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UNIVERSITY OF
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Faculty of Asian and
Middle Eastern Studies

Mystical Wine

—

the *Khamriyya* of Ibn al-Fāriḍ (d. 1235)

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Collaborative Research Initiative

Khamriyya as a World Poetic Genre:

Comparative Perspectives on Wine Poetry

in Near and Middle Eastern Literatures

University of St Andrews and University of Cambridge

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1

شَرِبْنَا عَلَى ذِكْرِ الْحَبِيبِ مُدَامَةً سَكِرْنَا بِهَا مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ يُخْلَقَ الْكَرْمُ

In memory of the Beloved we drank a wine
That made us drunk before the vine was created.

2

لَهَا الْبَدْرُ كَأْسٌ وَهِيَ شَمْسٌ يُدِيرُهَا هِلَالٌ وَكَمْ يَبْدُو إِذَا مُزِجَتْ نَجْمٌ

Its cup is the full moon, itself a sun passed around
By a crescent. When it is mixed, how many stars appear!

3

وَلَوْلَا شَذَاهَا مَا اهْتَدَيْتُ لِحَانِهَا وَلَوْلَا سَنَاهَا مَا تَصَوَّرَهَا الْوَهْمُ

But for its fragrance, I would not have been guided to its tavern,
But for its radiance, my imagination would not have pictured it.

وَلَمْ يُبَقِّ مِنْهَا الدَّهْرُ غَيْرَ حُشَاشَةٍ كَأَنَّ خَفَاهَا فِي صُدُورِ النُّهَى كَتَمُ

Time left nothing of it save a last breath,
As if it had been concealed in the breasts of the wise.

صَفَاءٌ وَلَا مَاءٌ وَلُطْفٌ وَلَا هَوَاءٌ وَنُورٌ وَلَا نَارٌ وَرُوحٌ وَلَا جِسْمٌ

Purity, but not water, subtlety, but not air,
Light, but not fire, spirit but without a body,

وَعِنْدِي مِنْهَا نَشْوَةٌ قَبْلَ نَشَأْتِي مَعِيَ أَبَدًا تَبْقَى وَإِنْ بَلِيَ الْعَظْمُ

As for me, I was drunk with it before I was created,
And so it will remain forever, though my bones decay.

عَلَيْكَ بِهَا صِرْفاً وَإِنْ شِئْتَ مَزْجَهَا فَعَدُّكَ عَنِ ظَلَمِ الْحَبِيبِ هُوَ الظُّلْمُ

Drink it pure! But if you wish, you may mix it,
For it would be wrong to turn away from the Beloved's mouth.

37

وَدُونَكَهَا فِي الْحَانِ وَاسْتَجْلِلْهَا بِهِ عَلَى نَعْمِ الْأَحَانِ فَهِيَ بِهَا غُنْمٌ

Seek it in the tavern and there unveil it!
Accompanied by melodies you can win the prize.

40-41

فَلَا عَيْشَ فِي الدُّنْيَا لِمَنْ عَاشَ صَاحِحاً وَمَنْ لَمْ يَمُتْ سُكْراً بِهَا فَاتَهُ الْحَزْمُ
عَلَى نَفْسِهِ فَلْيَبْكِ مَنْ ضَاعَ عُمُرُهُ وَلَيْسَ لَهُ فِيهَا نَصِيبٌ وَلَا سَهْمٌ

No joy is in this world for one who lives sober,
And who does not die drunk with it – wisdom has passed him by.

Let him weep for himself, whose life is wasted,
Without a share or portion of this wine.

23-24

تَقَدَّمَ كُلَّ الْكَائِنَاتِ وَجُودُهَا قَدِيمًا وَلَا شَكْلٌ هُنَاكَ وَلَا رَسْمٌ
وَقَامَتْ بِهَا الْأَشْيَاءُ ثُمَّ لِحِكْمَةٍ بِهَا احْتَجَبَتْ عَنْ كُلِّ مَنْ لَا لَهُ فَهْمٌ

It existed prior to all created things
In eternity, when there was no form nor sign.

All phenomena came into being through it according to a wise decision,
Whereby it was veiled from those lacking understanding.

25-26

بِهَا اتَّصَلَتْ رُوحِي بِحَيْثُ تَمَازَجَا ا تَّحَاداً وَلَا جِرْمٌ تَخَلَّلَهُ جِرْمٌ
فَنَفْسٌ وَلَا خَمْرٌ وَأَدَمٌ لِي أَبٌ وَخَمْرٌ وَلَا نَفْسٌ وَلِي كَرْمُهَا أُمَّ

My spirit longed for it, so they were mingled together
As one, but not as a body pervades another body.

There is a soul and no wine, for Adam is my father,
And wine without a soul, for its vine is my mother.

27-28

وَلُطْفُ الْأَوَانِي فِي الْحَقِيقَةِ تَابِعٌ لِللُّطْفِ الْمَعَانِي وَالْمَعَانِي بِهَا تَسْمُو
وَقَدْ وَقَعَ التَّفْرِيقُ فَالْكُلُّ وَاحِدٌ فَأَرْوَاحُنَا خَمْرٌ وَأَشْبَا حُنَا كَرَمٌ

The subtlety of the vessels depends in reality on the subtlety
Of its essence, and the essence multiplies by means of the vessels.

For division has taken place, while the whole is one,
And so our spirits are a wine and our bodies a vine.

29-30

فَلَا قَبْلَهَا قَبْلٌ وَلَا بَعْدَ بَعْدِهَا وَقَبْلِيَّةُ الْأَبْعَادِ فَهِيَ لَهَا حَتْمٌ
وُحْصِرُ الْمَدَى مِنْ قَبْلِهِ كَانَ عَصْرَهَا وَعَهْدُ أَبِيْنَا بَعْدَهَا وَلَهَا الْيَتِيمُ

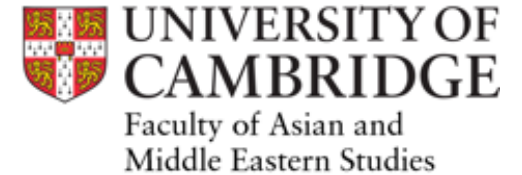
Before it is no “before” and after it is no “after”.
The priority of all posterity is essential to its nature.

Its grapes were pressed ere time began,
And our father’s age came after it, itself being an orphan.



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