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Review Article

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Recent Work on Classical Persian Literature: A Wake-up Call

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Hunsberger, Alice (ed.): *Pearls of Persia. The Philosophical Poetry of Nāṣir-i Khusraw*. London/New York: I.B.Tauris, in association with The Institute of Ismaili Studies. London. 2012, xxix + 286 pp., ISBN 978-1-78076-130-5.

Korangy, Alireza, with a foreword by Wolfhart P. Heinrichs: *Development of the Ghazal and Khāqānī's Contribution. A Study of the Development of Ghazal and a Literary Exegesis of a 12th c. Poetic Harbinger*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag. 2013, xiii + 465 pp., ISBN 978-3-447-06955-7.

Kiyanrad, Khosro (ed. and 'Nachwort') / Kiyanrad, Sarah (translation): *Die Ghaselen des Qāsem Anwār In der Überlieferung der Handschrift in der Mamier-Kulturstiftung*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag. 2015, 498 pp., 16 Abb., ISBN: 978-3-447-10378-7.

Keshavarz, Fatemeh: *Lyrics of Life. Saʿdī on Love, Cosmopolitanism and Care of the Self* (Edinburgh Studies in Classical Islamic History and Culture). Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press. 2015, vii + 217 pp., ISBN 978-0-748-69692-5.

Katouzian, Homa: *Saʿdi in Love. The Lyrical Verses of Persia's Master Poet*. London/New York: I.B.Tauris, in association with the Roshan Cultural Institute. 2016, viii + 200 pp., 40 colour plates, ISBN 978-1-784-53224-6.

I wish to express my thanks to Hilary Kilpatrick (Lausanne), who not only edited my English but also made some useful suggestions, and to Paola Orsatti (Rome) and Renate Würsch (Basel), who critically read my text and endorsed my criticism.

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Keshavmurthy, Prashant: *Persian Authorship and Canonicity in Late Mughal Delhi. Building an Ark* (Iranian Studies 33). London/New York: Routledge. 2016, xi + 177 pp., ISBN 978-1-138-18598-2.

The six relatively recent publications on classical Persian literature under review here are of different kinds. One is an edited volume with articles by a number of specialists (Hunsberger); two are works by young scholars (Korangy, Keshavmurthy, the first orginally a PhD thesis); two are translations (Katouzian, Kiyanrad, the latter accompanied by an edition); finally, one, a monograph by an established scholar, nevertheless gives much prominence to translations as well (Keshavarz). As such these publications have different aims, arouse different expectations, and do not address the same readership; nevertheless, they all raise serious question about the condition of the field of classical Persian literature, something which is also obvious from many articles which have been published in recent years. In the course of the present review, I shall refer to these articles as well.

I shall begin with the volume on Nāṣir-i Khusrau (394/1004 – ca 469/1077), "the first major Persian poet to base his art on a thoroughly religious and spiritual and philosophical grounding and goal" (Hunsberger on p. 150 in this volume). Its contributors are all established scholars who might be expected to produce sound scholarship. It is the outcome of a conference at SOAS in London in 2007 which focused on Nāṣir-i Khusrau as a poet. It contains thirteen articles arranged in three sections, only the third of which, however, "Nāṣir-i Khusraw's poetics", which includes six articles, specifically addresses poetical issues and will be dealt with here.[1] Of the articles from the other sections I shall discuss only those which address Nāṣir's poems in sufficient detail.

Nāṣir-i Khusrau has been given attention, from the nineteenth century on, both in the West (by scholars such as Schefer, Zhukovskiy, Ethé, Ivanow and Bertel's) and Iran (by, e. g. Taqīzāda and Muḥaqqiq). In 2000 the editor of the present volume published a fine monograph on him herself.[2] It is, in particular, his prose *Safar-nāma*, the account of his travels from Khorasan through Persia, Syria, Egypt, Arabia and back, that aroused early interest, but also seven of his prose philosophical works and his poetry (a voluminous *Dīwān* and maybe a short *maṯnawī*, *Raušanā'ī-nāma*, as well; but see below). These texts have been edited, some of them more than once, and studied from a variety of angles. Many scholars, though, did not always appreciate his poetry very much *as poetry*. With anachronistic expectations, based on the poetry of the Romantics and

1 The two other sections are entitled "Speech and Intellect" (*sukhan* and *ʿaql* being two key terms in Nāṣir-i Khusrau's thought) and "Philosophical Poetry: Enlightening the Soul".
2 Alice Hunsberger 2000.

afterwards, poetry that "does not express the individual poet's feelings" but one that "aims to move the reader to improve morally or to accept a particular philosophy" was often considered "somehow poor". As Hunsberger rightly argues, this "criticism is invalid", as "an intimate connection between illumination, poetry and moral guidance can be seen in most poetic traditions of the world" (148–49).

While many of the articles offer serious contributions to our knowledge of this poet, they are not all based on solid philological foundations. Regrettably, many of the authors do not use the critical edition which Muǧtabā Mīnuwī and Mahdī Muḥaqqiq published in 1353/1974[3] on the basis of a number of old and trustworthy manuscripts, but still the by now superseded edition by Sayyid Naṣr-Allāh Taqawī dating from 1304–7/1925–28 (reprinted with additions many times afterwards).[4] In addition the contributors are not unanimous in their attitude towards the authenticity of the two *maṯnawī*s that have come down to us, the *Raušanā'ī-nāma* and the *Sa'ādat-nāma*. This last poem is still considered authentic by one of the contributors (Mehdi Aminrazavi, 91), and the editor writes that the "debate" concerning its ascription to Nāṣir-i Khusrau still continues (xiv). This is not correct: already nearly thirty years ago François de Blois made clear once and for all that its author is a certain "Šarīf", who mentions his own name at the end of the poem, and about whom nothing further is known, except that he must have lived before the middle of the ninth/fifteenth century, the date of the oldest MSS.[5] The *Raušanā'ī-nāma* is a more difficult case. Its authenticity is addressed directly by two authors. Mohsen Zakeri, in "The *Rawshanā'ī-nāma* and the Older Iranian Cosmogony" (103–116), considers that "with the exception of a few evident interpolations, the poetry is definitely that of Nāṣir" (105), whereas Nasrollah Pourjavady, "Hearing by Way of Seeing: *Zabān-i ḥāl* in Nāṣir-i Khusraw's Poetry and the Question of Authorship of the *Rawshanā'ī-nāma*"

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3 Nāṣir-i Khusrau 1353/1974. Interestingly, this edition gives the poems in the non-alphabetical order of the oldest known complete MS of the *Dīwān* that was used as the main source; however, this is not, *pace* Hunsberger, "one of the manuscripts used by Hermann Ethé in 1882" (xv, and again 182, n. 3). He relied on MS India Office 132, dated 714/1315, which, although used by Nāṣir-i Khusrau 1353/1974, contains a selection of only 78 *qaṣīda*s and *qiṭ'a*s. As is clear from the editors' introduction (vii) as well as from the MS's colophon included at the end of the *Dīwān* (530), the basis of their edition is MS Istanbul Çelebi Abdullah Effendi 290, dated 736/1336, which contains 282 poems (*qaṣīda*s, *qiṭ'a*s and *rubā'īyāt*).

4 Nāṣir-i Khusrau 1304–7/1925–28. It contains considerably more poems than the Istanbul MS, to wit 302, and without doubt there are spurious ones among them.

5 De Blois 1992: 203 and De Blois 1996. In a footnote in the same volume (113, n. 6) Mohsen Zakeri writes that "it has been established that the *Sa'ādat-nāma* is in fact by one Nāṣir-i Khusraw al-Iṣfahānī, who died in 735/1334 or 753/1352", but as De Blois writes in the appendix to his first publication, this is not correct either (De Blois 1997: 623).

(133–145), on the contrary rules out its being an authentic work, because "although Nāṣir-i Khusraw did use the language of state in his *Dīwān*, he did not use the name of *zabān-i ḥāl* to refer to it" (144). Here as well the discussion could usefully have been complemented by De Blois' important arguments pro and con in his *Persian Literature*, which conclude that "if the poem is by someone else, it can still hardly be by anyone who lived much after the time of Nāṣir".[6]

The issue of the authenticity of poems that are handed down as Nāṣir's is an important one. In the course of time, some classical Persian poets became, as it were, "genres", as De Blois was the first to note concerning the figure of ʿUmar Khayyām,[7] followed later on by Carl W. Ernst in connection with ʿAṭṭār.[8] Admittedly this happened to Nāṣir on a smaller scale, but it is undeniable that he also attracted would-be poets trying their hand at his style; the *Dīwān*, even the critical edition by Mīnuwī and Muḥaqqiq which is based on an old MS, contains some of them. This proves to be relevant to one of the three articles that translate – in this case very freely – and extensively discuss a single *qaṣīda*,[9] Leonard Lewisohn's "Nāṣir-i Khusraw's Ode to the Universal Soul and Intellect" (53–70), a study of the *qaṣīda* beginning "*bālā-yi haft čarkh-i mudawwar du gauhar-and/k'az nūr-i har du ʿālam u ādam munawwar-and*" ("Above the seven revolving domes are two substances/ by the light of the two of them the World and Man are illuminated").[10] A note added by Hunsberger draws attention to the fact that this poem "should be closely compared with another one in his *Dīwān* (...) written in the same meter and rhyme" (62, n. 15), beginning "*ǧān u khirad rawanda bar īn čarkh-i akhḍar-and/yā har duwān nihufta dar īn gūy-i aġbar-and*" ("Are the Soul and the Intellect running upon this green dome/or are both of them hidden in this dust-soiled ball?").[11] As she writes, the editions by Mīnuwī & Muḥaqqiq and Taqawī

6 De Blois 1992: 206–209. That this essential and admirable reference work by De Blois is ignored by every author of the volume and does not even figure in the Bibliography at the end is incomprehensible and a disgrace.

7 De Blois, 1994: 363.

8 Ernst 2006: 339.

9 The full text in Persian script of these three *qaṣīda*s is included on pp. 257–273, in a version, however, that does not always reflect the authors' choices. E. g. the *qaṣīda* discussed by Hunsberger reads "*suwār*" in its first verse (257), instead of "*kumait*" as she prefers (see below, n. 22).

10 Nāṣir-i Khusrau 1304–7/1925–28: 120–122; Nāṣir-i Khusrau 1353/1974: no. 112. As is duly mentioned (asterisked footnote on p. 53) Lewisohn's article was previously published as Lewisohn 2007 under a different title in the journal *Iran* (note that the reference to the issue and page numbers in the footnote and in the Bibliography has to be corrected) but it is "a much abbreviated, revised version" with "many new features" (*ibid.*).

11 Nāṣir-i Khusrau 1304–7/1925–28: 117–120; Nāṣir-i Khusrau 1353/1974: no. 201.

both contain the two *qaṣīda*s,[12] and the first *qaṣīda* cites the first half-line of the latter in its last verse, an example of *taḍmīn*. As Hunsberger notices, the first one is a *ǧawāb* ('response poem') to the latter, and she concludes that this "throws Nāṣir's authorship" of the latter "into doubt". Indeed, classical Persian poets did not write *ǧawāb*s to their own poems, but she gives no argument for her choice of the former as the authentic one, one could as easily choose for the latter. In fact, one may question the authorship of either of the poems, both may well be pseudo-epigraphic works. There is no doubt that their authors were Ismailis, and the poems include some of Nāṣir-i Khusrau's images and sayings, but they also show in part a vocabulary different from that of Nāṣir-i Khusrau himself and have rather too many *hapax legomena* in his poetic oeuvre to be fully credible as original works.[13] Moreover, in the verse with the *taḍmīn* of the *qaṣīda* beginning with "*bālā-yi haft čarkh*" the poet names himself as "Nāṣir", not this poet's usual *takhallus*, which is nearly always "Ḥuǧǧat"[14] ('Proof', the title of a chief Ismaili *dāʿī*, which he may well have been.)[15] If, on the other hand, in the *qaṣīda* beginning "*ǧān u khirad*", the poet invokes himself in the usual way as "ay Ḥuǧǧat",[16] this in itself does not prove its authenticity.

The contribution by Finn Thiesen, "Rhythm in Nāṣir-i Khusraw's poems" (209–221), apart from being valuable in itself, can help to solve issues of authenticity. By a detailed analysis of Nāṣir's poems, listing which metres he

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12 And, as appears from the apparatus in Nāṣir-i Khusrau 1353/1974, both are even included in the selection of 78 *qaṣīda*s in MS IO 132 mentioned in n. 3 above.

13 One can find these hapax legomena using on-line databases such http://ganjoor.net and http://rira.ir/rira/. For *qaṣīda* 201 they include *abtar* (v. 6, "worthless"), *āfrūša* (v. 14, a dish) and even a common term like *dāmgah/gāh* (v. 10, "a place where nets are laid"), here a metaphor for the world, otherwise very common in Persian poetry, or an image like the *haftgāna šam`* (v. 20, "the sevenfold candles" for the seven planets). For *qaṣīda* 112 they are even more numerous and include "scientific terms" to which Nāṣir-i Khusrau is little inclined in his poetry, such as *mašīma* (v. 2, "chorion", rather than "uterus" as Lewisohn translates it on p. 58), *ḥaḍīḍ* (v. 13, "nadir", not Lewisohn's non-existent "perigree" on p. 59, probably meaning "perigee", but this is something altogether different), but also *buġḍ* (v. 42, "hatred", otherwise common in e. g. Rūmī and ʿAṭṭār) and even *sunnīyān* (*ibid*, "Sunnis").

14 The couple of examples in the *Dīwān* where the poet refers to himself as "Nāṣir" either are in a poem of doubtful authenticity (a *musammaṭ*, Nāṣir-i Khusrau 1353/1974: 550, strophe 27, v. 2b, in the section of those poems ascribed only in some MSS to Nāṣir-i Khusrau) or include the poet's usual *takhallus*, Ḥuǧǧat, as well. E. g. *ibid.*, a.o., qaṣ. no. 5: v. 29, Nāṣir, v. 34, Ḥuǧǧat; qaṣ. no. 8: v. 42, Nāṣir, v. 38, Ḥuǧǧat; qaṣ. no. 163, v. 42, Nāṣir, v. 51, Ḥuǧǧat; I have found only one other exception, qaṣ. no. 241, v. 50.

15 It is not certain this was his rank; Ivanow did not think so, see Mohammad Azadpur's note 50 on p. 89 of the volume.

16 Only in Taqawī's edition does the poem have an extra four verses at the end, in which, uniquely, the poet calls himself "Nāṣir-i Khusrau".

used and how often, and enumerating a number of elements of prosody in a selection of forty poems which he contrasts in particular with Ḥāfiẓ, Thiesen identifies a number of Nāṣir's characteristics and can conclude that "Nāṣir-i Khusraw knew his *ʿilm-i ʿarūḍ* thoroughly and all his poetry should therefore be in accordance with its rules. Consequently, a verse that disagrees with the *ʿarūḍ* must be either corrupt or, less likely, unfinished and awaiting its author's finishing touch". He gives a number of examples as illustrations (219–220).

Julie Scott Meisami in her "Symbolic Structure in a Poem by Nāṣir-i Khusraw" (191–208)[17] also translates and discusses a single poem,[18] this one undeniably authentic and translated before (be it in part or freely) by Jerome W. Clinton and Peter L. Wilson & G.R. Aavani. In this rightly famous poem, beginning "*šāyad ki ḥāl u kār dīgar-sān kunam/harč-ān bih-ast qaṣd sū-yi ān kunam*" (in Meisami's translation, "Now it is fitting that I change the state of things/and strive to attain that which is best"), Nāṣir-i Khusrau describes his own poetic craft,[19] but there is more to it, and Meisami discusses its Ismaili implications, inter alia the "numerological and spatial aspects of his poetics" (192). Numerical symbolism, as is well-known, was important in Ismaili philosophy; however, her division of this 58-line poem into sections of 7 verses, and a "cap" of two more, seems debatable. I am not convinced that the caesuras in the poem are necessarily where she puts them.[20] There is no doubt that "the number seven holds [...] a special significance for the Ismailis" (195), but one can stretch this too far. And repeating a thesis (see n. 17 above) does not make it truer. This thought-provoking article, the first version of which dates from nearly thirty years ago,[21] has still not yet received the discussion it deserves.

One of the truly valuable articles of this volume is Alice Hunsberger's own contribution, "'On the Steed of Speech': A Philosophical Poem by Nāṣir-i Khusraw" (147–189), which betrays a deep familiarity with Nāṣir's philosophical writings. It is a subtle discussion again of a single magnificent *qaṣīda*, beginning "*kumait*[22]*-i*

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17 It is mentioned that this is a reprint of Meisami 1993 (asterisked footnote on p. 191; issue and page numbers should be corrected), but not that her even earlier Meisami 1990 is also partly the same text. Finally, in her monograph, Meisami 2003: 200–204, she gives a shorter version of the same analysis.

18 Nāṣir-i Khusrau 1304–7/1925–28: 303–305; Nāṣir-i Khusrau 1353/1974: no. 177.

19 In this context it was studied by Clinton 1979: 84–89.

20 E. g. between vv. 35–36 and 49–50.

21 I am not aware of any reaction on her analysis. Even in *Abstracta Iranica* the earlier versions have not been reviewed.

22 Hunsberger prefers the reading "*kumait*", as Taqawī's edition has it, and not "*suwār*" as in that of Mīnuwī and Muḥaqqiq (see also above, n. 9), as, according to her, this reading "cannot work because, when the second hemistich asks 'Who is the rider?' to what can the pronoun 'its'

sukhan-rā ḍamīr-ast maidān/suwār-aš či čīz-ast, ğān-i sukhandān"[23] (in her translation: "The steed of speech has the mind as spacious field./Who, what is its rider? The eloquent soul"). One of his longer poems,[24] it is, as she notes, "both richly poetic and heavily philosophical" (151). Its "overarching theme" is "the philosophical significance of language" (173) and the image of "the horse of speech" is recurrent in it. Her analysis is both rhetorical and philosophical, deftly unraveling the poem's structure, which moves from the macrocosm in the first half to the microcosm in the second half, and so, "moving from the Word to the Intellect, all the way down to the physical world", she shows how the "Divine action is paralleled with that of the poet, namely to release the human soul from its imprisonment in the physical world" (180). Although, as she writes, Nāṣir-i Khusrau "in his poetry rarely uses philosophical vocabulary" "his poetry still reflects his philosophical thinking" (181).

Michael Beard's "Also a Poet" (119–131) discusses a small *qiṭʿa* in which an eagle's downfall is an arrow into which his own feathers have been incorporated – a *qiṭʿa* which, as Beard does not fail to mention, "several generations of Iranians have learned [...] from their high school textbooks" (124). As Beard notices, it exists in two main versions, one of only four[25] and one of eleven verses.[26] According to him either of them might well be the original version, or Nāṣir might even have written both, but he chooses to discuss the longer one, finding it "more interesting because it dwells on the psychology of the eagle in more detail" (124). This may be so, but one should note that none of the old MSS has this longer version, and Taqawī's edition seems to be its only source.[27] Even if not authentic, this version had indeed a certain

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refer but to the horse?" (185, n. 36). However, both readings can make sense. And it is not true that Mīnuwī and Muḥaqqiq base this reading *suwār* "on one MS"; on the contrary, their apparatus on p. 582 makes clear that Taqawī's edition is the *only* source for the reading "*kumait*", while Mīnuwī and Muḥaqqiq's old MSS all read "*suwār*". Nor is it true that Hermann Ethé, who edited and translated this poem (Ethé 1882), preferred "*suwār*" on the basis of one MS (*ibid.*); on the contrary, among the three MSS he used, one of them the old anthology Mīnuwī and Muḥaqqiq use as well (see above, n. 3), only the most recent, a copy of the early eleventh/seventeenth-century anthology *Butkhāna*, has the reading "*kumait*" (Ethé 1882: 478–479).

23 Nāṣir-i Khusrau 1304–7/1925–28: 318–322; Nāṣir-i Khusrau 1353/1974: no. 39. Her article is marred only by a near-consistent spelling of 'hemistich' as 'hemistitch', corrected in my quote in the previous note.

24 80 (Nāṣir-i Khusrau 1353/1974), 79 (Nāṣir-i Khusrau 1304–7/1925–28) or 78 (Ethé: 1882) lines.

25 Nāṣir-i Khusrau 1353/1974: no. 260.

26 Nāṣir-i Khusrau 1304–7/1925–28: 499; vv.1, 6–7 and 10 in common with Nāṣir-i Khusrau 1353/1974: no. 260.

27 Nāṣir-i Khusrau (1353/1974) considers it to be so recent that they even do not find it worthwhile to include the extra verses or variants in their apparatus (724) and just refer to Nāṣir-i Khusrau 1304–7/1925–28. Beard (124) chooses the version as printed in the anthology Thackston

charm which Beard conveys well. He tentatively interprets it not, as usual, as a parable against pride,[28] but as "an argument against self-sufficiency, a statement about the limits of conscious perception" (129)

The volume is capped by yet another article by Julie Scott Meisami, "Nāṣir-i Khursaw: a Poet Lost in Thought'?" (223–255) in which Nāṣir receives the attention he deserves as a *poet* foremost. Meisami perceptively focuses on his use of figures of speech and his figures of thought, providing numerous apt examples, and concludes that "a detailed study of his use of imagery (in which respect he is virtually second to none among Persian poets) is one desideratum" (251).

Even if it has its flaws, this volume will hopefully stimulate further research in Nāṣir-i Khusrau as a poet. It amply shows that he deserves it.

Obviously, and as observed above, a PhD thesis raises different expectations from a series of articles by well-known scholars. On the other hand, given that a thesis is written by a young scholar, it requires reading and correcting in its early stages by the supervisor, rewriting and revision so that in the end, while maybe not a "mature" work, it may reasonably be expected not to be marred by many errors and faults, with too obvious blunders having been weeded out. Sadly, however, this is not the case of the thesis I shall discuss here, Korangy's *Development of the Ghazal and Khāqānī's Contribution*. What we have before us is a more than four-hundred-page book which discusses in a rambling, disorganized way the Persian *ġazal* from its earliest beginnings up to Khāqānī, who lived more than a century later than Nāṣir-i Khusrau (ca. 521/1127 – between 582/1186–87 and 595/1199) and was a court poet of the Širwān-Šāhs, in the region of present-day Baku in Azerbaijan. Khāqānī, who belongs like Niẓāmī to what J. Rypka calls the "school of Azerbaijan",[29] is best known as a master of the *qaṣīda*, and thus far his *ġazal*s have hardly been studied, so this part of his oeuvre certainly deserves special attention. The first requirement is to decide which poems to include or not. Yet Korangy does not even try to address the issue of what makes a certain poem a *ġazal*; he blindly follows Kazzāzī's edition of Khāqānī's *Dīwān*, an edition in which poems which share the characteristic of being short and having an internally rhyming *maṭlaʿ* are put together in a single section. By contrast, Sağğādī in his edition follows the manuscript tradition, putting such poems in two different sections, one of *ġazal*s, and one of "short

1994: 22, with its numerous examples of a *lectio facilior*, a version for "the general public" which is also to be found (minus the last verse) in the popular anthology Ṣafā 1339/1960: 228–229.

28 The usual translation of "*manī*", occurring twice, in vv. 5 and 11, and so not in the shorter version.

29 Jan Rypka 1968: 201–205.

qaṣīdas" (*qaṣāʾid-i kūčik*).[30] These latter poems are very different from the typical *ġazal*; in fact they never have an amorous theme but belong to other genres as the *fakhrīya* ("boasting poem") or the *zuhdīya* ("ascetic poem"). A discussion of the evolution of a certain verse-form should begin with determining what poets considered their poems to be when they composed them.

What could have provided relief from Korangy's verbose discussion, the numerous *ġazal*s given in the original and in translation, make the book even worse, as the translations are excruciatingly wrong, hardly any line is understood correctly and they are followed by an extremely long-winded commentary. Khāqānī may not be the easiest poet, but Korangy's ignorance of the basics would disqualify him from studying any Persian poet. I shall give some examples, all taken from the sixty *ġazal*s the analysis of which ("surgical scrutiny" in Korangy's grandiloquent words, 322) is the basis of chapters 4 and 5.

One cannot possibly read a classical Persian poem without being able to scan, as this eliminates many impossible readings; however, time and again Korangy shows he cannot. For example, his translation of a verse of one of Khāqānī's short *qaṣīdas*, a *fakhrīya-cum-zuhdīya* (ed. Sağğādī, p. 800, v. 8), "*maida tanhā tu-rā-st, tanhā khwur/ba sagān* ***dih****, ba-ham-nišast ma-dih*", "the sustenance is yours, you have it all to yourself/don't share it with those village dogs, your cronies" (288), shows that he reads the second half verse as "*ba sagān-****i dih*** *ba-ham-nišast ma-dih*". A correct translation of the verse would be "this bread of the finest flour is only yours, eat it alone/[if not] give it [rather] to the dogs, not to your companions" (that *ham-nišast* does not have the derogatory meaning "crony" has, and that *maida* is not "sustenance", but "bread of the finest flour", are lesser problems).

One cannot possibly read a Persian poem without a minimum stock of literary knowledge, accumulated during the years leading to a master's degree; and, where it proves to be insufficient, one can fortunately have recourse to a dictionary. Those who study classical Persian are lucky enough to have ʿA. A. Dihkhudā's multivolumed *Luġat-nāma* to their disposal. It may include a number of "ghost words", but the numerous quotations, mostly from poetry, enable the user to eliminate them, and also to determine the exact meaning of a word in a particular context. Korangy lists the *Luġat-nāma* in his Bibliography, but there is no evidence that he used it. The same poem offers an example of this. The fourth verse reads: "*muhra-yi mār bahr-i mār-zada ast/ba-kasī k'az gazand rast, ma-dih*", the *muhra-yi mār* being a stone found in the head of a snake, which was considered to be an antidote; it is to be translated "the snake's stone is meant for him who is bitten by a snake/ don't give it to one who has [already] escaped from the damage". Korangy, however,

30 This results in a corpus of 454 poems in Kazzāzī's edition (Khāqānī 1375/1996), instead of 339 in the edition by Sağğādī (Khāqānī 1357/1978[2]).

translates it "the coils of a snake are for a snake-bitten soul/ don't give them away to someone not in need". It is as if Korangy has used the first word which he associates with a snake, "a coil", even though the word *muhra* has never had that meaning either in the past or today. And of course the *Luġat-nāma* would have helped him out with a definition and many examples.

This literary knowledge of anyone studying medieval Islamic culture will include the associations certain names evoke, in the same way that a classics scholar knows which myth is connected with which god or hero. Not so Korangy, who manages to misunderstand a reference to Solomon's famous magic ring, so that in a verse which refers to it he can translate *nigīn* flatly with "gem".[31]

One cannot possibly read a Persian poem without a minimum of knowledge of *realia* enabling one to recognize, for instance, geographical names. Not so Korangy. In one of Khāqānī's famous *qaṣīda*s, in which he expresses the wish to go to Khorasan, this time not by way of Ray, where an earlier attempt had stranded, but taking a route north of the Elburz Mountains, that is, from Āmul and then via Gurgān,[32] Korangy takes Gurgān to be a person, "the mighty Gurgān" even adding a made-up adjective to strengthen his imaginary identification.[33] But then, Korangy has no scruples about adding whole sentences to back up his fanciful interpretations. Khāqānī devotes yet another *qaṣīda* to his yearnings to see Khorasan, and describes how he will overcome the hardships and dangers he will face along the way, such as highway robbers and miscreants (as it will be necessary to cross an area where Ismailis have their stronghold). He writes: "against those libidinous ones (*bād-parastān*, litt. "wind-worshippers"), I shall, with my gravity/weight (*šukūh*)/ be like the mountain Ṭahlān (*kūh-i Ṭahlān*), God willing!",[34] Ṭahlān being a mountain in Najd, an established metaphor for gravity and greatness. Korangy, however, again takes it to be a person and provides this imaginary person with a fanciful feat: "I shall be like *Thahlān*, who hoped to escape death by climbing to the summit".[35]

But why go on with examples? The translations are often not wrong but pure madness, bearing no relation with the poems themselves and causing a reader to wonder where they could possibly come from. A rather uncomplicated verse, taken from the panegyrical section of a *qaṣīda* written for a celebration of *ʿīd*

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31 330, his translation of this verse, *hast dar gītī Sulaimān ṣad hazār/ yak Sulaimān-rā nigīn ğustam, nīst.* (Khāqānī 1357/1978², short *qaṣīda*, p. 747, v. 10) is wrong anyway.

32 Khāqānī 1357/1978²: 297, v. 7.

33 P. 298. Oddly, further on, p. 343, in his translation of another poem (Khāqānī 1357/1978², short *qaṣīda*, p. 744) where Khāqānī refers again to the same situation, Korangy understands Gurgān correctly as a region. But this translation bristles with other mistakes.

34 Khāqānī 1357/1978²: 405, v. 7.

35 297.

that falls in autumn, "*ʿağūz-i ğahān mādar-i Yahyā-āsā/ az ū ḥāmil-i tāza-zahdān numāyad*"[36] ("the old woman of the world, like John's mother/ thanks to him [that is, the *mamdūḥ*] resembles a pregnant woman with a fresh womb"), in Korangy's version becomes: "From this lame old lady, the world/ which reminds one of John's mother/ Do you think one can expect gold, Or a perpetrating ascetic? In her mama's womb's a nuisance clutter!".[37]

All this makes one wonder how the academic hurdles to publication were cleared: the supervisors, Wheeler M. Thackston and Wolfhart P. Heinrichs, themselves serious scholars; the doctoral examination committee, not at a third-rate university but at Harvard; finally, the readers at the publisher's, a distinguished one at that, Harrassowitz. Was everyone on the road to completion asleep? Did they all give their fiat without even skimming through the book? Did they just give up?

If only the story would end there: an inferior study, which somehow slipped through the net (or even several nets), but once in the open was unmasked. Unfortunately, this is not the case. And this shows the predicament Iranian studies finds itself in.[38] Among academics writing reviews is not a popular activity. Now that publications are ranked "A", "B" or "C", tenure depends on having a quota of "A"s, and reviews do not qualify for it; as a result, any book, even a valuable one, receives only a handful of reviews. Journals have to put much energy into finding scholars who accept to write a review, and of Korangy's book, to my knowledge, only two were published, one by Ali-Asghar Seyed-Gohrab in *BSOAS*,[39] and another by Rebecca Gould in *Iranian Studies*,[40] both extremely favourable. This should not come as a surprise, when one realizes that this is an eminent example of mutual adulation. Seyed-Gohrab has written a number of books and articles which show that his grasp of the classical Persian idiom is, to put it mildly, inadequate.[41] Nevertheless, Korangy has extolled his achievements to the skies in a way that would be over the top even for a worthy

36 Khāqānī 1357/1978[2]: 131, v. 3; oddly, in this case Korangy refers to Sağğādī's edition, and not to that of Kazzāzī.

37 401, yes, *sic*.

38 For more examples of totally unsatisfactory PhD theses published by distinguished publishers, see my reviews of those by Mahmoud Lameï (Beelaert 2004); Nadia Eboo Jamal (Beelaert 2007); Christine van Ruymbeke (Beelaert 2013); and Jocelyn Sharlet (Beelaert/Kilpatrick 2015). On Van Ruymbeke's thesis, see also Grami 2016.

39 Seyed-Gohrab 2015.

40 Gould 2015.

41 See, for example, on his *Courtly Riddles. Enigmatic Embellishments in Early Persian Poetry*, the review article by Paola Orsatti (Orsatti 2012) and my own review (Beelaert 2008). When this book was reprinted eight years later at another university press, it was without any corrections (Beelaert 2016). On his *Mirror of Dew: The Poetry of Ālam-Tāj Zhāle Qāʾem Maqāmi*: Yousef 2015a and 2015b.

object, calling him "a true referential pillar in the field",[42] and his works "infinitely erudite and interdisciplinary" (leaving one to guess what is meant by "infinitely interdisciplinary").[43] This expected a quid pro quo, and indeed, Seyed-Gohrab deems Korangy's book "an enjoyable read", the "comprehensive study" on the *ġazal* the field was lacking, and "a must for anyone interested in this brilliant poet".[44] Similarly, Korangy had only praise for Rebecca Gould's still unpublished Columbia PhD thesis from 2013, *The Political Aesthetic of the Medieval Persian Prison Poem, 1100–1200*, the deplorable value of which can be judged by two of her articles on the same subject,[45] writing that the "work is groundbreaking on some fundamental and some more judiciously exacting

42 Korangy 2014a: 594. The whole rambling sentence, from a review of *Metaphor and Imagery in Persian Poetry* which Seyed-Gohrab edited, is "he is (not so) slowly but surely becoming a true referential pillar in the field and his work ethic as regards his judiciousness in this edited volume mirrors the many works of scholarship he has put out in the past decade".

43 Korangy 2014b: 590. The sentence, from a review of a volume edited by L. Lewisohn, *Hafiz and the Religion of Love*, to which Seyed-Gohrab contributed an article, runs: "whose works are not only infinitely erudite and interdisciplinary but also accessible to all due to his golden (and as we say heavy) pen '*qalam-i sangīn*'".

44 Seyed-Gohrab 2015: 520 and 521. As another example of mutual adulation, Korangy used the occasion of reviewing the volume edited by J.T.P. de Bruijn, *General Introduction to Persian Literature*, which contains a fine chapter on Riddles by Gernot Windfuhr, to recommend Seyed-Gohrab's *Courtly Riddles* (see above, n. 41), supposedly a "thorough work on the subject" which "would also be a great read on this subject, as it is a longer and more detailed exploration as it is a monograph" (Korangy 2016: 196).

45 Gould 2014 and Gould 2016a. These articles show, first, a baffling lack of knowledge of the proper use of sources: for instance, in the latter one Gould uses the nineteenth-century Bākīkhānuf, himself paraphrasing the notoriously unreliable fifteenth-century Daulatšāh, as her source for the life of this twelfth-century poet (*op. cit.*: 20). Secondly, they contain the most blatant errors in translations. So – even with Minorsky's translation to help her – in the former she translates the famous first verse of Khāqānī's "Christian *qaṣīda*", "*falak kaž-rautar ast az khaṭṭ-i tarsā/ ma-rā dārad musalsal rāhib-āsā*" (Khāqānī 1357/1978[2]: 23, v. –2) as "The sky, holding me like a monk in chains / is more broken than the Christian script" (*op. cit.*: 509), misunderstanding "*kaž-rau*", "moving crookedly", "moving in the wrong direction" – as are, compared to the Arabic script, the Christian scripts Khāqānī was acquainted with – as "broken". In fact, she totally misunderstands this Christian *qaṣīda*. It is absurd to read it, as she does, as an "unprecedented critique of normative Islamic law", in particular its "*shorut* regulations" (*ibid.*: 28), even if there were a number of *šurūṭ* regulating the behaviour of the *ahl al-ḏimma*, and Khāqānī, as we already knew, refers to them. Not surprisingly, Gould wrote a very positive review of Seyed-Gohrab's *Mirror of Dew* (see above, n. 41) (Gould 2016b). She is aware of Saeed Yousef's review, and writes "although it includes a detailed discussion of certain aspects of Persian prosody, this review ignores the key issue for a book of poetry in translation: the quality of the English translations" (*op. cit.*: 189), as if the "quality" of totally *wrong* translations, because the translator cannot scan, could be of any use.

levels" (what kind of levels are these meant to be?), and that "this dissertation, as well as the book that is sure to emerge from it, must hold a central place within its scholarship".[46] No wonder that Gould, for her part, finds Korangy's book "arguably the most important study of Khāqānī in the English language", and praises him for "the unprecedented depth and range of his sources", his "acute literary sensibility" and "his marvelous translations".[47]

The focus of the next book, Prashant Keshavmurthy's *Persian Authorship and Canonicity in Late Mughal Delhi. Building an Ark* is a much later author, the Indo-Persian Sufi poet Bīdil, who was born in 1054/1644 in what is present-day Patna (in the state of Bihar, India), but who lived most of his life in Delhi, where he died in 1133/1721. To be fair, one cannot put this book in the same category as Korangy's; even so, they have much in common. Neither Korangy nor Keshavmurthy discuss the easiest of the Persian poets, as Khāqānī and Bīdil are well-known for being highly sophisticated and should be tackled after a mastery of poets such as Firdausī, Farrukhī, ʿAṭṭār or Saʿdī has been acquired, that is, after a solid grounding in all the basics. Both Korangy and Keshavmurthy, however, started on a PhD thesis without this prerequisite.[48] Nor did their supervisors play the part expected of them.[49] Keshavmurthy was allowed to vent his theories using a ponderous vocabulary, unhindered by understanding of the texts, and ignoring essential earlier studies done in the field. He seems to be unaware of, or at least ignores, nearly all of the literature on Bīdil and Indo-Persian literature. It is as if Annemarie Schimmel, who did so much to open up India's Islamic culture, did not exist,[50] neither do these eminent Italian Bīdil scholars Alessandro Bausani, Gianroberto Scarcia and Riccardo Zipoli,[51] whose detailed studies are still among the best that has been written on this poet.[52] Is the reason for this that

46 Korangy 2015.

47 Gould 2015: 304.

48 Keshavmurthy's book is not his PhD thesis, his 2009 Columbia thesis (Keshavmurthy 2009), written under the guidance of Frances Pritchett, partly discusses similar issues. It has the same grave shortcomings.

49 One wonders about Keshavmurthy's training anyway; for instance, in his bibliographies (one for each chapter) he not once names the *editor* of the Persian texts, which is the essential information, but only gives the publisher's name. As, particularly in Iran, books are reprinted by different publishing houses, this latter information is hardly of any use.

50 For instance, she devotes to him some insightful pages in Schimmel 1973: 42–44, and presents beautiful examples from his poetry in Schimmel 1992.

51 Except, once, in a short note (p. 57, n. 112), and therefore in the bibliography of this chapter (p. 60) he refers to Zipoli 1363/1984, misspelling his name as "Ri**c**ardo Zi**pp**oli".

52 Bausani published four groundbreaking articles: Bausani 1957, Bausani 1965, Bausani 1967 and Bausani 1972, as well as a substantial section in Bausani 1958b: 76–86 (in the reprint Bausani 1968: 63–71). Scarcia 1983 is a translation of a section from Bīdil's *Čahār ʿUnṣur*. Finally, Zipoli

Keshavmurthy could read no Italian? But he could at least have known of them and asked a colleague to help him out. In any case all the studies written in Persian by the Afghan Bīdil scholar Asadullāh Ḥabīb should have been accessible to him[53] as well as Muḥammad-Riḍā Šafiʿī-Kadkanī's very helpful anthology, *Šāʿir-i āyīnahā, bar rasi-yi sabk-i hindī wa šiʿr-i Bīdil*,[54] with its rich introductory chapters and list of some of Bīdil's important motives and images. This indispensable tool is not referred to anywhere. Scarcely any previous literature on the so-called "Indian Style" is taken into account either. This too starts with an article by Bausani from 1958,[55] and includes, for instance, Wilhelm Heinz's important study published fifteen years later, *Der indische Stil in der persischen Literatur*,[56] which contains a detailed analysis of one of Bīdil's *ġazal*s and is still of great value to everyone who seeks to understand this poet.[57]

Keshavmurthy's book is a collection of five studies more or less independent of each other. The first three specifically address Bīdil, the last one discusses Bīdil and Ḥāfiẓ as they feature in the *taḏkira Safīna-yi Khwušgū*, written between 1137/1724 and 1147/1735 by Bindrāban Dās Khwušgū (d. 1170/1757), while the fourth study focusses on an author contemporary with Khwušgū and his long-time friend, Sirāǧ al-Dīn Ārzū (d. 1169/1756).

Obviously, it is not Keshavmurthy's business to discuss any of these authors in their *literary* capacity; his focus is on issues such as "authorship", the "relations between poetics and politics", and also, in Bīdil's case, mysticism. This means that the texts he discusses are approached not as literary creations but as material to buttress his arguments, although it is first of all because Bīdil

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contributed a substantial number of studies on the poet. First, a series of articles: Zipoli 1989, Zipoli 2005, Zipoli 2008 – which is a pendant to the article Meneghini 2008 – and Zipoli 2016. Secondly, a monograph, Zipoli/Scarcia 1997, which gives us, besides an extensively annotated translation of fifty *ġazal*s, a number of articles by himself and others – i.a. a reprint of Bausani's 1957 article (but without the texts in Persian) – and an extremely useful list, put together by himself and Asadollâh Ḥabib, of "*concetti chiave*" ("key conceits"). Moreover, in the context of his project *Lirica persica* (for which see my review, Beelaert 2005), he also published a volume on Bīdil: Zipoli 1994. Zipoli and his colleague Stefano Pellò at Venice University are still continuing their work on the poet, recently the first has published a complete translation of the *maṯnawī Ṭūr-i maʿrifat*, Zipoli 2018. For the studies by Pellò, from 2014 on, see the bibliography there.

53 E. g. Ḥabīb 1363/1984 and Ḥabīb 1367/1988, afterwards reprinted in Iran. As mentioned in the previous note, Ḥabīb also collaborated with Zipoli.

54 Šafiʿī-Kadkanī 1389/ 2010[9], it is already a "classic", the 1st edition dating from 1366/1987.

55 Bausani 1958a.

56 Heinz 1973.

57 It is the *ġazal* with the *maṭlaʿ* "*ba auǧ-i kibrīyā k'az pahlū-yi ʿiǧz ast rāh ānǧā*", beginning the section of this verse-form in most editions of the *Dīwān*. See Bīdil 1376/1997, vol. 1: 319); Heinz's commentary is on pp. 54–64.

was a poet that he continues to interest us. Keshavmurthy, however, is not one to approach poetic texts with the necessary subtleness. As an example I take here only his second chapter, entitled "Bīdil's *tarjīʿ-band*: the author's kenotic chorus" (61–89), which discusses one of Bīdil's strophic poems, the *tarǧīʿ-band* with the refrain "*ki ǧahān nīst ǧuz tağallī-yi dūst/īn man u mā hamin ān iḍāfat-i ūst* (in Keshavmurthy's translation "The world is nothing but a self-disclosure of the Friend/This talk of 'I' and 'us' is a self-same addition to Him"). Keshavmurthy writes that, according to Khwušgū's entry on the thirteenth-century mystic Fakhr al-Dīn ʿIrāqī (d. 688/1289) in the above-mentioned *Safīna-yi Khwušgū*,[58] the poem is an emulation of a *tarǧīʿ-band* by the latter (70); he fails to add, however, that this poem is not included in either of the two editions of ʿIrāqī's *Dīwān*,[59] so one cannot be sure that Khwušgū's information is correct.[60]

This *tarǧīʿ-band* might well be a good way to introduce Bīdil's thought because, as Keshavmurthy argues, it is shorter than his *maṯnawī*s, and it "abbreviates the cosmogony and correlated genesis of the human soul that his longest *masnawī*, *ʿIrfān* [...], details in all its stages" (61). Also the poem has received little attention before, so that a close reading of it with a commentary would be a welcome addition.[61] However, Keshavmurthy is not up to the task. Whereas he is

58 Although Keshavmurthy quotes part of Khwušgū's text, he does not give any reference, nor is Khwušgū included in this chapter's bibliography (86–87). As one can infer from C. A. Storey's entry on the *Safīna-yi Khwušgū* (Storey 1972 [1953]: 827–828), the entry on ʿIrāqī must be part of the first *daftar* on the "ancient" poets, which, as yet, has not been published. Keshavmurthy must have used MS Sprenger 330 in the Staatsbibliothek in Berlin, which he mentions in the bibliographies of his chapters 4 and 5 (on pp. 149 and 174 respectively). (The website of the library mentions that this MS's condition does not allow it to be consulted now; this may be the reason why it has not yet been made digitally available, unlike the second *daftar*). Although Keshavmurthy does not say so, Khwušgū refers to the relation of both *tarǧīʿ-band*s again in his entry on Bīdil in the third *daftar*, which deals with contemporary poets (Khwušgū 1378 h/1959: 120).

59 ʿIrāqī n.d. [1335/1956] and the critical edition ʿIrāqī 1372/1993.

60 I have not been able to find it in any other *dīwān*. On the website of Free Afghanistan, however, Khalīl-Allāh Maʿrūfī, commenting on ʿĀrif ʿAzīz's edition (see next note) suggests that Niʿmat-Allāh Walī (d. 827/1423–24 or 834/1430–31), who is the acknowledged author of a similar *tarǧīʿ-band*, may have composed it, although he has to concede that it is not to be found in his *dīwān* either (Maʿrūfī 2008). Incidentally, Keshavmurthy mentions Walī's *tarǧīʿ-band* as well (71), as one of two with a related refrain by poets before Bīdil, the other being by Nāṣir Bukhārāʾī. For the *tarǧī-band*s of these two poets he refers to Darakhšān 1352/1973, who gives the complete text of the *tarǧī-band* of Nāṣir.

61 Keshavmurthy does not refer to a separate annotated edition of the poem (together with one of Bīdil's *tarkīb-band*s), which has added vocalisation and *eḍāfa*s where needed for better comprehension and a number of useful introductory chapters, from which he would certainly have profited: Bīdil 2008.

well-read in secondary literature on Sufism, in particular the tradition of the Andalusian Sufi Ibn al-ʿArabī (560/1165 – 636/1240) to which Bīdil belongs, and renders the views of Chittick, Sells or Netton as far as they can be applied to this poem quite well, he flounders whenever he turns to the poem itself, because, like Korangy, he unfortunately seems to be totally unaware of the *ʿilm-i ʿarūḍ*. The *tarǧīʿ-band* is written in the, one might say, 'hallowed' variant of the metre *khafīf* used by Sanāʾī for his ethical/didactical *Ḥadīqat al-ḥaqīqa*, the *maṯnawī* he finished shortly before 525/1131. That poem had an enormous impact and its metre was used after him by many poets in their ethical and mystical poems, as indeed Bīdil himself did in his *ʿIrfān*. But obviously Keshavmurthy has not realized this, as he did not scan a single verse either of this poem or of any of those he adduces as extra examples, be they from Bīdil's *Dīwān* or from the poetical works of those who inspired him. As a result, already in one of the poem's very first verses, he translates "intoxication" (66), showing that he read *khumār*, whereas the metre makes clear that one has to read *khammār*, "vintner". Again and again he sees *eḍāfa*s where there can be none,[62] and misses them where they should be;[63] the outcome is distressing. If at first one had hoped to be guided in reading this poem by a much-needed complete translation, one is glad in the end to be spared the ordeal.

Still, Persian studies are in need of translations and in particular of scholarly ones which address all the problems which the texts raise. Most existing translations are intended for the general reader and try to offer an enjoyable text, and the notes they include are intended to explain the necessary backgound, and not to discuss any philological or interpretational problems.[64] Of course, there is nothing wrong with translations of this kind. Many of them are excellent and open the rich world of Persian literature to a public which otherwise would not even be aware of its existence.[65]

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62 E. g. *sarāsar-i ǧahān*, instead of *sarāsar ǧahān* (a verse by Niʿmat-Allāh Walī, p. 71); *šarar-i tamhīd sāzad*, instead of *šarar tamhīd sāzad* (one of Bīdil's verses, p. 76).

63 E. g. *mayūs-ṭalab* instead of *mayūs-i ṭalab* (again Bīdil, p. 81), and – as appears from the mistranslation "Oneness [*vaḥdat*] expended itself in an upwelling of multiplicity" (p. 75) – *waḥdat ṣarf ǧūs-i kaṯrat zad* instead of *waḥdat-i ṣirf ǧūs-i kaṯrat zad*, to be translated as "Pure Oneness fermented into multiplicity" (from the *tarǧīʿ-band*, strophe 2, v. 15).

64 There are some happy exceptions; an example is the translation by Charles-Henri de Fouchécour of Ḥāfiẓ's *Dīwān* (Ḥāfiẓ 2006) which offers detailed notes on nearly every single verse and a careful discussion of Ḥāfiẓ's vocabulary, often adducing arguments for the translator's choices (on this translation, see my review Beelaert 2009).

65 A case in point is Bausani's translation of Niẓāmī's *Haft paykar* (Niẓāmī 1967), which, although in prose, made such a strong impression on the Italian writer Italo Calvino that he devoted to it one of a series of essays he wrote on selected works of literature and published in a number of different newspapers. They were afterwards collected in the volume *Perché leggere i*

The next publication to be discussed concerns the mystical poet Qāsim-i Anwār, born in Tabriz in Iran in 757/1356, who lived for most of his life in Herat in present-day Afghanistan. He was expelled from that city in 830/1426–27 and in 835/1434 or 837/1436 he died in Khargird-i Ğām, now close to the Afghan border in Iran. When an edition and translation of his *ġazal*s was published by the scholarly publisher Harrassowitz, I expected and hoped to find just the kind of approach the field of Persian studies sees too seldom. Unfortunately it was not to be, but maybe one should no longer expect a scholarly level from a publisher that dared to give a platform to Korangy. I hasten to add that the editor and translator of these poems, Khosro and Sarah Kiyanrad, are definitely of another calibre than Korangy. Yet what we have here is a rather strange publication, and one wonders how it came about. Obviously, as the subtitle makes clear, the starting point was the existence of a manuscript in the possession of the "Mamier-Kulturstiftung", which also supported the publication financially (4). This cultural foundation is unlikely to be known to scholars in the field; it was certainly new to me. The book itself gives no further details. Page 5, following the title page, shows a photograph of a woman, Gisela Mamier, according to the caption the "*Gründerin der Mamier-Kulturstiftung*". But this does not help us much further. On the internet the website of this 'Kulturstiftung' was easy to find. It turns out to have been founded in 2007 by Gisela and her husband Fritz Mamier in the little community of Wallmerod (Rhineland-Palatinate, Germany).[66] In the same year they started a small museum[67] where the manuscript is kept. As Khosro Kiyanrad writes in his epilogue, the manuscript was bought by collectors in the bazaar of Kabul (477) during a famine in 1972 when many families were forced to sell valuable possessions.[68] Presumably the Mamiers then looked for somebody who could study the manuscript for them, and hit on the Kiyanrads.[69]

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classici (published posthumously, Calvino 1991). This essay first came out in the newspaper *La Repubblica* in 1982. Incidentally, this poem was fortunate in attracting two other gifted translators, Julie Meisami (in verse, Niẓāmī 1995) and J. C. Bürgel (in prose, Niẓāmī 1997).

66 The two met when working for the German Development Service (*Deutscher Entwicklungsdienst*, "DED"), and were active as development workers from 1967 on in i.a. Afghanistan, a country where they lived for many years. As they were also interested in art, they began a collection. Unfortunately, the link to the *Kulturstiftung* on which I found this information in 2018 now, in May 2019, has become unactive.

67 As stated on the site of the "Verbandsgemeinde Wallmerod", it is on the top floor of a beautiful property which was once the local jail.

68 Kiyanrad does not explicitly say that the collectors ("*Sammler*") were the Mamiers themselves, but neither does he refer to any transaction afterwards.

69 The publication itself says nothing about either of them, but on the Internet one can find that both are poets and translators, respectively from Shiraz and Frankfurt. A joint publication

Khosro Kiyanrad describes the manuscript,[70] as well as its restoration,[71] because at the time it was not in good condition (477–479). As one can judge for oneself since photographs of seventeen of its pages are included (481–496), it is a beautiful manuscript well worth restoring. It is written in an elegant *nastaʿlīq*, and every page is decorated, each time differently, with two or four small delicate vignettes of birds,[72] two by two of the same species.[73] The manuscript is far from complete, as the 217 poems are arranged alphabetically and stop at the letter *dāl*; this means that we have more or less half the *Dīwān*.[74] On the verso of every folio there is a *ġazal* by Qāsim-i Anwār's older contemporary Ḥāfiẓ (d. 792/1390?).[75] Unfortunately, Kiyanrad does not say which *ġazal*s, let alone which poems of the two poets were put next to each other.[76] Since the manuscript lacks a colophon, there is no date, but plausibly it is not later than the tenth/sixteenth-century.[77]

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is Kiyanrad 2013. Whereas Sarah Kiyanrad has a doctorate, teaches Persian courses at the university of Heidelberg, and has collaborated on scholarly works (e. g. Kiyanrad et al., (eds.) 2018), I could not ascertain any academic achievements of Khosro Kiyanrad.

70 Kiyanrad's use of terminology, however, is not very accurate, and he uses the terms "*Seite*" ("page") and folio as if they were synonyms ("jede der 217 hellbraun-rötlichen Seiten beeinhaltet ein Gedicht auf Vorder- und Rückseite" and "die beschriebene Aufklebung der Originalfolios"; 478).

71 This restauration was done at the palace of Karlsruhe (477).

72 Incorrectly, Kiyanrad writes about "die Abbildung zweier Vögel, die unten auf jeder Seite, rechts und links vom letzten Vers eines Gedichts abgebildet sind". As can be seen on the reproductions, on several pages there are actually four birds (490, 493, 495, 496), and these extra vignettes can flank e. g. a poem's first (495) or second (493) verse.

73 In two cases, he adds, there is a hare or a goat instead of a bird (479).

74 When we compare it with the only edition of Qāsim's Dīwān, by Saʿīd Nafīsī (Qāsim-i Anwār 1337/1958), the *ġazal*s up to and including this letter are found on pp. 1–168 of its 326 pp. Of course, if the Mamier MS was also a *Kullīyāt*, even more is missing (up to the index Nafīsī's edition has 408 pp.).

75 At least, "*normalerweise*" (478), so there may be some exceptions. Kiyanrad mentions two other manuscripts in which Qāsim's poems likewise alternate with those of Ḥāfiẓ. Both are in Tehran, in the Mağlis library and the Sepahsālār library respectively (476–477).

76 Only one of the reproductions, on p. 496, shows two facing poems. However, the one by "Ḥāfiẓ", beginning "*luṭf bāšad gar napūšī az gadāhā rū-t rā/tā ba-kām-i dil bibīnad dīda-yi mā rū-t rā*" is obviously not in Ḥāfiz's style, and indeed is included neither in the critical edition by Khānlarī (Ḥāfiẓ 1362/1983^2) nor in the older reference edition by Qazwīnī & Ġānī (Ḥāfiẓ s.d. [1320/1941]). Aḥmed Sūdī (d. 1006/1598?) includes it in his well-known commentary (Sūdī 1347/1968^2: 111–114), but does not consider it genuine either, and suggests that it was composed by one "Ḥāfiẓ Ṭarāqčī", a poet from Tabriz about whom I have no further information.

77 Kiyanrad makes the superfluous and banal comment that the fifteenth century must be a "*terminus post quem*" because of the use of *nastaʿlīq* (479). How could a manuscript of a fifteenth-century poet be written before that time?

The manuscript may be beautiful, but does this warrant a separate edition of its content? I am afraid it does not. Qāsim-i Anwār's *Dīwān* (as well as his other works) has come down to us in a fairly large number of manuscripts, many of them from the ninth/fifteenth and tenth/sixteenth century. Several are dated, and some of these are from only a couple of years after Qāsim's death.[78] A decision to edit a text following a single manuscript, that is, to make a so-called "diplomatic edition", is only justified if only a single manuscript of a certain text is extant, or if a certain manuscript has a special position in the tradition of a text. Neither is the case here. Kiyanrad gives us the text exactly as he found it in the manuscript of the Mamier Stiftung. He has used a single "*Vergleichshandschrift*", in the Majlis Library in Tehran,[79] but when in this manuscript he finds a different and even obviously better reading, in many cases the one Sarah Kiyanrad translates, he mentions it only in a footnote.[80] Such a veneration of the *Wortlaut* of the manuscript of the Mamier Stiftung, a veneration even to the extent of keeping readings that are

78 One manuscript, Tehran, Mağlis 18,461, may even partly be an autograph (see Dirāyatī 1389/2010: 323). The list Kiyanrad gives on pp. 475–477 is very careless. That it is incomplete, as he admits, does not matter much, as there are so many manuscripts it could hardly been otherwise. What is more serious is that the criteria on the basis of which he made the choice are not set out, and even more serious is that the references are incomplete (e. g. he never gives any reference to an 'accession number' or to a catalogue, but only mentions the "*šumāra-yi madrak*" ('document number', see also next note) or even incorrect. For instance, he mentions two manuscripts in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, the numbers Suppl. Persan 717 and 707 (475), without any further details. When one consults Blochet's catalogue (Blochet 1873), one sees that whereas Suppl. Persan 717 (Blochet 1873: no. 1648) is a manuscript of Qāsim's *Kullīyāt*, albeit one of the seventeenth century, Suppl. Persan 707 (Blochet 1873: no. 1531) is not a manuscript of Qāsim's work at all, but contains a *maṭnawī* by Amīr Khusrau, *Duwal Rānī Khiḍr Khān*. One sees as well that this same library has more manuscripts of Qāsim's works, most of them older than Suppl. Persan 717. Six of them contain only his work (Blochet 1873: nos. 1645–1650; the first of these, Suppl. Persan 1777, is dated 852/1448) but the oldest one includes it as one of the many *Dīwāns* written in the margins of a magnificent manuscript of the *Dīwān* of the sixth/twelfth century poet Ẓahīr al-Dīn Fāryābī, copied in 847–48/1443–45 (Suppl. Pers. 795, Blochet 1873: no. 1969).

79 A *Kullīyāt*, no. 2612, Kiyanrad says only that it is from the fifteenth century (477–478); however, it bears an exact date, 3 *ǧumāda II* 854/ July 14 1450. As in most of his references to manuscripts in Iranian libraries, Kiyanrad gives only the more recent so-called "*šumāra-yi madrak*" ('document number'), in this case 10–33589, not the original 'accession number' ("*šumāra-yi rāhnumā*" or "*šumāra-yi bāzyābī*"), which is the only one marked on a manuscript itself and the one by which it is usually referred to, as, for example, in the union catalogues by Dirāyatī (see previous note) and Munzawī (Munzawī 1348/1969–1353/1974).

80 Such a critical apparatus, minimal as it is, makes it, more correctly, a 'semi-diplomatic' edition.

obviously wrong, is totally unjustified. The mistakes in the Mamier manuscript are many, and Kiyanrad keeps them all. They range from a verse inserted in the wrong *ġazal*, immediately visible because it has a different *radīf* from the rest of the poem,[81] to a *ġazal* lacking its *maṭlaʿ* with its rhyming half verses,[82] or to readings which are just wrong because they are metrically impossible.[83] But then, we do not even always get the expected *Wortlaut*; if the edition is compared with the handful of reproductions of the manuscript a different reading can appear.[84]

Qāsim-i Anwār is not a very difficult poet, and his poems offer fewer pitfalls to translators than those of Khāqānī or Bīdil. Sarah Kiyanrad writes that she chose to keep close to the text ("*Textnähe*") and not give a free poetical rendering, a choice one can agree with, and by and large these translations are satisfactory, if nothing more.[85] They are not provided with any commentary; background information concerning, for instance, historical or mythical figures, mystical concepts, quotations from the Koran are given in the *Nachwort* (456–472).

This brings us to the question of the readership for which the publication is intended. It seems to fall between two stools: it does not meet the requirements

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81 E. g. in *Ġazal* 131, with rhyme + *radīf* "*-ar-guḏašt*", verse 2 has a rhyme + *radīf* "*-hā zi ḥad guḏašt*", which is the same as that of the following *ġazal*, 132, where it obviously belongs. Since, as Kiyanrad remarks in a note (p. 141), in the manuscript in the Majlis library (and, one should add, in the Nafīsī edition as well), it is inserted in that *ġazal*, why keep it in the wrong place, both in the edition and in the translation (361)?

82 *Ġazal* 90, both in the edition and in the translation. Kiyanrad duly mentions in a note that the manuscript in the Majlis library (and, one should add, the edition Nafīsī as well) begins with this verse.

83 Examples galore. Among the many metrically necessary are: *ġazal* 2 (metre *hazağ-i muṭamman-i akhrab-i makfūf-i maḥḏūf*), vv. 1a and 7b: *tu* after *ğabīn* and after *rūy*; *ġazal* 10 (metre *hazağ-i muṭamman-i sālim*), v. 13b: *našnīda-ī*, instead of *našnīda*; *ġazal* 16 (metre *muḍāri-i muṭamman-i akhrab-i makfūf-i maḥḏūf*), v. 8b: *durdī-kišān*, instead of *durd-kišān*.

84 E. g. *ġazal* 6, v. 2a reads here "*pīš-i dar-aš uftāda-am bar khāk-i rah čūn bīdakān*", Sarah Kiyanrad translates this (also incompletely) as "Vor Seiner Tür warf ich mich nieder, einer Trauerweide gleich" ("I threw myself in front of his door, like a weeping willow") which shows that she understood "*bīdakān*" as a synonym of "*bīd*", willow (in any case, not of the "weeping" variety, to which Persian poets do not refer). But "*bīdakān*" does not exist. In the reproduction on p. 489 one can see that the MS has the ductus of this word but without any dots, except on the last letter, *nūn*. This is a very common feature in this manuscript as in many manuscripts in *nastaʿlīq*, although Kiyanrad does not comment on it. Also in this MS the *gāf* is written as *kāf* – the only feature of the script Kiyanrad mentions (479). Reading a *nūn* instead of a *yā*, and a *gāf* instead of *kāf* is the solution, and indeed, Nafīsī's edition (15) reads "*bandagān*", which makes perfect sense: "I threw myself in front of his door, in the dust of the road, as slaves do".

85 In any case, as nn. 81, 82 and 84 above show, where the edition errs, the translation often does so as well. Even quite simple words can go wrong, such as *ḥusn*, [the beloved's] "beauty", translated as his "goodness, kindness", "*Güte*", in the first verse of the above-mentioned *ġazal* 132, with rhyme + *radīf* "*-hā zi ḥad guḏašt*".

of a scholarly readership, but for the general reader (or the student) the fact that the translations of the *ġazal*s are not accompanied by a commentary is a serious drawback. It is a missed opportunity too that in a field in which there are very few bilingual editions text and translations are not on facing pages.

By contrast, Homa Katouzian's *Saʿdi in Love. The Lyrical Verses of Persia's Master Poet* offers a translation with just such a parallel text of seventy of the nearly seven hundred *ġazal*s by Saʿdī, one of Iran's most famous poets (between 610/1213 and 615/1219 – 691/1291). They are preceded by a short introduction (1–27), and are clearly intended for a general readership. But, alas, this readership is not well-served. Unlike Sarah Kiyanrad, Katouzian does not strive for *Textnähe* but tries to be poetic, with unfortunate results. This "poetic" ambition, for instance, expresses itself in rhyming now and then (though not trying to give the verses any rhythm) or by throwing in the odd "thy" instead of "your".[86] Katouzian obviously has no sensitiveness of ear or feeling for the *mot juste*. It is decidedly odd to see the word *sukhan* translated as "libretto",[87] and even more preposterous that the mythical *ʿanqā* appears as a "condor", a real bird whose habitat is in a continent of which Saʿdī could not even be aware. Moreover, in the latter case, the fact that the bird in question is mythical and thus not to be found in this world is essential, as the poet speaks of the "*ʿanqā-yi ṣabr*", a metaphor for his lack of patience to endure his love.[88] Every translator should have a feeling for register and, for instance, not use an arcane word when the original does not; so when Saʿdī writes that "friends are sitting joyfully together" ("*yārān ba ʿaiš binšastand*"), the translation "friends in joyful truck" strikes the wrong note.[89] This is not the way someone who does not have access to the original Persian will learn to love Saʿdī. It will hardly come as a surprise that the volume is provided with a blurb by Seyed-Gohrab,[90] who considers it to be a "fascinating bilingual collection of love songs", with "beautiful and musical" translations, and, moreover, a "learned introduction" (ii). However, the introduction is nothing of the sort. We can do without a comment such as "no

86 And erratically, e. g. in one *ġazal*, on p. 31, v. 2 has "your face", whereas v. 4 "thy face".

87 *Ġazal* on p. 47, v. 4b.

88 *Ġazal* on p. 101, v. 5b; the translation of this verse is muddled, and wrong in more than one respect, the*ʿanqā-yi ṣabr* becoming "the condor of your love" and the *šāhīn-i ʿišq-i tu* rendered by the "hawk of my patience" (that a *šāhīn* is the Barbary falcon and not a hawk is the lesser mistake, at least they are two birds of prey).

89 *Ġazal* on p. 97, v.1b. Another example of an old-fashioned "poetic" word where a normal one would do, as the Persian wording is not quaint at all, is, e. g. "raiment" for Persian *pīrahan* (47, v. 2).

90 Here "Seyed-**Gh**orāb", his name in Persian, but not the one he uses in his English publications.

classical Persian poet was a greater and more passionate lover than Saʿdī. One might claim that he was the greatest lover" (4). As every literary scholar knows, the persona of the poet is not the man itself, a man about whom anyway we know very little; in any case, there is no reason to consider Saʿdī's love poetry as more passionate than, say, that of Ḥāfiẓ or Rumī. And when Katouzian mentions a concrete fact it is more often than not wrong.[91]

Saʿdī is not well served either in Fatemeh Keshavarz's *Lyrics of Life. Saʿdī on Love, Cosmopolitanism and Care of the Self*. Although published by a university press, the book is obviously not intended for academics in the field, who know Saʿdī already and can read him in the original.[92] Rather, it is a passionate attempt to reveal the author's dearly loved poet to an English-speaking audience. As she writes, it "celebrates the lyrics of Saʿdi of Shiraz" (vi). It is intended as a highly personal book and her "method" will be a highly personal one. "Meandering", she writes more than once, "will be a deliberate choice" (6), "meandering through the opportunity that his poetry provides" (27).[93] There is to be no "accumulation of facts" (27) or any "overblown technical analysis" (28). For this personal journey, she goes back to her childhood and evokes how Saʿdī's "lyrical precision and quiet confidence" "penetrated" her mother's usual "shield of reticence and reserve" (3),[94] giving her a way to express her emotions more easily. This "celebration", again, does not shun grandiloquence. Saʿdī is one of the "mega figures" (5) or "mega poets" (34); he and Rūmī "were expanding galaxies of imagination

91 E. g. the comment that "shortly after [Saʿdī's] death Chinese singers could sing one of his lyrics without knowing what it meant" (1), is not correct. What Ibn Baṭṭūta actually writes is that, around the year 747/1346–47, when entertained by the Chinese amir Qurṭay, singers "sang in Chinese, Arabic and Persian". He adds that the amir let them repeat the Persian poem – since then identified by scholars as belonging to one of Saʿdī's *ġazal*s – several times, so Ibn Baṭṭuta could memorise and quote it. Nothing is said about the singers' ethnicity, or their understanding of what they sang (it is only obvious that Ibn Baṭṭuta himself knew no Persian); there might well have been Arabs and Persians among them.

92 This appears also from the transliteration system the author uses. As she writes, she has "devised" one which is "somewhat inventive and based heavily on pronunciation" (vi). In practice this results not only in doing away with any dots under or above some letters – which is perfectly acceptable – but also in writing a long /ā/ as "aa". Although this usage is not unprecedented – it is often used in e-mails, for instance – it is rather rare in published texts, even for a non-specialist public. It is cumbersome in the numerous Persian publications referred to in the bibliography – who but those reading Persian would be interested in them? – and awkward when used in toponyms which have modern spellings (e. g. "Toqaat" instead of "Tokat", p. 59, or "Moltaan" instead of "Multan", pp. 56, 58 and 76).

93 Also other instances on p. 31 and on pp. 34–35.

94 This is reflected in the Index, s.v. "Saʿdi of Shiraz", in a lemma "mother" on p. 3, between the lemmas "morality" and "panegyrics".

and vitality" (34), and "borrow[ing] the language of modern physics", she describes his "discursive universe" as a "colorful and kaleidoscopic multiverse" (31–32). More generally, here mixing a metaphor offered by modern physics with one taken from history, she sees "Persian poetic discourse" as "a kind of conceptual Silk Road" one which "contributed to multi-world intersubjectivities" (43). However, in particular when discussing and analysing poetry, scholars should be careful with the language they use. Saʿdī's own *ġazal*s, as Keshavarz rightly notes, "have attracted the readers through their simple elegance and natural flow" (13). He deserves a scholar who does not try to attract readers by a language which is quite the opposite.

A large part of Keshavarz's book consists of translations; by the preceding, not surprisingly, there seems to be reason enough to be more than a little apprehensive. Admittedly, we have seen worse in the books reviewed above, there may be no real howlers, but, even so, there are rather too many flights of fancy: why would one try to improve on the poet? Any translator should resist this temptation. If the poet inspires her to create, let the translator write poems herself,[95] but not pass on her own words as if they were the poet's. Keshavarz's approach can be illustrated by her translation and discussion of Saʿdī's celebrated *tarǧīʿ-band*, a long love poem beginning "*ay sarw-i buland-qāmat-i dūst/ wah wah ki šamāʾil-at či nīkū-st*", "O tall cypress of my beloved's figure/O how lovely is your face!", to which she devotes a whole chapter.[96] Its refrain is "*Binšīnam u ṣabr pīš gīram/dumbāla-yi kār-i khwīš gīram*", "Let me sit down and be patient/I'll go on with my own work". The title of this chapter, "My Poor Heart Sometimes Runs, Sometimes Whirls: Meet Saʿdi the Comedian" (166), already shows how far from the original her translations can be: this proves to be her translation of part of the first strophe's seventh verse, as she has it in full further on, "Caught like a ball in the polo stick of her curls/My poor heart sometimes runs, sometimes whirls" (171). In Saʿdī's verse, however, there is no "running" and "whirling", it simply reads "*dar ḥalqa-yi ṣaulağān-i zulf-aš/bīčāra dil ūftāda čūn gū-st*", "In the polo stick of her curls/My poor heart is caught like a ball". The rest of Keshavarz's rendering is a product of her visualizing the scene; this visualizing, however, Saʿdī, leaves to the reader, he does not spell it

95 Actually, Keshavarz did publish poems of her own making too.

96 Saʿdī n.d.: 528–543. In this edition it has twenty-two strophes; Furūġī notes that in old MSS it has only twenty strophes, the twenty-first one lacking in the most reliable of these, and according to him not genuine. Nevertheless, he maintained it as it was included in so many editons and MSS. In her translation Keshavarz leaves out the last three strophes, without any comment. Her translation of the second half verse,"Wow! How lovely are you, and how fair!" is all too free (169).

out. At least the visualizing in this verse is not entirely wrong, since it is likely that the ball will "run" and "whirl". Some pages down, however, Kesharvarz's visualising produces what was certainly neither in Saʿdī's mind nor in that of his readers at the time. In the poem's sixth strophe Saʿdī is complaining; in v. 8 he says "*Ay kāš ma-rā naẓar nabūdī/ čūn ḥaẓẓ-i naẓar barābar-am nīst*", "O, I wish I had no sight/when I don't have the luck of having you before me!". Keshavarz, however, translates this as "Sometimes I wish I was as blind as a bat/When my beauty is not mine to gaze at" (182). One might think that the "bat" is there only for rhyme's sake, to rhyme with "at", but no, it is part of Keshavarz's argument. She ends her discussion of this strophe with the comment "We have sunk into the night with the bats, and the stanza has ended" (183) and introduces the next strophe with "it begins as fresh and as playful, as if there never was a dark night or a blind bat in the memory of the poem before us" (*ibid.*); indeed, there never *were* literally a "night" or a "bat". What can induce someone to introduce imagery which is totally lacking in the original, imagery which moreover does not exist in Persian classical poetry?[97] How terrible it is to be a dead poet at the mercy of those who self-professedly love you. If only those who study these poets were somewhat humbler!

Through this review I hope to have shown some of the serious problems which the study of classical Persian literature faces. As the references mentioned show, there is a valuable tradition of scholarly work on this literature in Iran, Europe and North America. Yet here it is sometimes ignored or insufficiently exploited, resulting in an alarming lack of academic rigour. When one deals with medieval texts, it is not optional to take cognizance of the vagaries of textual tradition by using the best possible critical edition, it is essential. When one deals with classical poetry it is not optional to know the *ʿilm-i ʿarūḍ* and the cultural background, it is essential. When doing research in any field at all, it is not optional to be aware of, and refer to, valuable previous research in this field, it is essential.[98] Nearly all the studies in this review, however, show one or more of these flaws – with some happy exceptions, such as some of the contributions in the volume edited by Alice Hunsberger, in particular, her own, and those by Finn Thiesen and Julie Meisami. These flaws are present both in the studies of established scholars and in those of younger scholars who were guided by established ones. These studies were not chosen for their lack of rigour, they are only a random selection of relatively recent publications made available by their publishers.

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97 To be "blind as a bat" is an English phrase; in Islamic lore the bat is a creature which flees from the sun and its light rather than a blind one.

98 See also n. 6 above concerning the reference work by François de Blois.

Is this situation unique for the field of classical Persian literature? I am not really in a position to know, but I wonder whether such serious flaws would be tolerated in, say, studies in European Classical studies; it seems unlikely. I hope this review will be a wake-up call to researchers, editors, PhD supervisors, referees and publishers. If all of those involved with the books under review had done their job properly and conscientiously, the situation would be different; one can only hope that they will do so in the future.

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