

## THE SAMÂ' GHAZAL AND ITS USE IN MEVLEVÎ SEMÂHANE (WHIRLING HALL) INSCRIPTIONS

Şermin Barihüda TANRIKORUR | ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4868-243X> | [tanrikorurb@gmail.com](mailto:tanrikorurb@gmail.com)

Dr., /PhD.

Milad SALMANİ | ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4261-8760> | [milad.salmani@mgu.edu.tr](mailto:milad.salmani@mgu.edu.tr)

Dr. Öğr. Üyesi, Ankara Müzik ve Güzel Sanatlar Üniversitesi, Ankara-Türkiye / Assistant Professor, Ankara Music and Fine Arts University, Ankara-Türkiye ROR ID: <https://ror.org/03470g923>

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## ABSTRACT

In the architecture and decoration of mevlevîhanes (dervish lodges of the sufi Mevlevî order) it was noticed that during the 19th century, inscriptions alluding to samâ' (the whirling movements of sufi dervishes) began to appear in the calligraphic decoration of some of their major semâhanes (assembly whirling halls). These inscriptions were used to encircle the centralized space in the middle of the semâhane called semâ meydan, which was designated exclusively to the performance of the Mevlevî Âyîn-i Şerif (the sacred ritualistic whirling semâ ceremony of the Mevlevîs). Although inscriptions in either Turkish or Persian alluding to samâ' were to be found in other architecturally similar 19th century semâ meydan, this study concentrates exclusively on the poetically influential use of the nine Persian couplets popularly attributed to Mawlânâ Jalaluddin Rumi, called the Samâ' Ghazal. The couplets of this ghazal each beginning with the question دانی سماع چه بود "Dānī samā' che bovad" / "Do you know what samâ' is?" were to be found in the calligraphic decoration surrounding the semâ meydan of some of the major mevlevîhanes of Istanbul as well as of northwestern Turkey. This study first examines the meaning and origin of the Samâ' Ghazal, giving arguments why it could not belong to Rumi, by showing that it first entered Mevlevî literature in the 17th century. It then goes on to examine the calligraphy, location and use of the nine couplets of the Samâ' Ghazal, in each of the semâ meydan of the Yenikapı, Kütahya, Gelibolu and Bahariye Mevlevîhanes.

**Keywords:** Mawlânâ Jalaluddin Rumi, Samâ' Ghazal, Semâhane, Yenikapı, Kütahya, Gelibolu, Bahariye, Mevlevîhane.

## ÖZET

### SEMÂ' GAZELİ VE MEVLEVÎ SEMÂHANELERİNDE KULLANIMI

Duymak ve dinlemek anlamına gelen semâ' ayrıca bir dervişin kendi etrafına dönme hareketini de kastetmektedir. Mevlevî tarikatında bu dönme hareketleri belli kurallara bağlanmıştı ve mevlevîhanelerde yapılan bir ritüel haline gelmişti. Mevlevîhanelerin mimarisi ve tezyinatında bakıldığında 19. asırdan itibaren bazı büyük mevlevîhane semâhanelerinde semâ' ya atıfta bulunan kitâbeler görülmeye başlamıştır. Bu kitâbeler, semâhanenin ortasında yer alan ve sadece Mevlevî Âyîn-i Şerif'inin icrasına tahsis edilen semâ meydanı adı verilen merkezî alanı çevrelemek için kullanılıyordu. Bu semâhanelerin tüm bir ara asma katına sahip olup merkezî semâ meydanları ahşap bir korkuluk ve meydan örten ahşap kubbe veya aynalı tonozu taşıyan kolonlarla çevrili olduğu göze çarpar. 19. yüzyıla ait mimari açıdan benzer semâ meydanların kuşak yazılarında da semâ'a atıfta bulunan hem Türkçe hem Farsça kitâbeler bulunmasına rağmen, bu çalışma yalnızca Mevlânâ Celâleddin Rumi'ye atfedilen ve Semâ' Gazeli olarak adlandırılan dokuz Farsça beytin şiirsel açıdan etkili kullanımına odaklanmaktadır. Bu gazelin her biri دانی سماع چه بود / "Semâ' nedir bilir misin?" sorusuyla başlayan beyitleri, İstanbul'un ve kuzeybatı Türkiye'nin bazı büyük mevlevîhanelerinin semâ meydanlarını çevreleyen kaligrafik süslemelerde bulunur. Bu çalışma ilk olarak Semâ' Gazeli'nin anlamını ve kökenini incelemekte, neden Mevlânâ'ya ait olamayacağına dair argümanlar sunmakta ve Mevlevî edebiyatına ilk olarak 17. yüzyılda girdiğini göstermektedir. Akabinde Semâ' Gazeli'nin dokuz beytinin Yenikapı, Kütahya, Gelibolu ve Bahariye Mevlevîhaneleri'nin semâ meydanlarındaki fiziki konumu, hat türü ile hattatı ve nasıl kullanıldığı detaylı incelenmiştir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Mevlânâ Celâleddin Rumi, Semâ' Gazeli, Semâhane, Yenikapı, Kütahya, Gelibolu, Bahariye, Mevlevîhane.

## Introduction

Founded on the teachings of the famous sufi mystic Mawlânâ Jalâluddîn Rumi (1207-1273), the Mevlevî sufi order of dervishes spread from its central mother lodge or *pîr evi*, the Konya Mevlâna Dergâh for over 600 years throughout the geographical regions occupied by the Turks during the Emirates and Ottoman periods. The order spread by establishing their dervish lodges called *mevlevîhanes* throughout the Ottoman Empire until the order's activities became legally prohibited in 1925 after the founding of the Turkish Republic.

The meaning of *samâ'* (سمع) in Arabic is to listen or to hear, or the act of "listening" or "hearing"<sup>1</sup>. *Samâ'* also refers to the whirling movements of sufi dervishes, which in the Mevlevî sufi order were developed into a series of set ritualistic whirling motions in which every initiate was trained. A Mevlevî dervish performing the Mevlevî *samâ'* movements was called a *semâzen*. In each *mevlevîhane* complex, existed an assembly whirling hall called *semâhane*, in which was located a centralized area called the *semâ meydan*, designated solely to the performance of the *Mevlevî Âyîn-i Şerîf* (the sacred, ritualistic whirling *semâ* ceremony of the Mevlevîs). Every week in the *semâ meydan*s of Mevlevî *semâhanes*, *Mevlevî Âyîn-i Şerîfs* used to be performed by *semâzens* supervised by their shaykh and *semâzenbaşı* (*semâ* teacher) accompanied by their *mutrib* (musicians).

During our research of the architecture and inscriptions of Mevlevî *semâhanes* it was noticed that inscriptions alluding to *samâ'* came into popular use in major *âsitâne*<sup>2</sup> Mevlevî *semâ meydan*s during the 19th century. The *semâhanes* in which these verses alluding to *samâ'* were located, coincidentally all had similar architectural features. Built or renovated during the 19th or early 20th centuries, they all had a mezzanine floor surrounding a lower-levelled, centrally located *semâ meydan*, which was enclosed by a wooden railing and columns which both supported a wooden dome or vault over the *semâ meydan* as well as separated it from its surrounding spectator galleries. Couplets written in either Turkish or Persian mentioning *samâ'* were to be found encircling these wooden domes or vaults, either in or under their rims.

Turkish couplets alluding to *samâ'* were to be found around the domes of the Bursa<sup>3</sup> and Cairo<sup>4</sup> *semâhanes*. All 16 lines of the eight couplets of the Turkish *ghazal* surrounding the Bursa *semâhane* dome built in 1820, ended with the *radif* (refrain) "eyler *semâ'*" (Pinar, 1941, 31); whereas six lines of one of the Turkish *ghazals* written in 1865 on the cartouches encircling the Cairo *semâhane* dome, ended with the *radif* "*semâ'-ı Mevlevî*" (Tanrıkorur, 2004, 29/588; Canova, 2006, 84). However, in the 19th and early 20th centuries there were particularly nine poetically influential Persian couplets, popularly known among Turks as the *Semâ' Gazeli*, which were used in the inscriptions encircling the *semâhanes* of four major *âsitânes* of Istanbul, Kütahya and Gelibolu. Each of the nine couplets of this *Samâ' Ghazal* attributed to Rumi, began with the question *دانی سماع چه بود "Dānī samā' che bovad"* / "Do you know what *samâ'* is?" Its couplets were utilized in different combinations and calligraphic compositions to encircle the domes or vault covering the *semâ meydan*s of these *semâhanes*.

In this study first the meaning of the nine couplets of the Persian *Samâ' Ghazal* will be explained. Then its origin will be discussed, giving reasons why it could not possibly belong to Rumi by showing that it first entered Mevlevî literature in the 17th century. The study will then continue by examining the manner in which the *Samâ' Ghazal* was used in each of the inscriptions encircling the *semâ meydan*s of the Yenikapı, Kütahya, Gelibolu and Bahariye Mevlevîhanes by examining their location, calligrapher and calligraphy.

<sup>1</sup> It derives from *سمع* / *sem'* 1. to hear, hearing; 2. to listen, listening (Ceyhan, 2009).

<sup>2</sup> An *âsitâne* was a *mevlevîhane* which possessed both the architectural section called *matbah-ı şerîf*, where Mevlevî initiates underwent their 1001 day spiritual training (*çile*), as well the teaching staff of Mevlevî dedes to supervise these initiates through their *çiles*.

<sup>3</sup> On May 5 1939, Zeki Pinar managed to copy the 8 couplets of the Turkish *ghazal* beginning with "Destûr Yâ Hazreti Mevlânâ, Sâkî-i gülruh ki ser-germ-i şarâb eyler *semâ'*", which was written around the rim of the dome covering the Bursa *semâ meydan* before the deteriorating *semâhane* was white-washed (Pinar, 1941, 31). Unfortunately in the 2023 reconstruction of the Bursa *semâhane* instead of writing its authentic *ghazal*, the 9 popular Persian couplets of the *Samâ' Ghazal* were written on the rim of the dome covering the new *semâ meydan*.

<sup>4</sup> There are 12 couplets belonging to two different Turkish *ghazals* written on the 24 cartouches surrounding the rim of the dome covering the Cairo *semâ meydan* that were written in *nasta'liq* script in 1282 (M. 1865) by the calligrapher Muhammed Kâsım Tabrîzî (Canova, 2006, 84-85; Tanrıkorur, 2004, 29/588).

## 1. The Meaning and Origin of the *Samâ' Ghazal*

Transliteration <sup>5</sup>	Couplets of the Persian <i>Samâ' Ghazal</i>
1 Dānī samā' che bovad sovt-e balā <sup>6</sup> shanīdan Az khīsh-tan borīdan bā vaṣl-e ū rasīdan	دانی سماع چه بود صوت بلی شنیدن از خویشتن بریدن با وصل او رسیدن
2 Dānī samā' che bovad ahvāl-e dūst dīdan Az parda-hā-ye lāhūt asrār-e Ḥaḡq shanīdan	دانی سماع چه بود احوال دوست دیدن از پردهای لاهوت اسرار حق شنیدن
3 Dānī samā' che bovad bī-khod shodan ze-hastī Andar fanā-ye moṭṭlaq zovq-e baqā chashīdan	دانی سماع چه بود بی خود شدن ز هستی اندر فنای مطلق ذوق بقا چشیدن
4 Dānī samā' che bovad dar-pīsh-e zarb-e 'eshqash Sar-rā cho gūy kardan bī-pā vo sar davīdan	دانی سماع چه بود در پیش ضرب عشقش سر را چو گوی کردن بی پا و سر دويدن
5 Dānī samā' che bovad bā nafs ḥarb kardan Chon morḡ-e nīm-besmel dar-khāk o khūn ṭapīdan	دانی سماع چه بود با نفس حرب کردن چون مرغ نیم بسمل در خاک و خون طپیدن
6 Dānī samā' che bovad dard o davā-ye Ya'qūb Bū-ye veṣāl-e Yūsuf az-pīrohan shamīden	دانی سماع چه بود درد و دواى يعقوب بوی وصال يوسف از پيرهن شمیدن
7 Dānī samā' che bovad hem-chon 'aşā-ye Mūsā Ān seḥrhā-ye Fer'ovn har dam-be-dam kashīdan	دانی سماع چه بود همچون عصای موسی آن سحرهای فرعون هر دم بدم کشیدن
8 Dānī samā' che bovad sırrī zi li ma'Allah <sup>7</sup> Āncā melek negūnced bī-vāsīṭa rasīden	دانی سماع چه بود سری ز لی مع الله آنجا ملک ننگنجد بی واسطه رسیدن
9 Dānī samā' che bovad mānand-e Shams-e Tabrīz Chashmān-e del goshūdan anvār-e qods dīdan	دانی سماع چه بود مانند شمس تبریز چشمان دل گشودن انوار قدس دیدن

Table 1. Nine Couplets of the Persian *Samâ' Ghazal* with their transliteration.

### 1.1. The Meaning of the *Samâ' Ghazal*

The nine Persians couplets of the *Samâ' Ghazal* are as shown in Table 1.

Their meaning can be expressed in English<sup>8</sup> as follows:

1. Do you know what *samâ'* is? It is to hear the sounds of souls replying "Yes<sup>9</sup>, (You are my Lord" to Allah's question "Am I not your Lord?"); it is to pass beyond one's self to meet your Lord.
2. Do you know what *samâ'* is? It is to see the states of your Friend, to hear Truth's secrets from beyond the curtains of the unseen universe!
3. Do you know what *samâ'* is? It is to pass beyond your own presence; to pathetically be in absolute nothingness to be able to taste the continuous Presence!
4. Do you know what *samâ'* is? It is to make your head like a ball in front of your Friend's heartbeats of Divine Love; to run towards the Friend without head or feet!

<sup>5</sup> The transliteration system used here is that which is used in the Cambridge University (IJMES transliteration system). See <https://www.cambridge.org/core/services/aop-file-manager/file/57d83390f6ea5a022234b400/transchart.pdf> (Accessed August 2024).

<sup>6</sup> بلی / "balā" / "yes", refers to the 7th Qur'anic Surah al-A'râf, verse 172, when Allah made Adam's offspring testify as to themselves (saying): *أَلَسْتُ بِرَبِّكُمْ* / "alastu bi-rabbikum?" / "Am I not your Lord?" / *قَالُوا بَلَىٰ شَهِدْنَا* / "Qālū balā, shahidnā" / "They said: Yes! We testify".

<sup>7</sup> As mentioned in the holy hadith referred to in the Persian couplet by the words *لی مع الله* / "li ma'Allah". Its full origin is *لِي مَعِ اللَّهُ وَقْتُ لَا يَسْعُنِي فِيهِ مَلَكٌ* / "lī ma'Allah" waqtun lā yasi'unī fihi malakun muqarrabun wa lā nabīyun mursalun" i.e. "There is a special time which I have with Allah, that not even an angel close to Allah nor a prophet can intervene between us!"

<sup>8</sup> For various Turkish translations of the *Samâ' Ghazal* refer to Şefik Can's translation (Can, 2000, 2/377), Ali Alparslan's translation (Özcan, 2015) and Hamit Arbaş's translation (Altuğ, 2006).

<sup>9</sup> See footnote 6.

5. Do you know what samâ' is? It is to battle with the *nafs al amara* (the lower self), continually struggling like a half-cut bird in dirt and blood!
6. Do you know what samâ' is? It is to understand Hazrati Jacob's troubles and cure, to discern Joseph's scent by smelling his shirt!
7. Do you know what samâ' is? It is to be like Hazrati Moses' rod, swallowing and eliminating Pharaoh's magical spells at every moment.
8. Do you know what samâ' is? Samâ' is a secret, it is without aid to arrive at that special time with Allah, when neither Allah's closest angel nor prophet can come between us<sup>10</sup>.
9. Do you know what samâ' is? Samâ', is to be like Shams of Tabrîz, to open the eyes of the heart, to see the Holy Lights!

These couplets are *tasawwufî* i.e. of Islamic mystical nature in their content and meaning. They express the states and feelings of the sufi mystic or semâzen when he "listens and "hears", especially while performing samâ'. Their use in inscriptions encircling spaces like semâ meydans, where samâ' was being performed would have been very appropriate and it is almost as if they had been written for this purpose. Therefore for this reason it has even been suggested that they may even have been written in the Ottoman period by a Mevlevî *dede*<sup>11</sup>.

## 1.2. The Origin of the Samâ' Ghazal

Although the *Samâ' Ghazal* has been popularly attributed to Rumi, its couplets are not to be found in any of the earliest authoritative collections of Rumi's *Küllîyyât-ı Shâms* or *Divân-ı Kebîr*, like those of Bedüzzaman Fûruzanfer, (1378). According to the Turkish scholar Şefik Can, the *Samâ' Ghazal* first appeared in an Ottoman hand-written *mecmuâ* of Rumi's *Divân-ı Kebîr*, after which time it began to become incorporated into later versions of the *Divân-ı Kebîr*. However, Can questions whether this ghazal belongs to Rumi or not (Can, 2000, 2/337). There appears to be a consensus among several other Turkish scholars<sup>12</sup> that although the concepts in the *Samâ' Ghazal* are in line with Rumi's teachings, the simplicity of their language<sup>13</sup> are not in keeping with his way of expressing them.

To support the thought that this ghazal does not belong to Rumi it would be helpful to examine his ghazals, especially those in which he uses the word samâ'. Mawlânâ uses the word sama' around 80 times in his ghazals in association with words like "music", "raqs (dance)", "wine" and "entertainment". We gain some important hints from the fact that among these words he uses *sama'* together mainly with "music" and various "musical instruments". The word samâ' is used together with musical instruments like "chang", "barbat", "nay", "daf", "tanbur", "rabab", "zurna" and musical terms like "taranah", "awaz", "agani", "bang", "zarb" and "mutrib (musicians)"<sup>14</sup>.

In his ghazal no. 1734, Mawlânâ defines the word samâ' in this manner: "What is samâ'? It is a message from the heart's hidden treasures. The homeless heart finds inner peace from their message." Among all his ghazals, this is the only couplet in which Mawlânâ openly asks, "What is samâ'?" and gives an answer. Rumi also uses the word samâ' to mean "raqs (dance)" or "ritual". In ghazal no. 339 he says "Samâ' is the inner peace of the soul of the alive, come on (if you are alive and not dead) quickly stand up, why are you waiting?" In ghazal no. 858, he expresses that "The sama' gatherings of perfected men can resurrect dead hearts". According to ghazal no. 1832 samâ' is both worldly/physical as well as spiritual. As a matter of fact worldly/physical samâ' is a kind of beginning for spiritual samâ'. This thought supports his idea in his *Mathnawi* that worldly love can be the beginning of spiritual love<sup>15</sup>. In ghazal no. 2495, Mawlânâ also makes a comparison between worldly and spiritual samâ': Our samâ' is 'nazar' (seeing spiritually), while his (those that cannot be one of us) is "stomach" (without sight). O son! Just as a Turk doesn't know the language of an Armenian, he doesn't understand us." He also separates the

<sup>10</sup> See footnote 7.

<sup>11</sup> The title of *dede* was bestowed on a Mevlevî intiate on the completion of his 1001 day spiritual training.

<sup>12</sup> Prof. Adnan Karaismailoğlu, Prof. Emine Yeniterzi, and Assistant Prof. Nuri Şimşekler expressed these views in our communications.

<sup>13</sup> For example the rather crude similes in the fourth couplet of 'making one's head like a ball' and 'like a half-cut bird in dirt and blood' in the fifth couplet.

<sup>14</sup> For example, in ghazal no. 1195, 1197, 1357, 1724, 1827, 1832, 2203, 2833, 2852, 3073. Throughout this study all the ghazal numbers are given as found in Fûruzanfer's publication. (Fûruzanfer, 1378).

<sup>15</sup> See (Rûmî, 2018, 10; Rûmî, 2017, 14).

samâ' of the Lovers of God from that of the unbelievers. In ghazal no. 1069 he says: "In the samâ' of the Lovers of God there is light and glow, whereas in the samâ' of the unbelievers there is no warmth or glow, leave it, let it not be so!"

In Mawlânâ's ghazals the word samâ' is used with various meanings. Of these the first meaning is "to hear" or "to listen", and the other is "ecstasy" and "entertainment." Mawlânâ used the word samâ' with each of these meanings in a ghazal he sent to Shams-i Tabrizi after he had left Konya and gone to Damascus. In ghazal no. 1760 he says: "Without you samâ' is not halal, ecstasy like the devil, has been damned. I did not say even one ghazal in which your name was mentioned, until a sound and sign came from you. Then in a letter to you, in order "to hear", five, six ghazals were written..." (Şemsüddin Muhammed-i Tebrizi, 1391, 25) As can be seen in this ghazal, Rumi uses the word samâ' first to mean the samâ' ritual that dervishes perform, then secondly to mean "to hear" and "to listen".

The rhyming words in the *Samâ' Ghazal* were chosen from infinitives. Therefore by examining Mawlânâ's ghazals ending with rhyming infinitives it can be demonstrated that this poem could not belong to them. Of his 3230 published ghazals<sup>16</sup> only 15 have rhyming infinitives and none of them contain the word samâ'. Also there is no question of similarity among these ghazals and the *Samâ' Ghazal*.

Our investigations to date have shown that Ismail Ankarawî (also known as İsmail Rusuhi Dede) (d. 1041/1631) penned the first historical source in which the *Samâ' Ghazal* appeared. Known for having written the most comprehensive Turkish commentary of the *Mathnawi*, Ankarawî wrote many works about Mawlânâ and *tasawwuf* (Islamic mysticism). The *Minhâcü'l-Fukara* (Minhajo'l-Fuqara) is his most known work about tasawwuf. In this work Rusuhi Dede explains 100 basic terms of tasawwuf. The ninth section of the *Minhâcü'l-Fukara* is devoted to the term samâ' and here Ankarawî, explains this term by giving quotations from Mawlânâ's ghazals and the *Mathnawi*. The first written source where the *Samâ' Ghazal* is mentioned is in this section, where Ankarawî says, "Hazrat-i Pîr's odes are such signs of the divine samâ' which say..." and gives the 1st, 6th and 8th couplets of this ghazal which he attributes to Mawlânâ (Rusuhi-i Ankaravi, 2008, 121). This means that this ghazal attributed to Mawlânâ entered written sources at the beginning of the 17th century and went on to enter other sources and semâhanes in subsequent centuries. The *Samâ' Ghazal* is not the only poem which was attributed to Mawlânâ by Ankarawî (Gündüz, 2022). Rusuhi Dede did not rest at only attributing other poems to Rumi, but he accepted the existence of the *Mathnawi*'s 7th volume to which he wrote a commentary. This commentary was rejected by many other commentary writers of the *Mathnawi*.<sup>17</sup> Even Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı, who had translated Rumi's *Divan* into Turkish, made a commentary and translation of the *Mathnawi* and penned very important works about tasawwuf and Turkish literature, did not question whether or not the *Samâ' Ghazal* belonged to Rumi and attributed it to Mawlânâ (Gölpınarlı, 1931, 138). Also one of the last period's *Mathnawi* commentators, Iranian Karim Zamani, without showing any source for this ghazal, also wrote that it belonged to Mawlânâ (Zamani, 1393, 5/240).

## 2.The Appearance of the *Samâ' Ghazal* in Mevlevî Semâhanes

Since Ankarawî made such an official entry of the *Samâ' Ghazal* into Mevlevî literature in his *Minhâcü'l-Fukara*, it is most likley that this ghazal was probably first written in the Galata Semâhane sometime in the late 16<sup>th</sup>, or 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries when he or one of his followers was *postnişîn* there. However, despite the existence of many engravings, drawings, paintings and written travelogue descriptions of the Galata Semâhane from these periods, unfortunately none of them contain any information about its calligraphic inscriptions.

Fortunately, detailed information does exist about the *Samâ' Ghazal* inscriptions which were written between the early 19<sup>th</sup> to early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries in the semâ meydans of the Yenikapı, Kütahya, Gelibolu and Bahariye semâhanes. However, it must be remembered that all these inscriptions were written with a brush and have been subject to many repairs during the long historical periods of various restorations which these semâhanes underwent before they were closed down in 1925 or finally abandoned or demolished. The inscriptions in the Yenikapı and Bahariye semâhanes were totally destroyed by fire or demolition during the 20<sup>th</sup> century and have been rewritten anew during their 21<sup>st</sup> century reconstructions. Whereas the

<sup>16</sup> The most complete, critical collection of Mawlânâ's ghazals belongs to Bediüzzaman Fûruzanfer. However, according to a lot of scientific research, this publication mentions the presence of some poems not belonging to Mawlânâ and emphasizes the necessity to re-publish Mawlânâ's ghazals (Nayyeri et al., 1393).

<sup>17</sup> One of these rejections was written by Sarı Abdullah Efendi (d. 1071/1660) who had attended Ankarawî's *Mathnawi* commentary gatherings at a young age and later wrote one of the most comprehensive commentaries of the first volume of the *Mathnawi*. See (Salmani, 2020, 382-388).



*Samâ' Ghazal* inscriptions, located in the Gelibolu semâ meydan dome, underwent a series of very poor restorations during the 20th and 21st centuries by non-calligraphers, who ignorantly deformed the letters and language of the original Persian couplets (Altuğ, 2006).

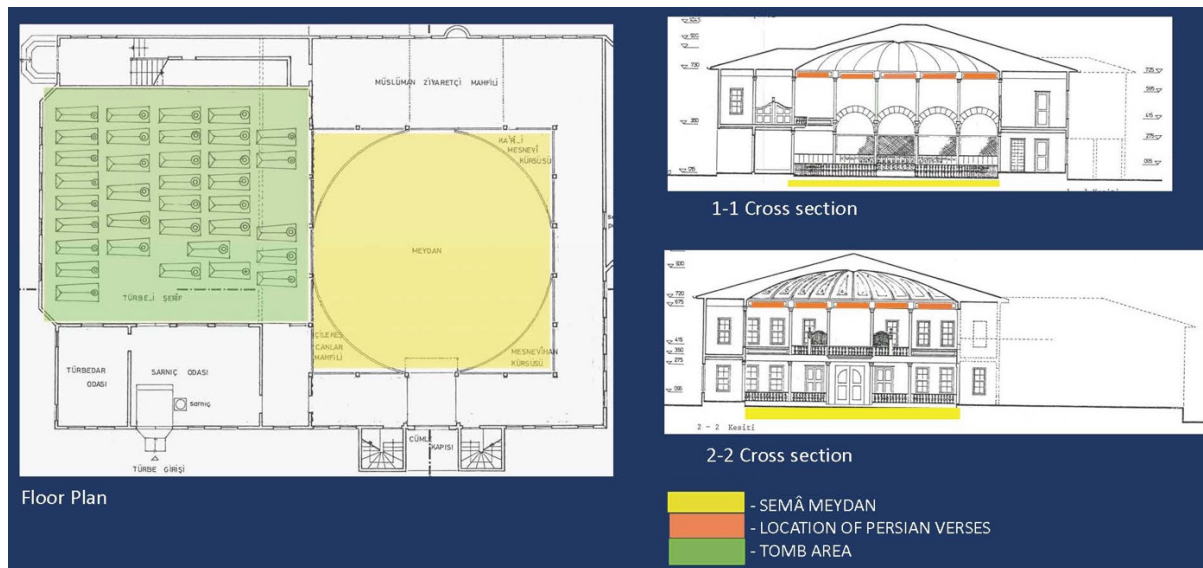
Except for the inscriptions found in the Kütahya Semâhane, most of the calligraphy of the *Samâ' Ghazal* couplets to be examined in this study, for the above reasons, are not authentic in nature. Therefore no attempt will be made to evaluate or discuss their calligraphic quality. Instead this study will concentrate more on the location of the ghazal and the way in which its couplets were used in each of the semâhanes.

## 2.1 The *Samâ' Ghazal* in the Semâhane of the Yenikapı Mevlevîhane

The semâhane of the Yenikapı Mevlevîhane located in the Zeytinburnu region of Istanbul was rebuilt and repaired several times during its history<sup>18</sup>. The particular wooden semâhane in which all nine Persian couplets of the *Samâ' Ghazal* were first used, was built during the period of Sultan Mahmud II after the mevlevîhane repairs of 1816 to 1817. Although no calligrapher's signature exists, *Defter-i Dervişân* states that the row of calligraphy containing the nine Persian couplets was written on "the 17th day of the month of Zilkâde in the year 1233 (M.1816) by the *na'than-ı dergâh*<sup>19</sup> Kerestecizâde Mustafa Nuri Dede", who had also played a major role in the actual construction of the semâhane itself (Kaya - Küçük, 2011, 269). *Defter-i Dervişân* gives detailed information about Kerestecizâde Nuri Dede: He was initiated into the Mevlevî order at Yenikapı Mevlevîhane in 1775, completed his samâ' training in 1795 and his *çile* training in 1798, when he became a 'dede'. Kerestecizâde Nuri Dede must have had a beautiful voice as in 1816, he is shown to have served both as a *na'than*, a muezzin as well as a *türbedâr*<sup>20</sup> at the Yenikapı Mevlevîhane (Kaya - Küçük, 2011, 61,67,151).

This Yenikapı semâhane was restored between 1837 and 1838 and again in 1845 (Tanman, 2015; Tanman, 2015). It was destroyed long after its closure in 1925 by a fire in 1961. The complete Yenikapı Mevlevîhane complex, including its semâhane, was totally reconstructed anew in the 21st century between 2005 and 2007 (Olgun, 2015; Olgun, 2016).

All of the eighteen lines of the *Samâ' Ghazal*, are to be found encircling the square-planned semâ meydan of the Yenikapı Semâhane, just below the rim of its dome and at the top of its three-sided mezzanine floor (Fig. 1a). Each line is written in gold jali nasta'liq script on the dark green background of a 230 x 30 cm. horizontally orientated rectangular cartouche. There are a total of twenty cartouches equally spaced apart in a single row, with five cartouches on each wall of the semâhane (Figs. 1b, 2, 3).



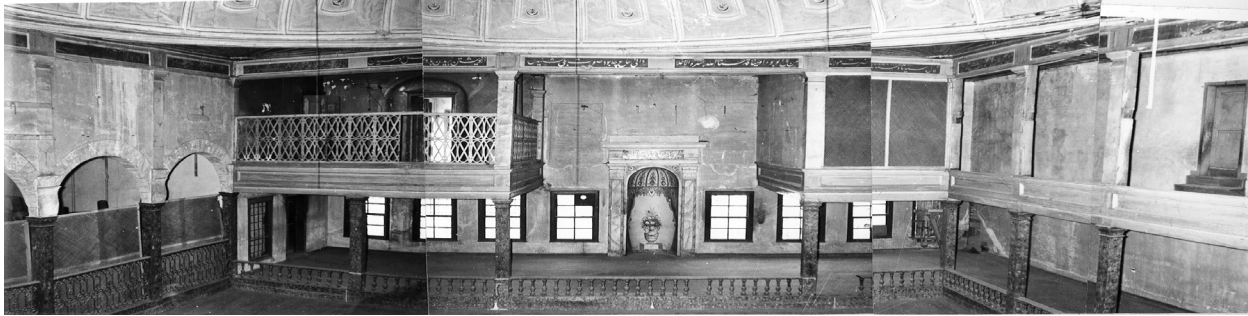
<sup>18</sup> For a detailed history and architecture of the semâhane of the Yenikapı Mevlevîhane refer to M. Baha Tanman, "Mevlevîhanenin Tarihçesi" and "Mevlevîhanenin Konumu, Yerleşim Düzeni ve Mimari Özellikleri" (Tanman, 2015; Tanman, 2015).

<sup>19</sup> *Na'athan-ı dergâh* was the dergâh's singer of the *na'at*, praise of the Prophet, at the beginning of the Mevlevî Âyin-i şerif.

<sup>20</sup> A *türbedâr* served in the *türbe* (tomb section) of the dergâh cleaning and making daily recitations of the Qur'an.

**Fig. 1a.** Plan and cross section of the Yenikapı Semâhane showing the location of the Persian *Samâ' Ghazal* (Prepared by B. Tanrikorur, 2023 using drawings from the Archives of the General Directorate of Waqfs)

On three sides of the semâ meydan, cartouches are to be found on the empty areas found in between the heads of the columns supporting the dome; whereas on the southern mihrab side two cartouches are found in sequence one after each other without a column head in between them because two columns were removed from in front of the mihrab and the sultan's lodge. (Fig.1b)



**Fig. 1b.** The Yenikapı Semâhane in the 1920's before its destruction by fire in 1961 (Encumeni Archives)



**Fig. 2.** The 9 Persian couplets in cartouches below the rim of the dome encircling the semâ meydan after its 2005-2007 reconstruction (Tanrikorur Archives)

The reading of the couplets starts with the cartouches located in the southeast corner above the lattice-fronted women's lodge on the mezzanine floor, moving in an anti-clockwise direction around the semâ meydan. It is immediately noticeable that at the beginning, there are two cartouches on which are written two lines of an introductory couplet in Arabic which precede the 18 cartouches containing the 18 lines of the Persian *Samâ' Ghazal* (fig.3).

This introductory Arabic couplet is as follows: (Fig. 3; Table 2)



**Fig. 3.** The two lines of the Arabic couplet preceding the first line of the *Samâ' Ghazal* in the Yenikapı Semâhane

1st Line of the 1st Couplet of the Persian <i>Samâ' Ghazal</i>	2nd Line of the Arabic Couplet preceding the <i>Samâ' Ghazal</i>	1st Line of the Arabic Couplet preceding the <i>Samâ' Ghazal</i>
دانی سماع چه بود صوت بلی شنیدن	من کل الوجوه اوینا قدسنا الله بسرہ الاغلال	قال سیدنا و سندننا حضرت مولانا
Dānī samā' che bovad sovt-e balā shanīdan	Min kulli'l-wujūhi awlānā qaddasanā'llāhu bi-sirrihi'l' a'lā <sup>21</sup>	Qāla <sup>22</sup> sayyidunā wa sanadunā Ḥaẓrat-i Mawlānā

<sup>21</sup> *awinā* was written instead of *awlānā*. In *a'lā* a dot exists above the ع ayin and a ل lam has been added after علا making it غلال. It is impossible to know how these letters were first originally written in 1816 or in which ensuing restoration they may have become deformed because they were recently re-written during the 2005 reconstruction.

<sup>22</sup> Only one dot instead of two exists above ق qaf thus making it قال *fāla* instead of قال *qāla*.



**Table 2.** The Arabic couplet preceding the first line of the *Samâ' Ghazal* in the Yenikapı Semâhane

The meaning of this introductory Arabic couplet in English is as follows: "Hazrat-i Mawlânâ -May Allah bless him with his high secret- our pioneer and protector from all sides, our lord on whom we depend, says<sup>23</sup>: 'Do you know what samâ' is?'

The deformation of some of the letters (see footnotes 21 and 22) seen in this introductory Arabic couplet makes it difficult to decipher the original text of the couplet. The 2005 calligraphic reconstruction was made by copying the calligraphy seen in the Encumeni archival photograph (Fig.1b) dating from the 1920's. This makes it difficult for researchers to discern in which previous restoration these letters had become deformed after they were first written in 1816.

In this calligraphic presentation, none of the letters on any of the 20 cartouches have been stacked and no decoration has been added. Total dependency has been placed on the large size and quality of the golden colored jali nasta'liq calligraphy to make an impression on the spectator.

Any discussion about the *Samâ' Ghazal* in the Yenikapı Mevlevîhane would be incomplete without mentioning the patterns of the *Samâ' Ghazal* written by the master nasta'liq calligrapher Mehmed (Yazgan) Hulûsî Efendi<sup>24</sup> (1868-1940) which exist in the collection of the Turkish scholar M. Uğur Derman. Derman claims that these patterns were commissioned from Hulûsî Efendi for the Yenikapı semâhane by Sultan Mehmed Reşad V in 1327 (M.1909-1910)<sup>25</sup> (Derman, 1980, 32-54; Derman, 1990, 20). Unfortunately, there is no mention of this fact in any of the major sources like *Defter-i Dervişan*, Ayvansarayî's *Hadîkatü'l-cevâmi'* or Mehmed Ziyâ's *Merâkiz-i Mühimme-i Mevlevîyeden Yenikapı Mevlevîhanesi*. The patterns in the Derman collection (Fig.4) were written in yellow *zırnik*<sup>26</sup> ink and are each 180 cm. in length (Derman, 2002, 28). However, they are too short to be patterns made for the lines of the *Samâ' Ghazal* existing in the Yenikapı semâhane, because the cartouches there are 250 cm. in length. Also the Derman collection of patterns do not contain any patterns for the two lines of the introductory Arabic couplet which precede the lines of the *Samâ' Ghazal* in Yenikapı (Fig.3; Table 2). Together with these facts, it is also important to note that during the difficult economic years of 1909 -1910, Sultan Mehmed Reşad V was known to have been more concerned and pre-occupied with re-building the destroyed *selâmlık* wing of the Yenikapı Mevlevîhane after its major fire of 1906<sup>27</sup> rather than with restoring its semâhane.



**Fig.4.** Patterns of the first two couplets in jalî nasta'liq script of the *Samâ' Ghazal* by Hulûsî Ef. in the Uğur Derman Collection. (Derman, 2002, 28).

<sup>23</sup> The 2 lines of the introductory Arabic couplet are followed by all 18 lines of the *Samâ' Ghazal*.

<sup>24</sup> Hulûsî Efendi was a master calligrapher as well as a Mevlevî initiate of shaykh Ahmed Jalâluddin Dede of the Galata Mevlevîhane. He produced many major works of calligraphy and was the teacher of very important Turkish calligraphers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Serin, 2010, 376; Serin, 2013, 43/356-357).

<sup>25</sup> See also (Serin, 2010, 376) and (Özcan, 2015, 106).

<sup>26</sup> *Zırnik* was a yellow ink used in the 19<sup>th</sup> century to make calligraphic patterns. It was made by mixing sodium and arsenic sulfides with gum Arabic.

<sup>27</sup> Mehmed Ziyâ notes that during the Ramadan Bayram of 1324 (M. 1906) a fire broke out from under the shaykh's library and gives the couplet written by Hikmet Bey dating the fire (Ziya, 1989, 2019-2221).

The subject of calligrapher Hulûsî Efendi will be returned to later in future discussions concerning the Gelibolu and Bahariye *Samâ' Ghazal* inscriptions.

## 2.2 The *Samâ' Ghazal* in the Semâhane of the Kütahya Mevlevîhane

The history of Kütahya Mevlevîhane, which has witnessed the building of several different semâhanes goes back to the time of Rumi's son Sultan Veled, the founder of the Mevlevî sufi order. The particular Kütahya semâhane-tomb building in which the couplets of the *Samâ' Ghazal* are to be found was first built in its present-day form by Sultan Abdulmecid between 1841 and 1842 and rebuilt by Sultan Abdülhamid II between 1886 and 1887 (Tanrıkorur, 2000, 432). The semâhane section of the semâhane-tomb building has a stone front facade with side walls which were constructed using a *bağdadî* type technique in which their wooden frames were filled-in with mud bricks and then covered with a special mixture of dry grass and plaster. Although it has undergone several important restorations, this building has never been demolished or reconstructed anew as in the case of the Yenikapı and Bahariye semâhanes.

All the calligraphic inscriptions in the Kütahya semâhane<sup>28</sup> were written by the known calligrapher Khalil Mâhir, Kütahya Tekfûrdağızâde, (i.e. the son of Kütahya Tekfûrdağı). Although Khalil Mâhir also wrote inscriptions in Kütahya's Grand Mosque and Lala Huseyin Paşa Mosque (Güler, 2021), not much is known about him. His existing signed works show that he wrote in the thuluth, nasta'liq and kûfîc scripts at the end of the 19th century. In the Kütahya semâhane, his signature is to be found just above the women's gallery on the mezzanine floor, at the end of the Ayat-ul-Kursî (Surah al-Baqarah 2: 255) written in huge jali thuluth script which encircles the rim of the elevated dome covering the semâ meydan (Fig. 5a). His signature also exists below the "Yâ Hazrat-i Argun" calligraphy written on the blue ceramic tiles embedded above the semâhane's main entrance door (Fig. 5b).

In the Kütahya semâhane, only six of the nine couplets of the *Samâ' Ghazal* were used in the calligraphic decoration of its semâ meydan. These couplets are located on wide, horizontal rectangular, yellow-colored areas above the eight Bursa arches joining the eight columns encircling the first floor of its circular semâ meydan (Fig. 6a, 6b). The calligraphy of the couplets are written in black nas'taliq script in two rows of small rectangular cartouches located within the larger rectangular yellow-colored areas (Fig. 6a, 7, 8).

<sup>28</sup> For all the inscriptions in the Kütahya semâhane see (Güler, 2015).



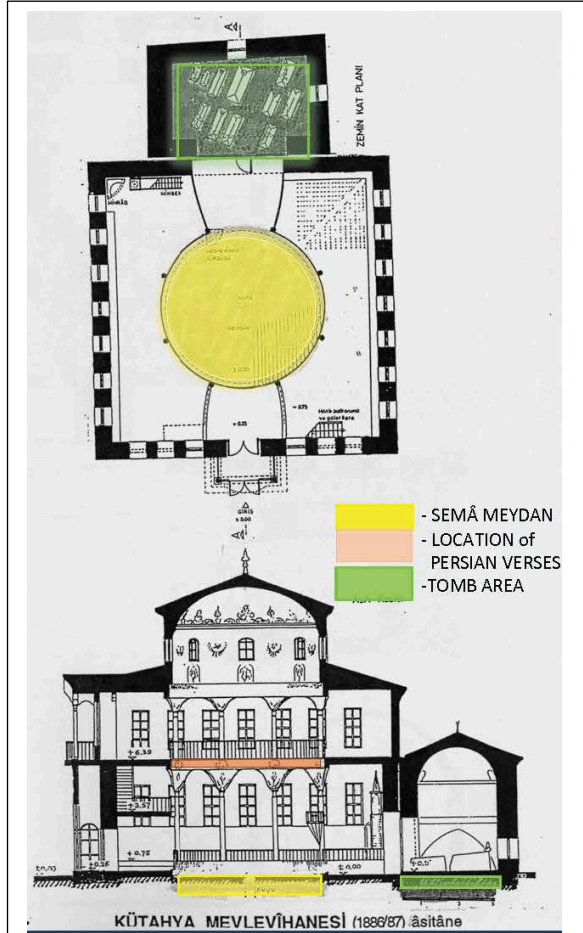
**Fig. 5a.** Calligrapher Khalil Mâhir's signature in the semâhane's dome: "Ketebetu'l-haqir Khalil Mâhir ghufire lehu Kütahya Tekfûrdağızâde 1304" [M.1886-87] (Photo: Haşim Polat, 2009)



**Fig. 5b.** Calligrapher Khalil Mâhir's signature: "Ketebehu el-haqîr Khalil Mâhir ghufire lehu" found under the 'Yâ Hazrat-i Argun'" written on the blue tiles embedded over Kütahya Mevlevîhane's main semâhane entrance (Photo: Haşim Polat)



**Fig. 6a.** Interior of the Kütahya semâhane showing location of the Persian couplets above the Bursa arches surrounding the ground floor of the semâ meydan. (Photo: Haşim Polat)



**Fig. 6b.** Plan and cross section of the Kütahya Semâhane showing location of the *Samâ' Ghazal* couplets. (Drawing: Cinuçen Tanrıkorur)

In the Kütahya semâhane some notable changes have been made to the text of the couplets of the original *Samâ' Ghazal* :

- 1) Two Turkish couplets of a rubai written by the famous Mevlevî poet Shaykh Galib (Yılmaz, 2023, 84) have been added in front of the *Samâ' Ghazal*'s Persian couplets. (Fig. 7; Table 4)
- 2) Here only six of the original nine Persian couplets of the *Samâ' Ghazal* have been used: couplets numbers 2, 4 and 5 were removed, leaving only 6 couplets (numbers 1, 3, 6, 7, 8 and 9) of the *Samâ' Ghazal*. (Table 3)
- 3) A slight change was made at the end of the second line of the first couplet of the original *Samâ' Ghazal* where وصل او رسیدن / 'vaşl-e ū rasīdan' was replaced by وصل حق رسیدن / 'vaşl-e Ḥaq rasīdan'.

With the two introductory Turkish couplets followed by six couplets (numbers 1, 3, 6, 7, 8 and 9) of the *Samâ' Ghazal*, a total of only eight couplets (Table 3) are repeated eight times above the eight arches, in between the eight columns encircling the first floor of the semâ meydan.

Transliteration	The 2 Introductory Turkish Couplets + 6 couplets taken from the <i>Samâ' Ghazal</i>
Ey kâşif-i esrâr-ı Ḥudâ Mevlânâ Sulṭân-ı beḳâ şâh-ı fenâ Mevlânâ <sup>29</sup>	ای کاشف اسرار خدا مولانا سلطان بقا شاه فنا مولانا
'Aşḳ itmededir ḥazretine böyle ḥiṭâb Mevlâ-yı gürûh-ı evliyâ Mevlânâ	عشق ایتمده در حضرتکه بویله خطاب مولای گروه اولیا مولانا
Dânî samâ' che bovad sovt-e balâ shanīdan Az khīştan borīdan bâ vaşl-e Ḥaq rasīdan	دانی سماع چه بود صوت بلی شنیدن از خویشتن بریدن با وصل او رسیدن
Dânî samâ' che bovad bî-khod shodan ze-hastī Andar fanâ-ye moḥḻaq zovq-e baqâ chashīdan	دانی سماع چه بود بیخود شدن ز هستی اندر فنای مطلق ذوق بقا چشیدن
Dânî samâ' che bovad dard o davâ-ye Ya'qūb Bū-ye veşâl-e Yūsuf az-pīrohan shamīden	دانی سماع چه بود درد و دوائ یعقوب بوی وصال یوسف از پیرهن شمیدن
Dânî samâ' che bovad hem-chon 'aşâ-ye Mūsâ Ān seḥrhâ-ye Fer'ovn har dam-be-dam kashīdan	دانی سماع چه بود همچون عصای موسی آن سحرهای فرعون هر دم بدم کشیدن
Dânî samâ' che bovad sırrī zi li ma'Allah Āncâ melek negünced bî-vâsiṭa resīden	دانی سماع چه بود سری ز لی مع الله آنجا ملک ننگجد بی واسطه رسیدن
Dânî samâ' che bovad mânand-e Shams-e Tabrīz Chashmân-e del goshūdan anvâr-e qods dīdan	دانی سماع چه بود مانند شمس تبریز چشمان دل گشودن انوار قدس دیدن

**Table 3.** The 8 Couplets repeated 8 Times around the Interior of the Kütahya Semâ Meydan

<sup>29</sup> The first two Turkish couplets taken from a rubai of Shaykh Gâlib (Yılmaz, 2023, 84) are followed by 6 Persian couplets (the 1st, 3rd, 6th, 7th, 8th and 9th couplets) taken from the original *Samâ' Ghazal*.



Fig. 7. The two Turkish couplets of Shaykh Galib's rubai preceding the first couplet of the Persian *Samâ' Ghazal* in the Kütahya Semâhane (Photo: Haşim Polat)

1st Persian Couplet of the <i>Samâ' Ghazal</i>	2nd Added Turkish Couplet (Shaykh Galib)	1st Added Turkish Couplet (Shaykh Galib)
دانی سماع چه بود صوت بلی شنیدن	عشق ایتمده در حضرتکه بویله خطاب	ای کاشف اسرار خدا مولانا
از خویشتن بریدن با وصل حق رسیدن	مولای گروه اولیا مولانا	سلطان بقا شاه فنا مولانا
Dānī samā' che bovad sovt-e balā shanīdan Az khīsh-tan borīdan bā vaşl-e Ḥaḡ <sup>30</sup> rasīdan	'Aşq itmededir ḥazretine böyle ḥiṭāb Mevlā-yı gürūh-ı evliyā Mevlānā	Ey kāşif-i esrār-ı Ḥudā Mevlānā Sultān-ı beḡā ṣāh-ı fenā Mevlānā
Do you know what samā' is? It is to hear the sounds of souls replying "Yes, You are my Lord" It is to pass beyond one's self to meet your Truth.	Divine Love has never addressed your majesty like this Friend of the community of saints, Mawlānā!	O Mawlānā, who has discovered Allah's secrets Sultan of baqā <sup>31</sup> , shah of fanā <sup>32</sup> , Mawlānā!

Table 4. Shaykh Galib's Turkish Rubai preceding the first couplet of the *Samâ' Ghazal*

The English meaning of the two introductory Turkish couplets of Shaykh Galib's rubai praising Rumi, preceding the *Samâ' Ghazal* is as follows: (Fig. 8; Table 4) "O Mawlānā, who has discovered Allah's secrets, Divine Love has never addressed your majesty like this, Friend of the community of saints, Mawlānā!"

In the compositional layout of the eight couplets around the Kütahya semâ meydan, two lines of each couplet are presented one above each other in eight columns consisting of two rows of a total of 16 rectangular cartouches. The lines of each couplet are written in black nas'taliq calligraphic script on a white background within a rectangle contoured by a red line. Each group of 16 cartouches is located above each of the eight Bursa arches alternating with a large cartouche containing "Yâ Hazrat-i Mawlānā Mohammed Jalāluddin quddise sirrihu" written in jali nasta'liq script found above the head of each of the eight columns (Fig. 8). Since eight couplets in 16 cartouches are repeated eight times above the eight arches of the semâ meydan, there are a total of 32 couplets contained in 112 cartouches (8x16=112) encircling the inner surfaces of Kütahya's semâ meydan (Fig.6a).

<sup>30</sup> In the original *Samâ' Ghazal* where *وصل او رسیدن* / 'vaşl-e ū rasīdan' exists, in Kütahya *وصل حق رسیدن* / 'vaşl-e Ḥaḡ rasīdan' was written.

<sup>31</sup> In Islamic mysticism *bāqā* is the state of existence with Allah, through Allah, in Allah and for Allah i.e. being in "Total Being" and "continual eternal existence" and is a consequence of the state of *fanā*. *Baqā-billāh* means to be in existence with Allah.

<sup>32</sup> In Islamic mysticism *fanā* is the state of having gotten rid of personal feelings and self thus becoming nothing by being lost totally in the Divine Presence.





**Fig. 8.** The group of 16 rectangular cartouches above each of the 8 Bursa arches and the “Yâ Hazrat-i Mawlânâ Mohammed Jalâluddin quddise sirrihu” nas’aliq script in a cartouche above the head of each of the 8 columns

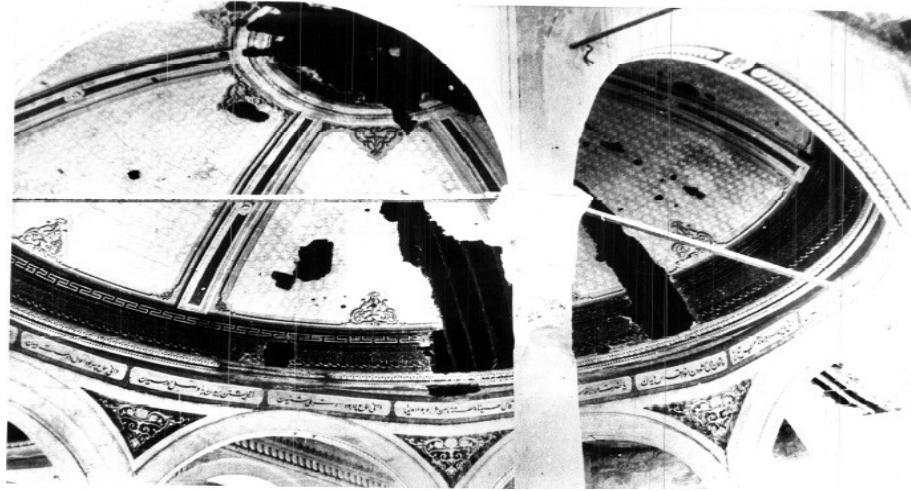
The decorative green leaves of the alternating yellow and white rosebuds in ‘S’ curves above and below the large yellow rectangular area on which the red contour-lined 16 cartouches are positioned add a colorful liveliness to the calligraphic compositional layout (Fig. 8). The stacking of some letters and the seeming non-repetition of the positioning of each line, adds a spontaneity and lively naturalness to the way the nas’aliq script is used in the writing of the lines of each couplet (Figs. 7, 8).

On a detailed examination of the interior of Kütahya’s circular-planned semâ meydan (Fig. 6a, 6b) it can be seen that the composition and positioning of the lines of the *Samâ’ Ghazal* is part of a very complex calligraphic scheme of decoration starting from the center of the dome where the circular composition of the Qur’anic Surah al-Ikhlâs 112:1-4 is located, gradually descending down through several horizontal layers of calligraphy encircling the semâ meydan. From the center of the dome, with its declaration of the Unity of Allah, one moves down to the first horizontal layer of calligraphy consisting of the names of Allah, Mohammed, and the four caliphs found written in between the windows of the drum, then next down to the second horizontal calligraphic layer consisting of the Ayat-ul-Kursî (Surah al-Baqarah 2: 255) written encircling the rim of the dome in gigantic jali thuluth. Then next down to the third horizontal calligraphic layer of the eight names of the sleepers in the cave found in Surah al-Kahf written in jali thuluth script above the heads of the columns on the mezzanine floor. Finally one descends down to the last horizontal layer of the *Samâ’ Ghazal* couplets found above the eight arches surrounding the semâ meydan on the ground floor, with its crowded layers of small-sized nasta’liq calligraphy representing the Multiciplity of creation close to the semâzens performing the semâ ceremony and their spectators (Fig. 6a).

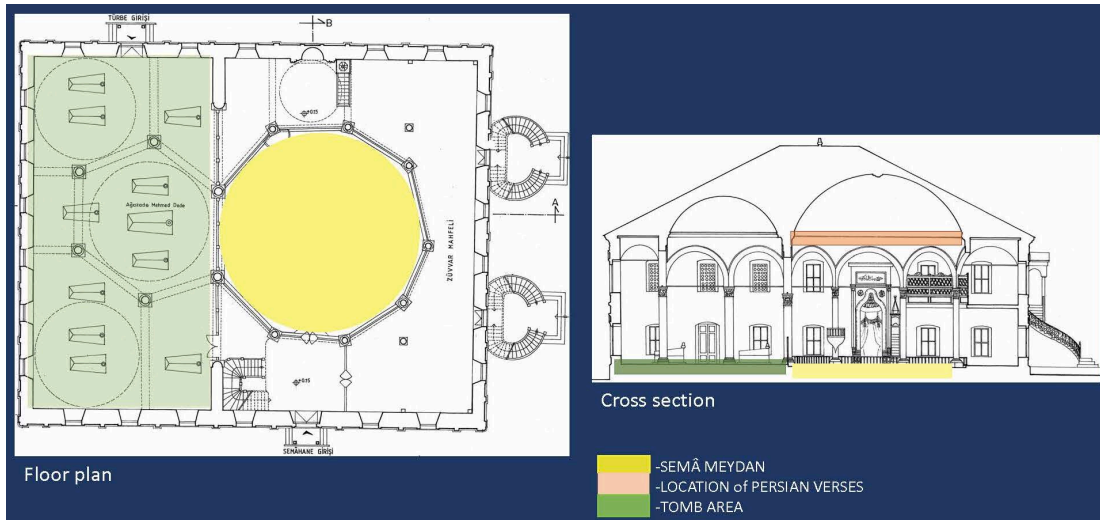
### 2.3. The *Samâ’ Ghazal* in the Semâhane of the Gelibolu Mevlevîhane

The particular stone-walled Gelibolu semâhane-tomb building covered by a wooden tiled hip roof in which the *Samâ’ Ghazal* is to be found, belongs to its last major renovation ordered by Sultan Abdulhamid II between 1899 to 1900 (Tanrıkorur, 2000, 324). After its closure in 1925, Gelibolu Mevlevîhane was taken over by the Turkish army and its semâhane-tomb building was used for storage and defence purposes. In 1982 it was turned over to the General Directorate of Waqfs and underwent a series of restorations which finally ended after the last long restoration between 1994 and 2005 (Yazıcı, 2009, 87). These restorations were of poor quality and the *Samâ’ Ghazal* inscriptions located in the wooden dome over the semâ meydan were unfortunately restored by non-calligraphers who ignorantly deformed many of the letters and some of the language of the original Persian couplets (Altuğ, 2006).

In the Gelibolu semâhane, 20 round-edged rectangular cartouches are tightly spaced apart in a single row, one after each other, to encircle the concave rim of the dome covering the semâ meydan (Figs. 9, 10). Similar to the situation found in the Yenikapı *Samâ’ Ghazal* inscriptions, the Gelibolu *Samâ’ Ghazal* couplets are preceded by two lines of an introductory Arabic couplet praising Hazrati Mawlânâ, which were written on two cartouches preceding the 18 cartouches on which the 18 Persian lines of the *Samâ’ Ghazal* were written. The lines of this introductory Arabic couplet are as follows: (Fig. 11; Table 5)



**Fig.9.** The row of cartouches containing lines of the *Samâ' Ghazal* in the rim of the dome, above the arches and pendentives of the Corinth-headed columns in the Gelibolu Semâhane (Photo: Serap Özler,1967)



**Fig. 10.** Plan and cross section of the Gelibolu Tomb-Semâhane building showing location of the *Samâ' Ghazal* in the rim of the dome over the semâ meydan (Restitution drawing by B. Tanrıkorur)



**Fig. 11.** The 2 lines of the Arabic couplet preceding the *Samâ' Ghazal* in the rim of the dome over the Gelibolu semâ meydan before its 1994-2005 restoration. (Photo: B. Tanrıkorur, 1992)

2nd Line of the Arabic Couplet preceding the <i>Samâ' Ghazal</i>	1st Line of the Arabic Couplet preceding the <i>Samâ' Ghazal</i>
قال سيدنا وسندنا من كل أوجه أولينا	يا حضرت مولانا قدسنا الله بسره الاعلا
Qāla sayyidunā wa sanadunā min kulli'l-wujūhi awlānā	Yā Ḥazrat-i Mawlānā qaddasanā'llāhu bisirrihi'l a'lā

**Table 5.** Arabic couplet preceding the *Samâ' Ghazal* in rim of the dome of Gelibolu's semâ meydan.

The English meaning of this added introductory Arabic couplet is as follows: "O Hazrati Mawlânâ -May Allah bless us with his high secret- Our lord on whom we depend, our pioneer and protector from all sides, says<sup>33</sup>: Do you know what samâ' is?"

The Arabic lines of this Gelibolu introductory couplet contain some Arabic word patterns similar to those used in Yenikapı's introductory couplet, but without their letter deformations. The Gelibolu *Samâ' Ghazal* inscriptions are stylistically unlike those found surrounding the Kütahya semâ meydan and are more similar to those found surrounding the Yenikapı semâ meydan in that their letters, lines and cartouches are not stacked in any special manner and no decoration was added to its calligraphy. (Figs. 9, 11)

The 20 lines encircling Gelibolu's dome rim bear no calligrapher's signature. However, the signature dated H.1317/ M.1899-1900 of the 30-year-old master nasta'liq calligrapher, Hulûsî Efendi<sup>34</sup> (1869-1940) (who was mentioned previously in our discussion about the *Samâ' Ghazal* inscriptions in Yenikapı), is to be found both on the huge marble inscription above the entrance door of Gelibolu's Semâhane as well as below its mihrab inscription (Tanrıkorur, 2000, 331; Altuğ, 2006). Although the nasta'liq script in the Gelibolu dome bears some resemblance to the script used in the semâhane entrance's marble inscription, it is difficult to be sure that Hulûsî Efendi wrote the *Samâ' Ghazal* couplets in Gelibolu's dome because of their letter deformations (Altuğ, 2006). However, it can be said with certainty that the nasta'liq script of the *Samâ' Ghazal* patterns found in the Derman collection (Fig. 4), which were written almost 11 years later, bear no stylistic resemblance, especially in the elongations of some of its letters, to the nasta'liq script found in the Gelibolu inscriptions. (Figs.9, 11)



**Fig. 12.** Semâ ceremony in the newly restored Gelibolu semâ meydan (Tanrıkorur Archives)

#### 2.4 The *Samâ' Ghazal* in the Semâhane of the Bahariye Mevlevîhane

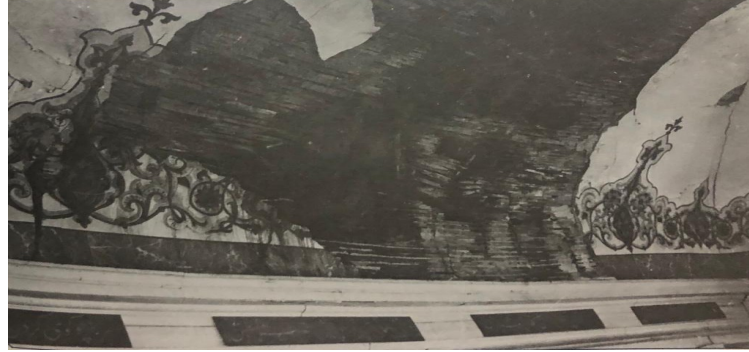
Bahariye Mevlevîhane was built as a continuation of the demolished Beşiktaş Mevlevîhane on the shores of Haliç in Istanbul in 1879. Its semâhane was totally rebuilt during the major repairs ordered by Sultan Mehmed Reşad V in 1910. After

<sup>33</sup> Similar to the Yenikapı Semâhane, this Arabic couplet is followed by all 18 lines of the Persian *Samâ' Ghazal*.

<sup>34</sup> see footnote 24.

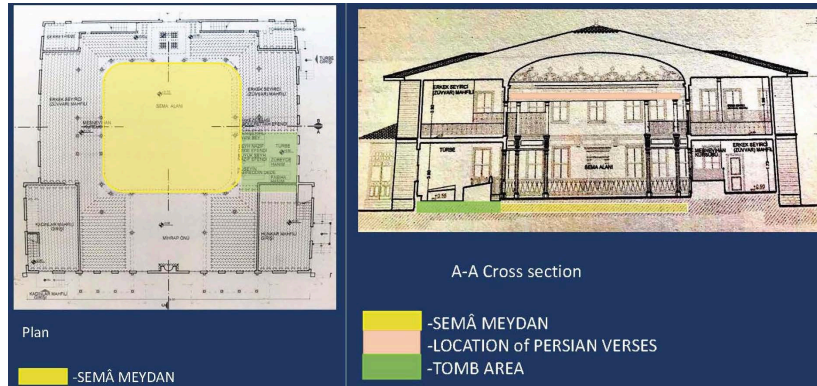


its closure in 1925, the deteriorating mevlEVîhane was abandoned. Then after 1935 it underwent a fire and a series of demolitions after which various factories were built on its site. Then between 2005 and 2011, the Greater Municipality of Istanbul finally reconstructed all of the Bahariye MevlEVîhane's wooden-structured buildings on their original site locations (Tanman, 2013, 76–77).



**Figure 13.** The damaged ceiling of The Bahariye Semâhane in the late 1920's (Encumeni Archives)

The only archival documentation existing of the interior of the original Bahariye semâhane are some photographs located in the Encumeni Archives which show its ruined interior before its demolition. One of these photographs shows a single row of four cartouches just below the concave rim of its ruined mirror-vaulted ceiling (Fig. 13, 14a). Each cartouche contains a line of the *Samâ' Ghazal* written in jali nas'taliq script on a dark colored background. The cartouches are spaced equally apart from each other in a single row, below the mirror-vaulted ceiling, in a manner similar to that of the Yenikapı Semâhane. However, the blurred nature of the archival photograph and the absence of any other visual or written data, makes it impossible to discern how many verses of the '*Samâ' Ghazal* were used or whether these Persian couplets were preceded by any introductory couplets as in the case of the inscriptions of the Yenikapı, Kütahya and Gelibolu Semâhanes.



**Fig. 14a.** Plan and cross section of the 2014 Bahariye Semâhane showing the location of the *Samâ' Ghazal*. (Drawings from *Mevlevî Dünyasında Bahariye*)



**Fig. 14b.** The Semâ ceremony in the reconstructed Bahariye semâ meydan. The gold lines of the *Samâ' Ghazal* exist on dark green cartouches below the mirror-vaulted ceiling (Photo: B.

The last semâhane of the Bahariye MevlEVîhane was totally rebuilt during the major repairs ordered by Sultan Mehmed Reşad V in 1910. This date coincides with the date that Uğur Derman claims that the calligrapher Hulûsi Efendi

was commissioned to write the patterns of the *Samâ' Ghazal* by Sultan Mehmed Reşad V<sup>35</sup> for the Yenikapı semâhane. Hulûsi Efendi's patterns (Fig. 4) were too short in length (180 cm.) for the length of Yenikapı cartouches (250 cm.) and they did not contain any lines of the introductory Arabic couplet which existed at Yenikapı (Fig. 3, Table 2). These conflicting facts in combination with the similarities of the date and the name of the commissioning sultan, brings up the question of the possibility of whether these patterns may not have been written for the Yenikapı Semâhane but rather for the Bahariye Semâhane.

Therefore it is an appropriate coincidence that without enough archival data about the authentic inscriptions in the Bahariye Semâhane, Hulûsi Efendi's patterns were used to make the letters in the 2011 reconstruction of the Bahariye *Samâ' Ghazal*'s inscriptions. However, in this reconstruction only 17 of the 18 lines of the *Samâ' Ghazal* were written in gold jali nasta'liq script, using a very non-traditional technique in which the letters of each line were first individually written, then decoupéd and mounted individually<sup>36</sup> on each of its 190 cm. long, dark green-colored cartouches. In the Bahariye semâ meydan there are no cartouches containing introductory couplets similar to those found in the Yenikapı, Kütahya and Gelibolu Semâhanes. Instead in Bahariye, a short cartouche on which was written 'Yâ Hazrat-i Mawlânâ' in jali nasta'liq script, surrounded by smaller cartouches containing decorative rumi motifs, was mounted above the protruding mutrib musicians' balcony on the mezzanine floor.

### Conclusion

Samâ' (سما) which means to listen or to hear, or the act of "listening" or "hearing" in Arabic, also refers to the whirling movements of sufi dervishes. This is of particular importance in Rumi's Mevlevî order of dervishes where it is essential training and part of the weekly performed *Mevlevî Âyîn-i Şerîf*, samâ' ritual ceremony in their semâhanes. During the 19th century it was observed that verses alluding to samâ' in both Turkish and Persian were to be found in the calligraphic decoration of âsitâne semâhanes. Although Turkish verses alluding to samâ' encircled the semâ meydans of the Cairo and Bursa semâhanes, it was the nine Persian couplets known as the *Samâ' Ghazal*, attributed to Rumi, which gained particular popularity in use as a calligraphic decorative element in the semâ meydans of the Yenikapı, Kütahya, Gelibolu and Bahariye Mevlevîhanes.

In this study, after explaining the meaning of the nine Persian verses of the *Samâ' Ghazal*, it was shown in an examination of Rumi's use of the word *samâ'* in his ghazals, that he could not have written the *Samâ' Ghazal*. It was shown to have been first introduced at the beginning of the 17th century into Mevlevî literature as having been written by Mawlânâ, by Ismail Rusuhi Dede Ankarawî in his famous tasawwufî work of *Minhâcû'l-Fukara*. In this manner, with Ankarawî's approval that it belonged to Mawlânâ, after that time without any question or doubt about its authenticity, the *Samâ' Ghazal* easily entered other sources and semâhanes in subsequent centuries.

In its calligraphic presentation around the Yenikapı, Kütahya and Gelibolu semâ meydans, the Persian *Samâ' Ghazal* was not used by itself but was preceded by an introductory couplet in Arabic as in Yenikapı and Gelibolu or by a Turkish rubai (by Shaykh Galib) as in Kütahya. These introductory couplets all praise the qualities of Hazrat-i Mawlânâ (the pîr of the Mevlevî order of dervishes) asking for his support and blessings and attribute the ensuing Persian lines of the *Samâ' Ghazal* as belonging to Rumi. These introductory couplets have the respectful nature of asking for some kind of *destur* (permission) from the pîr to perform the rituals of the semâ ceremony.

Despite differences in style and compositional layout, the calligraphic presentation of the *Samâ' Ghazal* with their introductory verses found in these semâ meydans have several similarities. They were all written in various styles of the nas'taliq script on rectangular cartouches of various sizes. These cartouches were either spaced one after each other in a single row (as in Yenikapı, Gelibolu and Bahariye) or in stacked rows (as in Kütahya). They were placed on the inner surfaces of the semâ meydan either within (Gelibolu) or below the rim of the covering dome (Yenikapı) or vault (Bahariye) or on the arches (Kütahya) found in between the supporting columns encircling the semâ meydan.

<sup>35</sup> See footnote 25.

<sup>36</sup> Unfortunately because of the decoupé and mounting letter technique used in the Bahariye *Samâ' Ghazal* semâhane reconstruction, some of these mounted letters have dropped off or become mis-positioned on the cartouches.



Although the *Samâ' Ghazal* was not written by Rumi, there is no doubt that its couplets asking the repeated question *دانی سماع چه بود* "*Dānī samā' che bovad*" / "Do you know what samâ' is?", express the deep mystical states of the semâzens while they performed the samâ'. For the spectators, their inscriptions added an extra spiritual dimension to the semâ meydans in which they were located by enhancing the spiritual meaning and atmosphere of the ritualistic semâ ceremonies being performed in them.

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