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THE OTTOMAN BIOGRAPHIES OF POETS[1]

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BETWEEN the middle of the sixteenth and the early decades of the twentieth centuries, there was produced in the Ottoman Empire a series of biographies dealing with the poets. Known under the general title of *Tezkere-i Şuᶜarā* (hereafter as tezkere), they may very briefly be defined as biographies of poets including samples of their verses. The writing of biographies—a favorite vocation in the Muslim world—was initiated by the Arabs or their converts to Islam as an adjunct to religious studies and as an ancillary to the historical sciences.[2] The tradition quickly spread into the field of literature and resulted in the production of compilations devoted solely to the lives and works of the poets. The Persians, who may be considered the political and cultural heirs of the Arabs, continued and developed the tradition which, like so much else, was readily adopted by the Ottomans in the sixteenth century.[3]

The Ottomans produced some twenty-four[4] extant biographies of poets, covering nearly all the poets of the Ottoman Empire, in addition to a few who, in one way or another, were associated with and flourished in the principalities of pre-Ottoman Anatolia.[5] Although uneven in reliability, objectivity, and scope, nonetheless this uninterrupted body of literature constitutes a significant source relative to (a) the biographies of Ottoman poets, poetesses, and poetasters, and (b) the products of the poets through the poetic samples almost invariably appended to each biographical notice; it also has the potential to act as the basis for the investigation and assessment of the critical attitudes and literary standards of Ottomans of various classes and shades of opinion by means of the comments of the biographers offered in the notices or supplied in the presentation of each selection of verse.

The following article contains the results of an examination of all the available Ottoman biographies of poets listed below in chronological order. The material

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See p. 73 for list of abbreviations used in this article.

[2] Cf. Sir Hamilton Gibb, "Islamic Biographical Literature," and Ann K. S. Lambton, "Persian Biographical Literature," in *Historians of the Middle East*, eds. Bernard Lewis and P. M. Holt (London, 1962), pp. 54–58 and 141–51 respectively.

[3] For a brief discussion of this tradition in Islam, see J. Stewart-Robinson, "The Tezkere Genre in Islam," in *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, XXIII (January, 1964), 57–65.

[4] Excluded from this figure are the following works which are traditionally numbered among productions of this genre: (i) *Zübdet el-Eşᶜār* of Ḳāfzāde Fāʾizī, and (ii) *Zeyl-i Zübdet el-Eşᶜār* of Meḥmed ᶜĀṣım, both of which are *mecmūᶜa*'s rather than tezkeres. (iii) *Nuḫbet al-Āşār fī Fevāʾid il-Eşᶜār* of Kemiksizzāde Ṣafvet, which is no more than a shortened copy of Ṣafāʾī's tezkere. Cf. In, I, 6, and the unpubl. diss. (Istanbul, 1930) by Tahsin Banguoğlu, "Şuara Tezkireleri," p. 53. (iv) *Tezkere-i Şuᶜarā* of Silāḥdārzāde which formed the basis of Şefḳat's tezkere. (v) *Mecmaᶜ-i Şuᶜarā ve Tezkere-i Üdebā* (Istanbul, 1325) of Meḥmed Serāceddīn, which, regrettably, was not available for consultation. (vi) Süleymān Fehīm's *Sefīnet aş-Şuᶜarā* (Istanbul, 1259), which is a Turkish translation of the Persian tezkere by Devleṭşāh. (vii) S. N. Ergun's *Türk Şairleri* (Istanbul, n.d.), 2 vols., based almost exclusively on past tezkeres and unfinished.

[5] This is especially true of the earlier tezkeres which feature many more of these pre-Ottoman poets. The first section of Laṭīfī's work, for example, deals with several of these.

reproduced here was gleaned, by and large, from the biographies themselves and is organized primarily with the purpose of supplying information on their form and contents as well as giving some general facts relating to the compilers themselves.

1. SEHĪ (of Edirne), d. 1548; *Heşt Bihişt*, comp. 1538; *ca.* 1400–1538.[6]
2. LAṬĪFĪ (ᶜAbdullaṭīf of Kastamonu), d. *ca.* 1582; *Teẕkere-i Şuᶜarā*, comp. 1546; *ca.* 1400–1546.[7]
3. ᶜAHDĪ (Aḥmed of Bagdad), d. *ca.* 1593; *Gülşen-i Şuᶜarā*, comp. 1563; *ca.* 1520–1563.[8]
4. ᶜĀṢIḴ ÇELEBİ (Pīr Meḥmed of Prizrin), b. 1519, d. 1571; *Meşāᶜir aş-Şuᶜarā*, comp. 1569; *ca.* 1400–1569.[9]
5. ḲINALIZĀDE (Ḥasan Çelebi of Bursa), b. 1546, d. 1603; *Teẕkere-i Şuᶜarā*, comp. 1585; *ca.* 1400–1585.[10]
6. BEYĀNĪ (Muṣṭafā of Ruscuk), d. 1597; *Teẕkere-i Şuᶜarā*, comp. *ca.* 1595; *ca.* 1400–1585.[11]
7. RİYĀẔĪ (Meḥmed of Istanbul), b. 1572, d. 1644; *Riyāż aş-Şuᶜarā*, comp. 1609; *ca.* 1400–1609.[12]
8. RIẒĀ (Zehīr-i Mārzāde Seyyid Meḥmed of Edirne), d. 1671; *Teẕkere-i Şuᶜarā*, comp. 1640; 1591–1640.[13]
9. YÜMNĪ (Meḥmed Ṣāliḥ of Istanbul), d. 1662; *Teẕkere-i Şuᶜarā*, comp. *ca.* 1662; *ca.* 1600–1662.[14]
10. GÜFTĪ (ᶜAlī of Edirne), d. 1677; *Teşrīfāt aş-Şuᶜarā*, comp. *ca.* 1669; *ca.* 1600–1669.[15]
11. MÜCĪB (Mustafā), b. 1671, d. 1726; *Teẕkere-i Şuᶜarā*, comp. 1710; 1609–1710.[16]
12. ṢAFĀᵓĪ (Muṣṭafā of Istanbul), d. 1725; *Teẕkere-i Şuᶜarā*, comp. 1719; 1640–1719.[17]
13. SĀLİM (Mīrzāzāde Meḥmed Emīn of Istanbul), b. 1687, d. 1743; *Teẕkere-i Şuᶜarā*, comp. 1721; 1687–1720.[18]
14. BELİG (Seyyid İsmāᶜīl of Bursa), b. 1668, d. 1729; *Nuḫbet al-Āṣār liẕeyl-i Zübdet el-Eşᶜār*, comp. 1726; 1620–1726.[19]
15. RĀMİZ (Ḥüseyin of Istanbul), d. *ca.* 1785; *Ādāb-ı Ẓurafā*, comp. second half of eighteenth century; 1721–1784.[20]
16. ESRĀR DEDE (Seyyid Meḥmed of Istanbul), d. 1796; *Teẕkere-i Şuᶜarā-yı Mevleviye*, comp. 1796; *ca.* 1400–1790.[21]
17. ŞEFḲAT (ᶜAbdulfettāḥ of Bagdad), d. 1826; *Teẕkere-i Şuᶜarā*, comp. 1813; *ca.* 1730–1813.[22]

[6] HOP, III, 7; EI(1), IV, 205; F. Babinger, *Die Geschichtsschreiber der Osmanen und ihre Werke* (Leipzig, 1927), p. 67; TTY, p. 611. The first name supplied in the above list is that by which the tezkereci is best known. In parentheses are given any other names or patronymics and places of origin. Following the title of the work the date of completion of the work and the period covered by the tezkere are given.

[7] HOP, III, 161; EI(1), III, 19; Babinger, p. 110; IA, VII, 19; TTY, p. 597.

[8] HOP, III, 8; Babinger, p. 112; M. Ṭāhir, *Türk Şairleri* (Istanbul, n.d.), I, 261; TTY, p. 575.

[9] HOP, III, 7; IA, I, 695; TTY, p. 579; the unpubl. diss. (Istanbul, 1952) by Faik Gözübüyük, "Aşık Çelebi ve Tezkiresi"; EI(2), I, 698.

[10] HOP, III, 199; EI(1), II, 1017; Babinger, p. 139; IA, cüz 63, 711; TTY, p. 588.

[11] SO, IV, 379; ᶜOM, II, 98; Babinger, p. 140; TTY, p. 582; see also n. 31.

[12] SO, II, 425; ᶜOM, II, 183; EI(1), III, 1161; Babinger, p. 177; HOP, III, 284; TTY, p. 605.

[13] SO, II, 397; ᶜOM, II, 185; HOP, III, 201; EI(1), III, 1153; TTY, p. 607.

[14] Şeyḫī, "Veḳāᵓi al-Fużalā," Süleymaniye MS, Beşir Ağa 479, I, 548a; TTY, p. 614.

[15] SO, IV, 76; ᶜOM, II, 391; F. K. Demirtaş, "XVII Asır Şairlerinden Edirneli Güfti ve Teşrifat-üş-şüerası," *Türk Dili ve Edebiyati Dergisi*, II, 3–4 (1948), 193–221; TTY, p. 585.

[16] Sf, fol. 381; Sm, p. 610; R, fol. 222.

[17] HOP, III, 202; Babinger, p. 257; unpubl. diss. (Istanbul, 1949) by Zekiye Sarak, "Safayi ve Salim Tezkireleri üzerinde mukayeseli bir araştırma"; TTY, p. 608.

[18] SO, II, 3; ᶜOM, II, 335; HOP, III, 202; EI(1), IV, 114; Babinger, p. 272; Sarak, *ibid*; TTY, p. 609.

[19] HOP, IV, 117; Babinger, p. 263; IA, II, 489; EI(2), I, 1165.

[20] ᶜOM, II, 48; Babinger, p. 315; TTY, p. 604.

[21] HOP, IV, 207–211; Babinger, p. 319; unpubl. diss. (Istanbul, 1940) by Rusuhi Baykara, "18ci asır şairlerinden Mehmet Esrar Dede; Hayatı, tasavvufî, edebî şahsiyeti ve eserleri"; TTY, p. 582.

[22] SO, III, 151; ᶜOM, II, 265; Babinger, p. 314, n. 1; TTY, p. 613.

18. ʿĀKİF (Meḥmed), d. *ca.* 1796; *Mirʾāt-ı Şiʿir*, comp. 1796; his contemporaries.[23]
19. EsʿAD (Meḥmed of Istanbul), b. 1786, d. 1847; *Bāġçe-i Ṣafā-endūz*, comp. 1835; 1722–1835.[24]
20. ʿĀRİF ḤİKMET (Seyyid Aḥmed of Istanbul), b. 1786, d. 1858; *Teẕkere-i Şuʿarā*, comp. *ca.* 1836; 1589–1836.[25]
21. FAṬİN (Dā'ud of Drama), b. 1814, d. 1867; *Ḫātimet el-Eşʿār*, comp. 1852; 1722–1852.[26]
22. TEVFİḲ (Meḥmed of Istanbul), b. 1843, d. 1893; *Ḳāfile-i Şuʿarā*, comp. 1873; incomplete.[27]
23. ʿALİ EMİRİ (of Diyarbakır), b. 1857, d. 1923; *Teẕkere-i Şuʿarā-yı Āmid*, *ca.* 1878; principal poets of Diyarbakır.[28]
24. İNAL (İbnülemîn Maḥmûd Kemâl), b. 1870, d. 1957; *Son Asır Türk Şairleri*, comp. 1930; 1852–1930.[29]

With a few exceptional representatives from the mystical *dervîş* orders, and the imperial palace (*enderūn*) service, most of the tezkere writers (tezkerecis) were from among the "learned" (*ʿülemā*) class. Generally speaking, therefore, the tezkeres may be taken as reflecting the mentality, interests, and tastes of this class. Following preliminary studies, a prospective member of the *ʿülemā* would enter, by examination, one of the many great *medrese*'s of the empire. Here he would follow a curriculum, everywhere largely the same, including such divers branches of knowledge as Arabic, Persian, literature, philosophy, jurisprudence, medicine, mathematics, and astrology. Just as the limitations of the numbers which could be accepted into these institutions tended to make of the successful candidates an intellectual elite in the empire, so, too, did the similarity of their studies and occupations throughout the years of their studentships, and their subsequent professional services provide them with a common background and create in them a uniformity of thought.[30]

Those of the *dervîş* orders, on the other hand, with their otherworldliness and their intense preoccupation with spiritual values, were in striking contrast to the *ʿülemā*. While some members of this class answered the call to a spiritual life after they had followed the training required for other professions,[31] most of them entered one of the orders earlier in life after receiving what must be regarded as merely an elementary education. They joined a *tekke* of a particular *ṭarīḳat* as *mürīd*'s and underwent training in literature, music, and religious subjects under a *şeyḫ* while serving their apprenticeships. Once they had successfully passed the various required stages designed to train both the body and the mind to a rigorous discipline and fulfilled all the requirements, they became full members of the order, and were henceforth known as *şeyḫ*'s themselves, devoting the rest of their lives to contemplation.[32]

[23] In, I, 78; Ṭāhir, I, 29; TTY, p. 577.
[24] Babinger, p. 354; IA, IV, 363; EI(2), II, 714; TTY, p. 603.
[25] HOP, IV, 350; IA, I, 564; EI(2), I, 630; TTY, p. 578.
[26] ʿOM, II, 117; EI(1), IV, 727; In, I, 9.
[27] EI(1), II, 92; Babinger, p. 359; IA, IV, 528.
[28] Babinger, p. 402; In, I, 298; R. E. Koçu, *Istanbul Ansiklopedisi* (Istanbul, 1959), II, 659; EI(2), I, 391.
[29] In, IV, 2201–2242.
[30] HOP, II, 394–400; H. A. R. Gibb and Harold Bowen, *Islamic Society and the West* (London, 1957), I, Pt. 2, 81–113, 139–64. As far as can be ascertained the following tezkerecis underwent at least a minimum of training of this kind in the traditional manner: ʿArif Ḥikmet, ʿĀşıḳ Çelebi, Belîġ, Beyânî, Güftî, Ḳınalızâde, Laṭîfî, Meḥmed Esʿad, Râmiz, Riyâżî, Rızâ, Sehî and Yümnî.
[31] One such case from among the tezkerecis is that of Beyânî, who left the legal profession and became a *şeyḫ* of the Ḫalvetî order. Cf. ʿAṭāʾî, *Ḥadāʾiḳ al-Ḥaḳāʾiḳ fî Tekmilet iş-Şaḳāʾiḳ* (Istanbul, 1268), I, 356 and II, 466.
[32] A. Gölpınarlı *Mevlânâ'dan sonra Mevlevîlik* (Istanbul, 1953), pp. 390–408; J. K. Birge, *The Bektashi Order of Dervishes* (London, 1937), pp. 162–209; Gibb and Bowen, *op. cit.*, pp. 179–206. Esrâr Dede is the only tezkereci known to have been a dedicated member of an order.

In contrast to both the "learned" and the "contemplative" classes, the *enderūn* class was originally recruited through the *devşirme* system, and its members spent their adolescent years training in one of the services of the palace. It was only at this period that many of them began their studies in the arts, sciences, and even in the very languages of Islam including Turkish, and some never acquired more than a superficial knowledge of any of these. Their training prepared them for service as pages and ultimately for administrative posts of power and distinction upon leaving the palace. Owing to their foreign background and their training designed to discipline them to loyalty and to develop them physically, and on account of their gaining knowledge of the Ottoman language later in life, they constitute a class quite different from the first two in outlook and feeling.[33] Thus to a lesser or greater degree, the tezkeres allow us to assess not only the view-points and judgments of the tezkerecis as individuals with their own predilections and idiosyncracies but also that of a select corps of biographers representing at least three[34] different approaches to the whole question of poets and poetry in the Ottoman realm. Intelligence of this broad and varied view of at least one department of literature, it need hardly be emphasized, is as important as an awareness of the diversity of verse itself produced by a variety of "classes" of versifiers.

The tezkeres themselves form the chief source of biographical detail on the tezkerecis. Information relating to the lives and works of the biographers may be derived from this source in three ways. (1) Although often less easily accessible and certainly more difficult to locate without a thorough examination, are the numerous incidental or deliberate remarks and interpolations made by the tezkerecis within the body of their works. This type of detail is encountered most commonly in the introductory portions of the tezkeres usually in connection with the accounts frequently given for writing the work in the first place.[35] There are also, however, numerous short and long passages in the individual notices which help fill out gaps in the biographers' lives. A casual statement in connection with the appointment of a poet to a certain town as an official or relative to a relationship with a biographee sometimes assist in tracing the movements or establishing the ancestry or marital status or identifying the informants of the biographer.[36] (2) Nearly all the biographers were poets in their own right and as such are mentioned in the works of colleagues who were either their contemporaries or their continuators. Notices on fellow tezkerecis are often very useful in that they frequently include evaluations of tezkeres. These are most helpful in our own assessment of a biographer's standing in his own circle or in that of following generations of literary critics and like-minded writers.[37] (3) It is not uncommon for a biographer to feature himself among

[33] B. Miller, "The Curriculum of the Palace School of the Turkish Sultans," *The Macdonald Presentation Volume* (Princeton, 1933), pp. 305–25; İ. H. Uzunçarşılı *Osmanlı Devletinin Saray Teşkilâtı* (Ankara, 1945), pp. 297–307; Gibb and Bowen, *op. cit.*, pp. 77–82, 331–50. From among the tezkerecis, Ṣafā'ī and ʿĀkif were products of the palace school system, though neither of them was recruited through the *devşirme*. Vols. IV and V of the *Târîḫ-i ʿAṭā* (Istanbul, 1292–1293) are to a large extent anthologies of the poets of this class.

[34] It might be argued that Meḥmed Esʿad, Tevfīḳ, Faṭīn, ʿAlī Emīrī, and İnal represent yet a fourth class because they compiled their works during and after the penetration of European literary concepts into Ottoman society.

[35] Laṭīfī, ʿĀşıḳ Çelebi, and ʿAhdī are the best examples of this.

[36] L, p. 229; Ah, fol. 43a; K, fol. 298b; Sm, pp. 271–2; R, fol. 7a.

[37] L, p. 237; Ah, fol. 124a; K, fol. 168b; B, fol. 54, and Ry, fol. 98a supply information on ʿĀşıḳ Çelebi, while A, fol. 247b; K, fol. 203b; B, fol. 65, and Ry, fol. 112a can be used for details on ʿAhdī.

the poets details of whose lives he seeks to preserve for posterity. Although at times inordinately boastful, these entries are detailed and presumably more reliable.[38]

The other sources which yield material of a biographical nature on the tezkerecis are the standard works specializing on the lives of members of one or another of the classes of Ottoman society. By far the most rewarding of study in this respect is the series devoted to the *ʿülemā*, the *meşāʾiḫ*, and to a lesser extent the *ḫaṭṭāṭīn*, etc. Since nearly all the tezkerecis belonged to the first of these classes, Taşköprüzāde's celebrated *Şaḳāʾiḳ an-Nuʿmāniye* and its sequels by ʿAṭāʾī, Şeyḫī, and others are indispensable for information on them. Historical works, too, because some have special sections of the *vefayāt* type or simply sections devoted to poets who flourished in each reign, and others happen to cover periods during which the tezkerecis might have been prominent in fields other than literature, may be regarded as useful sources. Also relevant are the more recent general biographical works such as the *ʿOṣmānlı Müʾellifleri* and the *Sicill-i ʿOṣmānī* which are themselves based largely on the older works mentioned above. To this brief list of source materials must be added the thousands of anthologies of the *mecmūʿa* variety, study of which, however, is more profitable for the verses they contain than the few details they might give on the lives of the biographers.

In spite of this array of possible sources, our knowledge of the tezkerecis is most uneven; while details about every appointment held by one may be found, even the barest facts may not be had about another. Generally speaking, the details which are available usually concern such matters as their descent, relatives, education, mentors, the various offices and posts which they held, etc. In short, those external facts of an individual's life which are customary in all Islamic biographies. To a large extent, this limitation is imposed by the nature—resembling that of a dictionary—of Islamic biography which was originally considered as sufficient for its purpose as an ancillary to history to give that chronology of a person which would allow the verification of an *iṣnād* or the establishment of the authenticity of a relation. Much the same approach is to be observed in the tezkeres themselves, especially in those produced before the nineteenth century.

The methods used by the Ottoman tezkerecis in classifying the poets indicate both an early dependence on their Arabic and Persian precursors as well as a later gradual change in approach. Social standing, origin, or profession had tended to determine the division of the versifiers into classes (*ṭabaḳāt*).[39] While the Ottoman originators of the genre by and large followed the same concepts, their continuators preferred to treat the poets as poets rather than as representatives of a region, social class or professional group. Sehī and ʿAhdī are the most obvious examples to cite with reference to the earlier tendency. The former's approach to this question is clearly indicated by the title which he chose for his work. The *Heşt Bihişt* is divided into eight parts, each containing the poets of a certain social or professional group, or of a particular time in relation to the author's own age or generation.[40] The provincial ʿAhdī too betrays similar views, although his *Gülşen-i Şuʿarā* is divided into only four sections.[41]

[38] The following tezkerecis have their autobiographies in their tezkeres: L, pp. 297–98; B, foll. 18–19; Sm, pp. 337–44; Ak, foll. 112–19, and In, IV, 2201–42.

[39] See Stewart-Robinson, *op. cit.*, p. 62.

[40] S, p. 7.

[41] Ah, fol. 6a.

Beginning with ʿĀşıḳ Çelebi, the Ottoman tezkerecis tended more and more towards the view that the poets constituted a class in themselves and should therefore be treated in one section irrespective of their other activities or social affiliations.[42] Generally speaking it can be said that those Ottomans who felt the need to compile works of this order followed ʿĀşıḳ Çelebi's example and listed the poets in strict alphabetical order, although, unlike him, they chose to segregate royal poets in clearly separate sections.[43]

The most significant exceptions to the above were three of the biographers who had a completely different viewpoint as regards the function and purpose of the genre. To begin with, Esrār Dede was responsible for completing an anthology begun by the poet Şeyḫ Ġālib.[44] By adding data of a biographical nature to the samples of verses Ġālib had collected for each of the Mevlevī poets represented in his anthology, Esrār Dede, apparently at the request of the famous Şeyḫ of Galata,[45] transformed the anthology into a tezkere devoted exclusively to the poets of the Mevlevī order. ʿĀkif also restricted himself to the poets of a particular class by listing only those who served in four of the departments of the *Enderūn-i Hümāyūn* where he himself, it would seem, served for a time. Finally, ʿAlī Emīrī Efendi, one of the last of the tezkerecis, chose to limit his work to a discussion of the poets of his own native town of Diyarbakır.

The *maḫlaş* or pseudonym of each poet determined the position of each name in the general alphabetical classification. With the exception of very rare errors which can probably be attributed to careless copyists, the Ottoman tezkerecis adhered rigorously to the alphabetical listing of their choice whether it was the *ebced* or the *ḥurūf-i tehcī* varieties. In certain cases, when the poet never took a regular pseudonym, he was featured under his given name instead.[46] All the biographers, however, follow the same pattern regarding the royal poets and list them under their given names or the names they assumed on their accessions. In all cases, it should be noted, chronology and not alphabetical order determined the classification of the *sulṭān*'s.[47]

Literature of this type in the Islamic East was almost invariably produced under patronage and dedicated to the great and wealthy in expectation of favor and reward. There are no examples, however, of such works having been actually commissioned, and, as we shall see further down, the initiative in compiling the tezkeres seems to have arisen from the authors themselves.[48] Such a system

[42] There is no doubt that ʿĀşıḳ Çelebi would have selected the more common *ḥurūf-u tehcī* system for listing his poets. This is indicated in his introduction where he states that during a conversation with Laṭīfī he told the latter of his intentions. He goes on to claim, however, that, acting in bad faith, Laṭīfī had stolen the idea and decided to use the system himself (A, fol. 40a). Having no alternative, ʿĀşıḳ was, it would seem, forced to adopt the *ebced* system in order not to imitate Laṭīfī (A, fol. 45b). Since Laṭīfī is most significantly silent on this matter, we have no way of knowing his side of the story.

[43] This is true of many of the tezkerecis; Laṭīfī, ʿAhdī, Ḳınalızāde, Beyānī, Riyāżī, Rızā, Mücīb, and Sālim placed those members of the House of ʿOs̱mān who indulged in verse writing in a separate section at the beginning of their works. Others either treated all the poets on an equal footing in a single section or ignored the royal poets altogether.

[44] HOP, IV, 175–206; EI(1), II, 137; A. Gölpınarlı, *Şeyh Galib. Hayatı, sanatı, şiirleri* (Istanbul, 1953).

[45] E, foll. 1b–2a.

[46] Aḥmed Paşa (d. 1496) is one of many such poets. Cf. L, p. 86; S, p. 20.

[47] The same pattern was followed by many tezkerecis, although in certain cases, the princes are arranged in a section of their own irrespective of chronology. Cf. K, foll. 32a–36b.

[48] Certain remarks in the introductions to these works, it must be noted, indicate that the tezkerecis were prompted to undertake to compile their tezkeres at the insistence of friends. Such remarks, however, are so much part of the tradition in Islamic literature that it is probably safest to regard them as purely conventional features of an introduction. Cf. L, pp. 17–21; G, foll. 11–5; Ş, foll. 5–7; F, p. 4.

of patronage naturally determined a certain locale for the works. The Ottoman Empire had a number of cultural centers to which most prospective beneficiaries with a literary bend could repair. Any provincial court presided over by a prince serving his apprenticeship in preparation for the difficult state duties which lay ahead of him,[49] or the residence of a powerful local ruler, always attracted the aspiring littérateurs of the realm. By far the most important of these centers were Istanbul, Edirne, and Bursa, all of which, at one time or another, served as the capital city of the empire. In addition to the more obvious reasons for collecting tezkeres—such as monetary compensation, fame, and self-immortalization—there would seem to have been certain other motives. The human urge to continue a class of literature must have played an important role in the creation of these works. It has already been stated that this large collection of biographical and anthological material represents a continuous body of literature which spans the whole range of Ottoman poetic achievement. When one takes account of the statements of some of the compilers to the effect that their own contributions in this field were *zeyl*'s (continuations) to collections already in existence,[50] one cannot dismiss the probability that the tezkerecis were indeed earnestly desirous of perpetuating a literary genre which had a practical and historical purpose—that of preserving the facts relating to the lives of the poets and the choicest of their verses.[51] To this may be added yet another reason, the uncontrollable urge of the Ottoman to collect verses for their own sake out of a genuine admiration for poetry and those who were good at it.[52]

While of less value than the biographical notices which constitute the major portion of each tezkere, the *Muḳaddime*'s (introductions) which precede them deserve some mention here. Not all of the tezkeres which have come down to us were ever completed[53] and some lack introductions.[54] Generally, however, in addition to the well-established features almost invariably to be found in *Muḳaddime*'s, those which are appended to this literary mode include such material as the origins and varieties of poetry, the characteristics of the poets, surveys of preceding tezkeres, information on the organization and scope of the work being introduced, reasons for compiling the work, details on the compiler's own life, the identification of the sources used, the author's views on contemporary literature, and, very rarely, brief histories of Ottoman literature. Mostly the earlier of the tezkeres are enhanced by introductory material which does more than merely supply the readers with the tezkereci's apologetic justification for compiling his work, or act as an indispensable guide to the notices contained therein. Out of the few that are thus improved by the inclusion of the thoughts of the compilers on such matters as the contemporary standing of poetry among the Ottomans, and the status of those who practiced and lived by the art of versification, one may easily single out the tezkeres of Laṭīfī and ʿĀṣıḳ Çelebi.

The former, who chronologically was the second Ottoman to undertake a work

[49] Uzunçarşılı, *op. cit.*, pp. 116–30; A. D. Alderson, *The Structure of the Ottoman Dynasty* (Oxford, 1956), pp. 17–24.

[50] Eg, Sf, foll. 13a–b; Bg, fol. 1b; ME, fol. 1; T, p. 3; F, p. 4; In, I, 13.

[51] S, p. 4; B, fol. 4; AE, fol. 4, etc.

[52] One need only thumb through the catalogs of manuscripts in Turkish libraries and see the unbelievably large number of *mecmuʿa*'s available to be easily convinced of this.

[53] Tevfiḳ's tezkere stops at the letter *dāl*, and Şefḳat's has provisions for poetic samples which have been omitted.

[54] E.g., the tezkeres of ʿĀrif Ḥikmet, Mücīb, Rāmiz, and Yümnī.

of this genre, used his *Muḳaddime* as a forum for the exposition of his own views on poetry and the poets. In his reply to the alleged suggestion by a friend that he compile a tezkere,[55] he finds a pretext to lodge a lengthy and bitter complaint against the adduced literary injustices of his age. He finally brings his remarks to an end by claiming that all his protestations were to no avail and that he had no choice but to comply with his friend's wishes.[56] Laṭīfī's criticism of the low poetic standards of his day, and his condemnation of the apparent inability of the patrons of the arts to adequately discriminate between the true poets and the mountebanks, may have been induced by his personal bad fortune in not having been properly recognized as a talented writer by the powerful and the wealthy of his own time. Be that as it may, the statements of his reviewers regarding his high standards of evaluation and fairness in judging the merits of others render his remarks on the literary climate of his generation both significant and interesting.[57]

Unlike Laṭīfī, ʿĀṣıḳ Çelebi, who was professionally more successful and less at odds with the literary society of his day, could perhaps meditate on the arts more objectively. He does not state one of the conventional reasons for collecting his tezkere, a fact which allows us to assume that his interest in the history of Ottoman verse was probably solely responsible for undertaking the task of producing one of the best tezkeres. In the main, his introductory remarks consist of three parts; a history of literature, an account of the last twenty years of his life, and a description of the tezkere. First he deals with speech and how it distinguishes man from animal, then he continues with a dissertation on the superiority of poetry over prose discussing, in passing, rhyme and meter. Under the *teşbīb* (exordium) which follows, he gives a somewhat superficial review of the evolution of literature among the Ottomans from the time of Murād I (1360–1389) to the middle of the sixteenth century, laying particular stress on the contributions of Süleymān the Magnificent (1520–1566) and Selīm II (1566–1574) to the rapid development of poetry and prose through their patronage of the arts.[58] There follows the inevitable *taẓarruʿ* (self-abasement) and a description of the hardships which he suffered by being left an orphan at an early age. In vainglorious terms he underlines his perseverance in and application to studies that led to the accumulation of an immense amount of knowledge which in turn made him rank among the greatest men of the realm. All this, he emphasizes, despite the discouraging and disparaging judgments of the critics! Referring to earlier endeavors in the field of tezkere-writing, he mentions the Persian biographies of poets by Devletşāh, Cāmī, and the Turkish one by Nevāʾī.[59] Among the Ottoman works of this type, he cites Sehī and Laṭīfī;[60] he extols the former for being the originator of the genre in the Ottoman language and

[55] This friend is not actually named in the introduction by Laṭīfī, but we learn from a notice later in the tezkere that it was Ḥācızāde Meḥmed Çelebi of Kastamonu whose pseudonym was Ẓaʿīfī (L, pp. 228–29). The same poet is also mentioned, probably after Laṭīfī, by Ḳınalızāde (fol. 165b) and Beyānī (fol. 104). Cf. GOD, II, 460.

[56] L, pp. 14–32.

[57] ʿAlī, "Künh al-Aḫbār," Süleymaniye MS, Esad Efendi 2162, fol. 498a. Cf. A, foll. 145a–b; GOD, III, 28–30; HOP, III, 161–62.

[58] A, foll. 21b–38b. Since this portion of the introduction is divided into several parts each representing a reign, it constitutes, in a sense, the section of the *Meşāʿir aş-Şuʿarā* which, in other tezkeres, is set aside for the praise and biographies of the imperial poets.

[59] For the roles of Devletşāh, Cāmī, and Nevāʾī in the development of this genre in Islam, see Stewart-Robinson, *op. cit.*, pp. 63–64.

[60] Curiously enough he does not cite the *Gülşen-i Şuʿarā* of ʿAhdī which had been completed six years before his. ʿĀṣıḳ does, however, indicate knowledge of the existence of this work in his notice on its compiler (A, fol. 246b).

for the success of his *Heşt Bihişt*, but confines his comments on the latter to their dispute over the alphabetical classification of the poets in the tezkeres. Then ʿĀşıḳ Çelebi goes on to give an account of the years he spent in various localities in service as a judge. He adds that although during this period the drafting of his tezkere was left in abeyance he never ceased to collect information for it which finally allowed him to complete it in the year 1569 and call it the *Meşāʿir aş-Şuʿarā*.[61]

As already indicated, such instructive and revealing *Muḳaddime*'s as the foregoing two examples are exceptions rather than the rule when this body of literature is taken into consideration as a whole. The compiler's conception of a tezkere as regards its coverage and purpose determined to some extent both the contents of the *Muḳaddime*'s as well as the substance of the individual biographical notices. Some of these works seem to have been conceived with the idea of an anthology in which the choice verses of the poets were collected together into one work, and in this respect resembling the *mecmūʿa* or *çönk* types. Some were composed with the precision of a reference book with no attention paid to polish in either language or format. Some authors, on the other hand, regarded the form as a pretext for the display of their own literary abilities and endeavored to produce samples of ornate and artistic prose or to write tezkeres in verse.[62] Yet all the tezkerecis attest an enduring admiration for poetry and an interest in the lives of those who were skilled in this art. For the purpose of demonstrating the unique value of this continuous assemblage of information on the Ottoman poets, the rest of this survey will contain an identification of the provenance of the material utilized by the tezkerecis followed by a brief itemization of the type of biographical detail available on the biographees in the notices.

[61] A, foll. 1b–47b. For equally lengthy introductions, see K, foll. 1b–21b; Sm, pp. 3–52; In, I, 3–20.

[62] Ḳınalızāde's tezkere is the best example of the ornate prose, while Güftī has the distinction of having composed the only tezkere in verse.

THE SOURCES

As far as can be ascertained from statements in the tezkeres, three principal sources were available to the tezkerecis in their search for pertinent details on the poets: (1) Previous tezkeres; (2) secondary documentary sources, and; (3) oral sources of one type or another.

(1) There was a strong desire throughout Ottoman literature to achieve the continuity of certain genres. This stimulated the composition of works dealing, to a large extent, with subjects of an historical and biographical nature.[63] Both the historians and the biographers demonstrate an awareness of the need for an unbroken chain of recorded facts. Hence historical works by the *vaḳāʿi'-nüvīs*, biographies of famous men who belonged to the *ʿülemā* and *meşā'iḫ* classes, and the tezkeres under consideration, all of which categories are sustained and brought up to date by writers who have endeavored to continue one literary form or another by means of *ẕeyl*'s. This feature, characteristic of all such works, furnished some of the tezkerecis at least with a fairly easily available source of information. Furthermore, the frequency of the production of tezkeres during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries created a considerable overlap in coverage. As a result, many of the poets who flourished during that period are represented in the works of several tezkerecis the latter of whom were able to make use of preceding tezkeres as sources.

[63] It should be noted in passing that works dealing with biography are often considered to belong within the sphere of history and are grouped as such in the catalogs of collections in the libraries of Turkey. Cf. the remarks of C. Cahen in Lewis and Holt, *op. cit.*, p. 77.

While not all the biographers considered it necessary to acknowledge indebtedness to a predecessor,[64] there is enough evidence in the tezkeres themselves to demonstrate conclusively that the genre itself acted as a primary source.[65]

(2) As for the poetic citations which are traditionally appended to each biographical notice in almost all the tezkeres, they were derived mainly from the *mecmūᶜa*'s and *dīvān*'s. The latter of these two anthological forms served also as a source for personal details on the poets.[66] Longer poems, especially the *meṣnevī*'s, were occasionally consulted by the tezkerecis, who extracted verses from them for inclusion in their works whenever appropriate.[67] Among the biographical works available at one time or another, which must have been regularly consulted and extensively used for information but which are seldom referred to by the tezkerecis, are to be numbered the more substantial biographical series which began with the *Ṣaḳāʾiḳ an-Nuᶜmāniye*. While it is inconceivable that any serious and conscientious tezkereci could ignore the wealth of material available in the aforementioned work and its continuations, there is very little factual evidence in the tezkeres indicating that they were systematically utilized.[68] Biographical works dealing with special classes of people, such as *dervīṣ*'s, artists, and calligraphers, on the other hand, were used by a few tezkerecis.[69] Histories also, one would assume, must have been sources to which the tezkerecis had frequent recourse. One of the characteristics of Ottoman historical works is that they abound in biographical information on statesmen and other prominent figures such as the more famous of the poets.[70] These are mentioned either in connection with political or social events or in special addenda at the conclusion of chapters devoted to particular reigns.[71] Yet remarkably few tezkerecis make specific allusions to historical works or declare that they have used them as sources for biographical data.[72]

(3) The tezkere writers could not rely entirely on textual information in their attempts at piecing together the biographies—bare enough though some of them are—of the numerous poets and poetasters they included in their tezkeres. Either because all those who had indulged in the art or pastime of stringing verses were not famous enough to be included in previous biographical works of the tezkere variety or others, or in histories, or because they had lived and flourished at too recent a period to feature in any work, the tezkerecis had, perforce, to record details acquired verbally from those who had known them. That the first tezkereci Sehī was faced by such a research problem is made very clear in the section of his introduction reserved for an examination of his sources. Since he could not avail himself of the benefits of

[64] Comparisons of tezkeres sometimes reveal strikingly similar passages such as those on the poet ᶜAṣḳī in the tezkeres of Sehī (p. 136) and ᶜAhdī (fol. 130b). Furthermore, Ḳınalızāde incorporated many of ᶜĀṣıḳ Çelebi's statements into his own tezkere.

[65] A, fol. 94a (Celīlī); K, foll. 126a–b (Zeyneb Ḥātūn); Sm, p. 262 (Rāṣid); E, fol. 25a (Dervīṣ Ḥayātī); ME, fol. 72 (Pīrī); AH, fol. 38b (Ṣafīᶜī).

[66] Ry, fol. 46a (Caᶜfer Çelebi) *et passim*. Of all the tezkerecis, Riyāżī seems to have been the one who had access to most *dīvān*'s. Cf. also Bg, fol. 71b (Ḳābilī); E, fol. 106a (Dervīṣ Vehbī-yi Ḳadīm).

[67] B, fol. 94 (Ṣemsī-yi ᶜAcem); Ry, fol. 58b (Ḥamdī); Sf, fol. 465 (Vālī).

[68] Ṣeyḥī's hitherto unpublished zeyl, for example, has a section on the poets at the conclusion of the reign in which these poets flourished. These biographies are usually very brief, but in every case verses are quoted. Cf. K, fol. 69b (Ḥācı Ḥasanzāde Cāmī); E, fol. 47a (Reṣkī ʿAlī Dede).

[69] E, foll. 17b–19b (Ṣākib Dede) *et passim*; ME, fol. 42 (Bāriᶜī); AH, fol. 38b (Ṣānī).

[70] Aḥmed Paṣa (d. 1496), Caᶜfer Çelebi (d. 1514), and Nedīm (d. 1730), to mention a few. For an interesting discussion of the relationship of biography to history in Islam, see F. Rosenthal, *A History of Muslim Historiography* (Leiden, 1952), pp. 15, 85–94.

[71] The classic example is ᶜAlī's still unpublished *Künh al-Aḫbār*. See also, n. 68.

[72] K, fol. 278a (Necātī); AH, fol. 38b (Ṣānī).

textual sources he had to rely on either verbal or hearsay information.[73] There is ample evidence that Sehī's continuators also used similar sources of information, though in many cases the related statements are so vague that one cannot rule out the possibility that a written source was used.[74] The poet himself was sometimes used as a source, especially for poetic samples. Poets in their own right, the tezkerecis must have been in contact with other poets, and furthermore, as literati, they had access to the meeting places of members of the literary circles of their times. But only a few tezkerecis indicate that they personally knew any of the poets on whom they were collecting facts. Curiously, it is ᶜAhdī of Bagdad, who was not a permanent resident of either Istanbul, Edirne, or Bursa, who refers to his having personal knowledge of more than one poet he includes in the *Gülşen-i Şuᶜarā*,[75] the document which contains much of the research which he conducted in Anatolia between 1552 and 1563.[76]

THE CONTENTS

The length of individual notices in the tezkeres ranges from a few words of introduction barely sufficient to identify the biographee to several pages containing detailed personal data on his life and works. The following list of the contents of these notices and the verse samples which accompany them represent but a general survey of all the available tezkeres as a corpus. Consequently, an item which is a consistent feature of a majority of the tezkeres may be totally absent in a few, while another may be a rarity and appear only in one tezkere.

1. *Titles of notices and nomenclature:* Each notice is headed by the *maḫlaṣ* or the given name of the poet. While the pseudonym is almost always the title of the notice in those sections of the tezkeres where the poets qualified for inclusion only because they had written poetry, in the tezkeres where the author has chosen to list *sulṭān*'s, statesmen, administrators, or the *meşā'iḫ* separately, the given name is more often used as the title of the notice. In such cases, the pseudonym—if assumed—is inserted in an appropriate place within the notice itself.[77] Most of the biographers make a point of supplying the given name of the poet in addition to the pseudonym. When the given name was not available or unknown, one has only the place of origin of the poet to distinguish him from others who might have selected the same *maḫlaṣ*.[78] Some can be more accurately identified only from their *laḳab*'s (nicknames) though these often constitute additional identification for the poet. There were certain Ottoman poets who had changed their pseudonyms in later life, in such cases the biographers used the last pseudonym assumed as the title of the notice and mentioned the first pseudonym somewhere in the narrative.[79]

[73] S, p. 7.

[74] The itinerant ᶜAhdī (fol. 44b, "Uṣūlī Efendi," *et passim*) had many opportunities of hearing about certain poets during his journey into Anatolia. Cf. A, fol. 252b (Ferdī); B, fol. 232 (Vālihī); K, fol. 70b (Caᶜfer Çelebi); Ry, fol. 7a (Kemāl Paşazāde Aḥmed); Sm, p. 144 (Ümīdī); E, fol. 104b (Derviş Lebīb). Beyānī indicates in one of his notices that "hearsay" information came directly from the poet concerned (fol. 137). Sometimes a member of the poet's family was used as a source. Cf. Sm, p. 110 (Çelebi Efendi).

[75] Foll. 12a (Temerrüd ᶜAlī Paşa), 21a (Pervīz Efendi), 133b (ᶜĀrifī) *et passim*. Cf. K, fol. 59a (Bāḳī); Sm, p. 228 (İsmāᶜīl Ḥaḳḳı); R, fol. 115 (Resā).

[76] Ah, foll. 4b–6a where the author presents details on his sojourn in Rūm.

[77] S, p. 13 (Bāyezīd); Ah, fol. 23a (Meḥmed Çelebi); K, fol. 30a (Selīm III); B, fol. 14 (Şehzāde Bāyezīd); Rz, p. 9 (Murād III); M, fol. 1 (Sulṭān Murād); Sm, p. 58 (Muṣṭafā I); Bg, fol. 2a (Aḥmed Ḫān); E, fol. 5a (Aḥmed Dede).

[78] Such is the case of Maᶜnevī of Salonika (A, fol. 171a; K, fol. 261a; E, fol. 107b), and of Maᶜnevī of Konya (A, fol. 171a; E, fol. 108a).

[79] K, fol. 220a (Fiġānī). Laṭīfī, who lists the same poet (pp. 267–68), did not apparently know about the earlier pseudonym of Ḥüseynī. Cf. B, fol. 209 (Nāmī);

One other detail pertaining to nomenclature which is frequently found in the notices throws light on the various reasons some poets gave for selecting a particular *maḫlaṣ*.[80]

2. *Origins:* While the place of origin is almost always mentioned in the notices, the manner in which this detail is presented frequently gives rise to vagueness and ambiguity. The more consistently encountered clichés used in recording this important detail about a poet's life do not lend themselves to accurate interpretation. They could be references to the towns in which the poets were born, to the towns they went to reside in subsequently, or to the towns in which they flourished and became known as poets. There are, however, some examples in which the poet's place of birth is clearly identified and even, though more rarely, distinguished from the locale in which he lived later.[81]

3. *Ancestry:* In keeping with the tradition so characteristic of Islamic works of an historical-biographical nature, the tezkeres abound in statements intended to help establish the identity of a poet by reference to his ancestry. Although there are instances of lengthy recitals of genealogical details—especially when an illustrious forebear is involved—[82] by and large entries regarding pedigree are brief and to the point. These rarely go beyond the bare identification of the poet's father by means of the *künye* (patronymic).[83] Occasionally this routine in the process is reversed by an allusion to the fact that the subject of the notice was the father of a distinguished son.[84]

4. *Births and deaths:* It stands to reason that the individuals who qualified for a place in the tezkeres did so only after they had uttered their verses or become known as poets. Since this presumably very rarely happened until long after their births, and since even in recent times records concerning births in the Near East were traditionally non-existent, it is hardly surprising to find that the tezkeres are far from satisfactory sources on this phase of a man's life.[85] They are infinitely more informative regarding the deaths of the poets. Details on these events vary from tezkere to tezkere[86] and from poet to poet. As a rule, however, entries relative to this subject include precise dates,[87] very approximate dates,[88] place of death[89] or of burial,[90] and cause of death.[91]

Sf, fol. 70a (Tā'ib); Ak, fol. 53 (ʿİbādī); E, fol. 106a (Dervīş Meyāl); Ş, fol. 37 (Şervet); ME, fol. 27 (Emīn); AH, fol. 7a (Pertev).

[80] S, p. 135 (Ḳandī); L, p. 274 (Ḳandī); A, fol. 105b (Hāşimī); Rz, p. 35 (Deştī); Sm, p. 374 (Şeref).

[81] S, p. 81 (Revānī); L, pp. 79–80 (Kemāl Paşazāde); Ah, fol. 56b (Başīrī); A, fol. 128a (Tabʿī); K, fol. 50a (Aftābī); B, fol. 209 (Necātī); Sm, pp. 119–20 (İbrāhīm Gülşenī); E, fol. 4b (Aḥmed Dede); ME, fol. 4 (Ahsen); Ak, fol. 25 (Naẓīf); AH, fol. 30a (Rıfḳī).

[82] A, foll. 161b–162a (Muḥyī); Sm, p. 605 (Mişlī).

[83] S, p. 125 (Fikrī); L, p. 224 (Şunʿī Bey); Ah, fol. 51a (Ehlī); K, fol. 61a (Bezmī); B, fol. 56 (Ḫusrev); Ry, fol. 53a (Ḥāletī); Rz, p. 40 (Rıfʿatī); Y, fol. 17 (ʿĀrif); G, fol. 69 (Ṣādıḳ); Sf, fol. 383a (Medḥī); Bg, fol. 31b (Remzī); R, fol. 167 (Ṭāhir); E, fol. 33a (Ḥālis Aḥmed Dede); Ş, fol. 87 (Refīʿ); ME, fol. 162 (Ṣākir); Ak, fol. 25 (Naẓīf); AH, fol. 34b (Sürūrī); T, p. 76 (Peyāmī); F, p. 231 (Ṣā'ib); AE, fol. 64 (Ṭālib); In, IV, 2015 (Ẕihnī).

[84] L, p. 108 (Caʿfer Çelebi); K, fol. 67a and B, fol. 38.

[85] Sm, p. 100 (Aḥmed Yaḥyā) *et passim*. Cf. A, fol. 366b (Ẕātī) where the poet himself is identified as the source.

[86] It is evident that not all the tezkerecis considered data of this nature valuable. Güftī, for example, does not record deaths, the earlier tezkerecis seldom do, while Riyāżī almost always does.

[87] Sm, p. 184 (Tā'ib); R, fol. 232 (Nedīm); In, I, 238 (Cevdet Paşa).

[88] Examples of this kind are too numerous to cite. They include an identification of the reign during which death took place, an approximate time within a certain year, or simply a statement indicating the time when the poet was last known to have been alive.

[89] As a few representative examples one may cite: A, foll. 122a–b (Ḥasan) *et passim*; Ry, fol. 60a (Ḥayretī) *et passim*; Bg, fol. 23a (Rāġıb) *et passim*; AH, fol. 5a (Efġān Bey) *et passim*.

[90] Ry, fol. 15a (Ebussuʿūd); Rz, p. 16 (Ehlī); Sf, fol. 26 (ʿĀdem Dede); Sm, p. 109 (Aḥmed Dede); E, fol. 111a (Nācī Dede), etc.

[91] Ah, fol. 138a (Fużūlī); R, fol. 232 (Nedīm); Ak, fol. 102 (Ḥāmid); ME, fol. 238 (Nihālī).

5. *Education and teachers:* Many of the poets listed by the tezkerecis appear to have qualified for a biographical notice solely by virtue of the fact that they had said a line or two of verse. A significant proportion of each tezkere is indeed made up of references to men to whom their biographers could ascribe only a *beyt*, or a portion of a *ġazel*, or a chronogram at most. These "lesser" poets of the Ottomans were so little known that the tezkerecis either did not consider it worthwhile to mention their educational backgrounds and the teachers under whom these were acquired, or, as seems more likely, had no way of obtaining details on this aspect of their lives. Furthermore, many of the biographees who fall into this category belonged to social groups which did not normally receive more than a very elementary education. Among such groups one may number the various branches of the imperial armed forces and in particular their lower echelons, the tradesmen, craftsmen, merchants, and farmers. Yet information of this kind relative to the so-called educated classes, sometimes, is also defective. These classes, and especially the *ʿülemā*, underwent prolonged and rigorous training in the *medrese*'s before they could attain their positions of responsibility. Despite this, the tezkerecis, in general, have remarkably few details to offer concerning the education of these men. Most tezkerecis omit any reference to the exact type or extent of training received. This may be so because of the similarity of curricula and length of training required from each candidate for office. One may argue that there was no need for the tezkerecis to elaborate once they had stated that a certain biographee had been granted his *mülāzemet* (eligibility for office), or *ḫilāfet*, or had left the palace school to serve in the provinces (*taşra çıkmak*). It was presumably obvious to the potential reader what these scholars had been through, and the entries relating to these matters were made accordingly.[92] This lack of adequate and precise information on the education of the poets is partially compensated by the fairly consistent recording of the names of the principal teachers involved. This is certainly the case in the longer and more detailed tezkeres where one can find the name of at least one teacher.

6. *Professions and careers:* It follows from the remarks made in the previous section that the tezkeres, even the brief and "unpadded" ones, are useful for determining the social class or professional group to which the poets belonged. Information of this order is in the form of citations ranging from single words like "judge," "physician," "janissary," etc. to slightly more elaborate sentences like "because he was proficient in the science of medicine, he was employed in that capacity."[93] As far as can be ascertained the poets featured in the tezkeres represent every conceivable social class or professional group, many of the mystic orders, and

[92] The earlier tezkerecis like Sehī and Laṭīfī and the authors of some of the shorter tezkeres of later periods do no more than identify the section of society to which the poets belonged. Cf. S, p. 65 (Niẓāmī) *et passim*; L, p. 194 (Sūzī) *et passim*; Ah, fol. 50a (Ümīdī) *et passim*; Rz, p. 49 (Sinānī) *et passim*; Y, fol. 22 (Meẕāḳī). For examples of more detailed entries, see K, fol. 46a (İsḥaḳ Çelebi) *et passim*; E, fol. 13a–b (Meḥmed Berrī) *et passim*; and the more modern, Western inspired citations such as In, IV, 2062 (Ziya Gökalp). One conspicuous exception to the general trend followed by the more traditional tezkerecis is Sālim's unusually long list of data on Esʿad Ḫōca's education (p. 78).

[93] S, p. 57 (Hümāmī); L, p. 103 (Behārī); Ah, fol. 78b (Ḫülūsī); A, fol. 210a (Saʿdī); K, fol. 235b (Kevşerī); B, fol. 91 (Seyyidī); Ry, fol. 43b (Şānī Bey); Rz, p. 50 (Sipāhī); Y, fol. 4 (Ābī); G, fol. 32 (Ḥamdī); M, fol. 11 (Dürrī); Sf, fol. 102 (Ḥamdī); Bg, fol. 20a (Rāzī); R, fol. 134 (Sirācī); Ṣ, fol. 16 (Esʿad Ġālib); ME, fol. 132 (Ḥalīmī); AH, fol. 22b (Ẕikrī Baba); T, p. 102 (Cenānī); F, p.148 (ʿAlī Rıżā Paşa); AE, fol. 112 (Vāhib); In, II, 701 (ʿİlmī). Since the tezkeres of Esrār Dede and ʿĀkif are restricted to certain professions and classes this discussion does not apply to them.

versifiers of every walk of life in the Ottoman Empire; all treated equally by the tezkerecis. However, hardly any references are made to non-Muslim groups who might have produced poets who became famous in stringing verses in Turkish.[94] Information concerning the careers of the poets includes an occasional allusion to the place of appointment, the date at which this took place, and the date of dismissal or retirement from it. While mention of one office or post is usual, the detailed listing of posts held over a period of years is most uncommon.[95]

7. *Characters and appearances of the poets:* There is very little to be found in the tezkeres by way of detail on the physical appearances and the characters of the poets. A number of vague expressions which might be true and accurate descriptions of the poets are used so indiscriminately, it would seem, and are so often repeated that they are undoubtedly devoid of any real significance. Discounting the numerous passages which are at times quite out of proportion to the average size of the notices and which are written in very dithyrambic terms describing the persons and natures of the poets, there is next to nothing resembling character analysis. Such expressions as "pleasant disposition" or "charming nature" are used with so little discrimination that they cannot be regarded as reliable. These would appear, rather, to apply to most literary men, and to be standard terms describing the class and not any particular poet. One should point out, however, that there are some rare and refreshing passages which are so emphatic and so totally unlike the expressions referred to above both in meaning and language that one may not dismiss the possibility that they are serious attempts at recording accurate and objective descriptions.[96] There were few poetesses in Ottoman society who were sufficiently conspicuous in literary circles to warrant mention in the tezkeres. Those who were selected for inclusion, however, must have presented the tezkerecis with certain problems; clichés that were appropriate in the case of men were obviously out of the question when describing a woman. Mihrī's[97] "unusual" habit of enjoying the company of men, to give one example, forced Ḳınalızāde to go out of his way to assure the reader that the poetess indulged in this without blemishing her honor.[98]

8. *Additional biographical, anecdotal, and incidental material:* The marital status of the poets does not appear to have been deemed important enough to receive the attention of the biographers. The outstanding entry of this order is made by a tezkereci who mentions the marriage contract, names the bride, and even identifies her father.[99] The same eighteenth-century tezkereci provides us with one of the rare examples of the non-literary talents of a poet who was apparently proficient as a builder and exterior decorator.[100] By way of another illustration of an isolated detail of a biographical nature, we might mention the description of the murder of a poet. The tezkereci was probably prompted to dwell on the incident because of the unusual circumstances surrounding it.[101]

[94] See AE, fol. 56 (Ṣīrīn).

[95] One such rare example of detailed listing is that given for İsḥaḳ Çelebi by Sālim (pp. 67–68), who traces the poet's career step by step for the years 1703 to 1717.

[96] L, p. 112 (Ṣānī), who is followed by K, fol. 67b and B, fol. 38. Cf. Ah, fol. 151 (Kevṣerī); K, fol. 55a (Ānī); Rz, p. 26 (Ḥāletī).

[97] D. 1506, see GOD, I, 306–09; HOP, II, 123–35; EI(1), III, 490; IA, VIII, 305.

[98] K, fol. 266a. Cf. also the comments on the same lady in S, p. 122; L, p. 320; A, fol. 173b; B, fol. 200.

[99] Sf, fol. 327 (Fenāyī).

[100] *Op. cit.* fol. 322 (Fennī).

[101] L, p. 112 (Ṣānī).

The compilers of the longer tezkeres occasionally enlarge their notices by including in them anecdotal material which is frequently most instructive and undoubtedly adds to the value of the notices. These supplementary and digressional insertions usually come under such sub-headings as *Laṭīfe* (Jest), or *Muṭāyebe* (Pleasantry). That not all of these can be characterized as mere padding may be demonstrated by referring to two such examples. There is the case, for instance, of the suggestion that since both Aḥmed Paşa[102] and Aḥmed of Gallipoli[103] wrote poetry under the same pseudonym there was the possibility of confusion between the two. When asked for his reaction to this, Aḥmed Paşa is reported to have replied; "As long as they do not attribute his empty words to me, it does not matter if they ascribe my excellent words to him."[104] Or again, the case of the versified rebuttals to a *beyt* uttered by an unnamed poet who was not particularly complimentary to the city of Edirne. Out of these rebuttals the tezkereci singles out as the best the one made by the early Süleymanic poet Sāġarī.[105] Even if in a minor way, both these examples make a contribution to our knowledge of Ottoman poetry. The former records the evaluation of a minor poet by Aḥmed Paşa, while in the latter we have the judgment of a tezkereci concerning the talent of another minor poet. Such digressions undoubtedly render the notices—often very dry and repetitive—more pleasant to read and even entertaining.

In addition to material of a purely biographical nature, the tezkeres contain observations of an incidental character designed, it would seem, either to inform, or to display the versatility and erudition of the tezkereci, or to supply some relief from the more mechanical process of recording facts about the poets. These observations almost always relate to poetry or the poets, but occasionally they reveal that the biographer was prompted to make them by considerations not directly related to the subject of the notice. Esrār Dede's definition of a technical term pertaining to the *dervīş* orders, and his remarks concerning the granting of fiefs to the poets by the *sulṭān*'s,[106] or ʿĀşıḳ Çelebi's instructive comments on the financial dealings of some poets[107] are but a few examples of the range of informative material preserved in this collection of biographical works.

9. *The literary activities of the poets:* No serious biography would be complete without some reference to a subject's contribution—whether in prose or in verse—to the general literature of the society in which he lived, and the tezkerecis make an effort to fulfill this requirement. The more conscientious among them attempt to record as many as possible of the known literary products of the men and women they pass in review, and on very rare occasions even offer their personal evaluations of these works. These catalogs, some of which are lengthy and detailed,[108] of contributions which they ascribe to the biographees include prose works like histories,[109] *ḥāşiye*'s or *şerḥ*'s (commentaries), *risāle*'s (essays) on a

[102] GOD, I, 198–205; HOP, II, 40–69; IA, I, 187–92; EI(2), I, 292.

[103] L, p. 85 (Aḥmed-i Rūmī); GOD, I, 205.

[104] For other interpolations of various types, see Ah, fol. 86b (Riyāżī); A, fol. 252b (Ferdī) *et passim*; K, fol. 44a (Aḥmedī) *et passim*; Ry, fol. 138a (Nāmī) *et passim*; Şm, pp. 125–26 (Ülfetī) *et passim*; F, p. 353 (Kānī).

[105] L, pp. 181–82. Cf. GOD, I, 244; HOP, II, 370.

[106] E, fol. 68b (Dervīş Ṣāḥib) and fol. 41a (Dervīş Dede) respectively.

[107] A, fol. 367a (Ẕātī) *et passim*.

[108] K, fol. 237a (Lāmiʿī); A, fol. 265b (Fużūlī); Ry, foll. 60a–b (Ẕātī); Rz, p. 40 (Rıfʿatī); ME, fol. 57 (Beliġ).

[109] L, p. 81 (Kemāl Paşazāde); A, fol. 183b (Neşrī) *et passim*; Sf, fol. 271 (ʿAbdī); AH, fol. 44a (Ẓarīf).

variety of topics, a multitude of original or imitative verses (*naẓīre*'s), and translations of all types.[110] It should be noted too that we are sometimes informed about tezkeres in these passages which are no longer extant.[111]

10. *The poetic citations:* Even a brief description, such as is being given here, of the contents of the Ottoman tezkeres must include some comment on the more anthological facets of these works. Whatever their ulterior motives may have been, the tezkerecis' declared purpose in compiling these tezkeres was, after all, the preservation of the verses of the poets as well as the collecting of facts relating to their lives. As was the case in many of the other aspects of the tezkeres thus far considered, in this also there is a good deal of variation in both substance and size in the presentation of these verses. In the main, it can be said that the more famous figures in the history of Ottoman poetry not only have a much wider selection of their verses recorded but are also given a considerably larger representation. This is undoubtedly owing to the fact that many more of these prolific poets had collected *dīvān*'s and were already better represented in the *mecmūᶜa*'s which served as sources for the tezkerecis. This gave them a greater selection of source material to draw upon. Consequently we may assume that they were in a better position to exercise more discrimination in their choice of verses and so tended to record only the best and most characteristic verses of a poet. We may even go one step further and suggest that any examination of the critical appreciation and judgments of the tezkerecis could be fruitful if based on the brief but often telling introductory remarks which the tezkerecis make in presenting this material. Such an investigation could lead to a more or less correct appraisal of the critical standards, tastes, and preferences of not only the tezkerecis but also of other Ottoman literary critics. At any rate, the circumstances which governed the selection of verses by the tezkerecis made it possible for them, when necessary, to restrict their illustrations to single couplets. In the more substantial tezkeres, however, we find that sometimes entire *ġazel*'s or a significant portion of a *ḳaṣīde* or of a *meṣnevī* might be recorded. There are numerous *miṣrā*'s inserted within the narrative which constitutes the substance of the notice. These seldom represent a poet's talent. More often than not, in keeping with the Islamic tradition, they serve to justify a point made by the biographer or to associate an event with a line of poetry once uttered by a famous poet. All the tezkerecis consistently give samples of verses at the conclusion of each notice. The *beyt* is the most frequently recurring example, and when such a couplet is part of a *ġazel* or *ḳaṣīde*, it often represents the *maṭlaᶜ* which could be the best couplet of a poem.[112] Among the other verse forms which are found in the tezkeres, we may mention the *ḳıṭᶜa*, *rubāᶜī*, *muḫammes*, *taᵓrīḫ*, *muᶜammā*, *luġaz*, *naᶜṭ*, and *şarḳı*.[113]

In the foregoing descriptive analysis of

[110] S, p. 43 (Şemseddīn Aḥmed Çelebi); L, p. 192 (Sinān Paşa); Ah, fol. 23b (Kāmī Efendi); A, foll. 177a–b (Necātī); Ry, fol. 143b (Niyāzī); Rz, p. 104 (Vişālī); Sf, fol. 251 (ᶜAzīzī); Sm, p. 68 (İsḥaḳ Efendi) are a few of the many examples which could be listed.

[111] Sf, fol. 264 (ᶜİzzetī); AH, fol. 7a (Pertev) and fol. 21b (Mīr Dāniş); ME, fol. 68 (Pertev).

[112] HOP, I, 81. For some examples, see S, p. 47 (Faḫrī); L, p. 239 (ᶜAbdī); Ah, fol. 48b (Āgehī); K, fol. 107b (Dervīş); Sm, p. 356 (Seᶜīd); F, p. 222 (Şemᶜī).

[113] S, p. 53 (Şeyḫī); L, p. 111 (Temennāyī); Ah, fol. 38a (Süleymān Efendi); A, fol. 113b (Vüşūlī); K, fol. 220b (Fiġānī); Ry, fol. 137b (Nādirī); Rz, p. 105 (Velī); Y, fol. 11 (Şānī); G, fol. 60 (Şehdī); M, fol. 26 (ᶜĀlī); Sf, fol. 299 (Fütuḥī); Sm, p. 99 (Emīn); Bg, fol. 39a (Sūzī); R, fol. 137 (Sālim); E, fol. 14b (Dervīş Pervāne); Ş, fol. 37 (Şervet); ME, fol. 54 (Bezmī); Ak, fol. 19 (Yāver); AH, fol. 66b (Lāmiᶜī); T, p. 65 (Behāyī); F, p. 331 (Fiṭnet Ḫānım); AE, fol. 64 (Ṭālib); In, I, 88 (ᶜĀkif Paşa).

the tezkeres no attempt was made to evaluate them as source materials of a critical nature demonstrating the judgments of the individual tezkerecis or reflecting the literary standing of particular poets among their peers and subsequent critics. However, even the most cursory examination of the tezkeres would indicate that they could prove to be a beneficial area of initial investigation to assess the Ottoman notion of criticism and literary standards. Such an investigation would necessarily have to be preceded by the systematic isolation, definition, and evaluation of the seemingly vague, ambiguous, and often confusing terms utilized by the tezkerecis both in the biographical notices and in their remarks introducing the verse samples. As indicated earlier, it was not within the purview of the present article to undertake such a task.

Despite their inadequacies, which are relative and evident only in comparison with the completely different modern Western concepts of biographical literature, these tezkeres constitute an invaluable source for Ottoman poetry.[114] Supplemented by information within the folios of a variety of biographical works produced by the Ottomans, and complemented by anthological collections of which there is an abundance in Turkish and other libraries, this hitherto little known and badly appreciated body of literary material can form the basis of more extensive and conclusive studies on Ottoman *dīvān* poetry. These works were the productions of people who cared about literature and availed themselves of this only genre allowed to them by tradition to write about it, and who, within these limits, frequently succeeded in achieving some measure of objectivity.

[114] Cf. Mehmet Halit, "Teskereler ve Teskereciler," *Hayat*, CVII (1928), 44–45 where a completely negative and unjustified evaluation is presented.

The biographies of poets are further relevant to any serious study of Ottoman literature because they act as guides and indexes to the literary generations. Had these not been available even under present conditions,[115] it would have been necessary to create them. This task would probably have been impossible given the methods of Oriental book production and the state of even the most accessible records. This would have resulted in the loss to us of many significant Ottoman poets.

[115] The majority of these tezkeres are still in manuscript form and, in addition, the obvious divergencies which are evident in numerous recensions of some of them call for the scholarly preparation and publication of critical editions of these. Since several of them appear to exist in the form of unique manuscripts, such an undertaking should not prove too difficult as regards some. As for those which are already in print, these are undoubtedly publications based solely on one or two of the many manuscripts which are available for each work and therefore fall short of the standard required for reliable and accurate texts. As, furthermore, these editions are no longer obtainable, new critical editions of all the Ottoman tezkeres are more than ever desirable and urgently needed.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

A	ʿĀṣık Çelebi, "Meşāʿir aṣ-Ṣuʿarā," Süleymaniye MS, Aşır Efendi 268.
AE	ʿAlī Emīrī, "Esāmī-yi Şuʿarā-yı Āmid," Millet MS, Ali Emiri 781/1.
AH	ʿĀrif Ḥikmet, "Teẕkere-i Şuʿarā," Millet MS, Ali Emiri 789.
Ah	ʿAhdī, "Gülşen-i Şuʿarā," British Museum MS, Add. 7876.
Ak	ʿĀkif, "Mirʾāt-ı Şiʿir," Millet MS, Ali Emiri 773.
B	Beyānī, "Teẕkere-i Şuʿarā," Millet MS, Ali Emiri 757.
Bg	Belīġ, "Nuḫbet al-Āṯār liẕeyl-i Zübdet el-Eşʿār," Ist. Univ. MS, TY1182.
E	Esrār Dede, "Teẕkere-i Şuʿarā-yı Mevleviye," Süleymaniye MS, Halet Efendi Mülhakı 109.
EI(1)	*Encyclopaedia of Islam* (First edition).
EI(2)	*Encyclopaedia of Islam* (New edition).
F	Faṭīn, *Teẕkere-i Ḫātimet el-Eşʿār* (Istanbul, 1271).
G	Güftī, "Teşrīfāt aṣ-Ṣuʿarā," Millet MS, Ali Emiri Manzum 1324.
GOD	J. von Hammer-Purgstall, *Geschichte der osmanischen Dichtkunst bis auf unsere Zeit* (Vienna, 1836–1838), 4 vols.
HOP	E. J. W. Gibb, *A History of Ottoman Poetry* (London, 1900–1909), 6 vols. (Vols. II–VI ed. by Edward G. Browne).
IA	*İslâm Ansiklopedisi*.

In	İ. M. K. İnal, *Son Asır Türk Şairleri* (Istanbul, 1930–1942), 4 vols.
K	Ḳınalızāde, "Teẕkere-i Şuʿarā," British Museum MS, Add. 24957.
L	Laṭīfī, *Teẕkere-i Laṭīfī* (Istanbul, 1314).
M	Mücīb, "Teẕkere-i Şuʿarā," Ist. Univ. MS, TY3913.
ME	Meḥmed Esʿad, "Bāġçe-i Ṣafā-endūz," Ist. Univ. MS, TY2095.
ʿOM	M. Ṭāhir, *ʿOṣmānlı Müʾellifleri* (Istanbul, 1333–1342), 3 vols.
R	Rāmiz, "Ādāb-ı Ẓurafā," Millet MS, Ali Emiri 762.
Ry	Riyāżī, "Riyāż-ı Şuʿarā," Nuruosmaniye MS, 3724.
Rz	Rıżā, *Teẕkere-i Rıżā* (Istanbul, 1316).
S	Sehī, *Teẕkere-i Sehī* (Istanbul, 1325).
Sf	Ṣafāʾī "Teẕkere-i Ṣuʿarā," Millet MS, Ali Emiri 771.
Sm	Sālim, *Teẕkere-i Sālim* (Istanbul, 1315).
SO	M. Süreyyā, *Sicill-i ʿOṣmānī* (Istanbul, 1311–1313), 4 vols.
Ş	Şefḳat, "Teẕkere-i Şuʿarā," Millet MS, Ali Emiri 770.
T	Tevfīḳ, *Ḳāfile-i Şuʿarā* (Istanbul, 1290).
TTY	*İstanbul Kitaplıkları Tarih-Coğrafya Yazmaları Katalogları. I. Türkçe Tarih Yazmaları. 7. Fasikül: Biyografiye ait eserler. c. Şairler Tezkireleri* (Istanbul, 1947).
Y	Yümnī, "Teẕkere-i Şuʿarā," Millet MS, Ali Emiri 781.

For further information on the location of other MSS in Istanbul, see the penultimate item in the list of abbreviations, which is defective in that it does not include those MSS housed in the rich collection in the University of Istanbul Library, nor is there any reference to the collection in the Topkapı Sarayı Library. For the latter, see F. E. Karatay, *Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Kütüphanesi Türkçe Yazmalar Kataloğu* (Istanbul, 1961), I, 380ff.