



FARZĀD, MAS'ŪD

FARZĀD, MAS'ŪD, Persian litterateur and poet (b. Sanandaj, 1285 Š./1906; d. London, 26 September 1981; [Figure 1](#)). He studied at the American College (see ALBORZ COLLEGE) in Tehran and was later employed as translator in the Ministry of Finance. In 1929, Farzād was sent to London on a government scholarship to study economics but returned home two years later before completing the course. For the next nine years he had a variety of contractual jobs as translator at several ministries and governmental offices in Tehran.

Throughout this period, Farzād wrote poetry, mostly within the classical tradition. In 1942 he published a selection of his poems in a volume entitled *Waqtī ke šā'er būdam* (When I was a poet). He had also begun work on a new edition of Ḥāfeẓ's *Dīvān*, a task which became a life-long labor. Going against accepted academic norms of textual scholarship, he declined to give primacy to the oldest extant manuscripts, focusing instead on a mental image of Ḥāfeẓ as an ideal poet, in whose poetry therefore, the most authentic and the most perfect were identical. This entailed preparing a compendium of all the variant versions of Ḥāfeẓ's poems as a first step and then asking modern scholars to choose "the best" and "the most poetic" of each phrase, line, or *ġazal* as the authentic one (Farzād, 1973, pp. 1-13). From the outset, this subjective approach to Ḥāfeẓ, relying ultimately on the vagaries of personal taste and the editor's idiosyncracies, was considered questionable, and Farzād never gained the recognition he thought he deserved.

In the 1930s, Farzād made the acquaintance of Šādeq Hedāyat, and with him, and two other friends, Mojtabā Mīnovī and Bozorg 'Alawī, formed "the Group



of Four” (*rāb'a*; 'Alawī, pp. 239-41). Farzād collaborated with Hedāyat in writing the satirical sketches in *Vaġvaġ Sāhāb*, although the extent of his contribution remains unclear. In a later addition to the volume called “Qazīya-ye morġ-e rūḥ” (The case of the soul-bird), Hedāyat alluded to Farzād’s theories about Ḥāfeẓ’s poetry and his desperate search for a publisher. His friendship with Mīnovī, however, later turned into deep mutual animosity and vituperative exchanges.

In 1942 Farzād moved to London as an employee of the Persian section of the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), a post he held for eight years. Following that, he joined the Persian embassy in London as a local staff member. Later he was put in charge of the students’ section and also became the cultural attaché for close to a decade.

While at the BBC, Farzād continued to write and publish poetry in Persian. The three slim volumes of poetry he published at this stage are among his best compositions. They are: *Gol-e ġam* (Rose of sorrow; London, 1945), *Kūh-e tanhāī* (Mountain of loneliness; Tehran, 1947), and *Bazm-e dard* (Feast of pain; Tehran, 1953). He also produced many radio plays for the BBC based on anecdotes from Rūmī’s *Maṭnawī*, and worked intermittently on his edition of Ḥāfeẓ. Almost all of Farzād’s works in this period—from his poems to his notes on Ḥāfeẓ—emit strong feelings of bitterness, for he believed that a conspiracy of the Persian scholarly establishment in league with Britain were bent on thwarting his scholarly work on Ḥāfeẓ.

In mid-1960s, however, there was a sudden turn in his scholarly career. With the help of Golām-‘Alī Ra’dī Āḍarākšī and a few other well-placed friends, he finally found a niche for himself in the Persian academic milieu. In 1967 he was awarded a doctorate in Persian literature at Shiraz University (soon to be renamed Pahlavi University) and appointed professor in the university’s faculty of letters and humanities. Thus began, somewhat belatedly, the career which he thought best suited his talents. More importantly, at long last he had the opportunity to publish his work—now reportedly consisting of ten volumes—on Ḥāfeẓ. He remained at the university for ten years while his work on Ḥāfeẓ was being prepared for publication.

Early in 1977 Farzād suffered a brain hemorrhage and lapsed into a coma. He died over four years later in London and was buried there. Throughout this period he was nursed with exemplary fortitude and courage by Faḵrī Farzād, his devoted wife (Ḥoṣūrī, p. 594; 'Alawī, p. 239). By then, seven volumes of his



work on Ḥāfeẓ had been published. His critical edition of Ḥāfeẓ's *Dīvān* was published posthumously, as were his poetic compositions and much of his other writings.

Farzād was a versatile litterateur well acquainted with Western literature, but his approach to Persian scholarship had all the hallmarks of an autodidact . The principle on which he had devised his approach to Ḥāfeẓ, untenable from a scholarly point of view, was followed by some later poet-editors like Aḥmad Šāmlū, who have produced their own versions of Ḥāfeẓ's *Dīvān*, in which the intuitively aesthetic opinions of the editor play a large part in choosing between textual variants. Apart from his contributions to the study of Ḥāfeẓ, Farzād translated to and from Persian and wrote several articles on versification and poetic metres. He was also a keen advocate of the reform of the alphabet and spelling system.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

For a selected bibliography of Farzād's publications, see Ī. Afšār, "Dargodašt-e Mas'ūd Farzād," *Āyanda* 7, 1360 Š./1981, pp. 589-91.

B. 'Alawī, "Farzād: Ensān-e ranjdīda wa setīzgar," *Āyanda* 8, 1361 Š./1982, pp. 237-41.

M. Farzād, *Ḥāfeẓ: šeḥḥat-e kalemāt wa eṣālat-e ḡazalhā*, 2 vols., Shiraz, 1349 Š./1970.

Idem, *Ḥāfeẓ: gozāreš-ī az nīma-rāh*, Shiraz, 1352 Š./1973.

Idem, "Soḡanān-e Farzād az sargozašt-e ḵod," *Āyanda* 7, 1360 Š./1981, pp. 595-99.

Idem, *Sorūdahā-ye Mas'ūd Farzād*, ed. M. Rastgār Fasā'ī with intro. by Ġ.-'A. Ra'dī Āḍarākšī, Shiraz, 1369 Š./1990.

Šams-al-Dīn Moḥammad Ḥāfeẓ, *Dīvān*, ed. M. Farzād. n.p., 1362 Š./1983.



'A. Hoşūrī, "Yād-ī az Farzād," *Āyanda* 7, 1360 Š./1981, pp. 593-94.

Figure 1. Mas'ūd Farzād.