Multi-Dimensional Functions of Ottoman Poetry

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Ottoman poetry has been generally recognized as a literary corpus and assessed with aestetic and literary criteria within its own limits. However, according to recent studies it has multifunctional features that relate to many arts. Ottoman poetry increased its own function by serving other arts and fields to the same extent that the political and economic success affected artistic inclinations during the sixteenth century. In particular, literary texts that were inscribed on architectural monuments, artistic works in themselves, both increased the aesthetic features of the edifice and made contributions to the field of history and art history by adding literary, artistic, historical and biographical richness and value. This is the multifunctional aspect of Ottoman poetry. Chronograms, epigraphs and inscriptions, which are the intersections of poetry and architecture, are essential examples of this multifunctional feature. This study aims to examine the multidimensional functions of poetry as reflected in the inscriptions, epigraphs and chronograms that have been engraved on architectural monuments, such as mosques, fountains, hospitals, baths, tombs, shrines and gravestones. Since this study focuses only on the 16th century, it will make contribution to the few number of works that have been written in this field, in which literature meets architecture, which to date have been mainly concerned with later eras, like the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries.

Key words: Ottoman poetry, architecture, chronograms, inscriptions, epigraphs.

Literary Representations on Architectural Structures: *Chronograms, Epigraphs and Inscriptions*

To date, Ottoman poetry has been known generally as a literary corpus and assessed with aestetic and literary criteria within its own limits. However, studies carried out over the last decade show that it has multifunctional features that relate to the other arts with which it has been placed. Ottoman poetry was one of the most powerful literary media in sixteenth century-Istanbul and formed a mutual relationship with other arts, in particular with architec-

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ture.[1] In the same way that the political and economic success effected artistic inclinations in many ways during the sixteenth century, Ottoman poetry also increased its own function by serving other arts and fields. In particular, literary texts which are inscribed in architectural monuments, artistic works in themselves, both increased the aesthetic features of the edifice and made contributions to the field of history and art history by adding literary, artistic, historical, biographical richness and value. This is the multifunctional aspect of Ottoman poetry. Chronograms, epigraphs and inscriptions, which are the intersections of poetry and architecture, are essential examples of this multifunctional feature. This study aims to examine the multidimensional functions of poetry as reflected in the inscriptions, epigraphs and chronograms that are engraved on architectural monuments, such as mosques, fountains, hospitals, baths, tombs, shrines and gravestones. A contribution will be made to other studies done in this field by showing how literary texts are represented on the architectural structures; in addition the importance of these texts for understanding the significance of edifices, in particular, and using them as sources for literary and architectural studies in general will be mentioned. Despite the fact that a few works have been written in this field where literature meets architecture, these are mainly concerned with later times like the 17th, 18th and 19thcenturies[2], whereas this paper focuses on 16th century. Also, in a study carried out on the work of Sinan during the reign of Suleyman the Magnificent[3] there are many examples of *kitabe* text, but no literary value has been given to these. In this paper, the meanings of the poems are given in order to illustrate their function.

The Art of Writing

The art of writing is the main and most significant component of decoration in Islamic art.[4] Almost all architectural edifices have different forms of

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1   For the relationship between architecture and poetry in the 16th century see Vildan Serdaroğlu, "When Literature and Architecture Meet: Architectural Images of the Beloved and the Lover in Sixteenth-Century Ottoman Poetry", *Muqarnas, an Annual on the Visual Culture of the Islamic World,* 23, (2006), 273-287.

2   See Günay Kut, Hatice Aynur, "İstanbul'un Mimarî Yapılarından Kitabe Örnekleri", *Prof. Nihad M. Çetin'e Armağan*, (Istanbul: İÜ Edebiyat Fakültesi, 1999), pp. 63-96; Hatice Aynur, Hakan T. Karateke, *II. Ahmed Devri İstanbul Çeşmeleri, 1703-1730*, (Istanbul : Istanbul Büyükşehir Belediyesi, 1995.)

3   See İ. Aydın Yüksel, *Osmanlı Mimarisinde Kanuni Sultan Süleyman Devri: (926-974/ 1520-1566)*, (Istanbul: Istanbul Fetih Cemiyeti, 2004.)

4   For a discussion on the importance and development of calligraphy in Islamic art and civilization, see Sheila S. Blair and Jonathan M. Bloom, "Art and Architecture, Themes and Variations," *The Oxford History of Islam*, ed. by. John L. Eposito, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 215-268.

literary texts carved either on the inner or outer surfaces. Each monument carries a certain type of text in accordance with its function and symbolic meaning. For instance, the Qur'anic verses, which are used for religious buildings, are very carefully selected to match the particular situation. These texts can provide clues about the significance of a particular building and the meaning of that edifice.

Why would an architect feel an urge to decorate his work of art with a literary text? Is it simply a way of decoration? Or should these literary texts be given more meaning? The examples given in this study are approached from the view that the literary texts might present interesting information about the concept that lay behind the building itself. In other words, literary texts intensify and immortalize these architectural works by adding literal and spiritual dimensions to the historical one. The aim of an architect, whose role is indisputably central in creating monuments, is not only to create a functional building which serves the immediate purposes of the patron, but also to create an aesthetic as well as a functional structure that should please both the body and the spirituality of the spectators with the idea that beautification helps the building to become monumentalized. Only after refining the monument adequately the author of the edifice can leave it in the hands of immortality. Literary texts are the ways of expressing the architects' desire to attain the immortality of the edifice.[5] Examining literary texts on buildings gives us an insight as to how different arts were combined in the 16th century setting, as well as helping us to better understand the religious and literal associations of such buildings. For example, the great Ottoman architect Sinan describes how and why the Süleymaniye Mosque, which is one of most important of the immortal Ottoman architectural edifices, if not the most important one, was decorated with verses and other texts after the completion of the main structure.

> Finally, the largest dome was finished and the other parts were advancing. Hasan Karahisari,[6] who was the Mecca of calligraphers, inscribed the verse "*Allahu yumsiku's-semevati ve'l-arz*"[7] in a very beautiful calligraphy, hoping to leave it there forever. Additionally, different inscriptions (*kitabe*) were placed over each gate. These inscriptions were prepared by the most talented calligraphers and then

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5   For further information see Michael Rogers, "The Arts under Süleyman the Magnificent", *Süleyman the Second and His Time*, ed. by. Halil İnalcık and Cemal Kafadar, (Istanbul: ISIS Press, 1993), pp. 257-294.

6   Ahmed Karahisari (d.1556) For the works of Karahisari in the Süleymaniye Complex, see Uğur Derman, "Kanuni Devrinde Yazı Sanatımız", *Kanuni Armağanı*, (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1970), p. 277.

7   The Qur'an (35/41)

> engraved by engravers and inscribers on stone, in order to leave a page in time which flies like the wind.[8]

Sometimes architects were not satisfied with only engravings of literary texts on the surfaces of their architectural creations, but completed the experience by writing about it in separate literary texts. In explaining the reason d'étre for his tract on architecture, Sinan was reported to have said to the poet Saî (d. 1595) that he wanted to combat mortality by recording his experience in a separate literary work. Upon this request, Saî, a poet and muralist,[9] helped him make his monuments immortal.

> I am very old now. But I do not want my works to be forgotten in the passing of times like scattered leaves before the wind, and I want to be remembered with my good deeds. Would you write what I narrate?[10]

Either because of the desire of the architects, or the will of the poet there were also many occasions when poets produced poems and prose to praise and describe the monuments. It seems that the architect tended to ornament his work with Qur'anic verses, hadiths and poems.

In this study, I will discuss the function and significance of the inscriptions and chronograms in Ottoman culture and provide examples from different kinds of monuments.

Writings on and for Monuments in Turkish Literature: Inscriptions

The writings that are made by carving or engraving or making relief on marble, stone, wood, tile or metal slabs (pieces) on inner or outer walls of buildings are called inscriptions.[11] The discipline, which analyzes inscriptions,

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8   Sâî Mustafa Çelebi (d. 1595), *Yapılar Kitabı: Tezkiretü'l-bünyan ve Tezkiretü'l-ebniyye: Mimar Sinan'ın Anıları,*- faximile–translation-critical edition, Hayati Develi; translation from Ottoman Turkish into modern Turkish, Samih Rifat-; introduction, Doğan Kuban, (Istanbul: Koçbank, 2002).

9   According to the biographer Riyazi, Sâî had a divan. (Haluk İpekten et al), *Tezkirelere Göre Divan Edebiyatı İsimler Sözlüğü*, Ankara: Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı, 1988), p. 414; Kınalızade, another biographer introduces Sâî as a poet and muralist (*nakkaş*) and sees him as one of the most talented artists, and praises his works thus: "He is from Istanbul and his name is Mustafa. He is Mâni the second (Mâni-i sâni) in engraving and Erjeng was inspired by his engravings and drawings; all the designers of China were filled with admiration and praised him with thousands of words of admiration; when someone sees the works of his brush, they have faith in God, raising his finger like a pen." See Kınalızade Hasan Çelebi, *Tezkiretü'ş-Şuara I,* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1978), pp. 441-442.

10 Saî, *ibid.,* p.24

11 For the definition and history of inscriptions, see F.T. Dijkema, A Alpaslan, "Kitabet", *EI²*, CD version; and Ali Alparslan "Kitabe", *TDVİA*, vol 26, pp. 76-81.

is called epigraphy and was first studied in the West in the 19th century.[12] There are distinctive motifs used to decorate works of art and architecture in the Islamic geography and these are invaluable sources for history, art history and literature. In Islamic culture in general, writing is an ever-present feature of art and architecture because of its sacred importance.[13] In order to understand an architectural monument, as Gülru Necipoğlu argues, one should be aware of several interacting layers of meaning. One of the layers is inscription, because both profane and religious messages are interwoven in the inscriptions to communicate the patron's worldly and heavenly desires.[14] I would like to add the poetical dimension of inscriptions inscriptions to this analysis, as they are composed of one of the most powerful literary medium of the time, poetry. In other words, inscriptions reflect the literary culture of a particular time, as well as its artistic, ideological and historical culture.

Inscriptions on the monuments contain descriptions of the architect or patron of the building – his different features, as well as the respect felt for him and his status. Also they are nonfigurative elements that replace icons, which cannot be used on Islamic monuments.

If we follow the classification of Dijkema and Alparslan, inscriptions can be divided epigraphically into three categories in the Ottoman geography: commemorative inscriptions, pious inscriptions, and epitaphs. These are categories classified in accordance with the nature of buildings. The most important of these, both from the historical and the artistic point of view, is the first, which includes inscriptions or *kitabes* that commemorate the constructions or restorations of public buildings such as mosques, fountains, sebils (drinking fountains), and, in later times government buildings such as offices, hospitals, schools, and barracks.[15] The history of Turkish inscriptions dates back to the 8th century during the Göktürks reigned in Mongolia. The gravestones of three Turkic rulers, which are known as Orkhon monuments, have the first inscriptons to be discovered by scholars. These inscriptions were written in both Turkish and Chinese and provide us with many clues about the Turkic life at that time. Although they are not to be considered as literary texts, they have some

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12 This study is by Berchem, a Swiss historian who examined Islamic inscriptions by subdividing works geographically such as Egypt, Syria, Asia Minor, and Anatolia. Blair, *Islamic Inscriptions,* (New York: New York University Press, 1998), *ibid*, p. 13.

13 Sheila S. Blair, ibid, p. 3.

14 Gülru Necipoğlu Kafadar, "The Süleymaniye Complex in Istanbul: An Interpretation," *Muqarnas, An annual on Islamic art and architecture*, 3, (1985), pp. 92-117. The interacting layers are functional, connotative (i.e. cultural associations and myths), formal (architectonic) and literal (inscriptions). p. 92.

15 There are many different ways of categorizing inscriptions. They can be divided linguistically, historically, geographically or typologically.

literary clues like idioms, etc. As after the advent of Islam the Arabic language affected Turkish people both religiously and culturally from early Anatolian-Turkish history, inscriptions on buildings proliferated, both in content and style. In the beginning Arabic was the common language for writing monumental inscriptions. In medieval times, however, Persian was added to Arabic, as it had been seen in monumental inscriptions in Iran. During the Ottoman Empire, Arabic, Persian and Turkish were the languages used in inscriptions.

Turkish inscriptions began to be seen around the 15th century and they spread to monuments in the 16th century. This age is also known as the zenith of literary works, and poetic inscriptions began to be found on monuments at this time.[16]

The pious inscriptions, on the other hand, contain passages from the Qur'an and sayings of Prophet Muhammad, as well as and pious phrases like the ninety-nine beautiful names of Allah, or those of the four great caliphs, as well as prayers and poems. These were engraved for the most part on religious buildings and often were more numerous with a longer format than commemorative ones. In general, Ayah-al Kursi (2/255) is inscribed on sultanic mosques. The reason for this is that the word "*kursi*" symbolizes God's power, strength and knowledge. It also means the "sultan's throne". *Kursi* is the platform of the throne and thus it is associated with sovereignty, the sultanate, honor and loftiness.[17]

Epitaphs are inscriptions on a tomb or a grave in memory of the one buried there which are brief statements commemorating or personifying the deceased person.[18]

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16 Sheila S. Blair, *ibid.,* p. 25. For more information, see F.T. Dijkema, A. Alpaslan, "Kitabet". "During the early Ottoman times, the general tradition was followed for the writing of inscriptions in Arabic. The earliest inscription in Turkish is perhaps that of the *madrasa* of Yakub Celebi (1411) in Kütahya (İsmail Hakkı Uzuncarşılı, *Kütahya Şehri*, (Istanbul: Maarif Vekaleti, 1932, p. 79); later, especially from the end of the 16th century, this came to be the language in most of the commemorative inscriptions and epitaphs. The reason for this rather radical change was perhaps an increase in the prestige of Turkish vis-a-vis Arabic following the Ottoman occupation of the Arab lands in the 16th and early 17th centuries. Interestingly, the Arabic inscriptions are mostly prose, whereas the Turkish ones are usually verse. The wording of the Arabic prose inscriptions closely follows the models of the Mamluk and earlier Arabic epigraphy of Egypt and Syria. In most commemorative verse inscriptions, both those in Arabic and those in Turkish, the dates of the events commemorated are not expressed in figures or words, but hidden in the chronograms." EI[2] CD version.

17 Murat Sülün, *Sanat Eserine Vurulan Kuran Mührü*, (İstanbul: Kaynak Yayınları, 2006), p. 29.

18 F.T. Dijkema, A Alpaslan, "Kitabet", EI[2] CD version.

One should always keep in mind, however, that in many instances these are overlapping categories. That is to say, a pious inscription can be a commemaritve one, or an epitaph could be a pious one. In the broader sense, all of these inscriptions can be considered literary texts through which architecture and literature are joined.

1. Commemorative inscriptions: *kitabes* with chronograms:

Commemorative inscriptions or *kitabes,* are engraved on buildings, mosques, fountains, tombs and other monuments, and usually on the front of the building.[19] Almost all the monuments have a *kitabe*, which contains a literary text that usually has been written in accordance with the *abjad* rules. In most literary traditions there appears to be at least a threefold value system assigned to letters: phonetic signs, semantic and numerical values.[20] When the letters are used numerically they have a special order known as *abjad* or *abujad*. *Abjad* is the method of numeration with letters of the alphabet in which the order of the letters is not considered and all their values are added together."[21] *Abjad* is an acronym of the first four letters of the Arabic alphabet. According to *abjad*, the letters of the alphabet are put into eight groups: *abjad, havvaz, hutti, kalaman, sa'fas, qarashat, sakhkhaz, zazzagh*.[22] Abjad, or numerology, is an essential part of *kitabes*, since most of the *kitabes* are written in accordance with the rules of *abjad*.[23] There are some interpretations of *abjad* that claim that these are the first letters of the names of sultans who lived in the city of Madyan during the time Prophet Shuab (Jethro) and that each letter tells of the creation of Adam and his expulsion from Paradise. However these references have not been substantiated.[24] As Farooqi puts it, "letters carry hidden meanings in literary languages, being at once a sign and intrinsic: the mumeric and prophetic, the cryptic and esoteric and the historic

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19 For examples of *kitabes* see Halil Edhem's pioneering work on the Trabzon monuments. Halil Eldem, *Trabzonda Osmanlı Kitabeleri,* Haz. İsmail Hacıfettahoğlu, (Trabzon: Trabzon Belediyesi Kültür Yayınları, 2001); and F. T. Dijkema, *The Ottoman Historical Monumental Inscriptions in Edirne*, (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1977).
20 Mehr Asfahan Farooqi, "The secret of letters: chronograms in Urdu literary culture", *The Journal of Middle Eastern Literatures Edebiyat,* vol 13., no 2, 2003. p. 147.
21 Hatice Aynur, "Istanbul in Divan Poetry: 1453-1600", *Acta Viennensia Ottomanica: Akten des 13. CIEPO-Sypmosiums Comité international des etudes pre-ottomanes et ottomanes* (Selbstverlag: des Instituts für Orientalistik, 1999), p. 44.
22 Farooqi, *ibid.,* p. 158.
23 For a short evaluation of the *abjad* and examples see, İsmail Yakıt, *Türk-İslam Kültüründe Ebced Hesabı ve Tarih Düşürme*, (Istanbul: Ötüken Neşriyat, 1992).
24 Serkan Alkan İspirli, "Türk Edebiyatı'nda Tarih Düşürme Geleneği", *AÜ Türkiyat Araştırmaları Ensititüsü Dergisi*, 15, (2000), p. 79.

and commemoratorive".[25] When a *kitabe* is an indication of the date of the construction or restoration of the building, it is called chronogram.

In later times, the letters were used with numerical values as a literary device, i.e. chrognrams. The dates were embedded in the verse marking important occasions. Although Farooqi says that "chrongrams were also important parts of the literary culture of Turkish, Persian end Urdu languages during the 17th and 19th centuries"[26], as it is shown in this study, they were widely used before that time as well.

Chronograms have been used for many ages for different purposes, such as passwords for sending special notes, naming a child, to indicate the date of writing for books and articles, in official records, and in different sciences such as physics, mathematics, astronomy, architecture, *jifr* and *wifq* sciences and mysticism. In the field of history *abjad* is used for specific cases, the ascension of a sultan, the birth of important people, their marriages, circumcisions or deaths, or important events like fires, floods, victories, conquests, or the construction of buildings.[27] Most instances show that chronograms are inscribed on monuments, but in some instances the chronograms are kept among the poet's other literary collections and placed at the end of *divans*. In this study we will examine both types, regardless of whether they are found on monuments or written separately.

Chronograms can be made out of part or all of a Qur'anic verse, or from a prophetic tradition, or they could be a new poem. They can be as short as a hemistich, a couplet or indeed an entire poem, written in Turkish, Arabic or Persian. For example, while mosque and tomb *kitabe*s could be written in Arabic, fountain *kitabe*s, on the other hand, were written in Persian. Although chronograms are not that common in Persian or Arabic literature, they were the pioneering literary art in Turkish literature.[28] It is said that the first chronogram in Turkish literature dates back to the time of Mehmed II for the mosque he had built. The chronograms mentioned for this mosque belong to Hızır Bey (d. 1459), but before him Ahmedî (d.?) had some chronograms,[29] for example he had a chrongram for his book.[30] The oldest dates for the chrongrams

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25 Farooqi, *ibid.*, p. 147.
26 Farooqi, *ibid.*, p. 149.
27 İsmail Yakıt , *ibid.*, p. 40. For further information, see Yakıt, *ibid.*, pp. 40-61.
28 İspirli, *ibid.*, p. 79.
29 M. Kemal Özergin "Ahmet Paşa'nın Tarih Manzumeleri", *Türk Dili ve Edebiyatı Dergisi,* 10, (1960), p. 166.
30 Yaşar Akdoğan, *Ahmedi Divanından Seçmeler,* (Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı, 1988), p. 52.

are those recited for the Rumeli fortress, and the conquest of Constantinople.[31] Since writing a chronogram is an artistic form that requires great talent, there are some poets, such as Saî (d.1596) or Kandî (d. 1555), who established their reputations as writers of chronograms. I would like to illustrate here how architectural buildings are dated by poetry in chronograms.

Mosques and masjids:

Apart from citadels and palaces, most Ottoman monumental architectural structures served religious or charitable purposes. Mosques could be monumentally massive to hold public prayers and Friday sermons, or they could be smaller masjids, where only daily prayers were held. The *kitabe*s in which the name of the architect and the date of construction of the mosque and its function were listed were mostly in Arabic, and these are known as foundation inscriptions. The information about the date of construction, the reason why the building had been constructed, the person who constructed it, for whom it was constructed, as well as the date of restoration, if any, renders the edifice more valuable both for history and literature.

In Turkish literature there are many works that containing chrongrams, but there is only one devoted specifically to inscriptions: Şuʿarā-yı Eslāf Tevārīḫ-i Manzūme (Istanbul University Library. Rare Works, No: 2508, 17b-19a.) This work is a specific *mecmua* containing 99 *kitabe*s written for various mosques between the 15th and the 18th centuries by various poets. 99 *kitabes* suggest the 99 beautiful names of God. The mosques are located not only in Istanbul, but also in Baghdad, Belgrade and Mecca.[32]

The *kitabe*s on monuments are usually in Arabic, but sometimes they can be found in Ottoman Turkish and occasionally in Persian. For example, the foundation inscription of the Üç Şerefeli Mosque in Edirne was composed in Arabic and placed on the door that opens to the harem; this indicates both the beginning and ending date of the construction of the mosque.

> Tārīḫu bed-i ẕālik fes'elhu ʿān (ruḫāmīn) (841/ 1437)
> Tārīḫu ḫatm-i ẕālik yuḫbiruke (ḫayru mā) (851/1447)[33]

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31 Yakıt , *ibid.,* p. 126.
32 Aksu, *ibid.*, p. 66.
33 Aksu, *ibid.*, p. 66.

"You can ask the date of the beginning of this building from Ruh'al emin! The date of finishing will be told to you by he who has blessings upon him."

The word at the end of each hemistich indicates the dates of the beginning and the completion of the construction in the *abjad* calculation. The inscription on the main door of the Kocamustafa Paşa Mosque is a supplication written also in Arabic and is a good example of the *kitabe* being suited to the purpose of the monument. The poet, writer and calligrapher İdris-i Bitlisî (d. 1520) composed the hemistich.

Rabbi evṣil ṣavāben bānīhā (897/1491)[34]

رب أوصل ثواباً بانيها

"My Lord! Make the builder attain the Ultimate Truth!"

This statement fits the purpose of the building and its architect. The architect wanted to perform a good deed in order to receive blessings from Allah. One of the *kitabe*s on the Şehzadebaşı Mosque dates the mosque and describes its purpose:

Gōft pîr-i suḫan be o tārîḫ
Maʿbedu ümmet-i Resūlin emîn (955/1543)[35]

معبد أمّة رسول أمين

"This is a place of worship for the community of the reputable Prophet."

The Süleymaniye Mosque has many *kitabe*s, as Sinan mentioned in his memoirs. Here the inscriptions were composed from selected verses, except for the foundation one. Even this still contains some Qur'anic verses. Sinan tells us that the most distinguished poets, calligraphers and inscribers of the time prepared the chronograms and calligraphies for the Süleymaniye Mosque.[36]

Apart from these engraved inscriptions, there were also several other chronograms for the Süleymaniye, but these were not inscribed on the building. One of them reads:

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34 Abdulkadir Özcan, "İdris-i Bitlisi", *TDVİA*, vol. 21, pp. 495-498.
35 "This is a place of worship that belongs to the nation of a distinguished prophet." See Ayvansarayi Hüseyin Efendi, Ali Satı Efendi, Süleyman Besim Efendi, *Hadikatu'l-Cevâmi': İstanbul Camileri ve diğer Dini-Sivil Mimari Yapılar*, Ed. Ahmet Nezih Galitekin, (Istanbul: İşaret, 2001), p. 54; Similiar inscriptions can be found on other works by Sinan, for example the Şemsi Paşa Mosque in Istanbul: "Oh Ulvî! When the invisible speaker sees he recites the chronogram. Let this place be the place of adoration for the people of Beloved Muhammad! (988/1580)", Aksu, *ibid.*, pp. 69-70.
36 *Mimar Sinan ve Tezkiretül Bünyan*: by Suphi Saatçi; ed. Metin Sözen. (Istanbul: Film Televizyon Video Mtv, 1989), p. 71.

Kāle ʿabdun ʿābidun li-tārīḫihi
Maʿbedu lillāh ʿVescud vaḳtarib⁾(964/1557)[37]

معبد لله واسجد واقترب

"This is a place of worship for Allah. Prostrate yourself and be close to your God!"

Obviously this chrongram is from a Quranic verse.

Yahya Bey (d. 1582) composed another chrongram for this building:

Ṣāḥib-i cümuʿa şeh Sünnī Süleymān-ı zamān
Cāmiʿ-i bālā Teʿalallāh ʿaceb ʿālī binā (964/1557)[38]

جامع بالا تعالى الله عجب عالي بنا

"The owner of Jumu'ah, the shah, the Sunni Süleyman of the time [built] a high and beautiful mosque."

Here Sultan Süleyman is referring to the owner of the Jumuah prayer, meaning the legitimate champion of the religion of Islam. Stressing the Islamic role of the Sultan Süleyman, Necipoğlu writes, "Almost all the verses on the Süleymaniye Mosque emphasize the straight path of the Sharia to be followed by the orthodox believer and the ritual duties that distinguished the Sunni Ottomans from Shiite Safavids. Safavids were called infidels in some *fatwas* at that time. One of the reasons for this is that they disregarded communal ritual duties and Friday prayers."[39] Suggesting King Solomon, Süleyman is referred to as "*Süleymān-ı zamān*" (the Solomon of his time) in this couplet. It is known that Sultan Süleyman renovated the wall around Jerusalem and then intended to renovate the Dome of the Rock, to which frequent allusions are made in passages of the Qur'an where Solomon is mentioned; this was mentioned in his *waqfiya* and inscriptions on public foundations.[40]

Many poets recited chronograms for the Süleymaniye Mosque: Hüdayî, Mekkî, Hamdî, Kandî, etc.

Hüdāyî (d. 1570)

Lāyıḳ ol cāmiʿa ola tārīḫ
Beyt-i Raḥmān ve maʿbed-i islām (964/1556-7)

بيت رحمن ومعبد إسلام

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37 The Qur'an, (96/19)
38 Ayvansarayi, *ibid.,* pp. 56-57.
39 Necipoğlu, *ibid.,* p. 110.
40 Necipoğlu, *ibid.,* p. 101,

"This mosque deserves the date this is the house of Rahman and prayer place of Islam".

Mekkî: (d. 1789)

Didi tārīḫini anıñ Mekkī

Hāẕā cāmiʿan Süleymān Ḫān (964/1556-7)[41]

هذا جامعا سليمان خان

"Mekkî spoke its chronogram: This is the mosque of Süleyman Khan"

The Poet Tīğî (d. 1608) inscribed his *kitabe* of the Selimiye Mosque in Edirne in Turkish.[42]

Yazdı Tīğî levḥ-i bāb-ı Cennete tārīḫini
Cāmiʿ-i şāh Selīm'ul-ḳalb imām-ı cemīʿ-i dīn (982/1574-75)[43]

جامع شاه سليم القلب امام جميع دين

"Tīğî wrote its date on the slab of the gate of the Paradise. [This is] the mosque of Sultan [Selim] who has a soft heart and is the imam of all religions."

As can be seen in the example of the Yahya Bey Mosque in Edirne, the *kitabes* were not always short. For the completion of that building another poet Mecdî (d. 1590) composed the following poem:

Ṣāḥib'ul-ḫayr yaʿnī Yaḥyā Beg/Ḳıldı bu mescid-i şerīfi binā
Yaptı anınla dār-ı āḫiretin/Ḳıldı cennetde kendüye meva

Didi tārīḫini anıñ mecdi/Mescid-i ḫūb ve mecmaʿ-i aʿlā (985/6/1578)[44]

مسجد خوب ومجمع اعلى

"The benefactor, namely Yahya Bey, constructed this sacred mosque. He therewith built his dwelling in the hereafter and made himself an asylum in Paradise. Mecdi has recited its chronogram: 'a beautiful mosque, a lofty place of assembly."

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41 Aksu, *ibid.,* pp. 69-70.
42 Haluk İpekten et. al, *ibid.,* p. 506.
43 Yakıt, *ibid.,* p. 154.
44 F. T. Dijkema, *ibid.,* p. 60.

Fountains:

One of the most visible architectural monuments during the Ottoman Empire was the fountain, as they could be found in every corner of the city in different sizes.[45] There were pavilions, often very elegant in appearance, at the edge of the streets, where passers-by would be served with drinking water free of charge.[46] The *kitabe*s on the fountains could be in Turkish, Arabic or Persian, like those on other architectural structures. Kitabes on fountains were mostly about water, which is likened to an elixir, or the Kawthar River in Paradise. The verses most frequently found on fountains are: "Their greeting will be: "Enter ye here in peace and security".[47] "A fountain there, called Salsabil, upon them will be green garments of fine silk and heavy brocade, and they will be adorned with bracelets of silver; and their Lord will give to them to drink of a pure drink."[48] Poetical inscriptions on fountains generally contain sets of words related to water and its power, such as "thirst", "water", "flow", "fountain", "water of life (elixir)", "spirit (*can*)", "abundance" and the like.

For instance, Ruhî (d. 1605) recited a chronogram for both the mosque and fountain of Abdülkadir-i Geylani in Baghdad:

İkisinüñ söyledi şevḳle tārīḫini
Cāmiᶜ-i ehl-i duᶜā çeşme-i āb-ı ḥayāt (995/1586-87)[49]

جامع أهل دعا چشمهٔ آب حیات

"He recited both of their chronograms: it is the mosque for the praying people and the fountain of elixir."

Another example, the Kanunî Fountain in Büyükçekmece, which was built by Sinan, refers to the Kawthar River in Paradise:

Didi tārīḫin anıñ ehl-i tārīḫ:
Yine aḳdı cihāna āb-ı kevṣer (974/1566)[50]

ینه آقدي جهانه آب کوثر

"The people of history recited its chronogram: The water of Kawthar flowed to the universe once again."

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45 For the fountains in Istanbul, see İbrahim Hilmi Tanışık, *İstanbul Çeşmeleri I*, (Ankara: Maarif Vekaleti, 1943).
46 Suraiya Faroqhi, *Subjects of the Sultan: Culture and Daily Life in the Ottoman Empire,* (London: I.B. Tauris Publishers, 2000), p. 131.
47 The Qur'an, (15/46)
48 The Qur'an, (76/ 18, 21)
49 Aksu, *ibid.*, p.72.
50 Yakıt, *ibid.,* p.152.

In a study on the Edirne monuments, F. T. Dijkema cites examples of Otto-man monumental inscriptions that contain poetical details, such as meter. For example, on the sebil of Hasan Çelebi there is a Turkish inscription in poetic form, dating the completion of the *sebil* at 1588.

> Ṣāḥibu'l-ḫayr Ḥasan Çelebi ibn-i Muṣṭafā
>
> Ḫayr içün itdi sebīli çün binā
>
> Teşne-diller gelüben ṣu içeler
>
> İdeler aña duʿā-yi ʿayr-i mā
>
> Didi tārīḫin idüp hātif duʿā
>
> "Ve'l-ʿaynan fīhā tusemmā selsebīlā" (996-7/1588)[51]

<div dir="rtl">والعيناً فيها تسمّا سلسبيلا</div>

"Since the benefactor Hasan Çelebi, the son of Mustafa, has built the *sebil* for the public good, let the thirsty of heart[52] come and drink the water and pray for some blessing upon him. An invisible voice prayed and recited its chronogram 'And indeed there is a fountain therein the name of which is Salsabil."[53]

Here the poet used a part of a Qur'anic verse to construct his chronogram.

Edirneli Nazmî also says:

> 'Ali beg çeşmesi dil-cūy çeşme (951/1544)

<div dir="rtl">علي بك چشمه سي دل جوي چشمه</div>

"Ali bey fountain that is he art-captivating fountain!"

Hospitals:

In the Ottoman era, hospitals had a variety of titles, such as *daruşşifa* or *şifahane*, or sometimes *timarhane*. Hospitals that had been established for the mentally ill became to be known as *timarhane*. The *kitabe*s of these buildings contain words that include the words *şifa* (recovery), *afiyet* (health), *tabib, hekim*, (doctor, physician), and the like. For example, on the main door of the Haseki Darüşşifa in Istanbul the inscription reads:

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51 F. T. Dijkema, *The Ottoman Historical Monumental Inscriptions in Edirne*, (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1977), p. 62.

52 The word *dil* has two meanings in here. It can also mean thirsty tongues. (VS).

53 The last hemistich is from the Qur'an, (76/18). The verse should read "A fountain there, called, Salsabil". Two letters (و and ل) should be added to complete the date. (VS)

Dār-ı şifā nāfiʿ-i nās-ı cihān (957/1550)[54]

دار شفا نافع ناس جهان

"This is the house of recovery which helps people of this world."

On the main door of the Manisa Tīmarhane the inscription reads:

Suāl olunsa itmām-ı bināsı
Didi tārīḫ "maḳām-ı ʿāfiyetdür" (946/1539)[55]

مقام عافيتدر

"When the completion of the building was asked (he) recited its chrono-gram: (This is the) place of health!"

It seems that the date of the completion of the building is mentioned by referring to its function as the "place of health."

Baths:

Another of the principal buildings found in most mosque complexes were the public baths, called *hamam*. Bathhouses or *hamams* were either inde-pendent structures or connected to the mosque complexes. They were public places that were (and are) used not only for purposes of bathing but also for socializing. These buildings were highly common and endowed with an an-nual income to provide for their maintenance, using the same system as the mosques. An Italian traveler in the sixteenth century, Luigi Bassano da Zara, estimates that the mosques, baths and Greek churches in Istanbul and Galata numbered in the thousands.[56] The double baths (*çifte hammam*) had two separate entries, one for men and the other for women.[57]

The inscriptions or chronograms on these buildings were concerned with the purpose of the building, like health and cleanliness, or they gave the date of building or the date of restoration. Upon the restoration of the Old Thermal Resort in Bursa, the poet composed the following chronogram.

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54 Yakıt, *ibid.,* p. 147.
55 Yakıt, *ibid.,* p. 144.
56 For a detailed description of the public baths in the sixteenth century, see the description of the Italian traveler Bassano, Metin And, *Istanbul in the 16th century, The City, The Palace, Daily Life* (Istanbul: Akbank, 1994), pp. 242-243.
57 Celal Esad Arseven, *Türk Sanatı*, (Istanbul: Marif Basımevi, 1970), pp. 100-101.

Feyyāż-ı Żü'l-minenden erdi feyż-i 'ināyet

İtmāmına dendi tārīẖ "ḳapluca oldı ta'mīr" (917/1511)[58]

قپلوجه اولدي تعمير

"A bounteous gift and help came from Allah, Who is the Most Gracious;
the chronogram is recited for its completion: The baths have been repaired."

The Ayasofya Bath was another structure built by Sinan in Ayasofya
Square in 1555 under the patronage of Hürrem Sultan. In the beautifully com-
posed and engraved inscription, Hüdayî, the poet (d. 1570) likens the bath
and its water to the rivers and gardens in Paradise.

Eger görmek istersen ravża-i Firdevs-i Rıżvānı

Gelüb ḥammām-ı Sulṭāna bul ṣafā ile seyrānı

Revān olmuş içine Selsebīl u Kevẟer ırmaġı

Ṣāḳāhum Rabbuhum der içinde ol ābla lisānı

Hüdāyī girdi gördi bāġ-ı 'Adniñ 'aynıdır ābı

Didi tārīẖ ḥammām-ı behişt-ābād-ı sulṭānī (963/1555)[59]

حمّام بهشت آباد سلطاني

"If you would like to see the garden of Paradise, you should come to the
bath of the Sultan and experience the happiness and the pleasurable trip there.
It is as if the rivers of Salsabil and Kawthar flow into it, its tongue recites
"*saqahum rabbuhum*" with the water. Hüdayî has gone in and seen that it
is a garden of Paradise."

Bridges:

The Büyükçekmece Bridge, one of the greatest achievements of Sinan, is
built on the Büyükçekmece Lake. It consists of twenty-six spans and is one
mile in length, running from north to south. It began to be built during the
reign of Süleyman and was completed during the reign of Selim II. Hüdayî
composed the chronogram.

Ḥażret-i Süleymān kim aña /Şāh-ı rāh ola sırāṭ-ı müstaḳīm

Başladı bu ẖayrı olmadın tamām/Ḳıldı 'azm-i sūy-ı cennatunna'im

Geldi anı żıll-ı Ḥaḳ sulṭān Selīm/Etti tekmīl oldu bu cisr-i 'ażīm

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58 Yaḳıt, *ibid.,* p.138.

59 See Evliya Çelebi, IV: 380; İ. Aydın Yüksel, *Osmanlı Mimarisinde Kanuni Sultan
Süleyman Devri, 1520-1566*, vol. VI., (Istanbul, Istanbul Fetih Cemiyeti: 2004), p.
175.

Dedi tārīḫin Ḫüdāyī ol zamān/Yapdı āb üzre bu cisri şeh Selām (966/1558)[60]

يايدي آب اُوزره بو جسري شه سلام

"Hazrat Suleyman, may the true path be his main road, initiated this deed, but he passed to Paradise before it was finished. Sultan Selim – the shadow of Allah came and completed this enormous bridge. Then, Hüdayi recited its chronogram: Sultan Selim built this bridge on the water."

The bridge of Mustafa Pasha was built on the Meriç River. As it was completed at the time of its patron's death the chronogram indicates the date of the death of Mustafa Paşa as well. It is a poetical chronogram, written by Gazali, who was also known as Deli Birader (d. 1535).[61]

Bildi merḥūm Muṣṭafā Paşā
Köpridir filḥaḳīḳa bu dünyā
Yapdı bir köpri ḫarc idüp vārın
İde tā kim bu maʿnāya İmā
Göçdi merḥūm didiler tārīḫ aña
Köpriden geçdi Muṣṭafā Paşā (852/1448)[62]

كوپريدن گچدي مصطفا پاشا

"The late Mustafa Pasha understood that this world is a bridge indeed. He built a bridge, spending all he had in order to give this meaning. He - the deceased - passed away and some recited its chronogram: Mustafa Pasha has crossed the bridge."

Such a chronogram does more of course than just mark the death of Mustafa Pasha or the completion of the bridge. It also reveals the mindset behind the construction of the bridge. By building a bridge for the service of mankind, the patron was thought to have successfully crossed the bridge to the next world. In Islam it is believed that there is a bridge in the Hereafter which everyone must cross to Paradise. It is thought that those who have performed sufficient good deeds will have no problems passing over this bridge. In the inscription, Deli Birader states that Mustafa Pasha has already crossed over the bridge.

As can be seen in many such monuments, in the sixteenth century Turkish had increasingly become the dominant language in inscriptions.

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60 Yakıt, *ibid.,* p.149.
61 Ayvansarayi, *ibid.,* p. 521.
62 Yakıt, *ibid.,* p. 125.

2. Pious Inscriptions:

Pious inscriptions may consist of verses quoted in whole or in part and their arrangement is sufficient to indicate the theological or judicial implications of the texts that are related to the context. For instance, a verse may be concerned with worship or charitable deeds (*sadaqah jariyah*) if it is found in a mosque; it may be about health if it is on a fountain; it may be about death if it is at the entrance to a hospital or on tombs or gravestones. On certain monuments repetition of formulae, such as "*al mülk lillāh*" "Dominion belongs to God", can be seen. Ultimately this means that there is some form of devout reflection involved. Pious inscriptions can be examined in different categories. One consists of quotations from the Qur'an, hadiths or proverbs. Those can be found scattered in different places in mosques. On the domes of classical Ottoman mosques verses that describe the heavenly realm were chosen. One of them is: "It is Allah Who sustains the heavens and the earth, lest they cease (to function): and if they should fail, there is none - not one – who can sustain them thereafter: Verily He is Most Forbearing, Oft-Forgiving."[63] Doorways, for example, are inscribed with verses such as "When ye have performed the prayers, celebrate Allah's praises, standing, sitting down, or lying down on your sides; but when ye are free from danger, establish regular prayers: For such prayers are enjoined onbelievers at stated times. We see the turning of thy face (for guidance) to the heavens: now shall We turn thee to a Qibla that shall please thee. Turn then thy face in the direction of the Sacred Mosque: Wherever ye are, turn your faces in that direction. The People of the Book know well that that is the truth from their Lord. Nor is Allah unmindful of what they do."[64] Another inscription may be ten verses from the 17th surah.[65] Most of the Ottoman *mihrabs* (pulpits) have standard verses including "Right graciously did her Lord accept her: He made her grow in purity and beauty: To the care of Zakariya was she assigned.. Every time that he entered (her) chamber to see her, he found her supplied with sustenance. He said: "O Mary! Whence (comes) this to you?" She said: "From Allah. For Allah provides sustenance to whom He pleases without measure."[66] Pious texts may be preferred for commemorative inscriptions. As was mentioned earlier, there is no clear-cut division between these categories. Hence, pious inscriptions can also act as commemorative inscriptions.

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63 The Qur'an, (35/41)
64 The Qur'an, (4/103, 2/144)
65 The Qur'an, (17/ 91-111)
66 The Qur'an, (3/37)

In the 16th century there was a greater use of pious inscriptions compared to earlier times. Even the foundation inscription of the Süleymaniye Mosque has quotations from the Qur'an. "It was customary to write inscriptions in Arabic since Arabic is the language of Qur'an", Çulpan says when explaining why the inscriptions in the Süleymaniye Mosque were written in Arabic. The foundation inscription is on the wall of main gate close to the fountain. The text was prepared by the Sheikh-ul-Islam Ebussud Efendi and written by Hasan Çelebi, the student of Ahmet Karahisari.

The text consists of three parts: left, middle and right. The right part is the first one that mentions the mosque being built as a pious deed according to the desire of Allah, and describes the features of Sultan Süleyman; the second part mentions the genealogy of Sultan Süleyman, while the third part is dedicated to prayers for all of his royal ancestors. After these, the date of the mosque and the signature of Çelebi appear. In this part there are also some quotes from Qur'anic verses.[67] Other inscriptions are also from the Qur'an and give different descriptions of Paradise, according to where they have been put in the mosque. Thus, they not only provide basic religious reflections, but also give detailed associations with the heavenly world. For example, one of the main inscriptions in the Süleymaniye Mosque is inside the main dome. According to Saî, Hasan Karahisari put the verse[68] there so that it would stay there forever.[69] The dome of the mosque is associated with the sky,[70] while the gate entrances on the sides also carry inscriptions that depict these gates as gates of Paradise and the *şadırvan* (fountain) as flowing with Kawthar. The west gate, for example, contains a verse that says: "And those who feared their Lord will be led to the Garden in crowds: until behold, they arrive there; its gates will be opened. And its keepers will say: "Peace be upon you! Well have you done! Enter you here, to dwell therein."[71] As has been mentioned in several sources, in general the inscriptions in mosques, in particular the Süleymaniye Mosque, describe Paradise.[72] As with other arts, calligraphers also try to imitate the ideal place, that is, Heaven.

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67 The Qur'an, (55/76), (2/125) and (22/26). Cevdet Çulpan, *Süleymaniye Kitabesi*, (Istanbul: Sümer Matbaası, 1966), p. 2.
68 The Qur'an, (35/41)
69 Saî, *ibid.,* p. 71
70 Saî, *ibid.,* p. 66.
71 The Qur'an, (39/73)
72 Saî, *ibid.,* p. 66.

3. Epitaphs

Epitaphs are inscriptions on gravestones or tombs. Tombs are often built to commemorate the deceased person and are decorated with texts that tend to have a religious content, such as verses or sayings of the Prophet that refer to death or Paradise. The most frequently cited verse is "Every soul shall have a taste of death: in the end to Us shall ye be brought back."[73] Inscriptions are mainly intended to describe the significance of life and death for believers, and rarely serve the purpose of chronograms for the structure itself. Before and after Islam, Turks used various kinds of words for death while recording it. The reason behind this is that in Islamic belief, death is not an end but a passage, a journey or a new life for human beings. So, "pass away", "fly away", "take wing", "arrive at union" or "embarking on a journey" are some expression that are used instead of the word "death"[74]. For example, inscriptions on the tomb of Sultan Süleyman contain Qur'anic verses, the ninety-nine beautiful names of Allah, as well as the names of Prophet Muhammad and the four caliphs. One of the verses reads "And call not, besides Allah, any another god. There is no god but He. Everything (that exists) will perish except His own Face. To Him belongs the Command, and to Him will ye (all) be brought back."[75] All of the verses cited here refer to belief in God and good deeds in the world and death; these are seen to be valuable lessons for those living.

The tomb of Hürrem Sultan has a greater variety of literary texts. There are various inscriptions carved on different places of her tomb. They include verses, supplications, and several phrases of *tawhid*. One of the supplications opens with the Ayat'al-Kursi and continues with Surah Al-i Imran.[76]

The inscriptions on the tomb of Şehzade Mehmed consist of four Persian couplets which describe the finiteness of this world. "In the end, for the sake of *Qul Huvallahu ahad*[77] no one, neither elite nor common people, will be immortal in this palace of world. The Shehzade (prince) who has pure faith has passed from this world The Shehzade who has pure faith has passed from this world. May Allah who is *Hayy* (Alive) and *Samad* (Unborn) have mercy on him in eternal world. Thus he will sleep in tranquility and comfort in the

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73 The Qur'an, 29/57
74 Aziz Doğanay, "*Tuhfe-i Hattâtîn*'de Ebcedle Vefat Bildiren İfadeler (Öüme Hayat Verme Sanatı)", *Akademik Araştırmalar Dergisi*, 34, (2007), pp. 139.
75 The Qur'an, (28/88)
76 The Qur'an, (3/18,19,26); Sülün, *ibid.*, p. 372.
77 Say: He is Allah, the One (112/1)

Hereafter." On the tomb, there are also several other verses[78] and a chrono-gram that wishes the best for the sultan in the Hereafter.

Merḳad-i Sulṭān Muḥammed bād firdevs-i ebed (950/1543)

مرقد سلطان محمد باد فردوس أبد

"May the place of Sultan Muhammed be the eternal Paradise".

In one of the 15th century poets Necati's tomb there is

Bir seng-dil firāḳına ölen Necātīnüñ
Billāhi mermerle yapasız mezārını[79] (914/1508)

بالله مرمرله يپاسز مزاريني

"For the sake of Allah, make the grave of Necati who died for the sepera-tion of hard-hearted (beloved) with marble."

The tomb of the architect Sinan represents one of the richest examples of different literary texts. Sinan, the master of architects, died in 1578 and his tomb was built adjacent to the Süleymaniye complex. Saî, who helped Sinan to write his autobiography, composed the long poem on the tomb. The poem is basically Sinan's biography; he had lived for more than a hundred years and he built more than four hundred masjids, eighty mosques, aqueducts, and buildings that were thought to resemble the buildings of Paradise. Thinking that Sinan had done enough good deeds in the world Saî, supplicated Allah to give Sinan a place in Paradise.

Saî inscribed the tomb as follows:

Ey iden bir iki gün dünyā sarāyında mekān
Cāy-ı āsāyiş degüldür ādeme mülk-i cihān
Ḥān Süleymāna olup miʿmār bu merd-i güzīn
Yapdı bir cāmiʿ virir Firdevs-i aʿlādan nişān
Emr-i şāh ile ḳılup ṣu yollarına ihtimām

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78 There is no god but He, the Living, the Self-subsisting, Supporter of all. No slumber can seize Him nor sleep. His are all things in the heavens and on earth. Who is thee can intercede in His presence except as He permitteth? He knoweth what (appeareth to His creatures as) before or after or behind them. Nor shall they compass aught of His knowledge except as He willeth. His Throne doth extend over the heavens and the earth, and He feeleth no fatigue in guarding and preserving them. For He is the Most High, the Supreme (in glory) (The Qur'an, 2/255) Hakkı Önkal, *Osmanlı Hanedan Türbeleri,* (Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı, 1992), p. 140.

79 Yakıt, *ibid.,* p.138.

Ḫıżr olup āb-ı ḥayātı ʿāleme ḳıldı revān

Çekmece cisrine bir ṭāḳ-ı muʿallā çekdi kim

ʿAynıdır āyinede devrānda şekl-i kehkeşān

Ḳıldı dörtyüzden ziyāde mescid-i ʿālī binā

Yapdı seksan yerde cāmiʿ bu ʿazîz kardān

Yüzden artuḳ ʿömr sürdü ʿāḳıbet ḳıldı vefāt

Yatduġı yiri Ḫüdā ḳılsun anıñ bāġ-ı cinān

Rıḥletiniñ Sāʿî-i dāʿî didi tārîḫini:

Geçdi bu demde cihāndan pîr-i miʿmārān Sinān

Rūḥi içün fātiḥa iḥsān ide pîr ü cevān (986/1578)[80]

گچدي بو دمده جهاندن پير معماران سنان

"Oh, the one who has stayed in this world for couple days! The characteristic of the universe is that it is not a place in which human beings feel comfortable. This distinguished person was the architect of Süleyman Khan. (He) built a mosque that contains indications from the Highest Paradise! By the order of the king he gave importance to the water channels. (He) became *Khidr* and caused the *Water of Life* to flow for the universe. He made a high arch on the Çekmece Bridge that resembles the shape of the sky in this mirror of the universe. He built more than four hundred high masjids. This *azizkardan* made mosques in eighty places. He lived more than a hundred years and then died. May God make a place for him in Paradise! Saî records the date of his journey: Sinan, the architect, passed away from this world. May the elderly and the young recite Surah al-Fatiha for his soul."

Conclusion

Inscriptions, epigraphs and chronograms are poetical forms that are not only artistic decorations but also function as historical documents, increasing the esthetic value of the edifice. Apart from acting as decoration, the literary texts that are carved on the inner and the outer surfaces of architectural monuments have close connections with the function and the intention of the building. They are like an identity card that provides information about the history of the building in a short and highly esthetic way. One of the greatest successes of the Ottomans was in the field of 16th-century architecture. Other artists increased this success by adding decorative and literary arts, such as calligraphy, poetry, engraving (*nakış*) and gilding (*tezhip*) to the surface of

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80 Although the actual date is 986, the *kitabe* records the date as 996, Ayvansarayi, ibid., p. 265.

the structure, thus adding esthetic and spiritual dimensions to the historical aspect. Poetry made the relationship between the master and the artist visible.

The appearance of poems in many places during that century allows one to see the multidimensional function and value of "poetry", which was important not only for the *divans*, but also had a significance in other branches of the arts at the time.

Özet

Bu çalışma, divan şiirinin bilinenin dışında farklı bir özelliği olan edebî sahanın dışındaki sanat alanında da kullanılışını vurgulamak üzere hazırlanmıştır. Osmanlı edebiyatı ve divan şiiri, genelde kendi sınırları içinde edebî ve estetik ölçütlerle değerlendirildiği halde Osmanlı şiirinin başka alanlara da taşan ve onlara farklı yönelimler sağlayan fonksiyonları bulunduğu da bir gerçektir. Siyasi başarının yanı sıra sanat, özellikle de mimaride büyük gelişme kaydedilen XVI. yüzyılda şiir, divanların dışında başka sanat alanlarında da yer alıyor ve edebî yönünden ayrı olarak tarihî, sanat tarihi ve kültür tarihi gibi alanlara da ışık tutuyordu. Özellikle bizatihi kendisi bir sanat eseri olan mimarî yapılar üzerine nakşedilen edebî yazılar, hem o sanat eserinin estetik özelliklerini arttırıyor hem de yapıya ait bilgileri (yapılma tarihi, varsa tamir tarihi), yapanı, yaptıranı, üzerine yazılan yazıların müellifini veya şairini, nakkaşını ve onları eserlere yerleştiren sanatçıları anlatarak çok yönlü bir fonksiyonu yerine getirmiş oluyordu. Tarih düşürmeler, kitabeler, mezar taşları, şiirin mimariyle buluşma noktası olup Osmanlı şiirinin farklı fonksiyonlarını dile getiren temel örneklerdir. Bu çalışmada, İslam sanatı alanı içindeki yazı geleneğinden ve onun mimarî eserler üzerindeki etkisinden bahsedilmiş ve 16. yüzyılda yapılmış mimarî eserler üzerindeki edebî numunelerden örnekler verilmiştir. Bu çalışma mimarî ve divan şiirini birleştiren birkaç çalışmaya ilave ve aynı zamanda farklı bir çerçevede ve daha şümullü yaklaşıma sahip bir katkıdır. Bu çalışmayla birlikte divan şiirinin XVI. yüzyılda, yalnızca estetik kaygılarla yazılan bir sanat dalı olmadığı, başka sanatlara açılım sağlayan ve sanatlar arası gücü pekiştiren fonksiyonel bir yönü bulunduğu görülecektir.