

**OSMANLI ARAŐTIRMALARI  
VII-VIII**

**EDITORS OF THIS SPECIAL ISSUE  
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**THE JOURNAL OF OTTOMAN STUDIES  
VII-VIII**

**İstanbul - 1988**

POEMS FROM THE TURKISH

*Bernard Lewis*

My picture, my darling, my friend, my boon companion, my intimate,  
my soul,  
my comrade, my confidant, my life, my spirit, my remedy for grief,  
my sovereign, my moon, my sweetheart, my being, my sustenance,  
my spirit,  
my refuge, my goal, my direction, my orbit, my thought, my soul,  
my moon-featured, fairy-faced one, my merry and wanton charmer,  
my jasmine scented, rose fragrant one, my cypress grown in a rose  
garden,  
my delicate, my elegant one, my fair, my dear one, my peerless  
beloved,  
my Hijaz, my Ka'ba, my Sinai, my paradise, my houri, my Ridvan\*  
my rose, my sweet basil, my trees, my ambergris, my aloe wood,  
my pearl, my precious metal, my ruby, my cornelian, my coral,  
my heart illuminating, faithful, entrail-kindling tormentor,  
my sovereign, my world conqueror, my ruler, my monarch and  
emperor,  
my candle, my lamp, my light, my radiance, my star, my sun,  
my nightingale, my bulbul, my rose, I am sweet toned Nesimi.

Nesimi  
(d. 1405)

\* the angel who guards the gate of Paradise

My purpose is to obey God's command to wage jihad  
 my zeal is for the faith of Islam alone.  
 By the grace of God and the brave men of God's army,  
 my purpose is to conquer the infidels entirely.  
 My trust is in the Prophets and the saints,  
 my hope of victory and conquest is in God's bounty.  
 What if I wage jihad with life and fortune?  
 Praise be to God, my desire for battle grows many thousandfold.  
 O Muhammad, by your own miracles  
 let my power triumph over the enemies of the faith.

Sultan Mehmed II  
 (reg. 1451 - 1481)

I opened my eyes from sleep and suddenly raised my head;  
 before me I saw standing a moon-faced, heart-rending beauty.  
 My star was lucky or, perhaps, I attained the Night of Power  
 I saw the planet Jupiter rise in my street that night  
 I saw light flowing from his beauty,  
 he looked like a Muslim but wore the clothes of an unbeliever.  
 In the blink of an eye he vanished from sight,  
 but as I saw him he was either angel or sprite  
 Mihri is immortal until the day of resurrection, because she has  
 attained the elixir of life,  
 because in the darkness of night she saw that Iskender plain.

Mihri Hatun  
 (d. after 1510)

Greetings from me to the Bey of Bolu.  
 Let him come and lean against these mountains  
 let the mountains echo and reecho  
 the sound of the clash of arrows.

The enemy has come, in ranks;  
 the black script of fate is written on my white brow;  
 the musket has come, manhood is spoilt;  
 the curved sword must rust in its scabbard.  
 Has Koroğlu fallen from his glory?  
 He sends many from the battlefield.  
 Our boots are filled, our garments are stained  
 with the horse's spittle and the foeman's blood.

Koroğlu  
 (16th century)

The beys of our lands  
 light their candles,  
 they drink and become lions  
 and twirl their glasses round.  
 They drink till they are full  
 and then go out to seek a foe.  
 They mount their Arab horses,  
 stretching out their necks.  
 But my heart has rotted, rotted,  
 and my guts melt inside.  
 The arms of the Beys are weary  
 from brandishing the sword.  
 Beys, now what shall we do?  
 Let us go off with the girls,  
 let us show off our horses in the square,  
 stretching out their necks.  
 Koroğlu says: I have grown old  
 I have aged and I have rotted  
 my horse is tired and I am tired  
 of giving girls a ride.

Koroğlu

If I say that the skies have opened, the spring has come,  
 I mean that my beloved has shown me some affection.  
 If I say that the meadow is adorned with blossoms,  
 it conveys that my sweetheart spoke to me with a smile.

Galib  
 (1759 - 1799)

### Pool

Deep down, the night has massed again  
 My darling smiles in her wonted place  
 My darling who doesn't come by day  
 Appears at night by the pool.

The moonlight a sash for her waist  
 The heavens her secret veil  
 The stars roses in her hand.

Ahmet Haşim  
 (1884 - 1933)

### I Had A Map

I had a map, a souvenir from school  
 With continents and seas and coloured countries.  
 A splendid world, I hardly know it now,  
 With happy men and peaceful smoking chimneys  
 And continents and seas and coloured countries.

And now I weep, our map is all in blood  
 The blood Cain shed, that never could be staunched,  
 Bringing a somber sameness to our world  
 And torment to us all.  
 And now I weep, our map is all in blood.

Cahit Sıtkı Tarancı  
 (1910 - 1956)