

The Exeter Partnerships:

The Reception of Ḥāfiẓ in Nineteenth and Twentieth-Century Persia

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Bahman Solati

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Abstract

The main subject of this study is the analysis of the effect of Ḥāfiz's poetic language, thought, philosophy and teachings on nineteenth and twentieth-century Persian poets and writers. By placing Ḥāfiz in economic and sociopolitical context, the research examines and compares the work of contemporaries with that of Ḥāfiz. This study juxtaposes verses of selected poets of Qājār and Pahlavi Persia, and expands the examination as far back as the fourteenth century. It offers insight into the sociopolitical milieu of the home city (Shīrāz) of the poet and examines his relation with the court, kings and rulers of his time and the influence he had on them, as well as on the poets and the scholars who were contemporary to him.

This research reveals many unanswered questions and examines information that has not been discussed before, such as Ḥāfiz's influence on certain poets and scholars who openly denied this fact. I have made a case that Ḥāfiz's poetic language is such a deep and integral part of Persian, the national language of Iran that it would be an impossible task to separate the two.

The influence of Ḥāfiz on Persian political and cultural writings during the nineteenth and twentieth century is also discussed, taking into account the critical views of contemporary Iranian scholars such as 'Alī Dashtī, 'Abdul Ḥusayn Zarrinkūb, Bahā' al-Dīn Khurramshāhī, Muḥammad Isti'lāmī, Manūchihr Murtaḍavī and Muḥammad Riḍā Shafī'ī-Kadkanī. The research demonstrates the reasons this fourteenth-century classical Persian poet had such a profound influence on contemporary Iranian culture and society. By providing ample comparative statements, the thesis concludes that most poets of nineteenth and twentieth-century Iran have, in one way or another, been influenced or inspired by Ḥāfiz.

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CONTENTS

Transliteration	4
Acknowledgements	5
Introduction	7
I. The Life and Times of Ḥāfiẓ	14
II. Ḥāfiẓ in Historical Perspective, from the Late Tīmūrīds to the Qājārs	39
III. The Influence of Ḥāfiẓ on the Poets of Zand and Qājār Persia	100
IV. Ḥāfiẓ and the Poets of Pahlavi Iran	140
V. From Medieval to Modern Ḥāfiẓology: 500 Years of Editions and Compilations of Ḥāfiẓ's <i>Dīvān</i> , from (1500–2000)	182
VI. Conclusion	222
Appendix. The Influence of Ḥāfiẓ on Eight Persian Poets of the Zand and Qājār Period	243
Bibliography	270