

Lovely Bosnian Lads: Mü' min-zāde Ḥasīb's Poem on the Youths of Sarajevo

Adnan Mulabdić

Author:

MA, Research Institute of Turkology, Istanbul University
adnanmulabdic@hotmail.com
no ORCID

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Context

In 1147/1735, Mü'min-zâde Ḥasīb was appointed qadi of Sarajevo, where he subsequently engaged with a wide range of individuals, including the general public, high-ranking officials, prominent poets, and scholars.¹ Through these interactions, he was able to gain invaluable insights into the local social context, language, and customs, and exert influence over the local community of poets. It is therefore unsurprising that a number of his poems can be found within several manuscripts, mainly autographs preserved in the Gazi Husrev-bey Library.

The poem presented here appears to have been written during an informal gathering, as a mere work of poetical exercise, amusement, or even as a delightful display of the author's skill. The dating in the manuscript, nr. 2012, a *Mecmû'a* compiled by the poet Meylî from Sarajevo, indicates that it was written in the Hijri year of 1148.² The poem is relatively brief, comprising only seven distichs, with the same rhyming syllable at the end of every second half-verse.³ Despite its brevity, the poem is evidently composed in a conventional style characteristic of the *Şehrengîz* genre, which typically depicts the attractive young male residents of a particular town or city, its natural and historical sites, as well as renowned craftspeople and artists, and their social status within a specific urban context.⁴ In this example, only six young men are referenced by their names or nicknames. Excluding the first, all of these are mentioned in a single verse. The most striking feature is not only the use of local name variations, such as Haso, Salko, Ibro, Mujo and Kojo (all abbreviations of the commonly used names of Hasan, Salih, Ibrahim,

¹ Göker İnan, Ramazan Ekinci, "Ḥasīb, Mü'min-zâde Ahmed Efendi," *Türk Edebiyatı İsimler Sözlüğü*, <https://teis.yesevi.edu.tr/madde-detay/hasib-muminzade-ahmed-efendi>, accessed 28.11.2024.

² It is worth noting that Meylî, both the author and compiler of the manuscript in question, has carefully recorded the dates or years in which the poems were written or transcribed, establishing a clear chronological framework. The earliest poems date back to the Hijri year 1147, while the poem under analysis was transcribed a year later.

³ This poem was initially rendered in a transliterated form as part of an MA thesis by the author of this article. The version of this poem presented here has undergone certain corrections. For a more detailed comparison, see Adnan Mulabdić, "Mehmed Meylî Gûrânî'nin Mecmû'at'ü'l-Letâ'if Sandûkat'ü'l-Ma'ârif Mecmuası (Tenkitli Metin-Tahlil)," MA thesis, (Istanbul University, 2016).

⁴ Bayram Ali Kaya, "Şehrengîz," *TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, <https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/sehrengiz>, accessed 29.11.2024. See also Barış Karacasu, "Eski Türk Edebiyatında Şehr-engîzler," *TALİD*, no. 10, Sept. 2007, 259-314.

Muhammed or Mustafa and Konstantin), but also the usage of Bosnian words and phrases, which are written down phonetically and adjusted to the ‘*aruz* prosody. In keeping with the tradition of its genre, the text directly mentions several professions, including a *tellāk* (hammam attendant), a barber and a tavern-keeper, and may also refer to a tailor. In the absence of any known *Şehrengīz* devoted to the city of Sarajevo and its youthful population, this may be the sole surviving example of such an endeavour.

Transcription

Li-Ḥasīb

[fā ‘ilātün mefā ‘ilün fe ‘ilün]

1. *Bosnevī bir civān sevmiş-idüm*
Ḥulḳ[ı] gāyetde ḥūb nām[ı] Ḥaso
2. *Alsam āgūşa dir “ni taç ni taç”*
İstesem buse dir “sid s miro[m]”
3. *‘Amrī’ye disem ömrümüñ vārı*
Gāh “ışlatko⁵” dir gehī “gorḳo”
4. *Sürinürdüm o şūḥ dellāke*
Dise bir kerre raḥm idüb Şalḳo
5. *Ḥasreti cāna geçdi sūzen-vār*
Ol civānuñ ki nāmıdur İbro
6. *Gün-ı bī-mū ararsañ ey ‘āşık*
Ser-tırāşuñ degül midür Mūyo
7. *Sordum ismüñ o şūḥ muğ-beçenüñ*
Döndi nāz eyleyüb didi Ḳoyo

⁵ The addition of the vowel “ı” is a result of the two consonants at the beginning of the Bosnian word for sweet, “slatko”. This provides an alternative reading of the word, as it coincides with the imperative form of two Turkish verbs, “ıslatmak”, meaning to moisten or to wet, and “ko[y]mak”, meaning to put. The Turkish verb “ko[y]mak” is capable of denoting obscene or vulgar meanings, including the act of engaging in sexual intercourse or inserting an object into a specified body part. See Andreas Tietze, “ko-/koy-,” in *Tarihî Ve Etimolojik Türkiye Türkçesi Lugati*, vol. 4, ed. by Semih Tezcan (Ankara: Türkiye Bilimler Akademisi, 2016), 328-329.

Translation

By Ḥasīb

1. Once I loved a Bosnian lad
Kind was his nature, Haso his beautiful name.
2. If I hugged him, he'd say "Don't touch, don't touch (me)!"
If I begged for a kiss, he'd tell me to "Give it a rest!"
3. If I told 'Amrī, you're my everything,
One moment he'd say "sweet," the next "bitter (things)."
4. For this flirty bath attendant I would even rub myself,
If only he'd pity me and tell me so, oh, that Salko!⁶
5. It pierced my heart needle-like,⁷ this yearning
For that lad, whose name is Ibro.
6. If you're looking for a hair-less style,⁸ oh lover,
Don't you have that barber Muyo?
7. I asked that flirty tavern boy his name,
He turned coquettishly and said Koyo!⁹

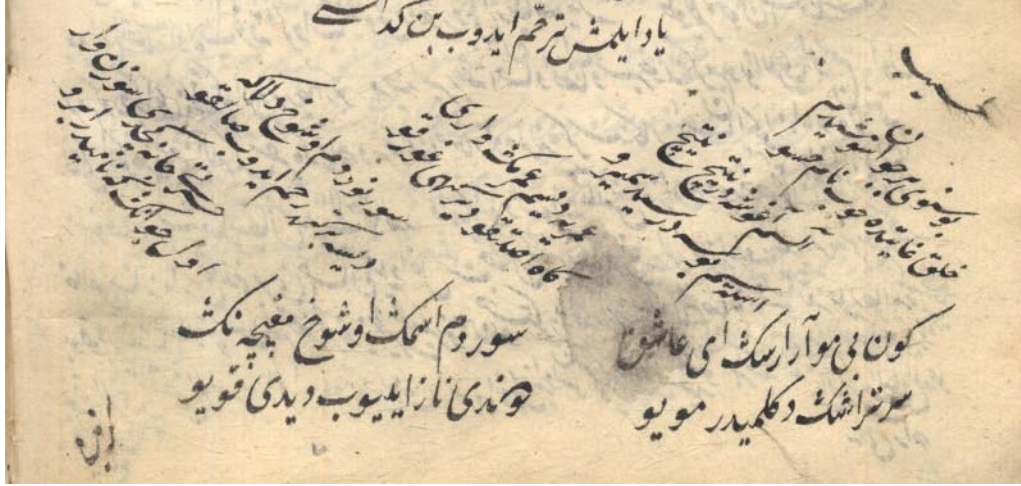
⁶ It is interesting to note the curious overlap between the name Salko and the imperative forms of two Turkish verbs, "salmak" and "ko[y]mak". The Turkish verb "salmak" has been suggested to carry sexual connotations, particularly in contexts such as "to relieve", "to give" or "to attack". See İlhan Ayverdi, "salmak," in *Misalli Büyük Türkçe Sözlük*, vol. 3, ed. by Ahmet Topaloğlu (Istanbul: Kubbealtı, 2011), 2694. For the Turkish verb "ko[y]mak", see footnote no. 5.

⁷ It is possible that the author is making an allusion to the youth's occupation as a tailor. The needle in this case could also be seen as a metaphor for the phallus.

⁸ The term "گون" is a homograph, denoting "gün", which signifies a multitude of meanings, including colour, kind, mode, manner, or fashion. Alternatively, when read as "kūn", it represents the anus.

⁹ An alternative reading of the word in question is "kuyo/kujo", which is the Bosnian term for "bitch" or "bastard". Accordingly, we may interpret this verse as follows: He turned coquettishly and said "you bastard!"

Facsimile



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