

Art and Patronage:

Revisiting Ottoman Poetry From the perspective of İnalçık and Andrews

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“Ma’rifet iltifâta tâbi’dir,
Müşterisiz metâ’ zâyi’dir”
[Talent is subject to compliment,
Commodity with no customer is a loss]

As life was shaped around the sultan and the court in the Ottoman Empire, being close to the absolute authority, the shelter of honor and prestige, was a necessity. Being honored by the sultan and having his favor was a must to be the "sultan of poets". Since the biggest compliment was to be a companion of the sultan, one had to reveal all his talent and mastery in the valley of poetry. In this context, the view "talent is subject to compliment" is important. However, it should be noted that almost every poet wanted to be the companion of the sultan, not his bookkeeper. That is, poetic concern preceded political concern. The patrimonial characteristic of Ottoman poetry was the event of tide between the poet's loss of prestige and his desire for

reputation. The paradox between the poet's aesthetic concern and patrimonial patronage constituted the essential point of Diwan poetry. The artist was always tested on the fine line between art and life. A pen is the only thing remaining in the shadow of art and power. Each literary period has its unique conditions and sense of art. These conditions should be considered while evaluating a literary work or artist. By his very nature, an artist has poetic and political concerns. Any one of these concerns may be prioritized depending on the characteristics of a period. They may also vary from one artist to another. In this regard, the present study compares the evaluations of Halil İncelik and Walter G. Andrews in their works titled Şair ve Patron [Poetry and Patron] and Şiirin Sesi, Toplumun Şarkısı [Poetry's Voice, Society's Song] respectively.

Key Words: Diwan, Maecenate, Patronage, Art, Poetry.

Introduction: Art in the Context of Patronage and Maecenate

Departing from the fact that art is subject to compliment, it is beyond any doubt that a work of art has, apart from its "aesthetic" dimension, an aspect concerning society and rational life. An artist is a person who appeals to the hierarchically top needs of a human being. In this respect, the groups addressed by artists are elites in almost every period. Those holding authority and power, rulers being in the first place, have protected artists and scientists and helped them produce their works in a free environment. It is the honor of a man of power that an artist produces works under his auspices.

Surely, the artist will put forward a more excellent work if he feels no pressure on himself while reflecting his spiritual world and produces works "freely and by his own will." However, at this point, we confront the following debate: Can an artist use his pen, brush, and paint against the person who protects and patronizes him without hesitation when appropriate? Or does he abstain from this?

The fact that the pen is in the shadow of art and power brings this paradox up for discussion again. This being the case, it is beneficial to have a multi-faceted perspective on this issue. Almost every period of history has involved people considering art and artists not entitled to life besides people protecting them. While the Middle Age Europe inquisitions mercilessly judged scientists and artists, sultans like Alexander the Great and Mehmed the Conqueror felt honored to host them in their courts and protect them. Indeed, this results from the nature of art: art is paradoxical by its very nature. This is made clear by the fact that there were artists producing works easily because they were protected and artists producing lyrical works because they were in need. While Bakî told rind poems in his easy life in the palace, Fuzûlî wrote lyrical, ecstatic, and touching poems because of the troubles he had in Karbala. Bâkî was a product of the praise he got, whereas Fuzûlî was a product of the help he did not get. Noble artists like Nef'î, on the other hand, never abstained from telling what they knew as truth regardless of the consequence. "Being or not being in the palace" did not matter to them much. In this respect, whether an artist should be under a protective umbrella or not is still a matter of debate.

At this point, the issue should be revisited based on the concepts of patronage and maecenate. In the Western world, the people protecting art and science and contributing to their development have been called "Maecenas." In real terms, the concept of maecenate or patronage developed in the 17th century. In the earlier periods, those who protected artists and scientists did so as a matter of prestige. As works of art were primarily signs of wealth and protecting a talented artist gave the person a reputation in society, patronage was not about respecting art and artists.

During the Renaissance, new art patrons emerged in Europe besides churches. Those were wealthy bourgeoisie (i.e., rich families, mostly merchants). The most important art patrons of the Renaissance period were the Florentine Medici family. Cosimo de Medici I from this family, serving as a maecenas for a couple of generations, mainly supported the construction of religious works as genuine maecenas. Lorenzo de Medici sought to spread the principles of the Florence School by sending artists such as Leonardo da Vinci, Verrocchio, and Botticelli to Milan, Venice, and Rome (Uzun, 2007). In the 16th and 17th centuries, the middle class strengthened, and civil maecenate developed. In the same period, with the centralization of the monarchs, artists became more dependent on the court.

The Ottoman court, especially from the 15th century until the 19th century, adopted protecting artists and scientists as a principle. In the Ottoman Empire, the court officials, prioritizing arts, were in a more self-sacrificing position than the Western maecenas for protecting artists. Almost all the rulers were poets at the same time and participated in poetry debates in poetry councils. This makes the stance of the court in this matter clear. However, there were also individual extremes such as Nefî and Fuzulî.

Recently, art has become a commodity, and the rich have taken possession of it. It has become a commodity purchased and sold through exhibitions and auctions. The fact that a valuable painting is purchased or sold for millions of dollars has brought along real concern. Minds are occupied by questions such as "Can a work of art be perceived as a commercial commodity?", "What about artistic concern?" and "What does an artist produce work for?"

The concept of patronage has been a tradition among rulers and elites in Eastern and Western cultures. Within the context of patronage, the poet secures himself and his work in socio-economic terms, whereas patrons consider this relationship a representation of their authority and nobility (Kılıç, 2018). Though this relationship is considered to be on proper ground within the context of the praise expected by the poet, the fact that art should be clear of any influence and pressure remains.

During the Renaissance, art patronage continued under the control of the bourgeoisie. Then it was institutionalized as it was transferred to the foundations set up by families. Art patronage, which came under the control of capitalism through the Industrial Revolution, is today at the heart of the culture industry (Bozdağ, 2015). From the perspective of historical chronology, it can be stated that there is an incompatibility between the Western maecenate and the Eastern patronage. Such discrepancy is more apparent in Ottoman poetry in particular. The most remarkable point here is that sultans, viziers, or pashas who were patrons were poets at the same

time. As there is no "tradition" in this sense in the Western maecenate, caution should be exercised in handling the issue.

Patrimonial State and Art / Authority's Voice

Relating the judgments about the patrimonial state structure with art is not anything new. Many scientists focusing on the artistic features of a specific period find it necessary to consider the political structure, the effectiveness of the authority, and the dominant mentality of the artists and of that period. It is true for İnalcık and Andrews, too. Both of them regard examining the patrimonial structure of the Ottoman Empire as essential to understanding the art of the period.

"In the Middle Age Eastern and Western monarchies, the state had a patrimonial structure. Sovereignty, property, and subjects were considered to be possessed by the royalty. Only those who held the royalty's favor constituted the most honorable and wealthy segment of society. Competition for superiority among dynasties manifested itself not only in magnificent palaces, servants, and subordinates but also in the patronage of science and art" (İnalcık, 2005).

For a large part of the Ottoman period, its essential characteristic was most probably the fact that the sultan held absolute authority. In a system where all elements were in a master-servant relationship, all patronage possibilities spread from the sultan in growing circles. This is because all the wealth and power in the system belonged to the sultan. The empire's treasure was considered to be the sultan's personal treasure. Salaries and other payments were all considered as gifts (Andrews, 2006).

Any era has its unique characteristics. It differs from the previous one and affects the following in terms of socio-economic structure, political stance, sense of art, and life culture. Hence, a scientist evaluating an era should consider the facts about that era and scrutinize the dominant mentality. He should evaluate artistic activity in its entirety as well. The Ottoman Middle Age certainly had its own entirety and contradictions. The sultan was the focus of art activities, just like anything.

"The sultan's court and the palaces of the most important persons in the state government were the only source and shelter of honor and prestige, *wealth and skill* in society. In the Ottoman Empire, the top architect was the chief architect of the court; the top jeweler was the chief jeweler of the court; and the most favorite poet was the 'sultan of poets', who was deemed worthy of the sultan's attention and favor" (İnalcık, 2005).

In the Ottoman Empire, the patronage system was necessary. Protecting art and artists became a state tradition, especially as of the period of Mehmed the Conqueror. Furthermore, Ottoman sultans performed at least one art as it was deemed to be a duty of the court.

In the Ottoman Empire, poetic formulation named the sultan as an object of love. As a determining object, the sultan was the inactive initiator of the emotional relationship in a sense. He aroused love, functioned as the addressee of love, but did not get involved in the emotional state. The sultan was a polar, still entity. His influence came from his nature, not his actions (Andrews, 2006). The interest showed in poetry and poets was a mirror of the artistic activities in the Ottoman period. The artist existed as far as he produced. Mimar Sinan (Sinan the Architect) was a focus of interest not less than Bakî. A poem was the sultan's favorite with its poet, and a building was the sultan's favorite with its builder. Who did the Ottoman authority praise: the building or the builder? The answer to this question will guide us through a fair area of criticism.

"The sultan, who was the patron of knowledge and art, had to have a command of science and art good enough to duly fulfill the role of an arbitrator" (İnalçık, 2005). Almost all of the Ottoman sultans had a command of poetry good enough to organize a council shows that they could duly fulfill the role of an arbitrator. This made it easier to open new doors for poetry and poets.

If it had not been for the poet sultans who had councils, the geniuses of the Turkish literature might have never appeared. Most of the masterpieces of that period can be attributed to the praise of elites, the highness of culture, and the interest in and enthusiasm for protecting artists. Based on the translation of *Şakayık-ı Numaniyye*, "It can even be said that it was mostly the sultan who determined the quality of the work of art or science and the reputation of the artist. The "*acceptability and respectability*" of a work depended on the sultan's praise in the first place" (İnalçık, 2005).

The authority in the Ottoman Empire was an absolute determinant, and his view of art and artist was critical. Considering that every Ottoman sultan was also an artist, any judgment on the triangle of *art – artist – authority* should be carefully formed. This is because biased external observations and orientalist approaches may mislead us.

Ottoman Poetry in Terms of Aesthetic Concern

Diwan poetry is a poetry of tradition. It has certain aesthetic flavors and rules but takes previous poetry forms into consideration as well. However, it should be remembered that each poet writes about his own universe, his own inner world. Every text is the mirror of the artist who creates it. Accordingly, every poet revealing himself and the mentality of his period expresses the general characteristics of the world he has constructed in his works.

Diwan poetry is based on particular aesthetic principles. In this sense, poets try to be unique within a tradition with predetermined boundaries. Poets contribute to poetic aesthetics, but, at the same time, they try create their own world of poetry with the same material. They choose not to be repeated in a world always renewed with metaphors and poetic themes that are common knowledge. If a poet wants to hold on to the literary field and be lasting, he has to have a good command of poetry. Any poet who does not have a good command of poetry is destined to disappear.

Diwan poetry was influenced by Arab and Persian culture, which played a role in its formation, besides the literature preceding it. Thus, in terms of mentality, the characteristics of the period penetrated into almost all works. "Our old literature took shape as the last creative, large link of the common civilization under the strong influences of the Arab literature and Persian literature that had no linguistic proximity between them and were formed at particular intervals in the same age" (Tanpınar, 1988). In this regard, Diwan poetry was a literary tradition shaped and steered by Islam based on common art values. Therefore, we should evaluate the aesthetic aspect of poetry in its entirety and based on the dominant mentality of the period.

The beauty and rhetoric structure of Diwan poetry arose from itself. Each artistic utterance was supported by a new artistic utterance. The artistic utterance was equated with the poet's success. Poets treated poems within the possibilities of the materials on hand and meticulously worked on words. The words used formed a world of dreams and incidents that was rich in meaning. The artist's success depended on how many poetic themes he could fit in the particular boundaries of the verse and how many images of incidents and matters he aroused in the mind. This is precisely the way Diwan literature developed. This is why this literature was witnessed to progress regularly as of the 14th and 15th centuries (Tarlan, 1999).

Poets sought perfectness of meaning and form in poems. As talent in poetry made up the poet's identity, the objective was to reach what was unique so as to renew and exist. A poet had a superior position over his contemporaries if he created a language of poetry unique to himself and achieved a distinctive style and expression. A diwan poet had to use all graces of the language in order to hold on to the tradition and be

lasting in it. As classical poetry involved a tradition, a poet had to comply with the current style of poetry, just like a dervish complying with the manners of the dervish community in which he is a newcomer.

Diwan poets created their poems based on an extensive culture coming from the past. This led to the formation and preservation of a tradition. The poets who adopted the traditional rules of diwan poetry and felt compelled to maintain it by making it better tried to be unique by supporting their talent with their artistic skills and knowledge. They accepted introducing new values to the tradition while preserving it as the uniqueness of being a poet. What made classical Turkish poetry emerge and last was the poet's compliance with traditional discipline. Those who wanted to make themselves accepted as poets paid attention to this. Each new pursuit led to a new form of poetry, and each new form of poetry led to the lastingness of classical poetry (İspir, 2007).

Poets made some extensions in the face of the Ottoman poetry tradition having strict precepts and graces to the extent they were genius. They tried to bring a breath of fresh air by forcing the strict rules of poetry, setting a new language, meaning, and utterance, but without opposing the tradition.

"Our old poetry was a style under the command of an aesthetics. Just like any style, it also had strict precepts, conveniences and difficulties, dangers and safeties, and far and distant targets. Again just like any style, it had a particular understanding of life and taste it was based upon" (Tanpınar, 1992).

Diwan poets knew that they could be creative by steeping themselves in language and meaning. Kneading their works with such awareness, poets paid maximum attention to rhetoric rules. Though their cultural richness made their job easier, talent remained the fundamental element.

While preparing their diwans, poets turned to God with poems of oneness and invocation by beginning from the highest authority of the chain of values in accordance with tradition. Then they gave coverage to the praises (qasidas) of Prophet Muhammad, elders of religion and sects, and earthly authorities such as sultans, viziers, and pashas. However, the central part of diwan was the gazels section, where poets featured their talents. Gazel was regarded more in terms of both quantity and quality. It was particularly gazel which reflected the understanding of diwan poetry in terms of aesthetics and poetic themes. Although qasidas formed the aesthetic bond between poets and sultans, mostly gazels were read in poetry councils.

Working on Ottoman poetry, Gibb considers gazel the most gracious and most treated type of verse. According to him, poets show their talents in gazel. This is why it finds most favor: "Gazel is the most gracious and excellent of all forms of poetry. Ottoman

poets also accept that gazel is the most suitable type of poetry to show their high capabilities as stylists" (Gibb, 1999). While praising himself in fahriyes (self-praises), the diwan poet features his art, not his position. Being close to the sultan is not a virtue. Having a talent in the valley of poetry is a ground for praise. The poet praises his talent in poetry as much as he praises who is to be praised.

Ömer Faruk Akün regards gazel as the heart of diwan poetry. His remarks on this subject are quite interesting: "Gazel is the heart of diwan poetry in two senses: having a never-declining lyric content; constituting the core of all diwans. Having a superiority as the most liked verse form of classical Turkish literature, gazel is the fundamental representative reflecting diwan literature with its all aesthetic elements and poetic themes" (Akün, 2014).

Almost all researchers accept that the type of poetry bringing the Ottoman poetry to the present is gazel, not qasida.

Ottoman Diwan Poets

The following statement in Sehi Bey's collection of biographies titled *Hes̄t Behišt* as referred to Mehmed the Conqueror is noteworthy in that it shows the value attached by Ottoman sultans to art and science: "*Having talented Arabs and Persians found and brought and assuring great compliance*" (İnalçık, 2005). The value attached to art and artists is about the desire for building a culture and civilization as much as about the "patron" identity of the state. This attitude is essential for envisioning the future through past experiences. The Ottoman sultans' *patronage* was parallel to the idea of being a world-dominating state.

"Bâkî having troubles in his early life became a companion of Suleyman the Magnificent and was given the highest positions after he gained his praise. *The ulama could not stand but opposed when Suleyman exceeded the bounds in praising and favoring him. Those who were jealous of him had him dismissed from his position as professor of Süleymaniye, the highest rank in madrasah hierarchy, when Murad III came to the throne*" (İnalçık, 2005).

How fine was the line on which the sultan, who was not sure whether he should grant the position of Shayk al-Islam to his poet companion competent enough for that position, acted while exercising his power and deciding on state affairs? The sultan,

who had "unlimited might" in terms of hierarchy and power, had to take the ulama into account.⁶

"Artists make an effort to produce the more excellent than what others produce in order to win the patron's favor. In this way, patronage plays a positive role for art" (İnalçık, 2005). Poets were more attentive to the quality of utterance than its quantity. This is because the rank of a poet was equal to his contribution to the aesthetics of poetry. The focal point of criticism about the patrimonial structure should not be an impulse but a dynamic with rational grounds.

Adopting a series of humiliating premises that are based on political and psychological fantasies rather than meticulous literary analyses to evaluate the meaning and value of diwan poetry means making an unfair judgment with a biased, negative point of view (Andrews, 2006). Any criticism made without evaluating the aesthetic dimensions of Ottoman poetry from an objective point of view will be unfair and biased. Making literary criticism by using the sources of the relevant field will be better and more meaningful. A tradition of poetry with predetermined language, measure, and aesthetic boundaries has to be evaluated in its reality.

Taking a poetic tradition as a text, an essential focal point in understanding the text will be the relationship between the text and the context. Accordingly, the hypothesis is as follows: art reflects and shapes what is around (Andrews, 2006).

Entering this area without remembering that Ottoman poetry was traditional poetry means overstepping the mark. Overall, Ottoman poetry was poetry completed within the bounds of Islamic civilization with its unique rules in a particular process. This is indisputably clear with its sources, topics, and forms. However, here we talk about poetry about whose style, expression, image, rhetoric, etc., different evaluations can be made. Accordingly, in art or society-based approaches, evaluations based on a single type of poem or a narrow-scoped period may be wrong and lead to mistakes that are hard to compensate.

⁶ "It is known that those who envied Baki Efendi influenced Murad III, and as a result Baki was sent to the position of professor at Selimiye Madrasah in Edirne with a degradation of rank, then served as Mecca, Medina, and Istanbul kadıs, and then was appointed as Anatolian kazasker and Rumelian kazasker. There was always a turmoil in his position as a kazasker as he experienced discharges and reappointments continually. In İpekten's words, 'while there was no position but the Office of Shayk al-Islam for Baki to accomplish, he was retired. 'Baki, retired without accomplishing this position, retreated as a resentful and desperate one. Although he recovered his hopes as Mehmed III came to the throne, the Sultan appointed Sun'ullah Efendi, but not Baki, as Shayk al-Islam upon the death of Hoca Saadeddin Efendi. Alas! Baki again failed to accomplish that position'" (Yavuz, 2003).

Patron and Sense of Art in Classical Poetry

The fact that Ottoman rulers supported artists and artistic activities led artists to be the main elements ensuring the maintenance of court manners. Likewise, rulers mainly chose courtiers/companions, whom they held close and whose opinions they asked from time to time, from among artists (Durmuş, 2017)

Verdict: "*It should be overemphasized here that natural vigor is affectation, not lyricism in diwan poetry*" (İnalçık, 2005). This is how the first sentence begins.

Interpretation of the Ottoman diwan poetry has always been a political issue. If we do not see and accept that many of the assumptions about diwan poetry we have taken over have a political nature, we cannot escape the illusion that we are advancing on the way to beneficially "understanding" the meaning and function of diwan poetry (Andrews, 2006).

According to the writers of collections of biographies, genuine diwan poets were creative poets who internalized semantics, rhetoric, eloquence, aruz prosody, and knowledge of poetry and associated literary arts with their imaginations in their poems (İnalçık, 2005).

A poet has to be fluent, eloquent, and gracious. The poem he (patron-sultan) *considers excellent is qasida* (İnalçık, 2005).

The requirement of being fluent, eloquent, and gracious for poets is true for any period. It is already impossible for a rude, ordinary poet to have a place in the history of literature or become a classic. However, considering "qasida" as an excellent poem within Ottoman poetry is a serious problem. All classical literature researchers know how qasida and gazel were included in the diwan format in quantity and quality.

Putting aside the rich lyricism, the world of words and images, and feelings of poets of classical poetry and confining the things to the narrow framework of qasida will not be fair. It goes without saying that qasida is one of the facts of classical poetry tradition and cannot be ignored. However, in our opinion, evaluating an entire tradition based on qasida or rendering a verdict in this matter is not appropriate. To give a small example, let us look at Ahmet Paşa's famous quatrain titled "gönül" ("heart"):

*Gül yüzünde görelî zülf-i semen-sây gönül
Kuru sevdada yiler bi-ser ü bî-pay gönül
Dimedüm mi sana dolaşma ana hay gönül
Vay gönül vay bu gönül vay gönül ey vay gönül*

Ahmet Paşa

(Oh my heart! Didn't I tell you not to wander around? You'd get in a tizzy upon seeing the fringes on the face of your beloved having the scent of jasmine? Oh my heart, oh this heart, oh oh heart!?)

This is definite: Gazel was the life-blood of Ottoman literature. It was the fundamental type of poetry in which poets showed their labor and talents for centuries and one of the primary voices in the melody of the Turkish culture (Andrews, 2006).

Andrews's point of view requires readdressing the Ottoman poetry within the context of gazel and qasida. One-sided or subjective approaches will not be methodical and may put researchers in trouble in terms of scientificness.

Fuzûlî and Patronage

In *Şikâyetnâme (Complaint)*, Fuzûlî confesses that he approached the sultan to attain a position though he did not stoop to a patron. Fuzûlî admits that gaining favor is possible only when one reaches the ruler of the period. He says that not resorting to the sultan is a mistake for the same reason. In a patrimonial community, the things would not be otherwise for Fuzûlî, despite his all unwillingness and pride (İnalçık, 2005).

There is a big difference between looking at a poem or a poem book from the perspective of a poetry tradition and a poet's perspective. For example, a Sufi poet tries to interpret the world based on a religious-Sufic pattern in essence. If we interpret a Sufi poet's poem based on the pattern of authority, we put a meaning in which the poet had little or no interest in his poem (Andrews, 2006).

"I greeted them, but they didn't welcome it as it wasn't a bribe. I showed them a verdict, but they didn't pay it a compliment as it was useless."

Şikâyetname summarizes the life tragedy of any poet begging for the patron's favor and grace. Here we hear the disappointment, rage, and irony of a nobleman, a great artist, in the face of how imperfect the world is. Here we see the never-ending confrontation of patrons having high, mighty positions with the poor fighting for life in inferior positions. In this regard, *Şikâyetname* is a document providing the most realistic manifestation of the patronage's genuine character and the psychology of the poets of that period (İnalçık, 2005).

A position accomplished in Istanbul is better than positions in other places. Living inside the empire is better than living outside it. The quantity and quality of direct

references made to the sultan in the poem is a sign of the consistency and steadiness of the Ottoman ideal (Andrews, 2006).

Şikâyetname was submitted to Celal-zade Mustafa Çelebi. Celal-zade is described as follows: "He was a well-known poet having a good command of Arabic and Persian and famous for his talent in using the official written language. Large amounts of the bequests he received for the qasidas he submitted to the sultan (45 thousand golds, as rumors went) are proof of how those winning the patron's favor got a fortune." (İnalçık, 2005). A daily pay of nine coins given to Fuzûlî was considered too much.

Who is more important in the history of literature; Celal-zade or Fuzûlî? Who is the owner of real wealth? The one who submitted qasida to the patron or the one who wrote touching gazels in Kufa? Who does art history remember?

Addressing Suleyman the Magnificent in his several works, Fuzûlî sought his patronage and favor. In his preamble for *Leyla and Majnun*, Fuzûlî expresses how important patronage is for the poet in every period as follows:

"Rahm et ki garib derdmendim

Bî-mûnis u yâr u derdmendim

(Show mercy on me as I'm a poor-fellow in trouble; with no friend and love)

...

Tutsan elimi ben fakîrin

Hak ola hemîşe destgîrin (İnalçık, 2005).

(Hold my hand, me a poor man

May Allah help you everlastingly)

Showing being close to the authority holder, the poem not only underlines the personal nature of authority relationship, but also turns the authority holder's space into a space with a transcendental value (Andrews, 2006).

It can be said that material reward expectations underlie the actual or symbolic submission in front of absolute authority. It is true for the lover, too. This is because he expects the beloved's praise. As a result, he goes through great suffering. Even the beloved's small glimpse is seen as a reward for the lover. Accordingly, in poetry, expectance for a reward exists in the beloved's interest, zeal, and favor as well as in the joy present in mystic coming together. To translate them into the terms of social system, the subject may expect material rewards from the sultan and wish to have a relatively easy, comfortable life (Andrews, 2006).

Ezelden şâh-ı 'aşkun bende-i fermânyuz cânâ

Mahabbet mülkiniün sultân-ı 'âlî-şânyuz cânâ (G.13/1) Baki

(Oh my love! We've been the captive of the sultan of love and the glorious sultan of the country of love from time immemorial.)

Kapunda kullara zulm ü cefâ itme vefâ eyle

Benüm şâh-i cihân-tâbum kerem eyle vefâ yigdür (G. 186/2)

(My world ruler! Don't oppress your subjects, don't inflict pain on them! Just do them some favor because fidelity is better)

In the diwan poetry tradition, the beloved is seen as the sultan. The lover is subject, slave, and beggar in the face of the beloved, who is the sultan of the country of love and the property of affection. While the beloved is unwilling, delicate, and healing, the lover is needy, praying, and helpless. Because of these qualifications and beauty, the beloved reminds the reader of a ruler. The lover has no choice but obedience in the face of the ruler's command. Both order and command are in the beloved's hands.

Later, besides praising their own talents, poets also appealed for the help of those whom they praised by uttering their material and spiritual problems. The people to whom the works were submitted evaluated them based on their own tastes and understandings and also the education they received. In the end, they rewarded them depending on their success. Such rewards provided poets with a reputation besides financial possibilities. The material and spiritual aids obtained by poets were called *câize* (i.e., gift for a poem of praise). It should also be noted that the poets did not only live on *câizes*. They also had a job depending on their talent. *Câize*, a kind of royalty, today continues its existence in an institutionalized form (Yaşar, 2007).

Being a sultan with a broad mind, Mehmed the Conqueror treated all wise men equally and invited them to engage in scientific contests before him. He gave gifts to those who succeeded and showed their wisdom by writing a book. Many wise men flocked into Istanbul in his era because of his interest in wise men. Thirty poets in his period lived on the salary and service pays he provided (İsen, 1999).

"It is said that 'classical poets got caize in return for the qasidas they wrote and so they exchanged their art with money.' Yes, it is true that some poets were rewarded when they submitted some of their qasidas to elders. But, what about tens of poems such as

gazels, musammats, and songs that were exchanged with no money and were subjected to no caize? Also, even if he is a poet, what is wrong with his getting royalty from a high-minded art patron in return for his labor? Let's put the question in another way: What is wrong with the state's notables' or rich men's protecting art?" (Pala, 2003: 326).

It is known that sultan's sons, just like Ottoman sultans, formed a literary circle for themselves and that many of them wrote poems to such degree that they held poetry councils. As a matter of fact, they showed interest in literary circles formed around them in the periods when they were appointed to provinces as sanjak governors. As a result, provinces such as Edirne, Konya, Amasya, Manisa, Trabzon, and Kütahya governed by them had literary vividness (İpekten, 1996).

As the Ottoman sultans, who were among the exceptional poets of our classical poetry, were artistically competent enough to appraise the qasidas submitted to them, they sometimes corrected and sometimes rejected the poems submitted (Çavuşoğlu, 1986).

Whether they were written for the praise of the power and authority holder of the period or the poet's own praise, qasidas had a place in the history of poetry as a literary reflection of the power and characteristics aimed to be accomplished. From this perspective, qasida had a value for the Ottoman authority and world of art and played an important role in maintaining the liveliness and continuity of poetry life. It can be stated that qasidas had positive reflections in terms of poets, cultural environment, and authority, and the world of art had material and spiritual development thanks to the works submitted (Çolak & C. Hiloğlu, 2010).

Poets always make an effort to be better, more successful, more authentic, and more artistic. To be a "center of interest," it is necessary to be present in circles where artistic and literary activities are vividly performed. As the court and its surrounding made up the "center", the works in which poets showed their talents were also assessed there. They praised "the sultan of the world" in methiye (praise) and praised "the sultan of word (themselves and their talent)" in fahriye (self-praise). This is just one of the ordinary jobs the tradition made the poets do.

Conclusion

In the Ottoman poetry tradition, poetic concern always preceded political concern. The patrimonial characteristic of Ottoman poetry was the event of tide between the poet's loss of prestige and his desire for reputation. The paradox between the poet's

aesthetic concern and patrimonial patronage constituted the essential point of Diwan poetry. The artist was constantly tested on the fine line between art and life. A pen is the only thing remaining in the shadow of art and power. Each literary period has its unique conditions and sense of art. These conditions should be considered while evaluating a literary work or artist. Ottoman poetry cannot be studied from today's perspective. It is necessary to look at the unique characteristics of the period and see and read the mentality of the period. By his very nature, the artist bears poetic and political concerns.

As works are subject to compliment, caution should be exercised in handling the issue of poet and patron, and evaluations should be made on a fair basis. Although art activities concentrated in the court and its surrounding, artists were also patronized in cultural centers far from the capital city by other patrons (i.e., viziers, pashas, sultan's sons).

Though the Eastern patronage and Western maecenate are considered the same thing, there is an incompatibility between them in terms of point of view. In this context, the main worrisome point is the commodification of works of art. Maecenate provides the artist with a reputation besides financial possibilities. An artist involved in literary circles can easily follow what is up-to-date.

Although the Ottoman sultans' holding the absolute authority made a direct relation compulsory in terms of the artist-patron relationship, the fact that the sultan was also an artist led to a distinctive situation. From the perspective of patronage, the artistic identities of the poet and the patron reading a poem facing one another in poetry gatherings became more important than anything else.

The methodological approaches employed by İnalçık and Andrews reveal their literary distance to Ottoman poetry. Readdressing the Ottoman poetry within the context of gazel and qasida may bring us new and different perspectives. However, we should avoid one-sided or subjective approaches as part and parcel of being scientific.

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