

Notes

Introduction

- 1 The two terms are both present in the poems presented in this book. *Hajv* is more often used in Persian studies and we have thus adopted this term in our comments and analyses.
- 2 For a survey of *hajv* and *hazl* in Classical Arabic literature see van Gelder 1988; van Gelder 1992. There are also those who argue that Persian *hajv* and *hazl* are completely independent of the Arabic models (Nikubakht 2001: 51–54).
- 3 Excursuses on *hajv* and *hazl* in Persian literature may be found in Behzâdi Anduhjerdi 1999; Behzâdi Anduhjerdi 2004, with a rich anthology; Dorri 1965: 5–16; Föllmer 2008; Halabi 1980: 1–138, up to the age of ‘Obeyd (14th century); Halabi 1985; Halabi 1998; Javadi 1988; Kâseb 1991, with an excellent anthology; Kavir 1997; Mahjub 1967: 84–87, 470–474, 636, for only the Khorasanian style (11th century); Mo’tamen 1967: 307–330; Nikubakht 2001, with a comprehensive classification and a good anthology; Rastegâr-e Fasâyi 1993: 227–258; Safâ 1954: II: 354–356; III: 86–97, 323; V: 628–631; Salâhi 2003; Sprachman 1981: 67–88, up to the age of ‘Obeyd; Sprachman 1988; Sprachman 1995. For some recent articles on *hajv* and *hazl* of the period dealt with here see Zipoli 1994; Zipoli 1995; Zipoli 1996; Zipoli 1997; Zipoli 2001; Zipoli 2002; Zipoli 2006; Zipoli 2008; Zipoli 2010; see also Zipoli 2011; Zipoli 2015. Interesting remarks about the social background of some of our anecdotes can be found in Floor 2008.
- 4 In Persian texts both *madh* and *madih* (more rarely *medhat*) are used to indicate panegyric.
- 5 Key Kâ’us 1973: 190.
- 6 Hârun ar-Rashid was the fifth caliph (r. 786–809) of the Abbasid dynasty.
- 7 Beyhaqi 1945: 30. Ma’mun is one of Hârun ar-Rashid’s sons involved in the power struggle for the caliphate.
- 8 Shams-e Qeys 1981: 459.

- 9 Nezâmi-ye ‘Aruzi 1967: 75–83. The entire *hajv* is in Ferdowsi 1990: 98–106 (*dibâche*). Regarding the authenticity of this text see de Blois 1992: 119; Nazir Ahmad 1991: 1–20.
- 10 Ferdowsi 1990: 105 (*dibâche*).
- 11 Shams-e Qeys 1981: 454.
- 12 Rumi 1925: I: 113.
- 13 ‘Owfi 1903: II: 203–204.
- 14 Anvari 1959: 330.
- 15 Kamâl od-Din 1970: 675.
- 16 Asadi 1977: 160.
- 17 Key Kâ’us 1973: 191.
- 18 Jabali 1977: 15.
- 19 Khâqâni 1997: 1243.
- 20 See Anvari’s retractions (Anvari 1959: 483), the fairly unlikely recanting of Suzani (d. c. 1174) recorded both in his poems (Suzani 1959: 250–251) and in other sources (Dowlatshâh 1987: 79; ‘Owfi 1903: II: 191), and the justifications which accompany the omission of similar passages (Dowlatshâh 1987: 79, 90, 218, 332). In modern times, this diffidence seems to have acquired stronger, though not more convincing, tones. Some of the usual reasons advanced by scholars to attenuate the impropriety of the poets, thus justifying them, are youthfulness, as in the case of Sanâ’i (d. c. 1130) (Sanâ’i 1983: *shast o yek*); encroaching senility, as in the case of Rumi (Rumi 1925: VI: VII); humble origins, as in the cases of Anvari, Suzani and Khâqâni (Shebli No’mâni 1984: IV: 129–130); and, in general, the corrupt times (Mo’tamen 1967: 318, 327–328; Safâ 1954: II: 356). Not infrequently this ‘deviant’ behaviour is said to have originated in the dominant Arabic models which the Persians would have simply emulated (Mo’tamen 1967: 307; Safâ 1954: II: 354). For further references on this issue see Zipoli 1994: 257–259.
- 21 Key Kâ’us 1973: 191.
- 22 Manuchehri 1977: 139.
- 23 Jamâl od-Din 1941: 265.
- 24 Bertel’s 1988: 400. Bertel’s account is also important, and convincing, in its rejection of a realistic tendency in *hajv* poetry. We share his view, and believe that what we have said on the subject of anti-realistic obscenity in Persian poetry (Zipoli 1994: 262–265) can be extended to the production of *hajv*. At the same time, however, it cannot be denied that this kind of poetry does give glimpses of some typical situations and mechanisms in the society of the time.

- 25 Râduyâni 1949: 47. Not only pen-names, but also evocative nicknames are used, such as Kun-e Mardom ('People's Arse') in the case of Ruhi (12th century) ('Owfi 1903: II: 165).
- 26 Askari n.d.: 148.
- 27 Beyhaqi 1945: 468.
- 28 Manuchehri 1977: 72–73.
- 29 The *adab* literature consists of texts aimed at conveying those forms of general knowledge which in the Islamic world are indispensable for a cultivated man to play an active part in social life. To make the often difficult texts more attractive to read, the authors sometimes add playful and even obscene anecdotes.
- 30 See, for example, Javadi 1988: 13–14, 16; Mo'tamen 1967: 307.
- 31 Nâser-e Khosrow 1956: 532.
- 32 With the more irreverent *hazl*, like the similar *hajv* (see note 20), disavowals and justifications of a conventional kind are frequent in various authors' work; see the implausible declarations made by Khâqâni (Khâqâni 1997: 796, 1181), the suspect pleading by Sa'di (d. 1292) (Sa'di 1995: 989) and the last-minute second thoughts in Râvandi's *Râhat os-Sodur o Âyat os-Sorur* (completed c. 1204) (Râvandi 1921: 457–458). The prudish reasons advanced in some cases for omitting the passages in question are significant in this context ('Owfi 1903: II: 175, 198).
- 33 Asadi 1940: 49.
- 34 Sanâ'i 1989: 686.
- 35 Rumi 1925: III: 8.
- 36 Ow Hadi 1996: 586.
- 37 'Attâr 2007: 153.
- 38 Nasrollâh Monshi 1964: 18. These interpretations follow some specific lines of *adab* literature: see note 29.
- 39 Anvari 1959: 398.
- 40 Sanâ'i 1981: 202.
- 41 'Obeyd 1999: 257.
- 42 Jâmi 1999b: I: 670–671.
- 43 Sanâ'i 1989: 718.
- 44 Rumi 1925: V: 160.
- 45 Rumi 1925: IV: 489.
- 46 Sa'di 1995: 89.
- 47 'Obeyd 1999: 324.
- 48 Key Kâ'us 1973: 78.
- 49 Key Kâ'us 1973: 204–205.

- 50 Nezâm ol-Molk 1962: 113–114, 154.
- 51 Shams-e Qeys 1981: 459–460.
- 52 We have followed the text in Meier 1963: 9; see also van Gelder 1995: 125; Halabi 1980: 81; Kâseb 1991: 43–45; Qazvini 1953: I, 39–42. On this episode and the earliest examples of satirical poetry in Persian see also Nikubakht 2001: 216–220; Safâ 1954: I, 148–149.
- 53 Some Persian authors of *hajv* and *hazl* directly allude to their Arab predecessors, such as Suzani who refers to Abu Nuwâs, the famous Arab poet who wrote some celebrated texts on erotic and Bacchic themes (Suzani 1959: 59). Abu Nuwâs was born at Ahvâz in 756, of a Persian mother and Arab father; he died in Baghdad in 814.
- 54 See Dorri 1965: 5–6; Kâseb 1991: 46; Qazvini 1953: I: 43–45.
- 55 The presence of *hajv* and *hazl* in Persian popular ballads has been documented by Zhukovskii 1902: 4.
- 56 Bertel's 1960: 127.
- 57 This trend is described and documented in Zipoli 1996: 279–280. Significantly, in this context, the Steingass *Persian-English Dictionary* very often includes obscene interpretations of its lemmas (Zipoli 2011).
- 58 For Ferdowsi's *hajv* see note 9.
- 59 The poem is translated below (see the text with note 183).
- 60 The texts of this dispute are in Hedâyat 1957: I: 922–929; for an analysis of these poems see Zarrinkub 1982: 191–195.
- 61 For the spread of *hajv/hazl* in the Timurid period see Dowlatshâh 1987; Navâ'i 1984. For some quotations see Yârshâter 1955: 234–238.
- 62 For reasons of space we could not include in our corpus the whole of any of the *masnavi* of interest from the *hajv/hazl* point of view. We only quote examples from Sanâ'i's *Kârnâme-ye Balkh* (see the text with note 228) and from the *masnavi* on the courtesans of the Ghaznavid prince Shirzâd (ruler in the year 1115) by Mas'ud-e Sa'd (d. c. 1122) (see the text with note 230). Other significant *masnavi* include that on the judge Tâj od-Din Amzâd (known as *Hajv-e Qâzi-ye Kirang*) by Anvari (Anvari 1959: 477–483); that on Shehâb od-Din 'Omar-e Lonbâni by Kamâl od-Din (Kamâl od-Din 1970: 450–456); and the *Kârnâme-ye Owqâf*, traditionally associated with a certain Tâj od-Din-e Nesâ'i (Nesâ'i 1960: 5–22) but recently attributed to Pur-e Bahâ (d. c. 1284) (Hoffmann 1990). For useful information on the satirical *masnavi* described as *kârnâme* see Nikubakht 2001: 126–130.
- 63 Namely, a *tarji'band* by 'Obeyd translated below (see the text with note 351) and its antecedent by Jamâl od-Din-e Kâshi, a 13th-century Ilkhanid poet, on whom little information has come down to us (Mohammad ebn-e

- Badr-e Jâjarmi 1959: 919–924). On these two works see Sprachman 1981: 109–118; Zipoli 1994. For some ghazals with *hajv* contents see Skalmowski 1999: 83–95.
- 64 For recent Persian examples of this attitude see Akhavân Sâles 1995: 37–39, 79, 116–118; Nikubakht 2001: 103, 256, 285, 287, 307, 322. Some comments on this are in Zipoli 1994: 255–257.
- 65 Bausani was one of the first to complain about the lack of research on this ‘particularly interesting’ field of Persian obscene poetry which ‘for false reasons of prudery has never been studied accurately’ (Bausani 1960: 422). Another more recent appeal for further research can be found in Halabi 1998: 11–12. This kind of backwardness is also present in the area of Persian humorous prose works (Marzolph 1992: I, 13–14, 21). Moreover, it is important to bear in mind that the few references in the various literary histories are all very superficial and usually contain negative judgements. In this context, Sprachman’s meagre excursus is significant (Sprachman 1988), although elsewhere he has dealt with the subject at greater length (Sprachman 1981; Sprachman 1995). Some useful studies have been published in Iran: Halabi 1985; Kâseb 1991; Halabi 1998; Nikubakht 2001; Shamisâ 2002.
- 66 The ancient Roman poet Martial, active in the 1st century, is mainly known for his epigrams containing acute, trenchant and also obscene satires. Another ancient Roman poet, Juvenal, who lived in the late 1st and early 2nd centuries, was famed for his often scurrilous satires on contemporary society. In Latin studies there is even a tendency to identify the whole output of an author like Horace only with his satires.
- 67 Zarrinkub 1992: 168.
- 68 At times the attributions are controversial. The confused textual tradition is made more uncertain in some cases by the fact that the poets would attribute their own *hajv/hazl* to rivals, thus bringing them into disrepute.
- 69 The division of the poets into a chronology required a conventional choice when the author was active over two centuries. In these cases the reference point adopted was the date of death of the poet (who therefore is situated in the second of the two centuries in question), unless he lived and flourished mainly in the first of the two centuries (which thus becomes the relevant temporal reference). The situation is particularly uncertain in the earliest two centuries (10th and 11th) due to the lack of precise biographical information. Within each century, the poets are listed in alphabetical order.
- 70 The *tazkere* are anthologies devoted to poets and illustrious figures containing biographical information and, in the case of poets, accompanied by some examples of their verse.

- 71 We have followed the technique proposed by Highet in studying satire: ‘One of the best ways to study the problem of form in literature is the method used by Aristotle. This is induction. First, collect as many examples of a given phenomenon as possible. Then, by observing resemblances and differences and contrasts and alliances, extract from these particulars a few general descriptive principles’ (Highet 1962: 13). In addition to Highet’s book, other works particularly useful in defining our corpus have been Griffin 1994; Hodgart 1969; Test 1991.
- 72 Obviously the *mahju* may not be the same person as the poet’s interlocutor as when, for example, the author turns to someone to criticise someone else.
- 73 Except for *masnavi* (see note 62) and a few other cases (see the texts with notes 157, 212 and 348), we have always translated whole compositions. At times, therefore, we quote lines not strictly within the *hajv/hazl* theme, but this serves the purpose of giving a general idea of the contexts that the passages belong to. Translating was sometimes problematic both because of the intrinsic difficulties of this kind of poetry and because of the lack of good editions. In addition, some of the more risqué parts have been ‘suppressed’ by the editors (Zipoli 1994: 255–256). This obliged us to various delicate salvage operations.
- 74 In this kind of poetry, the gap between the original texts and translations is wider than in serious poetry. In fact, as mentioned above, accurately interpreting *hajv/hazl* compositions is a complex operation and implies a knowledge both of the traditional models and their violations: it is a kind of twofold code. Paradoxically, the function and importance of form in these texts are given greater emphasis, precisely because of their outrageous content which, on the other hand, in translation may lead unwitting readers to believe they are dealing with only primitive and crude compositions.

Chapter 1 – Invective Poetry

- 75 Asadi 1977: 92.
- 76 Asadi 1977: 89.
- 77 Asadi 1977: 21.
- 78 Sanâ’i 1983: 1105.
- 79 A line attributed to Bu ’l-Horr is in Asadi 1940: 455.
- 80 Asadi 1977: 56.

- 81 Asadi 1977: 126.
- 82 Asadi 1977: 30.
- 83 Asadi 1977: 92.
- 84 Sâm Mirzâ n.d.: 209. Nimrod, the king of Babylon who refused to convert to monotheism, is a symbol of pagan perversion.
- 85 Asadi 1977: 176.
- 86 Asadi 1977: 146.
- 87 Anvari 1959: 461.
- 88 Khâju 1957: 164.
- 89 Asadi 1977: 15.
- 90 Asadi 1977: 167.
- 91 Asadi 1940: 76.
- 92 Asadi 1977: 163.
- 93 Asadi 1977: 139.
- 94 Asadi 1977: 25.
- 95 Asadi 1940: 254, first line; 82, second line.
- 96 Qomri 1989: 589.
- 97 Qomri 1989: 619.
- 98 Musk is a sweet-smelling black substance produced by the navel of the musk deer.
- 99 Asadi 1977: 26.
- 100 Asadi 1977: 153.
- 101 Asadi 1977: 128.
- 102 Asadi 1977: 23.
- 103 Asadi 1977: 113. A recurrent topos in this kind of poetry (Zipoli 1995: 209), the artificial penis obviously alludes to passive sexuality.
- 104 Asadi 1977: 76.
- 105 Asir od-Din 1958: 420.
- 106 In this world the absence of hair on the female pubes is considered to be attractive.
- 107 Edârechi Gilâni 1991: 310; the second line is also in Asadi 1977: 176.
- 108 ‘Owfi 1903: II: 202.
- 109 Sanâ’i 1983: 1098–1099.
- 110 Asadi 1977: 81.
- 111 Homâm 1972: 208.
- 112 Anvari 1959: 432.
- 113 Asadi 1977: 26.
- 114 Guzgânân is the name of a region in eastern Khorasan, between Balkh and Marv.

- 115 Sanâ'i 1983: 1075.
- 116 Âzar 1957: 1198.
- 117 Asadi 1940: 147.
- 118 This may be Abu 'l-‘Abbâs al-Fazl ebn-e ‘Abbâs al-Rabenjâni: see de Blois 1992: 61.
- 119 Âzar 1958: 338.
- 120 Sanâ'i 1983: 1051–1052. The last hemistich is also used by Sanâ'i in another poem (see the text with note 278).
- 121 Meier 1963: 264. The onset of the beard is the cause and also symbol of the decline of the beauty of the young beloved.
- 122 Qomri 1989: 554.
- 123 ‘Ârefak’s title is actually Serâj od-Din, ‘Lantern of faith’: see ‘Owfi 1903: II: 385.
- 124 ‘Owfi 1903: II: 385.
- 125 Shalfiyye is synonymous of a woman of loose morals. A female character with this name is the protagonist in a lascivious story entitled *Alfiyye o Shalfiyye*, believed to have been composed on the basis of pre-Islamic traditions of Indian origins by the 11th-century poet Azraqi. Some scholars claim that this poem, which has not come down to us, was accompanied by images and was written to cure the impotence of the prince Toghân Shâh, Azraqi’s patron: see de Blois 1992: 92–93.
- 126 ‘Owfi 1903: II: 208.
- 127 The allusion is to the small size of the member of the person being insulted.
- 128 Suzani is mentioned here as a famous author of poems on the male member.
- 129 Qamar 1984: 200.
- 130 Lâme‘i 1976: 20.
- 131 Lâme‘i 1976: 114.
- 132 Ghur, a region in Afghanistan, was considered to be a land of infidels. Moreover, *ghur* also means a depraved, effeminate man, thus alluding to a possible offence which creates an even more disparaging picture. In addition to being the cradle of unbelievers, India was famous for providing the Persian courts with pages and slaves.
- 133 The term ‘Antichrist’ is the translation of Dajjâl. In the Islamic eschatological tradition, he was a monstrous malevolent character who, according to some sources, will make a brief appearance at the end of time, riding on a donkey, it too monstrous, and encouraging, among other things, adultery and sodomy.
- 134 ‘Am‘aq n.d.: 173–176.

Chapter 2 – Satirical Poetry

- 135 ‘Owfi 1903: II: 240.
- 136 Sanâ’i 1983: 1094.
- 137 Anvari 1959: 366.
- 138 Zahir od-Din 1982: 306b.
- 139 Kamâl od-Din 1970: 440.
- 140 Anvari 1959: 330.
- 141 Zahir od-Din 1982: 297–298.
- 142 Sanâ’i 1983: 1087–1088.
- 143 Sanâ’i 1983: 1075.
- 144 ‘Owfi 1903: II: 4.
- 145 Enju 1980: 2034–2035.
- 146 ‘Owfi 1903: II: 297.
- 147 Salmân n.d.: 430. The last hemistich is a Persian proverb, meaning ‘there can be nothing worse’. This poem represents a minor category of satire involving horses; for other examples see Anvari 1959: 135; Kamâl od-Din 1970: 442; ‘Owfi 1903: II: 114–117.
- 148 Kamâl od-Din 1970: 681.
- 149 Kamâl od-Din 1970: 621.
- 150 The seven members are the two hands, the two feet, the head, the chest and the back.
- 151 The Islamic tradition recognises eight different levels of paradise and nine celestial spheres (the seven planets plus the sphere of fixed stars and the sphere moving all the others).
- 152 Mojir od-Din 1979: 321–322.
- 153 For Abu Nuwâs see note 53.
- 154 Rostam is a famous hero in the Iranic epopee and the most important character in Ferdowsi’s *Shâhnâme*. He was a central figure in the struggle between Iran (the civilised world) and Turân (the land of barbarians and the steppe).
- 155 Sâm and Narimân are two legendary heroes whose deeds are narrated in Ferdowsi’s *Shâhnâme*. They are respectively the grandfather and great grandfather of Rostam (see the previous note).
- 156 This is a twofold affront: the poet not only denies his favours but also acts offensively. He says he is unable to satisfy the patron’s erotic requests, blaming the patron himself for having abused the poet’s favours in the past, thus undermining his sexual prowess.
- 157 ‘Owfi 1903: II: 169–170.

- 158 'Owfi 1903: II: 297.
- 159 Khâju 1957: 161.
- 160 Bâvard, better known as Abivard, is the name of a city in northern Khorasan.
- 161 Dowlatshâh 1987: 318.
- 162 Nezâri 1992: 131–132. According to a method typical of Persian poetry, at times the poet addresses himself using, as in this case, the third person or, as in other poems, the second person (see note 165).
- 163 For musk see note 98.
- 164 According to tradition, Solomon, the renowned king and prophet, possessed a ring that gave him magical powers. As a punishment for his misbelief, the ring was stolen by a *jinn* (a supernatural being, half man and half angel) who, for a certain period, ruled in Solomon's place.
- 165 In Persian poetry, sometimes the poet addresses himself using the second person (see note 162).
- 166 Farghâni 1985: 118–120.
- 167 In the Persian lyrical-mystical literature, the Old Man of the Magi is an esoteric and spiritual master who introduces disciples to the mysteries of life. The Magi are described in Persian poetry as the ritual representatives, associated with fire and wine, of the religion founded by Zarathustra.
- 168 Hâfez 1983: 406. The Persian term translated as 'cleric' is *Hâfez*. It literally means 'one who knows the Koran by heart' and is also the pen-name of the poet, which is usually found at the end of a ghazal. The *mufti* is an expert in Islamic law authorised to pronounce juridical-religious sentences.
- 169 Bohlul (d. c. 805) is the archetype of the 'wise fool' genre in Arabic and Persian literature. For Hârûn see note 6.
- 170 'Attâr 2007: 117.
- 171 Nezâmi-ye 'Aruzî 1967: 74.
- 172 Farrokhi (d. 1037) and 'Onsori (d. 1039) were two celebrated panegyrists at the Ghaznavid court and the first major exponents of the early style of Persian poetry known as the Khorasanian style.
- 173 Râduyâni 1949: 32. On these lines see de Blois 1992: 180–181.
- 174 A contemporary of Jâmi and his rival, Sâghari was a 15th-century poet notorious for his poor verse-making.
- 175 Jâmi 1999a: I: 841.
- 176 Râmtin was a celebrated Sassanid-age musician thought to have invented the harp; he was probably active during the reign of Khosrow Parviz (590–628).
- 177 For musk see note 98.

- 178 According to Islamic doctrine, the houris are virgins awaiting the devout in paradise.
- 179 These pairs of letters from the Arabo-Persian alphabet are distinguished only by the presence of some dots.
- 180 Ray was once in the territories of the Ghaznavid dynasty, at whose court Manuchehri was a poet.
- 181 Shervân, a region of the eastern Caucasus, was ruled by the Shirvanshah dynasty from the 11th to the early 16th centuries.
- 182 Mo'tasem and Mosta'in were two caliphs in the Abbasid dynasty. The first ruled from 833 to 842, the second from 862 to 866.
- 183 Manuchehri 1977: 79–82.
- 184 A 'tavern' would literally be 'where they store vats of wine'. For this poet see de Blois 1994: 341–342.
- 185 Since Kash was in Transoxiana, the expression 'from Kash to Kashmir' means a vast geographical expanse.
- 186 In the Islamic tradition, Mercury is said to offer protection to and encourage men of science.
- 187 Zâl and Hojir are two epic heroes whose deeds are narrated in Ferdowsi's *Shâhnâme*. Zâl is the father of the great Rostam (see note 154) and Hojir is the custodian of the famous White Fort.
- 188 Suzani 1959: 43–45.
- 189 See de Blois 1994: 548. There are also different opinions: see Nikubakht 2001: 135, 272.
- 190 The Samanids dynasty was of Persian origin and ruled from 819 to 999 in Transoxiana and in a large part of Iran.
- 191 Mazdikat is the name of a town near Samarkand.
- 192 Suzani 1959: 62–64.
- 193 For Ghur see note 132.
- 194 Shavvâl is the tenth month of the Islamic lunar year.
- 195 Khâqâni 1997: 931–932; in lines 3 and 10 we have followed the variants in Khâqâni 1937: 650. On the character mentioned in the final hemistich see de Blois 1994: 339.
- 196 The Homâ is a mythical bird, whose shadow is a harbinger of protection and good fortune.
- 197 According to popular tradition, the snake entered the earthly paradise concealed in the peacock's beak. The sparrow is noted for its copious droppings.
- 198 Khâqâni 1997: 1225–1226.
- 199 Khâqâni, in turn, makes *hajv* on Abu 'l-'Alâ' (Khâqâni 1978: 235–237); on

the relations between the two poets and their dispute in poetry: see de Blois 1994: 247–249.

200 Âzar 1957: 205.

201 Shervân is the Caucasian region in which Khâqâni was born: see note 181.

202 Amin Ahmad n.d.: III: 299–300; on the last line see de Blois 1994: 248.

203 Alexander, the Macedonian king and conqueror of the ancient Persian empire, is a character adopted by the Islamic-Persian tradition. As such, he is seen not as a foreign enemy but as a hero with prophetic aspects. In poetry he is mentioned, among other things, for his vain search for the water of life and for the mirror, which he ordered to be placed on the tower of Alexandria so that he could look out for enemy ships. His legendary deeds inspired many Persian poems, the most famous being the *Eskandarnâme* by Nezâmi-ye Ganjavi. Here the poet wishes to stress that Khâqâni's soul was so black that it could not be 'brightened', even if Alexander's skill transformed it into a mirror.

204 The Persian text plays on a pun of an astrological nature. In the Arabo-Persian tradition the two constellations of the Bear (Ursa Major and Ursa Minor) are both called Banât on-Na'sh ('The daughters of the coffin'): four stars form the coffin and three are the daughters. More precisely, Ursa Major is called Banât on-Na'sh-e Kabir and Ursa Minor Banât on-Na'sh-e Saghir. Here the allusion is to Ursa Minor, which includes the North or Pole Star, a universal reference point. Since the addressee of these lines boasts of being as essential as the Pole Star, Mojir od-Din replies that he is indeed like the pole, but only because no one is near him except the coffin of his daughter, thus alluding to Ursa Minor (the two terms, 'daughter' and 'coffin', are simply inverted) as well as to the abandonment and solitude that an unattended funeral evokes.

205 Khâqâni wrote *hajv* lines against his own father (see the text with note 281). Mojir od-Din might have insinuated here that he wrote them ('cutting off his nose to spite his face') in the hope of being compared to the carpenter's son, i.e. Abraham (mentioned in the following line), who also disowned his father, Âzar, but for noble reasons. Âzar was a famous idolator and builder of pagan wooden idols, hence Mojir od-Din's use of the epithet 'carpenter'.

206 Hedâyat 1957: I: 1188. The reference in the last hemistich is to the Koranic episode in which Nimrod threw Abraham onto a pyre, but Abraham came off unscathed because the Lord ordered that the fire 'be coolness and safety' (Koran 1955: XXI, 69). Hence the many allusions in Persian poetry to flames being transformed, through love and faith, into a rose garden. But the opposite applies to the addressee of these lines: a delicate, fragrant basil

- plant is transformed into a tormenting fire. Hedâyat considered the lines translated here to be on Khâqâni, but they also appear in a long *qaside* addressed to Zeyn od-Din-e Tabari in Mojir od-Din's divan (Mojir od-Din 1979: *bist o do—bist o se*, 125–131; see Foruzânfar 1979: 588; Halabi 1998: 542–543). See also Khâqâni 1989: *chehel o hasht*.
- 207 For Shervân see note 201.
- 208 Emru 'l-Qeys was one of the leading Arab poets in the pre-Islamic period; he lived in the first half of the 6th century. Sahbân was a celebrated Arab orator and rhetorician who lived during the reign of the caliph Mu'âwiya (r. 661–680).
- 209 According to tradition, cumin was a typical product of Kerman, so this phrase is the equivalent of 'carrying coals to Newcastle'.
- 210 The ant is associated with Solomon in a Koranic story (Koran 1955: XXVII, 18–19): an ant complains to Solomon that his advancing army would crush his companions, and the powerful sovereign pays heed to it. This motif is used to represent the generosity of noble souls and the contrast between two incommensurable positions. The contrast is emphasised by the modest gift, a locust leg, which, according to one tradition, the ant gave to Solomon.
- 211 Tayyân was a 10th-century poet who also wrote playful and obscene poems; some are included in this anthology.
- 212 Jamâl od-Din 1941: 85–86. Hassân was an Arab author who lived in the 7th century; he was the official poet of the prophet Muhammad.
- 213 A satire on Isfahan by Mojir od-Din is quoted below (see the text with note 289). On the consequences of this satire for relations between Mojir od-Din, Jamâl od-Din and Khâqâni see Nikubakht 2001: 123–125; Zipoli 2002: 466–470.
- 214 Shervân and Beylaqân are the home towns of Khâqâni and Mojir od-Din respectively, both targets for Jamâl od-Din's satire.
- 215 Jamâl od-Din 1941: 400–401.
- 216 Jamâl od-Din 1941: 402.
- 217 Amin Ahmad n.d.: II: 87. The bridge in question is called Serât (it is wide for the virtuous and very narrow for sinners). According to the Islamic eschatology, the bridge crosses hell and leads to paradise.
- 218 Vatvât 1960: 570. The city of Basra was renowned for the superior quality of its dates.
- 219 In this and the following lines, the poet alludes to events involving Khosrow, Shirin and Farhâd. Khosrow was a famous Sassanid sovereign who ruled from 590 to 628 and Shirin was an Armenian princess. Their love

story and the feud between Khosrow and Farhâd, a rival to the Sassanid sovereign in his love for Shirin, are the subject of many Persian poems; the most celebrated is *Khosrow o Shirin* by Nezâmi-ye Ganjavi.

220 The poet left his native town of Ardabil and spent some time in the region of Shervân, at the Shirvanshah court in the Caucasus, where he began to write the *Farhâdnâme*.

221 In Persian poetry allusion is often made to the great skills, as a painter, of Mâni, the prophet and founder of Manichaeism.

222 'Âref 1976: 137–139.

223 *Tâbe* and *âftâbe* mean 'pan' and 'water-pot', respectively.

224 The meanings of the four words are: 'bowl' and 'book', 'cup' and 'grief'.

225 For Mercury see note 186.

226 Sanâ'i 1989: 647–648.

227 Sanâ'i 1989: 697.

228 Sanâ'i 1981: 202–203.

229 Suzani 1959: 450.

230 Mas'ud-e Sa'd 1939: 571–572.

231 Qomri 1989: 528.

232 Meier 1963: 266.

233 Meier 1963: 169. The last two comments seem to reproach the butcher for being overly zealous in his work and consequently neglecting his lovers. But it may also be an allusion to his insatiable sexual desire.

234 For Zuzan see Meier 1963: 308.

235 Meier 1963: 308.

236 Meier 1963: 184. Regarding the onset of the beard see note 121.

237 This is the hood covering the head of the falcon when it is ready to hunt.

238 This piece of poetry has been taken from 'Attâr's *Manteq ot-Teyr*, which narrates how the hoopoe invites some other birds to go to the mythical bird called Simorgh.

239 'Attâr 1963: 53–54.

240 For the *mufti* see note 168.

241 Khayyâm 1959: II: 27 Persian numeration.

242 The *menbar* is a kind of pulpit in the mosque. The *mehrâb* is a niche in the mosque that indicates the *qibla*, i.e. the direction of Mecca, and to which the faithful turn when saying prayers.

243 For the Old Man of the Tavern/of the Magi see note 167.

244 Hâfez 1983: 404.

245 Hâfez 1983: 774.

246 Khayyâm 1931: 203.

- 247 Sa'di 1995: 995. Muslim prayers, recited standing and kneeling, are led by an imam, who faces Mecca with his back to the congregation.
- 248 For the *mehrâb* see note 242.
- 249 Sanâ'i 1989: 668–670. On the attitude of the Sufis towards love for young boys see Shamisâ 2002: 95–141.
- 250 Leaning the forehead on the prayer rug is one of the ritual positions during Muslim prayers.
- 251 Qomri 1989: 557.
- 252 For musk see note 98.
- 253 Sa'di 1995: 1000–1001. Sprachman points out that many of the lines in this poem were used in *Loghatnâme-ye Dehkhodâ* as examples in numerous entries (Sprachman 1995: XXXV, 39). This corroborates a consolidated Persian lexicographic tradition which involves searching for and using obscene sources. For this lexicographic tradition see note 57.
- 254 Joseph is a recurrent character in Persian poetry. He features in Sura XII of the Koran, in which his parable is described as 'the fairest of stories' (Koran 1955: XII, 3). Jacob's favourite son, he made his brothers jealous because they envied his good luck. They threw him in a well and told their father he had been devoured by a wolf. Joseph was renowned for his handsomeness, which is celebrated in many texts.
- 255 Owhadi 1996: 564–566.
- 256 A *tafsir* is a commentary of the Koran and a *hadith* is an account of a saying or deed of the prophet Muhammad.
- 257 Koran 1955: XLIX, 12.
- 258 Jâmi 1999b: I: 189–193.
- 259 In the following lines some questions are asked whether formulas and rituals typical of the pilgrimage to Mecca have been properly performed.
- 260 The reference is to Sura XVIII of the Koran, describing how seven young believers took refuge in a cave to flee from the paganism of their own people.
- 261 Nâser-e Khosrow 1986: 300–301.
- 262 Nâser-e Khosrow 1956: 505.
- 263 Khayyâm 1959: II: 58 Persian numeration.
- 264 Nezâmi-ye Ganjavi 1954: 144.
- 265 Anvari 1959: 441.
- 266 Asadi 1977: 88.
- 267 Asadi 1977: 140.
- 268 'Owfi 1903: II: 206.
- 269 Asadi 1977: 22.

- 270 The shapes of *jim* and *mim*, two letters in the Arabo-Persian alphabet, recall the curve of a curl and a rounded open mouth, respectively.
- 271 Mohammad ebn-e Badr-e Jâjarmi 1959: 1214. The author of these lines, Ebn-e Khatib, was involved in a famous love affair with Mahsati, characterised by exchanges of satirical and outrageous poems narrated in a text of uncertain date but 14th century: see Meier 2005.
- 272 Qamar 1984: 277.
- 273 Khâqâni 1997: 1070; in lines 9 and 10 we have followed the variants in Khâqâni 1937: 691.
- 274 Meier 1963: 370.
- 275 Suzani 1959: 479–480.
- 276 Sanâ'i 1989: 658–659.
- 277 Ebn-e Yamin 1965: 383.
- 278 Sanâ'i 1983: 1052.
- 279 For Âzar and Nimrod see notes 205 and 84, respectively. Joseph the carpenter is the husband of Mary, mother of Jesus.
- 280 For the *menbar* see note 242.
- 281 Khâqâni 1997: 1196–1197.
- 282 Anvari 1959: 358.
- 283 Anvari 1959: 401.
- 284 The Koran and the Bible relate how God, when exhorting Moses to pursue his mission as a prophet, showed him some miracles. Thus he told him to throw his stick on the ground, and it was immediately transformed into a snake (Bible 2011: Exodus 4, 2–4; Koran 1955: XX, 17–21).
- 285 Mas'ud-e Sa'd 1939: 611.
- 286 For some examples on other social categories or groups see the texts with notes 226, 227, 228, 229. On *shahrâshub* as a collective satirical composition see Nikubakht 2001: 120–126.
- 287 'Owfi 1903: II: 297.
- 288 Anvari 1959: 444.
- 289 Mojir od-Din 1979: 396. For this satire see note 213.
- 290 Khâqâni 1997: 1153.
- 291 Asir od-Din 1958: 441–442.
- 292 Anvari 1959: 401.
- 293 For another poem with the same addressee see the text with note 134.
- 294 For the Magi see note 167.
- 295 'Am'âq n.d.: 170–172.
- 296 The early-morning noise of a fart (the unpleasant surrogate for the fragrant breeze) makes the dawn despair. At the same time, the breaking up of the

- sky's dress in the early morning is synonymous with dawn itself. Thus in an eccentric and disrespectful 'fantastic etiology', the fart seems to cause the day to break.
- 297 What we have translated as 'wet gherkin' is in Persian *gauz/guz-e tar*. This expression literally means 'fresh walnut' or 'wet fart'. We tried to recreate the wordplay with our pun on 'gurk' (a kind of fart) and 'gherkin'.
- 298 For musk see note 98.
- 299 The name of this town is not random: the word *guzdân* may literally also mean 'place containing farts'.
- 300 Here the tongue is sharper than the sword, which consequently takes issue with its own inadequate sharpness.
- 301 Kamâl od-Din 1970: 434–438.
- 302 The reference is to faeces that may be expelled at the moment of penetration.
- 303 This is an elaborate erotic gastronomic reference. Herbs were used to make yogurt tastier. The poet uses this image in a twofold humiliation of his victim: the herbs in the bowl are the hairs on the posterior, a repulsive image which, by resorting to an equally humiliating 'fantastic etiology', the poet associates with the *mahju*'s desire to taste the yogurt, in this case the sap from 'living' radishes.
- 304 Qomri 1989: 292–293.
- 305 Asadi 1940: 174.
- 306 Anvari 1959: 371.
- 307 Jamâl od-Din 1941: 428.
- 308 Asadi 1977: 15.
- 309 Khayyâm 1959: II: 52 Persian numeration.
- 310 Homâm 1972: 186.
- 311 Ebn-e Yamin 1965: 391.
- 312 Ebn-e Yamin 1965: 380–381.
- 313 'Owfi 1903: I: 178.
- 314 Sa'di 1995: 140–141.
- 315 'Attâr 1963: 120–121.
- 316 For Joseph see note 254.
- 317 Koran 1955: LII, 30.
- 318 Koran 1955: XLI, 17.
- 319 This is a reference to Sura LV of the Koran, dealing with the great mercifulness of the Creator.
- 320 Koran 1955: VII, 29.
- 321 Rumi 1925: V: 86–91.

- 322 The marriage portion that a husband must pay his wife if he divorces her for no good reason.
- 323 Sa'di 1995: 1001–1004. The wish in the last hemistich is from Koran 1955: II, 197; III, 14; III, 188.
- 324 Owhadi 1996: 549–550.
- 325 According to an ancient Zoroastrian custom, incestuous relations, especially in the noble classes, were not only allowed, they were even encouraged (Floor 2008: 2–3, 11). For the Magi see note 167.
- 326 Mokhtâri 1962: 222–226.
- 327 Mohammad ebn-e Badr-e Jâjarmi 1959: 871.
- 328 Mohammad ebn-e Badr-e Jâjarmi 1959: 871.

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- 329 For Rostam see note 154.
- 330 'Obeyd 1999: 240–241.
- 331 On the parodic use of the exordium in Arabic and Persian poetry see Meisami 2003: 144–189.
- 332 This is a reference to Moses' reproach to his brother Aaron, narrated in the Bible (Bible 2011: Exodus 32, 21–22) and the Koran (Koran 1955: XX, 92–95); in the Koran there is a specific allusion to Moses grasping Aaron's beard.
- 333 This prince can probably be identified as the Shaddadid ruler Fazl III (1073–1075).
- 334 Hedâyat 1957: II: 648.
- 335 For Khosrow, Shirin and Farhâd (mentioned below) see note 219.
- 336 The belt and crown are characteristic of royalty and here allude to the shape of the male member after circumcision; in the following lines the poet goes on to conjure up the circumcision ceremony.
- 337 This is an allusion to the erect or relaxed position of the male member, which is supported—in a different way in the two cases—by the testicles and pubic hair.
- 338 Ebn-e Sirin was a famous Muslim scholar and interpreter of dreams. Born in Basra, he lived in the late 7th and early 8th centuries.
- 339 These two men were renowned for their generosity. Hâtem was a 6th-century pre-Islamic Arab poet and Afshin a 9th-century Persian general at the Abbasid court of the caliph Mo'tasem.
- 340 The original line is more complex and uses the names of two letters with

- no diacritical marks (*vâv* and *hâ*) in the Arabo-Persian alphabet to indicate poverty, and then the names of two letters with diacritical marks (*sin* e *shin*) in the same alphabet to indicate wealth.
- 341 *Dugh* is a beverage made from yogurt, water and salt; here it is an allusion to spermatic fluid.
- 342 The reference is to anal penetration: see note 302.
- 343 Suzani 1959: 73–75.
- 344 Black is the representative colour of the Abbasid dynasty.
- 345 Silver and gold are two metaphors connected to sexual activity: the first stands for sperm and the second for faeces (explaining, in the latter case, the ‘street sweeper’s trade’: see notes 302 and 342).
- 346 For musk see note 98. The allusion here is to the black colour of the musk (the pubic hair).
- 347 When numbers are represented by using certain configurations of the fingers (according to the rules of the ‘*aqd-e anâmel*/counting on fingers), ninety recalls the shape of the anus and twenty that of the vagina.
- 348 Ebn-e Yamin 1965: 114. Cutting off the head of the penis is an allusion to circumcision.
- 349 For the Magi see note 167.
- 350 For the *mehrâb* see note 242.
- 351 ‘Obeyd 1999: 201–203.
- 352 The following two poems are replies to two ghazals by Hâfez (Hâfez 1983: 22, 330), whose original words are in italics. On the technique of this kind of reply see Akhavân Sâles 1995; Nikubakht 2001: 99–118.
- 353 For musk see note 98.
- 354 Boshâq 1981: 35.
- 355 For Solomon and the ring see note 164.
- 356 The reference is to Mâni: see note 221.
- 357 Qâri 1886: 57.
- 358 ‘Obeyd 1999: 224. The hemistichs in italics come from a ghazal by Sa’di (Sa’di 1995: 505).
- 359 ‘Obeyd 1999: 229. The second and fourth hemistichs form the beginning of a famous *qaside* by Rudaki (Nezâmi-ye ‘Aruzi 1967: 52). The Muli-yân brook was in Bukhara. Rudaki mentions it to make the Samanid sovereign Nasr II (914–943) homesick and so convince him to return to Bukhara and give up the pleasures of his country retreat at Herat.
- 360 The reference to Mo’ezzi is based on the last line of the poem, but we have not found the work referred to in the printed edition of Mo’ezzi’s *divan* (Mo’ezzi 1939). For some examples of Suzani’s numerous replies to Sanâ’i see Akhavân Sâles 1995: 30–34.

- 361 Suzani 1959: 28–30.
- 362 See notes 302, 342 and 345.
- 363 Fereydun is a Persian epic hero. In the *Shâhnâme*, Ferdowsi tells how he managed to overcome the demon Zahhâk, who is mentioned in the following line.
- 364 Zahhâk is a legendary demonic creature, who, as narrated in the *Shâhnâme*, usurped and ruled for a while the ancient Persian kingdom. This creature has a monstrous appearance with, on his shoulders, two snakes who feed off human brains. This line is a kind of obscene ‘fantastic etiology’ concerning the snakes on the shoulders of the evil Zahhâk.
- 365 For Rostam see note 154.
- 366 Esfandiyâr is a Persian epic hero whose deeds are narrated by Ferdowsi in the *Shâhnâme*. He was killed in battle by Rostam.
- 367 The male member takes the place of the sun since, according to a legend, the sun’s rays have the power to change stones into rubies.
- 368 According to Islamic law, adultery is a sin punishable by stoning to death. In this case stoning is a reference to the sexual act.
- 369 The poet’s member is exalted through a sort of implied syllogism: given that the wood of plane trees is described by poets as self-inflammable and that his penis also catches fire by itself, the penis therefore is like a plane tree.
- 370 Anvari and Suzani, like Serâj-e Qomri, mentioned below, are referred to because they are leading authors of obscene poetry (some of their poems have been translated in this anthology).
- 371 This is the same judge whose penis is celebrated by Anvari in a short *masnavi* (see note 62).
- 372 Mohammad ebn-e Badr-e Jâjarmi 1959: 906–909 (in this source the poet is mentioned with a less well-known version of his name: Ebn-e Bahâ). The poem by Kamâl od-Din to which Pur-e Bahâ replied is in Kamâl od-Din’s divan (Kamâl od-Din 1970: 115–118). The two poems have many rhyme-words in common. It should be noted, in particular, that the last rhyme-word (*ruzgâr/‘age’*) in Pur-e Bahâ’s poem is the first rhyme-word in Kamâl od-Din’s poem and the rhyme-word (*biqârâr/‘restless’*) of the second hemistich of the first line in Pur-e Bahâ’s poem occurs in a simplified form (*qarâr/‘agreement’*) in the last line of Kamâl od-Din’s poem. Moreover, the two poems also share a hemistich (the second one of line 32 in Pur-e Bahâ’s poem and of line 13 in Kamâl od-Din’s poem).

Biographies of the Poets

373 In drafting the biographical notes I have mainly referred to the following texts: Bausani 1960; de Blois 1992; de Blois 1994; Dabirsiyâqi 1976; Dabirsiyâqi 1977; Edârechi Gilâni 1991; Foruzânfâr 1979; Halabi 1998; Kâseb 1991; Mazâher-e Mosaffâ 1956; Modabberi 1991; Nikubakht 2001; Rypka 1968; Safâ 1954; Shamisâ 2002. I have also consulted major reference works such as *Loghatnâme-ye Dehkhodâ* 1946 and *Encyclopædia Iranica* 1982–, and, in some cases, the prefaces to the individual divans.

