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Cursing Through Someone Else's Mouth: Faizi's Lampoon of Veysi

Ercan Akyol *

Başkasının Ağzından Sövmek: Faizi'nin Veysi Parodisi

Öz ■ Faizi mahlasıyla tanınan Kafzade Abdülhay Çelebi (1589–1621) üretkenliğine rağmen modern edebiyat tarihçiliğinde sıklıkla göz ardı edilen bir figürdür. Külliyatı çalışılmış ve kısa biyografisi kaba hatlarıyla birden çok kez yazılmış olduğu halde 17. yüzyılın birincil kaynaklarına geniş kapsamlı ve dikkatli bir bakış muhtelif elyazmalarında Faizi'nin biyografik öğeler içeren çeşitli şiirlerinin ve mektuplarının bulunabildiğini ortaya çıkartmaktadır. Bu doğrultuda, bu makalenin üç amacı vardır: ilk olarak, Faizi'nin meşhur bir Osmanlı şairi ve edibi olan Veysi'nin (1561–1628) parodisini yaptığı ve şimdiye dek yayımlanmamış bir şiirinin açıklamalı bir çevirisini vermek; ikinci olarak, Faizi'nin şiiri üzerinden belli bir hiciv türünün dar bir edebî çevrede filizlendiği süre boyunca Osmanlı edebiyatının kısa bir dönemini incelemek; ve son olaraksa bu şiiri 17. asır başının '*ilmiyye* kültürü içinde yorumlamak.

Anahtar kelimeler: Osmanlı şiiri, Faizi, Veysi, Parodi, 'İlmiyye.

Introduction

Ottoman poetry manuscripts, many of which have not been properly studied and completely catalogued, have a lot to offer us about the intricate details of the interactions among early modern Ottoman poets. The poem I will examine here is found in one of those manuscripts. Its composer was an Ottoman scholar-poet

* University of Vienna.

The first drafts of this article were read by Edith Gülçin Ambros and Gisela Procházka-Eisl. I am indebted to both of them for their valuable opinions and criticisms. I am thankful to Furkan Öztürk for informing me of the existence of the manuscript in which Faizi's lampoon is found and helping me together with Ali Emre Özyıldırım to unravel some of the poem's intriguing details.

who was a scion of a renowned Istanbulite *'ulemā* [scholar] family, the *Kafzade*s. He gained recognition in early 17th-century scholarly milieus as Kafzade Abdülhay Çelebi, while becoming famous as Faizi in the Ottoman literary scene in Istanbul. Whilst some research[1] has been carried out on Faizi's biography and his works, there is still very little historical information about his character as prolific poet, generous literary patron, and perceptive scholar.[2] And regrettably little attention has yet been paid to the poem discussed in the present essay, though it merits significant consideration.[3] The value I attribute to the poem is based on several points: i) first, it contains information about the biographies of Faizi and Veysi, both as poets and as members of the *'ilmiyye* [the religious-judicial hierarchy]; ii) second, this style of poetry may have created a literary fashion in Ottoman literary culture, albeit for a short time, and limited to the *'ilmiyye* circle; and iii) it provides us with information about 17th-century Ottoman scholarly culture.

Previous studies on the Ottoman *'ilmiyye* organization have generally been shaped around the political and juridical history of state institutions.[4] However, as revealed by Mustafa İsen's study based on Ottoman biographical sources [*teẕkire*], 64% of the Ottoman *dīvān* poets were scholars and bureaucrats coming from

1 For the relevant academic studies, see Halil İbrahim Okatan, *Kafzade Faizi - Hayatı Eserleri Sanatı - Tenkitli Divan Metni* (İzmir: Ege Üniversitesi Basımevi, 1995); Nilgün Büyüker, "Kafzade Faizi Leylî vü Mecnûn (Tenkitli Metin-İnceleme)" (master thesis), İstanbul: Marmara University, 2011; E. J. W. Gibb, *A History of Ottoman Poetry*, vol. III, ed. Edward G. Browne (London: Luzac & Co., 1904); Sabahattin Küçük, "Kafzâde Fâizî," *TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi (DİA)*, 2001, XXIV, 162-163.

2 I am preparing a biography of Faizi based on his works, unknown letters, and some other primary sources found in archives in Vienna, Istanbul, Ankara, and Paris.

3 This poem has been partly transcribed (with some inaccuracies) in an unpublished PhD dissertation: Hikmet Feridun Güven, "Klasik Türk Şiirinde Hiciv" (doctoral dissertation), Ankara: Gazi University, 1997, p. 297.

4 İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Devletinin İlmiye Teşkilatı* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 2014); Richard E. Repp, *The Mufti of Istanbul: A Study in the Development of the Ottoman Learned Hierarchy* (New Jersey: Oxford Oriental Institute Monographs, 1986); Abdurrahman Atçıl, *Scholars and Sultans in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016); Murat Çelik, *Osmanlı Medreseleri ve Avrupa Üniversiteleri (1450-1600)* (İstanbul: Küre Yayınları, 2019); Denise Klein, *Die osmanischen Ulema des 17. Jahrhunderts: Eine geschlossene Gesellschaft?* (Berlin: Klaus Schwarz Verlag, 2007); Madeline Zilfi, *The Politics of Piety: The Ottoman Ulema in the Postclassical Age (1600-1800)* (Minneapolis: Bibliotheca Islamica, 1988); Michael Nizri, *Ottoman High Politics and the Ulema Household* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).

varying levels of the state apparatus.[5] This organization became an integral part of Ottoman literary culture, particularly from the beginning of the 16th century, because a substantial proportion of the poets that constituted the Ottoman literary canon were of *'ulemā* origin. The present article thus substantiates how Ottoman literary history and the *'ilmiyye* organization were intertwined.

A Miscellany of Satire

The discovery of this poem was serendipitous. My study of the relations between Faizi and Nefi (1572? – 1635) within the scope of my doctoral project involved inspecting a great number of manuscripts in different archives and libraries in Turkey and Europe. Eventually, I came across this poem in a *hiciv mecmū'ası*, a miscellany of satire, registered as T 3004 in Istanbul University's library of rare books. The dates[6] on the pages and the poets[7] mentioned in the manuscript suggest that this miscellany was compiled by different persons between the 17th and the first half of the 19th centuries. The miscellany's colourful content fraught with satirical poems and stories implies that its anonymous compiler(s)/owner(s) had serious interests in literary lampoons, satires, and invectives.

Faizi's lampoon, 40 distichs long, is on folios 87b and 88b of the miscellany under the title "Hicv-i Ḳāf-zāde berāy-ı Veysī ez-zebān-ı ḫod". Below I present a literal translation of the poem. I try to explain the intricacies, which may cause difficulties, in the footnotes instead of giving a long commentary following every distich. The poem and its translation read as follows:

5 Mustafa İsen, *Tezkireden Biyografiye* (İstanbul: Kapı Yayınları, 2010), p. 199.

6 The dates are recorded according to the Islamic calendar: 1173/4 [Hegira 1187, 96a]; 1781/2 [H. 1195, 64b]; 1821 [H. 1237, 111a].

7 Nefi, Faizi, Nevizade Atayi, Ganizade Nadiri, Bahayi, Riyazi, Sürüri, Sünbülzade, Kani, Osmanzade Taib, Ulvi, Tatar Rahmi and so on.

[87b] **Hicv-i Ḳāf-zāde berāy-ı Veysī ez-zebān-ı ḫod**
[mefā'ilün / fe'ilātün / mefā'ilün / fe'ilün]

Ḳāf-zāde's lampoon on Veysī, in his [Veysī's] own words[8]

Benim o merd-i neberd-āzmā-yi ṭanṭana-sāz
kühen süḫan-ver-i ma'nā-ṭırāz u nuṭḳ-endāz

I am that veteran jabberer,
the silver-tongued curmudgeon who harangues and embellishes the meaning.

Yegāne Veysī-yi ḫoş-lehce-i sebük-terkīb
edīb-i bī-edeb ü şā'ir-i ġalaṭ-pervāz

I am Veysī the peerless, the swift composer of pretty sounds,
the impudent litterateur and the poet of flighty gibberish,

muṣannif-i heme-fen ḳıṣṣa-gūy-ı herze-süḫan
medīḥa-gūy-ı muḳannen be-ḥabbeẕā vü ṭırāz

the writer who has a hand in every discipline, the raconteur of nonsense,
the eulogizer by law – how charming and fancy! –,

sütūde mürteşī vü müfterī-yi bī-taḳrīb
ḫuceste ḳā'il-i bī-bāk ü ẓālim ü ser-bāz

the laudable bribe-taker and the matchless slanderer,
the fearless and fortunate speaker, the unjust dare-devil,

müfettiş-i heme-aḥvāl-i ḫā'inān-ı emīn
muḥaṣṣıl-ı heme-emvāl-i Mıṣr u Rūm u Ḥicāz

the inspector of all affairs of treacherous collectors,
the tax-gatherer of all the possessions of Egypt and Rūm[9] and Hejaz,

8 Unless otherwise stated all translations are mine. The lower-case letters in the beginning of the lines signalise the enjambments between hemistics and distichs. For the scanned image of the manuscript folios, see Appendix.

9 See Tunca Kortantamer, *Leben und Weltbild des altosmanischen Dichters Ahmedi unter besonderer Berücksichtigung seines Diwans* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Klaus Schwarz Verlag, 1973), pp. 96-97; Cemal Kafadar, "A Rome of One's Own: Reflections on Cultural Geography and Identity in the Lands of Rum," *Muqarnas*, 24 (2007), pp. 7-25. Although its borders were vague and varied throughout the centuries, the term Rūm was the appellation of a geographical area of the Middle and Western Anatolia and the Balkans corresponding to the core lands of the Ottoman Empire.

ḳıyāfe-bīn-i ʿibārāt-ı *Fāyıḳ* u *Ḳāmūs*
ġalaṭ-şümār u ṣaḥāyif-terāş-ı *Gevher-i Rāz*

rüsūm-ı naḥv ü meʿānīde ġāfil-i muṭlaḳ
uṣūl-ı fıḳh u ferāʾiżde cāhil-i mümtāz

ẓarīf-i żarṭa-nişār u ḥarīf-i mühre-feşān
ṣadīḳ-i ḳahḳaha-fermā nedīm-i şuʿbede-bāz

bedīʿ-i bidʿa-nümā vü ʿacīb-i ucbe-fezāy
vaḳūr-ı ʿırż-güdāz u ʿaḳūr hemçü gürāz

muḳallid-i tenedernā-zen-i mecāmiʿ-i sūr
müşaʿbid-i yeleley-gū muṣāḥib-ı ṭannāz

the one who discerns the manner of the words in *Fāyıḳ*[10] and *Ḳāmūs*,[11]
the counter of blunders and the scraper of the pages of *Gevher-i Rāz*[12]

absolutely heedless of the methods of grammar and rhetoric,
the distinguished ignorant of the procedures of fiqh and *farāʾiż*,[13]

the elegant farter and the guy who breaks wind,
the sincere friend who makes one laugh, the juggling boon-companion,

the introducer of heresy and the strange enhancer of conceit,
the honored violator of honor, and savage like a boar,

the buffoon warbling the melody of *tenedernā*[14] at every festivity,
the trickster chanting *yeleley*,[15] the jeering companion.

10 *al-Fāiḳ fī Ġarībi'l-Ḥadīṯ*, al-Zamakhsharī's (d. 1144) work in which he compiled a list of expressions used in hadith. C.H.M. Versteegh, "Al-Zamakhshari," *EI*², 2002, XI, 432–434.

11 *Al-ḳāmuṣ al-Muḥīṭ wa'l-ḳābūs al-wasīṭ al-djāmiʿ li-mā dhahaba min al-ʿarab shamaṭīṭ*, al-Firuzabadi's (d. 1415) dictionary where he criticized al-Djawhari's (d. 1009?) work, entitled *al-Siḥāḥ*. For the details, see H. Fleisch, "Al-Firūzābādī," *EI*², 1991, II, 926–927.

12 A reference to al-Djawhari's famous Arabic dictionary, *Tādj al-Luġa*, also known as *Ṣıḥāḥ al-Luġa*. Hulusi Kılıç, "Tācü'l-Luġa," *TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi (DİA)*, 2010, XXXIX, 356-357.

13 A term in Islamic jurisprudence regarding the distribution of inheritance among beneficiaries. Mehmet Zeki Pakalın, *Osmanlı Tarih Deyimleri ve Terimleri Sözlüğü*, vol. I (İstanbul: MEB Basımevi, 1983), p. 603.

14 Syllables or words used in the warblings of classical Islamic music. Nefi, *Sihâm-ı Kazâ – Eleştirel Basım*, ed. Furkan Öztürk (İstanbul: DBY Yayınları, 2020), p. 326. 'Abdü'l-kādir Marāgī's famous composition, *Āmed nesīm-i ṣubḥ-dem* has good examples of both *tenedernā* and *yeleley*.

15 See footnote 14.

Elimde ḫāme-i verziş-nümā-yı laḳlaḳa-senc
ʿaṣā-yı laḫlaḫa-fersā tinīn-i mār-nüvāz

The diligent pen in my hand, this speaker of jabberwockies is
the pulverizing staff of aromatic cephalic pastiles, the dragon patting snakes.

Ḳalem çeġāne vü dīvānım elde dā'īredir
Mecālis içre benim Kürd-oġlu'na demsāz

The pen is a rattle and my *dīvān* is a tambourine in the hand;
It is I who sing together with Kürdoğlu[16] at the gatherings.

Ne Kürd-oġlu cihān bī-nevālarından heb
ʿaceb midir ger olursam müreccaḥ u mümtāz

[And] who the devil is Kürdoğlu? Is it a wonder
if I always get preferred and chosen more than the ones with hoarse voice

Ḳanı benim gibi ḳavvāl-i ḫırḫırī-naġme
Ḳanı benim gibi ṭabbāl u ḫançerī-āvāz

Where is there a fife with a snarling sound like me?
Where is there a drummer with a growly-noise like me?

Görüñ görüñ hele etrāk içinde hīç var mı
bu lehçe bu ʿaẓamet bu edā bu nāz u niyāz

See! See! Is there ever among the Turks[17]
such language, such grandness, such style, such coquetry and entreaty,

bu ṭurfa ṭalʿat-ı mevzūn bu reng-i būḳalemūn
bu baḫt u çehre-i şeb-gūn bu ḳāmet-i nā-sāz

such weirdly well-proportioned features, such chameleon coloring,
such dark fortune and countenance, such a discordant stature,

[88ᵃ] bu şekl ü tavr-ı muḫabbıṭ bu hey'et-i muḍḥik
bu ḫiffet-i müteṣāḳıl bu cünbiş-i pür-nāz

such disturbing shape and manner, such a grotesque appearance,
such sluggish levity, such coquettish agitation,

16 I could not identify such an individual.

17 The word "Turk" was often used as an insult. See Edith Gülçin Ambros, "'The Other' (Non-Muslim, Non-Ottoman) in Ottoman Literary Humour," *Journal of Turkish Studies*, 44 (2015), p. 97; Y. Hakan Erdem, "Osmanlı Kaynaklarından Yansıyan Türk İmaj(lar)ı," *Dünyada Türk İmgesi*, ed. Özlem Kumrular (İstanbul: Kitap Yayınevi, 2005), pp. 13-27.

bu imtizāc-ı meʿānī bu vaḥşet-i elfāẓ
bu sīret-i mütenāfir bu ṭarz-ı ṭurfe-ṭırāz

Benim o fāris-i mızmār-ı suḫre-i taḳlīd
ki esb-i ṭabʿıma urduḳça gūşe-i mihmāz

cihān-ı medḥ ü şenādan güzār ėdüb fīʿl-hāl
feżā-yı laʿnet olur aña ʿarsa-i tek ü tāz

Benim o Türk-i ḥasīb ü müzevvir ü şirrīr
ki niçe şaḥneye oldum zamān ile ġammāz

Bu demde mültezim-i cevr ü ʿālim-i ẓulmem
ziyāde olmada gitdikçe dilde ḥırṣ ile āz

Belā-yı ṭūl-i emel ḳāmetim ḫam ėyledi āh
göñülden olmadı zāʾil hevā-yı kīr-i dirāz

Benim o pīr-i dü-tā Şeyḫ-i Necdī-yi Sānī
mürīd-i pāk bana münkirān-ı ṣavm u namāz

ʿaleʿl-ḫuṣūṣ o ḳadīmī nedīm-i beẕle-güzār
ḳadīd-i zinde-liḳā şāʿir-i çe[ġ]āne-ṭırāz

such an accord of meanings, such ferocity of words,
such hateful conduct, such bizarre manner?

I am that horseman on the racecourse of ridiculing parody.
Whenever I clap the edge of the spurs on the horse of my character,

it instantly leaves the world of eulogy and praise,
and the plain of malediction becomes it's running ground.

I am that revenging, lying and evil Turk,
and have become the informer on many watchmen in the course of time.

Now I am the tax-farmer of oppression and the scholar of cruelty,
greed and lust increase more and more in my heart.

Alas! The calamity of lengthy desire bent my stature,
the longing for a long penis did not fade out of my heart.

I am that twisted old man, Sheikh-i Najdi the second,[18]
my pure disciples are the deniers of fasting and prayer;

especially this very old, witty boon-companion,
the weedy one with a vivid face, the tuneful poet.

18 Sheikh Najdī (the old man from Najd) refers to Satan, who disguised himself as an "old man" to support the Qurayshi tribesmen's plot against the Prophet. See Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir (Abridged)*, vol. 4, ed. Shaykh Safiur-Rahman al-Mubarakpuri (Riyadh, Houston, New York, Lahore: Darussalam Publisher, 2003), p. 298.

Benim ḫalīfe-i Merrīḫ [ü] ketḫüdā-yı Zuḥal
ki Saʿd-ı Ekberi ėtdim zemīn-i ʿacz u niyāz

Kemīne cünbiş-i teʾşīr-i kevkebimden olur
cinānda zār u zebūn rūḥ-ı Saʿdī-yi Şīrāz

Zemīn-i sīne vü ġār-ı ṭabīʿatımda mekīn
ḫişāl-i ḫayye-i Fārūḳ u ʿaḳreb-i Ehvāz

I am the scribe of *Mars*[19] [and] the steward of *Saturn*,[20]
I turned *Jupiter*[21] into the land of helplessness and poverty.

Because of the influence of my star's defective motion,
the soul of Saʿdī of Shiraz[22] cried its heart out in the heavens.

In my innermost bosom and in the cavern of my nature are firmly fixed
the characteristics of Fārūḳ's[23] snakes and Ahwaz's[24] scorpions.

19 In pre-modern Ottoman astrology, *Merrīḫ* (Mars) symbolized war because the color of the planet is red. Those under the influence of that planet were considered bold, impudent, quarrelsome, and dangerous, quick to anger and quick to act, heedlessly risking their lives. See Pakalın, *Osmanlı Tarih Deyimleri*, vol. II, 482.

20 *Zuḥal* is Saturn, the planet astrologers called "naḳṣ-ı ekber", "the biggest deficieny," regarding it as the most inauspicious star. Those under its influence were characterized by foolishness, ignorance, cowardice, lies, malice, reproaching, destructiveness, and (in the word's English sense) saturnunity. Pakalın, *Osmanlı Tarih Deyimleri*, vol. III, 473.

21 *Saʿd-ı Ekber*, "the greatest auspiciousness," an expression for Jupiter, symbolized happiness, blessing, and abundance. Those under the influence of that planet were believed to act with peace, tranquility, morality, love, and mercy. Pakalın, *Osmanlı Tarih Deyimleri*, vol. II, 636.

22 The author of the well-known *Būstān* and *Gulestān*, two classics highly-regarded by the Ottoman literati. Losensky, "Saʿdi", https://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/sadi-sirazi (accessed 27.07.2020).

23 al-Fārūḳ, the name Arabs used for Istanbul because the Bosporus bisects (*tafrīḳ*) the city. The reference to snakes reminds one of the column of Marcian which Evliya Çelebi said protected the city against snakes.

24 A city in Iran, famous for its scorpions.

Benim küşende-i ṣad bī-günāh-ı dīn ber-āb
Benim fikende-i āteş be-Çār-bāġ-ı niyāz

I am the swift slaughterer of hundreds of innocent believers.
I am he who sets the Çār-bāġ[25] of supplication on fire.

Nice vezīr-i dilīriñ ḫayātı ḫil'atin
nüḫūsetim [sic] meleküʻl-mevte ḳıldı pāy-endāz

My inauspiciousness spread out
the robes of many brave viziers' lives for the Angel of Death.

Vezīr-i āʻžam-ı sābıḳ gelüb Beliġradʻa
bańa ki ordu ḳażāsın[ı] ėyledi incāz

The previous Grand Vizier came to Belgrade
and fulfilled the promise of making me the *ḳāḍī* of the army.[26]

Beş on güne ḳomadı anı ṣoḥbet-i şūmum
miṯāl-i berg-i ḫazān ėyledim ʻadem-pervāz

My ominous society did not last more than five or ten days
before I made him fly to annihilation, like an autumn leaf.

Niçe anıñ gibi erbāb-ı cāh u iḳbāle
neşīd-i şīven ile olmaḳ oldı nevḥa-ṭırāz

Many holders of high rank and dignity like him
were doomed to lamenting with loud cries.

ʻAleʻl-ḫuṣūṣ vezīr-i dilīr ʻAlī Paşa
ne resme buldı görüñ pūte-i ecelde güdāz

See particularly in what manner the brave Vizier Ali Pasha[27]
melted in the crucible of death.

25 The name of a celebrated royal garden or park in Isfahan. In *dīvān* poetry it had various meanings, such as "The Garden", "The World", or "The Universe". Ahmet Talât Onay, *Eski Türk Edebiyatında Mazmunlar ve İzahı* (Ankara: Akçağ Basım Yayım Pazarlama, 2000), p. 147.

26 The *ḳāḍī* (judge) of the army was the legal authority representing the *ḳāḍī-ʻasker* [military judge] during the Imperial Army's military expeditions. İlber Ortaylı, "Kadı," *TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi (DİA)*, 2001, XXIV, 69-73.

27 Malkoç Yavuz Ali Paşa (b. ? – d. 1604) Ottoman Grand Vizier, who died during the Hungarian expedition of 1604. Soner Demirsoy, "Yavuz Ali Paşa," *TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi (DİA)*, 2013, XLIII, 352-353.

Kime müṣāḥib olursam budur benim kārım
Benim belāda ḥaḳīḳat benim vefāda mecāz

[88b] Daḫı neler ėde bu ṭabʿ-ı şūm-ı merdüm-küş
vėrirse ruḫṣat eger çarḫ-ı dūn-ı sifle-nevāz

Mıṣırʿda ėyledigim dest-bürd-i ġaddārī
ḫiṣāl-i Ḥażret-i Ḥaccāc-ı ẓālim-i enbāz

Diyār-ı Rūmʿa geçüb ėtdigim meẓālim ḫod
Celālīyān-i cihān-sūza oldı reşk-endāz

Nite ki ẕātım ola maẓhar-ı şütūm-ı ġażab
nite ki dā'im ola bende ḫulḳ-i kelb ü gürāz

hezār nefret ü nefrīn-i bī-nihāye-i ḫalḳ
ola resīde-i Veysī-yi cilf ü suḫre-tırāz

To whomever I become a companion, this is what I do;
I am the truth in trouble, I am the illusion in loyalty.

Who knows what else this ill-fated manslaying character would do,
if mean fate, caressing the ordinary men, should permit.

The superiority in perfidy I inflicted in Egypt
is equal in tyranny to his Highness Ḥaccāc's.[28]

The atrocities I carried out when I went to Rūm
made the Djelalis[29] themselves, who set the world on fire, envious.

Just as I may be wrathfully reviled,
just as the nature of a dog and a boar may be mine at all times,

may thousandfold hatred and the never-ending curse of the people
find its way to coarse Veysī with the clownish manner!

28 Haccac b. Yusuf es-Sekafî (b. 661 – d. 714), the Umayyad governor, famous for his cognomen, *ẓālim* [cruel]. İrfan Aycan, "Haccâc b. Yûsuf Es-Sekafî," *TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi (DİA)*, 1996, XIV, 427-428. Veysi reserved a chapter for him in his famous work, *Ḫᵛāb-nāme*, f. 17a.

29 "Rebels in Anatolia in the late 16th and early 17th centuries." Gustav Bayerle, *Pashas, Begs, and Effendis: A Historical Dictionary of Titles and Terms in the Ottoman Empire* (İstanbul: The Isis Press, 1997), p. 27.

First Things First: Veysi's satire, beginning a new literary fashion?

Veysi's name is one of the first that comes to mind when the topic is Ottoman flowery prose. In fact, even his contemporaries Nevizade Atayi (1583 – 1635) and Riyazi Muhammed Efendi (1572 - 1644), remarked upon Veysi's high competence in Ottoman rhymed prose. Riyazi described him as an author "who ornaments the finest styles of poetry and artistic prose; the melodic resonance of his pompous and bombastic sentences have astounded many poets [...]".[30] But how he gained a reputation and initially made a name for himself among the Ottoman literary public had nothing to do with his prose talents, but related to a satire he wrote when he was a novice (*mülāzım*) in the '*ilmiyye* hierarchy in Istanbul.[31]

Born in Alaşehir, a small town in Western Anatolia, Veysi succeeded after some difficulties to come to Istanbul for his education and early career.[32] There

30 "Hakkâ ki, tırâzende-i tarz-ı hâssü'l-hâss-ı nazm u inşâ olup debdebe-i tumturâk-'ibârât-ı tannânesi çok şâ'iri beliñletmiş [...]." Riyazi, *Riyazu'ş-Şuara*, p. 339.

31 The primary sources I have used for Veysi's life are: Zehr-i Mār-zāde Seyyid Mehmed Rıza, *Rızâ Tezkiresi*, ed. Gencay Zavotçu (Ankara: T.C. Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı, 2017), p. 165; Hafız Hüseyin Ayvansarâyî, *Vefeyât-ı Ayvansarâyî*, ed. Ramazan Ekinci (Ankara: T.C. Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı, 2017), p. 244; Nevizade Atayi, *Hadâ'iku'l-Hakâ'ik Fî Tekmileti'ş-Şakâ'ik*, vol. I-II, ed. Suat Donuk (İstanbul: Türkiye Yazma Eserler Kurumu Başkanlığı Yayınları, 2017), p. 1752-60; Kınalızâde Hasan Çelebi, *Tezkiretü'ş-şu'arâ*, ed. Aysun Sunu gurhan (Ankara: T.C. Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı, 2017), p. 907-908; Kafzade Faizi, *Zübdetü'l-Eş'ār*, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, H. O. 141, f. 138b-139a. Secondary sourcb es: Sedat Şensoy, "Veysi (Üveysi b. Muhammed El-Alaşehrî) ve Eseri 'Merace'l-Bahreyn'in Tahkiki" (master thesis), Konya: Selçuk University, 1995, pp. 17-34; Ahmet Tunç Şen, "A Dream of a 17th Century Ottoman Intellectual: Veysi and His Habname" (master thesis), İstanbul: Sabancı University, 2008, pp. 24-42; Fadıl Hoca, "Veysi Divanı Tahlili" (master thesis), İstanbul: İstanbul University, 2002, pp. 4-12; Th. Menzel, "Weysī," *EI²*, 2002, XI, 204-205, pp. 204-205; M. Kanar, "Veysi", *İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, 1986, XIII, 308-309, pp. 308-309; Bayram Ali Kaya, "Veysi", *TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi (DİA)*, 2013, XLIII, 76-77; Süleyman Çaldak, "Veysî, Üveys Çelebi, Üveys b. Mehmed," http://teis.yesevi.edu.tr/madde-detay/veysi-uveys-celebi-uveys-mehmed (accessed 06.09.2020); E. J. W. Gibb, *A History of Ottoman Poetry*, vol. III, ed. Edward G. Browne (London: Luzac & Co., 1904), pp. 208-218; Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall, *Geschichte der osmanischen Dichtkunst*, vol. III (Pest: Conrad Adolph Hartlebes's Verlag, 1837), pp. 203-206; Alessio Bombaci, *Storia Della Letteratura Turca* (Milano: Nuova Accademia Editrice, 1956), p. 400; Christine Woodhead, "Estetik Nesir," *Türk Edebiyatı Tarihi*, vol. II, ed. Talat Sait Halman (Ankara: T.C. Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı, 2006), pp. 315-325.

32 For his cultural milieu, and career projectory see A. Tunç Şen's detailed chapter in his master thesis, Şen, *A Dream of a 17th Century Ottoman Intellectual*, pp. 29-33.

he frequented *ḳāḍı-ʿasker* Molla Ahmed Efendi's (d. 1600)[33] public lectures, concerning which he later composed a satirical poem.[34] And if we are to believe what Atayi said, it was this poem that made Veysi's name known in the Ottoman literary salons.[35] Although I do not intend to go into details about this satirical piece, there are some points about it relating to Faizi's lampoon of Veysi that bear mention. Its title, *Manẓūme-i Veysī Çelebi ez-zebān-ı Loḳmān-ı Şeh-nāme-gūy* ("Veysi Çelebi's poem, in *Şahnameci*[36] Lokman's own words"), implies that Veysi composed a poem impersonating Lokman Efendi, and delineated these public lectures making fun of both the lecturer Molla Ahmed Efendi and the scholars who attended.[37] Of course this public lampoon came at a high price for Veysi: the *ḳāḍī-ʿasker* Molla Ahmed Efendi had been responsible for Veysi's appointment to an official position and was very annoyed with him, thus making him virtually unemployable for a while. But Veysi's close friends apparently succeeded in finally lessening Molla Ahmed Efendi's wrath, and he subsequently was appointed to Egypt as the *ḳāḍī* of Bani Haram.[38]

Throughout the period when Veysi worked as *ḳāḍī* and carried out the tasks of various bureaucratic positions, he was away from the capital and it took him almost ten years to return. His poem, however, seems to have circulated among the Ottoman literati and – as we are to understand from the miscellany – achieved some notoriety in a small literary coterie during his absence.

This *mecmūʿa*, in fact, includes three poems[39] resembling Veysi's and written

33 Şemseddin Ahmed el-Ensari. See, Nevizade Atayi, *Hadâ'ik*, p. 1192.

34 Süleyman Çaldak has published this poem with an introduction and translation, see Süleyman Çaldak "Veysî'nin Hicviye'si," *Littera Turca: Journal of Turkish Language and Literature*, II/1 (2016): 81–92

35 "Loḳmān-ı Şeh-nāme-gūy lisānından hicv-i meşhūrı iştihār ve nev-ẓuhūr iken ol eser ile taʿayyün ü iʿtibār bulmış idi." Nevizade Atayi, *Hadâ'ik*, p. 1752.

36 "A composer of dynastic histories or histories of military campaigns, often in poetical form." Bayerle, *Pashas, Begs, and Effendis*, p. 139. Also see, Christine Woodhead, "Şehnameci," *TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi (DİA)*, 2013, XXXVIII, 456-458.

37 For the attendants, see Çaldak, "Veysî'nin Hicviye'si," pp. 85-89.

38 Nevizade Atayi, *Hadâ'ik*, p. 1756.

39 "Güfte-i Riyāżī ez zebān-ı Remmāl ʿArab" [65a]; "Hicv-i Ḳāf-zāde berāy-ı Veysī ez zebān-ı ḫod" [87b]; "Vaṣiyye-nāme-i Ṭarzī ez zebān-ı Ṭıflī" [94a]. Bekir Çınar has studied Tarzi's *Vaṣiyye-nāme*, however, he does not mention any such poetic vogue in Ottoman literature, see Bekir Çınar, "Türk Edebiyatında Vasiyet-Nâmeler ve İki Şair (Tıflî/Tarzî) Arasında Kalan Bir Vasiyetnâme," *Türk Kültürü İncelemeleri Dergisi*, 9 (2003): 115–40.

by his contemporaries Riyazi[40] (1572 – d. 1644), Faizi (1589 – d. 1621), and Tarzi[41] (? – 1662). The similar life stories of these four figures suggest that their poetic style was a literary fashion belonging to a certain period, social class and/or milieu. All four, including Veysi, came from the ranks of the '*ilmiyye* organization: they all had similar educations, their lives all intersected and, perhaps more importantly, they all definitely made each others' acquaintance because in their professional network everyone worked hand in glove with each other. It is, of course, impossible at this distance in time, and in the absence of further examples, to prove whether or not satirical poems written with someone else's voice became fashionable in the Ottoman literary culture of the late 16th and early 17th centuries. But it would not be an exaggeration to suggest that Veysi and his three contemporaries left a witty impression on the literary milieu in Istanbul. Given that the members of this bureaucratic and literary circle occasionally wrote lines about each other in either biographical dictionaries of poets and in their poems,[42] and that they sent highly artistic letters to one another, there certainly was a bond between them.[43] In all likelihood, bantering with contemporaries in the '*ilmiyye*

40 For Riyazi's life, see Gönül Alpay Tekin, "Riyāḍī," *EI²*, 1995, VIII, 548-549.

41 For Tarzi's life, see İsmail Hakkı Aksoyak, "Tarzi," Türk Edebiyatı İsimler Sözlüğü, 2015, http://teis.yesevi.edu.tr/madde-detay/tarzi-tarzi-mehmed-efendi (accessed 04.08.2020); Safai, *Safai ve Tezkiresi*, ed. Nuran (Üzer) Altuner, (doctoral dissertation), İstanbul: İstanbul University, 1989, pp. 482-485.

42 We have many hints concerning the relations among these individuals. Apart from his *tezkire*, *Riyāzü'ş-şu'arā*, in which he wrote entries both for Faizi and Veysi, passages in Riyazi's letters and poems show that he knew Faizi and Veysi personally: Riyazi Muhammed Efendi, *Riyâzü'ş-şuara*, 339; Namık Açıkgöz, "Divân Edebiyatında Mektup ve XVII. Yüzyıl Şâirlerinden Riyâzî'nin İki Mektubu," *Fırat Üniversitesi Dergisi*, I/2 (1987): pp. 7–14. Faizi's immitative poem (*naẓīre*) for Riyazi can also be found in a manuscript in the Esad Efendi Collection in Süleymaniye, nr. 3479, f. 155a. Veysi's letters to Faizi are in the National Library of Turkey, Ankara, 26 Hk 1063, f. 47b; *Münşeat Mecmu'āsı*, İstanbul Üniversitesi Nadir Eserler Kütüphanesi, T 1782, f. 29a-30a; *Münşeat Mecmu'āsı*, İstanbul Üniversitesi Nadir Eserler Kütüphanesi T 1526, f. 224a-224b, 244a-244b, 258b-259a, and 262a. Tarzi's *Ẕille-nāme* ridicules both Faizi and Riyazi. For the full text see Çınar, "Bir Hiciv Örneği: Tarzi'nin Zille-Nâmesi", pp. 23-29.

43 A recent study by Sadık Yazar sheds light on the letter writing practices in the 17th century, see Sadık Yazar, "Okçuzade Mehmed Şahi'nin (1562-1630) Kanuni Devri Nişancısı Celalzade Mustafa Çelebi'nin (Ö. 1567) İnşasına Yönelik Tenkitleri," *Kanûnî Sultan Süleyman ve Dönemi: Yeni Kaynaklar, Yeni Yaklaşımlar*, ed. Suraiya Faroqhi, and etc. (İstanbul: İbn Haldun Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2020), pp. 215-245.

hierarchy through the medium of such satires in that period, and perhaps later too, became an entertaining – and probably for some a frustrating – part of the *'ulemā* and the literary culture.[44]

The roots of Ottoman *hicā'* can be traced back to the beginning of the Ottoman literature.[45] This literary genre has took on a different dimension in the early 17th century, as Michael Sheridan puts it in his dissertation, entitled "I Curse No One Without Cause".[46] Because, again, according to Sheridan, the rivalry between the Ottoman elites in this period has thoroughly intensified in parallel with the institutionalization and expansion of the Ottoman *'ilmiye* organization. And the Ottoman invectives too received their share from this rivalry. Thus, the genre has slightly changed. In the case of *Sihām-ı Ḳażā* (Shafts of Doom), in particular, one may say that the rivalry between the Rūmī, that is the insider scholar-litterateurs and the outsiders like Nefi, now turned into a verbal enmity. Faizi too wrote such invectives targeting Nefi in this manner, as Nefi did for him in return. However, this alteration seen in the Ottoman *hicā'* should not mean that the whole genre changed its course from scratch. The parts refer to Yahya Efendi in the *Sihām-ı Ḳażā*, for instance, was written in a friendly manner, as Zati had done in his invectives previously. In a similar vein, Faizi's lampoon for Veysi too was written in an unhostile manner.

Faizi puts his lampoon on paper

Of these satiric poems, the one by Faizi is especially worthy of consideration because it reflects the relationship between the author of the poem and its addressee, thereby displaying a facet of the *'ulemā* culture and literary fashion in Istanbul at the turn of the 17th century. It also provides some biographical information which we can infer by reading between the lines.

Faizi's life had been shaped by family members who, before he was born, had held the highest positions in the Ottoman bureaucracy. His career was made possible– thinking in *bourdieusian* terms – by the economic and social capital he had inherited from his great-grandfather, the distinguished scholar and famous

44 For a general introduction for the 17th century Ottoman literary culture, see Hatice Aynur, "Ottoman Literature," *The Cambridge History of Turkey*, vol. III (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2006), pp. 481-520; Berat Açıl, "The Poet 'Azmizade Haleti and the Transformation of Ottoman Literature in the Seventeenth Century," *The Empires of the Near East and India,* ed. Hani Khafipour (New York: Columbia University Press, 2019), pp. 428-449.

45 See, Michael Douglas Sheridan, "I Curse No One Without Cause" (doctoral dissertation), Ankara: Bilkent University, 2018, pp. 1-47.

46 Sheridan, "I Curse No One Without Cause," pp. 317-318.

şeyḫü'l-islām Ebussuud Efendi (d. 1574), from his grandfather, the *şeyḫü'l-islām* and *naḳībü'l-eşrāf* Malulzade Mehmed Efendi (d. 1585), and from his father, *ḳāḍı'asker* Feyzullah Efendi (d. 1611). Thus, from his youth onwards he had enjoyed the benefits of belonging to the Ottoman elite intellectual class. After earning his diploma (*mülāzemet*), he went up the professional ladder and became at the age 23 a professor at one of the most prestigious institutions of the empire, the Süleymaniye Medresesi; and when Osman II ascended the throne, he entered the Sultan's inner circle thanks to his social status and his poems dedicated to the sultan. He was appointed to Selanik (Thessaloniki) as a *mevleviyet ḳāḍısı*.[47] When he died at the relatively young age of 32, he left behind a *dīvān*, an anthological dictionary of poets (*Zübdetü'l-eş'ār*) which he had prepared in a new style, an unfinished *meşnevī* (*Leylā vü Mecnūn*), and his *münşeāt* (letters), most of which were written by his protégé Nergisi, one of the Ottoman prose giants and among Veysi's closest friends. But Faizi's most important contribution to Ottoman literary culture was as a patron of literature: despite his youth, he was the benefactor of Veysi, Nergisi, and Nevizade Atayi, and had a key role in Nevizade Atayi's first *meşnevī* which gave a new lease to life to the *sāḳīname* literary genre.[48] He was indeed in contact, not only with the aforementioned literary figures of the period, but also with the leading members of the ruling elite of the Ottoman state apparatus. If we are to map the social network of Faizi's life using information extracted from his *ḳasīde*s (eulogies) written for high-ranking state officials including Sultans, from chronograms penned for his acquaintances, from his satirical pieces (mostly

47 "The term *mevleviyet* signifies an office held by a Mawla (Molla), an honorific title conferring certain privileges, and was applied in all periods to the highest offices in the learned profession, though the identity of the offices changed with time." Repp, *The Mufti of Istanbul*, p. 31. That Selanik was a *mevleviyet* is implied by a letter of Nergisi: "be-tarīk-i mevleviyyet kār-fermā-yı kazā-yı Selānik bûdend, ve īn çāker-i sīne-sāf-ı hulûs-ittisāf be-hidmet-i niyābet-i ān ber-güzīde-i eşrāf ve hayrü'l-halef-i eslāf müşerref ü kām-revā ve mülāzemet-i sohbet-i ān hazret-i 'ālī-menzilet-i sāmī-menkıbet hoş-dil ü pür safā bûd, vukû' yāft." Nergisi, "The Esālibü'l-Mekātib (Münşe'āt) of Mehmed Nergisi Efendi," ed. J. R. Walsh, *Archivum Ottomanicum*, I (1969), p. 258.

48 This is a genre of classical Islamic literature. The main theme of the *sāḳīnāme*s, whether Sufic or mundane, is wine and its related material and non-material culture. See Kortantamer, *Nev'î-Zâde Atâyî ve Hamse'si*, p. 155. In her article, entitled "The Very Special Dead and A Seventeenth-Century Ottoman Poet: Nevizade Atayi's Reasons for Composing His Mesnevis," Aslı Niyazioğlu successfully unfolds this relationship between Atayi and Faizi; see Aslı Niyazioğlu "The Very Special Dead and A Seventeenth-Century Ottoman Poet: Nevizade Atayi's Reasons for Composing His Mesnevis," *Archivum Ottomanicum*, 25 (2008), pp. 229-31.

aimed at Nefi), and, perhaps more significantly, from the *münşeāt* Nergisi wrote on his behalf, it would be surprising if Veysi himself were not among the literary elite, despite the fact that he was only a mid-level judge.

The most explicit traces of the relationship between Faizi and Veysi are in the latter's letters between 1618 and 1621, when Faizi was the *ḳāḍī* of Thessaloniki. The phrases Veysi used for Faizi in these letters imply that they were sent to a superior: he calls Faizi a "spring of generosity and beneficence".[49] Selanik was a *mevleviyyet* when Faizi was *ḳāḍī* there, which means he had an open track to the highest positions in the *'ilmiyye* organization. Veysi, however, was a lesser figure in the bureaucracy. Therefore, their relationship was hierarchical in nature, though involving a sincere friendship. However, we do not know when they first met. As has been said, Faizi was born into an *'ulemā* family whose social position gave him the opportunity to become acquainted with literary figures like Nergisi and Nevizade Atayi, both of whom had been pupils of his father, Feyzullah Efendi. He might have met Veysi through family ties, or sometime between 1611 and 1614 when Nasuh Pasha was Grand Vizier because during this period both Veysi and Faizi, as well as some of their literary associates like Nefi and Haleti, endeavoured to secure the Pasha's patronage. Ultimately, however, it was Faizi who was appointed to a high-ranking position thanks to the patronage of Nasuh Pasha[50] whereas Veysi fell into the Grand Vizier's disfavor.[51]

I would judge that Faizi's satirical piece was written in a bantering tone to vex Veysi playfully rather than to criticize him hurtfully. Ottoman satire served different ends for different poets, and was composed variously to criticize, to curse, or, as in the case of Faizi, to banter. I therefore suggest that this poem was intended

49 "Menbā'u'l-cūd ve'l-kerem Ḳāf-zāde Fā'izī Efendi." (*Münşeat Mecmu'āsı*, İstanbul Üniversitesi Nadir Eserler Kütüphanesi, T 1526, f. 224a); the letters are on folios 244a-244b, 258b-259a, and 262a, and include congratulations, news of political rivals, etc.

50 "Ḳıṭ'a Berāy-ı Naṣūḥ Pāşā Der İltimās-ı Medrese-i Ṣaḥn." Kafzade Faizi, (Divan) *Hayatı Eserleri Sanatı & Tenkitli Divan Metni*, ed. Halil İbrahim Okatan (doctoral dissertation), İzmir: Ege University, 1995, pp. 261-2. Edith Gülçin Ambros touches upon the same issue in her recent monograph *Ottoman Chronogram Poems: Formal, Factual and Fictional Aspects* (Berlin: EB-Verlag Dr. Brandt, 2021).

51 As Nevizade Atayi puts it, Nasuh Paşa took offence at a reference in Veysi's work: "Beyāża çıkan bir cüz' miḳdārı bir Vāḳı'a-nāme'si vardır [...] ṣadr-ı A'ẓam Naṣūḥ Paşa'ya 'arż eyledükde 'Aḥsenü'l-kiẕbe' laṭīfesin itmişlerdür. Ba'dehu ḫilāl-i hikāyede vezīr-i Musta'ṣım-ı 'Abbāsī olan İbn 'Alḳamī ḫıyānetin görüp ta'rīż-i fehm itmekle der-i iḥsānı berkitmişler idi." Nevizade Atayi, *Hadâ'ik,* p. 1758.

to be a lampoon, a witty portrait, a friendly caricature of Veysi.[52] Due to the congenial nature of the relation between Faizi and Veysi, I do not consider this poem to be a cruel, derogatory satire either. The amicable content of the seven letters written between the two is is the proof of their friendship.[53] And, apart from the jeering remarks about Veysi's age and appearance, it was composed in a way that would prompt a laugh from the *'ilmiyye* members interested in the literature of the time. As Nevizade Atayi says, Veysi's outstanding trait was not his scholarship, nor his poetry, nor his prose, nor his companionship, but his handsomeness.[54] The themes of old age and ugliness standing out in Faizi's lampoon are therefore a sort of deconstruction of Veysi's personality as constructed by Atayi. The poem indeed speaks for itself and is a fine example of the way the *'ilmiyye* members would make sport of one another. Faizi's lampoon makes fun of Veysi through the very things that define his character, at least so far as can be discerned in modern literary historiography: specifically, poetry and companionship, profession and scholarship, his age and appearance, and his ethnicity, his "Turkishness".

Beginning with the matter of ethnicity, it is well known that the term "Turk" was frequently used in a pejorative sense in the early modern Ottoman context. Especially for the mullahs, including Faizi, who had formed a strong political clique in the imperial capital, "Turkishness" had quite opposite connotations from the lettered Istanbulite *çelebi* (gentleman). To them, "Turk" implied countryside

52 For the discussion on the terminology, see Geert jan van Gelder, *The Bad and the Ugly: Attitudes Towards Invective Poetry (Hijā') in Classical Arabic Literature* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1988), p. 75-77. The reason on choice of choosing "lampoon" rather than "invective" is that the term lampoon is more suitable for this piece of poetry. A lampoon is a satirical piece that describes the personality and appearance of a particular person in a way that makes them seem absurd, while invectives are derogatory epithets used to denounce someone. This poem contains more than derogatory epithets and denounciations. For the terms, see M. H. Abrams and Geoffrey Galt Harpham's, *A Glossary of Literary Terms* (Boston: Wadsworth Cengage Learning, 2012).

53 These letters are: Anonymous, *Münşe'at Mecmū'ası*, İstanbul Üniversitesi Nadir Eserler Kütüphanesi, T 1526, f. 244a and 258b and 262a; Anonymous, *Münşe'at Mecmū'ası*, İstanbul Üniversitesi Nadir Eserler Kütüphanesi, T 3166, f. 121b; Anonymous, *Münşe'at Mecmū'ası*, İstanbul Üniversitesi Nadir Eserler Kütüphanesi, T 1782, f. 29a; Anonymous, *Münşe'at Mecmū'ası*, İstanbul Üniversitesi Nadir Eserler Kütüphanesi, T 1812, f. 21b; Anonymous, *Münşe'at Mecmū'ası*, Milli Kütüphane, 26 Hk 1063, f. 21b.

54 "Ba'zı ẓurefā merātib-i ḥayṣiyyātını bu gūne edā iderlerdi ki 'ilminden ṣi'ri evlā, ṣi'rinden inşāsı a'lā, inşāsından muṣāḥabeti rācih, muṣāḥabetinden esbāb-ı vecāhet ü reşākat-ı ḳāmetinüñ rüchānı vāżıḥ ola." Nevizade Atayi, *Hadâ'ik,* p. 1759.

and roughness, and was the opposite of what was called "the Ottoman way".[55] Faizi was not the only poet to mock Veysi with his origin: one of most controversial figures of the time, the poet Nefi, likewise treated Veysi's origin with scorn.[56]

The backbone of the lampoon are the references to a world in which scholarly culture, poetry, and patronage were inseparably intertwined. The hemistichs mocking Veysi's poetic skills and professional occupations come one after another: The poet of flighty gibberish is none other than the bribe-taker, corrupt Veysi, whose *dīvān* is a standing joke in the literary gatherings. He is utterly ignorant of the grammar and rhetoric in which every member of the *'ilmiyye* is trained. He hasn't the foggiest notion about *fiqh* and the other legal issues for which the judges are responsible. He is virtually the embodiment of all the things criticized by the anonymous author of *Kitâb-ı Müstetâb*.[57] As the poem suggests, the duties Veysi performed in Egypt, Anatolia, and the Rumelia occupied a relatively long period when he was working as judge, tax-farmer, and inspector during the time of the Celali rebellions. Faizi's teasing regarding the sufferings of the people of West Anatolia due to Veysi's cruelty as judge take on a darker complexion when reference is made to the latter's fatwa for the decapitation of a man who wrote a book cursing the Prophet and claiming his own prophethood.[58] And Ali Paşa's

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55 The term, "Ottoman Way", has been used by several historians. For instance, to Sooyong Kim it is one of three buttresses of being an Ottoman elite: "[The Ottoman way] involved being completely conversant with Islamicate culture. That included being at ease with Ottoman Turkish (for which a knowledge of Arabic and Persian was essential) and conforming in public to the customs and manners for which that speech was the vehicle. Hence being an Ottoman was a matter of cultural conformity rather than of mere association with the sultan and his court." Sooyong Kim, *The Last of an Age - The Making and Unmaking of a Sixteenth-Century Ottoman Poet* (London: Routledge, 2018), p. 13.

56 "Bāreka'llāh zihī ḳudret-i ḥaḳ celle celāl
Nedür ol Türk-i müzevvir-süḫan u ṭurfe-maḳāl
Öyle Türküñ ḳaṣabu's-sebḳ-ı belāġat yėrine
Kef-i destinde ya ser-deste gerekdür ya ḳavāl
Öyle Türküñ yaraşur kanda ise başında
Kīse-i defter-i maʿnā yėrine eski çüvāl [...]." Nefi, *Sihâm-ı Kazâ,* p. 139.

57 A book written in the time of Osman II by an anonymous courtier. For his criticism of corrupt judges and *'ulema*, see Anonymous, *Kitâb-ı Müstetâb*, ed. Yaşar Yücel (Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi Dil ve Tarih-Coğrafya Fakültesi Yayınları, 1974), pp. 23-25.

58 Hüseyin Yurdaydın, "Alaşehir Kadısı Veysi Efendi (1561-1628)'nin İlginç Bir Fetvası," *Ciépo – Osmanlı Öncesi ve Osmanlı Araştırmaları Uluslararası Komitesi VII. Sempozyum*

death in Belgrade reflects a real incident in Veysi's career[59] when, after working in Egypt and Anatolia, he was appointed *ḳāḍī-yi ordu-yı hümāyūn* (judge of the Imperial Army) to represent the then *ḳāḍı-ʿasker* during the army's Hungarian expedition. The commander-in-chief of the army was Malkoç Ali Paşa (d. 1604), whom Veysi praised, saying

> Let the bright sun and luminous moon not rise, if they do not want to;
> The night-lamp of the Vizier's justice and conscience is sufficient for the world![60]

As the lampoon states, the Grand Vizier was the patron of Veysi, but it also states that the Grand Vizier died unexpectedly during the expedition to Belgrade because of Veysi's inauspicious company. Veysi was discharged and returned to Istanbul.[61]

Ali Paşa's death could be used as a point of reference for dating Faizi's poem, but we have an even clearer hint from the specific books Faizi mentions in ridiculing of Veysi, which include *Fāyıḳ*, *Kāmūs*, and *Gevher-i Rāz*. These works were primary literary sources for the *ʿilmiyye* members of that time, but in 1609 Veysi himself began a translation into Ottoman Turkish titled *Merāceʾl-Baḥreyn* of al-Fīrūzābādī's *al-ḳāmuṣ al-Muḥīṭ*,[62] a work that criticized the methods al-Djawhari had used in his dictionary *as-Sıḥāḥ*. However, Veysi died before finishing his translation.[63] As a considerable amount of Ottoman poetry is cloaked in the rid-

Bildirileri (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 1994). I thank Ömer Gezer for providing me with this article.

59 "Dārüʾl-cihād-ı Belġırad'a vāṣıl olduḳlarında serdār-ı ekrem, ʿalem-efrāz-ı ʿalem-i ʿadem olduḳda." Nevizade Atayi, *Hadâʾik*, p. 1756.

60 "Ṭoġmasun isterse mihr-i enver ü māh-ı münīr Dehre besdür şeb-çerāġ-ı ʿadl ü inṣāf-ı vezīr." Veysi, *Dīvān-ı Veysī*, Süleymaniye Yazma Eserler Kütüphanesi, Ali Nihat Tarlan Koleksiyonu, 144/7, f. 101a. I resorted to this manuscript, because unfortunately, I could not find the edition of Veysi's *dīvān* prepared by Zehra Toska in 1985.

61 In Atayi's work, there is a marginal note which corroborates the veracity of Ali Paşa's death and, more interestingly, it seems to have been written by Veysi himself: "Bu faḳīr sene 1012 Rebīʿuʾl-evvel'inüñ on altıncı güni İstanbul'a gelüb Cemādiye'l-ūlā'da Siroz ḳażāsı müyesser oldı. Sene 1013 Ṣafer'i ġurresinde Serdār ʿAlī Paşa'yı Ṣofya'ya istiḳbāle varduġımuz gün ordu-yı hümāyūn ḳażāsı virdiler. Rebīʿuʾl-āḫir'de Meḥemmed Paşa serdār olmaġla Siroz'dan ve ordu-yı hümāyūndan maʿzūl olup [...]." Nevizade Atayi, *Hadâʾik*, p. 1756.

62 The full name: *Al-ḳāmuṣ al-Muḥīṭ waʾl-ḳābūs al-wasīṭ al-djāmiʿ li-mā dhahaba min al-ʿarab shamaṭīṭ*.

63 Şensoy, *Veysi*, pp. 37-38.

dles of an eloquent language and mysterious imagination, with layers of hidden meaning and long-forgotten idioms, one of the greatest challenges for researchers is the fact that *dīvān* poetry is by definition virtually undatable. This is because of the nature of Ottoman poetry as well as the intrinsic historiographical problems it presents. However, sometimes these tight-lipped poems provide us with enough information to put them in historical context, as in the case of the books Veysi was personally interested in, which imply that Faizi's "impish" lampoon was probably written between 1609 and 1621.

In Lieu of Conclusion...

Those who study the Ottoman manuscripts in the library catalogues realize that the archives are full of unending series of scholarly books, mostly juridical works. This is not surprising given that the number of state officials enormously increased after Süleyman I.[64] Despite this crowded organization, and the great number of bureaucrats and scholars, many features of the cultural world of the Ottoman *scholarly circles* are still unknown. Being the natural organ of the *'ilmiyye* culture, literature itself can enable us to touch the surface of these unknown features and thus flesh out the historical figures whose names had been two-dimensional on long-forgotten manuscript folios. We do not know whether Veysi could forecast that the satire he had written at the beginning of his career would create a temporary literary fashion in a small milieu of bureaucrats and that similar poets would copy his style, and one even target him. However, Faizi who wrote a lampoon about Veysi, following his satirical style, provides us with a vantage point through which we can glimpse the cultural history of *'ulemā* relationships as well as a brief literary fashion of the early 17th century.

Cursing Through Someone Else's Mouth: Faizi's Lampoon of Veysi

Abstract ■ Kafzade Abdülhay Çelebi (1589–1621), known under the pen name Faizi is, in spite of his prolificacy, an often-ignored figure in modern literary historiography. Though his oeuvre has been studied and short biographies of him have been written more than once about the main lines of his life, a closer look at 17th-century primary sources reveal that some of his poems and correspondence, including biographical information, are unstudied and can still be found in various manuscripts. Accordingly, the aims of this paper are threefold: firstly, to give an annotated translation of an as yet unpublished poem by Faizi which parodies Veysi (1561–1628), a renowned

64 Atçıl, *Scholars and Sultans in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire,* pp. 119-124.

Ottoman poet and man of letters; second, to survey through Faizi's poem a short period of Ottoman literary culture during which a certain style of satire flourished within a narrow literary milieu; and finally, to interpret the poem within the *'ilmiyye* culture of the early 17th century.

Keywords: Ottoman Poetry, Faizi, Veysi, Lampoon, 'İlmiyye.

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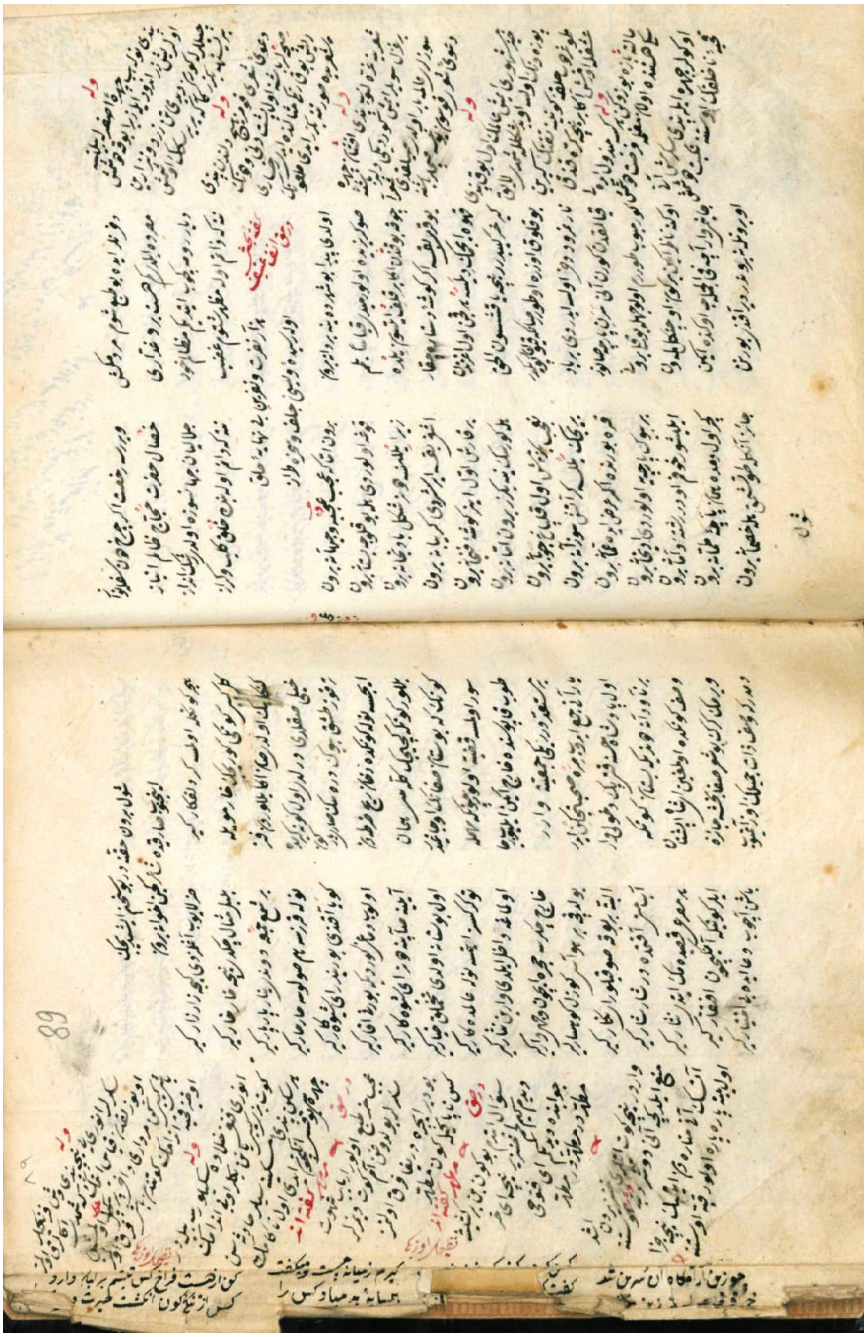
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