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Comparative Perspectives on the “Orient” and Kurdistan in Early Modern Ottoman and British Travelogues

Introduction

If non-European perspectives on travels in the early modern “Orient” are sought, then the Ottoman traveler Evliya Çelebi (1611–c. 1687) is a crucial figure and his ten-volume *Seyahatname* (Book of Travels) an invaluable source.¹ The *Seyahatname* of Evliya Çelebi may well be “the longest and most ambitious travel account by any writer in any language,” and is a “key text for all aspects of the Ottoman Empire at the time of its greatest extension in the seventeenth century.”² Istanbul-born and court-educated, Evliya Çelebi authored a work that is unlike anything else in seventeenth-century Ottoman writing, an anomaly revelatory of the norm, in Carlo Ginzburg’s terms.³ Evliya offers constructions of “otherness” according to Süleymanic principles, inflected by Sufi dervish ideals. “The well-protected domains” of the Padishah (*memalik-i mahrusa-i şahane*) are envisaged as a place of safety as well as toleration for all subjects, diversity and difference within humankind are actively valued, and lives are to be spared and bloodshed avoided whenever possible in imperial governance.⁴ That is to say,

1 Nuran Tezcan, When did Evliyâ Çelebi Die?, in Nuran Tezcan, Semih Tezcan, and Robert Dankoff (eds.), *Evliyâ Çelebi: Studies and Essays Commemorating the 400th Anniversary of his Birth* (Istanbul 2012), pp. 30–32.

2 Robert Dankoff and Sooyong Kim, Introduction, in Robert Dankoff and Sooyong Kim (eds. and trans.), *An Ottoman Traveller: Selections from the Book of Travels of Evliya Çelebi* (London 2010), pp. xi–xxix; p. xi.

3 Even Bernard Lewis acknowledges an exception to his incuriosity thesis in the case of “the great and ever-curious traveler Evliya Çelebi.” Bernard Lewis, *The Muslim Discovery of Europe* (New York 1982, London 1994), p. 81. For the seventeenth-century Ottoman intellectual context see Cemal Kafadar, *Self and Others: The Diary of a Dervish in Seventeenth-Century Istanbul and First-Person Narratives in Ottoman Literature*, in *Studia Islamica* 69 (1989), pp. 121–150; Rhoads Murphey, *Forms of Differentiation and Expression of Individuality in Ottoman Society*, in *Turcica* 34 (2002), pp. 135–169.

4 On more on Evliya as “conscience of the empire” and his Sufi-inflected political observations and judgments see Donna Landry, *Evliya Çelebi, Explorer on Horseback: Knowledge Gathering by a Seventeenth-Century Ottoman*, in Adriana Craciun and Mary Terrall (eds.), *Curious Encounters: Voyaging, Collecting, and Making Knowledge in the Long Eighteenth Century* (Toronto

Sunni Islam and Ottoman legal and administrative practices provide an evaluative ground but Sufism renders that ground's borders flexible.⁵ Evliya's axis of difference is also not a European one in that, for him, the "Orient" (*Şark*) begins when he enters "that inhospitable region" that he names "Kürdistan," which, as Martin Van Bruinessen explains, Evliya uses as an "ethnic" category, and "a definite geographical region" inhabited by Kurds, in distinction from contemporary Ottoman usage, where it referred to a province (*eyalet*), an administrative unit.⁶ When read alongside contemporary British travelers' accounts, Evliya's investments in toleration of difference, and even active affection and hospitality, are striking. Remarkably few early British travelers to Kurdish inhabited regions even noticed the Kurds, and those who did were usually misinformed and generalizing. Evliya, by contrast, provides "a more lively description of everyday life in one of the major Kurdish emirates than we find in any other source."⁷ What is especially notable is his obvious admiration for the Kurdish emir Abdal Khan Rozhiki of Bitlis (d. 1666?), and how he encourages his readers to identify with the Kurdish point of view in order to mock Ottoman authority. Neither the few early modern British travelers who ventured into Kurdistan, nor Henry Blount (1602–1682), who visited Istanbul and Cairo, appear as genuinely embracing of difference as is Evliya, though Blount styles himself as having put book-learning aside to witness Ottoman imperial governance for himself, in Baconian-empirical Enlightenment fashion.⁸

2018), pp. 43–70; Donna Landry, *The Ottoman Imaginary of Evliya Çelebi: From Postcolonial to Postimperial Rifts in Time*, in Barbara Buchenau, Virginia Richter, and Marijke Denger (eds.), *Post-Empire Imaginaries? Anglophone Literature, History, and the Demise of Empires* (Leiden 2015), pp. 127–158. See also Hakan T. Karateke, whose close analysis of Evliya's use of such terms as "bloodthirsty" (*hunhar*) reveals a critique of the abuse of power, in *Evliya Çelebi's Journey from Bursa to the Dardanelles and Edirne: From the Fifth Book of the Seyahatname* (Leiden 2013), pp. 7–10.

⁵ Evliya was probably a member of the *Gülşeni*, a branch of the *Halvetiyye*. See Robert Dankoff, *An Ottoman Mentality: The World of Evliya Çelebi* (Leiden et al. 2004), pp. 121–122. This was the order traditionally closest to the Ottoman sultans. Karen Barkey, *Empire of Difference: The Ottomans in Comparative Perspective* (Cambridge et al. 2008), p. 184.

⁶ Martin van Bruinessen, *Kurdistan in the 16th and 17th Centuries, as Reflected in Evliya Çelebi's Seyahatname*, in *The Journal of Kurdish Studies* 2 (2000), pp. 1–11, pp. 4–5. And see Martin van Bruinessen and Hendrik Boeschoten (eds.), *Evliya Çelebi in Diyarbekir: The Relevant Section of the Seyahatname Edited with Translation, Commentary and Introduction* (Leiden et al. 1988); Robert Dankoff (ed.), *Evliya Çelebi in Bitlis: The Relevant Section of the Seyahatname Edited with Translation, Commentary and Introduction* (Leiden et al. 1990).

⁷ Van Bruinessen, *Kurdistan* p. 2.

⁸ Henry Blount, *A Voyage into the Levant: a Breife [sic] Relation of a Iourney, Lately Performed by Master H. B.[...]* (London 1636); see also Donna Landry, *Said Before Said*, in Ziad Elmarsafy,

1 Evliya the anomaly and Ottoman “travel knowledge”

What can we learn from an exceptional, as opposed to typical, text such as Evliya's *Seyahatname*? The *Seyahatname* has become “the most frequently cited source for the Ottoman seventeenth century,”⁹ the century that would prove a critical turning point as “the time of [the Ottoman Empire's] greatest extension.”¹⁰ The work offers “descriptions and appraisals of the entire spectrum of Ottoman society: elites and commoners, urban and rural populations, descriptions of key battles and important government officials, legends and tall tales. Nothing quite like it had ever been produced in Ottoman territory (or anywhere else), nor would ever be again.”¹¹ The manuscript was composed in Cairo, where Evliya settled after making the pilgrimage to Mecca in 1671, and it was disseminated by the chief eunuch El-Hajj Beshir Agha (c.1657–1746), who, having received the original from Cairo in 1742, had it copied in Istanbul.¹² Apart from this recognition by an important Ottoman court intellectual, there is no evidence of the text's original reception because the manuscript did not come to public attention until the early nineteenth century.¹³

Evliya, therefore, conforms to Ginzburg's paradigm of the anomaly. Defending microhistory, Ginzburg argues that the traditional historiographical privileging of the typical or statistically representative should be reversed: “Actually, the argument should be turned on its head: it is precisely the exceptional nature of the Martin Guerre case that sheds some light on a normality that is difficult to

Anna Bernard, and David Attwell (eds.), *Debating Orientalism* (Basingstoke et al. 2013), pp. 55–72; Gerald MacLean, *The Rise of Oriental Travel: English Visitors to the Ottoman Empire, 1580–1720* (Basingstoke et al. 2004), pp. 117–176.

⁹ Caroline Finkel, Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall's English Translation of the First Books of Evliya Çelebi's *Seyahatnâme* (Book of Travels), in *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 3rd series, 25/1 (January 2015), pp. 41–55, p. 55.

¹⁰ Dankoff, Kim, Introduction, p. xi.

¹¹ Jane Hathaway, *The Chief Eunuch of the Ottoman Harem: From African Slave to Power Broker* (Cambridge et al. 2018), p. 209.

¹² Hathaway concludes that “Introducing this unique work to the readership of the Ottoman central lands,” as El-Hajj Beshir Agha did, “was one of the greatest contributions to Ottoman literature that any individual ever made.” Hathaway, *Chief Eunuch*, pp. 209–210.

¹³ Finkel, *Hammer-Purgstall's English Translation*, pp. 41–42. The translation, of the first two volumes only, appeared in three parts (Book I, part i in 1832, Book I, part ii in 1846, and Book II in 1850). See also Pierre A. MacKay, *The Manuscripts of the Seyahatname of Evliya Çelebi, Part I: the Archetype*, in *Der Islam* 52 (1975), pp. 278–298.

document.”¹⁴ Ginzburg explains further that: “The violation of the norm contains even the norm itself, inasmuch as it is presupposed; the opposite is not true.”¹⁵ Evliya is an ideal subject for a microhistorical approach, in which the very anomalous status of his writing renders it particularly revelatory of both norms and their critique. In the absence of reception evidence apart from El-Hajj Beshir Agha’s preservation and dissemination, the text’s own figurings of anticipated audience responses are especially valuable. Evliya portrays himself as having had certain experiences during his extensive travels that he knows his audience are likely to find challenging to their worldview, and to which he is eager to introduce them.¹⁶ As the leading Evliya scholar Robert Dankoff puts it, we can safely say that Evliya’s “eccentricities do not necessarily contradict his typicalities.”¹⁷ Identifying strategies and tropes of representing “otherness” in the *Seyahatname* requires attending both to his “eccentricities” and his “typicalities” through the text’s projection of audience expectations that are more orthodox than the author’s.

Evliya’s text is a repository of Ottoman “travel knowledge,”¹⁸ aimed at the governing classes as well as tourists. His text is often playful, parodic, satirical: among the first words a traveler needs to know are curses. In Albania in 1662, for instance, in volume 6, Evliya’s glossary of the Albanian language begins: “First, *pörtuni zoti* ‘For God’s sake!’ When buying and selling they count coins thus [...].”¹⁹ He continues with: “*aqi mebe teşin qurd* ‘Bring barley or I’ll split your head open.’ *pörtuni zoti nuqu qâm aqi* ‘For God’s sake, there is no barley,’” and then:

The following are foolish expressions, but the traveller needs to know them since he might be the object of cursing or beating: *hak mut* ‘Eat shit!’ *tkiřsatı tâmu* ‘I’ll fuck your mother’ [...] *tı piriřte bîhund* ‘I’ll fart in your nose.’ *tkiřsatı büti* ‘I’ll fuck your ass.’ *iç qıvrđm* ‘cata-

14 Carlo Ginzburg, *Threads and Traces: True False Fictive*, translated by Anne C. Tedeschi and John Tedeschi (Berkeley et al. 2012), p. 57.

15 Ginzburg, *Threads*, p. 222.

16 Rhoads Murphey’s survey of seventeenth-century Ottoman constructions of individuality, of which Evliya’s is the most sustained, bears witness to how “outwardly-apparent cultural diversity” was accompanied by an individual identity “characterized by a similar multi-dimensionality”. Murphey, *Forms of Differentiation*, p. 157.

17 Dankoff, *Ottoman Mentality*, p. 115.

18 Ivo Kamps and Jyotsna G. Singh, Introduction, in Ivo Kamps and Jyotsna G. Singh (eds.), *Travel Knowledge: European “Discoveries” in the Early Modern Period* (New York et al. 2001), pp. 1–16.

19 Robert Dankoff and Robert Elsie, *Evliya Çelebi in Albania and Adjacent Regions* (Kosovo, Montenegro, Ohrid). *The Relevant Sections of the Seyahatname Edited with Translation, Commentary and Introduction* (Leiden 2000), p. 43.

mite, pimp.’ In short, when dervishes are travelling, they should know such expressions as well, so that they can avoid trouble by not going to places where they will be abused.²⁰

Evliya wittily combines travel advice with scurrility. The need for accurate reportage licenses bawdy jokes and blasphemy. His keen ear makes his travelogue still a source for historical linguists.²¹ When travelling in Kurdistan in 1665 in volume 4, for example, his account includes official Ottoman, but also Diyarbekir dialects of Turkish, as well as Kurdish and Armenian and Arabic languages and dialects. This linguistic richness corresponds to the mixture of different peoples who live there, all of whom are by now (in the 1650s) accustomed to Ottoman rule via Kurdish proxies and to negotiating with official visitors from Istanbul. As Dankoff observes, exchanges often record a code-switching from local “Kurdish dialect” to “good Ottoman,” demonstrating how adept the local Kurdish governors have become at such negotiations.²²

Evliya anticipates audience censure for his vulgarity and obscenity; he begs indulgence from readers on the grounds of pragmatic necessity. Evliya’s ethnographic attentiveness and linguistic facility represent an Ottoman openness to the multicultural. Yet Evliya goes beyond mere polite acknowledgement of difference. If there is one principle of engaging with “otherness” to be derived from the *Seyahatname*, it is to suspend judgement, and inhabit imaginatively another’s point of view. Evliya frequently cautions his audience against condemning the foreign practices he describes as “disgraceful” because, in their social context, they are “no disgrace” and should be accepted. This is a form of affirmative toleration. Evliya invites his audience to stretch their imaginations and moral codes. In volume 8 in 1670, for instance, Evliya describes how in Gjirokaster, the Albanians, who are “devoted to Ali” (i.e., Shi’a Muslims), enjoy weddings and feast days by drinking alcohol and dancing in the streets: “Lovers go hand in hand with their pretty boys and embrace them and dance about in the manner of the Christians. This is quite shameful behaviour, characteristic of the infidels, but it is their custom, so we cannot censure it (*bu dahi bir bed-sünnetdir kim âyîn-i kelfe]redir, amma böyle göre gelmişler, bunu dahi ayblamazız*).”²³ Dankoff observes how the very phrasing contains the refusal (-mazız) to attribute disgracefulness to acts that Evliya’s audience would be likely to consider disgraceful (*ayıb* or *ayıp*): “*ayblamazız.*” “We cannot censure it”

²⁰ Dankoff and Elsie, Albania, pp. 43, 45.

²¹ Robert Dankoff, *An Evliya Çelebi Glossary: Unusual, Dialectal and Foreign Words in the Seyahat-name* (Cambridge, MA 1991), p. 8.

²² Dankoff, Introduction, Bitlis, p. 24.

²³ Dankoff, Ottoman Mentality, pp. 72–73. See also Dankoff and Elsie, Albania, p. 85.

is literally ‘we cannot say it is *ayıb*’ – in other words, ‘*ayıb değil*!’ [‘No disgrace!’] No passage of the *Seyahatname* is more revealing of Evliya’s attitude toward such customs.”²⁴

Here Evliya appears to fit Karen Barkey’s description of the early Ottoman state’s valuing of difference and inclusivity, its active preference for heterogeneity as a social good.²⁵ This aspect of state formation underpinned Süleymanic ideals of an empire not conceived in Western terms of imperium, but as “the well-protected domains” of the Padishah (*memalik-i mahrusa-i şahane*), a place of safety as well as toleration for all subjects who acknowledge the authority of the state, without being forced into conversion: such is the ideal.²⁶

In this respect Evliya could be said to approach what Jacques Derrida has theorized as an ethic of unconditional hospitality.²⁷ We might also understand this openness of Evliya towards non-Ottoman Sunni orthodox social practices or customs as a consequence of his Sufi dervish mission to serve as a *nedim-i beni-adem* (boon companion of mankind), which sets him apart from contemporary Western travelers.²⁸ Britons do not seem to have embarked on their journeys with any conscious ethic of promoting the good or happiness of the others they met by traveling among them.²⁹ Evliya’s pronouncement of “No disgrace!” implies the potential censoriousness of his audience towards foreign or infidel customs that outrage pious Islamic sensibilities – but also the possibility of an au-

24 Robert Dankoff, *Ayıp Değil! (No Disgrace!)*, in *Journal of Turkish Literature* 5 (2008), pp. 77–90, p. 82.

25 Barkey, *Empire of Difference*, p. 25.

26 Selim Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domains: Ideology and the Legitimation of Power in the Ottoman Empire 1876–1909* (London et al. 1998, London 2011), p. 42.

27 Gerald MacLean, *Hospitality in William Shakespeare and Evliya Çelebi*, in *Shakespeare Jahrbuch* 149 (2013), pp. 117–135. See also Meyda Yeğenoğlu, *Islam, Migrancy, and Hospitality in Europe* (Basingstoke et al. 2012). Glossing “it is their custom, so we cannot censure it”, MacLean contrasts Evliya directly with Shakespeare, for whom hospitality is always so fraught as usually to be regretted: “For Evliya, differentiation within the imperial domains follows a logic of difference shaped by inclusion and conviviality rather than mere difference.” MacLean, *Hospitality*, pp. 134–135.

28 Dankoff, *Ottoman Mentality*, p. 9. Laila Hashem Abdel-Rahman El-Sayed explores Evliya’s “cosmopolitan emotions” in her PhD thesis: Laila Hashem Abdel-Rahman El-Sayed, *Discourses on Emotions: Communities, Styles, and Selves in Early Modern Mediterranean Travel Books: Three Case Studies* (PhD thesis, University of Kent, Freie Universität Berlin 2016), pp. 234–303.

29 Exactly such an ethic of travel was suggested by the Greek Patriarch of St. Catherine’s Monastery in Sinai, who praised Evliya as an “honourable” man “of peace” who desires “to investigate places, cities, and the races of men, having no evil intention in his heart to do injury to or to harm anyone”. Pinelopi Sathi, *A Greek Patriarchal Letter for Evliya Çelebi*, in *Archivum Ottomanicum* 23 (2005/2006), pp. 263–268.

dience who might be persuaded to tolerate or even befriend those unlike themselves.

Evliya was a pious Muslim but no puritan or fundamentalist. In 1623 he was apprenticed to Sultan Murad IV's (1612–1640) imam, Evliya Mehmed Efendi (d. 1636), to train as a “*hafiz*” – a Qur’anic reciter.³⁰ Yet he is explicitly critical of Muslim fanaticism, setting himself apart through his openness to other religions, especially the strange energies and powers that attach to shamanism or the practices of magicians. In volume 8, on a campaign with Ak Mehmed Pasha (fl. 1660s) and the Crimean Tatars near the Kuban River in the winter of 1666–1667, Evliya observes a Buddhist Kalmyk shaman performing excremental magic to freeze the river so that the army can cross. All the garrison with its sheep, all the horses and carts and people, get across except the Pasha’s secretary “and seven or eight narrow-minded individuals,” “fanatical Dagestani Muslims: ‘We refuse to cross this ice that was produced through magic,’ they said”; when they attempt to drag the Pasha’s secretary’s cart across while praying loudly, the ice breaks up and some are drowned.³¹ Rather than sympathizing with the fanatics, Evliya admires and sympathizes with the Kalmyk shaman; he explicitly refuses to allow his faith to be identified with a “fanatical” Islam, an Islam that is not receptive to alternative mystical practices, or an Islam incapable of syncretism.³²

2 On the way to the “Orient”: Kurds and Kurdistan

Evliya’s openness to magic and mysticism is never more apparent than when he is in Kurdistan, which for him represents the “Orient.” Kurds are “Orientals”. But this ethno-linguistic difference is not construed by him as backwardness but rather as exotic Eastern “otherness,” often to be admired. Evliya looks to the “Orient” as the original home of beauty and aesthetic sophistication; Khorasan, and closer to home, Kurdistan, represent the source of the best poetry and music.³³ Nothing could be further from the views of the very few early modern British travelers who ventured there.³⁴

30 Dankoff and Kim, *Ottoman Traveller*, p. xi.

31 Dankoff and Kim, *Ottoman Traveller*, p. 273.

32 Dankoff and Kim, *Ottoman Traveller*, pp. 273–274.

33 Donna Landry, *Evliya Çelebi (1611–c.1685) Among the Kurds*, in *Kurds and Kurdistan in Ottoman Period: Proceedings from 1st International Academic Conference on Kurds and Kurdistan in*

The earliest British traveler to record encountering Kurds was the merchant Ralph Fitch (1550–1611) who, in 1591, noticed that the city of “Merdin [...] is in the country of the Armenians; but now, there dwell in that place a people which they call *Cordies*, or *Curdi*,” but left no further comment.³⁵ With the establishment of the Levant Company factory in Aleppo in the 1580s, British merchants arriving at the port of Iskenderun and bound for that city could not avoid meeting Kurds since substantial Kurdish communities had settled in northern Syria since before the crusades.³⁶ Most British travelers, however, failed to notice or to distinguish Kurds from the Turkmen, Arab, Jewish, or Anatolian Turkish communities. Arriving in 1599, the Levant Company chaplain William Biddulph (fl. 1599–1609) was unusual in noticing them, observing that: “In the Mountaines betwixt *Scanderone* and *Aleppo*, there are dwelling a certaine kind of people called at this day *Coords*, comming of the race of the ancient *Parthians*, who worship the Devill.”³⁷ Biddulph’s journey had taken him south of the Afrin valley where there was a substantial community of Yezidi Kurds.³⁸ Although he never again mentioned Kurds, Biddulph was the first British traveler to claim that all Kurds were Yezidis, and to repeat the accusation that Yezidis worship the devil. He subsequently failed to realize that the governor of Aleppo in 1603, Husayn Khan Canpulatoğlu (d. 1605), was Kurdish, instead believing him to be “of the house of *Sanballat*, who hindred the building of the Temple of *Jerusalem*,”³⁹ in the biblical account.⁴⁰

History. A Joint Conference between Salahaddin University – Erbil (Kurdistan, Iraq) and Mardin Artuklu University – (Turkey), Conference Proceedings on CD (Erbil 2013), 7 pp.; Walter Feldman, *Music of the Ottoman Court: Makam, Composition, and the Early Ottoman Instrumental Repertoire* (Berlin 1996), pp. 39, 53, 225.

³⁴ For a full account of early modern British travelers’ views see Gerald MacLean, *British Travellers, the Kurds, and Kurdistan: A Brief Literary History, c. 1520–1680*, in *Kurdish Studies* 7/2 (October 2019), pp. 113–134.

³⁵ Richard Hakluyt, *The Principal Navigations: Voyages, Traffiques and Discoveries of the English Nation* [1589] (8 vols., London 1910), vol. 3, p. 315.

³⁶ Jordi Tejel, *Syria’s Kurds: History, Politics and Society*, translated by Emily Welle and Jane Welle (London et al. 2009).

³⁷ William Biddulph, *The Travels of certaine Englishmen into Africa, Asia, Troy, Bithnia, Thracia, and to the Blacke Sea* (London 1609), p. 41.

³⁸ John Guest, *The Yezidis: A Study in Survival* (London 1987), pp. 53–54; Paul Rycha, *The History of the Turkish Empire From the Year 1623. To the Year 1677* (London 1680), p. 93.

³⁹ Biddulph, *Travels*, p. 41.

⁴⁰ Nehemiah 4–6. In addition to Nehemiah, “Sanballat is mentioned in the Elephantine Aramaic papyri as Governor of Samaria.” John How, *Ezra-Nehemiah*, in Charles Gore et al. (eds.), *A New Commentary on Holy Scripture* (London 1928), pp. 294–298, here p. 295.

Other Englishmen also journeying in 1599, but further east, disapproved of Kurdistan and the people who lived there. Anthony Sherley (1565–1635?) and his companions William Parry (fl. 1601) and George Manwaring (c. 1551–1628) travelled through Kurdish territory en route from Baghdad to the court of Shah ‘Abbās (1571–1629) in Qasvin. Parry called it “theevs country,” and portrayed the Kurds as “addicted to thieving, not much unlike the wilde Irish.”⁴¹ Manwaring agreed, calling “Curdia [...] a very thievish and brutish country,” inhabited by uncivilized people who “have no houses, but live in tents and caves [...] and remove from place to place with their tents.” “They would,” he continued, “come into our company sometimes forty, sometimes more or less; and, except we did look well unto them, they would filch and steal anything they could lay their hands upon.”⁴² Accusations of theft were already a well-established perception of the Kurds, whether the Sherley party were aware of it or not.⁴³ For his part, Anthony Sherley summarily dismissed the “Courdines” as the “scum of Nations,” but also portrayed the Kurds as powerful enough to precipitate a fifteen-year war between the two empires of the region.⁴⁴ He recounts how during his stay at the court of Shah ‘Abbās, “ten thousand soules of *Courdins* which had abandoned their possessions under the *Turke*,” applied for “some waste land [...] to inhabit in; which he had given them.”⁴⁵ According to Sherley, the arrival of an Ottoman General in 1603 demanding their return so infuriated Shah ‘Abbās that, encouraged by Sherley, he declared war against the Ottomans.⁴⁶

41 William Parry, *A New and Large Discourse of the Travels of Sir Anthony Sherley* (London 1601), pp. 17–18.

42 George Manwaring, *A True Discourse of Sir Anthony Sherley’s Travel into Persia*, in Edward Denison Ross (ed.), *Sir Anthony Sherley and his Persian Adventure*, including some contemporary narratives relating thereto (London 1933), pp. 175–226, 196.

43 Boris James, *Mamluk and Mongol Peripheral Politics: Asserting Sovereignty in the Middle East’s “Kurdish Zone” (1260–1330)*, in Bruno de Nicola and Charles Melville (eds.), *The Mongols’ Middle East: Continuity and Transformation in Ikhanid Iran* (Leiden 2016), pp. 277–305, here p. 281.

44 Anthony Sherley, *Sir Anthony Sherley His Relation of his Travels into Persia* (London 1613), p. 51.

45 Sherley, *His Relation*, pp. 75–76.

46 This episode involving a tribe of Kurdish migrants is not recorded by Eskander Beg Monši or any other contemporary chronicler, though Kurdish tribes regularly switched sides between the Ottomans and Safavids. Compare Eskander Beg’s account from early 1603: “A further incident which occurred this year was the arrival at the royal camp of Soleyman Beg Mahmudi, the governor of Kosab and Qara Hesar, a provincial governor subject to the Ottoman *beglerbeg* of Van. He now transferred his allegiance to the Shah, in the customary manner of Kurdish emirs, who always give their allegiance to whichever party is in the ascendant. But the expressions of fealty he uttered did not derive from any loyalty of heart. The Shah, although he had no illusions as to

Yet for most British travelers, the Kurds remained invisible, an insignificant minority within the empires of the Turks and Persians, and therefore of little interest. Of ancient but murky origins, uncivilized and migratory, inclined to brigandage and obscure religious beliefs, the Kurds inhabited the mountainous frontier separating the Turkish and Iranian empires and sometimes caused trouble by switching allegiance. This was the image of the Kurds that, established at the turn of the seventeenth century by the very few British travelers who noticed them, would remain largely unchanged until well into the nineteenth century.

For Evliya, such generalizations required strict qualification, though he substituted generalizations of his own, such as “the Kurds are a hairy race,”⁴⁷ and Kurdish men live a long time: “when you think they have lost the power of speech, they still mount horses, bear swords, and go out hunting [...] while they seem to be sixty or seventy, they are really a hundred.”⁴⁸ Virility was clearly a Kurdish characteristic. Elsewhere he notes: “Never failing from sexual intercourse, they live to the age of a hundred.”⁴⁹ Unlike British travelers, Evliya knew Kurds were not all migratory, living in tents and caves, and he distinguished sophisticated urbanites from uneducated rural Kurds. He also recognized that while some Kurds were Yezidi, most were not, and observed how the Kurdish populations of Diyarbekir and Bitlis “all follow the Shafi’i legal school.”⁵⁰

Being himself a court-educated Istanbulu, Evliya reveals “something of the educated urban dweller’s disdain for rough and frightening rural folk” when picturing a wild region with the figurative phrase “*Kürdistan ve Türkmenistan ve sengistan*” (a land of Kurds and Turcomans and rocks).⁵¹ Of Diyarbekir, he

the worth of professions of loyalty by Kurds, accepted Soleyman Beg’s protestations at their face value (it is usually advisable for rulers to do this), loaded him with robes of honor, and raised him to the rank of khan before giving him permission to return to his own territory.” Eskander Beg Monši, *History of Shah ‘Abbas the Great*, translated by Roger Savory (2 vols., Boulder, CO 1978), vol. 2, p. 856.

⁴⁷ Dankoff, Bitlis, p. 75.

⁴⁸ Dankoff, Bitlis, p. 73.

⁴⁹ Van Bruinessen and Boeschoten, Diyarbekir, p. 157.

⁵⁰ Van Bruinessen and Boeschoten, Diyarbekir, p. 129 and note 59.

⁵¹ Van Bruinessen, *Kurdistan*, p. 4. And see Palmira Brummett who compares Evliya with Ogier Ghislain de Busbecq (1522–1592): “For Evliya, in his travels to the western and Christian reaches of the empire, the ‘natives’ were both fascinating and never quite a part of his own elite, metropolitan, Ottoman ‘us’. In this regard, Evliya was like Busbecq, a cosmopolitan representative of the imperial center who cast a rather jaundiced eye on the mores of those on the outskirts of civilization.” Palmira Brummett, *Mapping the Ottomans: Sovereignty, Territory, and Identity in the Early Modern Mediterranean* (Cambridge et al. 2015), p. 257.

wryly observes: “Because this is a land of Kurds and Turcomans, the population, in the mountains and gardens and fields, far away or close at hand, is never lacking in war and strife, combat and fight. For that reason there are innumerable surgeons here that have attained perfection in their trade.”⁵² Of Bitlis, he similarly notes: “This being Kurdistan, people are constantly saying *hare verre runété* [Go! Come! Sit!] and fighting with one another day and night, so practically everyone is a surgeon.”⁵³ The ever-present threat of violence extends even to the religious orders: “All the Kurdish ulema, and even the chief muftis (sheykhül-islam), still go around with daggers, since all – great and small, young and old – are brave fighters.”⁵⁴ Nevertheless, in addition to the persistent “anarchy and rebellion of Kurdistan,”⁵⁵ Evliya also registered that a sophisticated urban culture was to be found among the Rohziki Kurds of Bitlis.

In early summer 1655 Evliya accompanied the Ottoman official Melek Ahmed Pasha (c. 1602–1662) who had just been appointed governor of Van. En route they visit Diyarbekir before stopping for ten days in Bitlis, ruled by Abdal Khan Rohziki (d. 1666?), who welcomed the Ottoman delegates by throwing a lavish banquet. Yet it was not only the quantity and variety of food, but the sumptuous “golden and silver dishes and porcelain and onyx and celadon bowls” on which it was served that caused Evliya to exclaim:

Such a bounteous and delicious banquet no latter-day sultan has given since the time of Cemshid and Iskender and Keykavus. As God is my witness, there was enough to feed the three thousand soldiers of our lord Melek Ahmed Pasha, and the three thousand retainers of the Khan, as well as the town notables who had come out to meet us, and the swarms of Kurdish vermin in the surrounding districts.⁵⁶

For Evliya, the distinction between those Kurdish “town notables” and mountain-dwelling “Kurdish vermin” was a crucial matter of manners and civility. He considered Abdal Khan a model of the wise and civilized ruler who, just like Mehmed the Conqueror (Fatih Mehmed II, 1432–1481), encouraged skilled artisans of all nations to migrate to his city. Evliya called him “*hezār-fen*” (master of a thousand skills),⁵⁷ whose widespread “reputation as a patron of the arts and sciences” inspired “skilled men [...] from every country” to come to Bitlis and fill

52 Van Bruinessen and Boeschoten, Diyarbekir, p. 159.

53 Dankoff, Bitlis, p. 75.

54 Dankoff, Bitlis, p. 67.

55 Dankoff, Bitlis, p. 375.

56 Dankoff, Bitlis, p. 43.

57 Dankoff, Bitlis, p. 7.

the city with “skilled masters.”⁵⁸ He observed how the citizens of Bitlis were exceptional for their fine clothing: “Although it is Kurdistan, nevertheless there are many notables and retainers of the Khan who wear sable furs,”⁵⁹ while in Diyarbekir the people were so wealthy that even “the lower classes wear various sorts of English woollen cloth,”⁶⁰ which were imported at great cost.

In late July, Abdal Khan defied Ottoman authority, causing Melek Ahmed Pasha to raise an army and sack Bitlis. Evliya commented: “But how much damage this town of Bitlis suffered! And how much wealth was plundered! For the Ottoman army included several thousand rough mountain Kurds who tore to pieces those precious silk carpets from Isfahan, Cairo, and Ushak, worthy of kings, and used the rags to cover the mud and dirt in their tents.”⁶¹ Not all Kurds, notably those from the mountains, understood and appreciated beauty. Having previously described the magnificent buildings, notable mosques, schools, fountains, palaces, gardens, public and private baths which he attributes to Abdal Khan’s patronage and civilizing influence, Evliya was amazed at the quantities of magnificent treasure discovered inside the citadel. Besides valuable objects – carpets, tents, swords, gold and silver vessels, jewel-encrusted daggers, muskets, maces, saddles, leopard and tiger skins, precious stones – Evliya marveled at the huge number of books and works of calligraphic artistry. Some Ottoman scholars hold that Evliya was prone to exaggeration,⁶² but it remains a testament to Abdal Khan’s wealth, taste, and learning, that Evliya lists dozens of illustrated Qur’ans, “countless calligraphic albums” by famous masters, volumes of Persian and European drawings, numerous atlases and maps, all of which he was charged with cataloguing. All this treasure was auctioned off to pay the costs of the military operation.⁶³

Beyond Abdal Khan’s wealth, personal skills, sophistication, learning, and achievements in making Bitlis a model of urban culture, Evliya praised the Kurdish language, which he believed was among the earliest languages spoken after the Flood.⁶⁴ “Since this is an oriental region” [*Bu diyâr cānib-i şarq*] he argued,

⁵⁸ Dankoff, Bitlis, p. 107.

⁵⁹ Dankoff, Bitlis, p. 77.

⁶⁰ Van Bruinessen and Boeschoten, Diyarbekir, p. 161.

⁶¹ Dankoff, Bitlis, p. 321.

⁶² See Tülay Artan, following Michael Rogers, Arts and Architecture, in Suraiya Faroqui (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Turkey: Volume 3: The Later Ottoman Empire, 1603–1839* (Cambridge et al. 2006), pp. 408–480, here p. 429.

⁶³ Dankoff, Bitlis, pp. 281–321, and Armenag Sarkisian, Abdal Khan Seigneur Kurde de Bitlis au XVII^e Siècle, et ses Trésors, in *Journal Asiatique* 229 (1937), pp. 253–270.

⁶⁴ Van Bruinessen, Kurdistan, pp. 5–6.

“hundreds of proficient and eloquent poets of accomplishment are found here [...] poets of great refinement.”⁶⁵ He admired the “lovable boys” [*Mahbûb*] who “speak so pleasantly and eloquently in their native dialect – for this is the Orient [*Şarq diyârî*] – that people with an amorous temperament are ravished when they hear them.”⁶⁶ He provided extensive examples illustrating the distinctive qualities of the dialects of Diyarbekir and the Rohziki of Bitlis.⁶⁷ And for Evliya, this place of poetry and of beautiful boys with ravishing voices, this “Orient” was a region of magic and wonders that was being destroyed by the Ottoman state.

Although employed by Melek Ahmed Pasha, to whom he happened also to be related,⁶⁸ Evliya by no means approved of the authoritarian manner in which this officer of the central government was going about his official business. Evliya hints broadly that the war against Abdal Khan was a pretext for seizing his wealth, and that following the auction of his treasures, Melek Ahmed Pasha did not pay for “the various precious goods and stuffs and jewels which he himself had bid for and bought.”⁶⁹ He clearly deplored the bloodshed, regularly pleading for the lives of captives to be spared, even “the accursed Yezidis and Khalitis and Chekvanis” who held the citadel long after Abdal Khan had fled.⁷⁰ Yet Evliya also called himself a dervish, “the kind who goes out among people, rides horses, and keeps servants. Still, I am unconcerned with the affairs of the world. A war happened, a province was plundered and ruined. I know nothing of that.”⁷¹ Despite witnessing moments when it failed, Evliya continued to believe in the universal inclusivity embedded in the codes of “Kanuni” Süleyman – the lawgiver – even after those benevolent ideals of the “well-protected domains” of the patrimonial Ottoman state had started hardening into a repressive and absolutist dynastic polity. Against these despotic tendencies, which, as historian Baki Tezcan has recently argued, precipitated the emergence of what he calls the “second Ottoman Empire” following the regicide in 1622 of Osman II (1604–1622),⁷²

65 Van Bruinessen and Boeschoten, Diyarbekir, p. 159.

66 Van Bruinessen and Boeschoten, Diyarbekir, pp. 157–159.

67 Van Bruinessen and Boeschoten, Diyarbekir, pp. 173–177; Dankoff, Bitlis, pp. 85–87.

68 Robert Dankoff, Introduction: The Author and His Subject, in Robert Dankoff (ed. and trans.), *The Intimate Life of an Ottoman Statesman: Melek Ahmed Pasha (1588–1662) As Portrayed in Evliya Çelebi’s “Book of Travels”* (Albany, NY 1991), pp. 1–20, here p. 3. Melek Ahmed Pasha was a cousin of Evliya’s mother; they were Abkhazian slaves who had been presented to Ahmed I.

69 Dankoff, Bitlis, p. 321.

70 Dankoff, Bitlis, pp. 249–265.

71 Dankoff, Bitlis, p. 347.

72 Baki Tezcan, *The Second Ottoman Empire: Political and Social Transformation in the Early Modern World* (Cambridge et al. 2010), pp. 1–13, 214–216, 227–232.

the splendors and magnificence of Abdal Khan's court offered Evliya a living challenge to the authoritarian imperatives of Melek Ahmed Pasha's governorship.

Splendor, magnificence, and magic: these features of "Oriental" difference all presented a challenge to Istanbul and the representatives of Ottoman authority. A day or two after Evliya and Melek Ahmed Pasha first arrived in Bitlis, Abdal Khan arranged an evening of entertainments for the Ottoman visitors. Evliya recounts an episode he titled "A strange and wondrous spectacle, the science of magic."⁷³ He recalls how one Molla Mehmed (fl. 1665), an emaciated magician, entered the public arena, threw down his sack and was suddenly naked. While "prancing impudently about the meydan," he declared "friends, I have no penis. Just take a look!" before proceeding to leap into the air and fly about the arena to "an astonished audience" that "was delighting at this spectacle."⁷⁴ Suddenly he "revealed a huge penis like that of Og son of Unuk. Holding this in his hand [...] he started pissing, and sprayed the spectators [...] They all became soaking wet [...] and [...] exclaimed: 'We just looked at the Molla naked and saw that he had no penis. Now what is this enormous tool, and where did this damned rain of piss come from?' But those Kurds who understood what was going on just drank up this 'urine' and pronounced it 'water of life'."⁷⁵

In this extraordinarily subtle piece of storytelling,⁷⁶ the joke is clearly directed against Melek Ahmed Pasha and his retinue of Ottoman officials, while Evliya brings his readers inside the joke where we share the point of view of "those Kurds who understood what was going on." For Evliya, the Kurds provided a perspective from which the repressive and authoritarian follies of the new order of Ottoman officialdom could be ridiculed. The implication was that respecting Kurdish differences and negotiating within a framework of relative autonomy for the Kurdish regions were the only way for the Ottomans to achieve peace.⁷⁷ And, for Evliya, that necessary recognition of Kurdish difference and relative in-

⁷³ Dankoff, Bitlis, pp. 123–125.

⁷⁴ Dankoff, Bitlis, pp. 123–125.

⁷⁵ Dankoff, Bitlis, p. 125.

⁷⁶ Dankoff points out in Bitlis, p. 7, note 1, that a similar tale of conjuring appears in a Persian romance of the sixteenth century in which the magician, Moqantara, asked to demonstrate his powers by King Valid of Cairo, mixes water from an urn with dust to produce an enormous black cloud which produces enough rain to fill all the streets of Cairo right up to the roofs of the buildings, except the palace from which the king and his retinue are watching: the king pleads with Moqantara, who breaks the urn causing the cloud and flooding to disappear, leaving all as it had been. See William L. Hanaway (trans.), *Love and War: Adventures from the Firuz Shah Nama* of Sheikh Bighami (Delmar, NY 1974), pp. 79–84.

⁷⁷ Van Bruinessen, *Kurdistan*, p. 5.

dependence is signified by, and bound up with, an openness to “Oriental” magic, mysticism, and the mustering of energies and practices that were different from those sanctioned in Istanbul.

3 Norms and anomalies: Henry Blount and Evliya

No early modern Englishman set out to break the mold of European prejudice more explicitly than Henry Blount. We could hardly find a better example of self-positioning in terms of a self-professed “Enlightenment” sensibility, scientifically open to empirical evidence, having consciously shed acculturated prejudices. Blount explicitly states that his views are so anomalous that they “barre” his account from public consumption or even “appearing beyond my owne closet.”⁷⁸ His views are so singular, in other words, that his audience will most likely be hostile to his findings, “for to a minde possest with any set doctrine, their unconformitie must needs make them seeme unsound, and extravagant, nor can they comply to a rule, by which they were not made.”⁷⁹ Blount composes his travelogue primarily for himself, therefore, so as to remember what occurred, keep account of the evidence he gathered first-hand, and thereby make good on his investment in voyaging overseas, considering “how much” he “ventured” for this “experience.”⁸⁰ He remains cagily modest about the extent of the worldly experience he has had, and thus what may be gathered from his adventures, qualifying that “experience” with the phrase “as little as it is.”⁸¹

What was so anomalous about Blount’s account? Why would his findings be considered “unsound” and “extravagant” in their “unconformitie” with his countrymen’s opinions? Blount declared an instrumental purpose beyond the merely empirical. He stated that he voyaged to Istanbul and Cairo in order to see how the greatest modern empire worked. He decided to visit the Levant because the “Turkes [...] are the only moderne people, great in action, and whose Empire hath so suddenly invaded the World, and fixt it selfe such firme foundations as no other ever did,” and so, he is “of opinion, that he who would behold these times in their greatest glory, could not finde a better *scene* then *Turky*.”⁸² Blount is aware of what must be a contradiction –between the incontrovertible

⁷⁸ Blount, *Voyage*, p. 4.

⁷⁹ Blount, *Voyage*, p. 4.

⁸⁰ Blount, *Voyage*, p. 4.

⁸¹ Blount, *Voyage*, p. 4.

⁸² Blount, *Voyage*, p. 2.

fact of the Ottomans ruling a great empire, and the prevalent British view of the Ottomans as mere barbarians. Therefore, he has set himself the task of being an unbiased witness (having “an unpartiall conceit”) regarding how things *are* in order to discover whether “the *Turkish* way appeare absolutely barbarous, as we are given to understand, or rather another kinde of civilitie, different from ours, but no lesse pretending.”⁸³

Blount found that which he sought, an alternative civility: herein lies the nature of the unorthodoxy of his account, designed to outrage English audiences. Of Ottoman mariners he reports how surprised he was by their good manners:

The strangest thing I found among the *Turkish* Mariners, was their incredible civilitie; [...] and that not only in ordinary civility, but with so ready service, such a patience, so sweet, and gentle a way, generally through them all, as made me doubt, whether it was a dreame, or reall; if at any time I stood in their way, or encombred their ropes, they would call me with a *Ianum*, or *Benum*, termes of most affection, and that with an encline, a voyce, and gesture so respective, as assured me, their other words (which I understood not) were of the same straine.⁸⁴

Of Ottoman manners more generally he reports:

There is no people more courteous of *Salutation*, then the *Turkes*; in meeting upon the *high-way*, one with a *stoope*, and his *hand* upon his *breast*, bids *Salaam Aleek*, the other with like obeisance, replies *Aleek Salaam*; and when any one comes into company, the rest salute him with a *Merabbah Sultanum*, ever sweetening their conversation, with such accent of pronunciation, and so much respective gesture, as savours of a gentle *Genius*, free from that rudenesse, whereof they are accused.⁸⁵

Ottoman civility cannot be denied, and it is very different from either English manners or English views of the Turks. But Blount is also typical of his countrymen in having an instrumental agenda: how to rule an empire, if Britain should acquire one? For Blount the ultimate test of successful rule must lie in the great metropolis of Cairo, “clearly the greatest concourse of Mankinde in these times, and perhaps that ever was.”⁸⁶ Blount reasons that “there must needs be some proportionable spirit in the Government: for such vast multitudes, and those of wits so deeply malicious, would soone breed confusion, famine, and utter des-

⁸³ Blount, *Voyage*, p. 2.

⁸⁴ Blount, *Voyage*, p. 75.

⁸⁵ Blount, *Voyage*, p. 107.

⁸⁶ Blount, *Voyage*, p. 3.

olation, if in the *Turkish* domination there were nothing but sottish sensualitie, as most *Christians* conceive.”⁸⁷

The spirit of civility and openness to outsiders appears to be the key. Blount approves of the speed of execution of the Ottoman legal system, which has advantages over the English system, in which lawyers commonly protract proceedings for profit, sometimes to the detriment of good causes; Ottoman justice is also refreshingly hospitable to foreigners and travelers – “honourable to *Strangers*” – such as himself.⁸⁸ Both these features bespeak a cosmopolitanism enabling to both diplomacy and trade.

Blount’s account of the Ottoman polity and its seventeenth-century Ottoman upheavals – including regicide – indicates that he was paying attention; it resonates with Baki Tezcan’s thesis that dynastic absolutism and feudal ties increasingly gave way to capitalist commercial pressures and the rise of new categories of official within the state bureaucracy, especially self-made men from outside the *devşirme* system, as well as contentious legal reforms.⁸⁹

However, Blount’s final judgement is that the Ottomans rule both by love – though this is “applied to” the Turkish Muslim community only – and by fear. Having found civility, he ends his account with tyranny. Is this conclusion so very far from the accusation of Turkish “barbarous” behavior common in England?⁹⁰ Enquiring into Ottoman treatment of minorities or “Sects,” Blount takes the Jews as the ultimate test case, devoting some ten pages to them (pp. 113–123), out of 126 pages, and concluding that they have failed to form a “temporall Government of their owne” both because they are “timide” and incapable of soldiering, and because “their extreme corrupt love to private interesse” and their “continuell cheating and malice among themselves” mean they lack the sense of “justice, and respect to common benefit, without which no civill societie can stand.”⁹¹ Blount’s ultimate “other,” then, remains “the Jews,” hardly an anomalous position for a European to take up.

Evliya, by contrast, when he describes Jews, though he makes jokes about “Yids” and their “ill-omened” houses and agrees that Jews “have no stomach for a fight and are not swordsmen and horsemen,” distinguishes knowledgeably amongst Jewish communities, practices, beliefs, and languages.⁹²

⁸⁷ Blount, *Voyage*, p. 3.

⁸⁸ Blount, *Voyage*, pp. 91–92.

⁸⁹ Blount, *Voyage*, pp. 54–55, 64–65, 92, 95–96, 124–126; Tezcan, *Second Ottoman Empire*, pp. 1–13 and *passim*.

⁹⁰ Blount, *Voyage*, pp. 90–91, 124.

⁹¹ Blount, *Voyage*, p. 123.

⁹² See, for example, Dankoff and Kim, *Ottoman Traveller*, pp. 92, 230, 250.

The “Pax Ottomanica,” a concept present in much recent scholarship, “posits that the economic and social stability of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries made the Ottoman lands a relatively safe and secure environment for trade, the flourishing of arts and crafts, peaceful coexistence and settlement, particularly for groups – for example, Jews – for whom the situation in Ottoman lands compared favourably to that in other parts of the world.”⁹³ According to the editors of *Disliking Others: Loathing, Hostility and Distrust in Premodern Ottoman Lands*, this concept has been “over-idealized” in so far as “the relative stability of Ottoman lands at the time did not preclude established or even formal antipathies among groups of people within Ottoman society.”⁹⁴

Evliya’s *Seyahatname* testifies to both these tendencies: on the one hand, ideals of accommodation and inclusiveness, of affirmative toleration; on the other, failure to practice these ideals, especially when confronted by “established antipathies.” Such antipathies and failures were, of course, exacerbated when dynastic and state power came under new pressures during the seventeenth century, as shown by Baki Tezcan.⁹⁵ As Ottoman society and the state were transformed during his lifetime, Evliya’s stance, derived from conceptions of Süleymanic governance inflected by Sufi dervish ideals, would be largely left behind. Evliya certainly understood this fact, despite his evident hopes.

Both Evliya’s *Seyahatname* and Blount’s *Voyage*, in their different ways, and in their shared anomalous status, offer us imaginative resources of possible cosmopolitanisms and visions of hospitality not otherwise readily available in early modern Europe.

⁹³ Hasan Karatepe, H. Erdem Çıpa, and Helga Anetshofer (eds.), *Disliking Others: Loathing, Hostility and Distrust in Premodern Ottoman Lands* (Boston 2018), p. xi.

⁹⁴ Karatepe et al. (eds.), *Disliking Others*, p. xi.

⁹⁵ From an environmental history perspective, both climatic changes leading to scarcity and rebellion (Sam White) and changes in ecological management and modes of production, in accordance with Ottoman and world economic changes (Alan Mikhail), should be taken into account alongside the political changes analyzed by Tezcan in order adequately to understand early modern Ottoman self-transformations; see Alan Mikhail, *Under Osman’s Tree: The Ottoman Empire, Egypt and Environmental History* (Chicago et al. 2017); Sam White, *The Climate of Rebellion in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire* (Cambridge et al. 2011).