

## DOSYA/DOSSIER

Bu özel dosya, Edith Ambros'un editörlüğünde hazırlanmıştır. Dosyada yer alan dört çalışmanın üçü (Edith Ambros, Hatice Aynur ve Sadık Yazar'ın çalışmaları) ilk kez 21-25 Haziran 2024 tarihinde Arnavutluk, Tiran'da gerçekleşen 25. CIÉPO sempozyumunda (Symposium of the Comité International des Études Pré-Ottomanes et Ottomanes) bildiri olarak sunulmuştur. Makaleye dönüşen üç bildiriye Benedek Péri'nin makalesi daha sonra katılmıştır.



This special dossier has been prepared with Edith Ambros as editor. Three of the four studies in the dossier (those by Edith Ambros, Hatice Aynur, and Sadık Yazar) were originally presented as papers at the 25th CIÉPO symposium (Symposium of the Comité International des Études Pré-Ottomanes et Ottomanes) held in Tirana, Albania, on 21-25 June 2024. Benedek Péri's article later joined the three papers that had been modified into articles.

## Presentation: A Quartet on Ottoman High-culture Poetic Style\*

Count de Buffon says it tersely in his famous discourse on style in 1753: “*The style is the man himself.*”<sup>1</sup> True as far as the symbiosis of a person and his or her style goes, but of no use in analysing style. For instructions to that end, we had better turn to J.A. Cuddon who writes:

The analysis and assessment of style involves examination of a writer’s choice of words, his figures of speech, the devices (rhetorical and otherwise), the shape of his sentences (whether they be loose or periodic), the shape of his paragraphs – indeed, of every conceivable aspect of his language and the way in which he uses it.<sup>2</sup>

And then comes the blow, for Cuddon continues: “Style defies complete analysis or definition.”<sup>3</sup> So we are back where Buffon left us.

However, no-one has been totally discouraged by this state of affairs; the innumerable writings on style and stylistics in various languages are proof of that. Studies on Ottoman literary style are quite numerous, too, and yet they are clearly insufficient. It is evident that Ottoman-Turkish philology is not yet through with the *Zemin*, “the fundament”, of studies on style, and that there still is much to do. Furthermore, as new methods of analysis present themselves, hopes of defining style more precisely or better than ever before do not die out. The present dossier containing a quartet of studies on aspects of style illustrates how varied the themes and approaches can and are bound to be. It also reminds us that style – as a component of “literature” – both highlights and forms various readings of history. As Terry Eagleton pertinently writes, “It is not a question of debating whether ‘literature’ should be related to ‘history’ or not: it is a question of different readings of history itself.”<sup>4</sup>

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1 “Le style c’est l’homme même.” From the famous “Discourse on style” (“Discours sur le style”) delivered by the French naturalist Georges-Louis Leclerc, Comte de Buffon (d. 1788); see *The Oxford Dictionary of Phrase and Fable*, 2. ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, Current Online Version, 2006), <https://www.oxfordreference.com> (accessed on 17 July 2025).

2 J.A. Cuddon, *The Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*, 4. ed., revised by C.E. Preston (London: Penguin Books, 1999), 872.

3 Cuddon, *The Penguin Dictionary*, 872.

4 Terry Eagleton, *Literary Theory: An Introduction*, Anniversary Edition (Malden, MA – Oxford – Victoria: Blackwell Publishing, 2009), 182.

The present quartet is made up of articles that all relate to some aspect of the Ottomans' literary history. None of these aspects are imaginary, all are historical. Should we use a flowery simile, we might say that in this string quartet the article about high-culture prosody by Sadık Yazar is the cello that plays the rhythmic patterns underlying style, the article by Hatice Aynur on the poet Maḥremī (d. 1535) and that by Benedek Péri on the poet Nihālī (d. 1542 or 1543) are the first and second violins playing melodies of style, and the article on a mild style of humour by Edith Ambros is the viola filling in humorous harmonies. Prosaically said, the common denominator of the four articles is their dealing with aspects of the historic Ottoman phenomenon of high-culture poetry. But let the articles speak for themselves.

**Edith G. Ambros**