

IN MEMORIAM

MEHMED ÇAVUŞOĞLU

15 January 1936 — July 1987

THE FIELD of Turkish Studies and students of Ottoman literature in particular are shocked and saddened by the tragic and untimely death of Professor Dr. Mehmed Çavuşoğlu in an automobile accident.

Professor Çavuşoğlu was born in the village of Saray in the district of Perşembe on the Black Sea coast. After completing his elementary education in the village of his birth, he attended secondary schools in Istanbul, following which he was admitted to the Faculty of Law at Istanbul University. While studying law he became convinced that his true calling was in the field of Ottoman literature and so transferred to the Turkish Language and Literature branch of the Faculty of Letters, from which he received his undergraduate degree in 1962. In the same year he was appointed as graduate assistant to Professor Dr. Ali Nihat Tarlan, the foremost scholar of Ottoman Divan poetry of his age. Following and to a great extent extending the path indicated by his mentor, Professor Çavuşoğlu completed a doctoral dissertation analyzing the *divan* of Necâtî (1966) and a “doçentlik tezi” on Yaḥyâ Bey’s *Yûsuf u Züleyhâ* (1973). Since then he has published some thirteen books, including numerous meticulously accurate and sensitively restored editions of major *divan* poets. He also has more than twenty-five articles on all aspects of Ottoman literature. At the time of his death, he was chair of the Turkish Language and Literature department of Mimar Sinan University and Associate Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences.

For his fellow scholars in the field of *divan* poetry, the loss of Prof. Çavuşoğlu is a professional disaster of major proportions. His work was immensely valuable and by no means complete. He possessed a vast knowledge of *divan* literature which was in many respects unique and he was a prolific and tireless worker. Moreover, he had an active and inquiring mind which allowed him to seek out and enjoy contacts with scholars from all over the world. In the course of his career he spent time working in Edinburgh, Scotland (where, as he was proud to report, he earned the surname MacChavush), in France, and most recently in Seattle, Washington. He was open to new ideas and new methodology: at the time of his death he was even prepared to take the lead in using computer technology for the study of *divan* poetry. In many ways he represented the best of both the past and the future.

To those who knew him, however, the loss of Prof. Çavuşoğlu’s scholarly genius is only a part of the tragedy. He was a good friend, a pleasant companion, a person whose decency, honesty, and concern for his fellow

human beings could always be counted upon. His home was a haven for visiting scholars and students; his hospitality epitomized the Turkish ideal; and the storehouse of his knowledge was ever open to those who asked his assistance.

Many, many of us will remember him with sorrow at his passing, with love, and with the greatest respect, and will wish to express our sincerest condolences to his wife, Emine, and his son, Mehmed Sami.

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