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Reviews

Fikret Turan: Mustafa İsen, *Tezkireden Biyografiye*. İstanbul: Kapı Yayınları, 361 pages, ISBN 978-605-4322-15-2.

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Writing biographies and biographical dictionaries was one of the highly esteemed and productive areas of literary activities of the Ottoman scholars and intellectuals. Within a close affiliation with the earlier works and genres in Arabic and Persian literatures, the field of Turkish biography writing began producing works in the early 16th century and developed through the following centuries well into modern times. These works are essential sources for the research and study of modern Turkish and Middle Eastern literary and cultural historians as well as linguistics. On the one hand, these works yield significant information about the literary and intellectual qualities and personal lives of authors, poets and scholars who lived in and around the Ottoman Empire, and on the other hand, they present highly valuable firsthand historical data, understanding and insights especially on the linguistic and cultural traits of the place and periods of their writing. For this reason, a serious scholarship based on deep investigation thorough analyses and objective interpretations of these sources is surely crucial for high-quality research and studies. The work under review *Tezkireden Biyografiye* (From *Tezkire* to Biography) by Mustafa İsen doubtless belongs to this high quality scholarship in the field.

Tezkireden Biyografiye is a collection of İsen's 30 articles and conference papers on the history of Turkish biography writing and its bearing in connection with Ottoman Turkish language and literature. Except for the last article, all were published in various Turkish journals and conference proceedings between 1983 and 2009. This last article, which appears for the first time here in this book, is concerned with the significance of the biography works of Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall and Behçet Necatigil, who were also engaged in biography writing among other scholarly and literary activities in the 19th and 20th centuries, respectively. As a whole, these articles and papers are the outcomes of professor İsen's more than thirty years of study, research and teaching on the genre in libraries, research centres and universities.

Articles are presented in two parts. Part I consists of 11 works dealing with biographic sources *per se* under the heading "Türk Biyografi Geleneği" (The Tradition

of Turkish Biography Writing) providing an analysis of outstanding *tezkire* books (biography dictionaries) and their contributions to the emergence and development of biography writing in Anatolia. The first work “XVI. Yüzyıl Sonuna Kadar Osmanlılarda Biyografi Geleneği” (Biography Writing Culture among the Ottomans until the 16th Century, pp. 3–24) portrays the general aspects of the genre in its earlier periods, names the earlier seminal works in Arabic and Persian, and points out methodological parallels between these earlier works and the Turkish ones. In this regard, the author describes the determining effects of *Bahāristān* by Jāmī and *Tezkire* by Dawlatshāh in Persian, and *Mejālisu'n-Nefā'is* by Nevā'ī in Chaghatay Turkish on the works produced in the Ottoman lands. The author systematizes the biographical accounts produced in the development period, which covers mainly the 15th and the 16th centuries. All the biographical data and accounts put out in this period appear in three types of works, which include a) biographical accounts (*tercüme-i hāl*) in general historical works and chronicles like those by Aşık Paşazāde, Neşrī and Mustafā Ālī, b) the Arabic biographical work *Şakā'iku'n-Nu'māniye* by Taşköprizāde and its extended translations and supplements (*zeyl*) like those by Muhtesibzāde, Derviş Ahmed and Mecdī Mehmed, and c) the biography dictionaries of poets like Heşt Behişt by Sehī Bey, *Tezkiretü'ş-Şu'arā* by Latīfī, *Gülşen-i Şu'arā* by Ahdī and *Meşā'irü'ş-Şu'arā* by Aşık Çelebi. Analysing these prominent works, the author presents the general features of the methods, styles and the ranges of coverage of personages appear in them.

The studies following this opening article are concerned with analysing in more detail the prominent biography dictionaries. General characteristics, mainstream approaches, sources, peculiarities and originalities of the *tezkire* works are explained under the titles “Türkçe Şair Biyografileri” (Biography Dictionaries of Poets in Turkish, pp. 25–48), “Türk Biyografi Geleneğinde Ali Şir Nevā'ī'nin Yeri” (Ali Şir Nevā'ī's Position in the History of Turkish Biography Writing, pp. 49–56), “Sehī Bey ve Tezkiresi” (Sehī Bey and His *Tezkire*, pp. 57–68), “Latīfī Tezkiresi” (The *Tezkire* of Latīfī, pp. 69–79), “Anadolu Sahası Türk Tezkireciliğinde Şekli Gelişim” (Development of Formal Features in the Turkish *Tezkire* Writing in Anatolia, pp. 80–86), “Türk Tezkireciliğinde Antoloji Tipi Örnekler” (Instances of Anthological Methods in Turkish *Tezkire* Writing, pp. 87–92), “Hasan Çelebi Tezkiresi Üzerine” (On the *Tezkire* of Hasan Çelebi, pp. 93–100), “Edebiyat Tarihi Açısından Künhü'l-Ahbārın Önemi” (Significance of the Work Künhü'l-Ahbār in Turkish Literary History, pp. 101–113), “Künhü'l-Ahbārın Şairlerle İlgili Kısımlarının Kaynakları” (Sources of the Parts Dealing with Poets in the Work of Künhü'l-Ahbār, pp. 114–158) and “Edebiyat Tarihimizin Kaynaklarından Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnamesi” (Seyahatname of Evliya Çelebi as a Source of Turkish Literary History, pp. 159–165). From these titles it is clear that the author went through all major primary sources of the genre in Turkish literature providing the reader with invaluable material and methodological information and theoretical insights on the topic.

Part II is entitled “Tezkireler Işığında Divan Edebiyatına Bakışlar” (New Outlooks on Divan Literature in the Light of *Tezkire* Books) including 19 conference

papers and articles, which deal predominantly with the cultural and literary history of outstanding Ottoman cities and towns and their poets who made significant contributions to the literary life, becoming famous representatives of various schools and traditions of the classical literature as they were portrayed in biographical works. The first article in the part “Osmanlı Kültür Coğrafyasına Bakış” (An Overview on the Ottoman Cultural Geography, pp. 169–182) is an analysis of 27 *tezkire* books written between the 16th and 19th centuries in the aim of exploring birthplace and hometowns of Ottoman poets, determining the literary centres of the Ottoman cities and mapping out the cultural centres of the empire. Among approximately 152 regions, cities and towns mentioned in the *tezkiyes*, Istanbul, as expected, leads all others by a wide margin, with 609 major poets and authors born and raised there. That Istanbul is followed by two earlier capital cities Bursa and Edirne, which generate 156 and 150 poets, respectively, demonstrates the impact of political power and institutions on the creation of favourable cultural and literary environments. This said, though, it is surprising to discover in the list of authors’ hometowns sometimes very unexpected small towns producing a high number of poets, some of whom are leading figures in the field. Among these relatively small towns, doubtless, Vardar Yenicesi (Giannitsa) excels over others as it has been the hometown of many poets of fame like Hayālī, Hayretī and Usūlī, to mention just a few.

The following papers bring forth, in a similar approach, crucial research findings on various issues and questions concerning the divan poets and the Ottoman literary life as they are discussed in the *tezkire* works. These studies present valuable data especially on the local upbringing, education, social and religious identity and literary standings of the poets and authors. For instance, the paper “Divan Şairlerinin Tasavvuf ve Tarikat İlişkileri” (Divan Poets’ Affiliations with Sufism and Tarikah Orders, pp. 183–192) explores the spiritual attachments of the divan poets to Sufism and sufi tarikah orders and shows that the great majority of the Ottoman divan poets were the followers of the officially sanctioned Mavlavi order, while the study “Divan Şairlerinin Mesleki Konumları” (Occupational Positions of Divan Poets, pp. 193–205) indicates the poets had other occupations outside literature and poetry, with a great number of them holding the positions of judge (*qādī*), university lecturer (*müderris*), scribe (*kātib*) or the leadership of tarikah orders (*şeyh*) among other occupations, which required a high level education. All in all this part of İsen’s work draws attention to the cultural and literary weight of various Ottoman cities and regions, and comes up with original findings and conclusions on the intellectual and literary life. Here, cultural centres such as Istanbul, Bagdad, Balkan towns including Üsküp, Priştine and others, Cyprus, Ankara, Tokat, Erzurum, Diyarbakır and Sakarya are evaluated within the context of overall Ottoman literary history, with their poets, literary traditions and cultural centrality taken into consideration. In a similar line, an interesting paper deals with Azerbaijani immigrant poets who migrated to Istanbul and Anatolia proper and produced significant works. Their names, works and influence are described in the light of data found in the *tezkire* works.

From the beginning to the end, İsen's analyses of *tezkire* works reflect glimpses of various inter- and intra-linguistic aspects of the gradual emergence of literary Ottoman Turkish, as the development process of the *tezkire* genre was very much intertwined with the development of the literary language and the cultural factors contributing to its standardization. An overview of linguistic and stylistic aspects of the two earlier *tezkire* works *Heşt-Behişt* of Sehî and *Tezkire* of Hasan Çelebi, produced in the 16th century, for example, demonstrates how simplicity, clarity and the natural flow of spoken Turkish of the time were the essential mode of the first work of the genre in Turkish, *Heşt-Behişt*, and how this took an exalted imperial turn with such bombastic diction, tone and voices that necessitated the use of highly educated rare Arabic and Persian loanwords organised in the structure of the extended Persian-style *modified-first* word groups and phrases laden with specialised topoi, set phrases and clichés in an abstract semantics. In this context, İsen's investigation of the changing stylistics of these works in his articles is sometimes constructed in a comparative textual model, as he, for instance, compares the linguistic styles of Sehî and Hasan Çelebi on page 67 and explains how deeply these two styles contrast in their descriptions of Sultan Jem as a poet. With this and with similar analytical writings, the author explicates how Ottoman Turkish prose language is reflected in *tezkire* works and how these works in turn influenced the linguistic and stylistic attributes of the *tezkire* genre through the passage of time.

In summary, it should be said with certainty that Mustafa İsen's *Tezkireden Biyografiye* is a collection of meritorious studies on Ottoman Turkish biography writing and classical Turkish literature that brings together highly valuable findings, evaluations and interpretations produced by the author over many years of rich academic and research activities. The work, therefore, has much to offer to anyone engaged in Turkish and Middle Eastern cultural and literary history, Turkology or Turkic linguistics.

Gulayhan Aqtay: Review of Zaire Batayeva, *Colloquial Kazakh (The Complete Course for Beginners) with CDs and MP3s*. London & New York: Routledge. 2013, 309 pages.

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A feature distinguishing this textbook from other Kazakh textbooks known to me is that it is constructed on dialogues and contains few texts. Texts can be found in only three units: 11, 12, 14, out of fourteen. In this feature it is similar to the other text-