

A Prescription for Love Sickness*

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Context

A prescription describing how to make a paste with the power to soothe love-stricken hearts is explained in a multiple-text. This anonymously compiled anthology is housed in IMM Atatürk Library (*Bel Yz K0633*). Dated between 19 September 1714 and 3 November 1739, the anthology includes folk tales, love poems, allegorical works, and fortune-telling pieces composed in verse. For recovering from lovesickness and epilepsy, the author offers to mix precise quantities of beautifying qualities possessed by the love-stricken individual. After directing where, when, and how this paste should be consumed, the author asserts that an afflicted soul will be relieved of its sickness after consuming the prescription for forty days. The author assuages any doubt prospective consumers may harbour as to the paste's effectiveness by boldly stating that anyone who does not benefit from it is free to curse him.¹ There are also some spelling errors in the text, which implies that it was penned by an insufficiently educated copyist.

We require further evidence before we are able to designate such prescriptions as their own independent genre within the wider corpus of Ottoman literature. Nevertheless, the existence of seemingly analogous examples, both in terms of content and in style, suggests that such a genre may have indeed occupied a place in Ottoman literature, especially during the 17th and 18th centuries.²

Transcription

[79a] *Benüm cānum 'aşk maraızı şar'a zaḫmeti müşābihi bir şeydür. İbtidāsı gözden intihāsı yürekden olur. Allāhü 'azīmü'ş-şān ümmet-i Muḫammedi ol maraızdan emīn eyleye. Bir tāze nāzenīn gül gibi şolup āhü gözlerin süzüp biñ dürlü nāz ile ve istiğnā ile başum agrır ve yüregim [?] oynar ve cānum şıkılır ve sevdām kılkdı dir. Giceler serserī ve bir sā'at bir yerde qarār idemez. Evvel mācinse [?] bir ṭabīb-i hāzık [?] ve bir ḫakīm-i 'ārif gerekdür. Muḫkem nabzdan bilüp ve bildire yañlış 'amel eylemeyeler ve daḫı yahūdī*

¹ Doğan, p. 300–301.

² Şeyma Benli, "A Prescription for the Heart from the Late Ottoman Period", *Keshif: E-Journal for Ottoman-Turkish Micro Editions* 1/2 (Summer 2023): 15–18.

aķrānuñ ĥakīmlerine yapışdırup ve baķdırmayalar. Zīrā anuñ aķ beñzi ve gāh timur gibi kızarır [79b] ve tīz tīz āh vāh ider. Binā'en 'alā zālik bunuñ hevāsınca bu 'ilāc bir ĥūb āvāzlı tāze ile deşt-i şahrā idüp şaġ yanı bāġçe ve şol yanı deryā deñiz ve gül-i gülistān olan bir maħalde bülbüller eġġān ide böyle bir yerde teselli-i ĥātır idüp tesķin ide ve andan daħı bir terkīb ile bir ma 'cūn yapup isti 'māl ideler. Terķīb-i ma 'cūn:

<i>nāzdan</i>	<i>şīveden</i>	<i>vādīden</i>	<i>edādan</i>
<i>1 dirhem</i>	<i>2 dirhem</i>	<i>3 dirhem</i>	<i>4 dirhem</i>
<i>āvāzdan</i>	<i>cünbişden</i>	<i>aĥlāķdan</i>	<i>revişden</i>
<i>5 dirhem</i>	<i>6 dirhem</i>	<i>7 dirhem</i>	<i>8 dirhem</i>
<i>terennümden</i>	<i>eṭvārdan</i>	<i>reftārdan</i>	<i>tırızdan</i>
<i>9 dirhem</i>	<i>10 dirhem</i>	<i>11 dirhem</i>	<i>12 dirhem</i>

üslūbdan

13 dirhem

[80a] *İşte benüm cānum benüm efendüm ĥünkārum bu eczāları cefā çöplerinden ayırdlayup vefā ĥavānında dögüp şafā elegeinde iliyüp ve daħı şevķ tenceresinde muĥabbet āteşiyle ĥaynadup ve zevķ gicesiyle ĥarışdırup tamām-ı ĥasret 'aleviyle kıvāma gelince bu eczāları içine ĥoyup ma 'cūn ide. Andan şoñra aĥşām ve şabāĥ vuşlat meblāġıyla isti 'māl ide ve andan şoñra sīne ĥammāmına girüp muĥkem derleye ĥarāret aldıķça 'anberli vişne şerbetin içe ve kendi bāġçesi mīvesinden ĥelāl mīve daħı olur ise o daħı a 'lā olur. Ba 'dehū kırķ gün böylesine tīmār olduķdan şoñra eger bir daħı ol ādemde bir marāz ĥalur ise baña söge. İşte ĥukemālık da budur yoĥsa Hind'den [80b] Yemen'den ĥakīm getürseler fā'ide eylemez. Bāķi ve's-selām bāķi olasin bāķi durduķça cihān bāķi.*

Translation

My dear, love sickness is reminiscent of epilepsy. It emerges in the eye and reaches its pinnacle in the heart. May Almighty Allah protect the Ummah of Muhammad from this disease. He slowly withers like a delicate, freshly bloomed rose and, with a thousand shades of coyness and self-denial, proclaims, “My head hurts whilst my heart palpitates; my spirit grows jaded whilst my spleen soars.” He wanders at night, unable to find repose in one place for even an hour. Such a fearless, indifferent lover needs, first and foremost, a skilled doctor and a sagacious physician. They should take his pulse and not act with indiscretion; nor should they take him to one of the Jewish doctors for examination. For he has a light complexion, thus causing him sometimes to blush and sigh quickly. As such, they should take this appropriate medicine with a young man with a beautiful voice, and venture into the desert, letting the nightingales serenade him at a place flanked by a garden on the right and the sea and a rose garden on the left. There, they should be consoled and make a paste with this? compound and use it.

Paste composition:

1	2	3	4
drachmas	drachmas	drachmas	drachmas
of coyness	of flirtation	of tenor	of affectation
5	6	7	8
drachmas	drachmas	drachmas	drachmas
of voice	of amusement	of moral qualities	of mincing gait
9	10	11	12
drachmas	drachmas	drachmas	drachmas
of singing	of manner	of pompous walking	of ornamentation

13

drachmas

of savoir-faire

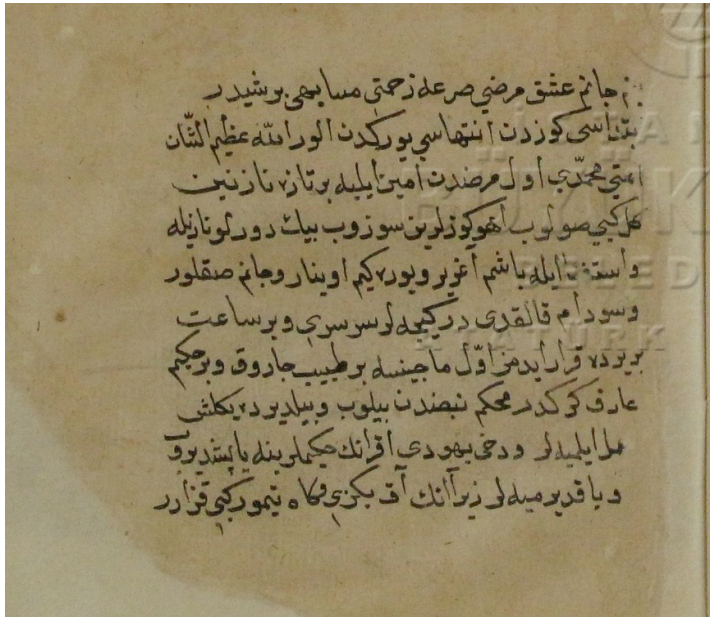
Here, my dear! My sir -my sultan- should glean these ingredients from the refuse heaps of cruelty, mould them in the mortar of constancy, sift them in the sieve of delight, boil them in the saucepan of eagerness with the fire of love, and mix them with the night of pleasure. Once it attains its proper consistency by the flame of longing, he should add these ingredients into it and make it into a paste. He should then ingest it in the evening and morning with the spatula of reunion after which he should enter the bathhouse of warm embrace and sweat it out completely. He should drink sour cherry sherbet with ambergris for as long as he sweats. It would be excellent if ḥalāl fruit from his own garden accompanied this. Should any remnants of his sickness persist after forty days of treatment, let him curse me. This is what it means to be sagacious, (a quality) without which this medicine shall not have any effect, even if they were to bring a physician from India or Yemen. Everlasting greetings. May you too thus remain everlasting for as long as this transient world should endure.

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Facsimilia

79a:



79b:

دیترتیزاه راه ایدر بناء علی ذلک بوندک هو استیجه بو
 علاج برضوب اوزلی تازه ایله دشت صحرای ایدوب صحرای
 یانی باغچه وصول یانی دریا دکن و کل گلستان اولان
 برمه لدر بلبلر افغان ایدر بویله بروردن تسلطی خاطر ایدوب
 تسکین ایدر و اندن دخی بر ترکیب ایله بر معجون یاپون
 استعمال ایدر لوترکیب معجون

نارزدن درهم ۱	شیوه دن درهم ۲	وادیدن درهم ۳	ادادن درهم ۴
اوزدن درهم ۵	جنبشدن درهم ۶	اخلاقدن درهم ۷	روایستدن درهم ۸
توتمدن درهم ۹	اطواردن درهم ۱۰	رفساردن درهم ۱۱	طرزدن درهم ۱۲
اوسلوبدن درهم ۱۳			اشنه

80a:

اشته بنم جانم بنم افندم بنم حنکارم بواجز اوی
 جفا جو پلر نزن آیرد کیوب وفا حوانندار و کوب
 صفا الکنده ایلوب و دخی شوق تیغ سند
 محبت اندیشه قینادوب و زوق کجه سیله
 فرشدروب تمام حسرت علویه قوامه کلنجه
 بواجز اوی ایچنه قیوب معجون اید اندن
 صکره اخشام و صباح و صلت مبالا غیله
 استعمال اید و اندن صکره سینده حجامنه
 کیوب محکم در لیه حرارت الدنجه عنبری
 ویشنه شریقتی ایچنه و کندی بغچه سی میوه سندن
 هلال میوه دخی اولور ایسه او دخی اعلا اولور
 بعده قرق کون بویله سنه تمار اولدندن
 صکره اکبر دخی اول آمدد بر مرض قاور ایسه
 بکاسوکه اشته صکره تقد بودریوخسه کهندن

80b:

یمندن حکیم کتور سه لر فایده ایلن باقی و التسلام
 باقی اوله سیندین باقی دور دتجه جهاه باقی