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THE *BELĀĠAT-İ 'OŞMĀNĪYE* OF AHMED
CEVDET PAŞA AND ITS CRITICS

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For the educated Ottoman, the Tanzimat was a period of instability and transformation which witnessed change in almost every aspect of life, not least of all in language, literature and even literary criticism. It is by examining in some detail the *Belāġat-İ 'Oşmānīye*, a work of literary rhetoric, that we may obtain some insight into one of the most influential minds of the Tanzimat, that of Ahmed Cevdet Paşa. This article will attempt to evaluate not only the *Belāġat-İ 'Oşmānīye* but also examine the immediate reaction it evoked in some of its readers. For, at the same time as some authors, such as Recā'izāde Maḥmūd Ekrem, had chosen to look to the west in order to find inspiration for a rhetoric of the Ottoman language, Cevdet Paşa chose to remain conservative in his approach. Curiously the strongest reaction to his rhetoric is not from the western-looking reformers but from traditionalists who were not altogether happy with the direction that was being taken by an essentially conservative man like Cevdet Paşa¹.

The Belāġat-İ 'Oşmānīye

Cevdet Paşa (1822-1895), the author of the *Belāġat-İ 'Oşmānīye*, was one of that small group commonly known as the Men of the Tanzimat. While Muştafā Reşid Paşa (1800-1858), 'Alī Paşa (1815-

1 See C. Ferrard, «Recā'izāde Maḥmūd Ekrem's *Ta'lim-İ Edebiyāt* and its contributions to Ottoman Literary criticism: Part I», *Türk Dili ve Edebiyatı Dergisi*, XXIV-XXV (İstanbul, 1986), pp. 215-233, and Part II published in *Osmanlı Araştırmaları*, VI (İstanbul, 1986) pp. 139-161.

1871) and Fu'ād Paşa (1815-1869) all rose to the highest positions in the government, Cevdet Paşa's role was less that of a statesman and more a civil servant responsible for the actual task of drawing up legislation, and consequently he failed to attain the supreme offices of state².

The three great statesmen of the Tanzimat all had similar careers; having acquired experience in foreign affairs, they all occupied at sometime the post of Minister of External Affairs, the Grand Vizierate and, with the exception of Reşid Paşa, the presidency of the Council of Tanzimat. Cevdet Paşa, on the other hand, occupied many important ministerial positions concerned with the direction and implementation of the Tanzimat reforms, but for a variety of reasons, at no time did he acquire a premier position in formulating the overall policy of the State. He was considerably more educated than his colleagues, and being somewhat younger than them it was natural that his best chances of advancement lay in attaching himself to their retinue. Receiving his first official appointment at the age of 26, he was within two years promoted to the Meclis-i Ma'ârif and shortly afterwards to the directorship of the Dârü'l-Mu'allimîn. There after followed numerous directorships and ministerial posts, mainly in the field of education and law, areas in which Cevdet Paşa's education in the *İlmîye* gave him an advantage over his colleagues. This classical background and his deep grounding in the traditional curriculum probably rendered him psychologically unsuited for the highest positions in the Tanzimat governments, where an uncritical belief in reform for its own sake was necessary rather than the conversancy with the traditional Islamic sciences which Cevdet Paşa could offer.

His ministerial duties and official commitments were allowed to occupy only part of his time, and much of his energy was devoted to drafting legislation, as well as to providing text-books for the educational institutions for which he was responsible. While his colleagues were enthusiastically engaged in propagating wide-sweeping reforms, it was to Cevdet Paşa that they delegated the task of actually implementing them.

² The sources for the biography of Cevdet Paşa can be found in A. Ölmez-oğlu's article on him in *İslâm Ansiklopedisi*.

In all things a moderate, he saw only too clearly that the reforming zeal of his colleagues arose from a shallow appreciation of the foundations of Ottoman culture, and he feared that their admiration for things European might lead them to question many of the established values, the preservation of which was for him the principal inducement to the reform of the state institutions. The classical conception of the Ottoman State was that of an organic unit centered around the person of the ruler, whose duty it was to protect, maintain and foster Islam and all thereto pertaining. As the basis of Islam was the Arabic Koran so, too, should Ottoman culture reflect the dominant position of those traditional sciences which found their origins in the study of the Holy Book. European pressure for the establishment of a secular constitutional state, thereby reducing the dominant position of the *Şer'at*, would not only endanger the executive power of the Caliph but bring into question many of the cultural values which were held sacrosanct by Cevdet Paşa and most of his countrymen. He was not, however, a reactionary, for he realised that without institutional reform the State could not survive; and he consequently channelled his immense energies into reconciling the classical institutions with prevailing conditions. Yet, as earnest as was his zeal for reform, no less was he wholeheartedly committed to the preservation of Ottoman culture as he conceived it.

To Cevdet Paşa was delegated the task of codifying the whole of Ottoman law, a monumental project which resulted in the publication of a twelve volumed codex entitled the *Mecelle-i Ahkâm-ı Adliye*, a work which was instrumental in preserving the fundamental position of the *Şer'at* in the legal system³. Cevdet Paşa's motives for introducing the *Mecelle* are clear, he feared lest the theory and practice of Ottoman law be replaced by a Western model which was seen to operate well for its own society. He appreciated that unless he could provide the Empire with a comprehensive and modern legal system, forces, both within and without the country, would impose a legal framework which would be alien to the Ottoman spirit.

³ See R. Gür, *Mecelle*, 2nd Ed (Istanbul, 1977), 25-28; Cevdet Paşa, *Tezâkir*, ed. Cavid Baysun (Ankara, 1960-67), vol. I, 62-63 and vol. IV, 95-96.

In matters of education too, he exhibited a marked reluctance to throw out the content of the classical curriculum. In the early years of his public life he began to prepare text-books for the new schools which had been established by the reforms. There being no question of replacing the old *medrese* system of higher education, the reformers contented themselves with establishing a parallel system of schooling in which new subjects would be taught. Common to both systems, however, was a need for instruction in grammar and composition, the ignorance of which was so painfully apparent in many of the employees of the government. In the *medrese* it was Arabic alone that figured in the syllabus, and consequently the new schools had to provide a similar education in the Turkish language, including the formal study of literature. Cevdet Paşa assumed the responsibility for writing all the necessary text-books for the study of the vernacular.

In a preface to the *Belâgat-i 'Osmanîye*, Cevdet Paşa outlined his programme for the study of the Ottoman language. Acknowledging that it was greatly indebted to Arabic which he saw as the principle source of Ottoman, he felt it necessary to discuss the Arabic linguistic sciences as applied to the Ottoman language (pp. 3-5)⁴. The *'Ulûm-i Edebîye*, as formulated by Cevdet Paşa, are eight, with four «branch» sciences:

'Usûl-i şemânîye: luğat, şarf, iştikâk, naḥv,
me'ânî, beyân, 'aruz ve kâfiye fennleridür.
F'ürû'-ı erba'a: inşâ, karz-ı şî'r, muḥâzarât
ve ḥaṭṭ, ya'nî imlâ, fennleri (p. 6)

The basic sciences can, therefore, be notionally translated as: lexicography, morphology, etymology, syntax, semantics, exposition, prosody and rhyme. The four branch sciences are prose composition, poetic composition, the art of the anecdote and calligraphy⁵. Within this framework he produced a series of works which would serve

⁴ References to the text are to the first edition (Istanbul, 1298/1881).

⁵ In the *Beyânü 'i-'Urvân* (Istanbul, 1273/1857), Cevdet Paşa gives a summary of the linguistic sciences (pp. 34-35) in which he defines the four «branch sciences» thus :

as text-books for some of these literary sciences. The first was the *Ḳavā'id-i 'Osmāniye*, a work produced in cooperation with Fu'ād Paşa, while residing in Bursa in 1849⁶. This was the first Ottoman grammar to be written in Turkish and was intended to serve the needs of the pupils at the newly established *rüşdiyye* schools. Cevdet Paşa combined within this work the *'ilm-i nahv* and the *'ilm-i şarf*, having decided that the former science was too insubstantial to stand on its own when applied to the Ottoman language. In 1865 a shortened version of the work, entitled the *Medhāl-i Ḳavā'id*, was published in order that the students at the primary schools might study it in preparation for the *Ḳavā'id-i 'Osmāniye*. The work was further simplified and published in an edition of 15,000 copies as the *Ḳavā'id-i Türkîye* (1875)⁷.

«Fürü olarak daği diğer dört fenn vardır : fenn-i haft ve fenn-i karz-ı şî'r ve fenn-i inşâ ve fenn-i muhâzarâtıdır. Zîrâ bahş, eger nuş-ı kitâbete dâ'ir olursa, fenn-i haft; ve eger kelâm-ı manzûma maşşûş olursa, fenn-i karz-ı şî'r; ve eger kelâm-ı manşûra maşşûş olursa, fenn-i inşâ; ve eger manzûm ve menşûrdan birine maşşûş olmyarak ikisine daği şâmil olursa fenn-i muhâzarât tesmiye olunur.» (pp. 36-37).

Cevdet Paşa's use of the term *muhâzarât* in this classification is rather idiosyncratic, and one cannot be quite sure what exactly it is that he means. The definition provided by Ahmed Taşköprizâde in the *Miftâhü 's-Sa'ade* (vol. I [Hyderabad, 1899], p. 182) would hardly make it appropriate to what seems to be the general intention of Cevdet Paşa in this analysis. The definition runs : «This is the subject from the study of which is derived the ability to quote the works of others in respect of the appropriateness of their general sense and their particular relevance». He goes on to distinguish *muhâzarât* and *me'anî* specifying the first as having particular relevance to the topic under discussion while *muhâzarât* is «the use of the words of eloquent men in the course of conversation, introduced as anecdote appropriate to the situation».

6 This was first published in 1281/1864. It was reprinted seventeen times, three times under the title: *Ḳavā'id-i 'Osmānî*. See *Tezâkir*, IV, 45; *Belâgat-i 'Osmāniye*, 3.

7 This was first published in 1292/1875, and thereafter reprinted six times. See *Tezâkir*, IV, 126. Ziyâ Gökalp in *Türkçülüğün Esâsı* argues that Cevdet Paşa failed to recognise the status of Turkish by calling his grammar the *Ḳavā'id-i 'Osmāniye* in contrast to Süleymân Paşa who preferred *Şarf-ı*

At the end of the *Ḳavā'id-i 'Osmānīye*, Cevdet Paşa committed himself to compiling a work on Ottoman rhetoric, for he felt that although his grammar provided the student with the means of giving correct expression to his intended meaning in the Ottoman language, he would nevertheless be unable to express it eloquently without a knowledge of rhetoric. During one of his terms as Minister of Education, he had formed a committee to organise the curricula of the public and specialist schools, and he was himself later commissioned by this committee to write a work on rhetoric. However, the pressure of the work entailed in fulfilling his numerous commitments prevented him from turning his attention to this immediately. In 1879 he was reappointed Minister of Justice and opened the first modern school of law, the curriculum of which was to include the teaching of *belāğa*. In 1881 the second year students of the *Mekteb-i Hukuk* began their studies and Cevdet Paşa took it upon himself personally to teach the students *belāğa* once a week. His lecture notes became the basis for the *Belāgat-i 'Osmānīye* which was finished during a vacation in *Şa'bān* of 1299 (June 1882). Shortly afterwards the work was published and subsequently ran into six editions between the years 1881 and 1908⁸.

The syllabus of the *Mekteb-i Hukuk* included both traditional subjects as well as new courses which were to be taught for the first time. In the curriculum were the following subjects: *Fikh*, *Mecelle-i Ahkām-i Adliye*, *Uşul-ı Fikh*, General Survey of Law Systems, Law and Institutions of the Ottoman Empire, Roman Law, Commercial Law, Court Procedure, Criminal Law and Interrogation Procedure, Maritime Law, International Law, Treaties, and finally Political Economy. Rhetoric was taught in addition to these basic courses, probably on the recommendation of Cevdet Paşa, who personally taught the class despite the pressure of work entailed in the post of Minister of Justice which he filled at this period. The relevancy of rhetoric to the study of law was accepted by traditional

Türkl, overlooking the fact that Cevdet compiled the *Ḳavā'id-i Türkiye*. *Principles of Turcism*, trans R. Devereux (Leiden, 1968), 4.

⁸ See *Belāgat-i 'Osmānīye*, 4-5; *Tezâkir* IV, 196 ff. and 214-215; also O. Ergin, *Türkiye Maarif Tarihi* (Istanbul, 1941), 890 ff. The title page of the 1st edition gives the year 1298, which could possibly refer to the financial year.

scholars who, realising that law was transmitted through the medium of language, taught the linguistic sciences in the *medrese*. Cevdet Paşa certainly realised that the students of the Mekteb-i Hukuk would become the first generation of Ottoman jurists and as such would be required either to draft or to interpret new laws; the study of Turkish composition would therefore complement their legal studies⁹.

The *Belâgat-i 'Osmâniye* is, as its title implies, the classical Arabic theory of rhetoric rendered applicable to Ottoman, little more in fact than the *Telhîş* in Turkish¹⁰. Its arrangement, consisting of a *muqaddime* and three chapters devoted to *me'ânî*, *beyân* and *bedî'*, mirrors that of its Arabic model, with little effort at the adaptation of the theory to a different language, a different educational system and the demands of a different society. To the introduction, Cevdet Paşa appends a brief discussion of language, taken from the science of logic, the chapters on *me'ânî* and *beyân*, however, remaining more or less the same. The *bedî'* section presents a selection of the numerous figures found in the *Telhîş*, to which is added a *faşl* on chronograms.

It must, however, be recognised as utterly failing in its avowed purpose of providing a rhetorical system for Turkish, and its inadequacy can be attributed to the confused conceptions held by its author concerning the nature and scope of the subject itself. Cevdet Paşa seems to have regarded rhetoric as an absolute science of

9 The relationship between the linguistic sciences and the study of law is succinctly formulated by İbn Haldûn in his *Muqaddime*, a work with which Cevdet Paşa was very familiar, having translated it into Ottoman: «The pillars of the Arabic language are four, lexicography, grammar, syntax and style (*bayân*), and literature. Knowledge of them, all is necessary for religious scholars, since the source of all religious laws is the Qu'rân and the Sunnah, which are in Arabic» (Trans: F. Rosenthal: Ibn Khaldûn, *An Introduction to History: the Muqaddimah*, Abridged ed. [London, 1967], p. 433.

10 Cavid Baysun, in the index to vol. IV of *Tezâkir*, suggests that Cevdet Paşa adopted the *Muhtasar* as his model. While it can be established that he relied on one of the commentaries it is virtually impossible to determine which of Teftâzânî's two *şerhs*, the *Muṣavvel* or the *Muhtasar*, he used (p. 286, entry «Belâgat-i Osmâniyye»). The *Telhîş* is properly known as the *Telhîş fi 'Ulûmi 'l-Belâga* written by Celâleddin Muhammed b. Abdürrahmân, Hatib el-Kazvinî. The edition referred to is Cairo, 1932.

universal application, much as mathematics or physics, the laws of which governed all languages; consequently, he could confidently assume that those Arabic texts with which he was familiar could serve the demands of Turkish by merely modifying a few details. Whereas the proper approach would have been to deduce law and principle from his own literature, he was content to seek in it only those examples which illustrated the foreign system.

While it is true that most literary modes in Ottoman Turkish were borrowed, usually from either Persian or Arabic, and underwent a development which can be identified as stages of translation, adaptation, imitation and, finally, imitation with some original features, they then developed into established forms within the body of Turkish literature. In this sense the *Belāgat-i 'Osmāniye* can be regarded as a work that goes beyond mere servile translation but yet cannot be acknowledged as having adapted itself to its Turkish context. The greater part of the work is no more than translation and rearrangement of familiar materials with lip service to the fact that it was intended as a rhetoric of the Turkish language. Although the very title of the work declares the intention of the author to write a rhetoric of the Turkish language, the fact that throughout the text very few definitions apply particularly to Turkish, would suggest that the author did not feel that the Turkish language required a distinct rhetoric of its own but could manage well with the rhetorical system of the Arabs provided that it was translated into Turkish and with illustrations in that language.

Cevdet Paşa is undoubtedly justified in regarding the rhetorical features of *beyān* as of equal validity to either Turkish or Arabic, simile, metaphor and metonymy being common to all languages. He is not justified, however, in expecting a translation, albeit adapted, of the Arabic text of the *Telhîş* to convey much more meaning than the original Arabic. Indeed, one can only suppose that the Arabic definitions were somewhat obscure both in their original form and in their subsequent translation, and that their authors relied on the illustrations to convey the actual force of the argument.

Cevdet Paşa adopted *in extenso* the classical Islamic expository style employed in the *Telhîş*: definition, explanation, illustration and elucidation of the illustration. The first, step definition, is intended

to be succinct, often to the point of unintelligibility, necessitating the second step, explanation. The illustration was by far the most important step, for it is the means by which the reader can recognise the feature under discussion in a concrete form. The illustration was often of two types: the first, a statement coined by the author which contains the feature under discussion in its simplest form: as in «Zeyd is like a lion» to illustrate the simile; the second, which in the *Telhîs* is invariably culled from poetry, gives validity to the rhetorical feature by attesting to its existence in poetry - and hence in literature. The first type of illustration should not be thought of as in any way being an example of the feature in prose, but rather as a non-poetical statement in which the feature is illustrated in isolation, reduced to its barest essential. The final optional step is the elucidation of the illustration which is provided, not always because the *beyt* or *mîsrâ'* in question contains some inherent difficulty, but often because the author is at a loss to find a categorical illustration which will exemplify the feature in question and that only. The elucidation can therefore be thought of as an attempt to reconcile the illustration to the definition. In fact, in this form of presentation the classical system reverses the order in which the science of rhetoric developed, for it is generally obvious that the definition proceeds from the example rather than the reverse. Those striking features of expression in a literary work which would detain the reader are inspirational in origin, and it was the attempt of the scholastic mentality to reduce these to formal definition that gave birth to rhetoric and consequently to the ambiguities and inadequacies of most of its foundations and definitions. One could react to the effective literary passage in a variety of ways which, taken together would constitute what we today call criticism; it was because the Islamic rhetorician regarded his subject as an appendix to grammar that he felt required to reduce these features to a system.

Cevdet Paşa's major contribution to the understanding of *beyân* lies in the illustrations taken from the *corpus* of Ottoman poetry, which he provides generously, for as has already been suggested it was the illustrations that made the definition intelligible. The Turkish illustrations also serve to attest to the existence of the rhe-

rheoretical feature and hence to give it validity. It is to Cevdet Paşa's credit that he departed from the narrow concept of rhetoric as a function of poetry to the extent of providing a true illustration of a form of *teşbih* as attested in a passage of prose. He often omits illustrative *beyts*, providing only the essential exemplary statement to serve as the example. This economy of style would be entirely laudatory were it not for the suspicion that Cevdet Paşa was at a loss for a *beyt* to illustrate exactly the point in question, a suspicion reinforced by the fact that the section on simile - a relatively easy rhetorical feature to understand - is abundantly illustrated whereas the section on the *mecâz-ı mürsel* has but one *beyt*.

That the definitions in the *Belâgat-i 'Osmanîye* depart little from the Arabic originals would suggest that Cevdet Paşa expended no great effort in attempting to turn the language of the *Telhîs*, which in itself is often difficult, into intelligible Turkish. His attitude would seem to have been that a work with which he himself was so familiar merely required transposition into a Turkish syntactical framework, with the minimum change in vocabulary to meet the needs of the students for whom the book was intended. The difficulty of the original is not so much a matter of Arabic syntax, but lies in the economical use of language which renders complex concepts even more obscure by stripping all statements down to their barest essentials. Because Turkish syntactical structure differs essentially from that of Arabic in its development of the idea, these definitions in the *Belâgat-i 'Osmanîye* become often even more obscure than their counterpart in the *Telhîs*.

The inadequacy of Cevdet's definitions and his servile reliance on his Arabic model can be observed in the following passage, where he attempts to explain the nature of the *mecâz-ı 'aklı*. He begins as usual with the definition:

Mecâz-ı 'aklı, bir fi'li mâ hüve lehine,
ya'nî, 'inde 'l-mütekellim hakkı olan
mülâbesine isnâd itmeyüb de mâ hüve lehîñ
ğayri olan mülâbesine isnâd itmekdir. (p. 125)

based on the following passage from the *Telhîs*:

... ve-hüve isnādü-hü [fi'l] ilā
 mülābesin le-hü gayri mā hüve le-hü
 bi-'te'evvülin. (p. 45)

Cevdet Paşa fails to tell his reader that this «Turkish» definition is borrowed not from the *beyān* section of the *Telhīs*, but from the section on *me'ānī*. As this discussion belongs properly to the latter than the former, the reader can be forgiven for wondering what the terms *isnād* and *fi'l*, which are particular to *me'ānī*, are doing in a discussion which has been transposed to the section on *beyān*. Furthermore he uses the word *mülābes* with neither an indication of its vowelling, nor an explanation of its meaning which would normally be ascertained from its context, which in this case, of course, does not exist.

The determined student would understand the definition to mean: «Intellectual Trope occurs when the verb is not attributed to what is intrinsic to it, that is to say, when it is not attributed to something intimately connected with it, in the opinion of the speaker, but rather to something which is not intimately connected with it.» It is quite clear that this definition needs expansion, so Cevdet Paşa proceeds to explain it:

Fi'le, fā'ili mülābes olduğu gibi, zamān
 ve mekān ve sebebi daḥi mülābes olur. Ve
 bunlarıñ fi'le mülābesede fā'il ile iştirākleri
 mecāz-ı 'aqliniñ 'alāqasıdır; faḫaḫ bunda daḥi
 kar'ine-i māni'e bulunmaḫ şartdır. (p. 126)

Again he follows closely the original Arabic:

Ve-le-hü mülābesātu şittā, yülābisü
 'l-fā'ile ve mef'üle bi-hi, ve-'maşdare
 ve-'z-zamāne ve-'l-mekāne ve-'s-sebebe. (p. 46)

He adds a condition to the original, thus relating the discussion for the first time to *beyān*. The above passage can be understood as meaning: «Just as the subject of the verb is intimately connected to it, so too are its time, place and cause. Their sharing together

with the subject, a common intimate connection with the verb, is the adjunct of the intellectual trope, with the *proviso* that there also exists therein restrictive adjunct.» This statement does little to clarify the definition, indeed it adds to the existing confusion by introducing additional factors which themselves need explanation.

The third step, the illustration, makes the above statements much clearer, by offering for the first time a statement which may be understood in its absolute form, without requiring the reader to refer to context in order for it to convey a meaning. The concrete image presented in the following illustration is the pivotal point of the whole discussion:

Meşelâ, bir mütedeyyin kimse «mevsim-i bahâr
otları inbât eyledi» didükde, mecâz-ı 'aqlî
olur, zîrâ anuñ 'inde otları inbât iden
Bârî Te'alâ Hâzretleridir, faqat vaqtı bahâr
olmağla şanki otları ol mevsim inbât idiyor
gibi taḥayyül iderek «inbât» fi'lîni zamânına
isnâd eyler. Emmâ bu sözi bir Dehrî söylemiş
olsa mecâz olmayub ḥaḳîkat olur. (p. 121)

Even in the example he follows closely the Arabic :

Şümme 'l-isnâdî min-hî ḥaḳîkatîn 'aḳliyetîn
... ke-ḳavli 'l-mü'mîni: «enbeta 'llâhü
'l-baḳle» ve-ḳavli 'l-câhîli: «Enbete 'r-rebî'u
'l-baḳle» ve-min-hî mecâzîn 'aḳliyîn...
ve-ḳavlu-nâ bi-'t-te'evvülî yuḥricü mâ merre
min ḳavli 'l-câhîli. (pp. 44-45)

Cevdet Paşa's simple illustration entirely elucidates the preceding definition and explanation. In fact, his argument, as presented at this stage, could well stand on its own, little expansion being necessary to make this statement completely explanatory and the previous statements redundant.

Cevdet, having defined *mecâz-ı 'aqlî*, at least to his own satisfaction, now proceeds to exhaust all the possibilities which this trope encompasses :

Mecâz-ı 'aqlîniñ yâ iki tarafı, haqîkat, veyâ ikisi de mecâz-ı luğavî; yâ-hod biri haqîkat, diğeri mecâz-ı luğavî olur. [1] Nitekim mişâl-i mezkûrda iki tarafı dañi haqîkatdir. [2] Ve «nev-civânlığı yeri ihyâ eyledi» didigimizde iki tarafı dañi mecâz olur, çünki nev-civânlık insânîñ harâret-i ğarîziyesi ziyâde ve kavî olmağdan 'ibâret oldığı hâlde, burada mecâzen: «kuvve-i nâmiyenüñ izdiyâdı» ma'nâsında müsta'meldir. Haqîkaten: «ihyâ» dañi «hayât vermek» ma'nâsına olub, hiss -ü-hareket-i irâdiyeyi muқтаzâ, ve beden-ü -rûha muhtâc olur, lâkin burada mecâzen «kuvve-i nâmiyeyi bi-'t-tehyic envâ'-ı nebâtât ile yere hüsn-ü-revnağ vermek» ma'nâsında müsta'meldir. [3] Ve «mevsim-i bahâr yere ihyâ itdi» didigimizde müsnedün ileyh tarafı, haqîkat, müsned tarafı mecâz olur. [4] Ve «zamânîñ nev-civânlığı otları inbât eyledi» didigimizde müsnedün ileyh mecâz, müsned haqîkat olur. (pp. 126-127)

The above passage is based on:

Ve-aqsâmü-hü erba'atün: Li-enne tarafey-hi
 [1] immâ haqîkatâni naħve: «enbete 'r-rebî'ü
 'l-bağle ev mecâzâni naħve» aħye 'l-arz şibâbü
 'z-zamânî; ev muhtelifânî naħve [3] «enbete
 'l-bağle şibâbü 'z-zamân, ve [4] aħye 'l-arza
 'r-rebî'ü. (pp. 48-49)

The bare statement of the *Telhîş* is considered to be insufficient and Cevdet Paşa here has recourse to the *Muavvel*¹¹ to elucidate the figurative nature of «şibâbü 'z-zamân» and «aħye 'l-arz»:

11 Properly known as the *Muavvel 'aḡe 't-Telhîş* by Sa'deddin Mes'ud b. 'Ömer et-Teftâzânî. The edition used is Istanbul, 1271/1854.

Fe-inne 'l-murāde bi-iḥyā'i 'l-arzi,
 tehyicü 'l-kuve 'n-nāmiyeti fi-hā ve-iḥdāsü
 nazāreti-hā bi-envā'i 'n-nebāti; ve iyḥyā'u
 fi 'l-ḥaḳīḳati ı'tā'u 'l-ḥayāti ve hiye
 şifatiin taḳtazi 'l-hisse ve-'l-ḥarekete
 'l-irādiyete ve teftikirü ile 'l-bedeni
 ve-'r-rühi ve ke-ze 'l-murādu bi-şibābi
 'z-zamāni, izdiyādü kuvā-he 'n-nāmiyeti ve
 hüve fi 'l-ḥaḳīḳati 'ibāretün 'an kevni
 'l-ḥayvāni fi zamānin, tekünü ḥarāreti-hü
 'l-gariziyetü meşbübeten, ey kaviyeten
 mušta'aleten. (p. 62)

The Arabic of the *Telḥiṣ* is both precise and clear; it notices that there are four possible permutations of the statement consisting of a subject and predicate, here classified as *mecāz-ı 'aḳli*. The context of the *Telḥiṣ* - the chapter is entitled «*Aḥvālu 'l-isnādi 'l-ḥaberiyi*» and definitions are provided for all the terms - indicates that the *tarafān* are the *müsned* (predicate) and the *müsned üleyh* (subject), but Cevdet Paşa, on the other hand, does not identify these *tarafān* until the end of the paragraph. As he has transposed his discussion from the *me'āni* section of the *Telḥiṣ* to the *beyān* section, any reference to *tarafān* will suggest in the mind of the reader the *muşebbeh* and the *muşebbehün bih*, or their corresponding elements in *isti'āre* or *kināye*. The gratuitous expansion of the second permutation of the trope, where Cevdet Paşa has recourse to the *Mutavvel*, no matter how useful it may be in itself, is nevertheless inconsistent with his terse economic style, and therefore confusing.

Having completed the classification of the *mecāz-ı 'aḳli* according to whether its two elements are figurative or real, Cevdet Paşa introduced three examples to illustrate three further points, the exact nature of which will probably elude the reader:

- [1] Ke-zālik, «Ser-dār-i ekrem düşmeni münhezim etdi» didigimizde tarafeyni ḥaḳīḳat oldığı ḥālde, mecāz-ı 'aḳli olur, çünki ḥaḳīḳat-i ḥālde düşmeni münhezim iden, ser-dārın

'askeridir, kendüsi âmir-ü-mudebbirdir.
Fakaç bu fi'le daħl-i 'azîmi olduđundan ol
fi'l, sebebine isnâd kabîlinden olarak aña
isnâd olur.

- [2] «Maħabbetiñiz beni buraya kadar getürdi» ve
«Mülâkatiñiz baña meserret verdi» cümleleri
daħi bu kabîlendendir.
- [3] «Fulân âdam 'ayn-i 'adaletdir» yâ-ħod «Adalet-i
mucessemedir» ve yâ-ħod «'adalet odur» cümleleri
daħi ke-zâlik mecâz-ı 'aklî kabîlendendir, çünki
'adalet, ol âdamın işlediđi işlere maħmül-u
-müsned olur, zâtına ħaml-ü-isnâd olunamaz;
fakaç çok 'adalet eylediđi cihetle, güyâ 'adalet
tecessüm etmiş gibi, taħayyül olunarak aña isnâd
olunur.

Egerçi bu mişllü terkîblerde muzâf maħzûfdır,
ya'nî «ehl-i 'adalet» yâ «şâhib-i 'adalet»
deyü te'vîl olunmaç daħi kabîl ise de, bu
taçdirce maçlub olan mubâlağa fevt olub, 'adi
söz ħükmine girer. (pp. 127-128)

The first example is based on an illustration from the *Telħiş*: «*Hezeme 'l-emîriü 'l-cüinde*» (p. 50), which also illustrates *mecâz-ı 'aklî*. The point made is that the «commander» is made the subject of the sentence rather than «his army» by attribution of the act of «destroying» to him rather than his army, which in logic is the true subject of the action. This is done because the concept of «commanding», on the basis of a causal relationship, is bound closely to the idea of «destroying».

The second example comes from the *Telħiş*: «*Maħabbetü-ke câ'et bi'iley-ke*» (p. 50); «*serret-nî riü'yetü-ke*» (p. 51). In classifying them as of same type as above [... cümleleri daħi bu kabîlendendir], Cevdet Paşa does not specify either «mecâz-ı 'aklî» or «... sebebine isnâd kabîli...» as the referent.

Cevdet expands the argument presented in the previous paragraph, providing an appendix to the section on *Mecâz-ı 'aklî*:

Ber vech-i bālā muzāf ḥazf olunub da, muzāfün ileyh anıñ maqāmına iḳāme olunduğu ḥâlde «mecâz-ı ḥazfî» denilir. Yerine göre bu daḥi bir tarîḳ-i meslûkdur, faḳaṭ mütekellimiñ ğarzına 'â'id bir meslekdir.

Nitekim bir şeyi öğrenmek için «ehl-i ḳaryeden sor» denilecek yerde «ḳaryeden sor» denilse, mecâz-ı ḥazfî olur. Emmâ bir kimse ḥarâb, ve ehâlisi nâ-yâb olan bir ḳaryeniñ önünden geçen iken nuş-u-îḳâz yolunda refîḳine, yâ-ḥod 'ibret-ü-îḳâz yolunda kendü kendüye: «su ḳaryeye sor ki ehâlisi ne oldu» dese mecâz-ı ḥazfîyyey ḥaml olunamaz.

Kezâlik ber vech-i bālā «fulân âdam «adaletdür» denilse mubâlağa ḥuşûli için, mecâz-ı 'aḳliye ḥaml olunmaḳ munâsib olmaz. (p. 128)

This is based on the following passage from the *Telḫîs*:

Ve-ḳad yuṭlaḳu 'l-mecâzî 'alâ kelimetin taġayyere ḥükmü i'râbi-hâ bi-ḥazfî lafzın ... ke-ḳavli-hî Te'âlâ: ve-câ'e rebbe-ke ve-'s'eli 'l-ḳaryete... ey emrû rebbi-ke, ve ehlü 'l-ḳaryeti ... (p. 336)¹²

The *Belâgat-i 'Osmânîye* remains in many ways a very unsatisfactory work. Retaining the format of a rhetorical system which had already proven itself inadequate to the needs of society, it was a defiant rebuttal of the arguments for change advanced by the modernists under the influence of Western literary standards. Although completely inadequate as a Turkish rhetoric, it did, however, have the positive merit of providing an exposition of classical Islamic rhetorical theory. Despite its numerous obscurities, it at least rendered the Arabic examples into Turkish, or even produced original Turkish examples, with the aid of which even the least proficient of

¹² Compare Cevdet Paşa's treatment with the commentary on this passage in the *Muḳavvel* (p. 405).

Arabic scholars could have access to Islamic rhetoric through the medium of Turkish. It need hardly be pointed out, however, that such attainment was hardly what was required by students of modern law in the changing society of late Nineteenth Century Turkey.

The quality of the scholarship is uneven: on the one hand, it manifests flashes of genius such as Cevdet Paşa's rendition of *lā ilāhe illa 'llāh* into Turkish as «yoğdur tapacak çalabdır ancak» (pp. 8-9), while on the other hand it is marred by basic errors when, for instance, he attributes examples to the wrong poets¹³. However, its chief fault lies in his failure to significantly improve and build upon the contributions of two of his predecessors, Ahmed Hamdî's *Belāğat-i Lisān-ı 'Osmānî* and Miḥalici Muştafâ Efendi's *Zübde'tü 'l-Be-yân*¹⁴. The *Belāğat-i 'Osmānîye* mirrors to a large degree the treatment in the *Belāğat-i Lisān-ı 'Osmānî*, a work published at the behest of Cevdet Paşa. That, however, is not to accuse him of plagiarism, for both works follow the argument of the *Telḥîş* so closely that most similarities may be attributed to their common source. Nevertheless certain coincidences cannot be ascribed to this, as for example, the fact that both works illustrate *ğarābet* with the Turkish word «çalab»¹⁵. It is Cevdet Paşa, however, who is credited with the aut-

13 One instance of this is Ḥayālî's *mısrâ'*: «O mähiler ki deryâ içredür deryâyı bilmezler» wrongly attributed to Fuẕûlî (p. 41).

14 For descriptions of these works see C. Ferrard, «The Development of an Ottoman Rhetoric: Part I», *Osmanlı Araştırmaları*, III (1982), 181-186.

15 The text of the *Belāğat-i Lisān-ı 'Osmānî* reads thus :

«Ğarābet isti'mālî gayrî me'nūs ve vaḥşî olan elfāzdır. Meşelâ eski Türkçede Allāh - te'ālā - ḥazretlerine çalab... denilir diye tekkellüm ve inşâda kullanılmak maḥv-ı feşāhtır.» (p. 6)

The text of the *Belāğat-i 'Osmānîye* :

«Ğarābet. Kelimenin vaḥşî olması, ya'nî me'nūsü 'l-isti'māl ve zāhirü 'l-ma'nâ olmamasıdır...
.....
Lā ilāhe illa 'llāh 'ibāre-i şerifesi'nin aşı Türkçesi *Yoğdur tapacak çalabdır ancak* 'ibāresidir. Ve Türkçe çalab lafza-ı celālenin tercemesidir, lākin şimdi lisānımızda müsta'mel degildir.» (pp. 8-9).

horship of the first Ottoman work of rhetoric¹⁶. While there is no doubt that the *Belāğat-i 'Osmānīye* is an improvement over the *Belāğat-i Lisān-ı 'Osmānī*, its superiority to the *Zübdetü'l-Beyān* cannot be argued so strongly. In method and approach as traditional as the rhetorics of Cevdet Paşa and Ahmed Hamdī, this latter work does however restrict itself to *beyān* and consequently offers a treatment which is defensible. This second section of the tripartite formulation of Islamic rhetoric, containing an analysis of figures of speech relevance to all languages, stands well on its own, and to treat it as merely the second of the three Islamic sciences of rhetoric can only be a retrograde step on the road to a Turkish rhetoric.

However the quality of the *Belāğat-i 'Osmānīye* is only a secondary consideration in the evaluation of its impact on the succeeding generation of students. Whatever the defects inherent in the works, it cannot be denied that this book became extremely popular, and the favourable reception that it received must in part be attributed to the eminence of its author. Cevdet Paşa's aim was to supply the uniform system of education, which it was hoped to bring into the Empire, with a text-book which would find the same universal acceptance as had the standard Arabic works of the medrese, which were now losing both relevance and usefulness. Just as the new centralist government of the Tanzimat required a uniform code of Ottoman law, so, too, was it desirable to have a uniform course in rhetoric. In the same way as Cevdet Paşa's *Mecelle* was to relegate the books of *fiqh* and codes of *kānūns* to the libraries and archives, the *Telhīs* was made redundant by his *Belāğat-i 'Osmānīye*. Such an innovation, however, did not pass without comment.

The similarity in the wording of the definition may be attributed to the common source, the *Muḥavvel* :

Ve-'l-ğarābetü : Kevnu 'l-kelimeṭi vaḥşiyeten,
ğayre zāhireṭi 'l-ma'nā ve-lā me'nūsete
'l-isti'māli. (p. 18)

16 See footnote on page 13 of the *Ta'lim-i Edebiyāt* of Ekrem Bey.

*The Criticism And Defence Of The Belāgat-i
Osmaniye*

The *Belāgat-i 'Osmaniye* became the subject of a heated debate among some prominent men of letters and some students at the *Mekteb-i Hukuk*. In 1299 (23 November, 1881/11 November, 1882), the year following its publication, no less than eight works were written in criticism or defence of this school text-book. The controversy confined itself to the preface (pp. 2-6) and the *muqaddime* (pp. 7-40) of the *Belāgat-i 'Osmaniye*, the former section consisting of a statement on the utility and origins of rhetoric, the latter being a discourse on the concepts of *belāgat* and *feṣāhat* after the model of the *Telhis*, for which Turkish illustrations are provided. An essay on logic and epistemology follows this discourse (pp. 28-40).

The debate was opened by 'Abdürrahmān Şüreyyā (d. 1322/1904), a correspondent for the *Ceride-i 'Askeriye*. Born and educated in Baghdad, he moved to Istanbul where he completed his schooling and found employment as a journalist (1871), and later as a teacher at the *Dārü 'l-Fünūn* and the *Dārü 'l-Mu'allimīn*. He wrote several works in Arabic and a few in Turkish, among which the most notable are two contributions to the study of the Turkish language: the *Mizānū 'l-Belāga* (1303/1885), which consists of a complete grammar of Turkish in the classical mold and the *Sefine-i Belāgat* (1305/1887), a commentary on the *Mizān*. As he is credited with a command of French and Kurdish, as well as the *elsine-i şelāse*, we may presume that his mother language was Kurdish, while the fact that he received his early education in Baghdad would suggest that his first literary language was Arabic rather than Ottoman¹⁷. In the course of the literary debate, he was often the victim of gibes at his weak command of Turkish from which he attempted to defend himself, declaring that although he was not Turkish, his «nationalité» was Ottoman, in which fact he took great pride¹⁸. These attacks on his linguistic ability in Turkish are quite groundless, for it is clear that 'Abdürrahmān possessed a very fine prose style in Otto-

17 Mehmed Tahir, *'Osmanlı Müellifleri* (Istanbul, 1334-43/1915-24), II, 339-40.

18 *Tahlil-i Hall*, 41.

man. Although this literary debate afforded him no opportunity to demonstrate this ability, he was able to devote some pages of his *Mizānū 'l-Belāğa* to a general discourse on the development of rhetoric, which serves as a persuasive demonstration of his complete mastery of the language¹⁹.

The debate was opened by 'Abdürrahmān's *Ta'liqāt-i Belāğat-i 'Osmāniye*, in which he offers a critique of the *Belāğat-i 'Osmāniye* in the guise and format of a traditional commentary. The work found its defenders in El-Ḥacc İbrāhīm, a member of the board of directors of *evkāf* and author of the *Temyiz-i Ta'liqāt*, and in an anonymous work entitled the *Hall-i Ta'liqāt*, the authorship of which was attributed to a student at the *Mekteb-i Hukuk*. In fact, the student in question was 'Alī Sedād Bey, Cevdet Paşa's son, who discarded the veil of secrecy in his later contributions to this debate, and openly claimed the work as his own.

These two works were in turn criticised by the author of the *Ta'liqāt*, in a work entitled the *Tahlil-i Hall*, to which 'Alī Sedād replied in the *Redd-i Tahlil*, written in collaboration with two classmates, Mehmed Fā'ik Ef. and Maḥmūd Es'ad Ef. 'Alī Sedād also wrote the *İkmāl-i Temyiz* in order to supplement the *Temyiz-i Ta'liqāt*, while Maḥmūd Es'ad wrote a complementary work, the *İtmām-ı Temyiz*. The last of these eight contributions to this controversy was the *Nāzire-i Ta'liqāt*, attributed to 'Abdürrahmān Şüreyyā. The development of this literary polemic may best be summed up in the following diagram²⁰:

19 *Mizānū 'l-Belāğa*, 2-3.

20 The chronological sequence, together with the day of publication when known, in which these works appeared is as given below:

Belāğat-i 'Osmāniye, Cevdet Paşa, 1881.

Ta'liqāt-i Belāğat-i 'Osmāniye, 'Abdürrahmān Şüreyyā (Pub. between Nov. 23, 1881, and Jan. 26, 1882).

Hall-i Ta'liqāt, Anon. ['Alī Sedād], 27 January, 1882.

Temyiz-i Ta'liqāt, El-Ḥacc İbrāhīm, 1882.

Tahlil-i Hall, 'Abdürrahmān Şüreyyā, 1882.

Redd-i Tahlil, 'Alī Sedād, Maḥmūd Es'ad, Mehmed Fā'ik, 12 March, 1882.

İtmām-ı Temyiz, Maḥmūd Es'ad, 30 March, 1882.

İkmāl-i Temyiz, 'Alī Sedād, 4 April, 1882.

Nāzire-i Ta'liqāt, Anon. [Abdürrahmān Şüreyyā], 1882.

their own language into a particular science, the Arabs showing the greatest zeal in this respect. Arabic, the language of the Koran, became the object of intensive study, which was regarded as a religious duty by Arabic scholars, and was consequently preserved from decay (pp. 2-6). Cevdet Paşa does no more than summarise what was universally accepted among his peers, ideas which neither presented occasion for controversy nor required elucidation or comment. The introduction (*mukaddime*) likewise is conservative in its approach: following closely the model established by the *Telhîs*, he discusses two concepts fundamental to rhetoric, *belâga* and *faşâha*, enumerating the faults incidental to the latter. He provides examples in Turkish to illustrate each of these faults. To this is added a *lâhika*, in which he deals with speech (*kelâm*) as a philosophical concept, and examines some of the rules of logic in reference to it²².

The *Ta'likât* begins its critique of the *Belâgat-i 'Osmaniye* by analysing every element of Cevdet Paşa's first sentence:

«Tavâ'if-i mütemeddine kendi lisânlarının
kavâ'idini cem' ile bir fenn-i maşşûş olarak
tedvin idgelmiştir.» (*Belâgat-i 'Osmaniye*, p. 7)

«Tavâ'if», we are informed, is the plural of «tav'ife», signifying a portion or part of a thing, in its original meaning, a people accustomed to travel, thence signifying a grouping. To this statement he appends a footnote in which he suggests that had the words «mîlel» or «akvâm» been employed in place of «tavâ'if» then the adjective «mütemeddine» would have been more appropriate. «Mütemeddine» belongs to the *tefa'ul* group of derived verb forms, its function being that of an active participle, the primary *maşdar* being «müdün». Although this would mean «settle in a place and make it one's residence», it is no longer used in its basic form. The word «medîne» signifying a large town is derived from this triliteral root, and although lexically it signifies what pertains to a town, «mütemeddin», used figuratively, implies the qualities of one who inhabits a centre of polite usages (*terbiye merkezi*) and «medeniyet» has now acquired the connotation of correct upbringing. The

22 The *mukaddime* begins on p. 7, the *lâhika* on p. 28.

izâfet construction between «*ṭavâ'if*» and «*mütemeddine*» is adjectival, the adjective being singular, the qualified noun, plural; this apparent incongruity being reconcilable as the adjective is both singular and feminine.

«'Lisân'», we are further informed, «is a piece of flesh which serves as the instrument of speech in human beings; the Persian equivalent being 'zebân' and the Turkish 'dil'. Its plural forms are 'elsine', 'elsün' and 'lüsn', and 'lisân', signifying an instrument [of speech], is feminine, and used figuratively (*mecâz-ı mürsel*), it means argument or speech; according to the lexicon, the phrase "That man speaks with the tongue of truth" means 'He is speaking [using] the arguments and speech of truth'. Here 'lisân' is used in its lexical signification.

«'Kavâ'id' is the plural of 'kâ'ide' [rule], which signifies those statements which comprise the generality of its constituent parts; e.g. the statement 'Fâ'il merfû'dur' is a rule established by grammarians, in which the *fâ'il* comprises all its parts and individual instances.»

'Abdürrahmân proceeds to parse «*fenn*» and «*tedvîn*», so that by the middle of page seven of the *Ta'likât*, the reader knows a good deal of the morphology of the opening sentence of the *Belâgat-i 'Osmanîye*. On page eight he takes issue with Cevdet Paşa over the use of the phrase «'ulemâ-yı 'Arabîye»; 'Abdürrahmân prefers «'ulemâ-yı 'Arab» and cites as his authorities Ebû 'Alî Fârisî (d. 987), 'Abdülkâhir el-Cürcânî (d. 1078) and Ebû 'Alî Şelevbînî [or Şelübînî; d. 1247], three grammarians of which the latter is most notable for his meagre literary output, consisting of no more than two commentaries²³. Cevdet's definition of the *'ilm-i şarf* as «*zât-ı kelîmeniñ aḥvâlinden baḥs bir fenn*» is condemned as imprecise, on the grounds that the science of etymology, too, may be thus defined. Failing to recognise that Cevdet's exposition is summary and not intended as a definitive description of the literary sciences, which had already been provided in the *Beyânü 'l-Unvân*, the *Ta'likât* attempts to correct the inadequacy of most of the definitions given

23 For Şelevbînî, see Brocklemann, *Geschichte Der Arabischen Litteratur* (Leiden, 1943-49), G. I, 308; G. II, 379.

in this section. The description of rhetoric as a «science» acts as a stimulus to 'Abdürrahmān, who reacting predictably suggests that «ilm» would be an improvement on «fenn», and then goes on to a gratuitous summary of the epistemological arguments of three philosophical schools, the first represented by Er-Rāzī (d. 935), the second by El-Gazālī (d. 1111) and El-Cüveynī (d. 1085) and the third being subdivided into seven separate views, each of which is attributed to one or other of the ancient scholars. He further dissects each of the definitions in Cevdet's argument, with scarcely a trace of evidence to suggest that he actually understood it, or was even aware of its existence. Ignoring page six of the *Belāgat-i 'Osmāniye*, in which Cevdet presents a classification of the literary sciences, 'Abdürrahmān alights on the word «mükaddime» and wrestles with its various meanings for two and a half pages. This discussion, in its total irrelevancy to the text, must surely mark one of the low points in Tanzimat literary criticism.

Addressing himself to the contents of the *mükaddime*, 'Abdürrahmān once again dismantles the definitions provided, examines each constituent word in minute detail, and then discards it in favour of another. Cevdet Paşa defines *tenāfir-i hurūf* thus:

«Kelimeniñ lisān üzere şikletini ve telaffuzunuñ
 'usretini icāb eden bir keyfiyettir ki hiss-ü
 -zevķ ile bilinir. Mürtefi' ma'nāsında müsteşzir
 ve istatistik kelimeleri ve işsiz ve güçsüz
 lafzları gibi» (p. 8)

Although this description is far from adequate, it is sufficient to allow the reader to identify the linguistic phenomenon through his instinctive reaction to euphony and harmony. This linguistic fault could well have been explained according to the canons of Arabic phonetics: two consecutive consonants sharing the same point of articulation but differing in voice and affrication will require an intervening vowel to facilitate pronunciation. However such analysis would be redundant where most readers, we may presume, were aware of this phenomenon, and instinctively avoided it without necessarily being able to explain it in phonetic terms. Cevdet's choice

of «ışsız» and «güçsüz» as Turkish examples of *tenâfir-i hurûf* are not as persuasive as the Arabic example taken from the *Telhîş*²⁴.

'Abdürrahmân however, resists the temptation to pursue these lines of criticism, preferring instead to dwell on those elements which are irrelevant to Cevdet Paşa's presentation. He devotes three-quarters of a page to pointing out that «müsteşzir» does not mean «mürtefi'», and devotes several lines to arguing that «istatistik» (Fr. *statistique*) should be correctly spelt «statistik»; while he concedes that its orthography has not yet been established in some languages (among which we presume he includes Ottoman); he uses this fact as an argument for including it in the section dealing with *garâbet* rather than *tenâfir*. It is curious that he should wish to dwell on this illustration as he seems to be in ignorance of its meaning, equation it with «mizâniye» (budgeting or balancing of accounts). Although 'Abdürrahmân may have felt uneasy about the inclusion of «ışsız» and «güçsüz» within the category of *tenâfir*, he does not object to them, but rather seems to accept them implicitly when he offers the phrase «ıtsız tuzsuz şanâ'i'» from the text of the *Belâgat-i 'Osmaniye* as a more convincing illustration of this fault²⁵. This attack on Cevdet's style falls short of its mark in three aspects: firstly, while Cevdet objects to a combination of a *çim* or a *şin* with a *sîn*, he may well have considered them quite compatible with *tâ*, or *zâ*; secondly as «şanâ'i'» is *faşih* in itself, one may presume that 'Abdürrahmân disapproved of the construction «tuzsuz şanâ'i'», in which case what is being illustrated is not *tenâfir-i hurûf*, but rather *tenâfir-i kelimât*; finally, the implication that Cevdet Paşa's own style lacks *feşâhat* does not in any way invalidate his argument.

'Abdürrahmân's unbridled zeal in casting doubt on the quality of the scholarship in the *Belâgat-i 'Osmaniye* allows him unwittingly to criticise Cevdet's interpretation of his own poetic composition. The *Menâzırü'l-İnşâ* illustrates *ta'kid* with the following *bejt*²⁶:

24 *Telhîş*, p. 24.

25 *Belâgat-i 'Osmaniye*, 26.

26 For an analysis of the *Menâzırü'l-İnşâ*, see C. Ferrard, «The Development of an Ottoman Rhetoric up to 1882: Part II» *Osmanlı Araştırmaları*, IV, 19-21.

Men ne-mī-āyem ez ān der kūy-ı tū
Tā tūvānem dīd dā'im rūy-ı tū

which Cevdet translates into Turkish as:

Dergeh-i luṭfūne gelmem zīrā
Seni her dem göre-bilmek dilerem (p. 20)

Cevdet, following the *Menāzīrū 'l-İnşā*, interprets this beyt as meaning: «to come to the convent of the beloved presumes absence from him. The [writer's] wish is that he may return from exile and always be there [in the presence of his beloved]. In other words, I will not leave your convent, because I wish to see you always» (p. 15).

This explanation is too far-fetched for 'Abdürrahmān, who, seemingly unaware that this illustrative *beyt* was a translation of a Persian original, attributes its composition to a dervish, no doubt suggested to him by the word «dergeh», which is employed by Cevdet in a purely figurative sense.

The commentary offers several more observations and criticisms and, leaving off at page eighteen of the *Belāğat-i 'Osmānīye*, recommences at page twenty-eight with renewed vigour, 'Abdürrahmān devotes more than nine pages to a critique of the first two pages of the *lahika* (pp. 28-29). The *Ta'likāt* does not offer a consistent treatment of the text, rather it alights only on those passages which offer scope for criticism. Not all of it is groundless however; on several occasions 'Abdürrahmān identifies faults in the *Belāğat-i 'Osmānīye*. Cevdet Paşa's felicitous rendition of the Arabic formula, «*Lā ilāhe illa 'Ulāh*», as «Yokdur tapacak Çalabdır ancak» is criticised by 'Abdürrahmān, who felt that the translation made for bad Turkish and offers the pedantic alternative: «Çalabdan başka tapacak yoktur». While our commentator is hypercritical of Cevdet's definition of *muḥālefet-i kıyās* on several grounds, all of which are tenuous, he does however make one sound observation, but in a footnote, almost as an afterthought: the definition, «*Kıyāsa muḥālefet: kelimeniñ, kavā'id-i 'Osmānīyeye ve ehl-i lisānıñ isti'mālīne muḥālif olmasıdır*», he points out, is tautological²⁷.

27 *Ta'likāt*, 24-25. Cevdet's version, «Yokdur tapacak Çalabdır ancak», is couched in the form generally associated with Turkish proverbs, e.g. «Tañrıdan korğan kıldan korılmaz» or «Taş atar uğur arar».

The *Ta'likāt* can best be characterised as a vehicle for a personal attack on Cevdet Paşa, rather than a constructive review of his work. 'Abdürrahmān Şüreyyā does not seem to represent an ideological viewpoint; the bases of his criticism and the form in which they are couched suggest that the author is venting his personal dislike of Cevdet Paşa rather than reviewing the *Belāgat-i 'Osmāniye* in a constructive way. The commentator's contempt for the Paşa is evident in many passages, and it is obvious even to the most casual reader that the aim of his commentary is to discredit Cevdet's scholarship. However, certain passages, such as the three-page gloss on the word «muḩaddime», do not offer any criticism of Cevdet's treatment, being an extrapolation of the text, totally irrelevant, but in no sense hostile to it. These passages may well have been included in order that the *Ta'likāt* could be presented as a commentary rather than a critique, so that the true purpose of the composition could be disguised, a direct attack on an eminent statesman such as Cevdet Paşa by a correspondent of the *Cerīde-i 'Askerīye* being considered unacceptable.

The basis for 'Abdürrahmān's enmity for Cevdet Paşa is not clear from the text of the *Ta'likāt*, any suggestion will of necessity be speculative. The impression left by the *Ta'likāt* is that its author was a scholar of the old school, educated in a *medrese*, and completely immersed in the trivial arguments fostered by a system of education which could only accommodate itself to changing social values by the introduction of yet a further gloss to the body of commentary on a text written several centuries before. This accords with the fact that he was born and partly educated in Baghdad where, we may presume, he received a good grounding in the traditional sciences, and this may have aroused in him resentment against Cevdet, whom he may have perceived as undermining the status of the Arabic language by translating the Arabic sciences into a Turkish context. Although the official language of government had always been Turkish, the language of higher education was Arabic, this fact alone offering an advantage to scholars in the Arab lands which partly made up for their disadvantage of living at a distance from the centre of the Empire, Istanbul. Cevdet Paşa's plans to replace the medium of instruction with Turkish would have effectively removed this advantage.

Although the *Ta'likāt* required no refutation, the triviality of the points raised in the work serving best to relegate it to the dusty shelves of scholastic pedantry whence Cevdet Paşa was attempting to drag the Ottoman educational system, it did however attract two rebuttals. The first of these, entitled the *Hall-i Ta'likāt* was written by a student of the *Mekteb-i Hukūk*, who otherwise remains anonymous. In a later work entitled the *Redd-i Tahlil*, the identity of the student is revealed as 'Alī Sedād Bey, Cevdet Paşa's son. In the introduction, which is remarkable for its freedom from stylistic artifice normally associated with the *dībāce* to a work, he accuses 'Abdürrahmān of perpetrating many errors, some of which he will attempt to correct, leaving the majority of them to someone more competent than himself in Turkish composition.

The format of the *Hall-i Ta'likāt* is that of a review, 'Alī Sedād takes each offensive passage, quotes it in full, and then subjects 'Abdürrahmān's opinion to critical analysis. The work is uncompromisingly hostile to the *Ta'likāt*, no attempt being made to disguise the author's animosity. In reacting to the trivial nature of the critique presented by the *Ta'likāt*, 'Alī Sedād is led to replying in an equally petty manner. It would, indeed, be too much to expect a student to rise above the mediocrity of his elders and to abandon the time-honoured format of serial commentary on a text, in which every opportunity for an attack on the author is relentlessly pursued to its logical end and often beyond it. Cevdet Paşa's son would have done himself more credit had he merely ignored the *Ta'likāt*, allowing it to condemn itself. It may be assumed therefore that 'Alī Sedād's counter-attack stemmed not only from filial duty, but was a response to a body of opinion current at the time.

The method of presentation of the *Hall-i Ta'likāt* is less like a classical commentary than an undergraduate review, which in fact is precisely what it is. More than half the work consists of quotation from the *Ta'likāt*, 'Alī Sedād's contribution being purely critical. This technique is effective in that it presents the arguments of the *Ta'likāt in toto*, allowing the reader to appreciate their banality. The refutations, which in some cases consist of only a few words, are often restricted to short contradictory sentences. When, for example, the *Ta'likāt* criticises Cevdet Paşa's Turkish style, the

Hall merely observes that «Orasını Türkçe bilenlerden şormalı» (p. 6). The effect of this type of brief response is to dismiss with contempt the contribution of the *Ta'likât*, as for example, when the *Hall* offers the following appreciation of a *beyt*, considered the model of elegance by 'Abdürrahmân: «İşte bu beyt Kürdceyi aındırır» (p. 27). There is no doubt that this insult refers to 'Abdürrahmân's ethnic origin; in a previous comment 'Alî Sedâd questioned 'Abdürrahmân's competence to pronounce judgement on *selâset* thus: «Eş'âr-ı Osmâniyenî selâsetini üdebâ-yi 'Osmâniye añlar, yoħsa Türkçe bilmez bir Kürd añlayamaz» (p. 26). 'Alî Sedâd will however argue his case at some length when he feels it is necessary.

Prefixing the formula «E'üzü bi-'llâh mine 'ş-şeytâni 'r-recim» to the *bismillâh*, 'Alî Sedâd begins his work with a studied insult, and then proceeds to the text of the *Ta'likât*, where he objects to the suggestion that «mîlel-i mütemeddine» or «aķvâm-ı mütemeddine» would have been preferable to Cevdet's «Tavâ'if-i mütemeddine». 'Alî Sedâd maintains that a *millet* (singular of «mîlel») is a social group based on religion, and as every schoolchild knows from his catechism (*'ilm-i hâl*), nation and religion are one and the same. The argument is not well developed, and far from clear. Our law student seems to have erroneously presumed that «mütemeddine» (radicals: M-D-N) is derived from «dîn» (radicals: D-Y-N), and therefore objects to the tautological expression «mîlel-i mütemeddine». «Tavâ'if», he believes, is a commonly used expression in Ottoman, and needs no gloss or explanation, indeed servile dependence on etymological derivations culled from the Arabic lexicon can often lead to errors (pp. 4-5). In other words he is implicitly adopting the position that commonly used Ottoman words have their own validity, based on the usage of the people; to ascribe to them significations based exclusively on their original form in the language from which they have been borrowed will produce nonsense: common usage and the context will always be the surest guide. It is unfortunate that his lapse into grave error on a question of etymology will inevitably arouse in the reader the suspicion that 'Alî Sedâd's mistrust of the Arabic lexicon stems from his weakness in the language rather than his concern for defending the authority of Ottoman usage. Following the gloss on «Tavâ'if Mütemeddine» in

the «*Ta'likāt*, he takes issue with the grammatical analysis of the construction: 'Alī Sedād read it as a *terkīb-i vaşfī* (!) rather than as an *izāfet*, and in either case would have preferred «mütemeddine» to have been written with a «*tā'-ı tavīl*» (*sic!*). It is clear that 'Alī Sedād's views are unacceptable, not only according to the canons of Arabic grammar, but even in the context of Ottoman usage.

Many of the criticisms levelled against the *Ta'likāt* are on questions of Ottoman usage: when 'Abdürrahmān objects to the use of «*diyānet*» in the phrase «*diyānet-i İslāmīye*», presumably preferring «*dīn*», 'Alī Sedād points out that the word, far from being unacceptable, is commonly used and he encourages his readers to continue using it (p. 6). Dealing with the word «*istatistik*», 'Alī Sedād rejects the explanation offered in the *Ta'likāt* on the grounds that the word had been used for several years and there was no longer any need to explain its origins. Ottoman usage required the initial *hemze* to allow it to be more easily pronounced, its original form being irrelevant in the light of popular acceptance in the Ottoman orthography.

However, 'Alī Sedād is unable to divest himself of all the conventions of classical scholarship, and will occasionally have recourse to the authorities, as when he quotes a passage from the *Muṭavvel*, restricting his own comment to: «Buraları görülmüş olsaydı, böyle şübheye düşülmezdi» (p. 28). Far more significant is the way in which he mercilessly exploits the fact that 'Abdürrahmān had failed to recognise that a *beyt* quoted by Cevdet Paşa was a translation from the Persian of the *Menāzirü'l-İnşā*. He subsequently cites the book as an authority, and expresses the opinion that it had not been studied by the commentator (p. 23).

Although the *Hall-i Ta'likāt* consists of little more than a series of ill-prepared arguments, dwelling on trivia and motivated by a passionate desire to discredit a scholar of the old school, it can nevertheless be presented as an inarticulate plea for a fresh approach to the Ottoman language. Our student author is appealing for the abandonment of the accepted principles governing the writing of Ottoman, the time-honoured criteria founded on the didactic classification of the Arabic linguistic sciences, which having been brought to fruition through centuries of scholasticism and subse-

quently fossilised in a body of knowledge, every bit as immutable as the holy scriptures, now held the Ottoman language in the vice of pietist conservatism. Ottoman was for 'Alī Sedād, a dynamic living language, fully entitled to borrow and adapt features from other languages without the necessity of submitting to the constraints of grammar and orthography or usage peculiar to the language of the source. «İstatistik», he argues implicitly, is an Ottoman word borrowed from French and phonetically adapted to suit the Ottoman speaker, the original orthography and pronunciation being irrelevant to all but the pedant.

The *Ta'likāt* attracted a second commentary, the *Temyiz-i Ta'likāt* by el-Ḥācc İbrāhīm (d. 1891), an Arabic scholar who had studied in the Ḥicāz and subsequently moved to Istanbul where he opened the *Dārü 't-Ta'lim*, a private school which aimed at providing an education in the Arabic language and literature in five years²⁸. The *Temyiz*, representing the first of his contributions to the study of the classical languages, was followed by a commentary on the *Belāğat-i 'Osmānīye* (1301/1883); and two translations of Arabic work on grammar, *Nahv Tercemesi* and the *Şarf Tercemesi* (both 1304/1886); and a work on literature the *Edebîyât-ı 'Osmānīye* (1305/1887).

El-Ḥācc İbrāhīm professes to having been shocked by the manner and severity of the criticism offered in the *Ta'likāt*. It is, he maintains, conventional for commentators and super-commentators to present criticism in an acceptable form, the purpose of their work being a sincere desire to establish the truth of the matter (*ḥaḳīkat-i ḥāl*). As the author of the *Ta'likāt* had overstepped the bounds of propriety, El-Ḥācc İbrāhīm felt it incumbent upon himself to correct some of the errors in the work. It is interesting to note that the function of commentary is perceived as that of «establishing the truth» (*ḥaḳīkat-i ḥāl meydāna çıkmaḳ*) and not of understanding, interpreting, or presenting it to the student.

The *Temyiz-i Ta'likāt* defends Cevdet Paşa's contribution to the study of *belāğat* against the unwarranted attacks of 'Abdürrahmān.

28 'Osmānlı Mü'ellifleri, I, 287; O. Ergin, *Türkiye Maarif Tarihi*, III (Istanbul, 1941), 777-781.

However no matter how much he may pretend to be shocked by the hostile tone adopted by the *Ta'likāt*, his own work is not free from the petty insults and gibes which characterise both the *Ta'likāt* and the *Hall*, and the standard of scholarship evinced in it is not worthy of a schoolteacher. As we cannot reasonably accept that the principal motivation for this critique was a sincere desire to further the cause of the study of Turkish rhetoric, we are justified in presuming that El-Ḥacc İbrāhīm is intent on discrediting 'Abdūrrahmān, either for reasons of personal enmity or in the hope that by doing so he may attract the favourable opinion of the great statesman who was author of the *Belāgat-i 'Osmānīye*.

In form, the *Temyiz-i Ta'likāt* resembles very much the *Hall-i Ta'likāt*, and what is more curious, is the fact that many of the ideas, arguments and choice of word and phrase suggests that one of these works is dependent on the other. The criticism levelled at the *Ta'likāt* in many of the passages are based on the same criteria in each of the works, and what is more damning, both works fall into similar errors, as when the *Temyiz* objects to the tautological expression, «milet-i mütemeddine», based on the paradigm that *millet* and *dīn* are one, and the mistaken presumption that «mütemeddine» is derived from the root of «dīn». Internal evidence would tend to suggest that the *Temyiz* plagiarised the *Hall*, of which it is about half the size, and argues only a third of the issues raised in the latter work; of these only five quotations from the *Ta'likāt* are not to be found in the *Hall*. Apart from the textual evidence, there are very good reasons for postulating that the *Hall* appeared prior to the publication of the *Temyiz*. When 'Abdūrrahmān wrote his rebuttal to these two books, he divided it into two sections, the first of which dealt with the *Hall*, and the second with the *Temyiz*. One of 'Alī Sedād's subsequent critical reviews of the *Ta'likāt* is entitled the *İkmāl-i Temyiz*, which is devoted to the part of the *Ta'likāt* which the *Temyiz* omitted to deal with, its very title suggesting that it was intended to supplement the *Temyiz*, which must, therefore, have appeared prior to it, but presumably after the *Hall*.

The author of the *Temyiz* is guilty not only of too literal a dependence on the *Hall*, but also of misrepresenting the work he is reviewing. On one occasion he totally distorts 'Abdūrrahmān's ex-

planation, and then proceeds to attack it, not forgetting to add to it a calculated insult. The *Ta'likāt* analyses «Ṭavā'if-i Mütemeddine» thus:

«Bu taqdırce Ṭavā'if'iñ 'mütemeddine' lafzına izāfesi şıfatıñ mevşüfa izāfesi kabılinden olub, şıfat müfred ve mevşüf cem' olmak ḥasebi-yle şıfat ve mevşüfuñ 'adem-i muṭābakası gibi bir kâ'idesizlik hâtırâ gelirse de her bir cem', cema'at i'tibârı-yle hem müfred ve hem de mü'enneş olduğundan muṭābakat ḥaşıl olmuş olur.» (p. 5)

The *Temyiz*, however, argues:

«Şıfat ve mevşüf cem' olmak ḥasebi-yle şıfat ve mevşüf 'adem-i muṭābakası gibi bir kâ'idesizlik hâtırâ geliyor, demesi daḥi yaqışık almıyor, çünkü bundan evvel şâhib-i Ta'likāt ṭavā'ife şıfat ve mütemeddineye mevşüf demiş idi. Burada ise şıfat müfred ve mevşüf cem'dir diyor ki bundan ṭavā'ifiñ müfred ve mütemeddineniñ cem' olması lâzım geliyor. Subḥāna'llāh, bu ne kadar ğalat ve ne kadar ğafletdir.» (p. 5)

The *Taḥlil-i Hall*, by 'Abdürrahmān Şüreyyā, appeared soon after the publication of the *Temyiz-i Ta'likāt*, and was intended as a refutation of the attacks made on the *Ta'likāt*, by both the *Hall* and the *Temyiz*, and is accordingly divided into two sections. The first of these is no more than a concentrated 'counter-attack on the *Hall*, from which eighty-three passages are quoted and refuted; 'Abdürrahmān concentrates on the task of parrying each of 'Alī Sedād's criticisms, allowing himself no digressions. The triviality of the arguments render the work virtually unreadable to all but the partisans of the debate. The second section of the *Taḥlil* is devoted to answering the criticism presented in the *Temyiz*, most of which are exactly the same as those of the *Hall*, and not surprisingly he goes

over much of the same material covered in the first section. 'Abdürrahmān does, however, restrict himself to answering only fifteen of the criticisms levelled against the *Ta'likāt*, and allows himself more space in which to argue his points. This second section is in essence as trivial in argument as the first, but by confining the debate to a limited number of topics, it is rendered far more readable than the former, which hardly has the dignity of a literary debate.

In order to counter 'Abdürrahmān's *Taḥlīl-i Ḥall*, 'Alī Sedād joined with two of his fellow students from the *Mekteb-i Hukūk*, Maḥmūd Es'ad and Mehmed Fā'ik, in the authorship of a work entitled the *Redd-i Taḥlīl*, which is unredeemed by any intrinsic merit, reducing the arguments to absurdity. Whereas the *Taḥlīl* presents the material in the form of a script with three *dramatis personae*, the *Ta'likāt*, the *Ḥall* and the *cevāb*, the *Redd-i Taḥlīl* adds yet another, so that in some of the eighty-two individual topics of debate the dialogue is developed through the texts of the *Ta'likāt*, the *Ḥall*, the *Taḥlīl* and the *Redd*. Many of the points are not argued but are merely repetitions of previously-stated positions, an economy of language, even to the point of incomprehensibility, being the keynote in this work. The following dialogue (p. 19), although the briefest and therefore an extreme example, can with some justification be considered indicative of the tenor of the whole work:

Hall : İki müzâf ileyhiñ ilḥ [ilā aḥiri-hi]

Taḥlīl : Bu da yañlıştır.

Redd : Niçin?

Not satisfied with having the last word in this debate, Maḥmūd Es'ad and 'Alī Sedād each prepared a further word which was intended to supplement the *Temyiz-i Ta'likāt*. The first of these, the *İtmām-ı Temyiz* by Maḥmūd Es'ad, is devoted to a discussion of three epistemological questions raised in the *Belāgat-i 'Osmāniye* and subjected to criticism in the *Ta'likāt*. The *İkmāl-i Temyiz*, by 'Alī Sedād, was published five days after the *İtmām*, and is in both appearance and content very similar to it. In the *İkmāl* we find western sources cited for the first time in the course of this debate. 'Alī Sedād introduces Descartes' epistemological argument, summed up in

the syllogism, «*cogito ergo sum*», by way of a fresh approach to the classical presentation (pp. 5-8). The rest of the book is devoted to discussing issues raised by four passages in the *Ta'likāt*. This essay concludes with the advice that the reader should refer to the European sciences in order to understand the relationship between rhetoric and logic (p. 24).

The last contribution to the debate, the *Nazīre-i Ta'likāt*, is ostensibly the work of 'Abdūrrahmān Şüreyyā. However the sarcastic tone of the work - it is in fact a parody of the pedantic style which characterised some of these polemics - casts doubt on the authorship of this lithograph. As a contribution to the discussion of the merits of the *Belāgat-i 'Osmānīye*, it is worthless, serving only to illustrate the bitterness that could be engendered by a debate such as this²⁹.

The importance of this polemic lies not in its content, but rather as an illustration of the primitive level to which literary criticism had sunk in the early period of 'Abdülhamīd's reign. The scholarship evinced is at best trivial; but worse, it is faulty, truth and accuracy having fallen victim to vituperation. Although the style and format is that of the classical gloss, these works were mere parodies of commentaries, the real function of which is to view a body of received knowledge, in the light of new experience and perspective. These works, with the sole exception of the *İkmāl-i Tem-yīz*, make no attempt to introduce new ideas from the West, thus retaining the faults of the classical mode of presentation without the redeeming feature of some new idea worth communicating. If this controversy mirrors the intellectual ambiance in which the *Belāgat-i 'Osmānīye* was written, - and there is no reason to assume that it did not - then we can only liken Cevdet Paşa's contribution to that of the sower casting his seed on stony ground.

It would seem that for many of the «*üdebā*», the sole criterion for critical appraisal was whether the statement was true or not.

29 This work was described by a contemporary thus : «Heyhāt, bunlar [the previous works in the controversy] kâfi degilmiş de bir başka eğlence daha lâzım imiş. O da eñ şofira kimiñ tarafından neşr olunduğu bilinmiyen tezyif-nā-medir ki: ser-ā-pā eğlenceden 'ibāret olub muhteviyātından bir netice-i edebiye çıkarılamaz.» (Cāzım, *Belāgat* [Istanbul, 1304/1886], p. 10).

Furthermore a partial truth or proximity towards it, seems as unsatisfactory to the commentator as complete falsehood, nothing less than the complete and absolute truth will do. At no point in the debate, is the question raised as to whether the *Belāğat-i 'Osmānīye* is successful in its goal of providing a suitable text-book for students. This fault is common to much of classical Arabic scholarship, the same criteria of criticism being employed for all written works, whether they be addressed to the schoolboy, the student or the scholar. Even the defenders of the work fail to make the point that the *Belāğat-i 'Osmānīye* succeeds in its goal of providing law students with a text-book for the study of the Ottoman language, and as such, filled a serious gap in the new syllabus. They, too, are totally committed to the quest for the absolute truth of the statement rather than the utility of the work. Nowhere do these literary critics attempt to balance the deficiencies of the work against its merits.

The introductions to some of these works which have been discussed allow us to form some idea of the society for which the *Belāğat-i 'Osmānīye* was written. The social life of much of the intelligentsia of Istanbul consisted of literary *soirées* where students and teachers discussed the latest works and ideas³⁰. Cevdet Paşa's work must certainly have circulated in these gatherings and would naturally have provoked discussion. Whereas we might have expected a negative reaction to an essentially conservative work to have come from the modernists with their insatiable appetite for western ideas, the opposite was the case: 'Abdürrahmān's objections emanated from his anxiety to preserve the authority of Arabic grammatical principles in the Ottoman language. His opponents, on the other hand, merely took the moderate viewpoint that the Ottoman language had its own integrity, and was free to develop without the constraints imposed by adherence to a system of grammatical rules alien to Turkish morphology and syntax.

Cevdet Paşa's contributions to Ottoman grammar and rhetoric had the effect of endowing the language with an autonomy it had

30 See the introductions to the *Ta'likāt*, the *Ḥall* and the *Temyiz*, where the authors explain that the idea of writing their works came about in the course of literary *soirées*.

previously lacked. Ottoman had hitherto developed as a body of conventions, unrestricted by a universally accepted theory of style. It was a language divorced from scholarship, being the property of the governing class; scholars discussed literary theory only in respect of Arabic. By introducing the study of Ottoman language and rhetoric into the educational system, Cevdet Paşa had broken the monopoly which Arabic had held in the field of literary theory.

It is only in the light of this controversy that we can appreciate the value of the *Belāğat-i 'Osmāniye*. It initiated a debate, in which Cevdet Paşa was implicitly proposing that the Ottoman language was a viable medium of communication, and possessed all the attributes of a language, a morphology, a syntax and a rhetoric, characteristics which many Islamic scholars conceived of as being peculiar to Arabic. Opposing the proposition, lay a body of opinion which believed that the criteria for determining correct Ottoman were to be found in the classical theory of the Arabic linguistic sciences.

One cannot divorce this debate from its historical background: in 1881 'Abdülhamīd had barely consolidated his basis of support in the state, most of the Balkan territories had been lost, and the Arab *vilāyets* had acquired an importance within the Empire previously denied them. As the parliament of 1876 had been prorogued, there was no forum in which the Arab intelligentsia could voice their claim to a greater share in the direction of state policy. It may be argued that one way in which Arab scholars could exert their influence in the cultural reorientation of the Empire was by demanding that the Ottoman language adhere more closely to the rules of Arabic grammar, rather than merely pay lip-service to some of the conventions of the language from which it had so freely borrowed its vocabulary.

It is significant that 'Abdürrahmān Şüreyyā had been educated in an Arab province, his prestige as a scholar undoubtedly depending to some extent on his skill in Arabic, an advantage which he would naturally wish to guard jealously. It is unfortunate that his education conditioned him to argue his case at its most trivial level. While one might have wished that the other participants had raised the tone of the debate, it should be remembered that they too were probably products of the same educational system. In this respect

the debate is of crucial significance to the study of Ottoman rhetoric: it illustrates most vividly the intellectual ambiance in which both the *Belāgat-i 'Osmānīye* and the *Ta'lim-i Edebiyāt* were written. The appallingly low standard of critical awareness current in this period gives to these works a preeminence which intrinsically they do not merit.

It is ironic that an essentially conservative work such as the *Belāgat-i 'Osmānīye* was able to arouse an impassioned debate on language in a way that neither the *Mebāni 'l-İnşā*, the *Ta'lim-i Edebiyāt* nor Nāmīk Kemāl's «Mülāḥazāt» had done³¹. These latter works were influential, but their revolutionary nature deprived them of a wider readership, the concepts discussed therein being so unfamiliar to contemporary society that the reaction to them remained one of cautious silence. Western criteria of literary criticism - indeed the very concept of «a literature» - was alien to most Ottomans with a traditional education. Cevdet's book elicits a response precisely because all the concepts are familiar, it discusses not «literature» but language, a field of study with which the Islamic sciences could cope adequately. By offering a new handbook of rhetoric to his students, Cevdet Paşa provoked a reaction which focused the students' attention on language. Some of 'Alī Sedād's observations could well have been in response to Kemāl's plea for a new and more pragmatic approach to Ottoman language, but they were not: rather they evolved naturally as replies to 'Abdürrahmān's pedantic criticisms. Cevdet Paşa had, in other words unwittingly introduced the Turkish language into the arguments and debates which had previously characterised the discussion of Arabic within the *medreses*, and it was now able to benefit from the highly developed theory of language, up to then applied only to Arabic.

31 See C. Ferrard «The Development of an Ottoman Rhetoric up to 1882», *Osmanlı Araştırmaları*, IV, 23-27.