CHAPTER ONE

EVLIYA ÇELEBI AND HIS SEYAHATNAME

MARTIN VAN BRUINESSEN

I. a *Evliya's life and travels*

Whatever is known about Evliya's life we owe to his own remarks, spread throughout the *Seyahatname*. There is nothing new we have to add here to the studies by Lybyer (1917), Baysun (1948), Kreutel (1972), MacKay (1975) and Iz (1979); we therefore give no more than a short summary of the most relevant facts.

Evliya was born in Istanbul in 1020/1611. His father, Derviş Muhammed Zillî, was a master goldsmith employed at the court, while his mother was closely related to the Abkhaz (Abaza) Melek Ahmed Paşa, to whose brilliant career Evliya was to owe much. Evliya's early education was not different from that of many youths of similar, rather privileged backgrounds. After several years at the elementary school (*sıbyan mektebi*) he studied for seven years the (islamic) sciences at the *medrese* of Hamid Efendi, living in a cell there rather than returning home for the night. At the same time or afterwards, he studied for many years—eleven years, he claimed—the canonical styles of recitation of the Qurʾan from a certain Mehmet Efendi, at the *darü'l-qurra* of Sadizade. From his father, meanwhile, he learnt silverwork, engraving and various other related crafts. His solid training in Qurʾanic recitation, a beautiful voice and a good feeling for music combined to make Evliya known in gradually widening circles. During the celebrations of the Night of Power in 1045/1636 Evliya was one of those elected to recite and sing in the Aya Sofya, and his voice drew the sultan's benevolent interest. This, and the influence of Melek Ahmed, who had married a daughter of the sultan (Murad IV) secured Evliya an invitation to stay at the palace as a page and complete his education at the palace school. It was there that he received lessons in such arts as calligraphy, music (from the famous court musician Derviş ʿÖmer Gülşeni) and poetry, deemed essential skills for any member of the cultured elite. He spent altogether some four years at the court and left it with an appointment to the ranks of the *sipahis*. Soon after, in 1050/1640 he began the first of his many travels, which were to take him all over the Ottoman Empire as well as into its main

to report, in roughly chronological order, in the *Seyahatname*. Most of these travels he made in the suite of some high official: he accompanied Ketenci ʿÖmer Paşa who was the governor of Trabzon (in 1640-41), Defterdarzade Mehmed Paşa, the governor of Erzerum (in 1646-47), Mürteza Paşa (whom he first, in 1648, followed to Damascus, and eight years later joined again in Baghdad, where Mürteza then was the governor), and of course his relative and protector Melek Ahmed Paşa. Melek Ahmed had become Grand Vizier in 1650, and Evliya became a member of his household in the capital. After a year Melek Ahmed was removed from office and appointed as the governor of Özü, where Evliya again followed him. In 1655 Melek Ahmed was appointed to Van; it was on the way to this new post that Evliya, travelling with his patron, visited Diyarbekir. Many other travels followed, one of the most interesting being his participation in Qara Mehmed Paşa's embassy to Vienna, in 1665. In 1671 he performed the hajj, and from Mecca went to Egypt, where he was to spend the rest of his life—except for a short excursion to Abyssinia.

In all of his travels he took every opportunity to make short detours and see places he had not yet visited. He often volunteered for all sorts of missions on behalf of his patrons, and gladly accepted every invitation to an excursion. Everywhere he kept notes on things that interested him, and his interests were catholic: geography and architecture, tales of the prophets and of local saints; local types of foods, clothing and language, and even the sort of names their slaves had; details on local administration and taxation as well as on religious practices. His quotations include sayings attributed to the Prophet as well as obscene verses.

After he had settled in Egypt he began to write his great Book of Travels, drawing upon what seems to have been extensive but not very well organised notes and on a prodigious memory, and not hesitating to use whatever written materials he had been able to collect in the course of his life. By the time he died—probably in 1684 or 1685, but the date cannot be established with certainty—he had finished ten volumes, covering all his travels, in a preliminary form that he had apparently been reworking, and which he clearly intended to supplement with further details.

The fourth volume—from which the section we publish here is taken—deals almost entirely with Kurdistan, where Evliya travelled rather extensively in 1655 and 1656. The volume opens with Evliya's departure, in Melek Ahmed Paşa's company, to the latter's new post at Van. It is particularly rich in details on the military and administrative organisation of the *eyalets* of Diyarbekir and Van, especially on the relation. From Van, Evliya was sent on a mission to Iran, and continued through Western Iran to Baghdad. His route description here is geographically impossible, and it seems that his information on Persian cities other than Urmia, Tabriz and Hamadan (including the smaller towns on that route) is a mixture of poorly assimilated reading and hearsay. From Baghdad—of which he gave an excellent description—Evliya travelled north through the provinces of Şehrizur and Mosul, giving what is probably the best and most complete survey of Southern Kurdistan in the 17th century.

I. b *Manuscripts and editions of the Seyahatname*

The manuscript on which this edition is based is part of the series that was identified by Kreutel (1971) as Evliya's autograph. It is generally accepted that this is in fact the archetype manuscript, but MacKay (1975) and İz (1979) have contested Kreutel's opinion that it was Evliya himself who wrote it. Because of the numerous orthographic "mistakes", they assumed that Evliya dictated it to a clerk, who did not have such a thorough education as Evliya himself. The question of these "mistakes" will be discussed in some detail in Chapter VIII; MacKay's and İz's arguments are not entirely convincing. The marginal additions and the editorial remarks (see I. c), all in the same hand as the main text, strongly suggest that Evliya himself was the actual writer. Be that as it may, the fact that this is the archetype manuscript is beyond doubt.

The first six volumes of the printed edition (Istanbul 1896-1901), to which is usually referred, diverge considerably at some points from this manuscript and to some extent this is also true of the early copies that von Hammer acquired and used for several of his publications. Comparison of almost any section will show that the autograph is richer, while the printed edition moreover contains many mistakes. Publication of the entire manuscript is therefore urgently needed.

Only a few manuscript copies of the *Seyahatname* exist; the work seems to have been too unconventional to be immediately appreciated. For a half century after Evliya's death the ten volumes remained in Egypt, apparently unnoticed by Ottoman intellectual circles. Only after it had been sent to Istanbul in 1742, as a present to Hacı Beşir Ağa, the powerful *qızlar ağası* who was also a great bibliophile and patron of letters, several copies were made and Evliya's fame gradually—very gradually—began to spread. It seems however that even then the work did not at first have such an enthusiastic reception in Ottoman circles as it later was to find in Europe when Joseph von Hammer first drew atten-

complete copy, in 1745-6, may be representative of the attitude of his time. He added a note that "the book is a very charming historical work, but it does not have the organisation of other histories" (MacKay 1975, 279). It seems that only in the changing intellectual climate of the Tanzimat period the *Seyahatname* came to be considered as something more than a charming but disorganised chronicle. A first selection (*Müntehabat-ı Evliya Çelebi*) was printed in Istanbul in 1843—twenty-one years after von Hammer had published an abridged German translation of Book I, and nine years after the appearance of the first part of his English translation! One of the reasons for the increasing interest may have been that Evliya gave—like no other author—glimpses of daily life in a period that was rapidly receding into the past. More important, however, was the change in intellectual attitude that made post-Tanzimat Ottomans (and present-day Turks) more receptive to the specific qualities of the *Seyahatname*. Evliya conformed but little to the standard pattern of historical and geographical writing of his period, but he was original (a quality that was not always appreciated) and he paid attention to themes that other chroniclers might have deemed beneath their dignity: local customs and practices, dialects, the behaviour of various social classes other than the elite. It is precisely this that makes him now more popular than any other Ottoman author. One of Turkey's leading columnists, the novelist Çetin Altan, recently suggested that Evliya was the only real writer of the pre-Tanzimat period, all others being supremely dull, and devoid of critical or original thought[1]. The cartoonist Turhan Selçuk parodied the *Seyahatname* in one of his comic strips for effective social and political satire [2], while several newspapers serialised popular, abridged editions of the *Seyahatname*[3].

But let us return to the manuscripts. Already in Beşir Ağa's lifetime several volumes of the autograph were dispersed. The first eight books, after considerable peregrinations, finally ended up in the palace library, whereas the last two seem to have got lost. These manuscript volumes—some of which are bound together—have the following catalogue numbers:

Bagdat Köşkü 304 (Books I and II);
Bagdat Köşkü 305 (Books III and IV);
Bagdat Köşkü 307 (Book V);
Revan Köşkü 1457 (Book VI);
Bagdat Köşkü 308 (Books VII and VIII).

[1] Daily *Milliyet*, 29-1 1981.
[2] In *Milliyet*, during 1979-80.

When the printed edition of the first six books was being prepared (publishing dates: 1896-1901), the palace library was not yet accessible. This edition was based on only one of the available copies, series P (Pertev Paşa collection, nrs 458-462).

The reasons why this edition is extremely unsatisfactory have been enumerated by several scholars: the editor, Ahmet Cevdet, left out difficult passages or modernized the language, filled in gaps and smoothened clumsy phrases, etc. Secondly, the censorship of those years forced the editor to leave out or change passages dealing with "sensitive" subjects. Thus, in the descriptions of the Empire's eastern provinces, the Armenians often disappeared or were changed into Jacobites (for instance in the description of Bitlis). Sometimes long passages that were neither difficult nor in any way offensive have entirely disappeared. This may be due to lacunae in the editor's manuscript. Series P shows one lengthy lacuna at the end of book IV: 62 folia of the autograph (fols. 347-408, or almost 30% of the entire book) are lacking in P, and therefore in the printed edition. This part contains descriptions of the graves of many saints in Iraq and their hagiographies, stories (heard) about the region of the Persian Gulf, and a lengthy description of an itinerary from Baghdad by way of Erbil and ʿImadiye to Mosul, then to Cizre, Hisnkeyfa and Diyarbekir (for the second time) and from there back to Baghdad—a trip that Evliya claims to have made at the request of Mürteza Paşa, the vali of Baghdad. His description of certain places (Mosul, Cizre) is so detailed and lively that there can be little doubt that he actually visited them. We intend to publish this section in the near future.

Books VII and VIII were satisfactorily published by the Türk Tarih Encümeni, in a critical edition by Kilisli Rifʿat, who took the manuscript in the Beşir Ağa collection (a good, early copy) as their basis but also used other manuscripts, including the autograph. The Books IX and X (in Latin script) are passable, but as the autograph of these two volumes has been lost, a careful critical edition that reconstructs the original as closely as possible might have some historical value[4].

The poor first edition has as yet been the basis of vitually all research that used Evliya as a source. Most of the later, more popular editions are in turn derived from it. The 15-volume edition by Zuhuri Danışman (Istanbul 1971) is really a much abridged translation into modern Turkish and should not be used except as an elaborate table of contents.

[4] Critical discussion of the manuscripts: Taeschner 1929, Kreutel 1971 and MacKay 1975. Taeschner was the first to identify the codex Bağdat Köşkü 304-308 as the oldest available, while Kreutel showed convincingly that it is the original manuscript. The most

The recent edition by Tevfik Temel Kuran and Necati Aktaş (Istanbul: Üçdal, 1975-1983), in Latin script, is almost identical with the first printed edition; only the language has been modernised here and there. İsmet Parmaksızoğlu is preparing an edition of the entire *Seyahatname*, in somewhat modernised Turkish too, but based on the original manuscript. To date, one volume, containing a part of Book I, has appeared (Ankara: Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı 1983). Unfortunately, it shows the signs of too great haste: some names are misread, certain figures are wrongly copied. Nevertheless, it forms a useful addition to the first printed edition as long as a scholarly edition is not yet available.

Another popular edition that deserves some attention is the selections published by M. Nihat Özön[5]. These selections are not based on the first printed edition but on a manuscript in the provincial library of Manisa.

I. c *Evliya's method of writing*

Evliya's description of Diyarbekir follows roughly the same pattern as that of other cities he visited for long enough to collect sufficient material. There are some remarks on the history of the city, an enumeration of the leading governmental and religious authorities, a description of the city's architectural features (beginning with the fortifications around the city and the citadel, followed by mosques and medreses, *hans* and *hamams*), and a host of curious details on the population, more or less arranged in a fixed pattern. The description ends with an account of the places of pilgrimage around the city, and as usual some of the miraculous deeds of saints are narrated.

Evliya seems to have worked partly from memory, partly from a vast collection of notes of rather disparate character, chaotically arranged. Obviously he did not always have all his notes on a certain subject at hand, and then, leaving some space open to fill in later, continued with the next subject. When he found new notes or, rereading his text, suddenly remembered further details, he filled in some of the lines left open. At times there was not enough space for the additions he wished to make; in such cases he continued in one of the margins, as for instance on fols 199^{v} and 200^{r} (see the facsimile). Minor corrections in the finished text, too, were made in the margin (and indicated by the note "*maṭlab*"). The margin further contains many editorial remarks and aide-mémoires. Unfortunately, as these were written at the very margin of the paper, they have been partially cut off when the binder trimmed the volume. Some however can still be read, and show how Evliya kept rearranging

his material and planned to insert new folia. Thus, at the bottom of fol 208^{r} (after his notes on the Qavs gardens, along the Tigris) we read: "*Bu maḥalle aşağıda ṭoquzıncı kağıddaki Şaṭ keleki gemileri yazılmaq gerek*" ("At this point it is necessary to write [the notes on] the rafts of the Tigris that are [now] on the ninth page below")—the author apparently found that these notes, which we still find on fol 217^{v}, properly belonged to the section on this park, near which the long-distance rafts began their southward journey. We find a similar aide-mémoire on the folio immediately preceding the description of Diyarbekir. On fol 197^{v} Evliya related that he had been sent by Melek Paşa to the begs of Palu, Egil, Hini and Ergani (north of Diyarbekir) to requisition fodder. The space he had earlier left open for details on Egil was apparently insufficient, for at the bottom he noted: "*Mü'min Bege paşa mektubları verüp paşaya ẓaḫīre gönderüp şehrüŋ ʿimāristānı yazıla. Mā-beyne bir kağıd gerek*" ("It [still] has to be written how [I] gave Mü'min Beg—the beg of Egil—the pasha's letters and how he sent the pasha grain, and also the prosperous town has to be described. An additional leaf has to be inserted".) This shows that Evliya continued to make additions and alterations, even though the work was ready in outline. The editorial remarks, in the same handwriting, stongly suggest that Evliya himself, and not some scribe, wrote the text.

Beside his own observations, Evliya also made use of later hearsay and of written sources (some of which he also may only have known indirectly). Tales locally heard, stories later read or heard elsewhere, and books at his disposal in Egypt, from which he could freely copy, were sometimes jumbled together into an inextricable mesh. His notes on the history of Diyarbekir, for instance, consist of such a strange mixture. There are legends associating the foundation of the city with the Prophet Jonah—on interesting fact by itself, since in the *qisas*-literature so far no tales were known in which Jonah is presented as travelling to other places when the people of Nineve refused to heed his call. Evliya seems to owe this tale to an unidentified, probably Armenian, author whom he elsewhere mentioned as *Miġdisi*[6], and to whom he owed many similar

[6] Evliya wrote his name as Miġdisi (thus vocalised), which must however be a corruption of Maqdisi—a second name given to persons from, or those who had made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land (Maqdis), i.e. Jerusalem. Evliya's source is certainly not identical with the famous Arab historian Maqdisi (or Muqaddasi), although he sometimes seemed to confound the two. Miġdisi must have been an Armenian (Evliya at least once called him Yarmeni, i.e. "Armenian"), who wrote extensively on the legendary history of Armenia and Kurdistan. Evliya probably had the tale of Jonah as the founder of Diyarbekir from this Miġdisi—elsewhere he explicitly mentioned Miġdisi as his source for a similar association of Jonah with Mardin's early history (IV, fol 210^{r}, 17-8).

fragments of the legendary history of Armenia and Kurdistan. Then follows the—widely accepted—story of the conquest of the city by the islamic armies under Khalid ibn Walid, a story Evliya may have heard locally as well as read.

A second islamic conquest, after an Armenian (!) interregnum, is attributed to a legendary Kurdish ʿAbbasid ruler, the son of a certain Awhadullah. Evliya mentioned this Awhadullah several other times in connection with the early history of the Kurdish emirates. A Kurdish ruler of this name however does not occur in the Kurdish and other chronicles of the region's history (cf. note 9 to the translation). Evliya may have been imperfectly remembering something told him by the learned Kurdish ruler of Bitlis, ʿAbdal Han, whose guest he was for a long time, or something read in an unknown chronicle[7]. Finally Evliya gave an account of the Ottoman conquest of Diyarbekir that is rather at variance with all other existing chronicles. If this account represents a local tradition there may be something of value in it, but given the many factual mistakes this would be hard to disentangle. As far as this historical section is concerned, Evliya's usefulness as a source is virtually nil.

But this is certainly not the case for the rest of his description of Diyarbekir. The next section consists of a literal copy of a *qanunname* of Diyarbekir (or rather a combination of two *qanunnames* from different periods), which is followed by a list of government officials in the city that seems to have been compiled by Evliya himself. The description of the city walls and of the major buildings, which then follows, is mainly based on Evliya's own observations and therefore important, although it is incomplete. It is clear that Evliya took extensive notes on some of these buildings at the time of his visit; he actually walked around the city walls to measure their size, and made a rough calculation to account for the part he could not measure because of the steepness of the rock on which it stands. The figure that he arrived at is quite realistic. The same is true of a figure he gave in the preceding section, as the governor's income. The sum of 100,000 guruş per year that Evliya mentioned corresponds very well with the income recorded in the personal account book of

attributed to the same Miġdisi. These tales differ from those found in the Armenian version of the Alexander Romance (translated by A. M. Wolohojian, New York & London, 1969) as well as from those related by the better-known Armenian historians. So far, we have not been able to identify this Miġdisi.

[7] Evliya himself mentioned one important chronicle that he claimed to have read (in part, at least): the *Sharafnama*, a famous history of the Kurds written by ʿAbdal Han's ancestor Sharafuddin Bidlisi (completed in 1596). It is likely that during his stay at Bitlis he had the opportunity to use the magnificent library of the bibliophile ʿAbdal Han, which may have contained many works that are now lost. (On ʿAbdal Han's library, see

Diyarbekir's governor sixteen years after his visit, the latter being only 10% higher than Evliya's estimate[8]. This is at variance with Evliya's reputation of giving estimates that are consistently much too high[9]. This reputation is partly based on the mistakes in the printed edition, as said before, but not entirely. It is true that Evliya tended to exaggerate numbers he had not actually counted, and preferred to give an absurdly high number rather than simply saying "many". The numbers of little shops in a market, or the numbers of different crafts practised in some city, are often unrealistic. But whenever there is an indication that he actually did measure or count, his figures prove to be quite reliable.

After the mosques and medreses, Evliya devoted a long section to the city's water supply, illustrating the Ottoman's preoccupation with water as a major strategic factor. Like in the section of the mosques, Evliya inserted here whatever stories he had heard, historical or legendary, in connection with the various sources of water. It is his concern for such details that makes his *Seyahatname* the major source on 17th-century folklore and popular beliefs.

Next, there are some notes on the city's economic life (commerce, trades and crafts), and sociological observations on the population. A long description of the *hamams* seems rather out of place here, and the following observations on food and drinks would better fit in the economic section.

A poem in the Diyarbekir Turkish dialect is presented integrally. We see again how conscientiously Evliya worked: he asked for the meanings of all the words and expressions he did not understand, and wrote down an extensive word-list that shows him to have been a competent linguist.

Long descriptions of the parks and the places of pilgrimage near Diyarbekir, full of interesting detail, end the description of Diyarbekir.

The order in which all his observations are presented is almost the same in all his city descriptions. But clearly this is a format he only designed when he started writing. His collection of data was less systematic and therefore several of the paragraphs remained almost empty. During his stay in Diyarbekir Evliya seems not even to have attempted to make exhaustive lists of all the mosques, medreses, city wards, trades and crafts etc. This encyclopedic ambition apparently only emerged at the time of writing. The *Seyahatname* was therefore doomed to remain an uncompleted work. But it may be precisely to Evliya's

[8] See note 56 to the translation.

[9] "...in many of these cases, a round number was guessed, about ten times too large and then a slight change was made to make the estimate seem to be the result of

unsystematic and unselective data-collecting that we owe the most charming and significant bits of information. Instead of a complete list of dervish convents and shrines we have a long and interesting story about Şeyh Mahmud of Urmia and his execution by Murad IV; instead of a survey of all the crops grown along the Tigris a charming narrative of the refined nightly banquets held there.

CHAPTER TWO

THE OTTOMAN CONQUEST OF DIYARBEKIR AND THE ADMINISTRATIVE ORGANISATION OF THE PROVINCE IN THE 16TH AND 17TH CENTURIES

MARTIN VAN BRUINESSEN

In quoting a *qanunname* of the *eyalet* of Diyarbekir, Evliya draws our attention to one of the peculiarities of this province: the existence, besides "ordinary" sancaqs with centrally appointed *sancaqbegi*s, of two varieties of sancaqs with hereditary, more or less autonomous, Kurdish rulers, the *hükumet* and the *ocaqlıq*. For a long time, large parts of Kurdistan were thus to be ruled indirectly—the last of these chiefdoms were not brought under direct control until the 1830s. There were two obvious reasons for this form of indirect control. The first of these had to do with the geographical position of Kurdistan: it was a frontier, behind which there was the enemy state Iran, ever willing to support rebellious Ottoman subjects. If a Kurdish ruler fell out with the Ottomans, he would be welcome in Iran. Many of these Kurdish rulers enjoyed the unquestioning support of tribesmen, who would in such a case follow them to Iran or—even worse—rebel against the Ottoman government and declare their district a part of Iran. In the *Sharafnama*, the history of these Kurdish chiefdoms that was written towards the end of the 16th century, we find several examples of Kurdish rulers who actually did defect to Iran—one of them being its author, Sharafuddin of Bitlis, himself. It was in fact precisely because Shah Ismaʿil attempted to rule directly, while Sultan Selim promised a form of autonomy, that most Kurdish rulers, after the battle of Çaldiran, formally submitted to the latter and expelled the former's troops.

The other reason was that direct control and taxation of these mountainous districts would in many cases cost the state more than they could be expected to bring in as revenue. Only places of strategic or economic importance were always to be ruled directly (with very few exceptions, such as strategic Bitlis). The number and size of the Kurdish chiefdoms however, as well as the degree of their autonomy, varied considerably in the course of time, depending on the strength of the central government,