

THE AUTHOR AND HIS SUBJECT

Evliya Çelebi was a Turk from Istanbul. His father, Derviş Mehmed Zilli Agha, chief goldsmith at the Ottoman court, had (according to family tradition) accompanied Süleyman the Magnificent on his late campaigns. His mother was an Abkhazian slave girl, presented to Sultan Ahmed I along with her cousin, Melek Ahmed, who later became one of the great statesmen of the age and Evliya's chief patron.

In the Ottoman system, those men who began their careers as "slaves of the Porte" (*kapıkulu*)—notably the janissaries, derived mainly from the Balkans, and the military slaves from the Caucasus—had the likeliest chance to achieve high office in the military and political sphere. Such was the case with Melek Ahmed (though he was not technically a military slave, as he was born in Istanbul), whose career followed a typical pattern: upbringing in the Caucasus; introduction to the palace service as a young man (*gulam*); graduation to officer status (*ağa*); appointment to the highest offices of the state (*paşa*).

The military option was not open, at least in principle, to native Turks, who tended rather to seek careers as religious personnel (*ulema*) or bureaucrats in the financial administration (*efendi*). But they too could gain entrance to the centers of power by virtue of their skills. Such was the case with Evliya's father, and with Evliya himself.¹ And anyone noted for refined taste and literary accomplishment could gain the nickname of "gentleman" (*çelebi*).

As a youth of endless curiosity, Evliya explored the variegated metropolis and imbibed tales and accounts of its history, as well as the history of Süleyman's far-flung conquests. He received a thorough training in Islamic and Ottoman sciences, especially Koran recitation and music. With his fine voice and entertaining manner, he attracted the attention of Sultan Murad IV, thus

gaining entry to the palace where his education was refined. He learned the Koran by heart (*hafız*) and was often called on to recite. And he was the sultan's boon companion (*musahib*).

But Evliya's nature was too restless for a sedentary career as a courtier. His wanderlust was encouraged by the Prophet himself in a dream which (as he tells us) occurred on the night of Ashura, the tenth of Muharrem, in the year of the hegira 1040 (19 August 1630)—his twentieth birthday!² Thereafter, by attaching himself to various pashas sent out to govern the provinces, he traveled the length and breadth of the empire, and into its peripheries. Evliya served his patrons as Koran reciter, caller to prayer (*müezzin*), and prayer leader (*imam*); as boon companion and raconteur; more officially, as courier, tax collector, or deputy. But he shunned official status. When Melek offered him the key post of marshal of his guards (*kapıcılar kethüdası*), he refused (see Chapter 9). He saw himself as a mendicant (*derviş*), as "world traveler and boon companion to mankind" (*seyyah-ı alem ve nedim-i beni-Adem*). As one of his interlocutors puts it: "Evliya Çelebi is a wandering dervish and a world traveler. He cries the chant of every cart he mounts, and sings the praises of every man who feeds him. Wherever he rests his head, he eats and drinks and is merry."³ Travel was his true career. And the *Book of Travels* (*Seyahat-name*) was his life work.

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The *Book of Travels* is a vast panorama of the Ottoman world in the mid-seventeenth century. At this period the Ottoman state was still a great imperial power—geographically it was at the height of its glory—although cracks and strains were evident. Evliya's account naturally begins with the capital, also his birthplace, Istanbul, to which he devotes one entire book (the work as a whole is divided into ten "books"). Following the story of the dream (in which the Prophet blesses his travels) the historical and geographical surveys of the metropolis proceed systematically and at a stately pace, although with frequent digressions and anecdotal asides. Book I is divided into 273 chapters; the passages translated below (Chapter 1) are drawn from Chapter 120, "Viziers of Murad IV," and Chapter 138, "Gazas and Conquests under Murad IV." The longest, Chapter 270, covering sixty-two folios of text—it would make a book of several hundred printed pages—is a description of the guilds of the city as they

paraded before Sultan Murad IV in preparation for the Baghdad campaign of 1638. At one point, while discussing the guild of fireworks makers, Evliya mentions a youthful prank in which he launched a spectacular rocket of his own devising from a boat in the Bosphorus, shocking those on the shore. This took place, he tells us, "during the festivities celebrating the birth of Kaya Sultan"—Sultan Murad's daughter who later became Melek Pasha's wife—that is, in 1633.⁴

Book II opens with a reprisal of the initiatory dream. Evliya's first venture outside the capital, beginning (so he tells us) just before his thirtieth birthday in 1050/1640, was to the old Ottoman capital of Bursa. After returning to Istanbul to get his father's blessing, he journeys along the Black Sea coast as far as the Caucasus region, the homeland of his mother's kin, and around to the Crimea. He participates in raids against the infidel (*gaza*). He suffers shipwreck. He goes to Crete for the Canea campaign, and so is present at the initial Ottoman victory (1645) in the twenty-five-year-long struggle to conquer that island. Returning to Erzurum in the train of the newly appointed governor of that province, his kinsman Defterdar-zade Mehmed Pasha, Evliya accompanies an envoy to Tebriz in the country of the heretical *Kızılbaş* (i.e., the Safavids of Iran), his first venture outside the Ottoman realm. Later Mehmed Pasha is caught up in one of the frequent Anatolian disturbances of that era, a revolt by a disaffected provincial governor (all such rebels at this time were called *celali*). The rebel in this instance, Varvar Ali Pasha, refused the command of Sultan Ibrahim to forward the wife of another provincial governor, İpşir Pasha. The same İpşir Pasha was sent to put down the rebellion. (He was to play an important role in the later fate of Melek Ahmed Pasha.) Learning of his father's death, Evliya returns to the capital in time to witness the deposition of the extravagant Sultan Ibrahim and the accession of the seven-year-old Sultan Mehmed IV (1648).

In the first part of Book III Evliya accompanies Murtaza Pasha to Damascus, capital of the province of Şam (Syria). Luckily he is back in the capital when his kinsman Melek Ahmed Pasha is appointed grand vizier (1650; Chapter 2). From that time on Evliya is almost constantly in Melek's service, following him to Özü, Silistre, and Sofia (Rumeli province; Chapter 3), and back to Istanbul, where the Pasha serves as deputy grand vizier until the arrival of İpşir Pasha from Aleppo (Chapter 4). İpşir "exiles" Melek to Van. On the way there (Book IV) Evliya stops off in Di-

yarbekir province and has the opportunity to relate some of Melek's exploits when Melek was governor of that province fifteen years earlier (Chapter 5). After reaching Van, Melek takes advantage of his position by mounting an expedition against the rebellious, quasi-independent Kurdish ruler of Bitlis, the flamboyant and wealthy Abdal Khan (Chapter 6). Thus, despite the poor prospects initially, he is able to amass a small fortune—as Evliya remarks, “for Melek Ahmed Pasha the province of Van turned out to be a veritable Egypt.”⁵

Evliya once again goes on an embassy to Iran, and takes the opportunity to travel to Baghdad and make an extensive tour of Mesopotamia and Kurdistan, returning to Van only at the beginning of Book V. He is in Bitlis collecting some arrears when Melek is removed from office. After an adventurous escape from Bitlis, Evliya warns Melek not to return to the capital via Bitlis and Diyarbekir, but to take a northerly route through Erzurum, despite the winter season. The remainder of Book V covers the latter part of Melek's career, as governor of Özü (Chapter 7) and Bosnia (Chapter 9), interrupted by the blow caused by the death of his beloved wife, Kaya Sultan (Chapter 8). At the beginning of Book VI Melek is recalled from the Transylvania campaign to marry another sultana, Fatma Sultan, the daughter of his original patron, Sultan Ahmed I (Chapter 10). The unhappy match is short-lived, ended by Melek's death in 1662.

Though left patronless, Evliya rejoices in the lack of family attachments⁶ and goes off to join the German campaign. Book VII includes eyewitness accounts of the Battle of St. Gotthard (1664) and the Ottoman embassy to Vienna under Kara Mehmed Pasha (1665), followed by travels in the Crimea, Circassia, and Kalmukia. Book VIII is largely devoted to Greece, including an eyewitness account of the Candia campaign and the final Ottoman conquest of Crete (1669). Pilgrimage to the holy cities of Jerusalem, Mecca, and Medina is the subject of Book IX. In 1672 Evliya finally reaches Egypt, his goal and haven after forty years of travel; and his leisurely description of Cairo in Book X (plus journeys up and down the Nile) recalls his description of Istanbul.

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If a travel account can be said to have a hero, that hero must be the traveler himself. While the *Book of Travels* is no exception to this, it can also be said to have another hero: Melek

Ahmed Pasha. For it is not simply a travel account (*seyahat-name*); it is also a chronicle (*tarih*) of Evliya's life and times. The narrative thread, accounting for roughly 5 percent of the huge ten-book text, is an autobiographical memoir. And the "hero" in Evliya's life, from his own perspective, is not himself but his patron. Of the various patrons who sponsored Evliya's career Melek Pasha was by far the most important. Their bond of kinship provided the basis for Evliya's attachment to Melek and to his household. Evliya served Melek, not only in religious and official capacities, but above all as confidant—we might say, as friend, although their differences in age and in position clearly made Evliya a subordinate.

One obligation of a subordinate in the Ottoman system was to praise and otherwise to promote the welfare of his superior, to whom he owed loyalty. Evliya fulfills this obligation in the *Book of Travels*. Although not wholly covering up Melek's weak points he tends to portray him in glowing colors. He probably exaggerates Melek's heroic exploits; and in the course of his eulogy after Melek's death, he says that he has gathered the accounts of those exploits in a separate volume, entitled *The Gestes of Melek Ahmed Pasha (Risale-i Menakıb-ı Melek Ahmed Paşa)*.⁷ *The Intimate Life of an Ottoman Statesman* in some fashion reconstitutes that volume, lost or never written.

What gives Evliya's account its special character is that it goes far beyond the laudatory recounting of public exploits characteristic of Ottoman (and Islamic) biographies and hagiographies. It records how Melek used Evliya as a sounding board for his dreams; how Melek and his wife, Kaya Sultan, related their dreams to each other, and how their dreams reacted to and were fulfilled in events in the world. With these dreams, especially, Evliya comes close to a psychological portrait of his patron and patroness. We gain an acquaintance of their hearts and minds, at a level of intimacy quite unusual, if not unique, in Ottoman (and Islamic) literature.

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In the case of most Ottomans, we know very little of their individual lives beyond what we can glean from chronicles and biographical dictionaries; "biographical details on the great men of the empire are characteristically lacking in intimate detail."⁸ Melek Ahmed Pasha is an exception only because of Evliya's very rich account.

As with many Ottoman officials, Melek Pasha comes to the notice of the chroniclers only when he holds high office—in this case, during his year as grand vizier.⁹ For his fuller career, without Evliya we would have to be content with such notices as the following from the *Sicill-i Osmani*:

The imperial son-in-law (*damad-ı şehriyari*) Melek Ahmed Pasha. He was Abkhazian. Raised in the sultan's harem, he became imperial sword-bearer. In 1048 [text, in error: 1148] (1638–39) he was appointed governor of Diyarbekir, with the rank of vizier. In Zilhicce 1050 (March–April 1641) he was made governor of Baghdad, in 1051 governor of Damascus. In 1053 (1643) he returned to Istanbul and [the following year] married Kaya Sultan. In 1055 (1645) he became governor of Diyarbekir for the second time. He was removed from office in that year, and in 1056 became governor of Diyarbekir for the third [text: second] time. In Zilkade 1058 (November–December 1648) he was made governor of Baghdad for the second time; removed from office in Zilkade 1059. In Zilkade 1060 (November 1650) he was appointed governor of Baghdad for the third time; but the following day he became grand vizier.

In Ramazan 1061 (August–September 1651) he was made governor of Silistre; in '62 governor of Rumeli, removed from office in Zilhicce '63 (October–November 1653). In 1064 he served as deputy grand vizier, and at the beginning of 1065 (November 1654) was sent to Van. In '66 he was appointed to Silistre; in '69 (1658–59) to Bosnia, removed from office in 1072 (1661–62). He died of the plague on 17 Muharrem 1073 (1 September 1662). He was cultured, dignified, gentle, free of defect, compassionate. The Baghdad chronicle notes certain facts, such as that he customarily paid one hundred purses annually from Baghdad into the imperial treasury; that he himself appeared to be abstemious, while his retainers appropriated the wealth of the poor, and he chastised those who informed him. An infant daughter of his sultana, named Afife Hanım Sultan, is buried at Şehzadebaşı.¹⁰

Evliya's cursory summaries of Melek's career—for example, in Chapters 1 and 10 below—resemble this stereotyped account. In

the more detailed sections of Evliya's chronicle we win access to the private side of this public figure: his fears and hopes and dreams; his hesitations as well as his heroics; his religious life and domestic affairs.

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In the Ottoman system, relation by family and clan gave the presumption of patronage and favor (though it did not prevent rivalry, as the relation of Melek and İpşir demonstrates). Melek has to assure Köprülü that he will fight against the rebel Hasan Pasha despite their Abkhazian clan ties.¹¹ The Abkhazians apparently had a reputation for stinginess; Melek was an exception.¹² At one point, when he displayed his typical generosity on the occasion of feasting the Crimean Khan in Ak-kirman in 1068/1657, the people were surprised:

"Such generosity has never been seen in an Abkhazian," they said. But Melek Ahmed Pasha was not originally Abkhazian. He was born in Istanbul, in Tophane, and since his parents were of Abkhazian origin they sent him, as was customary among the Abkhazians, with his wetnurse to the——clan in the Abkhazian country, at the age of six. Then at age fourteen he was brought to the capital and presented as a gift to Sultan Ahmed along with my own mother, who was the daughter of his maternal aunt. When Ahmed Khan saw Melek he cried, "God knows, that boy is an angel (*melek*)," and gave Melek into the charge of the chief black eunuch, Büyük Mustafa Agha, while he bestowed my mother upon the chief goldsmith of the Porte, Derviş Mehmed Zilli. I came into being as a result of that union, and this is the source of my kinship with Melek; while the sobriquet "Melek" was the result of Ahmed Khan's pearl-strewn speech.¹³

According to Evliya's family tradition, his own mother and Melek, who were cousins on their mothers' side, were presented to court on the same day during the reign of Ahmed I.¹⁴ And Melek, early in the reign of Murad IV, brought Evliya to the sultan's attention, thus enabling him to be educated at court.¹⁵ Although Evliya provides little information about his relationship with Melek until the year of the latter's grand vizierate, it ap-

pears that he was accepted from the start as a member of Melek's household.¹⁶

Before he began his serious "career" as a traveler, Evliya apparently accompanied Melek at least once to a provincial post, viz., to Damascus in 1051/1641.¹⁷ Several references in Book II seem to corroborate this: Evliya claims to have dined with Haci Baba and Melek in the robbers' den near Ankara;¹⁸ and Ipşir Pasha blames him for serving Defterdar-oğlu Mehmed Pasha: "Why aren't you again with our lord Melek Ahmed Pasha?" he says. "Go again to Melek Ahmed Pasha."¹⁹ Even at this time Evliya was considered to be Melek's protégé.²⁰

Melek's wife, the rich and generous Kaya Sultan, made Evliya a special object of her regard. In Book II, again, there is reference to a watch that Kaya gave him "twenty-one years before" (i.e., in 1627?).²¹ Kaya was a liberal benefactress to Evliya and was also the patroness of Evliya's sister.²² Indeed, Melek's other retainers seem to have envied Evliya because of this special favor, and after Kaya's death they felt freer to abuse him.²³ One mark of this favor was an abundant supply of Kaya's hand-embroidered handkerchiefs, which Evliya used as gifts both during her lifetime and well after her death.²⁴

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As a tried and trusted warrior and statesman, Melek Ahmed Pasha could be sent to troubleshoot in various hot spots of the empire, the frontier outposts, to deal with upstart Kurdish rebels in the neighborhood of the Safavids (Sincar, Chapter 5; Bitlis, Chapter 6); or menacing cossacks (Varna and Özü, Chapter 7); or raiders and rebels on the Venetian and Austrian borders (Dalmatia and Transylvania, Chapter 9).

The rewards for carrying out these duties were substantial, accruing not only from the legitimate revenue of an Ottoman provincial governor,²⁵ but also from booty, gifts, and other perquisites. Aside from the dangers, however, there were other drawbacks as well, including the great expenses involved and the precarious nature of the posts.

Like other grand statesmen of the day, Melek Ahmed Pasha was obliged to maintain a huge household—a kind of sultanic palace in miniature—as a token of prestige and a basis of power.²⁶ His retinue consisted of several hundred aghas or "officers," ranging from menial domestics and bodyguards to companions

and agents like Evliya himself and the hapless Kudde Mehmed. In a famous passage of his didactic work known as *Hayriyye*, the poet Nabi (d. 1124/1712) advises his son to avoid the lot of a pasha. To cite E. J. W. Gibb's quaint Victorian translation:

He wrecks the shrine of Faith, if he oppress;
 If he do not, he bideth portionless.
 Were all the sorrows told he undergoes,
 Cairo and Baghdad were not worth those woes. . . .
 Unless his meinie²⁷ well he clothe and feed,
 Though he command them, none his words will heed.
 Yet his demesnes suffice not to provide
 All he must lavish upon every side. . . .
 Untold are the expenses of his place,
 To these no limits may he ever trace.
 Kitchens and stables, rations for his rout,
 His servants and his slaves, within, without. . . .
 He passeth all his life in bitter stress;
 Is glory the fit name for such duress?²⁸

A pasha had to steer a course between principle and corruption, between dynastic loyalty and self-preservation. In a violent age, when the exercise of power was erratic and often brutal, a pasha was in a very precarious position. Melek's reputation for honesty and fair-dealing, and his marriage to the wealthiest of the Ottoman princesses, made him no less vulnerable to the whims of grand viziers as ruthless as İpşir Pasha or Köprülü Mehmed Pasha and no less subject to the violent currents of Ottoman politics.

Perhaps Evliya's portrait of Seydi Ahmed Pasha—Melek's friend and fellow-Abkhazian—illustrates this theme best. Evliya first came into contact with Seydi, then *sancak-begi* of Tortum, in 1057/1647, when he joined him in raids on the cossacks at Günye and into Mingrelia.²⁹ Evliya is fond of quoting Seydi's barbaric Turkish; he draws a lively and sympathetic picture of the rough and honest warrior, telling how he even lost some teeth at Seydi's hands from a playful throw of the jereed-javelin.³⁰ In 1071/1661, while Melek was in Tımışvar during the Transylvania campaign, an order arrived from Grand Vizier Köprülü Mehmed Pasha, who had an old grudge against Seydi, to have Seydi executed.³¹ Melek had had an ominous dream regarding Seydi's fate the previous year.³² Now Seydi, condemned

to death, entrusted his son to Melek. Evliya's sagalike account of Seydi's bravery in life and death is a moving one. And his description of Melek's reaction on hearing of Seydi's execution is telling. "He summoned all the aghas, made his last will and testament, and distributed the three hundred diamonds that were in his seal-purse, noting down in a register who should get what: ten for his son Ibrahim Beg;³³ ten for Seydi's son Mehmed Beg; ten for his daughter Hanım Sultan; and the rest for his aghas. 'If I die,' he stipulated, 'they are yours; but while I live, I retain possession.'"³⁴

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Above, I characterized the narrative portions of the *Book of Travels*, using such terms as *chronicle*, *autobiographical memoir*, and *eulogy* (\approx *menakıb*). To gain a sharper idea of just what Evliya is doing, let us concentrate on the one episode covered in the standard Ottoman histories: Melek's fall from the grand vizierate. We will compare Evliya's account with that of the major historian of the period, Naima.³⁵

Naima's account, in the fifth volume of his *History*, is in five sections:

1. Restiveness of the *sipahis* over salary delay
2. Rebellion of Abaza Hasan
3. Unjust execution of Hacı Osman
4. Rebellion of Dasni Mirza
5. Bazaar revolt

The first and third episodes, which reflect poorly on Melek Pasha's statesmanship, are not even mentioned by Evliya. He names, as the initial reason for Melek's downfall, Abaza Hasan's rebellion, for which he blames Melek's deputies, particularly his steward Kudde. Characteristically, Evliya gives color to the account by quoting the verbal quarrel between Hasan and Kudde, including Kudde's homely proverb (given in the original dialect form) and Hasan's obscene response.

Evliya also exonerates Melek of blame for Dasni (or Dasnik) Mirza's rebellion. He depicts Melek as the cat's paw of his deputies, who by their greed have alienated a public servant, and by their ferocity have driven him to become a rebel or *celali*.

At this point the narrative switches gears and turns into a kind of battle epic, lightened by Evliya's personal touch. Evliya himself joins the fray. In an episode recalling Gideon's spying out the Midianites (Judges 7:9–15), he creeps up to the enemy camp at night where he overhears two young braves, one singing quatrains (in dialect) while grooming his horse, the other telling his friend a dream that, like the quatrains, prefigures their fate. After the fighting, when the rebels are executed, Dasnik's partner with the religious sounding name of Hanefi Halife, who is not mentioned at all by Naima, is revealed in Evliya's account as a holy man, whose execution bodes ill for Melek.

When he turns to the bazaar revolt, Evliya once again depicts Melek as the wholly innocent victim of circumstances and shifts the blame entirely to Melek's officers, especially Kudde. The only implied criticisms of Melek are that he was too weak to oppose his underlings, and that he reacted too impetuously when the delegation demanded justice.

Incidentally, Evliya's judgment here agrees with that of the major Ottoman historians. Hacı Halife exonerates Melek, saying that he himself was mild and gentle, but that his deputies (Bektaş Agha, [Kudde] Kethüda Beg, etc.) held sway over him.³⁶ And Naima faults him only for his quick temper.³⁷ On the other hand, Eremya Kömürçüyan, in his diary, specifically blames Melek for initiating the unjust impositions that alienated the bazaar merchants: "They [i.e., Kara Çavuş, Mustafa Agha, etc.] were not satisfied with silver, gold, and gifts from all sides, but they began to place imposts of linen and cotton on the guildsmen—from the vizier, whose order it was. Finally they imposed base money on the guildsmen, demanding one goldpiece for 120 aspers."³⁸

In this section as well Evliya inflates the human drama, most clearly in the Telhisi Hüseyin episode, in contrast to Naima's summary treatment: "The vizier, fearing the mob, wrote a note (*telhis*) explaining the situation and sent it with his memorandum-man (*telhisçi*) who, when he set foot inside the palace grounds, was set on by the crowd shouting 'Kill that bastard' (*bre uruñ melunı*). Severely wounded by blows of stones and daggers, he was taken away half-dead."³⁹ Here, where he claims personal involvement, Evliya builds up the narrative very carefully. He first has Melek Pasha appeal for someone to step forth and act the peace maker. Kudde interrupts with his saberrattling plan. When Telhisi Hüseyin—too officious and tactless

for the job, as everyone realizes—volunteers, Melek sends Evliya with him, presumably to act as a restraining influence. Evliya, anticipating the worst, puts on bazaar clothing (described in some detail) before entering among the mob. In the event, Evliya's judiciousness fails to save Telhisi Hüseyin; but he himself, considering discretion the better part of valor, manages to slink into the crowd and avoid a beating.

There is a telling detail in this narrative: when Telhisi Hüseyin, instead of placating the mob, addresses them rather roughly, someone cries out, *bizi begnemediñ mi* ("Don't you like us?").⁴⁰ Characteristically, once again, Evliya gives color to the drama through the use of dialect (in this case, the lower-class Istanbul *begnemediñ* rather than standard *begenmediñ*). But there is another point. When Evliya describes a similar episode that occurred a few years later—how Kara Abdullah tried to placate the mob during the "plane-tree affair" (Çınar Vakası, 1066/1665)—he has someone taunt Kara Abdullah with these same words: *ya siz bizi begnemediñ mi*.⁴¹ It is possible that we have here a phrase that was commonly used on such occasions. It is more likely, I think, that we have an example of Evliya's formulaic narrative technique.

Of course, Evliya did not invent the Telhisi Hüseyin episode—its presence in Naima, in however summary a fashion, proves that it occurred, and we can reasonably credit the expanded and vivacious character of Evliya's account to his actual presence as participant and eyewitness. But we can also assume that, in the retelling, Evliya applied the storytelling techniques which he had mastered as "world traveler and boon companion to mankind."

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The use of dialect—by the anonymous guildsman taunting Telhisi Hüseyin, or by Kudde Kethüda provoking Abaza Hasan, or by the anonymous soldier singing quatrains while grooming his horse—as interpreted above as one way in which Evliya colors and personalizes his narrative. Other instances of its use in the Melek Pasha materials—by Telhisi Hüseyin himself just before he is attacked,⁴² Kudde crying out under torture,⁴³ the Abkhazian guards addressing a would-be assassin while squatting outside the Pasha's tent to "renew their ablutions"⁴⁴—confirm this.

But in all these instances something else seems to be going

on as well. To Evliya's audience, dialect was humorous. And among Evliya's storytelling techniques is the use of humor at points in the narrative that are charged with danger. This is not comic relief, which eases tension after horror or tragedy, but rather its reverse: the comedy is woven into the tense situation and signals that horror or tragedy is to come. The "escape from Bitlis" episode contains several masterful examples: Haydar Kethüda spits a gob of slime "like a mullet-oyster" before he is cut to pieces; Altı Kulaç ("Six Fathoms"), the Khan's goon, approaches "like destiny's cloud" before cutting down Molla Mehmed; Evliya pretends to snore "like a pig" while Nureddehir stands over him with a drawn dagger, then goes to kill his brother.⁴⁵ Humor—including the use of dialect—as a counter to fear seems to have come naturally to Evliya, as, just after Altı Kulaç's horrible deed, Evliya, sensing his own danger, "jumped up on the horse without even using the stirrups, and galloped before the Khan, cracking all sorts of jokes, and using dialect to make fun."

Evliya's narrative style, it seems to me, oscillates between anecdotal inventiveness and epic formulaicness. The latter is especially prominent in the descriptions of war and battle, feasts and gift exchanges, and the like. The Sincar episode (Chapter 5) is a good example. Here there is only the slightest pretence to eyewitness. Evliya, responding to Firari Mustafa's insistent queries, elaborates with obvious rhetorical flourishes on one of Melek's martial deeds, which occurred fifteen years before. After the victory, "some of the Yezidis, seeing that their wives and children were taken captive, gouged out their own eyes"—so begins a passage describing the enemy's reaction to their defeat.⁴⁶ The self-blinding is a formula Evliya employs as a climaxing device in other battle accounts; for example, at the end of the long siege of Canea on Crete in 1055/1645 the Venetian commander, "witnessing the celebrations, and hearing the Muhammedan calls-to-prayer, and seeing the crosses on the church towers turned on their heads and the green banners of the Prophet waving in their stead, and considering it preferable not to witness this scene, gouged out his own eye with his finger and, damned, died."⁴⁷ And following the even longer siege of Candia in 1080/1669 one of the Venetian captains, "considering it preferable to be blind than to see this fortress in the hands of the Turks, stuck his finger into his right eye, gouged it out, and threw it into the sea."⁴⁸

The formulaic character of Evliya's writing is everywhere apparent, not only in narrative style, but at all levels of composition, including orthography and grammar, as well as in the molds into which he casts his topographical and architectural descriptions, his etymological and hagiographical excursions, and so on. At the same time, he can display quite sophisticated literary skills, as in the interplay, in the Sincar episode, between the two time-scales of the narrative; or in the flashback technique employed during Kaya's funeral cortege.⁴⁹ The obvious parallel between the Kaya Sultan and Fatma Sultan episodes is another case in point: note their contrasting characters; also the reaction of Mehmed Köprülü at Kaya's death as contrasted with the reaction of his son, Fazıl Ahmed, at Melek's death⁵⁰—although in this case Evliya may simply be reporting what happened.

The question arises, If we are discussing literary techniques, to what extent is Evliya's biography of Melek a chronicle of historical events, and to what extent is it fiction? Clearly some of the episodes are "pure" fiction. The story of the storks and the crows is an Ottoman morality tale, even though the parallel story about Debbağ-oğlu may have a germ of truth.⁵¹ The two accounts of a Bektāşi dervish appearing out of nowhere to comfort Melek at times of stress are surely Evliya's invention, although we can certainly believe that Melek did take comfort in his (Nakşbendi) Sufi connections at such times.⁵² Melek's "dream" of the *şeyh* of Urmia is little more than a vehicle for Evliya to display his knowledge of onomancy and to comment on Köprülü's vizierate.⁵³ The pattern "illness-dream-cure," recurring twice with striking similarity, has a ring of artifice to it, like the appearances of the Bektāşi dervish.⁵⁴

Evliya utilizes dreams to good narrative effect, as in Melek's dreams of the ants (Chapter 6) and the bear (Chapter 9); or the anonymous youth's dream of the candle (Chapter 2). But this does not mean that all the dreams in the *Book of Travels* are fictions. The recording of dreams and the soliciting of dream interpretations were common Ottoman activities.⁵⁵ In particular, the two dreams premonitory of Kaya's death—Melek's in which Kaya demands a divorce, and Kaya's in which her *imam's* wife (probably her closest female companion) is arrested for being "bloody"—are so unique and original, and contain such rich psychological insight (Melek's separation anxiety, Kaya's projection of her fear and guilt onto her household companion) that, it

seems to me, they can be attributed, at least in conception, only to the dreamers themselves and not to Evliya.⁵⁶

We are not in a position to separate the strands of fact and fiction in Evliya's account more precisely than we have done. Perhaps, when the *Books of Travels* as a whole has been better studied and we know more about Ottoman mentalities and Ottoman realities, we will be in a position to do so. For now, it seems clear that Evliya begins with actual events, then embroiders or "fictionalizes" them to a greater or lesser extent. The result, as illustrated in the materials translated here, is a remarkable portrait of a man and a unique record of his life and times.

Notes

1. Cf. Kunt, *Servants*, p. 17.
2. I 6b.18 (28; Hammer i, 2).
3. V 9b.29 (24–25; cf. *Bitlis*, p. 349).
4. I 182b.32 (Hammer ii, 181; the printed text lacks this part of Book I).
5. IV 284a.6 (not in printed text; cf. *Bitlis*, p. 337).
6. VI 49a.24 (146); cf. II 220b.15 (3; Hammer, 1).
7. VI 48a.7 (see Ch. 10). There is a large literature of the *tezktre* or *menakıb-name* variety. One recently translated example is Cafer Efendi's encomium of Mehmed Agha, chief architect and builder of the Sultan Ahmed mosque; see *Risāle-i Mi'māriyye: An Early-Seventeenth-Century Ottoman Treatise on Architecture*, trans. Howard Crane (Leiden, 1987).
8. Bruce McGowan, "Ottoman Political Communication," in H. D. Lasswell, D. Lerner, and H. Speir, eds., *Propaganda and Communication in World History, Volume I: The Symbolic Instrument in Early Times* (Honolulu, 1979), p. 457.
9. See Naima, vol. 5, pp. 18–102.
10. Süreyya, vol. 4, p. 509.
11. V 69b.21 (236); cf. III 99a.6–8 (beginning of Ch. 2). Cf. M. Kunt, "Ethnic-Regional (Cins) Solidarity in the Seventeenth-Century Ottoman Establishment," *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 5 (1974): 233–39.

12. Cf. III 53a.13f. (143), where Evliya says that high officials like flattery—but Melek Ahmed Pasha was an exception!

13. V 51b.33f. (168).

14. VI 47a, Ch. 10.

15. VI 47b; also I 69a (244; Hammer i, 132).

16. Cf. I 69a22 (245; Hammer i, 133): *her bar silahdar Melek Ahmed Ağa ile görüşürdüm, zira validemiz tarafından karabetimiz olması cihetiyle daima hakiri yoklayup hatrum sual edüp ihsanlar ederdi.*

17. VI 47b.12. But note that at V 32a.17 (Ch. 7) Evliya pretends that he had been with Melek in Diyarbekir in 1051. (However, in 1051 Evliya was probably still in the service of Kentenci Ömer Pasha in the Black Sea region; see II 244b.35f. [69f; Hammer, 35f.]) And at IV 344a.1 (426) he claims to have come to Baghdad in Melek's company in 1058. Similarly, at IV 403a.28–29 (not in printed text) he says that in 1059, when Melek was dismissed from Baghdad, “we” spent several hours in the ancient fire temple of Mosul. This apparently contradicts III 51b–53a (138–44), where Evliya gets as far as Aleppo in 1059 (from Syria), then returns to Anatolia. But he affirms several times that he first came to Baghdad in 1059 (IV 348a.3–4, 351a.32, 352b.30, 357a.30 [not in printed text]).

18. II 354a.8 (420; not in Hammer)

19. 366a.28, 32 (453; Hammer, 238)

20. He is called *Melek Ahmed Paşalı Evliya Çelebi* at 374b.1 (477; not in Hammer). Long after Melek's death, when Evliya has an interview with the sultan in 1081/1670, he is introduced as *Melek Ahmed Paşalı Evliya* (VIII 380a.26 [775]); and he identifies himself thus in more than one of his graffiti (see M. Cavid Baysun, “Evliya Çelebi'ye dâir notlar,” *Türkiyat Mecmuası* 12 (1955): 257–64). Note also that in a prayer at Mecca for his masters and patrons (IX 345b.19 [752]) the list of patrons begins with Melek Ahmed Pasha.

21. II 374a.33–35 (477; not in Hammer).

22. V 76a.4, Ch. 8.

23. V 79a.32, Ch. 7.

24. They are called *Kaya Sultan yağlıği*, *Kaya Sultan makraması*, *destmal-ı Kaya Sultan*, or *Sultani destmal*: I 192b.margin; II 293a.1, 318b.7, 354b.1, 355b.2,3,7; IV 290a.26; V 50a.31, 51a.30,

64a.1; VI 153a.30; VII 63a.34 (283; trans. Kreutel, 136 and note 2), 73a.2,4 (325), 175b.10 (845); X 183a.3 (391—here [as elsewhere?] for a *type* of handkerchief), 399a.17 (858).

25. For a typical example of the period, see I. Metin Kunt, *Bir osmanlı valisinin yıllık gelir-gideri: Diyarbekir, 1670–71* (Istanbul, 1981).

26. For background, see Kunt, *Servants*; Rifaat Ali Abou-El-Haj, "The Ottoman Vezir and Paşa Households 1683–1703: A Preliminary Report," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 94, no. 4 (1974): 438–47.

27. That is, retinue; translating *daire*.

28. *History of Ottoman Poetry* III (London, [1904] repr. 1965), pp. 344–5.

29. II 328b.13f. (347; Hammer, 191).

30. II 335b.28f. (367; not in Hammer).

31. V 183b.28 (589).

32. V 135a.31f., Ch. 9.

33. Also mentioned at VI 45a.30 (Ch. 10); elsewhere (I 154b.27 [518; Hammer ii, 108], IX 255b.3 [561]) Evliya mentions "a son of Melek Ahmed Pasha" buried in Damascus.

34. V 186a.2 (597).

35. Evliya: III 98b f. (Ch. 2); Naima, vol. 5, pp. 83–101.

36. *Melek Ahmed Paşa nefsinde halim [ü] selim olduğundan gayri bunlar teğallub ile sözlerin yürüdürlerdi*. [Katib Çelebi (d. 1657), *Fezleke-i Tarih*, ms. Vienna Natl. Libr. H.O.64, fol. 442a.11; cf. printed edition, 2 vols. (Istanbul, 1286–87), vol. 2, p. 373] Rycout, p. 13 makes Bektaş Agha the chief culprit and refers to Melek as "then Prime Vizier, and yet a slave to the lusts of the *Jantzaries*."

37. Naima, vol. 5, p. 99, line 13: *Melek Ahmed Paşa hiddet ve sürat-i gazab üzre mecbur idi*. Naima also refers to his quick temper (*acul, acele-i tab'*) in the colorful incident narrated on p. 61 and again on p. 91.

38. Eremia Ch'elepî K'eömiwrchiant's, *Oragruktun* (Jerusalem, 1939), p. 20; emphasis added. (Eremya's diary covers the years 1648–62). The figure 120 agrees with Evliya's at 102a.5f. Naima, vol. 5, pp. 98–99 gives the figure 118.

39. Vol. 5, p. 101.

40. III 103b.7 (284).
41. V 6a.14 (not in printed text).
42. III 103b.17, Ch. 2.
43. III 184b.24, Ch. 4.
44. V 143a.18–24, Ch. 9.
45. V 9a–13b (21–36 [abbreviated]); see *Bittlis*, Part III.
46. IV 215a.30.
47. II 272a.28 (157; Hammer, 81).
48. VIII 329a.32–33 (571).
49. V 78a, Ch. 8.
50. V 78a–b, Ch. 8; VI 45b, Ch. 10.
51. III 143a, Ch. 3.
52. III 175a, Ch. 4; VI 44b, Ch. 10.
53. V 32a, Ch. 7; cf. I 81b, Ch. 1; also III 175b–176a, Ch. 4.
54. III 144a, Ch. 3; V 32a, Ch. 7.
55. For a preliminary survey of the literature, see Cemal Kafadar, "Self and Others: The Diary of a Dervish in Seventeenth Century Istanbul and First-Person Narratives in Ottoman Literature," *Studia Islamica* (1989): 121–50, esp. pp. 130–31; also Orhan Saik Gökyay, "Rüyalar Üzerine," *II. Milletlerarası Türk Folklor Kongresi Bildirileri* (Ankara, 1982), vol. 4, pp. 183–208. For dreams in Islamic culture generally, see the articles gathered in G. E. von Grunebaum and Roger Caillois, eds., *The Dream and Human Societies* (Berkeley, 1966); also T. Fahd, "Les songes et leur interpretation selon d'Islam," *Sources orientales* 2 (1959): 127–58; Barbara Langner, *Untersuchungen zur historischen Volkskunde Ägyptens nach mamlukischen Quellen* (Berlin, 1983), esp. pp. 66–89: oneiromancy. Note Langner's remark (p. 67): "The whole spectrum of religious ideas, personal and political anxieties and hopes of a people at a given point in time is reflected in its dreams. In this respect, it hardly matters for the complete picture of an age which emerges from the mosaic of these dreams, whether they are authentic or made up."
56. V 76a–b, Ch. 8.

THE HISTORICAL SETTING

Rhoads Murphey

While the *Seyahat-name* is essentially a travelogue and *vade mecum* for Ottoman administrators, the passages translated here are written in an autobiographical vein and as a eulogy to Evliya's lifelong patron and friend, Melek Ahmed Pasha. The chronological scope of these segments is relatively short, concentrating on the last twelve years of Melek Pasha's life, between his appointment as grand vizier in 1650 and his death in 1662. A particularly detailed account is given of events in the capital during the short but momentous vizierate of Ipsir Mustafa Pasha during the spring of 1655 (Chapter 4). In this account Evliya provides a panoramic view of the actions of major historical figures, while informing us how these events were perceived by the inhabitants of the city. This is history from the top, but written with an eye to recording the shifting mood of the general populace as well. While the full contents of Evliya's ten volumes give eloquent testimony to the internationalization of Ottoman concerns in the mid-seventeenth century, and although the narrative is peppered with references to Ottoman involvement in far-flung theaters of war in Crete, Dalmatia, and Transylvania, developments on the home front form the principal focus of the narrative in the autobiographical sections of Evliya's work included in this translation. These segments of Evliya's magnum opus are an invaluable source for the study of the Ottoman power structure.

From the dramatis personae introduced in Evliya's account—some of them celebrities who occupied a place at the center of Ottoman politics, others minor characters, lower-ranking and less visible but nevertheless influential agents, deputies and confidants of the powerful—we can reconstruct the full panoply of Ottoman court life. This permits us to determine who were the real power brokers and who merely figure-

