Lesson Plan for Teach Turkey
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Ottoman Lyric Poetry

Author of Lesson:
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Length of Lesson:
3 class blocks (or 4-5 45-minute periods)

Grade Level:
12, post-secondary (adaptable to grades 7-11 also)

Subject Area:
English, World Literature

Introduction/Rationale:

Although its capital city and over one-third of its territory lay within the continent of Europe, the Ottoman Empire has consistently been regarded as a place apart, inextricably divided from the West by differences of religion and culture. It has been perceived as militaristic, barbaric, tyrannical, and exotic; such stereotypes have led historians to measure the Ottoman world against a Western standard and to find it lacking. As a result, outside of Turkey, Ottoman Turkish literature is rarely included in any canonical anthology or representation of world literature; in fact, it is almost invisible. Furthermore, even Islamic Studies typically downplays the significance of the Ottoman cultural legacy, often presenting Ottoman literature as derivative of Persian and Arabic traditions and accepting it rarely as an appropriate topic of study in its own right. For the Ottomans, literature was poetry first and foremost, and nearly all the poetry was love poetry. The Ottoman love lyric (or gazel) has had, since the time of the Troubadours, a strong influence on European conceptions of love and love poetry, a fact that Western literary history fails to recognize. This unit exposes students to a necessary but little-known body of literature, involving them in the examination of selected aspects of Turkish culture and history. Much of what we most often identify as "Islamic" or "Middle Eastern" (in terms of music, food, architecture, dress, art) is a product of the Ottoman synthesis of a vast array of multicultural elements that coexisted under the canopy of Ottoman rule. Understanding both that students have varied learning styles and that literary imagery is multi-sensory, this unit is interdisciplinary, integrating Ottoman literature with art, music, and history.

Lesson Objectives:

After the lesson, students will be able to:

♥identify the "gazel" (or love lyric) as a cross-cultural phenomenon in the Middle East adapted and perfected by Ottoman style.
♥analyze an Ottoman lyric to determine its structure, style, intent and imagery.
♥recognize that Western writers were influenced by the Ottoman lyric, particularly during the Renaissance.
♥identify the various motifs in Ottoman lyric poetry.
♥understand how historical and geographical information as well as various cultural aspects of

Ottoman Turkish culture relate to the production of lyric poetry.
♥write an Ottoman-inspired lyric based upon direct reading and understanding of traditional images and themes.
♥explain how elements of Turkish culture are revealed in the poetry.
♥relate Ottoman poetry to the larger context of both the Eastern and Islamic literature that they have studied in the course
♥relate Ottoman poetry to the larger context of both the Western literature that they have studied in the course

World Literature Connections :
Hebrew love lyric ("Song of Solomon"), the Quran, Rumi, Hafiz, the European medieval romance (Breton lai), the Renaissance sonnet

General Background Notes for Instructor:

The Empire's elite spoke a language called Osmanlica, or Ottoman Turkish, which was loaded with Arabic and Persian words and influenced by their grammatical rules. Ottoman poets used Osmanlica to create, and their readers were an elite group privy to this multicultural language. It was unintelligible to common people, who had the freedom to use their own languages.

Ottoman poets often understood, enjoyed and created poems quiet differently than do today's poets. Stylistic complexity was valued both by Ottoman poets and audiences, and the Ottoman lyric often reveals a wild flight of rhetorical fancy. The themes, metaphors, and stories of Ottoman poetry show little change over time; however, the poets were extremely resourceful in inventing new conceits, relations, and comparisons. As Walter Andrews says, "This constant creativity is what the Ottomans know as originality." Furthermore, the poets easily and regularly transcended languages; a single Ottoman poet might write in Turkish, Persian, Arabic and Eastern Turkish (Chaghatay). Thus, each lyric is a storehouse of multicultural elements.

Specific and peculiar devices were used by Ottoman poets:
♥*Matla'*: "the place where the heavenly body rises," the first couplet.
♥*Redîf*: "a person who rides into battle on the back of someone else's saddle," a repeated word that rides behind the rhyme and is the same in every rhyming line
♥Rhyme: The first couplet has two rhymes; the rest of the lines will have the same rhyme but only in the second-half line.
♥Relationships between words: use of words coming from the same root, or words belonging to a group of related concepts
♥Multiple meaning
♥Grouping of like things
♥Artistic exaggeration
♥Signature couplet: crowning couplet, or *tâj beyt.* It contains the pen name of the poet.
♥Absence of title

There are many common images and themes in Ottoman poetry, which will be explained at greater length in the "Instructor Notes for Poems section. Among these are the following:

♥moths to the candle (annihilation of lover by love)
♥shah or sultan (the beloved, the ruler of the heart's domain)
♥mirror (the purified self)

♥cypress (tall, graceful beloved)
♥nightingale and rose (lover and beloved)
♥haunting jinn (beloved)
♥dervish attire or rituals (the lover consumed by divine love)

Materials:

♥Ottoman Lyric Poetry: An Anthology. Edited and translated by Walter Andrews, Najaat Black, Mehmet Kalpakli. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1997.
♥Süleyman the Magnicent Poet. Edited and translated by Talat S. Halman. Istanbul: Dost Publications, 1987. (Bought by lesson's author in Istanbul on Teach Turkey trip)
♥Others materials are listed in each daily lesson that follows.

Suggested Readings:

♥Andrews, Walter. Poetry's Voice, Society's Song: Ottoman Lyric Poetry. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1985.
©Andrews, Walter G., and Mehmet Kalpakli. The Age of the Beloveds: Love and the Beloved in Early-Modern Ottoman and European Culture and Society. Chapel Hill: Duke University Press, 2005.
♥Goffman, Daniel. The Ottoman Empire and Early Modern Europe. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 2002.
♥Holbrook, Victoria Rowe. The Unreadable Shores of Love: Turkish Modernity and Mystic Romance. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1994.

Web Links:

♥The Republic of Turkey
This official website of the Republic of Turkey includes links to all things Turkish.
http://www.turkishembassy.org

♥Turkish Odyssey: History
This tourism guide provides a complete look at Turkish history, including the Ottoman Turks.
http://www.turkishodyssey.com/turkey/history/history.htm

♥Ottoman Souvenir
This website is an artistic approach to general information about Ottoman Empire, including information about music, calligraphy, cuisine, porcelain, folklore, maps, and history.
http://www.ottomansouvenir.com

♥Introduction to the History of the Ottoman Empire
This website gives myriad links to sites dealing with the Ottoman Empire
http://www.tau.ac.il/~shefer/websrcs.html

♥Osmanli 700
Celebrating the 700-year anniversary of the Ottoman Empire, this awesome website presents a wealth of information about everything Ottoman.
http://www.osmanli700.gen.tr/english/engindex.html

©**Tulumba**
This is the largest Turkish megastore in the U.S. It's a great place to buy (reasonably) the cultural items mentioned in the lessons.
http://tulumba.com

Arizona Standards :

♥Reading Strand 1: Reading Process, Concept 4: Vocabulary, PO2: Identify the meaning of metaphors based on literary allusions and conceits.

♥Reading Strand 2: Comprehending Literary Text, Concept 1: Elements of Literature, PO1: Evaluate the author's use of literary elements. PO2: Interpret figurative language, including, personification, hyperbole, symbolism, allusion, imagery, extended metaphor/conceit, and allegory with emphasis upon how the writer uses language to evoke readers' emotions. PO3: Analyze a writer's word choice and imagery as a means to appeal to the reader's senses and to set the tone, providing evidence from the text to support the analysis. PO4: Compare (and contrast) literary texts that express a universal theme, providing textual evidence. PO7: Explain how meaning is enhanced through various features of poetry, including sound, structure, graphic elements.

♥Reading Strand 2, Concept 2: Historical and Cultural Aspects of Literature, PO1: Describe the historical and cultural aspects found in cross-cultural works of literature. PO2: Relate literary works and their authors to the seminal ideas of their eras. PO3: Analyze culturally or historically significant literary works of world literature that reflect the major literary periods and traditions.

♥Writing Strand 3, Applications, Concept 5: Literary Response, PO1: Write literary analyses.

Procedures:
See each individual lesson below for specific procedures for the designated class period.

Evaluation:

Students will complete one or more of the following assignments at the end of the unit:

♥Write a comparison/contrast essay that places Ottoman poetry within the larger framework of world literature, looking specifically at connections to the production of literature in the other cultures we have studied (i.e. Middle Eastern/Islamic, Early European).
♥Write a poem in the Ottoman style, using some of the common themes and images. Attach an analysis of the poem that explains how the poem corresponds with Ottoman culture and literary style.
♥Selecting an additional poem (other than the ones presented in the lessons), write an analysis of the poem, identifying conceits, themes, imagery, sound, structure, as well as historical and cultural aspects.

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Lesson Activity 1 (Preparation): Overture to Ottoman Culture and Poetry

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Introduction:

The Ottoman Empire was a vast state founded in the late 13th cent. by Turkish tribes in Anatolia and ruled by the descendants of Osman I until its dissolution in 1918. Though modern Turkey formed only part of the empire, the terms "Turkey" and "Ottoman Empire" were often used interchangeably. The Ottoman state began as one of many small Turkish states that emerged in Asia Minor during the breakdown of the empire of the Seljuk Turks. Ottoman Turks began to absorb the other states, and during the reign (1451-81) of Muhammad II they ended all other local Turkish dynasties. Turkish expansion reached its peak in the 16th century under Selim I and Sulayman the Magnificent. In addition to Turkey, it grew to include Romania, Moldova, Bulgaria, southern Ukraine, Georgia, Armenia, Iraq, Kuwait, Cyprus, Syria, Lebanon, Israel, Palestine, Jordan, eastern and western Saudi Arabia, Oman, Bahrain, eastern Yemen, Egypt, northern Libya, Tunisia, and northern Algeria.

Turkey was a medieval state--economically, socially, and militarily. However, through most of its period, it was not a state in the modern sense of the word; it can be considered more of a military administration. It is important to note that the Empire was primarily unaffected by the developments in the rest of Europe. Though the court of Constantinople was known for corruption, and the administration of provinces and vassal states depended upon extortion of the subjects, there were some positive features in Ottoman culture that often are overlooked in historical studies of the era. For one, the religious toleration generally extended to all non-Muslims and offered more security than in Christian states up until the 18th century. Greeks and Armenians, for example, held a privileged status and were very influential in commerce and politics. For most of its inhabitants, it offered career possibilities. And it offered peace and relative harmony to all despite cultural and ethnic differences.

The reign of Suleyman I is considered a Renaissance period in Ottoman history, for it generated the flowering of Turkish literature, art, and architecture. It was in the midst of this milieu that the remarkable Ottoman poets excelled in their multicultural and multidisciplinary lyrics.

Materials:

♥Ottoman maps and maps of current Middle East and Europe
♥Video: Suleyman the Magnificent
♥Assigned readings from Andrews and Halman for homework (See lesson activity 2 for these)

Procedure:

♥After a general introduction to Turkey and the Ottoman Empire, give students maps of Europe, Asia, Africa and the Mediterranean Sea, showing them the vastness and diversity of Ottoman rule, especially during Suleyman's time.

♥Show the Discovery Channel video on Suleyman, informing students that they will be reading the sultan's poetry as part of tomorrow's assignment.

♥After watching the video, ask students to identify the ways in which Suleyman influenced the Empire's (and Western Europe's) culture development.

♥Give students time in class to research the different regions of the Ottoman Empire and keep a journal of impressions. (You may want to use the above-noted internet sites or allow them to peruse some books you choose for this purpose.)

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Lesson 2: The Image of the Sultan

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Introduction:

The reign of Sultan Süleyman (1520-1566) marks the zenith of political, economic, and cultural development under the Ottomans. Known in English as "the Magnificent" because of the grandeur of his court, he is usually known in Turkish as *kanuni*, or "law-giver," because he issued a set of laws harmonizing traditional Islamic and Ottoman legal codes. Named "Süleyman," the Arabic and Turkish form of Solomon, the Magnificent considered himself a worthy successor to his namesake, the biblical king of Jewish, Muslim and Christian lore.

Süleyman inherited a vast empire and a resourceful administration, and his reign was interposed by military campaigns east and west. Taking up arms persistently against his rivals, the Safavids in Iran, he captured major Shiite shrines in Baghdad and southern Iraq. He also played a leading role in European and Mediterranean affairs.

Süleyman's favorite wife, Hurrem, known in the West as Roxelana, occupied an amazingly important place in his court. His love for her was, by all accounts, extraordinary, and his love poetry to her, written under the pseudonym Muhibbi, was copied and illuminated by court artists. The sultan's love for art extended beyond the personal. Under his rule, Istanbul became the center of visual art, music, writing, and philosophy in the Islamic world. This cultural flowering represents the most creative period in Ottoman history; almost all cultural forms associated with the Ottomans date from this time.

Because Süleyman was such a patron of Ottoman lyric poetry, many poets earned fame and fortune during his reign, embedding within their works the familiar image of the "sultan" in reference to the beloved. Among these were Hayalî and Bâkî, two poets who will be presented alongside Süleyman in today's readings.

Hayalî, who spent much of his youth living among the dervishes, came to the attention of Süleyman early in his life. The Sultan was pleased by the handsome young man and showed him great favor, bestowing many gifts on him and eventually granting him a yearly salary and then the income from major fiefs.

Bâkî, during his appointment as a theological professor, attracted the attention of Süleyman and became a member of his intellectual circle. This remarkable honor confirmed Bâkî as the acknowledged supreme poet of his age. In addition to his fame as a poet, he was also appointed by Süleyman and his successors the highest positions available to members of the learned class,

including the military judgeships of the Eastern (Anatolian) and Western (Rumelian) provinces.

Hayretî is another poet who used the familiar motif of the "sultan" but in a more subversive manner. At some point during the early years of Süleyman's reign, he came to Istanbul and began to submit poems to noted patrons, and it appears that he impressed the court at first. However, his poem "We are not the slaves of Süleyman" probably ended hopes of a career at court, for it seemed to reject service to the Sultans and claim devotion to an unnamed shah.

Materials:

♥Ottoman Lyric Poetry: An Anthology, edited and translated by Walter Andrews, Najaat Black, Mehmet Kalpakli. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1997.
♥Süleyman the Magnicent Poet, edited and translated by Talat S. Halman. Istanbul: Dost Publications, 1987.
♥Suleyman the Magnificent. Discovery Channel video. 1998. Designated to correspond to National Standards.
♥Printed image of the tughra: Websites about the tughra that discuss and provide these images:
http://www.tughranet.f2s.com/tn2000.htm
http://www.tughranet.f2s.com/tughraen.htm
♥Slide show of Ottoman palaces, mosques, castles (e.g. Topkapi, Rumeli Hisar, Blue Mosque). Author uses her own photos taken in Turkey, but the following websites provide pictures that may be displayed in a PowerPoint presentation.
Topkapi: http://www.ee.bilkent.edu.tr/~history/topkapi.html
Rumeli Hisar: http://www.virtualtourist.com/travel/Middle_East/Turkey/Istanbul_Ili/Istanbul-1837624/Things_To_Do-Istanbul-rumeli_hisari-R-1.html
♥Cultural objects

Assigned poems:

Süleyman's "My very own queen," "I am the Sultan of Love," "Till the day I die," "The sparkle of my sighs," and "Out of the cup of love we drink wine"; Bâkî's "Oh beloved, since the origin" and "Your rebellious glance"; Hayreti's "We are not the slaves of Suleyman," Hayálî's "We are among those"

Procedures:

♥Discuss with students these opening questions: Do you notice any common images, themes, structure in the assigned poems? Explain to them that today's lesson will focus upon the important and frequent image of the "sultan" in Ottoman poetry.

♥Inform students that the image of the sultan pervades not only Ottoman art but is also seen in current cultural artifacts in Turkey. Distribute a copy of the tugrah (the calligraphic signature of the sultan) and define. Show samples of the tugrah in contemporary cultural objects that one can buy in Turkey: e.g., pendant medallion, pillows, belly dance sash, miniature tiles.

♥Walk students through a general Power Point slide show about Ottoman structures of power within the sultan's domain, including Rumeli Hisar, Blue Mosque and Topkapi.

♥Before reading the poems of Süleyman, review with students the information they learned about him in yesterday's video. See instructor notes for concise biographical information.

♥Ask the students: In what ways was Suleyman like his namesake Solomon and in what ways was he different? Compare to the poetry in "Song of Solomon."

♥In discussing the first poem “My very own queen,” help students to understand the line, “my Istanbul, my Karaman, and all the Anatolian lands that are mine” by showing slides of Turkey that provide direct images of the landscape of Ottoman poetry. (Author uses her own slides, but see materials listed above for access to presentable photos.) See the instructor notes that follow for specifics about the geographical references that Suleyman used to show the far-reaching extent of not only his political domain but also of his love for Roxelana.

♥How has Roxelana been portrayed? Discuss the role of women in the culture of the Ottoman Empire. (A particularly wonderful text for information about women and power in Islam and the Ottoman context is Leila Ahmed's Women and Gender in Islam: Historical Roots of a Modern Debate.) Tell students that tomorrow's lesson will include a poem by an Ottoman woman.

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Lesson 3: The Garden and the Gathering in Ottoman Lyric Poetry

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Introduction:

Ottoman culture was extremely social, filled with people who love to be with others. As a result, the Ottoman lyric itself was most often a song of love and desire expressed within a gathering (*mejilis)* of dear friends. Of course, such a gathering involved food, music, drink, dance, and art. These aspects of the gathering were as integral to Ottoman lyric poetry as Ottoman lyric poetry was to the gathering. In other words, the poetry required a party, and the party required poetry.

The ultimate get-together in Ottoman times was quite similar to what one experiences all over Turkey to this day. It takes place on a spring or early summer evening, on warm grass caressed by gentle breezes. Within garden walls bordered by the sacred cypress, dear friends (confidants) recline together, each one a sensitive, open, aware being . . . each one a poet. They eat together the most luscious of appetizers (mezes appearing on endless tables), served by lovely youths. All the while, musicians play, dancers dance, poets cite lyrics about love. Through all of this flow the tides of wine and conversation.

Such communion recalls also the inebriation of the mystic, whose heart opens to connect with the Divine. Sufi rituals during the Ottoman period occurred within the sanctuary of friendship and trust, and the movements of the dervishes together mimicked the whirling of the cosmos, and of creation itself.

The movements of nature, art, religion, and the human heart were all seen in relationship to each other. As a result, those “gathered” at court to entertain the sultan employed a vast knowledge of Turkish culture as well as world culture. The best court artists encompassed a wide ethnic range, enriching Ottoman art with pluralistic artistic influences: ancient Byzantium was mixed with traditional Chinese art brought in on the backs of the horses of the invading Mongols while the local Seljuk substructure was combined with Persian motifs. Out of this spectacular cornucopia, the art of Ottoman decoration developed, rich with a multitude of plants, intertwined branches

and vines, cloud formations from the Far East, and endlessly curling arabesques. The Turkish passion for ornament twisted and turned around and around in leaves and pearls, panthers and dragons, pomegranates and cypress trees, tulips and hyacinths. These images--connected to both natural and divine creation--extended to the realm of writing.

Materials:

♥Ottoman Lyric Poetry: An Anthology, edited and translated by Walter Andrews, Najaat Black, Mehmet Kalpakli. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1997.
♥CD of Ottoman court music, The Ottoman Classical Palace Musics, Turgut Özüfler, et. al, Sofyan Music
♥Printed image of Ottoman calligraphy: Websites about calligraphy that discuss and provide these images: http://www.ottomansouvenir.com
♥Slide show of Ottoman homes in Safranbolu, natural wonders of the Turkish landscape, Ottoman-inspired gardens, the Grand Bazaar, tiles in the Blue Mosque, whirling dervishes, caravansary, mirrored lamps. (Author uses her own photos taken in Turkey, but pictures may be obtained online and displayed in a PowerPoint presentation)
♥Excerpts about Ottoman culture and art (miniatures and illumination) from Orhan Pamuk's My Name is Red
♥Cultural objects (rugs and tapestries with tulip design, jewelry, tiles, whirling dervish figurine)

Assigned Poems:
Nejati's "Spiraling the sparks," Mihri Hatun's "My heart burns in flames of sorrow," Zati's "Oh heavens, why do you cry," Hayali's "When dawn hennas her hands," Yahya Bey's "Poetry holds the written veil," "Neshati's "We are desire," Sheyh Galib's "You are my effendi"

Procedures:

♥Discuss with students these opening questions: Do you notice any common images, themes, structure in the assigned poems? Explain to them that today's lesson will focus upon the important images in Ottoman poetry that relate to Creation (nature and art).

♥Inform students that imagery of nature (tulip, rose, nightingale) and of art (jewelry, calligraphy) pervade Ottoman art and also current cultural artifacts in Turkey. These are related to the religious theme of the Divine Love of Creation. Show samples in contemporary cultural objects that one can buy in Turkey: calligraphy work, tiles, illuminated manuscript copies, miniatures, filigree jewelry, rugs and tapestries.

♥Walk students through a general Power Point slide show of modern-day Turkey, exhibiting images that reflect Ottoman influence upon art and architecture, images that reflect the natural landscape that inspired the poetry, and images that reflect the religious realm of creation. These slides include Ottoman homes in Safranbolu, natural wonders of the Turkish landscape, Ottoman-inspired gardens, the Grand Bazaar, tiles in the Blue Mosque, whirling dervishes, caravansary, mirrored hanging lamps.
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♥As an activity to set the stage for discussion of the gathering in Ottoman lyrics and culture, serve students Turkish food. Ideas for this include Turkish tea and/or coffee and Turkish delight, fruits, baklava. Play CD of Ottoman Classical Palace Musics in the background.

♥Have students take turns reading aloud, dramatically, the selected poems for the day. Stop and

discuss the poems one by one, using the instructor notes in this curriculum packet as a guide for the discussion.

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Instructor Notes for Poems[1]

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Süleyman the Magnificent

My very own queen

One of his most enchanting poems, this gazel is addressed to Süleyman's beloved wife Hürrem.

torch, sunshine, sun, flaming candle: These images of light are not only common to Ottoman poetry but also are familiar tropes in the Sufi poetry of Hafiz and Rumi.

my Istanbul, my Karaman, and all the Anatolian lands that are mine: These are specific references to parts of areas of the Ottoman Empire that are now part of Turkey. Süleyman refers to Istanbul, the city he ruled as his capital. Karaman, now a Turkish city in central Anatolia, was once known as the independent Muslim state of Karamania, which at one time comprised much of Asia Minor and which existed until its subjugation by the Ottoman Turks in the late 15th century. Consider the images of the slide show.

Bedakhshan, Kipchak, Baghdad, Khorasan: These are all areas outside of Asia Minor under Ottoman rule. Bedakhshan (Badakhshan) was the region that now comprises parts of northeastern Afghanistan and Tajikistan. Kipchak was the name of a steppe region that is now present-day South Russia and the Ukraine. Khorasan is an area located in eastern and northeastern Iran. The name *Khorasan* is Persian and is made up of parts which mean "where the sun arrives from."

Different religion: This reference signifies "non-Moslem" (Hürrem was a Christian). The term "non-Moslem" is, according to some sources, a reference to "cruel." The beloved's unkindness and ruthlessness is a prevalent theme in classical Ottoman verse, including Süleyman's poems.

I am the Sultan of Love

In this gazel, whose rhyme-pattern is eliminated in translation, Süleyman assembles many images and scenes of royal life--crown, brigade, fire-breathing troops, bed of roses, polo, army of sorrow, etc.--and cleverly interfuses secular references with divine evocations.

Till the day I die

[1] Although my own research and analysis of the designated poems inform these instructor notes, much information is also derived from the following book: Andrews, Walter G., Najaat Black, and Mehmet Kalpakh. Ottoman Lyric Poetry: An Anthology. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1997.

Like most classical Ottoman gazels about love, this may be interpreted as either a paean to a human being that the poet loves or to God the Beloved.

The sparkle of my sighs

the Emperor's throne and the wealth of Croesus: In the original gazel, the Emperor is Keykavus, and the wealth belongs to Husrev, both legendary Persian kings (Kaykavus and Kaykhosrav or Cyrus). The translation substitutes "wealth of Croesus" because it is a far more familar allusion.

Out of the cup of love we drink wine

In both substance and tone, this poem differs greatly from all of Sultan Süleyman's verses. Here, with brazen pride, or perhaps tongue in cheek, the Sultan sets up a sect in his own name.

Süleymanis: It has proved difficult to find a proper English term for the adherents of the Süleyman sect: Süleymanites? Süleymanians? Süleymaners? Süleymanics? The translation retains the original "Süleymanis." One should also keep in mind that the name "Süleyman" in Turkish evokes King Solomon as well.

King Jem: Also known as Jemshid, he was a mythical king of Persia, who is legendary for his magical powers, heroic works, and tragic fall from glory. Jem is reputed to have invented wine and the solar calendar. His magic Cup (also called his mirror) represented the world's Seven Climes and, according to legend, Jem's Cup took the place of Solomon's Seal. Much like a magic ball, it was supposed to show him all that passed in the world.

Bâkî

Oh beloved, since the origin

Shah of love: In the poetry of the Ottoman elites, the beloved is commonly referred to as a ruler or monarch (shâh, sultân). Thus, the power that the beloved holds over the dejected lover/slave-of-love is always identified with the power of the ruler over devoted subjects. As a result, the appropriate behavior between ruler and subject is expressed intensely and passionately, and it often involves self-sacrifice. Some lyric poems, for this reason, are mini-odes (*kadides*) praising the ruler or some other power-holder; they ask for something, usually employment or money. This poem could be considered as such.

Poppies: The word for "poppies" here is *lâle*, which is usually translated as "tulip." However, in the sixteenth century in the Ottoman Empire, what we know as tulips did not exist, and the *lâle* at times was a type of peony or a wild poppy, not a true tulip, which later appears in much Ottoman art. Here love's burns are compared to the poppy, the charred center and inflamed surrounding area like the red petals and black center of the poppy.

Cup, cupbearer: The translation is a compromise and an attempt to hint at the poet's play on the ambiguity of the word *câmî*, which can mean "he who holds the cup" and is also the name of the famous Persian poet Jâmî. Thus, "I am the jâmî [*câmîI*] of the age means both "I am the Jâmî [the greatest poet] of the age" and "I am the [best] cup-bearer [the greatest producer of the wine of

poetry] of the age."

Your rebellious glances

Cavalry, soldiers, lances, war: This poem is filled with references to war, something very familiar to an Ottoman audience. These military images, common in Ottoman poetry, are balanced against events of nature (which, much like war, cannot be controlled by human hand.)

A flock of cranes: Migrating cranes, crying mournfully, were, in popular mythology, said to be the souls of the dead ascending to Paradise.

The water-seller: Wherever people gathered, the water seller, with a huge, ornate metal water-jug on his back, would work the crowd selling fresh water by the cupful.

Hands clasped: Standing with the hands clasped was a formal way for Ottomans to show respect and humility.

Hayretî

We are not slaves

Slaves: The phrase "we are slaves" is the redîf in this poem. In the Ottoman context, where many of the elite and wealthy were actually slaves of the ruler, it is most often a source of pride to refer to oneself as a slave.

The rivers of Paradise: In the original this is "the Kevser of the Paradises of Comfort." The word *kevser* means "abundance" and comes from a short Sura of the Quran (no. 108). Kevser is the river that refreshes the believers in Paradise. It is said to be as white as milk, sweet as honey, smooth as cream, cool as snow, quenching all thirst with a single sip.

Silken cloak, dervish cap, coarse robes: The poet refers to relinquishing the symbols of respectable, higher class dervishes (Mevlevîs, for example) and turning to the dress, a crude blanket, of those who have wholly renounced the world.

Hayâlî

We are among those

Moths to the candle: The moth and candle theme is a major one in both Persian and Ottoman poetry. Though the imagery in this poem is not new, it should be noted that it is beautifully and delicately expressed; thus, in Ottoman poetry old images are constantly transformed. Here the moth's annihilation in the flame is likened to the annihilation of self desired by the dervish.

Orphans . . . begging: This specific type of begging, theology students would venture into the countryside, preaching and reading the Quran in exchange for sustenance.

The dogs who guard your door: This refers to the general story of the beloved and lover in which

the beloved is surrounded by protectors and rivals.

Ascetic . . . drunken friends: The ascetic and the drinker are juxtaposed. The inebriated person represents the true mystic, wandering about intoxicated by the love of the Divine.

Oh my sultan: See notes for "Oh beloved" above.

Nejâtî

Spiraling, the sparks

Damascus . . . Egypt: This reference indicates multiple meanings. The word translated as "Damascus" can mean "night" or "dark." The word for "Egypt" means "a city" or "the city of Cairo." Ottoman readers would have been aware of historical conflicts between Egypt and Syria.

Like holy pilgrims: Pilgrims to Mecca circle seven times around the Kaaba, an occurrence that is often compared to the lover circling the beloved's house. Also the sun and moon circling the earth (in traditional cosmology) could be compared to the lover circling the Kaaba of the beloved's door.

The mirrors, turning: This image seems to suggest an artistic concept, referring possibly to the spherical, many-faced mirrors some shop-keepers hung outside their doors. One can also consider that this could refer to the round mirrors that were once hung in the great mosques.

Royal party: Notice that the image of the gathering is a requisite to the poet's spiraling verse.

Mihri Hatun

My heart burns

This poem is a "parallel" to Nejâtî's "Spiraling, the sparks." Such a companion or response piece is common in the Ottoman lyric tradition. Nejati is said to have been Mihri's idol.

Though Ottoman poets were mostly males, there are a few women writers among them, one of whom is Mihri Hatun, whose name translates as Lady Hatun. In her day it was considered important that women lead very private lives, so her public life as a poet was hard for her artistic peers to discuss since the world of poetry was exclusively male. Thus, they made Mihri into an honorary male. She was lauded for the quality of her work, receiving monetary gifts much larger than those of most other poets. She is said to have been passionate by nature and to have fallen in love several times, which her poetry seemingly reflects.

The sun and moon: The story of Joseph in the Quran centers upon the young man's dreams, one of which he relates to his father: "I saw the eleven stars and the sun and the moon; I saw them prostrate themselves before me." The interpretation: his parents and eleven brothers would bow to him. The brothers became so angry they sold him into slavery.

Zâtî

Oh heavens, why do you cry

Swaying cypress: The beloved's body is commonly likened to the cypress in Ottoman poetry—tall, graceful and slender, swaying as it moves. Consider also that the cypress is an evergreen, unaffected by the change of seasons. In Ottoman miniature painting, the cypress is often depicted in the embrace of a flowering branch as a symbol of love. It is planted as the border of a garden.

Oh nightingale: The image of the rose (the beloved) and the nightingale (the lover/poet) is one of the most common in Ottoman poetry. The nightingale comes to the garden to sing to the rose, which blossoms receptively but is guarded by the thorn, the angry protector who pierces the breast of the passionate bird when it embraces the beloved. It is said that this is why nightingales have red marks on their breasts. The thorn in this poem is compared to the rival in love who threatens the poet's (the nightingale's) life.

Haunting as a jinn: The jinn, according to Muslim lore, are invisible creatures who live like humans. The Quran mentions them several times. The relationships between humans and jinn are the focus of many stories in Islamic culture; often these stories deal with the harm committed by the jinn to the humans and the human attempts to compel the jinn to behave or give rewards. Among these stories are several about love affairs between jinn and humans. Out of this comes the image of the beloved as jinn and numerous conceits having to do with the mischievous, harmful, deceitful behavior of the jinn/beloved.

Hayâlî

When dawn hennas her hands

Hennas: In Turkey and the Middle East generally, brides traditionally dye their hands and the tips of their fingers with reddish-orange henna.

New bride of the golden veil: The fourth sphere or veil of the heavens is the sphere of the sun. Here the rising sun is likened to the bride lifting her veil.

Jemshîd: See above.

Let Venus: Venus is the musician of the spheres. Here she takes the rays of the sunlight for lute strings so that she can play two of the set melodic modes of traditional Turkish music: "Sünbüle or "Melody of (the Constellation) Virgo" and "Nevâ" or "the (Harmonious) Song."

Mirrored in the magic of the glass: This refers to the cup of Jem, which can reflect whatever the holder wishes to see.

Like writing on the water: This is a well-known Arabic phrase, which means "transitory, impermanent."

Yahyâ Bey

Poetry holds the written veil

Like Joseph: Joseph is a prophet mentioned in the Quran and the Old Testament, representative of ideal male beauty, modesty, and purity. When propositioned by the most beautiful woman in Egypt, he clung to his religion, modesty and purity, not displaying his beauty in a way to cause trouble. Thus, this reference is to poetry that speaks through a veil concealing passions that might inflame.

Shattered mountain of Moses: This seems to recall a story in the Quran in which Moses arrives at the place God has appointed and asks to see God, who says that Moses could not endure his divine countenance. God says He will show Himself to the mountain and if it can endure He will show himself to Moses. The mountains shakes and turns to dust, which causes Moses to faint and, upon recovering, to repent and stand firm in belief.

Neshâtî

We are desire

It was common for Ottoman poets to create poems using the same rhythm, rhyme and theme as a poem by another poet. As a parallel to Nâ'ilî's "We are the snake," this poem uses what is known as the Indian style, which employs complex compounds and strange juxtapositions.

The divine strand: The "thread of the soul" is the delicate bond between lover and beloved that makes everything that the lover does a part of that relation. On the mystical level, this thread is the link to the Divine unity of all existence. In Ottoman poetry this thread is commonly compared to the thread that links the pearls in a necklace.

So what if we are famous: The contradiction in this couplet creates almost a riddle. It can be read as thus: Our fame is that we leave no trace in this world, that we have nothing to do with it.

The lament hidden in the pen: The lament can be seen as the ability of the pen to write out the lover's sadness, yet it is also the moaning sound that a reed pen produces when it is moved across the page. In Arabic script, used in calligraphy at the time, one writes from right to left.

The perfect mirror: This represents the purified self. When the "rust" of this world has been polished away, the recognizable, material self is no longer visible. What can be seen is the true, eternal essence that cannot be viewed by those who only see the surface. One might compare this to Rumi's image of the mirror.

Sheyh Gâlib

You are my effendi

Effendi: "Lord, master" in Turkish. Gâlib refers to his spiritual master, Mevlânâ Jelâleddîn Rûmî.

Moth: See discussion above.

Love's burns: Lover and dervish (the Sufi) would often show the intensity of their love by burning themselves with a smoldering roll of material about the size of a cigarette. This burn is commonly depicted as a tulip (or wild poppy) with a charred center and red petals.

Dust on the mirror of my heart: See above discussion about the image of the mirror.

Saki: The sâkî is the servant who pours wine at the Ottoman party, often held in a garden where the gathering of good friends drink wine, eat, listen to music, recite poetry, converse. In mystical poetry the beloved is the master who pours out the wine of Divine love.

Dervish crown: Many of the dervish orders had an identifying cap. The Mevlevi dervishes wore a special conical hat called the "elif."

♥♥♥♥♥

Poems[2]

♥♥♥♥♥

Süleyman the Magnificent

My very own queen, my everything,
my beloved, my bright moon;
My intimate companion, my one and all,
sovereign of all beauties, my sultan.

My life, the gift I own, my be-all,
my elixir of Paradise, my Eden,
My spring, my joy, my glittering day,
my exquisite one who smiles on and on.

My sheer delight, my revelry, my feast,
my torch, my sunshine, my sun in heaven;
My orange, my pomegranate,
the flaming candle that lights up my pavilion.

My plant, my candy, my treasure who gives
no sorrow but the world's purest pleasure;
Dearest, my turtledove, my all,
the ruler of my heart's Egyptian dominion.

My Istanbul, my Karaman, and all the
Antatolian lands that are mine;
My Bedakhshan and my Kipchak territories,
my Baghdad and my Khorasan.

My darling with that lovely hair, brows curved like a bow,
eyes that ravish: I am ill.
If I die, yours is the guilt. Help, I beg you,
my love from a different religion.

I am at your door to glorify you.
Singing your praises, I go on and on:
My heart is filled with sorrow, my eyes with tears.
I am the Lover—this joy is mine.

Süleyman the Magnificent

[2] The first five poems (those by Suleyman) all come from the following text: Süleyman the Magnificent Poet, edited and translated by Talat S. Halman. (Istanbul: Dost Publications, 1987.) The remaining poems are taken from the following anthology: Andrews, Walter G., Najaat Black, and Mehmet Kalpakh. Ottoman Lyric Poetry: An Anthology. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1997.

I am the Sultan of Love:
a glass of wine will do
for a crown on my head,
and the brigade of my sighs
might well serve as the dragon's
fire-breathing troops.

The bedroom that's best
for you, my love,
is a bed of roses,
for me, a bed and a pillow
carved out of rock
will do.

My love, take a golden cup
in your hand and drink wine
in the rose garden;
as for me, to sip blood from my heart,
it is enough
to have the goblets of your eyes.

If, my beloved, you ride
the horse of coyness
and trot in the polo grounds,
this head of mine
will do
as a ball for your mallet.

Come, don't let
the army of sorrow
crush the heart's soldiers;
if it is my life you demand
just send those looks of yours—
that should be enough.

The heart can no longer
reach the district where you live,
but it yearns for reunion with you:
don't think Paradise and its rivers
can satisfy
the lover of the adorable face.

Lover, I have enough tears
to sprinkle
over the ground you walk on—
and my own pallid face
will do for me
as silver or gold.

Süleyman the Magnificent

Till the day I die, I shall never leave her beauty's sun:
She has antelope eyes, rose face, pearl teeth—
she is the one.

What if my heart is ablaze from the candle of her face?
The moth must catch fire and burn away till its
deed is done.

Pour the drinks: Let's toast the beloved's lips,
and for the love
Of that woman with the languid eyes, let's drink on and on.

If the heart's entangled in her lovelock, it can't escape:
Fetters are the lot of any man whose senses are gone.

Lover, that nymph demands my life for reunion with me;
I would give not one but a thousand lives to my loved one.

Süleyman the Magnificent

The sparkle of my sighs
stands as crown and diadem on my head;
my tears spread over me
the mantle of honor.

Let world events rage like the turbulent sea;
I will not set sail:
Thank God, the ship of your love
is an anchor for me.

I desire neither the Emperor's throne
nor the wealth of Croesus,
For it is my good fortune
to be a slave in your palace.

You may sometimes treat me kindly
and sometimes inflict torture:
My beloved, whatever you do
is all the same to me.

O lover, all I need over my head
is the flame of my sigh;
I am the sultan of love:
on my right and left, tears march like my troops.

Süleyman the Magnificent

Out of the cup of love we drink wine: we are the infamous
ones,
Notorious for writing on our hearts the paeans for beauties;
To us the only power is anguish, we roam all the oceans:
Free of care, clean in mind, pure of soul, we are the
Süleymanis.

From cups in the hands of the rose-faced cupbearer, we
drink away;
All night we wallow in the nightingale's voice till the break
of day.
In the world's rose garden, we give happiness to our hearts
this way:
Free of care, clean in mind, pure of soul, we are the
Süleymanis.

Time immemorial offers the wine of love and I drink it,
That is what subdues and tames the unruly horse of the
spirit.
Friends, to be reproached is the way of the lover and his
profit:
Free of care, clean in mind, pure of soul, we are the
Süleymanis.

His eyes are fixed on Islam, then why does he plunder
its domain?
Everything the vile infidel does is mired in pride and
disdain.
Let us allow that coy woman to inflict on us all her pain:
Free of care, clean in mind, pure of soul, we are the
Süleymanis.

Zealot, this is the sect of love—don't reject it, don't
reprimand:
The vulgar leader of a crude sect—will he ever understand?
I hold a gold cup in one hand, my love's neck in the
other hand.
Free of care, clean in mind, pure of soul, we are the
Süleymanis.

Let the taverns celebrate those ruby lips of yours to
the core;
Night and day let no one put the cups down; let them drink
and adore,
Let those who are intoxicated fill the world with all
that roar:
Free of care, clean in mind, pure of soul, we are the
Süleymanis.

After all, this mansion called the world was constructed
on the brine.
Gather your wits and just see what's become of King Jem
the divine.
O Lover, the remedy for all suffering is love and wine:
Free of care, clean in mind, pure of soul, we are the
Süleymanis.

Baki

Your rebellious glance lines up the cavalry
of your lashes
Soldiers armed with lances, they wait for war,
row by row

To watch you on the path of the rose garden
Swaying cypresses stand along each side,
row by row

To combat the throngs of my tear-soldiers
The world sea sends forth its waves,
row by row

Don't think it's a flock of cranes crying
in the sky
It's the birds of my heart and soul returning
to you, row by row

To see who prays with you knee to knee
in the mosque
The tearful eye, like the water-seller,
roves from row to row

The people of the heart are drowned
in your blessings of grief and pain
At the table of your kindness guests await
your gifts, row by row

If the reed pen sways like a banner
while telling of your body
Then the books draw up their verses
like soldiers, row by row

The lovers stand near you on every side
Like the columns of the Kaaba, row by row

Oh Bâkî, they will know your worth
upon the funeral stone

And your friends will stand before you
hands clasped in reverence, row by row

Hayali

We are among those who came to be moths
to the candle of beauty
Oh glowing candle, we are among those
who came burning

The orphans of my tears wander your quarter
begging for gifts and favors
Oh my beloved, we are among those who came
for your gift of mercy

Oh beguiling one, to befriend the dogs
who guard your door
We are among those who came to be near you
in an honorable way

Oh ascetic, don't forbid us our wine
and our beloved!
Since the origin, we are among those who travel
this path as drunken friends

Oh Hayâlî, we have bound together a new book
in sweet description of your cheek
Oh my sultan, we are among those who came
to recite our verses before you

Hayreti

We are not slaves of Süleymân, nor the captives
of Selîm
No one knows us, we are slaves of the shah
of generosity

One who is the servant of love has never bowed
to the nobles of this world
We are the Sultans of another world--
Hey look, whose slaves are we?

Don't think we thirst for the sweet water
of the rivers of Paradise
We eat sorrow and we gulp blood continuously
at our place of suffering

Oh my sultan of love, don't think we kneel

to the new beauty of youth
We are slaves of the ancient allure of your
radiant face

Oh Hayretî, we have up the silken cloak,
we quit the dervish cap
We are only slaves of the coarse robes
of this world

Nejati

Spiraling, the sparks
of my sign
reach the skies
Where the heart of the lamp
of the heavens
burns, turning.

Does the one hanging
by the noose of your curl
touch his feet to the ground?
With delight
he surrenders his life
twisting,
twirling.

The pigeon returning
circles with this message:
the black Damascus
of your curl
has destroyed
the Egypt of my heart.

If your door
were not the Kaaba
the sun and moon
would not forever,
like holy pilgrims,
circle around it.

The mirrors, turning,
those hopeful eyes,
constantly watching the ones
who come and go.

Those mirrors, suspended,
the facets of their eyes
shining—
maybe the one they see

is you!

You rise, you dance
spinning,
I bow my head
I submit.
And yet—it's your twisting curl
that embraces your silver breast!

Oh Nejâtî
at this royal party
it would be pleasing
for the musician to dance,
before the Sultan,
before the beloved, turning,
reciting this fresh new verse.

Mihri Hatun

My heart burns in flames of sorrow
Sparks and smoke rise turning to the sky

Within me, the heart has taken fire
like a candle
My body, whirling, is a lighthouse
illuminated by your image

See the rope-dancer of the soul, reaching
for your ruby lips
Spinning, descending the twist of your curl

The sun and moon came to your quarter,
circling in the sky
Bowing to you, faces in the dust
before your feet

Oh you with the bright face, radiant as Venus
The moon twisted into a crescent to resemble
your arching brow

When longing for an image of your lips
had befallen my heart
Oh Mihrî, then my heart burned
in flames of sorrow

Zati

Oh heavens, why do you cry? Is your beloved seen

in all places, but never by your side?
Do you have a shining moon that wanders everywhere,
just beyond your reach?

Oh garden, has the season of autumn made your
face so wan?
Or do you have a swaying cypress who looks beyond
the wall?

Oh nightingale, you're always weeping and crying out
with every breath
Do you have a laughing rose that shares one shadow
with the thorn?

I cried, "Oh beloved, I must sacrifice my life
for your sake!"
With a thousand angers, she replied, "Your life!
Have you not already spent it?"

Oh Zâtî, like the beloved's curl you are
once again disheveled
Are you endlessly oppressed, or do you have a lover
as haunting as a jinn?

Hayali

When dawn hennas her hands with the blood
of the horizon
Let the new bride of the golden veil uncover
her shining face

Let her make the skies the envy of the pleasure-house
of Jemshid
Let her brilliant cheek shine to every limit
of the universe

Let Venus make the dazzling ray a string
for her saz
Let her make a harmonious song out of the melody
of Virgo

Let the bowl of the sun pour out the dregs
of illumination
Let every mote be drunk and dance upon seeing
her bright face

Let me take that glass in hand and gaze
Until the desired one is mirrored in the magic
of the glass

Should I not stare into the bowl, my eyes
are bubbles floating
In the wine I see both worlds, elusive,
like writing on the water

Oh Hayali, they say wine is the brilliance
of the face of the wise
And the full bowl lights the lantern
of the poet's eye

Yahya Bey

Poetry holds the written veil across its face, shyly,
like Joseph
And speaks, hidden by its own intrigue

The heart-taker would know my plight
if she could look upon my verse
She would know my pain if she would listen
to my cries

It is fitting for masters of vision to gaze
upon the poem
It is a wave on the sea of beauty,
the brow of the beloved

Like the shattered mountain of Moses,
poetry has witnessed the divine
It ripped its collar open, tore itself apart

Poetry reveals the painful desires
of the people of suffering
For the maddened lover my book of verse
is a declaration of bewildered love

Poetry is revealed from the realm
of essence
Every line invokes a voice of the unseen
world

Yahya, let the roses, wild with passion,
tear at their robes
When I recite verses in honor
of her slender grace

Neshâtî

We are desire hidden in the love-crazed call

of the nightingale
We are the blood hidden in the crimson heart
of the unbloomed rose

We are pouring pearl-tears over the thinness
of our lovesick bodies
We are hidden, like the divine strand
that pierces the jewel's heart

So what is we are famous for having no worldly fame?
We are hidden, like the heart, in the strange mystery
of life's riddle

The east wind is the only confidante
for our every condition
We are always hidden in the disheveled twist
of the beloved's curl

Like the rose, the color of our essence
is obviously bright
But we are hidden in the joy of the wine-cup's
subtle way

Sometimes we are like the reed pen that illuminates
the plaints of love
Sometimes like the lament hidden in the pen
as it writes

Oh Neshati, we are ever abandoning the visible
presence of our selves
We are hidden in the absolute brilliance
of the perfect mirror

Sheyh Gâlib

You are my effendi, if I have any respect in the world,
it is because of you
If I am famed at all among the lovers,
it is because of you

In simple words, you are the loving soul,
the illumination of my life
If there is profit from the treasure of my life,
it is because of you

The color of your beauty gives brilliance to all
my thoughts
If the rose-garden of my imagining exists,
it is because of you

During your reign, I've not suffered
even the smallest pain
Oh my shining sun, if I cry out,
it is because of you

I am the moth of separation, I annihilate myself in the brightness
of your beauty, for you are the candle of union
If every evening I desire a kiss and warm embrace,
it is because of you

I am a martyr for you, my breast is a tulip garden
of love's burns
If my tomb has a lantern and my grave a candle,
it is because of you

He who sees me crazy with love would suppose
I was a whirlwind of the desert
I am the annihilation within annihilation,
whatever I have, it is because of you

Why did you cast me out to wander when I was your jewel,
your perfect pearl?
If there is dust on the mirror of my heart, if there is this longing,
it is because of you

Oh Saki, you filled my cup with tears of blood,
it glows scarlet like the dawn
On the morning after the wine-party, if I'm still drunk,
it is because of you

Oh Mevlana, it is in you that Galib takes his deepest
and holy refuge
If on my head there is a dervish crown of honor,
it is, my beloved, because of you