

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

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*Başkasının Ağzından Sövmek: Faizi'nin Veysi Parodisi*

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

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

## Introduction

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

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

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

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- 1 For the relevant academic studies, see Halil İbrahim Okatan, *Kafzade Faizi - Hayatı Eserleri Sanatı - Tenkitli Divan Metni* (İzmir: Ege Üniversitesi Basımevi, 1995); Nilgün Büyüker, "Kafzade Faizi Leylî vü Mecnûn (Tenkitli Metin-İnceleme)" (master thesis), İstanbul: Marmara University, 2011; E. J. W. Gibb, *A History of Ottoman Poetry*, vol. III, ed. Edward G. Browne (London: Luzac & Co., 1904); Sabahattin Küçük, "Kafzâde Fâizî," *TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi (DİA)*, 2001, XXIV, 162-163.
  - 2 I am preparing a biography of Faizi based on his works, unknown letters, and some other primary sources found in archives in Vienna, İstanbul, Ankara, and Paris.
  - 3 This poem has been partly transcribed (with some inaccuracies) in an unpublished PhD dissertation: Hikmet Feridun Güven, "Klasik Türk Şiirinde Hiciv" (doctoral dissertation), Ankara: Gazi University, 1997, p. 297.
  - 4 İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Devletinin İlmiye Teşkilatı* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 2014); Richard E. Repp, *The Mufti of Istanbul: A Study in the Development of the Ottoman Learned Hierarchy* (New Jersey: Oxford Oriental Institute Monographs, 1986); Abdurrahman Atçıl, *Scholars and Sultans in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016); Murat Çelik, *Osmanlı Medreseleri ve Avrupa Üniversiteleri (1450-1600)* (İstanbul: Küre Yayınları, 2019); Denise Klein, *Die osmanischen Ulema des 17. Jahrhunderts: Eine geschlossene Gesellschaft?* (Berlin: Klaus Schwarz Verlag, 2007); Madeline Zilfi, *The Politics of Piety: The Ottoman Ulema in the Postclassical Age (1600-1800)* (Minneapolis: Bibliotheca Islamica, 1988); Michael Nizri, *Ottoman High Politics and the Ulema Household* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).

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

### A Miscellany of Satire

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

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

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

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

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

[87b] **Hicv-i Kâf-zâde berây-i Veysi ez-zebân-ı ħod**  
[mefâ'ilüm / fe'ilätün / mefâ'ilüm / fe'ilün]

Benim o merd-i neberd-âzmâ-yî tañana-sâz  
kühen süñan-ver-i mâ'nâ-türâz u nuñk-endâz

Yegâne Veysi-yi ħoş-lehce-i sebük-terkib  
edf-i bî-edeb ü şâ'ir-i ġalañ-pervâz

muşannif-i heme-fen kıssa-güy-i herze-süñan  
medña-güy-i muñannen be-ħabbezâ vü tirâz

sütüde mürteşi vü müfteri-yi bî-takrib  
ħucestre kâ'il-i bî-bâk ü zâlim ü ser-bâz

müfettiş-i heme-aħvâl-i ħâ'inân-ı emîn  
muħaşşıl-ı heme-emvâl-i Mişr u Rüm u Ħicâz

**Kâf-zâde's lampon on Veysi, in his [Veysi's] own words<sup>8</sup>**

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

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

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

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

the inspector of all affairs of treacherous collectors,  
the tax-gatherer of all the possessions of Egypt and Rüm<sup>9</sup> and Hejaz,

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

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

the one who discerns the manner of the words in *Fāyik*<sup>10</sup> and *Kāmūs*,<sup>11</sup>  
the counter of blunders and the scraper of the pages of *Gevher-i Râz*<sup>12</sup>

absolutely heedless of the methods of grammar and rhetoric,  
the distinguished ignorant of the procedures of fiqh and *farâiz*,<sup>13</sup>

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

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

the buffoon warbling the melody of *tenedernâ*<sup>14</sup> at every festivity,  
the trickster chanting *yeleley*,<sup>15</sup> the jeering companion.

*kıyâfe-bîn-i 'ibârât-ı Fāyik u Kāmūs*  
*ğalat-şümâr u şaḫâyif-terâş-ı Gevher-i Râz*

*rûsum-ı naḫv ü me'ânide gâfil-i muṭlaḫ*  
*uṣûl-ı fıkḫ u ferâizde câhil-i mümtâz*

*zarîf-i zarṭa-nisâr u ḫarîf-i mühre-feşân*  
*şadîḫ-i ḫaḫkaha-fermâ nedim-i şu'bede-bâz*

*bedî-i bid'a-nümâ vü 'acîb-i ucebe-fezây*  
*vaḫûr-ı 'îrz-güdâz u 'âkûr hemçü gü'râz*

*muḫallid-i tenedernâ-zen-i mecâmi'-i sür*  
*müşâ'bid-i yeley-gü müşâhib-i ṭannâz*

10 *al-Fāyik fî Ğarîbî'l-Hadîs*, al-Zamakhsharî's (d. 1144) work in which he compiled a list of expressions used in hadith. C. H. M. Versteegh, "Al-Zamakhsharî," *EI*<sup>2</sup>, 2002, XI, 432–434.

11 *Al-kāmûş al-Muḫîṭ wa'l-ḫâbûs al-uṣûl al-djâmi' li-mâ dhalaha min al-'arab shama'îṭ*, al-Firuzabadi's (d. 1415) dictionary where he criticized al-Djawharî's (d. 1009?) work, entitled *al-Sihâb*. For the details, see H. Fleisch, "Al-Firuzâbâdi," *EI*<sup>2</sup>, 1991, II, 926–927.

12 A reference to al-Djawharî's famous Arabic dictionary, *Tâdj al-Luġa*, also known as *Sihâb al-Luġa*. Hulûsi Kılıç, "Tâcü'l-Luġa," *TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi (DİA)*, 2010, XXXIX, 356–357.

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

14 Syllables or words used in the warblings of classical Islamic music. Nefi, *Sihâm-ı Kâzâ – Eleştirel Basım*, ed. Furkan Öztürk (İstanbul: DBY Yayınları, 2020), p. 326. 'Abdü'l-kâdir Marâğî's famous composition, *Âmed nesim-i şubḫ-dem* has good examples of both *tenedernâ* and *yeley*.

15 See footnote 14.

Elimde hâme-i verziş-nümâ-yı laklaka-senc  
 'aşâ-yı lahlaha-fersâ tinin-i mâr-nüvâz

Qalem çegâne vü divânım elde dâ'iredir  
 Mecâlis içre benim Kürd-oğlu'na demsâz

Ne Kürd-oğlu cihân bî-nevâlarından heb  
 'aceb midir ger olursam müreccaḥ u mümtâz

Qanı benim gibi kavvâl-i ħurħur-nağme  
 Qanı benim gibi tabbâl u ħançerî-âvâz

Görün görün hele etrâk içinde hiç var mı  
 bu lehçe bu 'azamet bu edâ bu nâz u niyâz

bu ħurfa talât-i mevzün bu reng-i bûkalemün  
 bu baħt u çehre-i ŧeb-gün bu kâmet-i nâ-sâz

[88'] bu ŧekl ü tavr-i muħabbîḥ bu hey'et-i mudħik  
 bu ħiffet-i müteŧâkl bu cümbiŧ-i pür-nâz

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

The pen is a rattle and my *divân* is a tambourine in the hands;  
 It is I who sing together with Kürdoğlu<sup>16</sup> at the gatherings.

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

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

See! See! Is there ever among the Turks<sup>17</sup>  
 such language, such grandness, such style, such coquetry and entreaty,

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

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

<sup>16</sup> I could not identify such an individual.

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

bu imtizâc-ı me'ânî bu vahşet-i elfâz  
bu sîret-i mütenâfir bu tarz-ı turfe-türâz

Benim o fâris-i mizmâr-ı suhre-i taklîd  
ki esb-i tab'ima urdukkça gûşe-i mihmâz

cihân-ı medh ü şenâdan güzâr édüb fî'l-hâl  
fezâ-yı lâ net olur aña 'arsa-i tek ü tâz

Benim o Türk-i hasıb ü müzevvir ü şirîr  
ki niçe şahneye oldum zamân ile gâmmâz

Bu demde mültezim-i cevr ü 'âlim-i zulumem  
ziyâde olmada gitdikçe dîlde hırş ile âz

Belâ-yı tül-i emel kâmetim ham éyledi âh  
gönülden olmadı zâ'il hevâ-yı kır-i dirâz

Benim o pîr-i dü-tâ Şeyh-i Necdî-yi Sâni  
mürîd-i pâk baña münkirân-ı şavm u namâz

'ale'l-huşûş o kâdimî nedim-i bezle-güzâr  
kâdîd-i zinde-likâ şâ'ir-i çe[ğ]âne-türâz

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Benim alife-i Merrih [u] ketud-y Zuh  
ki Sa'd-i Ekberi tdim zemin-i cz u niyz

Kemine cnbi-i reir-i kevkebirden olur  
cinnda zr u zebn rh-i Sa'di-yi rz

Zemin-i sine v gr-i abatımda mekn  
ial-i hayye-i Frk u kreb-i Ehvz

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

Because of the influence of my star's defective motion,  
the soul of Sa'di of Shiraz<sup>22</sup> cried its heart out in the heavens.

In my innermost bosom and in the cavern of my nature are firmly fixed  
the characteristics of Frk's<sup>23</sup> snakes and Ahwaz's<sup>24</sup> scorpions.

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

20 *Zuhl* is Saturn, the planet astrologers called "nak-i ekber," "the biggest deficiency," regarding it as the most inauspicious star. Those under its influence were characterized by foolishness, ignorance, cowardice, lies, malice, reproaching, destructiveness, and (in the word's English sense) saturninity. Pakalın, *Osmanlı Tarihi Deyimleri*, vol. III, 473.

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

22 The author of the well-known *Bstn* and *Glestn*, two classics highly-regarded by the Ottoman literati. Losensky, "Sa'di," <https://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/sa-di-sirazi> (accessed 27.07.2020).

23 al-Frk, the name Arabs used for Istanbul because the Bosphorus bisects (*ufrk*) the city. The reference to snakes reminds one of the column of Marcian which Evliya elebi said protected the city against snakes.

24 A city in Iran, famous for its scorpions.



Benim küşende-i şad bî-günâh-ı dîn ber-âb  
Benim fikende-i âteş be-Çâr-bâğ-ı niyâz

Nice vezîr-i dilîrîn hayâtı hil'atın  
nühûsetim [sic] melekü'l-mevte kıldı pây-endâz

Vezîr-i â'zam-ı sâbık gelüb Beligrad'a  
baña ki ortdu kazâsin[ı] eyledi incâz

Beş on güne komadı anı şöbet-i şümum  
mişâl-i berg-i hazân eyledim 'adem-pervâz

Niçe anın gibi erbâb-ı câh u iğbâle  
neşîd-i şiven ile olmağ oldu nevha-turâz

'Ale'l-huşûş vezîr-i dilîr 'Alî Paşa  
ne resme buldı görüün püte-i ecelde güdâz

I am the swift slaughterer of hundreds of innocent believers.  
I am he who sets the Çâr-bâğ<sup>25</sup> of supplication on fire.

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

The previous Grand Vizier came to Belgrade  
and fulfilled the promise of making me the *kâdî* of the army.<sup>26</sup>

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

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

See particularly in what manner the brave Vizier Ali Pasha<sup>27</sup>  
melted in the crucible of death.

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

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

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

Kime müşâhib olursam budur benim kârim  
Benim belada haķikat benim vefada mecâz

[88<sup>b</sup>]

Dağ neler éde bu řab'-ı řüm-ı merdüm-küş  
véirse ruřat eger çarĥ-ı dün-ı sifle-nevâz

Mıřır'da éyledigim dest-bürd-i ğaddâri  
ĥiřâl-i Ĥâzret-i Ĥaccâc-ı zâlim-i enbâz

Diyâr-ı Rûm'a geçüb étdigim mezâlim ĥod  
Celâliyân-i cihân-sûza oldı reřk-endâz

Nire ki zâtım ola mazhar-ı řütüm-ı ğâzab  
nite ki dâ'im ola bende ĥulk-i kelb ü ğürâz

hezâr nefret ü nefrin-i bî-nihâye-i ĥalk  
ola residue-i Veysi-yi cilt ü suĥre-trâz

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

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

The superiority in perfidy I inflicted in Egypt  
is equal in tyranny to his Highness Ĥaccâc's.<sup>28</sup>

The atrocities I carried out when I went to Rûm  
made the Djelalis<sup>29</sup> themselves, who set the world on fire, envious.

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

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

28 Ĥaccac b. Yûsuf es-Sekafi (b. 661 – d. 714), the Umayyad governor, famous for his cognomen, *zâlim* [cruel]. İrfan Aycan, "Ĥaccâc b. Yûsuf Es-Sekafi," *TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi* (DİA), 1996, XIV, 427-428. Veysi reserved a chapter for him in his famous work, *Ĥ'âb-nâme*, f. 17a.

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

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

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

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

30 “Hakkâ ki, tırâzende-i tarz-ı hâssü'l-hâss-ı nazm u inşâ olup debdebe-i tumturâk-‘ibârât-ı tannânesi çok şâ‘iri belîñletmiş [...]” Riyazi, *Riyazuş-Şuara*, p. 339.

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

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

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

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

This *mecmû‘a*, in fact, includes three poems<sup>39</sup> resembling Veysi's and written

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

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

35 "Loḡmân-ı Şeh-nâme-gûy lişânından hicv-i meşhûrî iştihâr ve nev-zuhûr iken ol eser ile ta'ayyün ü i'tibâr bulmuş idi." Nevizade Atayi, *Hadâ'ik*, p. 1752.

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

37 For the attendants, see Çaldak, "Veysi'nin Hicviyesi," pp. 85-89.

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

39 "Güfte-i Riyâzî ez zebân-ı Remmâl 'Arab" [65a]; "Hicv-i Ḳâf-zâde berây-ı Veysi ez zebân-ı ḥod" [87b]; "Vaşiyye-nâme-i Ṭarzî ez zebân-ı Ṭiflî" [94a]. Bekir Çınar has studied Tarzî's *Vaşiyye-nâme*, however, he does not mention any such poetic vogue in Ottoman literature, see Bekir Çınar, "Türk Edebiyatında Vasiyet-Nâmeler ve İki Şair (Tifli/Tarzî) Arasında Kalan Bir Vasiyetnâme," *Türk Kültürü İncelemeleri Dergisi*, 9 (2003): 115–40.

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

40 For Riyazi’s life, see Gönül Alpay Tekin, “Riyâdî,” *EP*, 1995, VIII, 548-549.

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

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

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

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

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

### **Faizi puts his lampoon on paper**

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

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

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

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

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

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

47 "The term *mevleviyet* signifies an office held by a Mawla (Molla), an honorific title conferring certain privileges, and was applied in all periods to the highest offices in the learned profession, though the identity of the offices changed with time." Repp, *The Mufti of Istanbul*, p. 31. That Selanik was a *mevleviyet* is implied by a letter of Nergisi: "be-tarîk-i mevleviyet kâr-fermâ-yı kazâ-yı Selânik bûdend, ve in çâker-i sine-sâf-ı hulûs-ittisâf be-hidmet-i niyâbet-i ân ber-güzide-i eşrâf ve hayrül-halef-i eslâf müşerref ü kâm-revâ ve mülâzemet-i sohbet-i ân hazret-i 'âlî-menzilet-i sâmi-menkıbet hoş-dil ü pür safâ bûd, vukû' yâft." Nergisi, "The Esâlibül-Mekâtib (*Münşe'ât*) of Mehmed Nergisi Efendi," ed. J. R. Walsh, *Archivum Ottomanicum*, I (1969), p. 258.

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



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

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

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

49 "Menbâ'u'l-cüd ve'l-kerem ẖâf-zâde Fa'izi Efendi." (*Münşeât Mecmu'ası*, İstanbul Üniversitesi Nadir Eserler Kütüphanesi, T 1526, f. 224a); the letters are on folios 244a-244b, 258b-259a, and 262a, and include congratulations, news of political rivals, etc.

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

51 As Nevzade Atayi puts it, Nasuh Paşa took offence at a reference in Veysi's work: "Beyâza çıkan bir cüz' miqdârı bir Vâkı'a-nâme'si vardır [...] şadr-ı A'zam Naşûh Paşa'ya 'arz eyledükde 'Aşsenü'l-kizbe' laîfesinde itmişlerdür. Ba'dehu hilâl-i hikâyede vezîr-i Musta'sım-ı 'Abbâsî olan İbn 'Alkâmî hıyânetin görüp ta'rîz-i fehmi itmekle der-i ihsânı berkitmişler idi." Nevzade Atayi, *Hadâ'ik*, p. 1758.



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

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

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

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

54 "Ba'zı zurefâ merâtib-i haşşiyâtını bu güne edâ iderlerdi ki 'ilminden şî'ri evlâ, şî'rinden inşâsı a'lâ, inşâsından muşâhabeti râcih, muşâhabetinden esbâb-ı vecâhet ü reşâkat-ı kâmet-iniün rüçhâni vâzih ola." Nevizade Atayi, *Hadâ'ik*, p. 1759.

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

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

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

56 “Bâreka'llâh zihî kudret-i haq celle celâl  
Nedür ol Türk-i müzevvir-sûhan u turfe-mağâl  
Öyle Türkün kaşabu's-sebğ-ı belâgat yêrine  
Kef-i destinde ya ser-deste gerekdür ya kavâl  
Öyle Türkün yaraşur kanda ise başında  
Kise-i defter-i ma'nâ yêrine eski çüvâl [...]” Nefi, *Sihâm-ı Kazâ*, p. 139.

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

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

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

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

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

Ali Paşa's death could be used as a point of reference for dating Faizi's poem, but we have an even clearer hint from the specific books Faizi mentions in ridiculing of Veysi, which include *Fâyık*, *Kâmüs*, and *Gevher-i Râz*. These works were primary literary sources for the 'ilmîyye members of that time, but in 1609 Veysi himself began a translation into Ottoman Turkish titled *Merâce'l-Bahreyn* of al-Fîrûzâbâdî's *al-kāmuş al-Muḥîṭ*,<sup>62</sup> a work that criticized the methods al-Djawhari had used in his dictionary *as-Sıḥāḥ*. However, Veysi died before finishing his translation.<sup>63</sup> As a considerable amount of Ottoman poetry is cloaked in the rid-

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

59 "Dārü'l-cihād-ı Belğîrad'a vâsıl olduklarında serdâr-ı ekrem, 'alem-efrâz-ı 'alem-i 'adem olduḡda." Nevizade Atayi, *Hadâ'ik*, p. 1756.

60 "Toğmasun isterse mihr-i enver ü mâh-ı münîr Dehre besdür şeb-çerâğ-ı 'adl ü inşâf-ı vezîr." Veysi, *Divân-ı Veysî*, Süleymaniye Yazma Eserler Kütüphanesi, Ali Nihat Tarlan Koleksiyonu, 144/7, f. 101a. I resorted to this manuscript, because unfortunately, I could not find the edition of Veysi's *divân* prepared by Zehra Toska in 1985.

61 In Atayi's work, there is a marginal note which corroborates the veracity of Ali Paşa's death and, more interestingly, it seems to have been written by Veysi himself: "Bu fakîr sene 1012 Rebî'ül-evvel'inün on altıncı günü İstanbul'a gelüb Cemâdiye'l-ülâda Siroz kaçâsı müyesser oldu. Sene 1013 Şafer'i ġurresinde Serdâr 'Alî Paşa'yı Şofya'ya istiḡbâle varduğumuz gün ordu-yı hümayün kaçâsı virdiler. Rebî'ül-âḫîr'de Meḡemmed Paşa serdâr olmağla Siroz'dan ve ordu-yı hümayündan ma'zûl olup [...]." Nevizade Atayi, *Hadâ'ik*, p. 1756.

62 The full name: *Al-kāmuş al-Muḥîṭ wa'l-ḡâbûs al-wasîṭ al-djâmi' li-mâ dhahaba min al-'arab şamaṭîṭ*.

63 Şensoy, *Veysi*, pp. 37-38.

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

### **In Lieu of Conclusion...**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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Appendix



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