INTRODUCTION

Ghazal as World Literature: Transformations of a Literary Genre

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Why the ghazal?

The ghazal is certainly one of the most successful genres in world literature. Due to extensive migrations it is spread over a vast geographical space of multiple literary languages: from Arabic it migrated via Persian into Turkic and the languages of India, in Spain into Hebrew via Arabic and, finally, transmitted via Persian models, it even emerged in the poetic canon of German literature. This widespread dissemination of the ghazal genre alone would have been reason enough to hold a symposium on the ghazal. But there were further challenges. In 1993, the qaṣīda conference[1] held in Oxford filled an important desideratum by focusing on another great traditional poetic genre from the Middle East, the polythematic qaṣīda. This initiative set an example worthy to emulate. Above all, however, it was the *power* of the ghazal itself that inspired us to turn to this uniquely universal genre and to discuss its complex aesthetic manifestations, the eloquence of its refined language and the musicality that radiates from its poetic form, and thus, the fascination that it entails for those who read, hear or study it. The enthusiasm displayed by the conference participants and their guests in Beirut emphatically proved that our perception of the ghazal as an "enchanting genre" was not mistaken.

But from where and how does the ghazal as poetry derive its power? Is it the sound pattern of this poetic form which offers a unique synthesis of monorhyme and refrain poetry through its peculiar rhyming praxis, especially in its Persian and Turkic forms? The most striking characteristic of the Persian-Turkic ghazal, and thus also of the German *Ghasel*, is certainly its peculiar underscoring of a key word or even whole phrase – the so-called

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[1] Stefan Sperl and Christopher Shackle: *Qasida Poetry in Islamic Asia and Africa*. I: Classical Traditions and Modern Meanings II: Eulogy's Bounty, Meaning's Abundance. An Anthology. Leiden et al. 1996.

radīf – that precedes the rhyming syllable, by repeating it throughout all the verses of the poem. Should this technique of completing each verse with an identical word or phrase not suggestively hint at a hidden deeper layer of meaning? Although the Arabic ghazal does not draw on this particular poetic device, it too stands out from other poetic forms. Is it the personal character of the address in the ghazal, inspiring an intimacy unimaginable in other poetic genres that particularly fascinates us? Is it the illusion of eavesdropping that arises while listening as the poet conducts a conversation with his own intimate "you," where the poet – to quote Northrup Frye – "has metaphorically turned his back on the listener"? This inverted speaker-listener situation is markedly distinct from those of other genres, in particular that of the qaṣīda, in which the poet keeps in view the audience that he directly addresses in his lengthy recitation (or at least pretends to address). Or is it the ambiguity of the ghazal text that generates such an impression: the fact that the gender of the person addressed in the familiar form in Turkic and Persian is inherently ambiguous and thus leaves open the exact nature of the gender relation at work? A vagueness that in later Arabic and, above all, in Persian, Turkic and Urdu poems, can even refer to the either natural or supernatural affiliation of the beloved, who, although mostly embodied in a human person, can also be divine. The ghazal not only transcends levels of language, but uses language itself to transcend the worldly and the sacred, areas that are otherwise mostly dealt with separately. The ghazal goes beyond the boundaries of profane speech, yet simultaneously hauls sacred speech back into the human context. Thus, precisely through its comprehensive perspective, it restores the connection between the divine and the human – that is so uniquely efficient in love – in the literary world of poetry.

The papers brought together in this volume present the outcome of a symposium convened by Thomas Bauer and Angelika Neuwirth at the Orient Institute of the *Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft* in Beirut between July 7th and 10th, 1999, with the support of the *Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft* (DFG). The volume designed for publication in the series *Beiruter Texte und Studien* (BTS) was kindly accepted by the subsequent Director of the Orient Institute, Prof. Manfred Kropp. The editors wish to express their thanks to him, as well as to Thorsten Gerald Schneiders, who took upon himself the trouble of formatting and proofreading the texts as well as preparing the index, and Ruth Hartmann, OIB, who took care of the publication process. This collection of papers read in Beirut[2] is accompanied

[2] Unfortunately, four papers on the classical and mystic ghazal read at the symposium could not be included in this volume. In their place the editors have obtained contributions by Renate Jacobi, Jaakko Hämeen-Anttila, Th. Emil Homerin and Simon Kuntze on related subjects.

by a parallel volume, titled *Ghazal as World Literature – The Ottoman Gazel in Context. From a Literary Genre to a Great Tradition*, which documents the contributions presented at a second symposium on ghazal convened by Angelika Neuwirth, Börte Sagaster, and Judith Pfeiffer at the *Orient-Institut der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* in Istanbul from May 16th through 18th of the same year. Whereas our present volume attempts to cover the ghazal tradition in its vast range, the Istanbul volume focuses on the Ottoman and Turkic ghazal and strives to contribute to the memorialising of Ottoman imperial culture that currently enjoys renewed attention in Turkish intellectual society.

It is our hope that this volume will convey something of the fascinating power exerted by the genre of the ghazal. A rich array of international research formed the basis of this initiative. It drew special inspiration from the work of one scholar who, like virtually no other before her, has contributed to bringing to light the aesthetic aura of Arabic poetry, and in particular that of the ghazal genre. As an expression of our esteem, this volume is dedicated to Renate Jacobi.

TRANSFORMATIONS OF THE GHAZAL

The beginning of a long history

The prehistory of the ghazal begins around the fifth century on the Arabian peninsula. There the idea had developed to prelude poems composed for purposes not related to love with some verses that recorded a love episode experienced in the past. A poem thus emerged that was characterised by the sequence of two different, even contrasting themes in terms of their moods: the first displayed a melancholic longing while the other was mostly heroic in nature. This combination served to palpably increase the emotional effect of the poem.[3] As the prelude did not pursue any pragmatic intent, the poet was able to concentrate completely on its artistic and aesthetic shape, thus opening up new horizons for Arabic poetry and creating a perspective that, situated in a purely artistic poetry, went beyond any pragmatic objective.

[3] Another example (while certainly of another nature) for the combination of two disparate themes is evident in the "entry through nature" of the troubadour songs. Another type of combination is treated in T. M. Johnstone: Nasīb and Mansöngur. In: *JAL: Journal of Arabic Literature* 3 (1972), 90-95.

What is most important about this development, within our present framework, is the introduction of the love theme for the first time in Arabic poetry. The new pattern of the qaṣīda as a thematically multipartite poem, with an introductory section on love called the nasīb, was to prove very successful, as is witnessed by a career that was to last over one and a half millennia.

The essential components in terms of content and form of what we today understand as ghazal were thus already apparent by the beginning of the seventh century. At that time, the forerunners of the ghazal deal with the theme of love, and these poetic texts consist of metrically identical verses that use monorhyme, the first two half verses of the opening verse often constituting an additional rhyming pair. But here the theme of love is still only one part of a polythematic poem. There is not one single poem dating from the pre-Islamic era that is exclusively dedicated to love. Since individual poems focusing on other themes contained in the polythematic qaṣīda exist in abundance, it appears that no independent love poems existed in these early times.[4] More than another century was to pass until the need for such love poems emerged.

The scholar to whom this volume is dedicated has examined the emergence of the ghazal in great detail.[5] The societal upheavals during the era of the conquests, as integration into tribal structures was loosened, created the preconditions for the emergence of independent love poems. The poet Abū Dhuʾayb (d. 28/649), who himself took part in the conquests, has left us some of the oldest examples of fully developed ghazal poems. These few examples are useful for demonstrating that not only the societal rank of the individual had changed, but also that this change led to a new understanding of the phenomenon of love itself, a change without which the ghazal would not have emerged in the form now known to us. No longer exclusively focused on a retrospective view of an earlier love relationship now past, the sole theme of the pre-Islamic nasīb, this shift now allowed new perspectives on the present and future to emerge and to flank the orientation to the past.

In the love poetry of the Umayyad era, two traditions can be distinguished as separate ideal types, which in reality were often merged together in a variety of combinations or were mixed with the pre-Islamic

4 See Thomas Bauer: *Liebe und Liebesdichtung in der arabischen Welt des 9. und 10. Jahrhunderts. Eine literatur- und mentalitätsgeschichtliche Studie des arabischen Ġazal*. Wiesbaden 1998.

5 Renate Jacobi: Die Anfänge der arabischen Ġazalpoesie: Abū Ḏuʾaib al-Huḏalī. In: *Der Islam* 61 (1984), 218-250.

nasīb tradition. One type pertains to the urban milieu of the Ḥijāz (Medina, Mecca, al-Ṭāʾif) and was made famous by ʿUmar ibn Abī Rabīʿa (d. 93 or 103/712 or 721). Here poets tell of their amorous encounters and flirtations and produce song texts for male and female singers who had become important contributors to early Arabic-Islamic urban culture. In contrast to this *ḥijāzī* trend of love poetry, the *ʿudhrī* form, named after the tribe of ʿUdhra, emerged in the Beduin milieu (although it should not be imagined that all of its poets, singers and listeners were necessarily Beduins). Jamīl (d. 82/701) is its most famous representative. The poet, and sometimes the poetess, appears in this poetry as a partner captured in a love relationship, the intensity of which would have been unimaginable in the pre-Islamic nasīb. The lover is now totally absorbed by his/her own love. There is no room for anything else. Love defines an asocial space for itself and demonstratively confronts its social environment. Since external conditions render the fulfilment or the perpetuation of this love impossible, the only outlet that remains for the lover is death. This kind of love that has become literature through this kind of love poetry is called *ʿudhrī* love after its most famous representatives. And although not all poets of this mode belonged to the ʿUdhra tribe, they could still claim that "my tribe is that of the Asra (i.e. ʿUdhra) who die when they love."[6] It is noteworthy that *ʿudhrī* love does not manifest itself exclusively in the poems – and in the case of less important poets in this trend not even primarily – but rather in the lovers as a couple, one of whom is the poet. The *ʿudhrī* poet is always a *persona* in a love story that is illustrated in the poems. The more famous the couple, the more legendary this love story became, and so these poems are always more apocryphal. The existence of the most famous lovers, Majnūn and Laylā, is thus historically the most doubtful.

In an astoundingly short time, a wealth of love poetry of the most divergent kind, of love stories and musical traditions had emerged that formed a sufficient material basis and starting point for an array of expressive modes which could be used by the most diverse social groups and individuals. The caliph poet al-Walīd ibn Yazīd (d. 126/744), the last ghazal poet of the Umayyad era, no longer fits into the *ʿudhrī-ḥijāzī* scheme but forms from traditional elements "poetry of unique charm, playful and passionate, adoring and demanding, a curious mixture of sensual, courtly and ʿUdhrī love," as we can read in the contribution by R. Jacobi (p. 136). With al-Walīd, we have left behind the formative phase of the ghazal and

6 "*Und mein Stamm sind jene Asra, welche sterben, wenn sie lieben.*" Heinrich Heine: Der Asra. In: *Heines Werke in fünf Bänden*. Weimar 1959, vol. 1, 196.

enter into a series of transformations which led to new literary forms and to a remarkable differentiation in the meaning of the ghazal discourse for society as a whole. It is therefore fitting that this volume starts chronologically with al-Walīd.

Transformations of Language

Worldwide the ghazal displays a more astounding record than even the sonnet and not just because it enjoys a head start of six centuries over the sonnet. From Arabic, the ghazal spread via Persian into Turkic in one direction and in another to India and further eastward into the Malay-Indonesian area. Through its adaptation in German and Russian the ghazal even crossed the borders of large cultural domains – unlike the sonnet. If the ghazal, despite extending for a period of almost one and a half millennia and spatially ranging from Mauritania to Indonesia and from Sweden[7] to India, has nevertheless been granted little attention by Western literary studies, this is due – apart from Eurocentric prejudices – in the first instance to the poor state of research in Oriental literatures in general. Thus, entire periods and regions of the relevant literatures have scarcely yet been researched. And even in the better researched literatures, the concentration on both genuine and alleged "heydays" has lead to a distorted image, one that is more of a hindrance to gaining a comprehensive picture of the development of a genre, quite apart from the fact that there is hardly a scholar who fully addresses more than one or at the most two literatures of the ghazal. Hardly anyone could present a *tour d'horizon* like Ch. Bürgel, who presents here a wide range of varying manifestations of "the mighty beloved" theme in Arabic, Persian, Turkic and Urdu.

The most important step in the spread of the ghazal was unquestionably that from Arabic into Persian, for not only did many of the most important ghazal poets write in this language but, furthermore, it was mainly through Persian literature that the ghazal was brought into other language areas. J. S. Meisami is certainly on target in seeing the rise of the Persian ghazal as "analogous to the independent Arabic poems on love, wine, and various other topics" (p. 327). Other theories which identify the origins of the Persian ghazal in an autochthonous Persian folk literature or in the nasīb of the Persian qaṣīda, owe their success in the first instance to an ignorance, still prevalent until recently, of the Arabic ghazal of the 4th/10th century, that is, precisely the period in which the first ghazal poems emerged in Persian.

[7] Cf. the Swedish poem "En ghasel" by Gustaf Fröding (1860-1911).

Here, too, the Eurocentric canonisation of individual poets and epochs has diminished overall awareness. If we compare the themes and motifs of the Arabic ghazal of this time with those of the early Persian ghazal, there emerges such an extensive correspondence that no serious doubts can be raised as to the provenance of the Arabic ghazal. For instance, in the Arabic ghazal of the period after Abū Nuwās the catalogue of the beloved's beauty characteristics are virtually identical to those given in the Persian ghazal. Only the ideal of the small mouth and the double chin are missing in the Arabic version and first emerge in Persian love poetry, as R. Würsch shows in her contribution.

By contrast, the transition of the ghazal from Persian into Turkic is unproblematic. The Turkic ghazal in its Eastern (Čaghatay) and Western (Ottoman) expression is in the beginning a continuation of the Persian ghazal by other means, but then here, too, an autonomous development began to unfold, as the contributions by W. Andrews/M. Kalpaklı and J.T.P. de Bruijn show. With the transition into Urdu and the rest of the Indo-Islamic languages, we are once again confronted with the grave problems encountered by the status of the history of scholarly research in these areas, for this transition took place at a time when the "Indian style" (*sabk-i hindī*)[8] dominated in the Persian ghazal, a style that aroused extreme aesthetic reservations amongst Western experts in Oriental studies. The Urdu ghazal – probably the most lively ghazal tradition today – could thus only be considered marginally in the present volume within the comprehensive contribution by Ch. Bürgel.

The ghazal represents a particularly characteristic art form of Islamic culture, here comparable to the *muqarnaṣ*, although it is not a religious Islamic art form (apart from its Sufi transformation). Indeed, it was even viewed by strict religious scholars with scepticism, if not with downright disapproval. It is precisely those transformations which go beyond the Islamic bearers and even beyond the Islamic cultural circle that are of great interest here. It was on the Iberian peninsula that the Arabic ghazal cultivated by Muslims was taken over by Jews and emulated in Hebrew. Examples of the most important representatives of this tradition are presented in the contribution by A. Schippers. That the Arabic ghazal in al-Andalus would go on to help troubadour poetry see the light of day can be briefly mentioned here as well, although this step leads us thematically beyond the scope of the present volume.

[8] Cf. the contribution to the parallel volume by Michael Glünz: The Indian Style in Ottoman Lyric Poetry. A Far Cry from the Origins of the Ghazal.

The ghazal executed a real leap in the first years of the 19th century when it was introduced into German literature. The Orient offered an alternative to antiquity as the dominating model. The ghazals of the Persian poet Ḥāfiẓ, which were made accessible to German readers in the stylistically poor translation by Hammer-Purgstall, received an avid reception. Goethe's *West-Eastern Divan* became the starting-point for the whole of the "West-Eastern school" of German poetry. Goethe nevertheless approached the form of the ghazal – or as it was called in German *Ghasel* (or *Gasel*) – with hesitation, as H. Birus shows in his contribution. Paradoxically, however, it is precisely the form of the ghazal which was to allow the *Ghasel* to rapidly find a place in German literature beyond Oriental connotations. Friedrich Rückert's *Ghaselen*[9] are not only made up of his Ḥāfiẓ translations; he also used this form in more than a dozen of his *Kindertotenlieder* without any reference at all to the Orient. With August von Platen's melancholic *Ghaselen* the genre reached a pinnacle. The "Young German" Dingelstedt tested out the suitability of the *Ghasel* for satiric purposes. The Swiss Heinrich Leuthold and the Baudelaire translator Max Bruns wrote *Ghaselen* without any Oriental reference. However, as H. Birus points out in his contribution, if the ghazal does away with all allusions to its Oriental origin, it may become difficult to perceive its *raison d'être* as an autonomous form of poetry. Nonetheless, even in the 21st century, the *Ghasel* remained a presence in German literature.[10]

Transformations of Form

A genre or a literary form can survive for more than a millennium only if it displays a particular ability to adapt. But precisely this ability to adapt must perforce lead to a situation where ultimately very different manifestations emerge, which can then be recognised as related only through an awareness of their genesis.

The ghazal's ability to adapt is due in large part to an interdependence between content and form. Nonetheless, questions about the relationship between content and form have frequently led scholars astray, without a willingness first to cross linguistic and cultural borders through

9 See the contribution to the parallel volume by Hartmut Bobzin: Rückert as Translator and Imitator of Persian Ghazal Poetry.

10 For example, see "Ghasel." In: Harald Hartung: *Langsamer träumen. Gedichte.* München et al. 2002, 69.

interdisciplinary inquiry. The question as to whether the ghazal should be defined through its content or its form can never be answered unambiguously, not even for any manifestation in any given individual language. Claims that the Arabic ghazal should be defined through its content and the Persian through its form soon prove to be a dead end. In the end, both axioms – the relationship between form and content is arbitrary or between both there exists a clear dichotomy – must be principally called into question. Otherwise the phenomenon of the ghazal cannot be understood at all. Interestingly, the problems resulting from attempts to determine the relationship between form and content in the Arabic ghazal have nothing to do at all with those which analogously have arisen for the German *Ghasel*, to mention only this extreme; nevertheless, the problematic question of the relationship between form and content is and has been a constant in the history of the ghazal.

For the Arabic ghazal, the main question is the relationship between the ghazal and the nasīb. Whereas Arab literary theory treats these terms synonymously, as B. Gruendler shows in her contribution, it has become custom in Western Arab studies to distinguish between the two terms. The difference is one that is formally defined, with the term nasīb used for the introductory section of the qaṣīda with a love theme, and the term ghazal used for the independent love poem. At the same time, though, this formal characteristic is probably of secondary nature. The primary difference is rather that, on the one hand, there is a tradition of love poetry which goes back to the pre- and early Islamic nasīb, while, on the other hand, there is a tradition that stems from the independent, relatively short love poems of the Ḥijāzian and ʿUdhrian, later the courtly and urban poets and singers. While it is true that the latter tradition descends genetically from the former, it developed nonetheless so quickly and fundamentally as a distinct and autonomous form that as a rule it is little trouble to ascribe a verse to one of the two lines of tradition. The difference between nasīb and ghazal – a perfectly meaningful distinction founded in the material itself – thus resides in how both follow different intertextual lines. In terms of ideal types, this difference can be formulated as follows:

(1) The nasīb is a text that intertextually refers back to the pre- and early Islamic qaṣīda introduction, which is why it is set in the Beduin milieu. Thematically, the nasīb can basically be ascribed to the following three topics, as R. Jacobi has elaborated: a) the *deserted campsite*, where the poet abides at the traces of a forsaken campsite, shedding tears; b) the *vision* of the beloved, the *khayāl*, that the sleepless poet perceives while he spends the night in the desert; and c) the *morning of separation*,

during which the poet watches the members of the beloved's tribe depart.[11] Formally, the nasīb in the poems forming the starting point of the intertextual tradition is the first section of a polythematic poem.

(2) The ghazal is a text that intertextually refers to the tradition of independent love poems, as formed during the 7th, 8th and 9th centuries. For the fully developed ghazal of the 9th and 10th centuries, which can be regarded as the starting point for the entire ghazal of the following millennium, it holds that nearly all its themes and motifs can be subsumed under five different categories, namely: 1) *praise* of the beloved's beauty; 2) a *complaint* made by the lover, who cannot (or not yet, or no longer) attain a union with the beloved; 3) a *declaration* of passionate, unsurpassable and unavoidable love; 4) a *reproach* directed against the beloved, who does not satisfy the expectations of the lover in response to his expressions of unselfish love; and finally 5) a *portrayal*, i.e. the description of successful or unsuccessful encounters with the beloved or the depiction of the beloved's individual traits, such as his/her religion, race, eye colour, social position, or his downy beard.[12] In formal terms, those ghazal poems that form the starting point for the intertextual tradition are independent poems of shorter or, at the most, medium length.

The intertextual tradition thus includes criteria in terms of both content as well as form. As both traditions are part of the literary community's consciousness, a poet can either refer solely to one strand of the line of tradition – or however to both simultaneously. Hence, we can find introductions to qaṣīdas which clearly match the thematic catalogue outlined above for the ghazal and not the nasīb, as for example in the panegyric poems by al-Buḥturī (206-284/821-897) addressed to the caliph al-Mutawakkil. On the other hand, there are poems found in the ghazal chapter of the dīwān of Ibn al Muʿtazz (247-296/861-908) which just as clearly refer back to the intertextual line of the old Arabic, Beduin-style nasīb, even while remaining independent poems.[13] In the current volume this problematic distinction is taken up above all by A. Schippers, who examines the relationship between the nasīb and ghazal traditions for the Arabic and Hebrew love poetry of the 11th and 12th centuries in al-Andalus. He is able to show that it is relatively easy to assign every individual

11 Renate Jacobi: *Studien zur Poetik der altarabischen Qaṣide.* Wiesbaden 1971, 13-49; cf. also *eadem*: "Nasīb." In: *EI²: Encyclopaedia of Islam²,* VII, 978-983.

12 Cf. Bauer: *Liebe.*

13 See the contribution to the parallel volume by Thomas Bauer: The Arabic Ghazal. Formal and thematic aspects of a problematic genre.

verse to one of the two traditions even though the borders between the nasīb and the ghazal are frequently blurred. If the relationship between these traditions – and thus indirectly also that between form and content – may appear problematic to scholars today, for the poets it represented an extension of their possibilities and a stimulus for their creativity.

J. Hämeen-Anttila also emphasizes that the poets were very conscious of the traditions and the genre conventions in which they wrote. In his examination of Abū Nuwās' work (d. c. 198/813), he shows how poems addressed to girls are more conventional and barely transgress the genre boundary of the ghazal, whereas the ghazals addressed to youths were at this time a new genre still in gestation, which is why a greater thematic breadth and numerous instances of overlapping with other genres (*mujūn*, *khamriyya*) is evident.

For the Arabic poetry of the Mamluk period, the study of Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī's (773-852/1372-1449) dīwān by Th. Bauer shows the paramount importance lent to the love poetry of the ghazal type at this time. It can also be shown that formal criteria were of importance for assigning a poem to the ghazal genre. For although typical ghazal themes were dealt with in introductions to panegyric poems, in the form of epigrams, or in stanza poems, only those poems in the traditional *qarīḍ* form exclusively devoted to the theme of love were qualified *expressis verbis* as ghazal. Ibn Ḥajar's poem cited as an example shows in turn that polythematic poems, which at times were of extraordinary length, were composed within this framework (which if they were Persian poems would no longer have been accepted as a ghazal).

In Persian, the ghazal appears at first easy to define, and in fact exclusively through formal criteria: five to twelve verses; continuous rhyme plus a double rhyme in the first verse; often echo rhyme (*radīf*) as well as the mentioning of the poet's pen-name in the last verse (*takhallus*). Theoretically, any theme can be dealt with in this form, but in practice once again it emerges that the reception of this form is inevitably connected to the ghazal tradition focused on content. So, for example, the panegyric ghazals analysed by J. Meisami in her contribution begin as common love poems, and indeed some of them can only be distinguished from ghazals with a love theme by identifying the external textual context. Once again it is the creativity of the poet that allows the ghazal to be used for various purposes, through skilful manipulation of its "conventional" elements and exploitation of its connotative potential.

R. Würsch examines the extent to which phenomena of content also have an impact on the perception of the Persian ghazal as it is

formally defined. Although Würsch's contribution is focused on an epos of Niẓāmī (d. 605/1209), the love relationships in this epos do not correspond to those of the epic tradition but rather those of the ghazal. Niẓāmī transforms, as it were, the content of the Persian ghazal in the form of the epos, something that would not even have been possible if a distinct emphasis on content had not also been tied to the ghazal in Persian literature. In her contribution, P. Furrer shows how through a few language devices, including especially through the description of a male beloved, a modern Turkish novelist creates intertextual references to the Ottoman ghazal.

Even in the extreme case of the German *Ghasel*, which is exclusively defined by formal criteria, content components should not be overlooked, as in the examples of intertextual reference back to the Ḥāfiẓ and Rūmī reception of Hammer, Goethe and Rückert. The problematic relationship between form and content is attested by reference works which again and again name Goethe as one of the first German *Ghasel* poets.[14] However, as the contribution by H. Birus in this volume shows, Goethe never wrote a *Ghasel*, at least not one that completely fulfils the formal criteria for a *Ghasel*. Nevertheless, Goethe's *West-östlicher Divan* became a reference point for all later *Ghasel* poets, because in it the Orient intertextuality is realised as an ideal type. This intertextual line was difficult to escape. Platen, who – unlike Rückert – translated ghazal poems by Ḥāfiẓ into German in stanza form and not in the *Ghasel* form, used the form of the *Ghasel* to express highly personal experiences. He enthusiastically wanted to leave behind the Oriental tradition of the ghazal: "The Orient is finished, now look at the form as our own."[15] And yet, as the mask of Ḥāfiẓ in the form of the ghazal served him as a means for expressing feelings, which was otherwise prohibited by the repressive sexual morality of the Christian West, the intertextual reference to the Orient remained apparent in his *Ghasel*, as was also the case with Georg Friedrich Daumer, who also donned the mask of Ḥāfiẓ to poetically pronounce his *Weltanschauung* (and is thus mostly misunderstood as a far too free translator of Ḥāfiẓ). H. Birus views the poets who wrote *Ghaselen* without an Oriental quality as even the "more or less all happy exceptions" (p. 429).

14 Gero von Wilpert: *Sachwörterbuch der Literatur.* Stuttgart [7]1989, 344-5; Hans Dieter Schlosser: *dtv-Atlas Deutsche Literatur.* München [8]1999, 194.

15 Cf. the contribution by H. Birus, 415ff. See also the contributions to the parallel volume by Petra Kappert: Die Ghaselen in August Graf von Platens orientalischer Dichtung, and Gregor Schoeler: August Graf von Platens Ghaselen.

Transformations of Love and the Love Poem

Love is the sole theme in the Arabic ghazal, as well as the most important theme in the Persian ghazal and the lines of ghazal tradition stemming from it. And yet this says far less than is generally believed. One may be tempted to assume that love poetry is easier to understand for the modern reader than the genre of panegyric poetry, because after all everyone knows what love is, while the social conditions for panegyric poetry have ceased to exist. But one should not lose sight of the fact that emotions are also subject to transformation processes. For beyond biological constants, immutable in historical periods, emotions like love definitely have their own history and historical mutability, as the discipline of mentality history shows. If we view the extensive scope of the emotional worlds presented in the ghazal poems in this volume, then there exists sufficient reason to doubt whether the emotions expressed are compatible with one another or are equally open to the comprehension of the modern reader. We must therefore reckon with *(a) the transformation of the emotion "love" itself.*

But it is not only the lover and his emotions that are subjected to change. A glimpse at the addressee of the love poems in this volume shows that even the object of love also changes over time. Certainly, the fact that from the time of Abū Nuwās onward love poems could be addressed to both girls as well as youths – J. Hämeen-Anttila's contribution identifies common features and differences – points to a transformation of the individual emotional world of the lover. And yet, when we view the social environment prevailing in the "age of the beloved," one that W. Andrews and M. Kalpaklı illustrate so strikingly in their contribution, then it becomes clear that this explanation does not go far enough. And this becomes even more obvious when the beloved is identical with the ruler, as in the panegyric (J. Meisami), or with God, as in the mystical ghazal (Th. E. Homerin, S. Kuntze). We must therefore reckon with *(b) the transformation of the social function of love* as well.

However, not only a lover and a beloved belong to a love poem (in contrast to what we are used to, both roles are clearly distinguished from one another in Islamic love poetry). There is the audience which is also a participant, so to speak, in the experience of love. It is often a peculiar consequence of an all too successfully staged "performance" between the lover (as poet) and the beloved (as addressee) that causes us to forget that the poem revolves precisely around a playing out of the emotions experienced by those two in front of, and requiring, the audience as part of the experience. Perhaps modern observers encounter difficulties in

trying to understand this because they take their orientation from the concept of lyric poetry that has predominated since the early 19th century, where the poet expresses his/her most intimate feelings in a way that is as "honest" as possible. While this may lead to plumbing the depths of the subjective emotive potential, at the same time it greatly restricts the scope for which the poem can then be used. A poem composed under such premises is nothing more than a poem of a lover on love, and it is to be assumed that the numerous anthologies containing the "most beautiful love poems" which fill our bookstores are in fact purchased by lovers or are to be given to them as gifts, or by those who wish to reminisce over earlier loves.

As the texts presented here suggest, this orientation was certainly only one of several ways love poetry was used in the pre-modern Islamic world and quite often not even the most important. We are thus dealing with *(c) the transformation of the social and emotional function of love poetry*, a function that is often overlooked, precisely because it runs so counter to the expectations held by the modern reader. A few fundamental considerations thus first need to be discussed here.

Any engagement with the ghazal phenomenon is necessarily one that compares cultures, and in a double sense. First, as a phenomenon that transgresses the borders of language and culture, the ghazal can be grasped to any significant degree only through cultural comparisons. Just as important, however, is the fact that the observer is a member of a globalised Western modernity (which also holds true for contemporary Arab and Iranian literary scholars). When opinions are given on pre-modern cultures, scholars therefore necessarily compare cultures, for such judgements can only be made contemporaneously with the conceptual instruments of their time. Of course, scholars are aware of this problem as a rule and have developed from the outset a particular sensibility for the radical otherness of their research topic. And yet, frequently enough the search for this otherness and the attempt to explain it do not lead to satisfying results – and the ghazal phenomenon delivers a vast array of examples. It would appear that the reason for this lies in neglecting to replace, or at the least supplement, a homologous viewpoint with an analogous one.

The concepts "homologous" and "analogous" can be best explained by using an example taken from biology. There organs which are traced back to the same basic type but are different in shape and function (e.g. the forelegs of mammals and the wings of birds) are known as "homologous organs." Conversely, "analogous organs" are those which display the

same function but have a different building plan and another origin (e.g. the wings of insects and birds). The common approach when comparing cultures (as, e.g., when researching a non-modern culture) is to investigate a phenomenon in the target culture that also exists – at least in name – in the world of the scholar. The attempt is undertaken to describe the differences between the two phenomena, and this is then believed to be a satisfactory completion of the task posed. However, all too often such comparisons end with remarks on a deficiency in the target culture. And in fact there are only a few studies on literature (or historiography, or Islamic theology etc.), which do not contain passages where it is lamented in a regretful tone what literature (or historiography, or Islamic theology, etc.) still then actually had to achieve if they wanted to be genuine literature etc. Not to mention extreme cases of this viewpoint, such as the repeatedly expressed lament that Islamic culture suffers from the lack of a period that could be called a "Reformation" or "Enlightenment." Such views are given without even considering whether Islamic culture had ever experienced those problems which the Reformation and the Enlightenment occurred in response to and sought to resolve, or what then would have been the constitution of an analogous phenomenon in the Islamic world (and whether perhaps there was such one after all). This is especially important, since any homologous phenomenon would not have made sense in that culture at that time, or even have served the same function in that culture.

Obviously it is often difficult to understand that the habitat given to us humans by nature can be furnished in very different ways and that similar looking pieces of furniture can exercise quite different functions in individual dwellings. A certain type of furniture may serve here as a chair, there as a table or a bed. On the other hand, one function can be fulfilled in a variety of dwellings through different furnishings: a carpet, a cushion or a chair may be used for seating. And single functions in a variety of dwellings can be distributed across different furnishings or cannot evolve in one dwelling the same way they can in another.

In Islamic studies, gradually those phenomena we call "theology" and "law" came to be seen as existent in Islamic culture in ways that are quite different from the institutions we have erected to fulfil analogous functions. However, it is much more difficult to assume a similar perspective in the case of emotions which we are inclined to consider as immutable in time and place. This is all the more so virulent as the greater part of humankind's cultural activities mainly serve to cover emotional fields given to us by nature, and many categorisations serve no other purpose than to delimit these emotional areas from one another and to bring them

into a culturally-approved order. But this order holds no validity beyond the individual cultures. These considerations are relevant for all three forms of transformation that love and love poetry are subjected to.

(a) Transformations of love and sexuality. We already mentioned in the introduction the change in mentality that was mirrored in the transition from the pre-Islamic nasīb to the ghazal of the Umayyad period – indeed without such a transitional development there would probably never have been a form called the ghazal. Already soon after the last ghazal poet of the Umayyad period, a further change becomes noticeable, such as in the poems of Muslim ibn al-Walīd. This change reflected a stronger and more individualised expression as the poet depicts his love to Salmā with an innovative transformation and recombination of traditional topics and motifs (see the contribution by R. Jacobi). The historical development in terms of mentality becomes even more pronounced however in the poetry of Abū Nuwās, and it is no coincidence that two contributions are devoted to him (J. Hämeen-Anttila and G. Schoeler). For, after all, it was Abū Nuwās who was to formatively shape Arabic love poetry for the entire millennium to follow, as no other poet would do. One of the most far-reaching features of his love poetry is the fact that his poems are addressed not only to girls, as was usual, but now also to youths. A great deal has been made of this change and profound psychological considerations on Abū Nuwās have been made, while forgetting that Abū Nuwās merely picked up a theme that "was in the air." This is shown by the fact that homoerotic love poems are already in evidence amongst the contemporaries of Abū Nuwās and were to remain established into the modern epoch. Indeed, the love object of the Persian and Ottoman-Turkish ghazal is almost exclusively a youth. How ghazal poems interact with a culture of actual lovers and beloveds in a 16th century Ottoman town is demonstrated by W. Andrews and M. Kalpaklı and again by T. Kortantamer.

The existence of this same-sex love has resulted in a series of misunderstandings of Islamic culture that are more serious than merely irritating: Islamic culture was examined and studied through the lens of the West's own criteria of how love should function and with what kinds of sexuality, and the universality of these criteria for Islamic culture was rarely, if ever, questioned. This bias has kept many from studying the ghazal at all. Others silently performed a sex change on the loved person and transformed all masculine forms into the feminine (these failed however with the countless references to a downy beard). Others in turn had the presumption to formulate the strangest psychological or cultural history theories. No satisfactory result could emerge from all this, for the

pre-modern perception of love and sexuality in the Islamic world is simply not homologous to that of the modern West. It is therefore not possible to apply unchanged the Western concept of homosexuality, in existence since the end of the 19th century, to the Islamic pre-modern epoch (and, by the way, neither to the Western pre-modern epoch).

The concept of homosexuality doubtlessly exerts a social effect in the present. Countless people – not only in Western industrial societies – understand themselves to be homosexual and view their gay and lesbian existence as part of their identity. However, this is the result of a century-long emancipation process, in the course of which love relationships between men[16] were regarded at first as sinful, then as pathological and thus combated by whatever means possible. It was precisely at this time – as the most rigorous and allegedly scientifically grounded approaches were undertaken against male-male sexuality – that the harshest collision between Western and Islamic culture also occurred. Western colonialism took up the theme of "natural" vs. "perverse" sexuality in order to justify an alleged *mission civilisatrice*. In the different reflections of the West, the Islamic world at one time appeared as a culture that represses sexuality (key terms: status of woman; veil), at another time as being wild and promiscuous – a cliché already dominant in the Middle Ages.

The Islamic world, which in many cases itself adopted such colonialist views, took over colonialist moral judgements wherever homologous concepts were to be found. However, Islam did not take over the corresponding transformations of these judgements as they occurred in the Western world during the second half of the 20th century. This is especially true where the concept of homosexuality and the judgements that were once connected with it are concerned. A closer look reveals, furthermore, that the Western concept of homosexuality is incompatible with both the usual notions of sexuality and gender in the pre-modern Islamic world, as well as with the religious norms placed upon sexuality. The ideas about sexuality were orientated not towards sex but rather towards the gender of the those involved. The social norm did not distinguish between sexuality adhering to the norm, that is, a relationship between a male and a female partner (heterosexuality), and a deviant sexuality, that is, a relationship exclusively between males (homosexuality). Rather, the distinction shaping the social norm was between an active partner of male gender

16 Love relationships between women found far less attention – and here the pre-modern Islamic world, which was indeed also patriarchal, coincidentally hardly conducted itself any differently.

(a grown man) and a passive partner of non-male gender, who could either be of the female sex or a youth not yet able to grow a beard (he may also be an eunuch or an effeminate, a *mukhannath*, but these groups hardly ever appear as objects of love). A further difficulty is posed by religious norms, which in turn were also orientated towards the relationships described above. The prohibition of *liwāṭ* does not refer to homosexuality but rather to a sexual practice, just as pre-modern Christianity prohibited certain sexual practices, but not any accompanying sexual inclination. For men in Islamic societies though it was only natural to find young men and women equally beautiful and to fall passionately in love.[17] This situation is similar to that found in ancient Greece and Rome. This love and its literary expression would come into conflict with religious norms especially when it was feared that it could occasion and incite sinful actions. In his contribution Th. E. Homerin mentions the problems religious scholars had with the ghazal.

As a consequence, the rashly formulated equation "homoeroticism = homosexuality = *liwāṭ* = deviant" led the Islamic world to view the ghazal heritage with extremely mixed feelings from the end of the 19th century onwards. A productive reappraisal of this tradition still remains to be undertaken. Instead, far-reaching conflicts are encountered wherever the ghazal tradition or the ideas of love and sexuality expressed in this tradition reach into modernity. How the theme of homosexuality in connection with the ghazal tradition is interrelated with ideological positions and forms part of contemporary political debate – this is a complex of issues that P. Furrer draws our attention to. Equally problematic are the echoes of a ghazal-imprinted mentality discussed in the contribution of S. Guth, who analyses an Egyptian novel of the 1980s which perhaps may be regarded as a parody of the ghazal protagonist, the passionate lover.

(b) Transformation of the social function of love. Towards the end of the Mamluk era, the Mamluk dignitary Uways al-Ḥamawī (d. 910/1504) fell out of favour and landed in prison. To comfort himself, he worked on compiling an anthology with the title *Sukkardān al-ʿushshāq*.[18] While two hundred years before Ṣafī al-Dīn ibn al-Buḥturī focused on prison-related themes (ingratitude, imprisonment, death) in the anthology he also compiled in prison,[19] the book of Uways revolved around love to a considerable extent. What is of particular interest here is the fact that two love discourses merge in this book which otherwise mostly run parallel to one another, namely the discourse of the ghazal and the discourse of love treatises and stories in prose.[20] But what moved Uways to seek comfort with the theme of love in prison?

Here, too, a homologous view – one speaks of love when confronted with the phenomenon of love – hardly brings us any farther ahead. Yet love is one of the strongest emotions, and consequently the ghazal is one of the most emotionally charged genres. It is also simultaneously accessible to all members of the literary community and can thus provide an emotionalised atmosphere with a cathartic function, even in contexts far removed from every present love relationship.

If this should at first amaze the modern observer, then this is because poetry is no longer capable of creating a comparably encompassing emotional atmosphere. And yet we should also consider the fact that we live in a world in which countless people read detective novels and murder mysteries, although they themselves neither possess hidden criminal talent nor entertain personal relations with criminals. Yet they gain emotional satisfaction (entertainment, relaxation, catharsis) from their reading. These observations justify the assumption that the omnipresence of love poetry in the pre-modern Islamic world can itself be traced back to how the production and reception of love poetry actualised emotions which surpassed the emotional spectrum that we now view as constituting love between two people. Such poetry made it possible for these emotions to be expressed in language.

In this way, the paradigm of a love relationship between a lover and a beloved can also be used to structure the relationship between a poet and a prince, especially as the relationship between an active lover and a passive beloved forms a perfect parallel to the relations evident in a social hierarchy. Given this premise, it becomes understandable that the ghazal could be used for the purposes of panegyric, as presented by J. Meisami, a development that unfolded first in Persian (and its subsidiary languages) and remained peripheral in Arabic. It is important though to emphasise that this development in Persian was made possible because of the traditional

17 A number of publications have appeared on this subject during the last decade. Here it may suffice to mention: J. W. Wright jr. and Everett K. Rowson (eds.): *Homoeroticism in Classical Arabic Literature*. New York 1997; Bauer: *Liebe*, 150-184; Arno Schmitt: "*Liwāṭ* im *Fiqh*: Männliche Homosexualität?" In: *Journal of Arabic and Islamic Studies* 4 (2001-2002), 49-110.

18 Cf. Wilhelm Ahlwardt: *Die Handschriften-Verzeichnisse der Königlichen Bibliothek zu Berlin: Verzeichnis der arabischen Handschriften* [Berlin 1887-1899], no. 8407.

19 *Uns al-masjūn wa-rāḥat al-maḥzūn*. Ed. M. Adīb al-Jādir. Beirut 1997.

20 A similar division can be identified in Persian literature. Here the ghazal stands opposite the epos, cf. the contribution by R. Würsch.

content of love as the ghazal's central theme, and not by virtue of any formal considerations or qualities of the ghazal.

This also holds true for the development that was to crystallise as perhaps the most important one in the history of the Islamic ghazal, that is, the rise of the mystical ghazal. In the mystical ghazal, the relationship between man and God formed the central theme and hence became the most important genre in Islamic religious poetry, next to the eulogy of the prophet. This transformation of the ghazal is consequently represented in turn by two detailed contributions (Th. E. Homerin and S. Kuntze, but also see those by J. T. P. de Brujn and R. Würsch). Th. E. Homerin shows how Ibn al-Fāriḍ transformed two courtly panegyrics by al-Mutanabbī into mystical ghazals. S. Kuntze analyses how the themes of secular love poetry are adopted into mystic poetry.

The focus of B. Embaló's contribution is on a completely different type of beloved. Embaló analyses texts by Nizār Qabbānī (1923-1998) and Maḥmūd Darwīsh (b. 1941) which present the city of Beirut as the female partner of the male poet and author. She asks to what extent images and concepts of the ghazal tradition can still be detected in the texts of these contemporary authors. Equally striking is Maḥmūd Darwīsh's staging of a mythic relationship between a female beloved of cosmic dimension, the land of Palestine, and her partner, the poet. The poem discussed by A. Neuwirth echoes the mystic poet Ibn al-Fāriḍ's famous ghazal *al-Jīmīya* that celebrates the passion of a human lover for his divine beloved. Darwīsh's poem thus attests a "genealogical relation" that exists between the mystical ghazal of classical Arabic culture and modern secular resistance poetry.

Poems by Maḥmūd Darwīsh are also the subject of the contribution by V. Klemm. In these poems the object of love is a Jewish woman, although readers tend to understand them as a political message and identify the woman with Palestine. In the end, it is exactly these political circumstances that makes the fulfilment of the love affair impossible. As is often the case in Arabic love poetry, the realisation of love is shattered by hostile external circumstances. But in the eleven and a half centuries lying between the unfulfilled love affairs of Muslim ibn al-Walīd and Salmā and Maḥmūd Darwīsh and Rītā, not only love poetry but indeed love itself and its social setting have been drastically transformed. It is therefore only consequential that we end our tour through Arabic love poetry, one that started chronologically with al-Walīd, with two articles on this modern Arabic poet.

(c) Transformations of the function of the ghazal. A love poem addresses the love expressed by a lover to a person who is loved.

What could thus be more obvious than to see the function of the love poem as residing in communicating the nature of this relationship and its specific circumstances? And yet we encounter problems even with such a straightforward definition. In fact, there are poems in which the communicative situation depicted – the lover tells the beloved something in the familiar form of the second person – is the *raison d'être* of the poem. G. Schoeler presents such a poem by Abū Nuwās in his contribution – and it is no coincidence that this poem is particularly difficult to understand. For its purpose is after all to communicate something to the beloved, who brings prior understanding to what is not clear to us. Whether we, the listeners, also understand was irrelevant to the poet. Poems like these are still present everywhere today. Yet their literary value is weak, for their pragmatic value, namely the conveying of information, takes centre stage. Poems that are literary in the narrower sense have to be distinguished from these (G. Schoeler also presents one of them). In these poems the addressee of the poem is not identical with the audience intentionally addressed by the poet. The poem now becomes polyvalent. It is situated in a triangular relationship between the poet, who embodies the lover, the addressee, who embodies the beloved (and who can perfectly well be fictive), and the reading or performative audience, who bestow on the poem their own meanings and who connect their own emotional reactions to the poem. This emotional reaction is reinforced by the musicality of the ghazal. In fact, many ghazal poems are song texts. This circumstance is mentioned again and again (the musical quality of ghazal poems is dealt with in detail in the contribution by R. Jacobi), and yet for us today the disadvantage remains that the melodies to these texts are lost.

The emotions which the poet has as he writes and the audience have as they hear or read a ghazal do not necessarily have to have anything to do with love, and so must by no means everywhere be love where there is a love poem. Indeed, already the pre- and early Islamic nasīb owed its existence mostly not to the need of the poet to write about a past love experience; rather, the need to find an introduction that forms an atmospheric starting point or counterpart to the rest of the poem.

Consequently, when we consider that various kinds of love poetry have accompanied the Islamic world from its very beginnings and when we look at the general significance of the ghazal in society as well as the fact that many other emotive relationships were fashioned in the ghazal form, then it does not appear surprising that we should also find the ghazal or reminiscences of the ghazal in those arenas of the Islamic world where ghazal does not, in fact, function as a love poem.

This holds in a certain way already for the *perde gazeli*, a ghazal used to introduce a *karagöz* play. This form of poetry thrived during the 19th century. Here the ghazal serves to describe the didactic function of shadow theatre. Examples are presented and analysed in the contribution by J.T.P. de Bruijn.

Even if it did not appear in the form of complete poems, the ghazal could still fulfil social functions. Broken into motifs, the smallest meaningful units of poetry, the ghazal was the subject of *maʿānī* books. In these collections, the motifs of different forms of love poetry were isolated and arranged in a new order. As B. Gruendler shows in her contribution, one of the main functions of these collections was to provide its readers with topics of conversations in literary gatherings. To have comprehensive knowledge of the ghazal could indeed prove beneficial to one's social career.

Even today, the subject of love and its communication in the form of poetry has not ceased to play a socially more important role in the Islamic world, than as is the case in Western societies. The contributions by B. Embaló, P. Furrer, V. Klemm and S. Guth each show in their own way that the ghazal of the past as well as of modern forms of love poetry can assume a high level of social relevance and play an important role in the political struggles of our day.

In summary, we can say that the theme of this volume, namely the ghazal, its historical development and the development of its significance in Islamic society, is far more than the history of a literary genre. For in the societies of the pre-modern Islamic world, this literary form had a significance that is scarcely imaginable for people in modern Western societies, in which the significance of poetry has sunk to a unique low in world history. And fundamental social and cultural parameters are manifested in this genre and its transformations over time to an extent not expressed in other text groups. It is only because of its extensive cultural significance that the ghazal could become one of the most successful genres or literary forms of humankind. And, after countless transformations, the significance of its theme reaches into the present, in which the ruins of the ghazal tradition inspire writers in their search for a new and nevertheless independent identity through a rearranging of its elements. Finally, through its diverse, even often contradictory reception, the ghazal confronts the Western world with its own prejudices in a remarkable way – but also with its visions. It hardly needs to be mentioned that a contribution such as this volume is hardly capable of more than touching on themes, sketching deficiencies, and providing the stimulus for the removal of the latter. But,

above all, it is hoped that this volume may contribute to making clear how necessary interdisciplinary cooperation is, whereby success in this regard will be secured only if the culture of global Western modernity concedes one thing: that is, what it regards as important for itself is not necessarily of prime importance for all other cultures, and that there may be things which were/are more important for peoples of other epochs and/or other cultures than what drives the leading figures in the societies of modern capitalism. If the understanding of other expressions of human culture is still to have any significance at all, then the homologous viewpoint also will need to be given up and an analogous viewpoint must take its place. This one first of all traces and investigates the significance individual thematic areas and discourses in Islamic culture possessed for its members. It allows this significance to remain unquestioned, and then asks about the functions which these areas and discourses could have fulfilled for the people; and only then, after these steps, searches for possible parallels in its own culture, whereby this search is to take its orientation from the question as to why the findings gained are often so difficult to comprehend for members of Western modernity. Such an approach would guarantee that the self-understanding of their own lived reality is given due weight, thus forming the prerequisite for what can be characterised as, greatly simplified, an unprejudiced attempt to understand other cultures. No further reasons need to be given as to why the ghazal must assume a key position in such an endeavour.