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present

‘Ubayd-i Zakani’s Counterhegemonic Poetics: Providing a Literary Context for the *Ghazals* of Hafiz

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University of Oxford

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For far too long, the *ghazals* (short lyric poems) of Hafiz (d. ca 1390) have been discussed in isolation from those of his contemporaries. Although Hafiz was without doubt the most significant poet active in mid- to late fourteenth-century Shiraz, he was not the *only* poet attached to the Injuid and Muzaffarid courts to produce *ghazals* of elegance and complexity. Some scholars of Hafiz are now beginning to practise what could be called “lateral literary analysis” and are examining Hafiz’s poems in tandem with those of his competitors with whom he engaged in poetic dialogue and alongside whom he vied to secure the favour of the rulers of Fars. In this talk I will show, through the detailed analysis of quasi-companion poems penned by Hafiz and the slightly more senior ‘Ubayd-i Zakani (d. 1371), how our understanding of the semantic depth of Hafiz’s *ghazals* can be augmented. The *ghazals* of ‘Ubayd, who is chiefly celebrated for his satirical works, provide a fruitful point for comparison with those of Hafiz because of their often irreverent tone. It will be argued that what might appear to be irreverence on ‘Ubayd’s part is in fact a deliberate counterhegemonic poetic agenda, one he used to upset the aesthetic status quo embodied in the verses of his chief rival, Hafiz.

Dominic Parviz Brookshaw is Associate Professor of Persian Literature at the University of Oxford, and Senior Research Fellow in Persian at Wadham College, Oxford. From 2011-2013 he was Assistant Professor of Persian Literature and Comparative Literature at Stanford University. Dominic currently serves on the Editorial Boards of *Middle Eastern Literatures* and *DABIR* and, for a decade (2004-2014), he served as Assistant Editor (Literature and Culture) for *Iranian Studies*. He is a former member of the Board of the International Society for Iranian Studies (ISIS), and a current member of the Governing Council of the British Institute of Persian Studies (BIPS). Dominic has published numerous articles in peer-reviewed journals on pre-modern, nineteenth-century, and contemporary Persian poetry, as well as two Persian language textbooks, and a vocabulary of Media Persian. His recent publications include two edited volumes: *Ruse and Wit: The Humorous in Arabic, Persian, and Turkish Narrative* (Harvard University Press, 2012); and *Forugh Farrokhzad, Poet of Modern Iran: Iconic Woman and Feminine Pioneer of New Persian Poetry* (I B Tauris, 2010; co-edited with Nasrin Rahimieh). Dominic writes poetry (in English) on his connection to and experience of Iran as someone of mixed Iranian-English heritage.

Light refreshments will be served

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