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The Hafiz Ahmed Agha Library is an exceptional institution that has represented continuity since the 18th century, serving as a bridge between the modern world and the Ottoman past. It is a great honour for me to take part in the preparation of a volume whose aim is to create awareness of this little-known yet unparalleled collection. Tarık Tüten’s honorable invitation—which was a tremendous gift for me—arrived at a moment when I happened to be reading The Bosnian Chronicle, the unparalleled and sweeping novel by the Bosnian author Ivo Andrić, set around the time of the founding of the Hafiz Ahmed Agha Library. The opportunity to immerse myself simultaneously in a literary work depicting life in a small Ottoman town and in the manuscript holdings of a bibliophile provincial Ottoman intellectual’s library brought the twilight of the Ottoman Empire closer to me, turning it into a more personal and tangible experience. Just like Andrić’s protagonists, the Hafiz Ahmed Agha Library now connects two worlds in its own way—and perhaps the writer’s words are just as fitting for this institution, which recalls the Ottoman past of Rhodes: “No one truly knows what it means to be born and live on the edge of two worlds—to come to know and understand both, yet be powerless to bring them closer or make them explain one another; to love and hate both in equal measure; to waver and hesitate for a lifetime; to live in two countries without belonging to either; to feel at home everywhere, yet remain a stranger forever.”

Benedek Péri

A Hitherto Unpublished *Gazel* by Sultan Süleymān Muhibbī and its Place in 16th Century Ottoman Poetry

In a previous study,¹ I have already provided a detailed account of the earliest dated manuscript containing the *gazels* of Sultan Süleymān Muhibbī,² which, according to the colophon, was compiled in 1520. The mapping of the mentioned manuscript is currently underway, and a partial result of this research is the present paper, which presents a previously unpublished *gazel* by Muhibbī and attempts to place the text within a literary-historical context.

The poem is found not only in Muhibbī’s manuscript preserved in Warsaw but also in another manuscript that has not been used in previous text editions. As I have already indicated in my previous paper, the manuscript held in the Istanbul University Library’s Nadir Eserler collection under inventory number nekty 2042 is most likely a copy of the Warsaw manuscript.³ However, without the copyist errors present in the Warsaw version. The *gazel* is as follows:⁴

Her gönül ārāmıdur bildüm dil-ārāmum benüm

Ol sebebden yokdurur⁵ bu dilde ārāmum benüm

I knew that my heart-comforter gives peace to every heart,

Thus, there is no peace in my own heart.

Dūd-ı āhumdan durur çerhün göründügi kebūd

Kılalı terk-i vefā serv-i gül-endāmum benüm

The smoke of my sighs has made the sky look blue,

Since my rose-bodied cypress abandoned loyalty.

Dāne-yi tesbīhe bakmaz düstlar bu murğ-ı dil

Olalı zünnār-ı zülfi boynuma dāmum benüm

The bird of my heart pays no heed to the rosary beads,

Since the sacred thread of her tress became a noose around my neck.

‘Ahduna meh-rûlarun etmesünler i’timād

Ey şabā yeli ilet ‘uşşāka peygāmum benüm

So that none may trust the pledges of moon-faced ones

O breeze of Saba, deliver my message to the lovers.

1 Benedek Péri, “A Preliminary Report on Recent Discovery. The Earliest-Dated Collection of Poems by Kanunî Sultan Süleyman “Muhibbî”, ” in *Hürmetler. Studies in Honour of Pál Fodor*, ed. Géza Dávid and Antal Molnár (forthcoming).

2 Süleymān b. Selīm, *Divān-i Muhibbī*, Library of the University of Warsaw, Ms. Sygn. 219 (= *Divān-i Muhibbī* [W])

3 Süleymān b. Selīm, *Divān-i Muhibbī*, Library of Istanbul University, Nadir Eserler Collection, Ms. nekty 2042 (= *Divān-i Muhibbī* IU 2042).

4 *Divān-i Muhibbī* [W], p. 180–179; *Divān-i Muhibbī* IU 2042, f. 32b.

5 The scribe of the Warsaw manuscript consistently writes the word *yokdurur* in the following way, without a *vāv* after the initial *yā*.

Görmez isem gül yüzin ol gün benüm rûzum degül

Ermez isem zülfine hiç yokdurur şâmum benüm

If I do not see the rose-faced one, that day is not my day,

If I do not touch her tress, I have no night.

Ğamzesi tîrine karşı sînemi kıldım siper

Kalışar ‘uşşâk içinde ger ölem nâmum benüm

Against the arrow of her gaze, I made a shield from my chest,

If I die, my name will endure among the lovers.

Aldı sāgar kim Muhibbî nûş edüp ola feraḥ

Ḥûn-ı bağrumdan⁶ pür oldı eldeki cāmum benüm

Muhibbî took the cup in hand to find joy,

The cup in my hand was filled with the blood of my soul.

Even a very superficial reading makes it completely clear that Muhibbî’s *gazel* does not truly meet the expectations of 16th century critics regarding a good poem, as it is quite clumsy in terms of poetic ideas (*ma’nâ*), poetic imagination (*ḥayâl*), and the use of rhetorical devices (*san’at*).⁷ The poem seems to be an early attempt of a budding poet, engaged in literary experimentation. References scattered in the poem suggest that young Muhibbî was well-aware of not only the written and unwritten rules of *gazel* poetry but also of the newly established tradition of imperial Ottoman classical literature. As the third couplet indicates he knew the works of his contemporaries very well and used their poems as source texts incorporating the poetic ideas they developed into his own *gazel*. Classical poetical texts offer countless examples of poets comparing the beloved’s braided tress to a rosary based on formal resemblance. There are also numerous examples of the beloved’s tress being depicted as a trap intended to ensnare the poet’s heart-bird, with the beauty mark serving as the bait. However, there are hardly any examples of these motifs being interconnected. The seed that either captures or fails to capture the heart-bird’s attention here is not the beloved’s beauty mark but rather the rosary bead, as can be observed in the following couplet by Necâtî.

Meyl eder dâne-i tesbîḥe gönül murḡı velî

Zülf-i miskîni koyup dâm-ı belâdan geçemez⁸

The heart-bird is drawn to the rosary bead, but

Even if it leaves the musk-scented tress, it cannot escape the trap of sorrow.

It strongly appears that Muhibbî borrowed the key elements from Necâtî’s couplet and embedded them into a modified poetic context. Beyond the poetic context, there is another significant difference between the two couplets. Necâtî’s *beyt* is smooth; the poet did not have to struggle to align the poetic message with the meter. In contrast, Muhibbî was forced to use filler words (*düstlar* ‘friends’, *bu*

‘this’) that hold no meaningful significance for his message in order to achieve the required syllable count in the first hemistich. The difficulties in reconciling the poetic message with the meter are even more evident in the second and the final couplet (*makta*), where the syntactic structure of the utterances that make up the first hemistiches (*misra*) turned out to be rather unusual.

The first *misra* of the second *beyt* is interesting from another perspective as well. In the traditional imagery of classical poetry, there are many associative connections that have solidified into poetic topoi. One such example is the comparison of the sigh of a lover suffering from unrequited love to smoke rising toward the sky. Though traditionally this smoke is black, still Muhibbî depicts it as blue.

Based on the analysis of a large number of early 16th-century poetic texts this associative connection hasn’t been found in texts produced before Muhibbî. Moreover, except for the works of one poet, it is absent from the *gazels* of the leading poets of the first half of the 16th century. That poet is Bâkî, in whose *gazels* the noun phrase *dûd-ı kebûd* (“blue smoke”) appears multiple times.⁹ Not many examples can be cited from later periods either for the connection between the concepts of ‘smoke’ and ‘blue’. This suggests that, although the notion of ‘blue smoke’ became part of the *mundus significans* of Ottoman classical poetry, most poets did not recognize its poetic potential. In light of all this, it is rather peculiar and quite thought-provoking that, despite the rarity of this associative connection, its occurrence in Muhibbî’s *gazels* is strikingly high, which indicates the Sultan Süleymân as a poet liked the idea of connecting the two concepts. It thus is not inconceivable that this particular poetic idea and its verbal manifestation (*dûd-i kebûd*), which was most likely based on the blue colour of gunpowder smoke,¹⁰ was introduced into the *signifying universe* of Ottoman classical poetry by Sultan Süleymân, who had witnessed many battles and the blue smoke emitted by guns and muskets was an everyday experience for him. However, confirming this hypothesis requires further in-depth analysis.

Muhibbî’s inexperience as a poet in the above *gazel* is reflected not only in his struggle with meter but also in the absence of rhetorical figures. In the early 16th century, one of the key expectations of literary critics for a good *gazel* was that the poet should strive to incorporate as many rhetorical devices as possible into the text, with each couplet ideally serving as a display of rhetorical fireworks. One of the main reasons for this was that the primary goal of the classical *gazel* was to provide intellectual pleasure for the audience. Poets sought to achieve this through the skilful use of rhetorical devices by embedding numerous subtle details within the text, and in order to appreciate the text in its entirety the reader or listener had to discover them. These subtle details are absent from Muhibbî’s *gazel*, although an effort to include them is occasionally visible.

To give just one example, skilled poets tried to link the two hemistichs of a couplet using various rhetorical devices. In Muhibbî’s *gazel*, the poetic force that connects the two *misra* is completely absent from the fourth, sixth, and final couplets. These couplets consist of two utterances that are logically related but rhetorically unconnected.

9 In the following couplet, Bâkî uses the expression in a poetic context similar to that of Muhibbî. *Şerer-âlûde görüp dûd-ı kebûd-ı âhum/Şandılar gök yüzidür encûm ile olmuş zeyn* (They saw that the blue smoke of my sigh was mixed with sparks/They thought it was the sky adorned with stars.) Bâkî, *Bâkî Divânı. Tenkitli Basım*, ed. Sabahattin Küçük (Ankara: Türk Dil Kurumu, 1994), 333.

10 Ahmet Atilla Şentürk quotes a couplet from a poem by Fevzî (d. 1679) where the phrase is used to describe the smoke emitted by guns. Ahmet Atillâ Şentürk, *Osmanlı Şiiri Kılavuzu*, vol. 3 (İstanbul: DBY Yayınları, 2019), 311.

6 *Dīvân-i Muhibbî* IU 2042 has *bağrumdan*.

7 For a more detailed explanation of these expectations see Benedek Péri, “Love poetry with or without love? Classical ottoman amorous gazels in the early 16th century,” in *Love in Ottoman Literature*, ed. Christiane Czygan and Hatice Aynur (forthcoming).

8 Necati Beg, *Necati Beg Divanı*, ed. Ali Nihat Tarlan (İstanbul: Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı, 1997), 283.

One could think that this poem was not selected for inclusion in Muhibbî's elegantly illuminated, exclusive poetry collections compiled in the 1550s and 1560s—intended to reflect the Sultan's leadership role in the intellectual life of the empire and his power—due to these technical shortcomings.

However, in one such illuminated collection, a manuscript catalogued under inventory number netky 1976 in the Nadir Eserler collection of the Istanbul University Library, a very similar *gazel* appears.¹¹ Since the end of the manuscript is missing it is not known when it was compiled. However, considering when the project of compiling poems into elegant manuscripts began, it was undoubtedly compiled later than the Warsaw *divan*. The poem referred to here employs the same poetic framework comprising the metre *remel-i müsemmen-i mahzuf* (- . - - | - . - - | - . - - | - . -), the rhyme *-ām*, and the *redif* formed by the first-person possessive suffix and the first-person possessive pronoun (*-um benüm*).

Olayım rüsvâ-yı halk ey dil budur kāmum benüm

Cānumı hicr odına yakdı dil-ārāmum benüm

Let me be renowned among people, oh heart, this is my desire

My soul was burned by the fire of separation [ignited] by my heart's solace.

Bir yanadan ğam çeker bir yanadan derd ü belâ

Bilmezem âhîr n'olısardur serencāmum benüm

On one hand, I suffer from sorrow; on the other, from pain and hardship

I do not know what my fate will ultimately be.

Nām u nāmūs istemem yeter bana bed-nāmlık

Anıla tâ 'ışk ara bu nev'-ile nāmum benüm

I don't need a name or fame, notoriety is enough for me

So that my name may be mentioned in this way in love.

'Âşık oldım başuma geldi belâ vü derd ü ğam

Mihnet-ile geçdi sāl u māh u eyyāmum benüm

I fell in love, trouble, pain, and sorrow poured upon me

I spent my years, months, and days with suffering.

Ey Muhibbî dāne-i hālın görüp bu murğ-ı dil

Bend oldı bilmedi zülfi imiş dāmum benüm

Oh Muhibbî, the bird of the heart saw the seed of her mole

Unaware, it was bound, her braid became the trap for me.

The two poems are connected at three points on the textual level. In both poems, the first couplet contains the rhyming word *dil-ārām* ('heart-soothing'). The key elements of the third couplet in the Warsaw *gazel* reappear in the closing couplet of the Istanbul poem, but in a modified form that aligns with the traditional imagery of the classical tradition. The seed that serves as bait for the heart's bird is no longer the rosary bead but, in the customary manner of the *mundus significans* of classical poetry, the mole on the beloved's face. The third common point is the poetic idea found in the second hemistich of the sixth couplet in the Warsaw *divan*, which suggests that, due to the reasons described in the first hemistich, the poet-lover's name will endure among lovers.

Even upon a cursory reading, it is evident that this *gazel*, although rhetorically also rather flat, is free from the poetic-technical deficiencies previously mentioned in connection with the poem found in the Warsaw *divan*. The common points suggest that the Istanbul *gazel* is a heavily revised and rewritten version of the Warsaw poem, created by a much more experienced poet. It is impossible to say for certain whether this poet was the Sultan himself, who, over the course of at least thirty years between the compilation of the two collections, gained more experience and skill as a poet, or one of the professional poets entrusted with compiling and editing the elegant collections.¹²

Since one of the fundamental methods of composition in Ottoman poetry was imitation, it is always worth examining whether a given poem is a poetic reply, a *nazire*, inspired by an earlier text or by several earlier texts because if one succeeds in identifying the connection points that link a poem to other texts, *gazels*, preserved in isolation from the circumstances of their creation, can be placed into a literary-historical context. It is likely that this way one can determine in which literary environment and approximately when it was created, and the potential influence it had on later texts can also be traced.

Research conducted on the corpus of *gazels* composed in the of the first half of the 16th century revealed that the poetic framework used by Muhibbî in these two poems can also be found in the works of ten other poets, in eleven more poems. The poets are the following: Revânî (d. 1523),¹³ Gelibolulu Sun'î (d. 1534),¹⁴ Üsküplü Ishâk Çelebi (d. 1536),¹⁵ Remzî (d. 1548),¹⁶ Fuzûlî (d. 1556),¹⁷ Sehâbî (d. 1564),¹⁸ Mu'îdî (d. after 1568),¹⁹ Üsküdarlı 'Aşkî (d. 1574),²⁰ Nāmî,²¹ Sebzî.²²

12 On the issue of professional editors of the later collections see Péri, "A Preliminary Report".

13 Revânî, *Revânî Divânı*, ed. Ziya Avşar (Ankara: T. C. Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı, 2017), 321–322.

14 Gelibolulu Sun'î, *Gelibolulu Sun'î Divânı*, ed. Halil İbrahim Yakar (Ankara: T. C. Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı, 2018), 491.

15 Üsküblü Ishâk Çelebi, *Divan. Tenkidli Basım*, ed. Mehmed Çavuşoğlu and Ali Tanyeri (Istanbul: Mimar Sinan Üniversitesi, 1990), 226–227.

16 Bahadır Kurt, Remzî Divânı. Inceleme–Metin, MA thesis, Dumlupınar Üniversitesi, Kütahya, 2017, 269–270.

17 Fuzûlî, *Fuzûlî Divânı*, ed. Abdülhakim Kılınç (Istanbul: Türkiye Yazma Eserler Kurumu Başkanlığı, 2021), 804–805.

18 Sehâbî Hüsâmü'd-dîn Bin Hüseyin, *Sehâbî Divânı*, ed. Cemal Bayak (Ankara: T. C. Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı, 2017), 114.

19 Gülçin Tanrıbuyurdu, Mu'îdî Divân. Metin–Çeviri, Kocaeli Üniversitesi, Kocaeli, 2012, 269, 272–273.

20 Süreyya Uzun, Üsküdarlı Aşkî Divanı. Tenkitli Metin, Nesre Çeviri ve 16. yy. Osmanlı Hayatının Divandaki Yansımaları, MA thesis, İstanbul Üniversitesi, İstanbul, 2011, 491–492.

21 Muhlis Erol, Mecmû'a-i Eş'âr (06 mil yz a 4228/2): İnceleme, Metin ve Mestap'a Göre Tasnif, MA thesis, Bilecik Şeyh Edebali Üniversitesi, Bilecik, 2019, 279–280.

22 Hakan Yekbaş, Sebzî divanı. Inceleme–Tenkitli Metin, PhD diss, Cumhuriyet Üniversitesi, Sivas, 2011, 547–548.

11 Süleymân b. Selim, Divân-i Muhibbî, Istanbul University Library, Nadir Eserler, Ms. nekty1976, f . 153a on the margin. The folio number is wrongly given in the *Bütün Şiirleri* edition of Muhibbî's poems. Kânûnî Sultan Süleyman, *Muhibbî Divânı. Bütün Şiirleri*, ed. Kemal Yavuz and Orhan Yavuz, vol. 2 (Istanbul: Türkiye Yazma Eserler Kurumu Başkanlığı, 2016), 1089. For a short description of the manuscript and its place in the Muhibbî manuscript tradition see Christiane Czygan, "Was Süleymân Colour-Blind?" in *An Iridescent Device. Premodern Ottoman Poetry*, ed. Christiane Czygan and Stephan Connermann (Göttingen: V&R unipress , 2018), 184–185; Günay Kut, "Muhibbî Divanı'nın Yayınları ve Nüshaları Üzerine," in *Kanunî Sultan Süleyman dönemi ve Bursa*, ed. Burcu Kurt (Bursa: Bursa Osmangazi Belediyesi, 2019), 75.

Comparative analysis of the poems has clearly shown that they are *nazires*. However, as it is often the case with imitation poems, they are not poetic replies to a single model, but rather “poetic patchworks”, which form a *nazire* network through the textual parallels identifiable within the texts. Although the reason is unknown, the *nazire* network does not appear in any of the large *nazire* collections compiled in the first half or the middle of the 16th century, suggesting that the poetic framework did not become popular. This is further evidenced by the fact that *-āmum benüm gazel* are not included in the *divans* of poets active in the second half of the century.

The Warsaw manuscript of Muhibbî’s *divan* makes it clear that the first poems of the network had already emerged by 1520. In imitation networks composed of contemporary poets’ texts, it is often difficult to determine the author of the base poem, because beside a linear relationship between the model text and the poetic replies it inspired, it is also possible that authors who are well acquainted with each other engaged in a form of poetic game, testing their own talent and abilities by composing *gazels* simultaneously, using the same poetic framework.

In the present case, due to the lack of data, it is not possible to determine with certainty whether the authors of the earliest poems knew each other and, if so, whether there was a point in their lives when they were in the same place at the same time. However, considering their biographical data and the date of the Warsaw manuscript, it may not be unfounded to assume that Revânî, Muhibbî, and Ishāk Çelebi were the first authors of the *-āmum benüm gazels*. The relatively high number of textual parallels between Revânî’s *gazel* and other texts of the network suggests that Revânî may have been the author of the base poem.

Nevertheless, the textual connection between Muhibbî’s Warsaw *gazel* and Revânî’s poem is only very superficial. Muhibbî’s opening and Revânî’s closing couplet contain many identical textual elements, and the poetic message of the second hemistich in both couplets is very similar: due to unrequited love, the poet’s heart finds no peace.

It raises intriguing questions that there are close parallels between the last couplet of the Warsaw *gazel* and the third *beyt* of Ishāk Çelebi’s *nazire*.

Muhibbî VII

Aldı sāgar kim Muhibbî nûş edüp ola feraḥ

Ḥûn-ı bağrumdan pür oldı eldeki cāmum benüm

Muhibbi took the cup in hand to find joy.

The cup in my hand was filled with the blood of my soul.

Ishāk Çelebi III

Sākî-i bezm-i belâ ṭurmaz şunar cām-ı ğamı

Ben daḥı nûş etmedin bu eldeki cāmum benüm

The Sākî of the feast of sorrow does not stop; he keeps offering the cup of grief

Even though I have not yet finished the glass in my hand.

Among the parallels found in the two texts—such as the use of the same rhyming phrase, various forms of the verb *nûş etmek* (‘to drink’) and the appearance of the cup motif in the first hemistich—the most striking is the adjective used in connection with the rhyming word *cām* (‘cup’). The adjective *eldeki* (‘held in hand’) appears only in these two poems within the *nazire* network and does not occur anywhere else in Ishāk Çelebi’s *divan*. However, it can be found multiple times in Muhibbî’s *gazels*. All this would suggest that Ishak Çelebi was somehow familiar with Muhibbî’s poem and that his *nazire* was, at least in part, inspired by the Warsaw *gazel*.

Textual parallels between Muhibbî’s two poems and other *-āmum benüm gazels* can also be observed on a textual level in the *nazires* of Remzî, ‘Aşkî, Mu’idî, Sehâbî, Sebzî and Nâmî. The only common point between Muhibbî’s two *gazels* and Remzî’s *nazire* is the couplet in which the rhyming word is the noun *dām* (‘trap’), and the key motif is the beloved’s braid, which appears as a tether ensnaring the bird of the heart.

Remzî

Bend-i ğamdan kurtuluş yok bana kim şayyād-ı ‘aşk

Kıldı bu zülf-i siyāhun ağını dāmum benüm

I cannot escape the shackles of sorrow, for the hunter of love

Has trapped me in the net of your black braid.

In Remzî’s version, the poetic image is incomplete in the sense that it lacks the bait, the seed, which is represented by the rosary bead in the Warsaw *gazel* and by the beloved’s beauty mark in the other Muhibbî poem. It has been previously mentioned that one of the aims of *gazels* is to provide intellectual pleasure, and Remzî’s couplet indeed contains a poetic delicacy intended to offer the reader the joy of discovery. The second hemistich serves as an excellent example of the rhetorical strategies skilled poets employed to weave a rhetorical net around their couplets. This *beyt* demonstrates the highly creative use of the rhetorical device known as *tevriye*, which relies on ambiguity, and illustrates how, within a single hemistich, it can be effectively combined with another rhetorical device—in this case, opposition (*tezād*). In the context of the couplet, the word *ağını* means “his/her/its net”, but when extracted from the text’s overall meaning, it can also be interpreted as “his/her/its white colour”. If the reader adopts this latter interpretation, the word forms a direct opposition with the preceding colour term *siyah* (‘black’).

‘Aşkî’s *nazire* connects to Muhibbî’s two *gazels* at two points. One of these is the same couplet as in Remzî’s case, with the key difference that in ‘Aşkî’s version, the seed motif also appears.

‘Aşkî IV.

Istemez dîl murġı bāğ-ı kudse pervāz etmege

Ḥāl ü zülf-i yār olaldan dāne vü dāmum benüm

The bird of my heart no longer longs to fly to the Sacred Garden

Since my beloved’s beauty mark and braid have

become the seed and the trap for me.

The message of the couplet is almost identical to the similar *beyt* in the Warsaw *gazel*: ever since the poet fell in love with his beloved, he is no longer drawn to religion, that is to religious teachings in ‘Aşkî’s poem represented by the Garden of Paradise (*bāğ-ı kuds*) and to religious practices in Muhibbî’s *gazel* symbolized by the *tesbih*, the rosary used by Sufis. The difference lies, once again, in the presence of the motif of the beloved’s mole (*ḥāl*) in ‘Aşkî’s couplet, which is absent in Muhibbî’s *gazel*. The other point where the two *gazels* appear to be connected, albeit faintly, is the second hemistich of the sixth couplet in the Warsaw *gazel* and the second *misra* of the third *beyt* in ‘Aşkî’s *nazire*.

Muhibbi VIb

Kalısar ‘uşşāk içinde ger ölem nāmum benüm

If I die, my name will endure among the lovers.

‘Aşkî IIb

Defter-i ‘uşşâka ey dîl geçmedi nâmun benüm

Oh, my heart, my name was not recorded in the book of lovers.

The parallelism between the two hemistichs exists only at a formal level in the wording of the lines, that is in the combined appearance of the words ‘uşşāk (‘lovers’) and the rhyming word nām (‘name’). However, the message of the two *misra* and the two couplets stands in direct opposition to each other.

In the second couplet of Mu‘îdî’s second -*âmum benüm gazel*, and the second couplet of Muhibbî’s poem, which is also included in the *Bütün Şiirleri* collection, a strong textual parallel can be observed.

Muhibbî II.

Bir yanadan ğam çeker bir yanadan derd ü belâ

Bilmezem âhîr n’olısardur serencâmum benüm

On one hand, I suffer from sorrow; on the other, from pain and hardship

I do not know what my fate will ultimately be.

Mu‘îdî G 287/III.

Bende ne cevre taħammül var ne sende merħamet

Bilmezem kim ‘âkıbet n’olur serencâmum benüm

I have no endurance to bear the pain, and in you, there is no mercy.

I do not know what my fate will ultimately be.

Interestingly, Sehâbî’s *nazîre* connects to Muhibbî’s *gazel* at the same point.

Sehâbî I.

Ĥûn-ı dilden ĥâlî olmaz bir nefes câmun benüm

Bilmezem kim nic’olur âhîr serencâmum benüm

The blood of my heart never empties from my cup.

I do not know what my fate will ultimately be.

The textual parallel between the second hemistich of Sehâbî’s couplet and the second *misra* of Muhibbî’s *beyt* is quite clear. However, it is less immediately obvious that the first hemistich of Sehâbî’s couplet is related to the first hemistich of the closing couplet in Muhibbî’s Warsaw *gazel*. Indeed, the message and formulation of the two hemistichs are very similar. The love-stricken poet suffers from unrequited love, and this suffering is conveyed through the metaphor of the poet’s heart bleeding, while the wine in the cup consumed to sooth the pain still reminds him of his woes. The textual parallels between Muhibbî’s two *gazels* and Sehâbî’s poem are certainly not accidental, nor is it coincidental that such strong parallels appear in the first couplet. In my previous studies on the imitation practices in classical poetry, I have repeatedly pointed out that poets often use the

opening couplet of a *nazîre* to inform the reader, on the one hand, that their poem is a poetic reply, and on the other hand, to indicate whose poem served as the model.²³

In this case, Sehâbî likely intended to inform the reader that the Sultan’s two poems served as the primary inspiration for his -*âmum benüm gazel*. This assumption seems to be supported by the fact that in Sehâbî’s fourth couplet, the motifs of the breeze called Sabâ and the concept of ‘message’ expressed by the rhyming word *peygâm* appear—motifs which, among the -*âmum gazels*, available only here and in the Warsaw *gazel*. Moreover, in the final couplet, which, like the *makta* of the Warsaw *gazel*, relies on the *nâm* rhyme, the expression *hidmetinde şâhimun* (“in the service of my ruler”) appears, which can even be understood literally.

Sebzî’s poem is only loosely connected to Muhibbî’s Warsaw *gazel*, and this connection seems to be purely structural. It is evident in the fact that Sebzî’s first and last couplets use the same rhyming words as Süleymân’s verse.

Nâmî’s -*âmum benüm* poem is connected to Muhibbî’s *gazel* included in the *Bütün Şiirleri* collection, although this connection is quite loose, and the textual parallels are only incidental. The second hemistich of Nâmî’s second couplet and the second hemistich of Muhibbî’s fourth couplet convey a very similar message, and textual parallels can also be observed. In both lines, *eyyâm* serves as the rhyming word, both contain the third person singular past tense form of the verb *geçmek* (‘to pass’), and both include a noun (*ħasret*, *miħnet*) expressing the concept of ‘grief’ or ‘sorrow’, inflected with the -*LA* (‘with’) suffix.

Muhibbî IVb

Miħnet-ile geçdi sâl u mâh u eyyâmum benüm

I spent my years, months, and days with suffering.

Nâmî IIb

Âh kim ĥasretle geçdi cümle eyyâmum benüm

Oh, all my days were spent in sorrow

A comparative analysis of the poems within the -*âmum benüm* imitation network, with a focus on Muhibbî’s two *gazels*, leads to the following conclusions. The earliest poems in the imitation network, including Muhibbî’s first *gazel*, were composed around 1520. The exact chronological order of their composition remains unclear, but it is highly likely that the first poem was written by Revânî. As Prince Süleymân was almost certainly acquainted with him personally, it is not without reason to believe that the idea for the Warsaw *gazel* came from Revânî’s poem. Since Ishâk Çelebi’s *nazîre* contains intertextual references only to the Warsaw *gazel*, this poem was most likely composed when Muhibbî’s second *gazel* had not yet been completed.

It is not possible to determine the exact date of composition for Muhibbî’s second ghazal, which appears to be a significantly revised version of the first. The earliest confirmed intertextual references to it appear in Sehâbî’s *nazîre*, who passed away in 1564. This means that Muhibbî’s second *gazel* was available before this date. It is not inconceivable that the second *gazel* was composed during the compilation of the illuminated manuscript preserved in the Istanbul University Library (nekty

23 See e.g. Benedek Péri, “Mîr ‘Alîşîr Navâî and a Popular Ottoman Imitation Network from the 16th Century,” in *Ali Şîr Nevai ve XXI. Asır. 9. Uluslararası Konferans Bildirileri*, ed. Shuhrat Sirajiddinov and Vahit Türk (Tashkent–Bursa: Ali Şîr Nevai Taşkent Devlet Özbek Dili ve Edebiyatı Üniversitesi–Uludağ Üniversitesi, 2024), 23.

1976), but in the absence of further evidence, this claim remains purely speculative. The fact that the Warsaw *gazel* is alluded to in other poems within the *-āmum benüm nazire* network can indicate two possibilities. First, it may suggest that the *gazel* was available in several other manuscripts, such as IU 2042, that circulated among Ottoman litterateurs. Alternatively, as Fevrî hinted in his work *Ahlāk-ı Süleymānī*, it is also possible that Muhibbî's poems circulated orally.²⁴

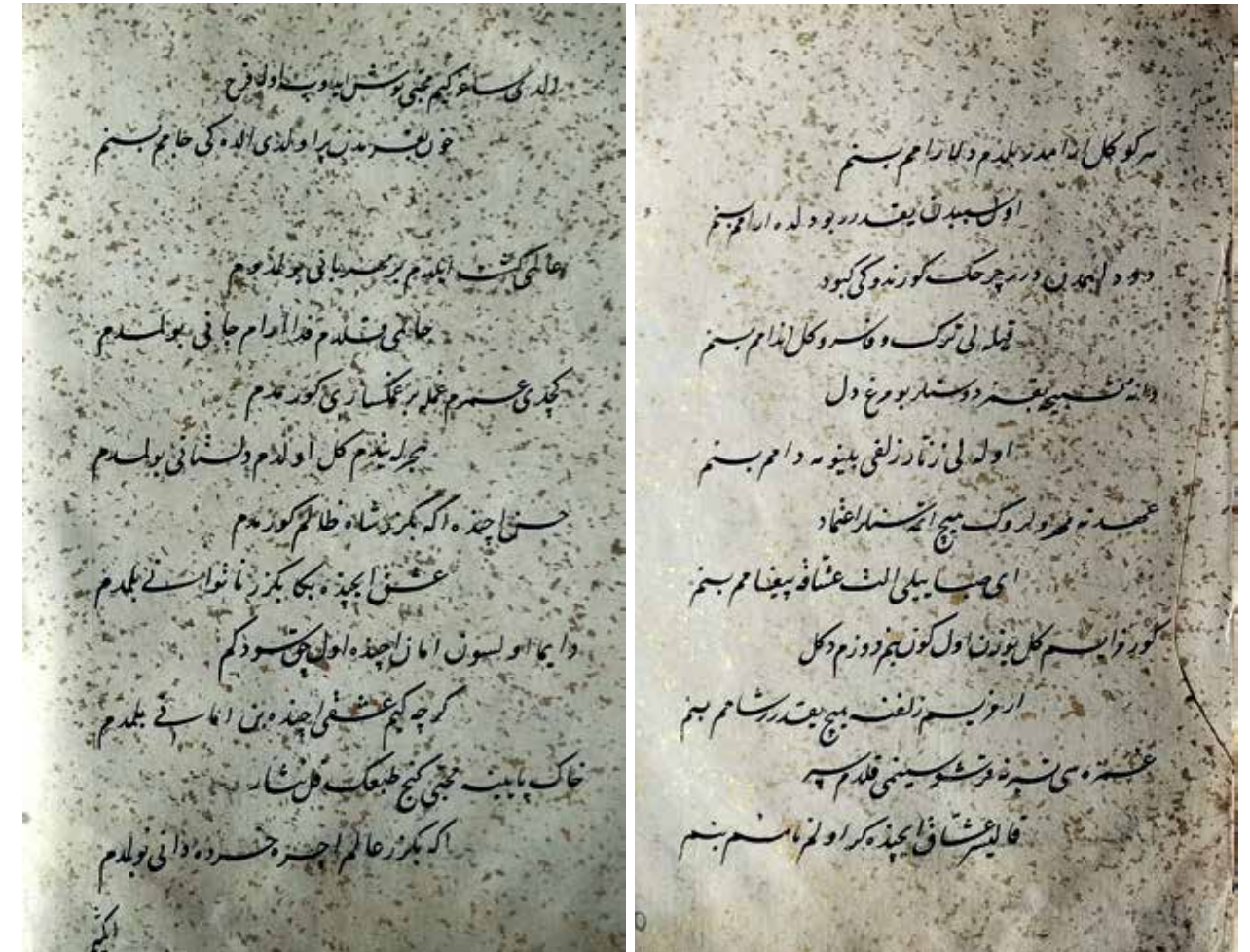
The case of Muhibbî's two imitation poems, which employ a relatively rare poetic framework, clearly demonstrates how deeply Sultan Süleymān's poetry was embedded in the literary life of his time. Muhibbî, as a poet, was well aware of the prevailing trends in Ottoman literary life and the new possibilities emerging through continuous poetic experimentation, the results of which he actively incorporated into his own poems. At the same time, his poetry was met with keen interest from his contemporaries—an interest that was undoubtedly linked not only to his social status as the Sultan but also to his poetic talent.



Süleymān b. Selīm, *Divān-i Muhibbī*, Library of the University of Warsaw, Ms. Sygn. 219.

The outer cover (left) and the inner leather bound cover.

With special thanks to Natalia Królikowska.



Süleymān b. Selīm, *Divān-i Muhibbī*, Library of the University of Warsaw, Ms. Sygn. 219.

The *gazel* beginning with 'Her gönül ārāmıdır bildüm dil-ārāmum benüm,' (right) and, the *beyt* starting with 'Aldı sāgar kim Muhibbī nūş edüp ola ferah,' which is a *nazire* to Ishak Efendi (left).

With special thanks to Natalia Królikowska.

²⁴ Fevrî, *Ahlāk-ı Süleymānī*. Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Berlin, Ms. or. 873, f. 84b.