

## Maḥremī (d. 1535) as a Poet of *Ḳaṣīdes* (Eulogies) and his Praise of Meḥmed Beg, Istanbul's *İhtisāb Kethūdāsi* \*

Kaside Şairi Olarak Maḥremī ve İstanbul'un  
*İhtisāb Kethūdāsi* Meḥmed Beg'e Sunduğu Kaside

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**Abstract:** Primary sources, especially sixteenth-century *tezkires* (poets' biographies), offer only limited information on Tatalı Maḥremī. Modern scholarship has generally identified him as one of the two leading figures of the *Türki-i Basit* (Simple Turkish) movement, although the very existence of this movement has recently been called into question. Alongside the study devoted to his *Şehnâme*, the discovery of his *Divân* (collected poems) and the *kaşides* (eulogies) preserved in the *Mecmû'a-i Kaşâ'id-i Türkiyye* (Miscellany of Turkish eulogies) has enriched our understanding of Maḥremī's life and works. Based on the information currently available, the forty-four *kaşides* identified thus far reveal a different dimension of his literary identity—namely, his authorship in the *kaşide* genre. Although absent from contemporary and later literary sources, these poems were composed for some of the most powerful figures of the period, including sultans, grand viziers, and judges.

This article, devoted to Maḥremī's *kaşides*, is organized into two main sections, following a brief introduction to his life and place in Ottoman literary culture. The first section examines the recipients, timing, and purposes of his *kaşides*, situating them within early sixteenth-century poetic conventions. The second section focuses on a single *kaşide*—notable for its literary and thematic features—to illuminate Maḥremī's skills as a *kaşide* poet. Drawing particular attention for what appears to be the earliest use of the *redif* (refrain) *şehr/şehir* (city) in Ottoman poetry, the poem was composed for Meḥmed Beg, Istanbul's İhtisâb Kethüdâsı (market superintendent), a senior figure within the Ottoman administrative hierarchy. To deepen our understanding of Maḥremī's *kaşide* practice, the poem is presented with Turkish and English translations and evaluated in terms of its form, content, and patronage context.

**Keywords:** *Türki-i Basit*, panegyric tradition, Meḥmed Beg, Istanbul's İhtisâb Kethüdâsı, patronage of Ottoman literature.

**Özet:** Tatalı Maḥremī hakkında başta on altıncı yüzyıl *tezkiireleri* olmak üzere birincil kaynaklarda verilen bilgiler oldukça sınırlıdır. İkincil kaynaklarda ise genellikle varlığı son yıllarda tartışılabilir hâle gelen *Türki-i Basit* akımının iki öncüsünden biri olarak anılmaktaydı. *Şehnâme*'si üzerine yapılan çalışmayla birlikte Maḥremī'nin hayatı ve eserleri hakkında zenginleşen bilgilere, son yıllarda ortaya çıkan *Divân*'ı ve *Mecmû'a-i Kaşâ'id-i Türkiyye*'de yer alan kasideleri eklenmiştir. Mevcut bilgiler ışığında tespit edilen 44 kasidesi Maḥremī'nin edebî kimliğinin farklı bir yönünü, yani kaside şairliğini öne çıkarmaktadır. Çağdaş ve ardından gelen edebî kaynaklarda söz edilmeyen bu şiirler, aslında dönemin en güçlü figürlerine—sultanlara, sadrazamlara ve kadınlara—sunulmak üzere kaleme alınmıştır.

Maḥremī'nin kasidelerine odaklanan bu yazı, giriş ve iki bölümden oluşmaktadır. Maḥremī'nin hayatı ve Osmanlı edebî kültüründeki yerine dair kısa bir girişten sonra ilk bölümde şairin kasidelerini kimlere, ne zaman ve ne amaçla sunduğu ve kasidelerin özellikleri değerlendirilmektedir. İkinci bölümde, edebî açıdan ve içeriği bakımından dikkate değer kasideleri olan Maḥremī'nin kaside şairliği yönüne aydınlatması için bir kasidesine odaklanılmıştır. Şimdilik tespit edebildiğim kadarıyla Osmanlı şiirinde ilk kez “şehir” redifinin kullanılmasıyla dikkatimi çeken bu kaside, Osmanlı bürokrasisinde önemli bir konum olan İstanbul İhtisâb kethüdâlığı görevinde bulunan Meḥmed Beg için yazılmıştır. Maḥremī'nin kaside şairliğinin anlaşılmasına katkı sunan kasidenin, Türkçe ve İngilizce çevirisi, biçim, içerik ve himaye ilişkileri bağlamında değerlendirilmesi yapılmaktadır.

**Keywords:** *Türki-i Basit*, kaside geleneği, İhtisâb kethüdâsı Meḥmed Beg, Osmanlı himaye ilişkileri.

**T**atavlı Maḥremī (d. 942/1535), born Aḥmed in Tatavla—today’s Kurtuluş in the Şişli district of Istanbul—was the son of Tatavlı Mehmed ‘Alī Bey, a companion of Bāyezīd II (r. 1481–1512).<sup>1</sup> Although his early career following his madrasa training is not fully documented, his *kaşīdes* indicate that he spent periods outside Istanbul, accompanying military campaigns. His identifiable posts include service as deputy judge (*nā’ib*) in the Galata court and, from 1528 onward, in Thessaloniki, where he worked alongside Beyşehirli Ḥasan Çelebi (d. 960/1552–53), the city’s *kaḍī*.<sup>2</sup>

A well-known anecdote relates that Maḥremī was dismissed from his post as *nā’ib* of the Galata court after composing a satirical verse about dignitaries who had attended an Easter service in disguise, though he was later reinstated.<sup>3</sup> Some years later, while returning to Istanbul from Thessaloniki in 940 (1533), the ship carrying Maḥremī and his family was seized by pirates, and they were taken captive. After a period of imprisonment, he ransomed himself, his wife, and their four children, but had to leave his family as hostages while he traveled to Istanbul to secure the remaining funds. With the assistance of friends, he began to gather the required sum, but Maḥremī died in Muḥarrem 942 (13 July–12 August 1535) before he could complete the payment. His family was eventually freed through the intervention of his friend, the poet, painter, and shipman Naḳḳāş Ḥaydar (d. 980/1573), although one of his sons is said to have died in captivity.

Maḥremī’s embeddedness in the literary networks of his time is evident in the recognition he received from prominent contemporaries. The celebrated poet

1 For biographical details and an overview of Maḥremī’s corpus, see Hatice Aynur’s studies on the poet, beginning with her PhD dissertation on Maḥremī’s *Şehnāme* (1993) and continuing in subsequent publications, including her most recent works: Hatice Aynur, “Maḥremī,” *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Three*, ed. Kate Fleet et al. (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2021), 80–82, [https://doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912\\_ei3\\_COM\\_36034](https://doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_ei3_COM_36034); and “In the Quest for a Lyrical Persona: Love in Tatavlı Maḥremī’s *Gazels*,” in *Challenging Conventions: Love, Lovers, and Beloveds in Early Modern Ottoman Poetry (1453–1600)*, ed. Christiane Czygan and Hatice Aynur (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2025), 157–74.

2 On the appointment of Beyşehirli Ḥasan Çelebi as *kaḍī* of Thessaloniki in 934 (1528), see Ercan Alan, “934 (1528) Tarihli Bir Belgeye Göre Rumeli’de Kadılık Müessesesi,” *Uluslararası Sosyal Araştırmalar Dergisi* 9, no. 46 (October 2016): 169.

3 *Âşık Çelebi, Meşâ’irü’ş-Şu’arâ: İnceleme-Metin*, ed. Filiz Kılıç, vol. 3 (Istanbul: İstanbul Araştırmaları Enstitüsü, 2010), 784–85.

Zâtî (d. 954/1547), for example, composed a *kaşîde* in his honour and mentioned him in his well-known *Letâiyif* (Anecdotes).<sup>4</sup> The modern scholarly framing of Maḥremî began with Fuad Köprülü (d. 1966), who identified him—together with Edirneli Naẓmî (d. 993/1585–86?)—as a principal representative of the *Türkî-i Basîṭ* movement. Although this characterization has since undergone critical reassessment<sup>5</sup>, subsequent research, particularly by Hatice Aynur, has significantly expanded the poet's known corpus beyond the two works traditionally attributed to him—the *Şehnâme* (Book of kings) and the *Basîṭnâme* (The plain book). Her studies have identified four additional compositions—*Şütürnâme* (Book of the camel), *Mecmû'ü'l-Letâiyif* (A collection of anecdotes), *Tarabü'l-Mecâlis* (Joyful gatherings), and his *Dîvân*—revealing an oeuvre considerably more extensive and diverse than previously recognized.<sup>6</sup>

More recent discoveries have further deepened our understanding of Maḥremî's literary world. The recovery of his *Dîvân*<sup>7</sup> and his strong presence in the *Mecmû'a-i Kaşâ'id-i Türkiyye*<sup>8</sup> (Miscellany of Turkish eulogies)—where he is represented by thirty-eight poems, more than any other poet included in the collection—have highlighted a previously neglected dimension of his authorship: his role as a *kaşîde* poet deeply engaged in the Ottoman panegyric tradition. In

4 On Zâtî's *kaşîde* in Maḥremî's honour, and his references to the poet in his *Letâiyif*, see *Zâtî Dîvânı: Gazeller Dışındaki Şiirler, İnceleme-Tenkitli Metin*, ed. Orhan Kurtoğlu (Ankara: T.C. Kültür Bakanlığı Kütüphaneler ve Yayımlar Genel Müdürlüğü, 2017), 190–192/*kaşîde* 64, e-book (accessed 25 September 2025); Mehmed Çavuşoğlu, "Zâtî'nin Letâiyifi," *IÜEF Türk Dili ve Edebiyatı Dergisi* 17 (1970): 50.

5 Hatice Aynur, "Rethinking the Türkî-i Basîṭ Movement in Turkish Literature," *Archivum Ottomanicum* 25 (2008): 79–97.

6 For his works, see Aynur, "Maḥremî."

7 A comprehensive edition of Maḥremî's *Dîvân*, based on the only known copy and on *mecmû'as*, is currently being prepared by the author.

8 I thank Mustafa İsen, who first directed me to the *Mecmû'a-i Kaşâ'id-i Türkiyye* (hereafter *Mecmû'a-i Kaşâ'id*) in 1992, and the late Mehmet Ali Tanyeri, who did so again in 1999. Tanyeri had prepared an inventory of the manuscript, shared the folios containing Maḥremî's *kaşîdes*. He later brought the same *mecmû'a*—together with his notes—to another scholar, facilitating its eventual publication. See *Mecmû'a-i Kaşâ'id-i Türkiyye*, ed. Murat A. Karavelioğlu (Istanbul: Titiz Yayınları, 2011). See also the *Mecmû'a-i Kaşâ'id*, Murat Ali Karavelioğlu, "Mecmû'a-i Kaşâ'id-i Türkiyye (Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Esad Efendi, 3418)," *Türk Edebiyatı Eserler Sözlüğü*, <http://tees.yesevi.edu.tr/madde-detay/mecmu-a-i-kasa-id-i-turkiyye-suleymaniye-kutuphanesi-esad-efendi-3418> (accessed 15 October 2025).

total, forty-four *kaşides* addressed to leading figures of his era, including sultans, viziers, and judges, testify to his active participation in the networks of literary patronage that shaped the cultural life of the early sixteenth century.<sup>9</sup>

The present study reassesses Maḥremī's poetic identity through this corpus of *kaşides*, situating his work within the broader dynamics of sixteenth-century Ottoman panegyric literature. By examining the themes, occasions, and dedicatees of these poems, it seeks to clarify the poet's position within the networks of patronage and cultural exchange that informed his literary milieu. Particular emphasis is placed on the *kaşide* composed for Meḥmed Beg, the *ihtisāb kethudāsı* (market superintendent) of Istanbul and a senior figure within the Ottoman administrative hierarchy. Distinguished by what appears to be the earliest use of the *redif şehri/şehir* (city) in Ottoman poetry, this poem is analyzed in terms of its imagery, diction, and rhetorical construction to explore how Maḥremī engaged with the conventions of the *kaşide* while articulating his own poetic voice within the formal economy of praise.

### The *Kaşide* Tradition and Maḥremī's *Kaşides*

In Ottoman poetic culture, the *kaşide* functioned not only as a literary form and genre but also as a social instrument—an art of praise that intertwined aesthetic mastery with systems of hierarchy and patronage.<sup>10</sup> Beyond the sphere of devotional poetry, poets composed *kaşides* to extol, and at times to censure, figures of authority. When addressed to rulers, viziers, or high-ranking officials, the *kaşide* served as a vehicle through which poets sought favour, protection, or material reward, while simultaneously displaying their rhetorical skill and erudition.

Therefore, the forty-four *kaşides* by Maḥremī identified to date constitute an invaluable record of his literary activity and social milieu. Identifying their dedicatees and the circumstances of their composition illuminates not only their themes and diction but also the networks of patronage and affiliation that shaped

<sup>9</sup> On the patronage in Ottoman literary culture, see Halil İnalçık, *Şair ve Patron: Patrimonyal Devlet ve Sanat Üzerine Sosyolojik Bir İnceleme* (Ankara: Doğu Batı Yayınları, 2003); Tuba Işınsu Durmuş, *Tutsan Elini Ben Fakirin: Osmanlı Edebiyatında Hamilik Geleneği* (İstanbul: Doğan Kitap, 2009).

<sup>10</sup> On the Ottoman *kaşide* see, *Kasıdeye Medhiye: Biçime, İşleve ve Muhtevaya Dair Tespitler*, eds. Hatice Aynur et al. (İstanbul: Klasik, 2013); Walter Andrews, "Speaking of Power: The 'Ottoman Kaside,'" in *Qasida Poetry in Islamic Asia and Africa: Classical Traditions and Modern Meanings*, eds. Stefan Sperl and Christopher Shackle (Leiden-New York-Köln: E. J. Brill, 1996), 1:281–300.

his poetic career. Such analysis also allows us to recover biographical details not preserved in the *tezkires* or other contemporary accounts.

Reconstructing these contexts, however, presents considerable challenges. With the exception of *tārîḥ manzūmes* (chronogrammatic poems) or *kaşîde-tārîḥs* (*kaşîdes* containing chronograms), Ottoman poets rarely specified the exact time or place of composition and seldom assigned titles to their works. In this respect, Maḥremî is unusual: of the twenty *kaşîdes* in his *Divân*, eighteen bear headings naming their dedicatees.<sup>11</sup> For some of the remaining twenty-three, preserved only in the *Mecmû'a-i Kaşâ'id*, the addressees can be inferred from internal allusions corroborated by historical evidence, while approximate dates of composition may be deduced from references to offices and their documented holders.

Apart from a single *kaşîde* for Bâyezîd II (r. 1481–1512) —of which only four couplets survive in the first volume of the *Şehnâme* (fol. 18b) — Maḥremî's *kaşîdes* are preserved in two principal manuscript sources. The first is the sole extant copy of his *Divân*, which contains only a portion of his collected poems, as the section containing the religious *kaşîdes* and several folios in other parts of the manuscript are now missing. Twenty *kaşîdes* survive, two of them incomplete. Their irregular sequence —for instance, a fragmentary *tevḥîd* (praise of God's unity) followed by an elegy for Kûrkçübaşı Aḥmed Beg, a chronogram, a poem on Süleymân I's (r. 1520–66) conquest of Hungary in 1526, and then panegyrics for Selîm I (r. 1512–20) and other dignitaries —suggests that the manuscript may represent either a working copy prepared by the poet himself or an early compilation produced by another hand.<sup>12</sup>

The second source is the above-mentioned anonymous *Mecmû'a-i Kaşâ'id-i Türkiyye*, compiled no later than the 1540s.<sup>13</sup> Among its 273 *kaşîdes*, thirty-eight

11 Two *kaşîdes* have no known dedicatee, while the dedicatee of one remains unidentified.

12 The only extant copy of Maḥremî's *Divân* is preserved in the Library of the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts (Zagreb)-OZJA 411. As the characteristics of this manuscript are discussed in detail in my forthcoming book on Maḥremî's *Divân*, that information is not repeated here.

13 The sole extant copy of the *Mecmû'a-i Kaşâ'id-i Türkiyye* is held in the Süleymaniye Library, Esad Efendi Collection, MS 3418. The *mecmua* contains 273 poems—three anonymous and 270 *kaşîdes*, by forty-three poets—and includes neither a colophon nor any indication of its compiler or date of compilation. Based on the death dates of the poets and their dedicatees, it may be inferred that the *Mecmû'a-i Kaşâ'id* was compiled no later than the 1540s. This point is not addressed in the published edition of *Mecmû'a-i Kaşâ'id-i Türkiyye* by Murat A. Karavelioğlu.

are by Maḥremî, making him one of the most prominently represented poets in the collection.<sup>14</sup> Twenty-three of these poems are absent from the *Dīvân*, while five poems preserved in the *Dīvân* do not appear in the *Mecmû‘a-i Kaşâ‘id*.

Barring the discovery of additional manuscripts, the extant corpus of Maḥremî’s *kaşîdes* thus comprises forty-four poems. It is remarkable that neither sixteenth-century *tezkiye* writers nor other contemporary sources mention this substantial output, despite his prominence within a major *kaşîde mecmû‘ası*. Archival *in‘âmât defterleri* (registers of royal gifts) record him twice among the poets rewarded for presenting poems at the court of Süleymân I: in Muḥarrem 937 (August/September 1530) and Şafer 937 (September/October 1530), when he received stipends of 300 *kuruş* on each occasion. These records are particularly valuable, as they confirm Maḥremî’s presence in Istanbul during 1530 and attest to his direct participation in courtly literary culture.<sup>15</sup>

The discussion that follows adopts the hierarchical arrangement typical of the *kaşîde* section in a classical *dīvân*: beginning with religious poems and proceeding through panegyrics to sultans, princes, viziers, and other dignitaries, before concluding with satirical and reflective compositions.<sup>16</sup>

**Religious Kaşîdes:** Maḥremî’s *kaşîdes* on religious themes—two *tevḥîds* (poems affirming divine unity) (MK/1b; MK 2011/215–16 and MK/6a; MK 2011/228–30, three *na‘ts* (poems in praise of the Prophet Muḥammed) (MK/11b; MK 2011/243–46; MK/17a; MK 2011/262–63 and MK/18a; MK 2011/264), and two *münâcâts* (supplicatory prayers to God) (MK/16a; MK 2011/258–59 and DM 1a–2a; MK/18a; MK 2011/264)—reflect both his mastery of devotional rhetoric and his sensitivity to formal convention. His twenty-seven-couplet *tevḥîd*

14 In the *Mecmû‘a-i Kaşâ‘id*, Maḥremî is represented by thirty-eight *kaşîdes*, whereas the published edition records only thirty-seven. The discrepancy arises from the misattribution of Maḥremî’s *mer-siye* (elegy) for Kürkçübaşı Şemseddin Ahmed Beg to the poet Revânî—an error that is also repeated in the editor’s subsequent writings. See *Mecmû‘a-i Kasâ‘id-i Türkiyye*, ed. Murat A. Karavelioğlu, 82–90, and especially 83.

15 İsmail E. Erünsal, “Türk Edebiyatı Tarihinin Arşiv Kaynakları II: Kânûnî Sultan Süleymân Devrine Ait Bir İn‘âmât Defteri,” in *Edebiyat Tarihi Yazıları: Arşiv Kayıtları, Yazma Eserler ve Kayıp Metinler*, ed. Hatice Aynur, 2nd rev. ed. (İstanbul: Timaş, 2024), 269–70.

16 The folio and page numbers of the *kaşîdes* are cited in parentheses in the text, according to the following abbreviations: DM (*Dīvân-ı Maḥremî*); MK (*Mecmû‘a-i Kaşâ‘id-i Türkiyye*, Süleymaniye Library-Esad Efendi 3418); MK 2011 (*Mecmû‘a-i Kaşâ‘id-i Türkiyye*, ed. Murat A. Karavelioğlu).

built upon the *redif lâ ilâha illallâh* (There is no god but Allah) is the first poem in the *Mecmû‘a-i Kaşâ‘id*, suggesting that contemporaries held it in high esteem. The *tevḥîds* of Şâhidî<sup>17</sup> and Revânî<sup>18</sup> (d. 930/1523–24) employing the same *redif* follow immediately after, while two further examples by Ḥafî<sup>19</sup> occupy the twelfth and thirteenth positions (MK/13a; MK 2011/247–49 and MK/14a; MK 2011/250–51). Whether this ordering reflects Maḥremî’s priority in adopting the refrain, the superior literary quality of his poem, or simply the compiler’s personal taste—or even a possible acquaintance between compiler and poet—cannot be determined.

In any case, these religious *kaşîdes* may be regarded as evidence of Maḥremî’s intention to arrange his poetry into a properly ordered *dîvân*, insofar as the conventional structure of a *dîvân* required it to open with devotional compositions before advancing to panegyrics addressed to the sultan and high-ranking officials, and subsequently to other genres and forms.

***Kaşîde for Bâyezîd I (r. 1481–1511)***: Although it is possible that Maḥremî composed more than one *kaşîde* for Bâyezîd II, only a single example—of which merely the first four couplets have survived—has come down to us.<sup>20</sup> This poem appears at the beginning of the first volume of the *Şehnâme*, composed for presentation to Bâyezîd II, and is constructed upon the rhyme *-âr* in the metre *Fâ‘ilâtün Fâ‘ilâtün Fâ‘ilâtün Fâ‘ilün*.

***Kaşîdes for Selîm I (r. 1512–1520)***: Maḥremî composed five *kaşîdes* for Selîm I. In these, he celebrates the ruler’s courage, martial prowess, justice, and liberality—virtues that reflect both the ideological ideals of Ottoman rulership and Selîm’s historical image.

According to the chronological sequence that can be reconstructed, the earliest of these poems, rhyming in *-end*, praises Selîm’s bravery and valour at the Battle of Çaldıran, fought between the Ottomans and the Safavids on 23 August 1514 (MK/299a–b; MK 2011/959–61). As Maḥremî himself notes in

17 It remains unclear which of the four poets named Şâhidî who lived until the mid-sixteenth century is meant here.

18 On Revânî, see Erünsal, “Revânî,” in *Edebiyat Tarihi Yazıları: Arşiv Kayıtları, Yazma Eserler ve Kayıp Metinler*, 35–42.

19 For Ḥafî, see Mehmet Fatih Köksal, “Hafî (Huffî/Haffî/Hufî ?),” *Türk Edebiyatı İsimler Sözlüğü (Teis)*, <https://teis.yesevi.edu.tr/madde-detay/hafi-huffi-haffi-hufi> (accessed 15 October 2025).

20 Tatavlahı Maḥremî, *Şehnâme-i Maḥremî*, Ankara, Türk Tarih Kurumu Kütüphanesi, MS no. Y.I/0001, 18b.

the twenty-seventh couplet, the poem was presented directly to the sultan. The second *kaşide*, rhyming in *-ād* and comprising fifty-three couplets, appears to have been written in 1516, on the eve of Selīm's Mameluke Campaign (DM/16b–18a; MK/294b–295a; MK 2011/946–47). The poet's references to the hardships of travel suggest that he was, at least for a time, away from Istanbul; within the poem he petitions for an appointment to an unspecified post.

The third *kaşide*, constructed upon the rhyme *-ār* and the *redif tonandı* (adorned), commemorates the conquest of Aleppo and Egypt (1516–17) (DM/18b–20a; MK/57a–58a; MK 2011/358–60). It vividly conveys the joy and festivities that erupted in Istanbul upon the arrival of the news, describing the official celebrations and noting in couplet 44 that numerous other poems and books were produced to commemorate the event. Since the poet refrains from making a personal request and reports the celebrations in the manner of an eyewitness, it seems likely that he was in the capital at the time.

The fourth *kaşide*, organized around the rhyme *-er* and the *redif kılıç* (sword), again extols Selīm's martial prowess and was likely composed during the Egyptian campaign (1516–17) or in its immediate aftermath (DM/15b–16b; MK/323a–324a; MK 2011/1018–19). In both of these final *kaşides*, which function as martial odes, the poet forgoes explicit petitions, aligning himself instead with the collective rejoicing of the empire.

The fifth *kaşide*, of uncertain date and rhyming in *-em*, is listed as the last of those addressed to Selīm I (DM/13b–15b; MK/218b–220a; MK 2011/761–64). While, like the others, it extols the sultan's heroism, justice, and munificence, it departs from the preceding examples by offering a more general expression of praise rather than one anchored in a specific historical occasion. Rather than articulating an explicit petition, Maḥremī alludes to his financial need, implicitly appealing to the very generosity for which the sultan is extolled.

***Kaşides for Süleymān I (r. 1520–1566):*** Süleymān I inspired the largest group of Maḥremī's panegyrics—seven in total. Much like his odes to Selīm I, these *kaşides* praise the sultan's heroism, prowess in battle, magnanimity, and justice—qualities that embodied the Ottoman ideal of rulership.

The first two belong to the *fethnāme* (victory ode) type. The first commemorates Süleymān's capture of Belgrade in 1521—his inaugural campaign after ascending the throne in 1520 (DM/20b–22a; MK/206b–207b; MK

2011/729–34).<sup>21</sup> The second celebrates his decisive victory over the Hungarian army at the Battle of Mohács on 29 August 1526 and the subsequent conquest of Buda, the Hungarian capital.<sup>22</sup> With its 260 couplets, the latter is among Maḥremî's longest *kaşides* and provides a remarkably detailed narrative of the battle and its aftermath (DM/4b–13b; MK/170b–177a; MK 2011/645–60). The third poem, dedicated to the circumcision festivities held for Süleymân's sons —Şehzade Muştafâ (d. 960/1553), Meḥmed (d. 950/1543), and Selîm (later Selîm II, r. 1566–74)— in 936 (1530), which continued for three weeks, is a fine example of the *sûriyye* or festival ode (MK/44b–50a; MK 2011/331–38). In his 120-couplet *tercî'-bend* (a stanzaic verse form), Maḥremî paints a lively picture of the feasts, spectacles, and entertainments that marked the occasion. Even as he praises the sultan's splendour and munificence, the poet allows a note of personal hope for royal favour to emerge through the rhetoric of praise.<sup>23</sup>

The fourth *kaşide*, featuring the rhyme *-âr* and the *redif dür* (pearl), extols the sultan's justice and liberality, though its precise date and occasion remain uncertain (MK/119a–120a; MK 2011/514–16). Explicitly presented to the palace, the poem reveals Maḥremî's wish to gain access to the sultan's inner circle and to benefit from his patronage.<sup>24</sup>

The next two *kaşides*, featuring the *redifs nîze* (spear) and *tîğ* (sword) respectively, return to the imagery of martial heroism and likely correspond to the Rhodes, Belgrade, or Mohács campaigns (MK/205a–b; MK 2011/728–730). In the *tîğ* poem, Maḥremî refers to his *Şehnâme*, which concludes with the conquest of Rhodes in 1522, suggesting that this composition was contemporaneous with that work (MK/305b–307a; MK 2011/974–76).

21 For the text of this *kaşide*, see Murat A. Karavelioğlu, *Mahremî'nin Belgrad Fethine Kasidesi ya da Kanunî Methiyesi* (Istanbul: Dün Bugün Yarın Yayınları, 2021).

22 On this *kaşide*, see Murat Karavelioğlu, "Mahremî'nin Mohaç Fethinamesi Örneğinden Haraketle Edebî Metinlerin Tarihi Olayları Anlatımına Dair," *Divan Edebiyatı Araştırmaları Dergisi*, özel sayı, "Prof. Dr. Orhan Bilgin Armağan Sayısı 1" 6, no. 11 (2013): 217–36.

23 The same occasion was celebrated in a *kaşide* comprising forty-one couplets by Fiğânî (d. 1532). See *Kanunî Sultan Süleyman Çağı Şairlerinden Fiğânî ve Divânçesi*, [ed.] Abdulkadir Karahan (Istanbul: İÜ Edebiyat Fakültesi, 1966), 6–10.

24 This *kaşide* may correspond to one of the poems for which he was granted a stipend, according to the archival evidence cited above. See, footnote 15.

The final *kaşide*, composed with the rhyme *-ān* and the *redif şikār* (hunt), celebrates the sultan's mastery in the royal hunt at Tokad Garden<sup>25</sup>, one of Istanbul's major imperial leisure estates. Although undated, the poem's imagery of the hunt as an emblem of sovereign control over nature and dominion reflects Maḥremī's ability to transform ceremonial occasions into symbolic affirmations of power (MK/153a–154a; MK 2011/603–05).

***Kaşide for Şehzāde (Prince) Aḥmed (d. 1513)***: One of Maḥremī's earliest *kaşides* is dedicated to Prince Aḥmed, the eldest son of Sultan Bāyezīd II (r. 1482–1512), composed for the '*İd al-Adhā* (Festival of sacrifice) (DM/22b–23b; MK/322b; MK 2011/1016–17). Belonging to the '*idiyye* (ode composed for religious festivals) type, it conveys wishes of prosperity and divine favour. References to Aḥmed as "ruler of Rūm" and to his selection among the princes suggest a date around September 1511, when Bāyezīd II briefly considered abdicating in his favour. The plan's failure amid military resistance intensified the rivalry between Şehzāde Aḥmed and Şehzāde Selīm (later Selīm I). Bāyezīd II abdicated in favour of Selīm in April 1512; Aḥmed was executed the following year. The poem thus mirrors a moment of political tension and personal hope, voicing Maḥremī's allegiance and anticipation of patronage.

***Kaşide for Hersekzāde Aḥmed Paşa<sup>26</sup> (d. 1517)***: Maḥremī's *kaşide* for Vizier Hersekzāde Aḥmed Paşa belongs to the *şikāyetnāme* (complaint) type—a subgenre in which poets lament their hardships and appeal to a patron for redress (DM/23b–25b; MK/320b; MK 2011/1012–15). The poem opens with praise for Aḥmed Paşa as a man of both sword and pen, extolling his generosity and virtue. Yet the tone soon shifts from panegyric to petition: Maḥremī recounts the material and moral hardships he endured during military service and voices his expectation of recompense. The title—*Berāy-ı Hersek-zāde gufte-şud der-şikāyet-i sefer* ([Composed] Recited for Hersekzāde: A Complaint about the Campaign)—indicates that it was probably performed before the vizier himself.

Although the specific campaign cannot be identified with certainty, the context points to Aḥmed Paşa's participation in the Battle of Çaldıran (1514) as

25 On the Tokad Garden, see Arzu Terzi, "Beykoz'da Padişahlık Makamına Ait Bir Mülk: Tokat Bahçesi/Çiftliği (Sultan Abdülaziz Dönemi Sonuna Kadar)," *Beykoz 2020 Sempozyumu: Tebliğler Kitabı* (İstanbul: Beykoz Belediyesi, 2021), 1133–49.

26 For Hersekzāde Aḥmed Paşa, see Şerafettin Turan, "Hersekzāde Ahmed Paşa," *TDVİA*, XVII, <https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/hersekzade-ahmed-pasa> (accessed 15 September 2025)

second vizier. Maḥremî's detailed account of the same battle in his *Şehnâme* reinforces this likelihood.

***Kaşîdes for Grand Vizier İbrâhîm Paşa*<sup>27</sup> (d. 942/1536):** Maḥremî composed with certainty three *kaşîdes*—and possibly a fourth—for İbrâhîm Paşa, the distinguished grand vizier of Süleymân I, who held office from 929 (1523) until his execution in 942 (1536). In these poems, İbrâhîm Paşa's generosity emerges as his defining virtue, while Maḥremî's appeals for favour are voiced with characteristic subtlety and restraint.

The earliest datable *kaşîde* was written for İbrâhîm Paşa's wedding festivities in 936 (1530), which lasted for fifteen days (MK/61a–b; MK 2011/369–72).<sup>28</sup> The same occasion was celebrated by Ḥayâlî Bey in what has been regarded as the very first Ottoman *sûriyye* genre.<sup>29</sup> Maḥremî's version, previously unknown, thus ranks among the earliest of the type. It describes the splendour of the banquets and entertainments with exuberant imagery, claiming that even the Persian poets 'Unşurî (d. 1039–40), 'Asjadî (d. c. 1040), and Ḥâkânî (d. 1199) could scarcely have captured such magnificence—an assertion that both flatters the event and signals Maḥremî's self-awareness as a poet competing with the Persian masters.

Another *kaşîde*, with the *redif ebr* (cloud), likens the vizier's generosity to rain-bearing clouds, the traditional emblem of bounty (MK/129a–b; MK 2011/541–43). Here, however, the image acquires a personal note, as the poet presents himself among those awaiting the vizier's beneficence.

A third *kaşîde*, rhyming in *-âr*, belongs to the *bahâriyye* (spring ode) type (MK/151b–153a; MK 2011/599–602). After an ornate description of nature's renewal, Maḥremî turns to praise İbrâhîm Paşa as “the most munificent man of his age,” aligning natural regeneration with moral virtue.

<sup>27</sup> For İbrâhîm Paşa, see Ebru Turan, “The Sultan's Favorite: İbrahim Paşa and the Making of the Ottoman Universal Sovereignty in the Reign of Sultan Süleyman (1516–1526)” (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 2007).

<sup>28</sup> While it is commonly believed that İbrâhîm Paşa married Ḥadîce Sulţân, the daughter of Selîm I and the sister of Süleymân I, on the occasion of this wedding, he in fact married Muhsine Ḥanım, the granddaughter of İskender Paşa (d. 1504). See Ebru Turan, “The Marriage of Ibrahim Pasha (ca. 1495–1536),” *Turcica* 41 (2009): 3–36, <https://doi.org/10.2143/TURC.41.0.2049287>.

<sup>29</sup> For the text of this *kaşîde*, see Büşra Çelik Vural, “Hayâlî Bey Dîvânı: İnceleme-Tenkitli Metin-Dil İçi Çeviri” (PhD diss., Akdeniz University, 2021), 91–3.

A fourth, undedicated poem with the *redif zer* (gold), may also address İbrâhîm Paşa (MK/118a–b; MK 2011/511–513). Its imagery links autumn leaves to gold’s brilliance, situating it within the *hazâniyye* (autumn ode) type and evoking the shared splendour of sultan and vizier.

**Kaşîde for Ayās Meḥmed Paşa<sup>30</sup> (d. 946/1539):** Another of Maḥremî’s *kaşîdes*, rhyming in *-er jāle*, belongs to the *bahâriyye* (spring ode) type (MK/204a–b; MK 2011/725–27). Although the addressee is not explicitly named, internal evidence suggests that the poem was composed for Ayās Meḥmed Paşa, known as Ayās Paşa. Appointed second vizier in 1524 during the suppression of Aḥmed Paşa’s (d. 1524) rebellion—known as “Ḥâ’in Aḥmed Paşa” (Traitor Aḥmed Paşa)—Ayās Paşa later served as grand vizier from 1536 until his death in 1539.

Composed between 1524 and 1530, the poem transforms the imagery of spring renewal into a meditation on generosity and order, portraying Ayās Paşa’s beneficence as the source of social and moral harmony. The recurring motifs of blossoms and rain, traditional to the *bahâriyye*, become metaphors for patronage, while the rhyme *-er* and the *redif jāle* (dew) lends the work freshness and vitality.

**Kaşîdes for Pîrî Meḥmed Paşa<sup>31</sup> (d. 939/1532):** Maḥremî composed three *kaşîdes*—one in Persian, two in Turkish—for Pîrî Meḥmed Paşa, tracing his ascent from *defterdâr* (keeper of the register) to grand vizier. The first *kaşîde*, built on the rhyme *-er* and the refrain *defter* (register), was probably composed between 1512 and 1514, during Pîrî Meḥmed’s tenure as *başdefterdâr* (head of the keeper of the registers) (DM/27a–28a; MK/117b; MK 2011/509–10).<sup>32</sup> The repeated invocation of *defter* highlights both the bureaucratic prestige of the office and the poet’s ingenuity in turning administrative language into poetic ornament. Through this conceit, Maḥremî elevates fiscal imagery into symbols of order and justice, aligning the vizier’s governance with divine precision.

<sup>30</sup> For Ayās Meḥmed Paşa, see Ebru Turan, “Ayas Mehmed (Ayās Meḥmed) Paşa,” *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Three*, ed. Kate Fleet et al. (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2017), [https://doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912\\_ei3\\_COM\\_27607](https://doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_ei3_COM_27607).

<sup>31</sup> For Pîrî Meḥmed Paşa, see Yusuf Küçükdağ, *Vezîr-i Âzam Pîrî Mehmed Paşa* (Konya, 1994).

<sup>32</sup> On this *kaşîde*, see Hanife Dilek Batıslam, “Mahremî’nin “Defter” Kasidesi,” *Hikmet: Akademik Edebiyat Dergisi*, özel sayı, “Vefatının 100. Yılında Ali Emîrî Efendi Özel Sayı”, no. 20 (2024): 520–39.

The second poem with the rhyme *-ār* and the *redif şeker* (sugar), judging from internal references, was written in 923 (1517), when Pīrī Meḥmed was appointed grand vizier in Damascus by Selīm I (DM/28a–29b; MK/116a–b; MK 2011/506–08). Here Maḥremī praises the vizier's eloquence, discernment, and generosity, portraying him as the embodiment of the ideal statesman, while subtly expressing his own hope for favour and advancement. The third, preserved solely in the *Dīvān* and composed in Persian, employs the image of *barf* ("snow") to convey purity and contemplation rather than material petition (DM/25b–27a).

***Kaşıde for Defterdār Aḥmed Çelebi*<sup>33</sup> (d. 931/1525):** Maḥremī's *kaşıde* for Aḥmed Çelebi, who served as *defterdār* between 1519 and 1521, belongs to the *ḥazāniyye* (autumn ode) type and rhymes in *-āne* (MK/213b–214a; MK 2011/750–51). In this poem, Maḥremī intertwines themes of loyalty and service, aligning the season's waning with his own precarious status as a poet seeking renewed favour. He praises Aḥmed Çelebi's generosity and justice while tactfully reminding him of his faithful service.

***Kaşıde for Mevlānā Şāh Çelebi*<sup>34</sup> (d. 929/1523):** Among Maḥremī's panegyrics to juridical figures, one *kaşıde* stands out for its refined imagery and tone (DM/29b–30b; MK/244b–245a; MK 2011/828–30). Although the addressee is not named in the text, the *Dīvān* heading identifies him as Mevlānā Şāh Çelebi—that is, Fenārîzāde Muḥyiddīn Meḥmed Şāh Efendi—who served as *Anadolu kâzî' askeri* (chief military judge of Anatolia) and later *Rumeli kâzî' askeri* (chief military judge of Rumelia) between 925 and 929 (1519–23).

Maḥremī portrays him as *şāh-ı taḥt-gāh-ı 'ilm* (the shah upon the throne of knowledge) and *māh-ı burc-ı ḥilm* (the moon in the constellation of forbearance), employing celestial and regal imagery to convey intellectual authority and moral composure. The *redif nesim* (zephyr) structures the poem's imagery: the spring breeze becomes a symbol of the judge's gentle temperament and generosity, aligning nature's renewal with the virtues of just governance.

33 For Aḥmed Çelebi, see Meḥmed Şüreyyā, *Sicill-i 'Oşmānî* (Istanbul: Maḥba'a-i 'Āmire, 1308 [1891]), 1:197.

34 For Muḥyiddīn Meḥmed Şāh Efendi, see Mehmet İpşirli, "Fenārîzāde Muḥyiddīn Mehmed Şāh," *TDVİA*, XII, <https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/fenarizade-muhyiddin-mehmed-sah> (accessed 10 September 2025).

Probably composed between 925 and 929, the *bahāriyye* (spring ode) joins aesthetic grace with moral reflection. Beneath its polished diction lies a note of gentle supplication, as the poet seeks to share in the serenity the *nesīm* embodies.

**Kaşide for Fenārîzâde Muhyiddîn Çelebi<sup>35</sup> (d. 954/1548):** Another *kaşide*, preserved only in the *Divân*, titled “written for Mevlânâ Muhyiddîn Çelebi, son of Mevlânâ Fenârî,” is addressed to Fenārîzâde Muhyiddîn Çelebi, brother of the previous addressee (DM/30b-31b). Before his appointment as *şeyhülislâm* in 949 (1543), he served successively as *Istanbul kâdîsî* (judge of Istanbul) in 926 (1520), *Anadolu kâdîsî askeri* in 929 (1523), and *Rumeli kâdîsî askeri* in 930 (1524), steadily rising through the hierarchy of the Ottoman judiciary.

Composed most probably during the 1520s, the poem employs the *redif şer‘* (Islamic law) to weave imagery of justice, light, and divine order. Maḥremî praises Muhyiddîn Çelebi’s learning and virtue as the embodiment of ‘*ilm* and ‘*adl*, depicting him as the earthly mirror of divine justice. By using *şer‘* as both theme and emblem, he brings legal rectitude into harmony with poetic expression, blending devotion, intellect, and humility—the quintessential virtues of the Ottoman scholar-statesman. A discreet personal plea couplet 16—

*Pāmāl-ı haşm-ı nâ-hak idüp eyleme hacil  
Ey ma‘delet çemenlerinde gül-i âbdâr şer‘*

“O practitioner of *şer‘*, the fresh rose in the meadows of justice, do not allow unjust enemies to trample me underfoot and thus bring me to shame”—

introduces a note of humility and sincerity.

**Kaşides for Sa‘dî Çelebi<sup>36</sup> (d. 945/1539):** Maḥremî composed three *kaşides* for Sa‘dî Çelebi, who served as *şeyhülislâm* from 940 to 945 (1534-39) and earlier as *Istanbul kâdîsî* (930-940/1524-33). Belonging to the *bahāriyye* (spring ode) and ‘*idiyye* (festival ode) types, these poems blend imagery of renewal and festivity with learned praise, portraying Sa‘dî Çelebi as the model scholar-statesman. In all three *kaşides*, Maḥremî likens him to the Persian theologians Sa‘d al-Dîn

35 On Muhyiddîn Çelebi, see Mehmet İpşirli, “Fenārîzâde Muhyiddîn Çelebi,” *TDVİA*, XII, <https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/fenarizade-muhyiddin-celebi> (accessed 17 September 2025).

36 For Sa‘dî Çelebi, see Mehmet İpşirli, Ziya Demir, “Sâdî Çelebi,” *TDVİA*, XXXV, <https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/sadi-celebi> (accessed 17 September 2025).

al-Taftāzānī (d. 792/1390) and al-Sharīf al-Jurjānī (d. 816/1413), whose works underpinned Ottoman madrasa education.

In the *bahāriyye* rhyming in *-ān*, Maḥremī praises Sa'dī Çelebi's learning and wisdom, noting that even the famed judge of Kufa, Qāḍī Shurayḥ (d. 80/699)—a symbol of justice in the Islamic world—could only have served as his assistant (MK/77b–78b; MK 2011/408–10). He finishes the ode by describing his own hardship and seeking the scholar's protection. In the *'idiyye* rhyming in *-īd*, Maḥremī exalts Sa'dī Çelebi's erudition and compares his generosity to that of the 'Abbāsīd vizier Yahyā al-Barmakī (d. 190/805), again appealing for patronage (MK/300a–302a; MK 2011/962–64). A second *'idiyye*, rhyming in *-ān idesin* (that you may do), takes a more personal tone: in its forty-second couplet, Maḥremī laments that if denied office, he will retreat like an ascetic to Mount Lebanon—a rare note of disillusionment within the decorum of panegyric verse (MK/107a–108a; MK 2011/485–87).

***Kaşıde for Mevlānā Ḥayreddīn Ḥalīfe***: Among the poems preserved only in Maḥremī's *Dīvān* is a *kaşıde* rhyming in *-ī'*, addressed to Mevlānā Ḥayreddīn Ḥalīfe, about whom no biographical information has yet been identified (DM/31b–32b). The poem stands out within Maḥremī's corpus for its tone of intimacy and its departure from the conventional framework of patronage. Unlike his panegyrics to officials and dignitaries, this *kaşıde* is rooted in the language of companionship rather than hierarchy.

Maḥremī addresses Ḥayreddīn Ḥalīfe as a friend and confidant, declaring that despite his travels he has never encountered a companion so worthy. The praise is horizontal rather than vertical—framed by affection, loyalty, and shared intellectual affinity rather than courtly expectation. The diction conveys warmth and sincerity, revealing Maḥremī's ability to adapt the *kaşıde* form to express genuine friendship beyond the conventions of power and reward.

***Kaşıde for İhtisab Kethüdası Meḥmed Beg***: This *kaşıde* is examined in detail in the following section (MK/168b; MK 2011/643–44).

***Kaşıde for Yeniçeri Ağası Muştafâ Ağa (d. 931/1525)***: Among Maḥremī's *kaşıdes*, one of particular historical interest is dedicated to Yeniçeri Ağası (commander of the Janissary corps) Muştafâ Ağa (DM/32b, some couplets missing; MK/55a–b; MK 2011/352–54). The poem is structured in two contrasting parts—criticism and praise—offering a rare glimpse into the poet's responsiveness to the volatile political climate of the 1520s.

In the opening section, Maḥremī censures Aḥmed Paşa—later known as Ḥā'in Aḥmed Paşa (Traitor Aḥmed Paşa)—who, after his appointment as *beylerbeyi* (a governor of general) of Egypt in 929 (1523), rebelled and declared himself sultan. The poem condemns the treachery and ambition that disrupted the moral and political order, situating the poet's voice within the imperial rhetoric of loyalty and justice.

The tone then shifts to praise as Maḥremī extols Muştafâ Ağa's courage and loyalty in suppressing the rebellion. His steadfast service to Süleymân I exemplifies the Janissary ideals of discipline and devotion, contrasting rebellion with obedience and casting him as the restorer of order.

Since the revolt was suppressed in 930 (1524), the *kaşide* was probably composed soon afterward. Yet the fate of its addressee proved ironic: Muştafâ Ağa was executed on 30 Cemâziye'l-evvel 931 (25 March 1525) for his involvement in the Janissary uprising of that same year.<sup>37</sup>

**Kaşide for Kürkçübaşı Aḥmed Beg<sup>38</sup> (d. 922/1516–17):** Maḥremī composed an elegy (*mersiye*) in the *terci'-bend* form for Şemseddin Aḥmed Beg, chief keeper of the sultan's pelisses (*kürkçübaşı*) under Süleymân I (DM/2a-4b; MK/30b–31b; MK 2011/297–300). Distinguished by its intimacy and warmth, the poem departs from the formal tone of official elegies. Maḥremī mourns his patron with restrained pathos, blending personal sorrow with reflections on transience and divine will. He praises Aḥmed Beg's generosity and virtue, portraying him

<sup>37</sup> İsmail Hami Danişmend, *İzahlı Osmanlı Tarihi Kronolojisi* (Istanbul: Türkiye Yayınevi, 1971), 2:107.

<sup>38</sup> No biographical record of Aḥmed Beg is found in the available sources. Ayvānsarāyī, who provides information on the mosques attributed to him, states that he was buried in Damascus. See *The Garden of the Mosques: Hafız Hüseyin al-Ayvansarayı's Guide to the Muslim Monuments of Ottoman Istanbul*, translated and annotated by Howard Crane (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 207. In the *Divân*, the elegy is followed by a Persian *târîh* poem composed by Maḥremī on the death of Aḥmed Beg. Although the year 922 (1516–17) is written beneath the poem, the chronogrammatic value of the *târîh* verse likewise corresponds to 922. The discrepancy between this date and that of the *vakfiye* of the Kürkçübaşı—dated Muḥarrem 928 (December 1521)—remains unresolved. For the *vakfiye*, see *İstanbul Vakıfları Tahrîr Defteri: 953 (1546) Târîhli*, ed. Ömer Lütfi Barkan, Ekrem Hakkı Ayverdi (Istanbul: İstanbul Fetih Cemiyeti İstanbul Enstitüsü, 1970), 392–93, see *İstanbul Vakıfları Tahrîr Defteri: 953 (1546) Târîhli*, ed. Ömer Lütfi Barkan, Ekrem Hakkı Ayverdi (Istanbul: İstanbul Fetih Cemiyeti İstanbul Enstitüsü, 1970), 392–93.

as a model of worldly excellence and spiritual grace. Gentle imagery of light, fragrance, and seasonal change lends the poem a quiet tenderness, transforming grief into a meditation on impermanence.

**Satirical *Ḳaṣīde* against Yazıcı Ḥaydar**<sup>39</sup>: Among the more striking works in Maḥremî's corpus is a *Ḳaṣīde* of the *hicviyye* (satirical) type directed against Yazıcı Ḥaydar, chief scribe (*başyazıcı*; *re'isü'l-küttāb*) of the *Dīvān-ı Hümāyūn* (The Ottoman Imperial Council), and several other court officials (MK/56a–b; MK 2011/355–357). Departing from the conventions of panegyric, Maḥremî adopts the voice of moral invective, accusing his targets of corruption, greed, and abuse of power. The tone combines sharp wit with measured indignation, revealing his mastery in adapting the *Ḳaṣīde* form to the rhetoric of censure.

His critique extends beyond personal grievance to a broader reflection on bureaucratic decay. Choosing Yazıcı Ḥaydar—a powerful yet ill-fated figure—as his target lends the poem both daring and immediacy. By inverting the language of praise, Maḥremî transforms courtly eloquence into an instrument of moral protest. Historical irony heightens the poem's impact: Yazıcı Ḥaydar, like Yeniçeri Ağası Muştafâ Ağa, was executed on 30 Cemāziye'l-evvel 931 (25 March 1525) for his role in the Janissary revolt.<sup>40</sup>

### Other and Final *Ḳaṣīdes*

Of Maḥremî's final three eulogies, one—composed in the *terci'-bend* form and belonging to the *bahāriyye* (spring ode) genre—has no identifiable dedicatee (MK/39b–40a; MK 2011/319–20). The remaining two, preserved solely in the *Dīvān*, are distinguished by their social and moral critique, marking a clear departure from the courtly panegyric that dominates much of his *Ḳaṣīde* oeuvre (DM/33b–34a; 35b–36b). Situated in the *Dīvān* after the poems addressed to the ruling elite, these compositions cast Maḥremî in the role of a moral commentator who laments the deterioration of justice, the corruption of patronage, and the instability of worldly fortune.

<sup>39</sup> It is highly probable that Yazıcı Ḥaydar was the author of the *Rūznāme* describing the events that took place between Selīm I's Çaldıran Campaign and his death. See Ali Seslikaya, "Yavuz Sultan Selim'in Sefer Menzilnameleri (Çaldıran, Kemah, Dulkadiroğlu ve Mısır Seferi Menzilnameleri) ve Haydar Çelebi Ruznamesi: Transkripsiyon ve Değerlendirme" (MA thesis, Gazi-osmanpaşa University, 2014), 23–8; Mehmed Şüreyyâ, *Sicill-i 'Osmānî*, 2:260.

<sup>40</sup> Danişmend, *İzahlı Osmanlı Tarihi Kronolojisi*, 2:107.

The survey of Maḥremī's *kaşīdes* underscores both the extent of his engagement with Ottoman patronage networks and the diversity of his poetic craft. His panegyrics, addressed to a broad array of patrons, attest to his command of the *kaşīde* form and to his sensitivity to the moral and political dimensions embedded within the genre. Among these compositions, the *kaşīde* for Meḥmed Beg is particularly noteworthy for what appears to be the earliest attested use of the *redif şehir/şehir* (city) in Ottoman poetry and for its implicit yet vivid evocation of Istanbul—the imperial capital—as a symbol of just and virtuous governance. The following section provides a detailed analysis of this poem—accompanied by its Ottoman Turkish text and English translation—focusing on its structural design, imagery, and rhetorical inflections within the broader cultural milieu of Ottoman panegyric and urban representation.

### The *Kaşīde* in Praise of Meḥmed Beg and the “City” Motif

Among Maḥremī's forty-four identified *kaşīdes*, one of particular historical and literary significance is dedicated to Meḥmed Beg, the *ihtisāb ketḥudāsı*<sup>41</sup> (superintendent of markets) of Istanbul. The poem survives only in the *Mecmū'a-i Kaşā'id* and bears no explicit title; Meḥmed Beg's name appears only once, in the ninth couplet. From internal evidence, it is clear that the addressee held a prominent administrative post in the city, though his exact title remains unstated. The mention of the drum (*tabl*) and banner (*'alem*) in that couplet suggests vizierial rank. Couplet fifteen identifies the reigning sultan as Süleymān I, thus situating the composition within his reign. Maḥremī also uses the term *vālī* in couplets 8 and 27—while in modern Turkish this denotes a provincial governor, here it more plausibly signifies “administrator” or “director.”<sup>42</sup>

Archival evidence supports this contextualization. An imperial decree dated 26 Rebi'ü'l-evvel 927 (6 March 1521) records a Meḥmed Beg serving as *ihtisāb*

41 According to Bayerle, the office of the *ihtisāb ağası*—already attested during the reign of Bāyezīd II (1481–1512)—was responsible for levying dues and taxes on merchants and artisans, inspecting prices to ensure conformity with official rate lists (*narḥ defterleri*) recorded by the local *kādī*. The *ihtisāb ağası* also exercised moral supervision over Muslims in public spaces, with oversight of the marketplace constituting an extension of this duty. Gustav Bayerle, *Pashas, Begg, and Effendis: A Historical Dictionary of Titles and Terms in the Ottoman Empire* (Istanbul: Isis Press, 1997), s.v. “İhtisab Ağası.”

42 In this article, I occasionally refer to Meḥmed Beg as “governor” in the sense of “administrator” or “director.”

*kethudası* in Istanbul, whose *berât* (appointment patent) was renewed by order of the Sultan.<sup>43</sup> This aligns closely with the poem's tone and content, suggesting that the Meḥmed Beg praised by Maḥremî occupied this post in the early 1520s. Beyond this reference, however, the historical record remains silent: several contemporaries share the same name, making further identification uncertain.

The *kaşıde* reflects its historical context through a series of direct and indirect references to events in sixteenth-century Istanbul. Among these, the references in couplets 14 and 21 are particularly significant. Couplet 14—"Through your generosity you have revived its ruins; no desolation shall remain within the city ever again"—appears to allude to the Great Istanbul Earthquake of 915 (1509), remembered by contemporaries as the *Küçük Kıyamet* (Lesser Judgment Day).<sup>44</sup> Maḥremî's praise of the governor's efforts to "revive the city's ruins" can thus be read as a poetic reflection of post-disaster reconstruction, portraying Meḥmed Beg as a key figure in the city's renewal. Couplet 21 shifts attention from physical rebuilding to social regulation:

*Gest-i deşt eylemeden zenleri men' êtdüğüne*  
*Cümle meşgûl-i du'âdur saña merdân-ı şehir*

The men of the city bless your name without cease for forbidding their women to wander in the gardens.

Though the earliest known decree restricting women's presence in public gardens dates to 981 (1573), Maḥremî's verse suggests that such measures were envisioned—or even practiced—earlier.<sup>45</sup> The couplet thus offers an early poetic glimpse of *hisbe* (moral supervision) in Istanbul's urban life, linking civic order with public morality and gendered spatial control.

43 *Mâlîye Ahkâm Defteri*, Başbakanlık Ottoman Archives—Kâmil Kepeci Collection, no. 61. I am deeply grateful to my colleague Bilgin Aydın, whose assistance made it possible to locate the only extant document presently available concerning Meḥmed Beg.

44 For a detailed discussion of the 1509 Istanbul earthquake and its aftermath, see Kazuaki Sawai, "The 1509 Istanbul Earthquake and Subsequent Recovery," *Mediterranean World = Mediterranean Studies* 22 (2015): 29-42.

45 For a recent study of women's visibility in the public sphere of the Ottoman Empire, see *Ottoman Women in Public Space*, ed. Ebru Boyar and Kate Fleet (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2016); for discussions based on literary sources, see particularly Edith Ambros, "Frivolity and Flirtation," in the same volume, 63-88.

Within its poetic framework, the *kaşide* employs the *remel* metre—(Fā‘ilātün) Fe‘ilātün Fe‘ilātün Fe‘ilātün Fe‘ilün (Fa‘lün)—a rhythm frequently favoured in Ottoman panegyrics. Its twenty-seven couplets revolve around the rhyme *-ān-ı* and the recurrent *redif şehir* (city), whose repetition produces a resonant structural and thematic unity. Among Maḥremī’s extant works, this *kaşide* is distinguished by its sophisticated integration of the *şehir* motif: the city emerges not as a static backdrop but as a living organism animated by just governance. Through a calibrated interplay of praise and moral reflection, Maḥremī transforms the conventional *medhiyye* (panegyric) into a meditation on civic harmony and ethical order.

Meḥmed Beg’s discernment and integrity appear as sources of urban renewal: gardens bloom like jewels, markets remain tranquil, and the inhabitants bless his rule. In the closing verses, Maḥremī imagines himself as one of the city’s “songbirds,” weaving his own voice into the harmony he describes. The poem thus articulates a triadic relationship between poet, patron, and city—each mirroring and reinforcing the other through beauty, virtue, and eloquence. The *nesīb* (lyric exordium) begins in the idiom of love poetry and, as the *medhiyye* unfolds, acquires civic and didactic overtones: ‘*adl* (justice) becomes a source of illumination, and *nizām* (order) emerges as the axis of prosperity.

### Thematic and Rhetorical Structure

What begins as lyrical celebration gradually transforms into a meditation on civic virtue and just governance. Maḥremī recasts the classical *kaşide* within a moral framework, in which the architecture of the poem mirrors the order it extols. Opening with the rose and moon—emblems of harmony and grace—he praises the beloved before turning to the ethical dimensions of beauty and authority. The central *medhiyye* (9–20) envisions Meḥmed Beg as the embodiment of discernment and justice, his governance mirrored in the daily life of the city’s inhabitants and in the tranquillity of its markets. In the *fahır* (self-praise, 21–25), the poet adopts the stance of a moral witness, linking civic virtue to his own poetic legacy. The concluding *du‘ā* (prayer, 26–27) brings divine, political, and aesthetic order into alignment through the recurring motif of the *şehir* (city). Through this layered structure, Maḥremī elevates the panegyric beyond praise, transforming it into a meditation on justice, harmony, and the poet’s place within the moral fabric of the city.

### Poem and Commentary

The following section presents the full text of Maḥremî's *kaşîde* ((MK/168b; MK 2011/643-44) in praise of Meḥmed Beg, accompanied by detailed commentary on each couplet. The commentary proceeds couplet by couplet, tracing shifts in tone, imagery, and moral emphasis, and situating Maḥremî's metaphors within the Ottoman discourse of justice ('*adl*'), order (*niẓâm*), and civic harmony. Transitional notes between thematic clusters clarify the poem's structural development—from lyric imagery to ethical counsel and, finally, to political benediction.

1. *Sen ki ḥandân olasın iy gül-i ḥandân-ı şehir*  
*Bir degül biy olur bülbül-i nālân-ı şehir*

O blooming rose of the city! To make you smile, not one but thousands weeping nightingales arise.<sup>46</sup>

The poem opens in an idiom commonly associated with the *ğazel* form: the addressee is figured as a "rose," the emblem of beauty, while the nightingale embodies longing and praise.

2. *Kethüdâyân-ı mahallât-ı melâḥat çokdur*  
*Sensin iy mâh bugün hüsn ile sultân-ı şehir*

There are many stewards in beauty's quarters, but O moon-faced one, you with your beauty reign today as the city's sultan.

Here the poet elevates the beloved from the position of one among many figures of beauty to that of sovereign of the urban realm. The "moon-faced" beloved, a conventional epithet of radiant perfection, now governs 'beauty's quarter' as the 'city's sultan,' marking the fusion of aesthetic and political dominion.

3. *Ne leṭâfet kodı Hâk sende ki cism ile seni*  
*Cân-ı halk eyledi vü hüsn ile cânân-ı şehir*

What beauty has the Almighty granted you, that with this form you have become the spirit of the people, and with grace, the beloved of the city.

Divine causality is invoked—beauty is not merely physical but an emanation of divine grace.

<sup>46</sup> In translating the poem into English, I have prioritized contextual and rhetorical coherence over the literal rendering of individual words, with the aim of preserving both clarity and tone for the reader.

4. *Ger çıkup 'arz-ı cemāl eylesin kaşruñdan*  
*İrişür göklere tā şayha-i sükkân-ı şehir*

If you were to leave your palace and unveil your radiant face, the residents' joyful cries would rise to the skyies.

Maḥremī transforms the beloved's unveiling into a civic spectacle. The beloved's appearance from the palace evokes not private longing but collective admiration: the residents' cries rising "to the skyies" signal both wonder and allegiance.

5. *Ger 'arāk-rīz olup gül gibi geşt eylesin*  
*Pür olur lü'lü-yi lālâyile dāmân-ı şehir*

If, rose-like, you wandered shedding perspiration, the city's skirts would fill with gleaming pearls.

The imagery of the rose recasts beauty as benevolent action.

6. *Kākülünj oldı perişānī-yi halka bā'ıs*  
*Gözlerünj fitneyile olalı fettān-ı şehir*

Since your mischief-making eyes led the city into strife, your curls have cast its people into confusion.

The language of seduction (*fitne*) becomes moral allegory. Beauty's power is double-edged: captivating yet destabilizing.

7. *Türk-i çeşmünj olalı vālī-yi hün-h'ār dile*  
*Eksük olmadı şehā fitne vü tālān-ı şehir*

O ruler! Since those Turk-like eyes of yours became the cruel governors of hearts, the city has known neither peace nor freedom from strife.

Maḥremī's use of the phrase *Türk-i çeşmünj* (Turkish eyes) draws on both its ethnographic resonance—connoting sharpness and martial vigor—and its poetic associations with a "blood-shedding" gaze. In Ottoman *dīvān* poetry, the conventional expression "Turk-like eyes" typically evokes narrow, keen, and metaphorically lethal eyes, blending martial grace with the stylized cruelty of the beloved's glance.<sup>47</sup>

47 "Turk-like eyes" is a well-established conventional expression in the *Dīvān of Hāfez* (d. 792?/1390?); see <https://ganjoor.net/hafez/ghazal/sh3> (accessed 20 October 2025). For the Turkish translation, see Şirazi, *Hāfiz Dīvānu*, trans. Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı (İstanbul: MEB, 1992), 8–10.

8. *Eyleme zulm ü sitem gey sakım âgâh olur*  
*Kâr-fermâ-yı ümem vâli [vü] a'yân-ı şehir*

Beware of injustice and oppression—for the city's notables, its governor, and the ruler of rulers know of every deed.

This couplet marks the poem's moral turning point. With measured brevity, Maḥremî warns against injustice, drawing a vertical chain of accountability that ascends from ruler to sultan and finally to God—a movement from passion to principle. With this moral tone established, the poem transitions into its central *medhiyye*, where the praise of Meḥmed Beg's governance becomes an image of harmony between justice and imperial authority.

9. *Şāhib-i tabl ü 'alem ya'nî Mehemmed Beg kim*  
*Lutf u kahriyla odur şimdi niğebân-ı şehir*

Mehmed Beg, who holds the drum and banner—it is he who now guards the city with his grace and his punishments.

This first explicit naming of the patron situates the poem within Ottoman bureaucratic discourse. The drum and banner (*tabl u 'alem*) signify legitimate authority conferred by the Sultan. The balance between 'grace' and 'punishment' encapsulates the Ottoman understanding of '*adl* (justice) as equilibrium.

10. *Görmedi ancılayın vâli-yi 'ādil hergiz*  
*Tarḥ olup resmi olaldan berü bünyân-ı şehir*

Since the city's foundations were first laid and its structures set in order, it has never seen a governor as just as he.

The poet employs *mübālağa* (hyperbole) to create historical breadth, asserting that from the city's very creation no governor has matched his justice. In doing so, Maḥremî elevates the patron above all predecessors in the city's imagined history.

11. *Görüben 'adlini her gün eder olanca du'ā*  
*Kankı reh-rev ki ola bir gice mihmân-ı şehir*

Any traveler who spends a single night in this town, blesses his justice with so many prayers each day.

Here justice becomes experiential, visible even to outsiders. The rhythmic symmetry suggests daily renewal of gratitude, turning governance into a living rhythm of moral life.

12. *İy ki hıfzuyla tolu emn ü emân mülk-i kulüb*  
*V'ey ki yümnünle firāvân ni'am u nân-ı şehir*

O you who fill the country of hearts with peace and trust, and through your bounty make the city overflow with bread and blessings—

This couplet synthesizes inner and outer order. ‘The country of hearts’ evokes spiritual tranquility, while ‘bread and blessings’ denote material welfare. Maḥremī links prosperity inseparably to moral virtue.

13. *Mīve yèrine bitürmese ‘acebdür gevher*  
*Kandı ‘adlün şuyına bâğ ile bostân-ı şehir*

The city’s gardens drink deeply from the waters of your justice; it would be no wonder if they yielded jewels instead of fruit.

Here, Maḥremī employs a subtle *teşbih-i belîğ* (eloquent simile): justice irrigates the city, rendering fertility and virtue inseparable. As fruit turns to jewels, the material world reflects the perfection of moral order.

14. *Lutf ile şöyle harapımı ‘imāret êtdün*  
*Ebedî kalmaya gibi daği vîrân-ı şehir*

Through your generosity you have revived its ruins; no devastation shall remain within the city ever again.

As noted above, this couplet alludes to the Great Istanbul Earthquake of 915 (1509), remembered by contemporaries as the *Küçük Kıyamet* (Lesser Judgment Day).

15. *Fitne dîvini zebün eylesey olmaya ‘aceb*  
*Seni teşhîrine naşb êdi Süleymân-ı şehir*

It is no wonder you subdue the giant of rebellion—for the Solomon of the city appointed you to conquer the demon.

At the poem’s climax, mythic and political imagery converge: the “Solomon of the city,” Sultan Süleymân I, empowers Meḥmed Beg to subdue rebellion personified as a demon—an allegory uniting divine sanction with imperial order.

16. *Kanda ser-fitne var ise kâmusın bend êtdün*  
*Toludur ehl-i fesādât ile zindân-ı şehir*

Wherever the heads of disorder arose, you struck them all down; the city’s prisons now are brimful with the agents of sedition.

Violence and discipline are reimagined as instruments of balance. The imagery unites administrative rigor with ethical containment, portraying justice as the harmonizing of force and virtue.

17. *Hıfzın ol resme-durur kahr ile kim cāyızdır*  
*Şubha dek her gece yapılmasa dükkân-ı şehir*

So firm is the peace your strictness secured that shops may remain unbarred through every night until dawn.

A scene of serenity replaces earlier chaos. The unbarred shops signify public trust in just governance—a recurrent topos in Ottoman panegyric and inscriptional rhetoric. The couplet's measured rhythm mirrors the steady pulse of civic life restored under moral order.

18. *Rāhat u emn ü huzūr ile tolodur cümle*  
*Ḥāne vü kaşır u serā mey-kede vü ḥān-ı şehir*

The city's homes, palaces, taverns, and inns are all filled with ease, safety, and repose.

Maḥremī presents a panoramic vision of social harmony—elite and common, elevated and profane. The inclusion of taverns (*meyḥānes*) underscores tolerance within order. The triad “ease, safety, repose” reflects a balance between the physical, moral, and spiritual realms of civic life.

19. *Şahneye simi vèrür avuç avuç hafvün den*  
*Ele vèrme bizi şakin dèyü düzdân-ı şehir*

The thieves, fearing exposure by the watchman, press handfuls of silver into his palm.

Humour and realism converge: even corruption serves as a sign of law's omnipresence. The watchman's dual role—both guardian and beneficiary—reveals Maḥremī's keen grasp of urban life, where satire and praise coexist in delicate balance.

20. *Eyleyüp hafv-i siyāset kuş uçurmaz hergiz*  
*Bend edüpdür der-i nāzüklüğü derbān-ı şehir*

The city's gatekeeper has shut the gate of courtesy; for fear of punishment, he does not let even a bird fly through.

The wordplay between *der-i nāzüklük* (gate of courtesy) and *derbān-ı şehir* (city's gatekeeper) turns vigilance into a form of moral discipline. The hyperbole “not even a bird” magnifies the reach of authority, transforming justice into an aesthetic of order and control.

21. *Geşt-i deşt eylemeden zenleri men' êtdügüne*  
*Cümle meşgûl-i du'âdur saña merdân-ı şehir*

All the men of the city bless your name without cease for forbidding their women to wander in the fields.

As noted above, this couplet offers an early poetic glimpse of *hisbe* (moral supervision) in Istanbul's urban life, linking civic order to public morality and gendered spatial control. By connecting gender regulation with civic virtue, Maḥremî places moral order at the core of his vision of urban harmony.

22. *Zindedür nâm-ı şerîfûyle dil-i halk-ı cihân*  
*Ṭoludur medhûn ile defter ü divân-ı şehir*

The hearts of all the world's people are alive with your blessed fame; the city's registers and *divāns* overflow with your praises.

The scope widens from local to universal: the governor's renown spreads through both affection (hearts) and texts (*defter ü divân*). The self-referential mention of literary collections (*divāns*) reflects the poem's awareness of its own place within Ottoman cultural memory.

23. *Midhatüñ gülşeninüñ bülbülü çokdur gerçi*  
*Maḥremüdür biri ol murğ-ı hoş-elhân-ı şehir*

Though many nightingales sing in the rose garden of your praise, one of them is Maḥremî, that sweet-voiced bird of the city.

Here the poet explicitly steps into the frame. The chorus of nightingales evokes the poetic community, while Maḥremî distinguishes himself through the sweetness of his verse. The *maḳṭa'* (end, cut-off point) tradition transforms praise into poetic immortality, asserting the poet's voice as part of the city's enduring harmony.

24. *Kafes-i dehrde bir tūṭî-i gūyâdur o kim*  
*Ṭoludur nağmesiyile şekeristân-ı şehir*

He is a talking parrot in the cage of the world; his melodious voice fills the city's fields of sugarcane.

The parrot (*tūṭî*), a familiar Persian and Ottoman emblem of eloquence, conveys Maḥremî's poetic self-awareness. The "cage of the world" (*kafes-i dehr*) evokes Sufi understandings of worldly confinement—of a world conceived as a

cage or veil dimming the soul's awareness of its divine origin—while the “fields of sugarcane” (*ṣekeristān*) mirror the sweetness and polish of his verse, binding art, pleasure, and wisdom into a unified image.

25. *Kū-be-kū ḥāne-be-ḥāne aranursa girmez*  
*Ele anuḡ gibi bir ḥūb ṣenā-ḥ'ān-ı ṣehir*

Search every district, every house no one can be found who praises the city's beauty as he does.

The poet presents himself as the city's unique voice, uniting eloquence with civic purpose—the aesthetic counterpart to the governor's administrative order.

26. *Niçe kim yümniyile 'adl eyesi ḥükkāmıḡ*  
*Ola erzān u firāvān ni'am-ı ḥ'ān-ı ṣehir*

May through the blessings of your righteous judges, the city's tables remain abundant and overflowing with bounty.

A transitional simile linking social justice. The *ḥükkām* (judges) complement the governor's authority, while the “tables” (*ḥ'ān*) represent collective well-being—the visible fruit of just governance and moral prosperity.

27. *Nazar-ı luḡ ile manzūr edüben her lahza*  
*Vālī-yi memleket etsün seni ḥaḳan-ı ṣehir*

May the sovereign of the city look upon you with favor at every moment and keep you forever the governor of this realm.

The poem concludes with a *du'ā* couplet—a benedictory prayer that unites divine grace, political continuity, and poetic harmony. The concentric hierarchy—Sultan (*ḥaḳan*), governor, city, and poet—resolves into moral unity. What began as praise ends as prayer, sealing the *ḳaṣīde* in blessing and order.

## Conclusion

This study has repositioned Tatalı Maḥremî (d. 1535) within the Ottoman panegyric tradition by foregrounding a corpus of forty-four *ḳaṣīdes* preserved in his *Dīvān* and the *Mecmū'a-i Ḳaṣā'id-i Türkiyye*. Read together, these poems reveal a poet far more deeply engaged in the social and moral functions of praise than the sparse *tezkiire* notices or the reductive label of *Türki-i Basit* would suggest. The *in'amāt* records from 937 (1530) further situate him within courtly literary culture, confirming his active participation in its networks of performance and patronage.

The close reading of the *kaşide* for Meḥmed Beg—distinguished by the *redif şehir* (city) and composed in the metre *remel*—clarifies Maḥremī’s distinctive contribution to the civic poetics of early sixteenth-century Istanbul. Its twenty-seven couplets draw a parallel between just governance and urban prosperity: gardens, markets, and even taverns become emblems of moral order. Allusions to the 1509 earthquake and to *hisbe* (moral supervision) embed the rhetoric of praise in the tangible realities of reconstruction and regulation. The recurring *redif* sonically centers the city within the poem, while the movement from *nesīb* to *du‘ā* traces an ethical arc from desire to discipline and benediction.

In the *fāhr*, Maḥremī enters the city as one of its “songbirds,” aligning poetic voice with civic harmony and inscribing both himself and Meḥmed Beg into the *defter ü divān*—the archives of reputation. Far from being a poet of linguistic simplicity, he emerges as a court-aware craftsman who used the *kaşide* to think with—and about—the city, sovereignty, and justice. Through this synthesis of form, ethics, and urban imagination, Maḥremī occupies a central place in the early Ottoman discourse that bound poetic beauty to the moral order of rule.

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