



BĀBĀ FAĠĀNĪ

BĀBĀ FAĠĀNĪ, a Persian poet in the 9th/15th and early 10th/16th centuries. Born and brought up at Shiraz, he began work as a cutler in his father's and brother's shop. For this reason he chose the pen-name Sakkākī, but later on he used Faġānī instead. After the sultan Ya'qūb Bāyondorī (Āq Qoyunlū) had given him the title *bābā* (an appellation of leading dervishes and *qalandars*), he was most widely known as Bābā Faġānī. He left Shiraz when he was thirty years old and went first to Herat, where his poetry was not well received, then to Tabrīz, where he worked for the sultan Ya'qūb and his successors until the Āq Qoyunlū régime began to disintegrate. He then returned to Shiraz, but at the time of Shah Esmā'īl Şafawī's rise to power he moved to Khorasan, where he lived for a time at Abīvard and then at Mašhad. He died at Mašhad at an age of over sixty in 925/1519 or, according to some accounts, 922/1516.

Bābā Faġānī's *dīvān*, which has been printed, comprises *qaşīdas*, *tarkīb-bands*, *tarjī'-bands*, *ġazals*, and *robā'īs*. All are pleasing and well-written. His *qaşīdas* are in praise of Twelver Shi'ite imams and Bāyondorī sultans, particularly Ya'qūb (d. 896/1490), Bāysonqor (d. 897/1491), and Rostam Beg (d. 902/1496); the last one which he wrote is a eulogy of the Safavid Shah Esmā'īl. In all these *qaşīdas* the simplicity of the poet's diction and the fluency and vividness of his rhetoric are impressive. He deserves praise for his attention to these qualities at a time when other poets were imitating abstruse odes of old masters or concocting purely cerebral lyric and narrative pieces. In his *ġazals* the same fluency and objectivity are found together with new phrases and compounds, moving expressions of feeling, and original themes. This caused his style to be



seen as different from that of his contemporaries and to be taken as a new and acceptable model. Literary critics even described him as a “Lesser Ḥāfeẓ.” His method of *gāzal* writing, in particular, was widely studied in the 10th/16th, 11th/17th, and 12th/18th centuries and is reflected in the works of poets who regarded him as a master. In all fields Bābā Faġānī exercised a lasting influence on Persian poetic style in the Safavid period.

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