



BĀDA

BĀDA (Pahl. *bātak*), one of several terms used in Persian poetry to mean wine, and, by extension, any intoxicating liquor. Others are, in approximate order of frequency, *mey*, *šarāb*, *ḵamr*, and *nabīd*. In meaning they are virtually interchangeable, but they are metrically different. Their use by poets was governed more by phonetic and linguistic considerations than by differences in sense.

Bāda and *mey* in particular appear in the terms for various kinds of wine, the implements necessary to make wine and prepare it for drinking, the place where it is drunk, and for wine-bibbers themselves. Double-distilled wine is “wine of two fires” *bāda-ye do ātaša*, a tavern is a “wine-house” *mey-ḵāna*, *mey-kada*, and wine-drinkers are those who “drink,” “worship,” or “measure out” wine—*bādagosār*, *bādaparast*, *bādapeymā* (for these terms see, e.g., Dehḵodā, s.vv.).

Literary texts reflect very different views of wine and drunkenness than one might expect from the fierce temperance of Islamic injunctions against intoxicating beverages. In the *Šāh-nāma*, a work that is self-consciously pre-Islamic in its context and ideology, wine is an antidote to grief and misfortune and the necessary accompaniment of hospitality (*Šāh-nāma*, Moscow, II, pp. 173-74 ll. 52, 58, 197-98 ll. 353-54, 460-63). Drinking wine in company is the benign opposite of meeting in war or single combat. There are many scenes in which heroes either invite their foes to put aside their arms and hoist the cup of friendship instead, or in which warriors prepare for battle by a night of carousal (*Šāh-nāma*, Moscow, II, pp. 208-09 ll. 484-526 passim, 232 ll. 815,



830-34).

Nor is there any suggestion that drunken conviviality has unfortunate side effects. Kay Kāvūs is a rash and foolish monarch who makes many decisions he later repents, but never under the influence of drink. Finally, while Zoroastrian beliefs and practices are only vaguely and imperfectly adumbrated in the *Šāh-nāma*, there is no suggestion that wine-drinking is offensive to the new faith. Esfandīār does not hesitate to hoist a cup with Rostam although he is an exemplar of Zoroastrian piety (*Šāh-nāma*, Moscow, VI, p. 249 l. 528).

Poetry and other works written as part of courtly *adab*, acknowledge the immorality of drinking, but rather light-heartedly. While it is now immoral to drink with one's friends, drunkenness is still presented as a relief from pain and the focus of hospitality and celebration. Persian poets followed the example of Abū Nowās in playing upon the opposition of wine-drinking and piety for ironic or humorous effect. Manūčehrī, for example, parodies the ritual of morning prayer—the cock is the *mo'adden* of wine drinkers and wine not piety is the hope of the despairing—and begins another poem by describing the drunken feast that follows the conclusion of the fast of Ramažān (*Dīvān*, ed. M. Dabīrsīāqī, Tehran, 1338 Š./1959, pp. 88, 177). Nor were such convivial gatherings simply a poetic convention; Bayhaqī makes reference to gatherings at which the members of the court gathered to drink and enjoy music and singing as well (Bayhaqī, ed. Fayyāz, pp. 54, 527-29).

When wine-drinking is condemned, it is less for reasons of piety than for a practical recognition of its disastrous consequences on public conduct and policy. Stories about the evils of making important decisions while drunk abound, as does praise for those officials wise enough to reconsider on the sober morning after all decisions made while drunk (Kvāja Nežām-al-Molk, *Sīār al-molūk*, ed. H. Darke, Tehran, 1347 Š./1968, chaps. 15, 17, 39). There is a certain truth in poets' fanciful derivation of *bāda* from *bād* "wind," meaning that it inflates the drinker with the "wind" of conceit and rashness (*bād-e ġorūr*; see Dehḡodā, s.v.). Disapproval of drinking, however, is balanced by the acceptance of it as a common, if unfortunate, practice. Kaykāvūs b. Eskandar includes a chapter on how to conduct oneself at a drinking party, along with gentle reproofs for those who so indulge themselves ('Onşor-al-Ma'ālī Kaykāvūs b. Eskandar, *Qābūs-nāma*, ed. Ğ.-Ḥ. Yūsufī, Tehran, 1345 Š./1967, chap. xi).



As the center of gravity in Persian poetry shifted from court to *kānaqāh*, *bāda* gained a new range of meanings which transformed the immorality of wine-drinking into an alternative mode of piety. In order to separate themselves from Islamic orthodoxy, Sufis created a world which, in their poetry in particular, was the diametric opposite of court and mosque. The well-established association of wine with intoxication, irrational behavior, the impious rejection of orthodoxy, and the joys of fellowship made wine-drinking a logical, even an inevitable symbol for the piety of mysticism. Wine-drinking and drunkenness came to stand both for the search for transcendent spiritual knowledge, and for the brotherhood of mystics. Wine was also widely believed by Muslim Iranians to be a part of Zoroastrian religious rituals, and this association with illicit or unconventional religious practices provided mystical poetry with an alternative clergy, the magian elder (*pīr-e moḡān*), and an alternative place of worship, the winehouse, that were in direct and shocking contrast with shaikh and mosque. And in the fusion of the “beloved” of the courtly *tašbīb* with the magian’s acolyte, the cupbearer or *sāqī* who poured the wine, mystical poetry found its most powerful and attractive symbol—the metaphorical love (*‘ešq-e majāzī*) for a beautiful youth which transformed the seductions and distractions of worldly joy into an allegory for the pursuit of transcendent union (Schimmel, pp. 284, 292). The association of worldly drunkenness with spiritual intoxication eventually became so firmly established in Persian poetry that wine drinking lost its original meaning of simple, worldly revelry.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Given in the text. See also A. G. Chejne, “The Boon-Companion in Early ‘Abbasid Times,” *JAOS* 65, 1965, pp. 327-35 (discusses the tradition of the wine party in early ‘Abbasid times).

A Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, Chapel Hill, North Carolina, 1975.

E. Yarshater, “The Theme of Wine-Drinking and the Concept of the Beloved in Early Persian Poetry,” *Studia Islamica* 13, 1960, pp. 43-53 (contains numerous



references to the treatment of wine-drinking in contemporary literary works).

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