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Evliya Çelebi’s *Seyahatname* in the Perspective of Contemporary Arab Culture

Çağdaş Arap Kültüründe Evliya Çelebi’nin *Seyahatnamesi*

Abstract: Evliya Çelebi was an Ottoman explorer, born in 1611 in Istanbul and died in 1682 in Cairo, his journey in the middle of the seventeenth century is considered one of the most important trips undertaken by a Muslim traveler due to the number of countries he visited, the duration of his voyage, and the important news and observations it contained. However, despite this importance, this journey did not receive much attention in the Arab world, and its author did not receive the fame as the other Ottoman scholars. Evliya Çelebi’s *Seyahatname* received attention from many cultures and was translated into several languages, including German, Russian, English, French, Greek, and Armenian, while only some parts of it were translated into Arabic. This research aims to monitor the status of this great traveler and his journey in the Arab culture and seeks to give an idea of the books and the researches that were written about this journey and the image in which it was presented. This study is a try to explore the reasons why Evliya Çelebi’s *Seyahatname* did not spread more widely in the Arab world compared to other travel books.

Key Words: Arab Culture, Journey, *Seyahatname* of Evliya Çelebi, The Ottoman Empire, Travel Literature.

Öz: Ünlü Müslüman seyyahların yaptığı seyahatler arasında, 17. yüzyıl ortalarında gerçekleşen Evliya Çelebi’nin (ö.1611 İstanbul-1682 Kahire) seyahatleri, ziyaret ettiği ülkelerin sayısı, seyahatinin süresi ve içerdiği önemli bilgiler ve gözlemler açısından önemli bir yer tutmaktadır. Ancak bu eser tüm önemine rağmen, çağdaş Arap dünyasında büyük ilgi görememiş ve sahibi Evliya Çelebi de İbn Kemal (ö.1534), Ebussuud Efendi (ö.1574) ve Katip Çelebi (ö.1657) gibi diğer Osmanlı alimlerinin şöhretine ulaşamamıştır. Özellikle Katip Çelebi’nin bibliyografik çalışmaları içerisinde en önemlilerinden kabul edilen *Keşfü’z-Zünun* eseri oldukça yaygınlık kazanmış ve neredeyse her kütüphanede bulunur hale gelmiştir. Aynı şekilde kapsadığı zaman genişliğine ve mekan zenginliğine rağmen İbn Battuta’nın (ö.1368-69) *seyahatnâme*’si kadar şöhrete sahip olamamıştır. Bu eserin Almanca, Rusça, İngilizce, Fransızca, Yunanca ve Ermenice gibi farklı dillere çevrildiği halde Arapçaya sadece birkaç cildi çevrilmiştir. Bu çalışma, büyük seyyah Evliya Çelebi’nin *Seyahatname*’sinin Arap kültüründeki yerine, hakkında yazılan kitaplar ve yapılan çalışmalara, Arap dünyasındaki imajına ve diğer seyahatnamelere nazaran neden daha az ilgi gördüğüne dair bir fikir vermeyi hedeflemektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Arap kültürü, Evliya Çelebi *Seyahatnamesi*, Osmanlı İmparatorluğu, Seyahat, Seyahat Edebiyatı.

Introduction

Travel literature is one of the literary genres that combines history, geography, folklore, sociology, and literature, all narrated in an engaging literary style. This type of writing blends scientific benefit with literary enjoyment. Many Muslim scholars undertook numerous journeys, the most famous of which include Ibn Battuta’s journey, Al-Idrisi’s journey titled *Nuzhat al-Mushtaq fi Ikhtiraq al-Afaq* (also known as *The Book of Roger and Tabula Rogeriana*), Ibn Fadlan’s journey, and lastly the journey of Evliya Çelebi, known as *Seyahatname*. This article aims to highlight the significance of Evliya Çelebi’s journey in terms of its breadth, the countries it covers, and the information it contains. The journey of Evliya Çelebi was chosen as the subject

of this article because we believe that, despite its value, it has not received the attention it deserves from Arab researchers in recent centuries. Moreover, it has not gained the same level of fame in contemporary Arab culture as the aforementioned journeys, in terms of widespread reading and recognition, although it is no less important or enjoyable. The article attempts to investigate the reasons behind its limited circulation and popularity.

The article is divided into five sections. The first section offers a brief overview of the life of Evliya Çelebi and his *Seyahatname* as described in contemporary Arabic sources. In the second section, the article discusses the voyages undertaken by Evliya Çelebi in general, with a special focus on his travels to Arab countries and his key observations. The third section explores Evliya Çelebi's methodology in documenting his *Seyahatname*, his approach to gathering news and information, and the criticisms directed at his style, language, methodology, and the accuracy of his reporting, particularly regarding whether his accounts were based on personal observation or hearing. The fourth section discusses the importance of this journey for Arab history and culture, as well as the reasons why it has not received the attention it deserves in terms of research and reading. In the fifth and final section, we report the Arabic translations of Çelebi's *Seyahatname*, which was originally written by the author in Ottoman Turkish. The article concludes with a summary of the key findings regarding Evliya Çelebi's work.

1. Evliya Çelebi's Life in Arabic Sources

Arab sources mention that he is known as Evliya Çelebi bin Muhammad Agha Zilli and that his real name is unknown, though it is said to be *Hafiz*. He was born in 1611, and the date and place of his death are uncertain, with some sources stating that he passed away in 1682.¹ He studied the Quran and its interpretation, the sciences of Hadith, literature, and languages including Greek, Arabic, and Persian. He also studied logic, mathematics, and Ottoman court traditions.² He learned calligraphy and silver crafting from his father. Muhammad Adib Ghaleb, a famous Arab researcher, describes him as the Turkish Ibn Battuta, expressing the breadth of his journey, and classifying him as the most famous Turkish traveler.³ Wasfi Zakariyya says that Evliya Çelebi loved freedom and adventure and was passionate about traveling and exploring horizons. Zakariyya also states that Çelebi possessed a melodious voice in reciting the Holy Quran, which captivated Sultan Murad IV, leading the Sultan to draw him near within the Palace. However, Çelebi favored travel and exploration over proximity to the sultans and court life as explained in the following excerpt:

ان اولياء شلبي لم يوفق في صباه في تلقي العلوم وان جمال صوته ساقه للولع بفنون الادب والموسيقى الى ان كان ذات يوم في رمضان سنة 1045 للهجرة يتلو القرآن في جامع ايه صوفيا فاعجب السلطان مراد الرابع بصوته ورفعته الى قصره وجعله من ندمائه. الا ان تلك الابهة والنعمة اللتين صادفهما اولياء شلبي في القصر كانت محاطتين بضروب التقييد والحصص فلم تروق لعينيه ولم تتفقا مع خفته وظرفه وحبه للحرية والانطلاق وشغفه بالسفر وجوب الافاق. فغادر القصر بعد مكوث سنتين وراح يجول في الامصار تارة منفردا وتارة مع كبار الوزراء والقواد.

During his youth, Evliya Çelebi did not succeed in receiving knowledge, and the beauty of his voice fostered a passion for music and literature. This culminated one day in Ramadan of the year 1045 AH when he was reciting the Quran in the Hagia Sophia Mosque. Sultan Murad IV was captivated by his voice, subsequently inviting him to the Palace and designating him as one of his companions. Nevertheless, the magnificence and elegance that Evliya Çelebi experienced in the Palace were accompanied by limitations and constraints, which his spirit found unappealing and incompatible with his buoyancy and allure, his yearning for independence and adventure, and his fervor for travel and exploration. He departed from the palace after a two-year residence and

¹ Zakariyya, W. (1932). Evliya Çelebi's Journey in the Arab Countries. Journal of the Arab Scientific Society in Damascus (3-4), 216-232. (Zakariyya, 1932)

² Al-Jaloudi, E. (2014). Intellectual Transformations in the Islamic World, .Ghaleb (1971)

³ Ghaleb, M. A. (1971). Evliya Çelebi, the Turkish Ibn Battuta. Kuwait: Al-Arabi Magazine, 155. Ghaleb (1971)

commenced traversing the cities, occasionally in solitude and at other times accompanied by prominent ministers and leaders.⁴

During his travels, he visited most of the Ottoman lands of his time, sometimes traveling alone and sometimes with state officials. Ghaleb characterizes Çelebi's *Seyahatname* as "a grand journey that characterized with unparalleled precision, during which its owner visited the lands of Persia, the Caucasus, Iraq, Syria, the Hejaz, Egypt, and a greater number of European countries, even Sweden."⁵ Çelebi visited many parts of Anatolia, the Roman region, the island of Crete, Iran, the Caucasus, southern Russia, Moldova, Transylvania, Hungary, Austria, Germany, and the Netherlands. In the Arab world, he visited the Levant (Syria, Lebanon, Jourdan, and Palestine), the Hejaz (Mecca, Medina, Jeddah, Tabuk, Yanbu, Taif, Al Bahah, the Red Sea, and Najd), Yemen, Egypt, and Sudan. He described the countries he visited, their buildings, and the conditions of their inhabitants, and provided geographical, historical, and social insights about them. Çelebi spent half of his life traveling, and his journey "took 40 years and left a rich record in history,"⁶ and he wrote about his journeys in ten large volumes. As for the reason behind writing his *Seyahatname*, Arab sources agree on a story told by Evliya Çelebi himself, recounting his dream of seeing the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) in 1630. Elian Al-Jaloudi reported in his *Intellectual Transformations in the Islamic World: Figures, Books, Movements, and Ideas from the Tenth to the Twelfth Century AH* that Evliya Çelebi said:

حلمت في ليلة عاشوراء في شهر محرم سنة 1630 للهجرة أنني أصلي في جامع (أخي جلي)، عندما رأيت رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم أمامي اضطربت من جلال الموقف، وبسبب المفاجأة التي سيطرت على مشاعري وبدلاً من أن أردد أمامه شفاعته يا رسول الله إذ بي أقول سياحة يا رسول الله، في تلك اللحظة اقترب مني من بين الجموع سعد بن أبي وقاص رضي الله عنه قائلاً لي "انطلق كالسهم والريح في بلاد الله، وسجل كل ما تراه في المدن والبلدان التي ستمر بها، والحوادث الغريبة التي تصادفك. واكتب ماكل سكانها ومشربهم وأطبائهم وعاداتهم".

I dreamt on the night of Ashura in the month of Muharram in the year 1630 AH that I was praying in the Mosque of Ahi Çelebi when I saw the Messenger of God, may God bless him and grant him peace. In front of him, I was shaken by the majesty of the situation, and because of the surprise that took over my feelings, and instead of repeating before him, 'Intercession, O Messenger of Allah,' I said, 'Travel, O Messenger of Allah.' At that moment, Saad ibn Abi Waqqas, may Allah be pleased with him, approached me from among the crowds and said to me, 'Go forth like an arrow and a spear in the lands of Allah, and record everything you see in the cities and countries that you will pass through, and the strange incidents that you encounter. In addition, write down the food and drink of its inhabitants, their manners, and customs.'⁷

In the dream, Çelebi asked the Prophet for his intercession, but instead of saying شفاعته "intercession" he said mistakenly سياحة "travel". Çelebi was fluent in many languages, including Arabic, and he was speaking with the Prophet in his dream in Arabic. These two words, شفاعته and سياحة, both have the same weight and rhythm and are close to each other and have a similar pronunciation, and this is where the confusion and error occurred. Consequently, this was interpreted as a sign and blessing from the Prophet to embark on his journey.⁸

2. Evliya Çelebi's Expeditions to the Arab Countries

Even while Arab resources describe Evliya Çelebi's *Seyahatname* and its contents generically and concisely, there has been a particular emphasis placed on his trips to the nations that are included in the Arab region. Certain segments of his *Seyahatname* have been translated into Arabic from the latter half of the 20th century into the 21st century. In the second volume of

⁴ Zakariyya, W. (1932). Evliya Çelebi's Journey in the Arab Countries. Journal of the Arab Scientific Society in Damascus (3-4), 217.(Zakariyya, 1932)

⁵ Ghaleb, M. A. (1971). Evliya Çelebi, the Turkish Ibn Battuta. Kuwait: Al-Arabi Magazine, 132.(Ghaleb, 1971)

⁶ Ghaleb, M. A. (1971). Evliya Çelebi, the Turkish Ibn Battuta. Kuwait: Al-Arabi Magazine, 132.(Ghaleb, 1971)

⁷ Al-Jaloudi, E. (2014). Intellectual Transformations in the Islamic World. *Transformations*, 200.(Al-Jaloudi, 2014)

⁸ Al-Hassan, A. Q. (2016). Lights on the Journey of the Turkish Traveler Evliya Çelebi in *Seyahatname* in the 17th Century. Amman: Al-Bayan Magazine 7, (1), 40.(Al-Hassan, 2016)

Seyahatname, Çelebi discusses the phases of the journey from Istanbul to Syria, particularly during his trip with Silahdar Mustafa Pasha in 1648. The third volume is dedicated to his journey to the Levant, where he describes the cities he passed through, such as Jerusalem, Nablus, Safed, Ashkelon, and Gaza. He also talks about his return journey from the Levant to Anatolia and thereafter recounts the Balkan cities he visited in 1652. In this volume, he also covers his return journey to Istanbul in 1652, his residence there, and his subsequent departure for the city of Van in 1654.⁹

In the ninth volume, he talks about his travels to Western and Southern Anatolia, and in this context, he also addresses his visits to the Arab lands, starting with Aleppo, followed by the Levant, Jerusalem, Hebron (known as Khalil al-Rahman, or the city of Hebron today), Mount Lebanon, and his pilgrimage to the holy lands in Mecca and Medina in 1671. During this expedition, he traveled with the Hajj leader, Minister Hussein Pasha, and depicted the stages of the Syrian and Jordanian Hajj routes leading to the Hejaz. He also mentions the cities along the Syrian, Lebanese, and Palestinian coasts, providing insights into their economic, commercial, and agricultural conditions.¹⁰

The tenth and final volume is dedicated to his voyages to Egypt, Sudan, and Ethiopia, where he stayed in Egypt for nearly ten years.¹¹ Thus, it is evident that Çelebi devoted a substantial portion of his voyages to exploring the Arab world, covering four of the ten volumes of his work. This suggests that nearly 40% of his entire journey was devoted to portraying the Arab countries. It is notable that this large portion of his work focused on the Arab world contrasts with the limited attention it has received from Arab historians and researchers. The frequent travel of Evliya Çelebi to the Arab nations prompted Muhammad Adib Ghaleb to assert that Çelebi acquired greater knowledge of Arab geography and topography than the Arab geographers themselves and that the Turkish explorer “surpasses, in terms of the abundance of material and the richness of information, the works of the best Arab geographers, despite its clear tendency towards fantasy”.¹²

3. The Methodology of Evliya Çelebi in *Seyahatname*

Arab scholars examining Evliya Çelebi and his travels consider him as exceptionally perceptive, emphasizing his detailed accounts of his observations.¹³ His adventure is marked by its extensive duration, considerable magnitude, and the meticulous narratives he offers. Çelebi predominantly bases his narratives on personal observations and experiences, scrupulously recording the events he witnessed along with specific dates and names. He also draws on various historical sources and travel books in Arabic, Turkish, Persian, and European languages; however, he often does not indicate the sources he consulted or quoted from. Furthermore, he includes information he heard from others. Regarding his account of the Arab countries, Auni and Al-Jaloudi state that Çelebi relied on a variety of sources, including the works of al-Tabari, al-Dhahabi, and al-Maqrizi.¹⁴

Çelebi's *Seyahatname* is systematically arranged in chronological order, documenting his extensive travels over numerous years. He documents the path he traversed, the dates of his excursions, and the locations he explored, frequently offering thorough accounts of the phases of his voyage. This chronological structure enables readers to trace the evolution of his journeys and

⁹ Zillioğlu, M. (1984). Tam Metin Seyahatname. (2-3).(Zillioğlu, 1984)

¹⁰ Çelebi, E. (1896). Evliya Çelebi seyahatnamesi (Vol. 8). İkdam Matbaası.(Çelebi, 1896)

¹¹ Zakariyya, W. (1932). Evliya Çelebi's Journey in the Arab Countries. Journal of the Arab Scientific Society in Damascus (3-4), 46-48.(Zakariyya, 1932)

¹² Ghaleb, M. A. (1971). Evliya Çelebi, the Turkish Ibn Battuta. Kuwait: Al-Arabi Magazine, 132.(Ghaleb, 1971)

¹³ Auni, M. A. (2009). Seyahatname Egypt, Sudan, and Ethiopia,. Dar Al-Kutub Wal-Watha'iq Al-Qawmiya Press.Auni (2009), Al-Hassan, A. Q. (2016). Lights on the Journey of the Turkish Traveler Evliya Çelebi in Seyahatname in the 17th Century. Amman: Al-Bayan Magazine 7, (1).(Al-Hassan, 2016)

¹⁴ Auni, *Seyahatname Egypt*;(Auni, 2009) Al-Jaloudi, *Intellectual Transformations*.(Al-Jaloudi, 2014)

comprehend the historical background of each location he explores. Çelebi meticulously records the topographical characteristics of the regions he explored while also providing insights into the social, cultural, and religious traditions of the locales he observed. His writings demonstrate an interest in the quotidian lives of individuals, encompassing their customs, social frameworks, and economic circumstances, including market conditions, agriculture, and local industries. Similar to numerous travelers, Çelebi diligently observes prominent landmarks, monuments, and sites of historical or religious significance. He offers comprehensive accounts of cities, mosques, tombs, and various locations he explores. His work serves as a significant resource for comprehending the architectural and cultural history of the regions in the 17th century.

Although he relied on sources for many of his narratives, Çelebi made some historical errors, such as claiming that Hatim al-Tai was one of the companions of the Prophet, and stating that the Prophet instructed Khalid ibn al-Walid to conquer Busra and Al-Sanamayn (two cities in Syria now). The well-known historical and biographical books indicate that Hatim al-Tai died in 605, five years before the Prophet's mission, and that Busra was conquered by Khalid ibn al-Walid during the reign of the first caliph, Abu Bakr al-Siddiq.¹⁵ Arab researchers believe that Evliya Çelebi studied Arabic and Persian travel literature and benefitted from it, especially the travels of Ibn Battuta. He followed a similar approach, focusing on popular legends, superstitions, and anecdotes. In this regard, Ahmed Fouad Metwally says that Çelebi

من المؤكد انه قرا كتب الرحلات العربيه والفارسيه التي ترجمت الى التركيه واستفاد من رحله ابن بطوطه بنوع خاص، حيث يسير على منواله في الاهتمام بالاساطير الشعبيه والخرافات والنوادر، كما تشبع بطريقته في وصف الآثار وتتبع الاحداث التاريخيه وتناولها بالشرح والتحليل مضيفا اليها شيئا من مشاعره وانطباعاته.

certainly read Arabic and Persian travel books that were translated into Turkish and benefitted from Ibn Battuta's journey in particular, as he followed his example in his interest in popular legends, myths, and anecdotes, and he also admired his method of describing antiquities and following historical events and discussing them with explanation and analysis, adding to them something of his feelings and impressions.¹⁶

So according to Metwally, Çelebi adopted Ibn Battuta's method of describing monuments, analyzing historical events, and adding his own feelings and impressions. Some researchers argue that it is difficult to confirm whether Çelebi visited all the places and countries he mentions in his travels.¹⁷ A careful study and comparison with other sources reveal whether his descriptions were based on direct observations or they were derived from the sources he consulted, such as Arabic, Persian, and Greek texts. However, the vivid observations and his discussions on the Ottoman Empire's relations with neighboring countries suggest that they are the result of his personal experiences.

One of the most notable characteristics of Çelebi's *Seyahatname* is his incorporation of folklore, superstitions, and actualities. His narratives frequently incorporate imaginative tales and events, including miraculous phenomena, magical components, and hyperbolic descriptions. These anecdotes both captivate readers and mirror the cultural imagination of the day. He recounts tales of animals succumbing to winter's chill or experiencing miraculous recoveries, frequently conflating fact with myth. Arab scholars including Ghaleb, and Al-Hassan note that Çelebi's language is simple and at times awkward, and it contains exaggerations, superstitions, and legends that he used to engage the reader. He frequently mentions tombs and miraculous events in the countries he visited, especially in the Levant. This view is also shared by Western scholars such

¹⁵ Al-Baladhuri, A. b. Y. (1988). *Futuh al-Buldan The Conquests of the Lands*, 166. (Al-Baladhuri, 1988). Kathir, I. b. U. I. (1997). *Al-Bidaya wan-Nihaya 'The Beginning and the End' The Conquests of the Lands*, 3, 252. (Kathir, 1997)

¹⁶ Ahmed Fouad Metwally says this in his introduction to Auni's translation of Çelebi's *Seyahatname Egypt, Sudan, and Ethiopia*, page 16. (Auni, 2009)

¹⁷ Ghaleb, *Evliya Çelebi the Turkish*; Al-Jaloudi, *Intellectual Transformations*.

as Bartold and Kratchkovsky.¹⁸ For example, he exaggerates when describing the freezing winter in Erzurum, claiming that a cat froze while jumping from one roof to another, and after eight months, when the weather improved, the cat fell, meowing strangely before running off into the alleys. He also tells the story of a surgical operation he attended in Vienna, Austria, where a doctor removed a bullet from a soldier's head and used ants to stitch up the wound.¹⁹ He recounts how a bird froze while flying from one roof to another in Kars, and also mentions how the cabbage in Van weighs as much as a camel's load; finally, he tells the story of a snake blocking the hole in Noah's Ark to prevent it from sinking in exchange for being fed human flesh by Noah.²⁰ As a matter of fact, anyone familiar with travel literature will notice that the element of the 'strange' or 'marvelous' is present in most travel narratives. This is a deliberate attempt by travelers to capture the reader's attention and add enjoyment to their voyages. This exoticism is not the creation of Evliya Çelebi, but rather a tradition that most travelers before and after him followed.

4. Evliya Çelebi's *Seyahatname* Status in the Arab Culture

We contend that Evliya Çelebi has not received the recognition and prominence he merits within Arab culture, literature, and publications. We also believe that Çelebi did not receive as much fame and recognition in the Arab world as other Ottoman scholars such as Ibn Kemal, Abu Suud Efendi, and Hajji Khalifa. Moreover, modern and well-known biographical books do not mention his *Seyahatname*, such as *Al-Alam* (Eminent Personalities: A Biographical Dictionary of Noted Men) by Khayr al-Din al-Zirikli,²¹ and *Mujam al-Muallifin* (Dictionary of Authors) by Umar Rida Kahhala.²² In addition, many other Arab sources that discuss travel and travelers do not reference Evliya Çelebi's *Seyahatname*, such as *Al-Rihla wa al-Rahala al-Muslimun* (Travel and Muslim Travelers) by Ahmed Ramadan Ahmed,²³ *Adab al-Rihlat* (Travel Literature) by Hussein Fahim,²⁴ and *Al-Rahala al-Muslimun fi al-Ausur al-Wusta* (Muslim Travelers in the Middle Ages) by Zaki Muhammad Hasan.²⁵ Furthermore, it is strange that Al-Muhibbi, the author of *Khulasatu al-Athar fi Ayan al-Qarn al-Hadi Ashar* (Overview of the Influence of the Prominent Figures of the Eleventh Century), who was a contemporary of Evliya Çelebi and translated for many Turkish scholars and notable figures, did not translate for Evliya Çelebi either.²⁶ The factors contributing to Evliya Çelebi's limited reputation and recognition in the Arab world, in our view, are as follows:

1. Evliya Çelebi wrote his *Seyahatname* in Ottoman Turkish, and only some parts have been translated into Arabic recently.
2. There was no manuscript of the *Seyahatname* in Arab libraries, existing solely in Ottoman language form, with its Turkish printing postponed until the early 20th century.
3. The large size of the *Seyahatname* and the difficulty of dealing with it by researchers, whether reading it in Ottoman Turkish or translating it into Arabic.

¹⁸ Vasily Bartold, *Islamic Culture*, trans. Shahid Suhrawardy (London: Oxford University Press, 2010). Bartold (2010)

¹⁹ Al-Jaloudi, *Intellectual Transformations*, 200.(Al-Jaloudi, 2014)

²⁰ Al-Hassan, *Lights*, 46-48.(Al-Hassan, 2016)

²¹ Al-Zirikli, K. a.-D. (1986). *Al-Alam 'Eminent Personalities: A Biographical Dictionary of Noted Men'*. Al-Zirikli (1986)

²² Kahhala, U. R. (1993). *Dictionary of Authors*.(Kahhala, 1996)

²³ Ahmed, A. R. (2005). *Travel and Muslim Travelers*. Ahmed (2005)

²⁴ Fahim, H. (1989). *Travel Literature The World of Knowledge Series*. Fahim (1989)

²⁵ Hasan, Z. M. (2012). *Muslim Travelers in the Middle Ages*.(Al-Muhibbi, 1867)

²⁶ Al-Muhibbi, K. a.-A. F. A. a.-Q. A.-H. A. (1867). *Overview of the Influence of the Prominent Figures of the Eleventh Century*.(Al-Muhibbi, 1867)

4. The subject matter of the *Seyahatname*, which is related to history and literature. Generally, Arabs exhibit a greater interest in Islamic sciences compared to other academic disciplines.

5. Additionally, there exists a broader rationale not solely pertaining to Evliya Çelebi's expedition but applicable to this genre (travel literature or journey narratives) as a whole, as it garners far less attention relative to the scrutiny afforded to works in other domains.

However, it can be noted that the interest in Evliya Çelebi and his *Seyahatname* has grown in the last two decades, and Arabic translations of some parts of his work have been published. Many Arab researchers who have discussed Evliya Çelebi and his journey emphasize the importance of translating the whole work into Arabic, as it contains valuable material that reflects the conditions of the Ottoman Empire, its territories, and neighboring countries in Asia, Africa, and Europe, from political, economic, social, urban, and cultural perspectives. More than that, it will provide great opportunities for researchers and scholars to conduct detailed and in-depth studies and researches.

5. The Translated Parts into Arabic from Evliya Çelebi's *Seyahatname*

All printed translations of some parts of Çelebi's *Seyahatname* have been released just in the past two decades; nevertheless, no comprehensive Arabic translation of Çelebi's voyage has been published. The sections related to the Arab countries and aspects of his travels to the Caucasus and Albania have been translated. The subsequent items constitute the printed translations:

1. What Wasfi Zakariyya translated, with some modifications, about Çelebi's *Seyahatname* to the Levant, especially Syria; he published it in ten articles in the Journal of the Academy of the Arabic Language in Damascus.

2. Çelebi's expedition to Egypt, Sudan, and Ethiopia, translated by Muhammad Ali Auni, with a foreword by Ahmed Fouad Metwally, and edited by Abd Al-Wahhab Azzam and Ahmed Al-Saeed Suleiman. Auni translated the section about Egypt from the tenth volume at the request of the Egyptian Book Authority in the late 1940s during the reign of King Farouk. The translation remained in manuscript form for many years until it was published as part of the National Translation Project by the Egyptian Ministry of Culture in 2009. Al-Mursi translated the remaining chapters of the tenth volume of Çelebi's *Seyahatname* and translated what related to Egypt in the ninth volume as well, and the book was printed in three parts at the National Center for Translation in Cairo in 2010.

3. Çelebi's journey to Hejaz, translated from Turkish by Al-Mursi, published by Dar Al-Afaq Al-Arabiya Publishing Centre.²⁷

4. Çelebi's expedition to the Kurdish regions of Iraq; this work is a translation of parts from the fourth volume of Evliya Çelebi's *Seyahatname*. Saeed Nakam translated the work from Ottoman to Kurdish, which was published by the Kurdish Scientific Academy in Baghdad in 1979. Subsequently, Rashid Fendi translated the Kurdish version into Arabic, with publication occurring in 2008.²⁸

5. Çelebi's Journey to the Caucasus, translated by Izzat Salama, Arab History Center for Publishing.²⁹

²⁷ Al-Mursi, A.-S. A. (1999). The Hejaz Journey of Evliya Çelebi Dar Al-Afaq Al-Arabia. Al-Arnaout (2021)

²⁸ Fendi, R. (2008). Evliya Çelebi's Journey in Kurdistan. Khani Press. Al-Arnaout (2021)

²⁹ Salama, I. (2020). Evliya Çelebi's Journey to the Caucasus Arab History Center for Publishing. Al-Arnaout (2021)

6. Selections from Çelebi's *Seyahatname* related to the Land of the Albanians, translated by Muhammad al-Arnaout and published by Alaan Publishers and Distributors.³⁰

7. Çelebi's tour to Jerusalem; translated and published by Bab al-Amoud Publishing and Distribution House.³¹

Ultimately, Abdul Qadir Al-Hassan mentioned that Al al-Bayt University in Jordan is working in cooperation with Arceka to translate the remaining parts of the journey.³² However, we are unable to confirm the fate of this project or when it will come to fruition.

Conclusion

Evliya Çelebi's literary style is characterized by a combination of factual precision and evocative narrative. His *Seyahatname* transcends a basic *Seyahatname*; it constitutes a literary masterpiece as well. The approach is frequently vibrant, replete with vivid descriptions that capture the sights, sounds, and ambiance of the locations he explores. This literary technique, combined with his narrative skills, rendered his book attractive to a broad readership. In brief, Çelebi's methodology integrates empirical observation, historical analysis, cultural recording, and narrative storytelling. His capacity to mix factual narratives with tales and personal insights renders his *Seyahatname* both educational and captivating.

Contemporary Arabic writings about Çelebi focus primarily on what he wrote about the Arab nations, with some researchers briefly mentioning the content of his travels to other nations. Some contemporary Arab researchers emphasize the cultural value of this journey, as it contains rich material that offers a profound picture of the conditions of the Ottoman Empire and its provinces, as well as the European countries that the Turkish traveler Evliya Çelebi visited. Therefore, it is considered an important source for the economic and social history of the Ottoman Empire and the Islamic world in the 17th century. It is a model of travel books that enrich the Islamic-Arabic library, containing information that other sources lack.

Çelebi's *Seyahatname* underscores the cultural interchange between the Ottoman and Arab realms; his journeys also illustrate the close relationship between them. His work demonstrates the interactions and influences of the Ottoman Empire on the Arab world, mainly through trade, religious pilgrimages (notably the Hajj), and cultural exchanges. We claim that Çelebi's *Seyahatname* is a significant historical document. His comprehensive accounts of several occurrences, including the political atmosphere, social frameworks, and economic endeavors of the countries he explored, enhance the comprehension of 17th-century Arab history. His work elucidates the cultural and religious customs of the era, especially within the Islamic world, which holds particular significance in Arab culture due to its religious importance.

Evliya Çelebi's journey to Egypt is of great significance because it occurred during a period when Arabic, Turkish, or European sources describing Egypt were scarce. It is considered the most important journey undertaken by an Eastern Islamic intellect to Egypt. In fact, through this study, it is evident that Evliya Çelebi's *Seyahatname* has not received the fame it deserves. However, many Arab researchers point out the necessity of translating the entire journey into Arabic, through collaboration between researchers, institutions, and research centers, in order to make this important work accessible to Arab readers and enrich historical studies about the Arab countries during the Ottoman era. It is also essential to place this work in its rightful place among

³⁰ Al-Arnaout, M. (2021). *Seyahatname Evliya Çelebi: Selections about the Albanian Lands* Alaan Publishers and Distributors.(Al-Arnaout, 2021)

³¹ Çelebi, E. (2022). *Evliya Çelebi and the Journey to Jerusalem* Bab Al-Amoud Publishing and Distribution House.(Çelebi, 1896)

³² Al-Hassan, *Lights*.(Al-Hassan, 2016)

historical writings. Finally, Evliya Çelebi's book *Seyahatname* can be seen as evidence against the theory that the Ottoman period was a time of intellectual stagnation and cultural decline.

We argue that the perception held by some individuals, viewing the Ottoman Empire's presence in Syria and other Arab nations as colonial, is not a reason for not translating Evliya Çelebi's work *Seyahatname*. This perspective offers a limited opinion; however, the majority perceives the Ottoman Empire as an conquering Islamic state, and an extending to the Umayyad Caliphate and the Abbasid Caliphate, particularly since Arab populations are predominantly Muslim and tend to accept any Islamic state irrespective of ethnic distinctions. The Ottoman Empire was, and still, one of the most formidable and illustrious Islamic states, a source of pride for every Muslim. Through our research and investigation we did not encounter any influence of postcolonial theory on the Arab writers' treatment of Evliya Çelebi's *Seyahatname*. For them, Çelebi does not constitute the 'other', but rather a part of the 'self' Muslim that created Islamic civilization.

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