasid reception of Umayyad poetry involved more explicit yet still elegantly modest love poetry; the other was chaste love poetry. Nevertheless, Abbasid-era poetry had its share of provocative topics, *mujun*, a term that has a somewhat more refined connotation than "bawdy."

The three chapters on allusions to kings and heroes, lovers (as opposed to the poet's lover persona and the beloved), and prophets reveal thoughtful perspectives on the broader intertextual and cultural significance of these allusions. Brookshaw follows Julie Scott Meisami's practice in many of her publications of identifying links between past and present that enhance the meaning of each allusion, and notes that the allusion reinforces the old while

also articulating a new perspective. In particular, he observes the connections and differences that allusions suggest between Iranian and Islamic culture, between different love stories, and among prophets. Although the Persian *ghazal* is typically homoerotic, many of the legendary pairs of lovers are in fact heteroerotic, and the allusion to narrative verse romances in Persian in the lyric *ghazal* entails both contrast and connection between these distinct genres. Among prophets, Joseph plays a significant role in articulating desire for a beloved or a patron, and Brookshaw points out that the written, oral, and aural experience of the *ghazal* relied on the audience's knowledge of history, legend, and scripture, just as one who reads or listens to the Qur'an may draw on knowledge of the stories of the prophets.

In conclusion, Brookshaw argues that Hafiz along with his contemporaries Jahan Malak Khatun and 'Ubayd Zakani disrupted the binaries of erotic roles and mystical and nonmystical interpretation, and intersecting devotion to a beloved, a patron, or the city of Shiraz. Based on his distinction between modern and medieval perspectives, one might believe that such binaries existed in medieval culture but had gained an exaggerated significance in the poet's contemporary times. Brookshaw's persuasive response to ongoing debates about interpretation and the thoughtful discussion of selections of poetry by Hafiz and his contemporaries (which are included in the main text in Persian and in translations that are both accurate and pleasant to read) make this book an important contribution to the study of the *ghazal* in Persian and other languages.

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Kindred Voices: A Literary History of Medieval Anatolia.
Michael Pifer (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2021). Pp. 320.
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In the thirteenth century, the mountainous peninsula between the Aegean Sea in the west and the Tarsus Mountains in the east, today called Anatolia, became a periphery to the Mongol behemoth that established its four political centers adjacent to the Eurasian steppe in western Iran, on the north Caspian coast, in Transoxiana, and in northern China. Scholars such as Patricia Blessing and Andrew Peacock have recently shown that this western frontier region was culturally contiguous to the Ilkhanid Mongol realm (ca. 1258–1335) in Iran to its east, and thus should not be considered in isolation.

Nonetheless, Michael Pifer's study of Mongol-era Anatolian literature seeks to define the internal cultural dynamics of this region. He argues that "medieval" Rum (that is, Rome, the premodern term for Anatolia) shared a unique set of historical conditions; a receding Byzantine political and cultural imprint as well as centuries on the Abbasid Arab frontier created the circumstances for three remarkable events which bring together this poetry-focused study. These events were the crafting of several didactic literary masterpieces in Persian, the birth of a distinct variant of literary Turkish, and the substitution of the classical Armenian *grabar* for the fresh vernacular register of Middle Armenian.

Pifer's deft execution of this work makes it so that one scarcely feels the need to question the physical bounds of its inquiry. His ultimate goal is to deliver a "more integrative mapping of Anatolian literary history" (4), which he does by following a selection of poets across the