

**TRAVELING WITHIN THE EMPIRE:  
PERCEPTIONS OF THE EAST  
IN THE HISTORICAL NARRATIVES OF  
MUSTAFA ÂLI AND EVLIYA ÇELEBI ON CAIRO**

by

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*In the loving memory of my grandmother,  
Rizan Gökçay, who introduced me to life, and  
passed away when I started this study.*

## ABSTRACT

### TRAVELING WITHIN THE EMPIRE: PERCEPTIONS OF THE EAST IN THE HISTORICAL NARRATIVES OF MUSTAFA ÂLI AND EVLIYA ÇELEBI ON CAIRO

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Keywords: Evliya  elebi, Mustafa Âli, Cairo, *Rum * identity, Orientalism.

This thesis questions if Egypt was analogous of the "Orient" in the early modern period, at least to the Ottoman literati coming from the imperial center of Istanbul. For the study, the narratives of two Istanbulite literati, *Book of Travels* by Evliya  elebi (b. 1611, d. after 1683) and *Description of Cairo* by Mustafa Âli (b. 1541, d. 1600), are chosen. Since the priority is to portray the perception of Ottoman literati toward the "others," their accounts on Cairo has been appropriate for this goal as they reflected the authors' mentalities. The Ottoman literati coming from the core lands of the Empire, "the lands of *Rum*," found some of the Egyptian ways of living "strange"; consequently, they reported the unfamiliar etiquette, public behaviors, and daily routines of the Egyptians.

The intended goal in questioning how Cairo was perceived is to provide an alternative framework for studies on Ottoman Orientalism; as the discourse of the literati "Orientalized" Egypt as a distant province. The "Oriental" status of Egypt was defined by its physical, cultural, and perceived distance to the lands of *Rum* – especially to the capital, Istanbul. Though "otherness" was determined by the position and norms of the authors. This thesis reaches the conclusion that the Ottoman Empire, considered in a way as the "Orient" itself, has similar tensions between its center and peripheries.

## ÖZET

### OSMANLI İMPARATORLUĞU'NDA SEYAHAT: MUSTAFA ÂLİ VE EVLİYA ÇELEBİ'NİN KAHİRE ANLATILARINDAKİ DOĞU ALGISI

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Anahtar Kelimeler: Evliya Çelebi, Mustafa Âli, Kahire, *Rumî* Kimliği, Oryantalizm.

Bu çalışma, erken modern çağda İstanbullu Osmanlı okuryazarları için, Mısır'ın “Doğu” olarak algılanışını konu almaktadır. Çalışma için, Evliya Çelebi'nin (d. 1611, ö. 1683 sonrası) *Seyahatname* ve Mustafa Âli'nin (d. 1541, ö. 1600) *Halatü'l Kahire mine'l Adati'z Zâhire* adlı eserleri birincil kaynak olarak kullanılmıştır. Yazarların zihniyetini ve “öteki”lere bakışını yansıtılmaları açısından özellikle bu iki eser çalışma için esas alınmıştır.

Osmanlı Devleti'nin merkez topraklarından - *Rum* ülkesinden - gelen Osmanlı okuryazarları, Mısır'daki âdetleri, gelenek ve görenekleri “acayib ve garayib” bulmuş, Kahirelilerin farklı toplumsal davranışlarını ve günlük hayat pratiklerini okurlarına anlatmışlardır. Kahire'nin algılanışının sorgulanmasındaki amaç, Osmanlı Oryantalizmi çalışmalarına farklı bir çerçeve sunmaktır. Mısır'ın “Doğulu” statüsü, *Rum* ülkesine ve özellikle İstanbul'a olan fiziksel, kültürel ve algılanan uzaklığı ile tanımlanmaktadır. Ötekileştirme ise yazarların konumları ve içselleştirdikleri normlar üzerinden gerçekleşmektedir. Bu tez, literatürde genel olarak “Doğulu” olarak tanımlanan ve ötekileştirilen Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda merkez ve çevre arasında benzer tasavvurlar ve ötekileştirmeler olduğunu ileri sürmektedir.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

EÇS: Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnamesi

EÇOS: Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnamesi Okuma Sözlüğü

DC: Description of Cairo

DİA: Diyanet İslam Ansiklopedisi

KA: Künh'ül Ahbar

## 1. INTRODUCTION

*Zîrâ Mısır'da olan binâ yı âsâr ı acîbe vü garîbeler bir diyârda yokdur.*<sup>1</sup>

Evliya Çelebi, the seventeenth-century Ottoman traveler, once summed up the unique qualities of Egypt by pointing out that no other realms in the world had such strange (*acîbe vü garîbe*) buildings. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the Ottoman Empire expanded its boundaries in the Arabian Peninsula and Africa. In that historical context, the 1517 annexation of the Mamluk lands was significant because of Egypt's strategic and economic importance to the Ottomans' eastward expansion. However, this conquest did not necessarily mean a complete Ottomanization of the people; Egypt came to operate within the Ottoman administrative framework while maintaining a separate cultural identity.<sup>2</sup> Egypt had its own customs, manners, and languages which were markedly different than those of its neighbors. The Ottoman literati coming from the core lands of the Empire, "the lands of *Rum*," found some of the Egyptian ways of living "strange"; consequently, they reported the unfamiliar etiquette, public behaviors, and daily routines of the Egyptians. This thesis questions if Egypt was analogous of the "Orient" in the early modern period, at least to the Ottoman literati coming from the imperial center of Istanbul. I will compare Evliya Çelebi's (b. 1611, d. after 1683) *Book of Travels* to the *Description of Cairo* by

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<sup>1</sup> *Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnamesi*, V.I. (Istanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları Ltd. Şti., 1996) 101 (hereafter, EÇS).

<sup>2</sup> Examples of the studies on Ottomanization are follows: Irene A. Bierman, "The Ottomanization of Crete," in *the Ottoman City and Its Parts Urban Structure and Social Order*, ed. Irena A. Bierman, Rifa'at Abou El Haj, Donald Preziosi (New Rochelle, N.Y.: A.D. Caratzas, 1991). Bierman traces the "Ottomanization" of the city by the "imposition of architectonic signs of Ottoman Muslim power upon the existing Christian built environment" after the conquest. See also Heghnar Z. Watenpaugh, *The Image of an Ottoman City, Imperial Architecture and Urban Experience in Aleppo in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> Centuries* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2004).

Gelibolulu Mustafa Âli (b. 1541, d. 1600), another Ottoman intellectual, who is also known for his definition of *Rumî* identity. I aim to contribute to the discussion of Ottoman Orientalism, the term coined by Usama Makdisi, by shifting its focus back to the early modern period.<sup>3</sup>

### 1. 1. Seventeenth century Ottoman Empire

Focusing on the Ottoman Empire at the turn of the seventeenth century provides a better understanding of the atmosphere and elite circles Mustafa Âli and Evliya Çelebi represented. The Ottoman Empire was undergoing a period of dramatic changes.<sup>4</sup> Mustafa Âli witnessed some of these changes and wrote about them; as a result many of his accounts, including *Description of Cairo*, abound with first-hand information about these changes. Comparatively, Evliya Çelebi's narrative on Egypt was written in the latter part of the seventeenth century, long after this significant transformation process had ended.

At the turn of the century, there was population pressure, economic difficulties, a collapsed monetary system, and an increased need for a military equipped with firearms.<sup>5</sup> The countryside suffered from the effects of the climate changes (known as the Little Ice Age) and the *Celali* uprisings, both of which had a devastating impact on agriculture.<sup>6</sup> In

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<sup>3</sup> Ussama Makdisi, "Ottoman Orientalism," *The American Historical Review* 107/3 (2002): 768-796.

<sup>4</sup> Halil İnalçık, "Military and Fiscal Transformation in the Ottoman Empire, 1600-1700" *Archivum Ottomanicum* VI, (1980): 283-288.

<sup>5</sup> İnalçık, *Military and Fiscal Transformation*, 283-288.

<sup>6</sup> See William J. Griswold, *The Great Anatolian Rebellion, 1000-1020/1591-1611* *Islamkundliche Untersuchungen* (Berlin: K. Schwarz Verlag, 1983). See also, William J. Griswold "Climatic Change: A Possible Factor in the Social Unrest of Seventeenth Century Anatolia," in *Humanist and Scholar: Essays in Honor of Andreas Tietze*, ed. Heath W. Lowry and Donald Quataert (Istanbul: Isis Press, 1993) 36-57.

this period, the centralized Empire went through a “state-wide decentralization” process.<sup>7</sup> In early Republican scholarship, especially in official historiography on Ottoman Empire, “decentralization” has been interpreted as a sign of decline.<sup>8</sup> The question of centralization and decentralization is still of importance with regards to the provinces — and in this case, Egypt — and it is strongly related to the long-standing question of Ottoman Decline.<sup>9</sup>

Mustafa Âli was one of the contemporary intellectuals who was seriously worried about the future of the Empire, and his worries were often reflected in his writing.<sup>10</sup> This can be seen in the *Description of Cairo*, where he focuses on the changing times and

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<sup>7</sup> Suraiya Faroqhi. “Crisis and Change,” in *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire 1300-1914*, eds. İnalcık and Quataert (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994) 468. See also, Karen Barkey, *Bandits and Bureaucrats: the Ottoman Route to State Centralization* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1994).

<sup>8</sup> See for example, Bernard Lewis, *The Emergence of modern Turkey* (London: Oxford University Press, 1961); Niyazi Berkes, *The Development of Secularism in Turkey* (Montreal: McGill University Press, 1964).

<sup>9</sup> The Decline Paradigm has been one of the most intriguing debates within the historiography of the Ottoman Empire for the past decades. To discuss it extensively would be beyond the scope of this thesis; however it is necessary to note that the perception of decline dates back to the very end of the sixteenth century. For a critical assessment of the Decline Paradigm, see Cemal Kafadar, “The Question of Ottoman Decline,” *Harvard Middle Eastern and Islamic Review* 4 (1997-98): 30-75. See also Donald Quataert, “Ottoman History Writing and Changing Attitudes towards the Notion of ‘Decline’,” *History Compass* 1 (2003) 1–9; Dana Sajdi, “Decline, its Discontents and Ottoman Cultural History: By Way of Introduction,” in *Ottoman Tulips, Ottoman Coffee*, ed. Dana Sajdi, (London: IB Tauris, 2008).

<sup>10</sup> Also other contemporary authors were responding to the “transformation” at the end of seventeenth century by emphasizing the degeneration of times. One of the best known examples belongs to Koçi Bey, as he explains possible causes and offerings of the ‘decline’ after making a diagnosis. In *The Veliyyüddin Telhis: Notes on the Sources and Interrelations between Koçi Bey and Contemporary Writers of Advice to Kings*, Rhoads Murphey gives a detailed account of Koçi Bey’s narrative with its relation to other *nasihatname* writers. Apparently, seventeenth century Ottoman intellectuals who were driven by the similar motivations had similar aims and “intellectual biases”. (Rhoads Murphey, “The Veliyyüddin Telhis : Notes on the Sources and Interrelations between Koçi Bey and Contemporary Writers of Advice to Kings,” *Belleten* 43 (1979): 547-571) *Koçi Bey Risalesi* is one of the most discussed examples of this literature in the secondary sources (see studies of Abou-el-Haj, Howard Douglas and Baki Tezcan). *Nusat-ül Selatin* by Mustafa Âli, *Habname* by Veysi (Book of Dreams) are other important examples.

perceived deterioration of social and political conditions. In the relevant secondary literature, there are different opinions about Mustafa Âli's concerns. Cornell Fleischer states that Mustafa Âli might have been overstating corruption and abuses; however, he concedes that there are descriptive and archival materials in Mustafa Âli's *Counsel for Sultans* in support of these arguments.<sup>11</sup> In his review of Fleischer's book, Rhoads Murphey criticizes Mustafa Âli's portrayal of the decline and refers to his "professional jealousy" and personal disappointments as contributing to his bias.<sup>12</sup> It is significant to note that as an eye-witness to the events unfolding around him, Mustafa Âli's perception of the crisis can be misleading, as he was arguing from within the classical establishments of the Empire. The structural and bureaucratic changes the Empire was faced with may have created such a perception. People like Mustafa Âli glorified the past and were occupied with the preservation of the old order for the sake of both the state and their personal careers.<sup>13</sup>

In the 1600s, there was a significant development toward the making of a new political bureaucratic establishment as well as the professionalization of its members.<sup>14</sup> Recent scholarship emphasizes the shortcomings of the political and military power of the Empire in the seventeenth century, and there are several studies focusing on the provinces. Some of these studies emphasize the flourishing of bureaucratic establishment and state apparatus. In that respect, using the term "transformation" would be more appropriate than

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<sup>11</sup> Cornell Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and Intellectual in the Ottoman Empire : the Historian Mustafa Âli (1541-1600)*, (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1986) 9.

<sup>12</sup> Rhoads Murphey, "Mustafa Ali and the Politics of Cultural Despair," Review of *Bureaucrat and Intellectual in the Ottoman Empire: The Historian Mustafa Ali, 1546-1600*, by Cornell H. Fleischer, *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 21-2, (1989): 246.

<sup>13</sup> İnalcık, *Military and Fiscal Transformation*, 285.

<sup>14</sup> Faroqhi, *Crisis and Change*, 552-556. See also Linda Darling, *Revenue Raising and Legitimacy: Tax Collection and Finance Administration in the Ottoman Empire, 1560-1660* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1996); and Dina Rizk Khoury, *State and Provincial Society in the Ottoman Empire: Mosul, 1540-1834*, (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, Cambridge Studies in Islamic Civilization, 1997).

merely calling these changes a decline.<sup>15</sup> From this perspective, decentralization, too, can be regarded as a “viable strategy” for survival.<sup>16</sup> Apparently, during its long reign, Ottoman Empire underwent significant changes; and it is possible to talk about at least four different empires — the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries constituting the second or third Empire.<sup>17</sup> In this period, there were devastating wars and limited military victories. However, the palace allowed for institutionalized bureaucracy.<sup>18</sup> From the very end of the sixteenth century, the new political structure of the Empire was “web-like,” without a single center.<sup>19</sup> It is also necessary to add that the changes at the turn of the seventeenth century were not limited to the Ottoman Empire. In the Mediterranean World especially, the shift of the trade routes was changing the equilibrium between different participants of overseas commerce.<sup>20</sup>

These changes of the sixteenth and seventeenth century were reflected best in Egypt, one of the biggest and most productive provinces of the Ottoman Empire. Egypt, a former

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<sup>15</sup> See Faroqhi, *Crisis and Change*; Daniel Goffman “Izmir: From Village to Colonial Port City,” in *The Ottoman City between East and West: Aleppo, Izmir, and Istanbul*, ed. Edhem Eldem, Daniel Goffman and Bruce Masters (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999) 79-134; Dror Ze'evi, *An Ottoman Century: The District of Jerusalem in the 1600s* (Ithaca: SUNY Press, 1996); and Antonis Anastasopoulos (ed.), *Provincial Elites in the Ottoman Empire*, (Rethymno: Crete University Press, 2005).

<sup>16</sup> Ariel Salzmann, “An Ancien Régime Revisited: ‘Privatization’ and Political Economy in the Eighteenth-Century Ottoman Empire,” *Politics and Society* 21/4, (1993): 394-395.

<sup>17</sup> Tülay Artan, “From Charismatic Rulership to Collective Rule. Introducing Materials on the Wealth and Power of Ottoman Princesses in the Eighteenth Century,” *Dünü ve Bugünüyle Toplum ve Ekonomi* 4 (1993): 53-56.

<sup>18</sup> Artan, *From Charismatic Rulership*.

<sup>19</sup> Baki Tezcan. “The Second Empire: The Transformation of the Ottoman Polity in the Early Modern Era,” *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 29 (2009): 361.

<sup>20</sup> To “imagine the early modern Ottoman space,” see Palmira B. Rummet, “Imagining the Early Modern Ottoman Space, from World History to Piri Reis,” in *The Early Modern Ottomans, Remapping the Empire*, ed. Virginia H. Aksan and Daniel Goffman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007). See also, Molly Greene, “The Ottomans in the Mediterranean,” in *The Early Modern Ottomans, Remapping the Empire*, ed. Virginia H. Aksan and Daniel Goffman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

imperial center, was turned into an Ottoman province after the Ottoman conquest; yet Egypt continued to play an important role in the networks of the Empire. Both Mustafâ Âli and Evliya Çelebi underlined the importance of Egypt, while also noting it being “strange” and “different” (*acayîb* ve *garâyîb*), in relation to Ottoman lands and culture. As both authors were early modern Istanbulites who lived in and wrote about Cairo, my choice of authors to focus on in this thesis is not accidental. Evliya Çelebi’s *Book of Travels* is more extensive and provides a wide range of themes serving the purposes of this thesis. Similar themes are discussed in the *Description of Cairo* briefly, but it has a deeper Orientalist tone.

## 1.2. Evliya Çelebi and his *Book of Travels* on Egypt and Cairo

*Sultan Murad IV to Evliya Çelebi (in Evliya’s own narrative):*  
“What a child! Every word he uttered has elegance, a subtle point [...] and from now on there is no why and wherefore, the place is open to you; you are my boon-companion.”<sup>21\*</sup>

Though it is not easy to introduce Evliya Çelebi by prioritizing some of his many peculiarities, the words he puts in the Sultan’s mouth about himself are telling. Evliya Çelebi, now famous for his curiosity and drive for travel, was known for using words unreservedly in a witty way, even when he was a young man. Halil İnalçık, underlines the importance of Evliya’s boon-companionship. Evliya Çelebi was an educated man and became a successful courtier to please the sultan with his jokes and anecdotes.<sup>22</sup> İnalçık further states that Evliya Çelebi had a good understanding of history, but he distorted it to attract the attention of his master; this can be seen when Evliya Çelebi distorted history

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<sup>21</sup> “Hay veled her güftesinde zerafet eyle bir güne nükta ve rumuzat vardır [...] ve şimdiden gerü sana çun [u] çera ve kapu-baca yoktur musahibimsin.” in EÇS V.I, 101. \*All Evliya Çelebi translations are mine unless otherwise noted.

<sup>22</sup> For Evliya’s education, see Robert Dankoff, *An Ottoman Mentality: The World of Evliya Çelebi*. (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2006) 29-20.



according to the *zeitgeist*.<sup>23</sup> İnalçık is convinced that Evliya Çelebi wrote his travelogue with the intention to guide the future generations, and what he had in mind was the future boon-companions.<sup>24</sup>

Evliya Çelebi's *Book of Travels* has more to it. Although Evliya Çelebi's account has long been criticized for its historical inaccuracies and overstatements, his rich account provides historians a wide variety of topics ranging from accounts of specific historical events to his insightful perceptions about these events.<sup>25</sup> In that respect, the *Book of Travels* enables historians to trace various aspects of social, cultural, and daily life in the multifaceted Ottoman world in the early modern period. The importance of Evliya Çelebi's account on Cairo has also been noted by scholars both for the amount of information it yields on the seventeenth-century Egypt and the ideological issues related to the Ottoman presence it brings forth.<sup>26</sup> As Evliya Çelebi was brought up at the center, his perception of the provinces, in this case Cairo, was shaped by his education and internalized norms of educated circles in Istanbul.

This thesis aims to test Evliya Çelebi's *Book of Travels* as a tool to depict the Ottoman center's perceptions of its peripheries and the "others" living in these regions. Evliya Çelebi went to pilgrimage in 1082 (1671/1672), and in the same year he arrived in

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<sup>23</sup> For example, although Iznik surrendered, Evliya told the story how Orhan Gazi put the people to the sword. This, according to İnalçık, was to please his readers. Halil İnalçık, "Açış Konuşması," In *Çağının Sıradışı Yazarı Evliya Çelebi*, ed. Nuran Tezcan, (Istanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2009) 15-16.

<sup>24</sup> İnalçık, *Açış*, 16. At the end of the sixteenth century, the boon-companionship gained more importance. The boon-companions were expected to be well trained in rhetoric and to be well educated in history, and sciences. They were expected to be moderate and sober people; and to inform and entertain the Sultan properly. (from *Nushatü's-selâtin*, quoted in DİA, V. 31, *musahib*).

<sup>25</sup> For Evliya Çelebi's assessment in the academic circles, see Nuran Tezcan, "17. Yüzyıl Osmanlı Türk Edebiyatı ve Seyahâtname," in *Çağının Sıradışı Yazarı Evliya Çelebi*, ed. Nuran Tezcan, (Istanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2009).

<sup>26</sup> Doris Behrens-Abouseif, *Egypt's Adjustment to Ottoman Rule: Institutions, Waqf and Architecture in Cairo, Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Leiden; New York: E. J. Brill, 1994) 13; and Ulrich W. Haarmann, "Ideology and History, Identity and Alterity: The Arab Image of the Turk from the Abbasids to Modern Egypt," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 20 (1988): footnote: 83.

Cairo. The first impression of Cairo on Evliya Çelebi was positive, and he wrote that the city deserved the worldwide reputation and fame.<sup>27</sup> He dedicated the last volume of his travelogue almost entirely to Cairo and Egypt, where he spent the last years of his life and compiled his notes into a multi-volume *Book of Travels*. It is impossible to overlook that Evliya Çelebi's portrait of Cairo parallels his description of Istanbul in the first volume.<sup>28</sup> Apart from being the capital of the Ottoman Empire, Istanbul was "naturally" the center of the world for Evliya Çelebi.<sup>29</sup> Istanbul was his birth place, home town and more importantly, the point of reference for his following volumes.

His descriptions of Istanbul and Cairo are monumental, detailed and thorough. The parallels are visible especially in his enumeration and portrayal of shops and guilds, as well as the overview of the villages on the shore of the Golden Horn, Bosphorus and the Nile.<sup>30</sup> It should be also noted that Evliya Çelebi lived in both of these cities for longer periods than other cities he visited; in other places he was often a short-term visitor.<sup>31</sup> Though Evliya Çelebi's *Book of Travels* provide a very rich account for local colors, customs, and people on the other lands.

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<sup>27</sup> In EÇS, V.X, 94.

<sup>28</sup> This is also underlined by Dankoff, *Ottoman Mentality*, 6.

<sup>29</sup> Dankoff, *Ottoman Mentality*, 1.

<sup>30</sup> Dankoff, *Ottoman Mentality*, 19.

<sup>31</sup> Suraiya Faroqhi, "Evliya Çelebi's Tales of Cairo's Guildsmen," (Unpublished article, 2011). I am very grateful to Prof. Suraiya Faroqhi for allowing me to read and cite her unpublished article. Also see Dankoff, *An Ottoman Mentality*, 18.

### 1.3. Mustafa Âli and the *Description of Cairo*

Shortly before Evliya Çelebi's birth in the year 1611, Mustafa Âli wrote his descriptions of Cairo, who was again an Istanbulite. Many topics like the local customs, manners, public visibility, and piety that Evliya Çelebi dealt with were also mentioned in Mustafa Âli's *Description of Cairo*, though more concisely.

Mustafa Âli was a prominent figure in the early modern Ottoman historiography, best known as a "bureaucrat and intellectual."<sup>32</sup> What distinguishes him from his peers is his courageous style and his outspoken way of addressing political, cultural, and historical issues. As a determined and demanding careerist, he followed a bureaucratic track rather than a scholarly path. In his twenties he served many men of important offices.<sup>33</sup> Unlike Evliya Çelebi, his life did not revolve around travel, but, mostly due to his appointments and patrons, he ended up traveling a lot.

Mustafa Âli visited Egypt twice. During his first visit in 1578, Mustafa Âli was delighted to be in Egypt. He appreciated the fertility, affluence, order, and decency of the cavalry, and good relations between people from core lands of the Ottoman Empire, *Rumîs*, and the Cairenes. In 1599, while writing his world history, *Künhü'l-ahbar*, he requested a post in Egypt because Cairo would be the best place to finish his history for he would have easy access to significant sources of reference.<sup>34</sup> Although he could not secure a post in Cairo, he was able to visit on his way to Jidda. Mustafa Âli stayed in Cairo for five months, and he wrote the *Description of Cairo*, also known as *Conditions of Cairo Concerning Her Actual Customs*, during his first three months in the city.<sup>35</sup> However, during his second

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<sup>32</sup> Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and Intellectual*.

<sup>33</sup> Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and Intellectual*, 8, 67.

<sup>34</sup> For detailed information on *Künh'ül Ahbar*, see Jan Schmidt, *Pure Water for Thirsty Muslims, a Study of Mustafâ 'Âlî of Gallipoli's Künh'ü l-ahbâr*, Publicaties van het Oosters Instituut, III, ( Leiden: Het Oosters Instituut, 1991).

<sup>35</sup> Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and Intellectual*, 181-182. On the available manuscripts of the *Description of Cairo* (full title in Ottoman Turkish: *Hâlâtü'l-Kahire Mine'l- Âdâti'z-Zâhire*, hereafter DC) see Andreas Tietze, "Introduction," in *Mustafa Âli's Description of Cairo of 1599*, ed. Andreas Tietze.

visit, Mustafa Âli found that the “good old times” were no longer. Egypt had lost her prosperity, as well as her “honesty” and “chastity.”<sup>36</sup> According to Mustafa Âli’s narrative, it was the deterioration of social and political conditions in Cairo which led his friends to ask Mustafa Âli to write the *Description of Cairo*. Apparently, he liked the idea of compiling a critical book to fill the need.<sup>37</sup> However, another motive for the compilation of the *Description of Cairo* is equally possible: Mustafa Âli had the desire to become the governor general of Egypt. A successful display of his familiarity and concerns with the daily life and politics in Egypt could portray him as a fitting candidate for the post. Beyond that, this would legitimize his request or remind his superiors about his desires and assure his position in the eyes of Gazanfer Ağa, to whom he dedicated the *Description of Cairo*.<sup>38</sup>

The personal difficulties Mustafa Âli met during the several campaigns he attended, as well as the challenges and disappointments he faced, had turned him into an alienated and bitter observer who drew a gloomy picture of the course of events in the late sixteenth-century Ottoman Empire. As the first Ottoman “political commentator,” Mustafa Âli elaborated on economic, social, and political transitions extensively.<sup>39</sup> In the example of Egypt, Mustafa Âli attempted to display the serious defects (e.g. moral degeneration, corruption, disobedience to laws, deficient governance) that he perceived as decline — not only in Egypt but having an impact on the entire Empire. Fleischer describes Mustafa Âli’s approach as the amalgamation of the “traveler’s curiosity,” the “moral critic’s eye for fault” and the “historian’s passion for causes and patterns.”<sup>40</sup>

The *Description of Cairo* is divided into four parts. The introduction provides a brief overview of the legendary pre-Islamic Egyptian history. The first part deals with the notable and praiseworthy characteristics of Egypt. It then goes on to the blameworthy

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<sup>36</sup> DC, 25-27 and 31-32.

<sup>37</sup> Tietze, *Introduction*, 28

<sup>38</sup> Gazanfer Ağa was the chief white eunuch of the imperial palace and he was a prominent figure during the reigns of Murad III and Mehmed III. Tietze, *Introduction*, 28, footnote:10. Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and Intellectual*, 183.

<sup>39</sup> Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and Intellectual*, 90; 101.

<sup>40</sup> Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and Intellectual*, 182.

features. The epilogue focuses on the history of Egypt during the Islamic Era. At last, the appendix assesses the mishaps of the Ottoman rule in Egypt, and depicts the class of eunuchs as responsible for the “decline.” Andreas Tietze, who made the transliteration and English translation of *Description of Cairo*, describes Mustafa Âli’s account of Egypt as the “kaleidoscopic glimpses through the eyes of an observant and intelligent tourist” rather than being the outcome of a thorough exploration.<sup>41</sup> Still, for the purposes of this thesis, *Description of Cairo* is very significant. First, it provides a point of comparison to the account of Evliya Çelebi. Second, the personal observations of contemporary literati are as important as their thorough explorations.

#### 1.4. The Question of Ottoman Orientalism

Both Mustafa Âli’s and Evliya Çelebi’s approaches toward Egypt and Egyptians strongly resemble the discourse promulgated by the critics of the discourse of Orientalism, such as Edward Said.<sup>42</sup> Still, it is important to note that the historical context in which Said penned *Orientalism* and the Ottoman experiences in the early modern period are substantially different. Said refers to a period of imperialist agenda dominated by the colonial powers. In more general terms, Said argues that the relationship between the East and the West relies on power relations, domination and hegemony. As a consequence, “the Orient was created,” or in Said’s terminology, it was “Orientalized.”<sup>43</sup> The West had a flexible “positional superiority.”<sup>44</sup> Orientalism helped to justify the colonial rule of the Western powers, too.<sup>45</sup> For the early modern Ottoman world, instead of about the binary oppositions of the East and the West, talking about an imperial center as a point of

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<sup>41</sup> Tietze, *Introduction*, 17.

<sup>42</sup> Edward Said, *Orientalism* (London: Pinguin Books, 2003).

<sup>43</sup> Said, *Orientalism*, 5.

<sup>44</sup> Said, *Orientalism*, 7.

<sup>45</sup> Said, *Orientalism*, 39.

reference in relation to its peripheries would be more appropriate.<sup>46</sup> Different uses of the concept, of Orientalism are widely discussed in the literature; however, a closer focus on these will be beyond the aim and scope of this study.

A brief overview of Said's definition of Orientalism is necessary when considering the early modern Ottoman experience. As part of the debates on Ottoman Orientalism, it has been argued that "one major weakness of Orientalism was its neglect of what the 'Orient' did with Orientalism."<sup>47</sup> In the light of Mustafa Âli's and Evliya Çelebi's narratives and in the example of Ottoman Egypt, this thesis raises the question whether it would be appropriate to talk about an "Ottoman Orient" that was invented by the Ottomans. More specifically, did Cairo served as a kind of "Orient" for the Ottomans coming from the core lands of the Empire?

Said argues that the Western visitors who travelled to the Orient went there first as Europeans and Americans, then as individuals; and being a European or an American was not an "inert" condition.<sup>48</sup> Similarly, "an Oriental man was first an Oriental and only second, a man."<sup>49</sup> I will argue that both Mustafa Âli and Evliya Çelebi in Egypt were *Rumîs*, and Ottoman literati first, and individuals second.

The way both Mustafa Âli and Evliya Çelebi described the manners and customs in Egypt with a special emphasis on their own extraordinary observations is analogous of the

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<sup>46</sup> The discussion of core lands and peripheries has been introduced by Immanuel Wallerstein in his World-system theory. This theoretical framework has been utilized by many social scientists also in relation with the Ottoman Empire. See for example Metin Heper, "Center and Periphery in the Ottoman Empire: With Special Reference to the Nineteenth Century," *International Political Science Review* 1 (1980). In his recent study, Alan Mikhail underlines that there were numerous "centers" and numerous "peripheries" in the Empire, and Egypt was both a center and a periphery. In Alan Mikhail, *Nature and Empire in Ottoman Egypt: An Environmental History. Studies in Environment and History*. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011) 24-25.

<sup>47</sup> Baki Tezcan, "Lost in Historiography: An Essay on the Reasons for the Absence of a History of Limited Government in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire," *Middle Eastern Studies*, 45/3 (2009): 499.

<sup>48</sup> Said, *Orientalism*, 11.

<sup>49</sup> Said, *Orientalism*, 231.

“exotic” way of life and the “romantic” experiences of Orientalist narratives.<sup>50</sup> A tension between the Istanbulites and Cairenes, especially generated by comparisons, is visible in

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<sup>50</sup> Among many others, some examples of the “exotic” way of life and the “romantic” experiences of the Egyptians (and these will be discussed later in more detail): “No other realms in the world had such strange (*acîbe vü garîbe*) buildings.” (*Zîrâ Mısır'da olan binâ-yı âsâr-ı acîbe vü garîbeler bir diyârda yokdur.* in EÇS, V.X, 11). The climate drew Egyptians to melancholy, and because of women’s deception and tricks, the whole society was under their enchantments. The men who were prone to melancholy were sent to lunatic asylums for healing. However, without a decree from the Ottoman governor, they would not possibly be sent to the asylum. (*Ammâ bu Mısır'ın âb [u] havâsı yübûset üzre olduğundan cümle halkı [Y 120a] sevdâyîdir. Ve mekr-i zenânı çok olmağile ekseriyyâ halkı meshûr ve memkûrdur. Hemân ol âdemi ahâlî-i mahalle paşaya arz edüp buyurdu-yı şerîf ile bîmârhâneye koyup tîmâr ederler. Buyurdu olmasa bîmârhâneye komazlar,* in EÇS, V.X, 144). Engaging in sexual intercourse with a crocodile, slaying crocodiles, flaying its skin is not “disgraceful,” but bravery. (*Zîrâ ol diyârda timsâh ile cimâ' eylemek ve timsâh katl edüp derilerin kapularına mihlamak ayıb değildir ve yiğitlikdir,* in EÇS, V.X, 188). In festivities, lovers enjoyed the Egyptian nights while swimming and diving naked in the Nile River, and flirting with their companions. All people were entertained by the excursions on the Nile, music, and wine. (*Ve Mısır'ın cümle dilberânları bu halîce gelüp cân-ı cânânlar ol mahbûb cüvânânlar bilâ-hicâb fûtasız uryânen halîce girüp sâf billûr nûr ten-i münevveri ile bahr-i ma'ârîf-vâr gümüş balığı gibi şînâverlik edüp mâlik-i Nîl-vâr gavvâşlık ederlerken ba'zı âşîkân bu mâhî mâh-pâreleri dil riştesiyle sayd edüp der-kenâr ederler. Ve bu halîc günleri Mısır'da eyle günlerdir kim destûr-ı şâhîdir, herkes gûy gûy sohbetde- [Y 130a] -dirler ve cemî'i dilberân-ı Mısır bu halîce girüp âşîkları ile bilâ-vâsita bî-pâk u bî-pervâ kuc kucağ dirâgûş olunurlar,* in EÇS, V.X, 154). Sexual intercourse in the old city of Zeyla was common and available; and there were exceptional virgins whose virginity regenerated itself. (*Ve cimâ'ı bu şehrin gâyet lezîzdir. Ve Hitâyî dedikleri zenânelerinden kûsâm-ı hâsıl-ı kâm masdar-ı insân-ı kân bu diyâra mahsûsdur. Her cem'iyyetde bâkire bulunur mahbûbeleri vardır,* in EÇS, V.X, 490). For Egyptians it would be unacceptable to celebrate just the two sacred fests of Islam, as it is the case in the lands of Rum. (*Vilayet-i Rum gibi yıldan yıla iki 'id-i şerîf şadmanisine münhasur olması gayr-i müyesserdir,* in DC, 107). Cairene women were making “all sorts of movements during intercourse ... [and] motions like an Arabian horse that has slipped out from under its rider, thereby enchanting sexual enjoyment” and they had lips “delicious as the cane sugar of Egypt.” (*Zenlerinin zahiren mezmumü l-etvar olmaları amma hüsn u şivede xususa ganc u delal u 'işvede qudret u meharetları memul olandan efzunderdür... esna-i cima'da xod gunagun cünbişleri ve binici altından çıqmış esb-i tazı gibi ekserinin mezid-i lezzet-i shehevani olur qanışları...* in DC, 113). Some examples of “despotism”: It is necessary to kill people to restrain the Egyptian *fellah*, because without strong measures it would be impossible to suppress them. (*Islâh-ı âlem için böyle âdem katl etmese Mısır fellâhının zabtı rabtı mümkün değildir,* in EÇS, V.X, 43; *Hemân Mısır'a bir hâkim-i cebbâr lâzımdır, ammâ gulû-yı âm edüp hükûmet etmeğe dahi komazlar,* in EÇS, V.X, 43). If there were no officials around, the *urban* (Bedouins) and *fellahin* would have killed each other (*Yohsa hâkim tarafından âdem olmasa Urbân ve fellâhîn birbirlerini katl ederlerdi,* in EÇS, V.X, 184). The *fellahin* were of willful, hostile, and tyrannical nature. (*Mısır fellâhları kavm-i*

both authors' narratives. The images of the "other" are generated by geographic, ethnic, economic, and educational lines. If we look closer at the Ottoman context, there is a powerful center with positional superiority and a physically and mentally distant province — in this case, Egypt. For sure, in the Ottoman example, the relationship is not one between colonizers and colonized. The Ottoman imperial center claimed not only political dominance but also moral superiority as will be shown by several examples. Then, the question to ask would be: Did the Ottoman literati "orientalize" their eastern provinces? This question has no simple answer.

Placing the early modern Ottoman world in the Orientalism discourse as a dominant power center would not be unusual; but apart from the obvious problem of historical anachronism, the Ottoman Empire was itself categorized as the "Orient" in the Western accounts. Said's Orientalism was not an exception.<sup>51</sup> As neither the East nor the Ottoman Empire were monolithic entities, the sources from within the Empire will contribute to the discussion of Orientalism on different layers by depicting different "other"izations within the Empire. In that perspective, a closer focus on the narratives of early modern Ottoman authors will enrich the literature of Orientalism, especially with respect to the Ottoman Empire.

Although the Ottoman Empire is either neglected or marginalized in many studies about Orientalism, the question of Ottoman Orientalism has been a popular topic among Ottomanists throughout the last decade. Eminent authors such as Ussama Makdisi, Selim Deringil, Edhem Eldem, Hakan Karateke and Şükrü Hanioglu discussed the possibility and

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*Fir'avnî bir alay kavm-i cebbârîn ve anûd, hasûd, fessâk kavimdir, görmeğe muhtâc kavimdirler*, EÇS, V.X, 185). Mustafa Âli explained that the "Pharaonization" was caused by the water of the Nile, and as a consequence, the governors of Egypt became autocratic. This "Pharaonization" was inherited from pre-Islamic history of Egypt. (*Ekseriya hakimlerinün fir'avniyeti, şürb-i ma'i Nile binaen tefer'ünleri haleti ve kin u kibr u gurura müte'allik xasletidür-ki mutlaka zaman-i devlet-i islamiyeden evvel gelenlerin cebbariyeti sıfatleri ruşendür*, in DC, 120-121).

<sup>51</sup> For a critical approach towards Said's ignorance of the Ottoman Empire see Esin Akalın, "The Ottoman Phenomenon and Edward Said's Monolithic Discourse on the Orient," in *Challenging the Boundaries*, ed. Işıl Bas and Donald Freeman (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2007); and Selim Deringil, "'They Live in a State of Nomadism and Savagery': The Late Ottoman Empire and the Post-Colonial Debate," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 45, (2003).



extent of “Ottoman Orientalism.”<sup>52</sup> However, in most of these cases, available studies focused on the late Ottoman Period and the internal and external impacts of European colonialism. Ottoman Orientalism was portrayed as a prevalent and characteristic feature of Ottoman modernization.<sup>53</sup>

To claim that Mustafa Âli and Evliya Çelebi, two early modern Ottoman intellectuals, were Orientalists would be too far-fetched and anachronistic. Orientalism has many modern connotations and it is closely linked to industrialism, colonialism, and the rise of the West. However, the similarities in their narratives to the later discourse of Orientalism necessitate some kind of explanation, or at least, they deserve scholarly attention. This thesis argues that the center, Istanbul, was the reference point for the Ottomans; and “all other parts of the imperium earned their ‘oriental’ statuses with regard to their spatial and cultural distance to this center.”<sup>54</sup> The perceptions of Evliya Çelebi and Mustafa Âli were shaped according to a “regionalistic referential system,” as referred by Karateke, and in Cairo, both Evliya Çelebi and Mustafa Âli observed many customs, manners and attitudes that were strikingly divergent from the norms set and observed in the imperial center. Consequently, I believe Egypt served as a kind of “Orient,” at least for the Ottoman literati coming from the imperial center, Istanbul, in the early modern period.

In the following chapters, I will discuss some outstanding themes in the narratives of Evliya Çelebi and Mustafa Âli. I will focus on the questions of being an Istanbulite or Cairene (namely the question of Ottoman identity); the authors’ position towards *Rumî* identity; as well as their reflections on manners, customs, and public visibility.

In accordance with the purpose of the study, this thesis is divided into three chapters in which different facets of Mustafa Âli’s and Evliya Çelebi’s narratives as well as the question of Ottoman Orientalism are discussed. I have chosen to use Evliya Çelebi’s *Book*

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<sup>52</sup>Makdisi, *Ottoman Orientalism*; Deringil, *Nomadism and Savagery*; Edhem Eldem, “Ottoman and Turkish Orientalism,” *Architectural Design*, 80 (2010); Şükrü Hanioglu, “Osmanlı Yapamadı ama Biz Başardık: Türk Oryantalizmi,” *Sabah Gazetesi*, February 27, 2011; Hakan Karateke, “Gurbet,” (Unpublished article, 2011). I am very grateful to Prof. Hakan Karateke for allowing me to read and cite his unpublished article.

<sup>53</sup> See for example Makdisi, *Ottoman Orientalism* and Deringil, *Nomadism and Savagery*.

<sup>54</sup> Karateke, *Gurbet*.

*of Travels* and Mustafa Âli's *Description of Cairo*. Due to my personal interest and due to the nature of the primary sources chosen, some topics such as customs, manners, gender, and public visibility are more prominent in this study. While this study focuses on two major primary sources, a more thorough analysis, which will be beyond the physical limits of this thesis, would certainly require the study of other contemporary primary sources in a comparative fashion. In a similar respect, looking from the other side, using primary sources by Egyptian writers, would enrich this study.<sup>55</sup> In addition, especially with regard to the discussion of Orientalism and its arguments, it would have been interesting to include contemporary European sources.<sup>56</sup> But this will, again, be beyond the purposes and physical extent of this thesis. Having these limitations in mind, I believe that this thesis would be helpful in shedding light on the perceptions between Istanbul and Cairo by following the paths of two prominent figures of the early modern period.

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<sup>55</sup> Some of the Egyptian writers and their perceptions will be mentioned in the course of this study; however these observations rely on the secondary sources.

<sup>56</sup> A very interesting example for comparison would be *Osmanlıda Bir Köle, Brettenli Michael Heberer'in Anıları 1585-1588*. (Michael Heberer von Bretten, *Osmanlıda Bir Köle, Brettenli Michael Heberer'in Anıları 1585-1588*, trans. Türkis Noyan (Istanbul: Kitap Yayınevi, 2003).

## 2. AN OTTOMAN / *RUMÎ* IDENTITY

In this chapter, I aim to clarify how two Istanbulite literati in Egypt, Mustafa Âli and Evliya Çelebi, defined their identities and underlined the superiority of their homeland, the core lands of the Empire. Today, nationalistic narratives of historiography and popular accounts refer them as *Turks*; they, however, called themselves *Rumîs*.<sup>57</sup> In this section, I will focus on the definition of *Rumî* identity, while referring to some of the authors who tackled the question of who the *Rumî* people were, and where the boundaries of their lands lay.

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<sup>57</sup> Both Evliya Çelebi's and Mustafa Âli's short biographies are available from different series entitled as *Turkish Grandees (Türk Büyükleri)*. See for example, Mustafa İsen, *Gelibolulu Mustafa Âli* (Ankara: Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı Yayınları – Türk Büyükleri Dizisi; 1. edition, 1988). A search in Google using keywords “Evliya Çelebi” and “Türk Büyükleri” gives around 6410 results, and in the case of “Mustafa Âli” and “Türk Büyükleri” it is around 943 results. (Date retrieved: 05 August 2011).

## 2. 1. Literature Review: *Rumî* Identity

*Rumî* identity is a subtopic of the broader question of Ottoman identity. The Ottomans reigned over a vast geography with people of different faiths and subjects speaking different languages. Apart from that, there were remarkable cultural, social, and class differences within society. A complete picture of the Ottoman identity needs to cover not only the Muslim ruling elite or people from the core lands (“the lands of *Rum*”), but also include the people of different faiths, schools of thought, ethnic minorities, and different social strata.<sup>58</sup> Only then is it possible to have a more realistic and complete picture of the quests and question of Ottoman identity. However, as the key persons of this thesis were early modern literati defining themselves as *Rumîs*, and as their *Rumîness* shaped their perception of Cairo, this section has the *Rumî* identity at its center.

Though there are several works that delve into the topic of *Rumî* identity, they can only be found by searching through sub-disciplines, as they are scattered among various sources. Among these, architectural history and provincial studies are prominent sub-disciplines that address the question. Since the *Rumî* people had their own distinct architectural style, *Rumîs* compared styles of construction observed on their explorations to the lands of *Rum*. Thus, the question of *Rumîness* has been linked in close connection with architectural history.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> See for example Baki Tezcan and Karl Barbir, *Identity and Identity Formation in the Ottoman World: A Volume of Essays in Honor of Norman Itzkowitz* (Madison: University of Wisconsin, Center for Turkish Studies, 2007). There are some other studies that have the phrase “Ottoman Identity” at the title. Examples are Taner Timur, *Osmanlı Kimliği* (Ankara: İmge Kitabevi, 1998); İlber Ortaylı, “Osmanlı Kimliği,” *Cogito* 19 (1999); Salih Özbaran, *Bir Osmanlı Kimliği, 14-17. Yüzyillarda Rûm/Rûmi Aidiyet ve Imgeleri* (Istanbul: Kitap Yayınevi, 2004). Both Timur’s book and Ortaylı’s article focus on the late Ottoman period. Özbaran’s book is the most comprehensive study on *Rumî* identity between 14<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. The book is published in Turkish. [The title in translation: *An Ottoman Identity. The Rûm and Rûmi Belongings and Images in 14<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> centuries*].

<sup>59</sup> See for example Tülay Artan, “Questions of Ottoman Identity and Architectural History,” published in *Rethinking Architectural Historiography*, eds. Dana Arnold, Elvan Altan Ergut

In studies on provinces and, in this specific example, on Egypt, several authors elaborate extensively on the role of *Rumîs* as observers of Egyptians. Their perspective helps to shed light on the Ottoman presence in these lands. Apart from that, *Rumîs* are usually contrasted with the others living in Egypt: *Arabs* and *Acems*.<sup>60</sup>

All the studies covered in this chapter agree that trying to define *Rumî* identity or the borders of the lands of *Rum* is a difficult task. This is not only because of the porous boundaries and flexible identities of the early modern world, but also because of probable drawbacks of using ethnic and geographic identity markers.<sup>61</sup> Keeping these complications in mind, it is necessary to define *Rumî* provisionally. Briefly, “*Rumî* by ethnicity” is used to denote “someone from western Anatolia or the eastern Balkans, particularly the vicinity of the imperial capital.”<sup>62</sup> Defining the lands of *Rum* as “a region corresponding to the Eastern Roman domains, commonly designating Anatolia and the Balkans” is likewise possible,

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and Belgin Turan Özkaya, (London: Routledge, 2006); Gülru Necipoğlu and Sibel Bozdoğan, *Muqarnas: History and Ideology: Architectural Heritage of the "Lands of Rum,"* 24, (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2007); Çiğdem Kafescioğlu, “Rûmî Kimliğinin Görsel Tanımları: Osmanlı Seyahat Anlatılarında Kültürel Sınırları ve Mimari Tarz,” *Journal of Turkish Studies*, 31/II, (2007).

<sup>60</sup> See for example Jane Hathaway, "Egypt in the Seventeenth Century," in *The Cambridge History of Egypt: Modern Egypt, from 1517 to the End of the Twentieth Century. The Cambridge History of Egypt 2*, ed. M. W. Daly and Carl F. Petry, (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Jane Hathaway “The Evlâd-i 'Arab ('Sons of the Arabs') in Ottoman Egypt: A Rereading,” in *Frontiers of Ottoman Studies: State, Province, and the West V. I*, ed. Colin Imber and Keiko Kiyotaki (London, New York: I.B. Tauris, 2005); Doris Behrens-Abouseif, *Egypt's Adjustment to Ottoman rule*; Michael Winter, "Cultural Ties between Istanbul and Ottoman Egypt," in *Frontiers of Ottoman Studies: State, Province, and the West V. I*, ed. Colin Imber and Keiko Kiyotaki, (London, New York: I.B. Tauris, 2005); Michael Winter, "Ottoman Egypt, 1525-1609," in *The Cambridge History of Egypt: Modern Egypt, from 1517 to the End of the Twentieth Century. The Cambridge History of Egypt 2*, ed. M. W. Daly and Carl F. Petry (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

<sup>61</sup> For a different example comparing the fluidity of identities in the early modern world in cases of French and Ottoman Empires, see Christine Isom-Verhaaren. “Shifting Identities: Foreign State Servants in France and the Ottoman Empire,” *Journal of Early Modern History* (2004).

<sup>62</sup> Hathaway, *Egypt in the Seventeenth Century*, 53.

with a special reference to the root of the word, Rome or Romans.<sup>63</sup> Many erudite (and lesser educated) people of Asia Minor had no problem with identifying themselves as *Rumîs* or their lands as the lands of *Rum*.<sup>64</sup> This usage was accepted by Turkish-speaking people to address the lands where they lived, and over which they reigned. However, it is necessary to first note that the word *Rum* had no static definition throughout the centuries. Sharing a similar fate with many loan words, the word *Rumî* underwent a shift in its meaning in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.<sup>65</sup> It originated as a reference to the Muslims in Asia Minor both by foreigners as well as by Muslims. After that, the lands of *Rum* corresponded to not only a physical but also a cultural space.<sup>66</sup> In that respect, the lands of *Rum* provide historians a “particularly fertile starting point” for discussion: In contrast to the “Ottoman Empire” or “Turkey,” the “lands of *Rum*” were a “more inclusive and evocative designation,” especially because of its “impurity,” “hybridity,” and its ability to question the dominant “essentialist” constructs of Ottoman history.<sup>67</sup>

As it will be seen in the forthcoming examples throughout this thesis, the Ottoman literati referred to themselves as *Rumîs*. Kafadar argues that the term *Rumî* was not used in European languages; but it was widely used in Arabic, Persian, and Turkish.<sup>68</sup> However,

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<sup>63</sup> Gülru Necipoğlu and Sibel Bozdoğan, “Entangled Discourses: Scrutinizing Orientalist and Nationalist Legacies in the Architectural Historiography of the ‘Lands of *Rum*’,” in Gülru Necipoğlu and Sibel Bozdoğan, *Muqarnas: History and Ideology: Architectural Heritage of the “Lands of Rum,”* 24 (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2007) 2; Cemal Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds: The Construction of the Ottoman State*, (Berkeley : University of California Press, 1995) 1-2.

<sup>64</sup> Cemal Kafadar, “A Rome of One’s Own: Reflections on Cultural Geography and Identity in the Lands of *Rum*,” in Gülru Necipoğlu and Sibel Bozdoğan, *Muqarnas: History and Ideology: Architectural Heritage of the “Lands of Rum,”* 24 (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2007)7.

<sup>65</sup> It is also important to recall the contemporary usage of the word. In time, *Rumî*’s meaning shifted and there occurred a distinction between the “*Rumî*” and the “*Rum*”; “*Rum*” started to be used to refer Greeks or Greek Orthodox people. Kafadar, *Rome*, 11.

<sup>66</sup> Kafadar, *Rome*, 9-11.

<sup>67</sup> Necipoğlu and Bozdoğan, *Entangled Discourses*, 2-3.

<sup>68</sup> Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds*, 1.

Özbaran denotes that in Portuguese historiography and archival documents the word *Rumî* was commonly used, and he argues that this usage might have been transferred from North to South Africa. I agree with his note that with further studies historians will be able to trace the different names, identities, and portrayls of Ottomans in foreign lands.<sup>69</sup>

In the secondary literature on the Ottoman Empire, the words *Rumî* and *Turk* are often used synonymously. For example, in his translation of *Description of Cairo*, Tietze translates *Rumî* as *Turk*. Likewise, Michael Winter treats the terms *Rumî* and *Turk* as synonyms.<sup>70</sup> It should be noted that Özbaran criticizes both Tietze and Winter because of their overly simplistic translation. Özbaran rightly claims that the translation of *Rumî* as *Turk* would lead to a loss of some nuances which are significant to understand the complex characteristics of the identities in the early modern Ottoman Empire. Added to this, the loss in translation causes a poor understanding of Ottoman identity because in this definition, the way Ottoman intellectuals described themselves is kept in the dark.<sup>71</sup>

Because *Rumî* and *Turk* were used to refer to the same people, this discussion requires a closer look at the etymology of *Turk*, too. First, it is important to recognize that the term *Turk* was used in a broad sense in the Ottoman period. In the accounts of some Arab historians, even the Circassians were regarded as *Turks*, and the Turkish-speaking Ottoman soldiers from the Balkans were considered *Turks*.<sup>72</sup> The fact that *Rumîs* spoke Turkish makes the situation more complex. Kafadar argues that these identity markers pointed to different social strata. *Rumî* people spoke a “refined” Turkish, regardless of the fact that they may not have been native speakers. They were a part of an “urban culture”

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<sup>69</sup> Özbaran, *Osmanlı Kimliği*, 25.

<sup>70</sup> Michael Winter, *Egyptian Society under Ottoman Rule, 1517 – 1798* (London; New York: Routledge, 1992) 31; 38-39; 44-46.

<sup>71</sup> Özbaran, *Osmanlı Kimliği*, 89-90; 95-96.

<sup>72</sup> Considering the reign of Mamluks, Ayalon points to two different uses of *Turk*. First, it was an equivalent term to Mamluk; *dawlat al-turk* or *dawlat al-atrak* was used with reference to Mamluk Kingdom. In the second usage it was a common name for the people coming from the Kipchak plain. In David Ayalon, “The Circassians in the Mamluk Kingdom,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 69/3 (1949): 137, footnote: 19.

with “urban cultural preferences.” On the contrary, *Turks* were associated with a nomadic way of living and culture. In that respect, the dichotomy of “*Rumî* vs. *Türk*,” indicated a social class differentiation that Kafadar resembles the one between “bourgeois vs. rustic.”<sup>73</sup> *Türk* was used conventionally to refer to unsophisticated people, criminals, nomads, and peasants who were originally Turkish speakers. Similar connotations were valid for its Arabic plural form, *etrak*; however, *etrak* was also commonly used to label the Turcoman tribes. Though, these ordinary approaches interpreting *Türk* as a derogatory term is too vague.<sup>74</sup> Hakan Erdem criticizes the conventional approach to define the Turkish identity necessarily as a lower social status or ethnic/primordial category. Using *Aşık Paşazade Tarihi*, Erdem shows that the Muslims/Ottomans were not hesitant to call themselves *Turks*, at least for the early periods.<sup>75</sup> This, again, denotes the multi-faceted use of different identity markers.

The effort to define *Rumî* and *Türk* usually involves defining others, because comparisons to others carry hints about one’s own identity. To define what something is, we often rely on first identifying what it is not. In that respect it is more than necessary to look at people who were not *Rumîs* or *Turks*, namely the *Arabs* and *Acems*.

Using imperial decrees as primary source, Winter asserts that there was no crystal-clear definition of who was considered to be *Arabs*. *Arabs* may have denoted the Bedouins, or people of Arabic origin, *evlâd-ı ‘Arab*, or Arabic-speaking people in these lands. The term *Arab* was not commonly used to refer to the settled people in towns whose native language was Arabic. During both the Middle Ages and Ottoman period the term “*Arab*” was used “almost exclusively” to refer to the Bedouin people, and many among the

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<sup>73</sup> Kafadar, *Rome*, 10; 16.

<sup>74</sup> Kafadar, *Rome*, 11.

<sup>75</sup> Hakan Erdem, “Osmanlı Kaynaklarından Yansıyan Türk İmaj(lar)ı,” in *Dünyada Türk İmgesi*, ed. Özlem Kumrular, (Istanbul: Kitap Yayınevi, 2005) 13-26.



Bedouins were not nomads.<sup>76</sup> Some were semi-nomads, some lived on farms, and their way of living was close to *fallahin*.<sup>77</sup> The differences were in the Bedouins' tribal structure, the assertion of an Arabic ancestral origin, and their military skills. Bedouins carried arms and were successful riders renowned for their warlike traits. According to the official Ottoman perspective, Bedouins disturbed the peace and caused rebellions, and they had a negative impact on public welfare. Ottoman soldiers were strongly encouraged to engage in fights with Bedouins and kill as many as possible.<sup>78</sup>

In the *Evlâd-i 'Arab ('Sons of the Arabs') in Ottoman Egypt*, Hathaway points out the use of the phrase *Evlâd-i 'Arab* in Ottoman and Arabic chronicles. She criticizes the superficial approach of using the modern meanings of terms while disregarding their specific historical context. Hathaway argues that Winter perceived *Evlâd-i 'Arab* as an ethnic term in the modern sense.<sup>79</sup> Hathaway refers to the *Description of Cairo* and highlights Mustafa Ali's description of *evlâd-i 'Arab* as people with ugly features. Taking Mustafa Âli's use of the word *Arab* as an indicator of the use of the word in the seventeenth century, Hathaway argues:

“The wording implies that [Mustafa Âli] is not completely sure what kind of people these are; he simply knows that they are called *evlâd-i 'Arab*. For Bedouin tribes, in contrast, he typically employs the plural *urbân*.<sup>80</sup> The singular 'Arab, on the other hand, seems to refer to a sub-Saharan African. Notwithstanding, his wording implies

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<sup>76</sup> Winter, *Ottoman Egypt*, 21-22. Jane Hathaway, too, gives a very similar definition for Arabs: “Arab was typically used to designate the nomadic Bedouin or, more broadly, nomads in general, including those who might not be Arabic-speaking or ethnically Arab.” In Hathaway, *Evlâd-i 'Arab*, 207.

<sup>77</sup> *fallahin* (also as *fellahin*) pl. of *fellah*., used to refer to Arab villagers or agriculturalist. *Redhouse Turkish/Ottoman - English Dictionary*, s.v. “fallahin”.

<sup>78</sup> Winter, *Ottoman Egypt*, 21-22.

<sup>79</sup> Hathaway, *Evlâd-i 'Arab*, 203-204.

<sup>80</sup> pl. of Bedouins. For a detailed account of Bedouins' position in Egyptian society, as well as their reciprocal relation with the Mamluks, see Aharoni Reuven, “Bedouin and Mamluks in Egypt – Co-existence in a State of Duality,” in *Mamluks in Egyptian and Syrian Politics and Society*, ed. Michael Winter and Amalia Levanoni (Brill: Leiden, Boston, 2004).

that the *evlâd-i 'Arab* are highly localised: that is, they belong to the established Cairene population and thus qualify as *beledî* [native].”<sup>81</sup>

Hathaway’s article begins with an imperial decree forbidding the *Evlâd-i 'Arab* from serving in the army.<sup>82</sup> However, it was neither realistic nor possible to avoid the participation of *Arabs* in the Ottoman army as local powers. The Ottoman army in Egypt had two military divisions: Ottomans and Egyptians (although these divisions were named and structured differently from time to time).<sup>83</sup> It is worth noting that the appearances of Ottoman and Egyptian soldiers were markedly different. The Ottomans had beards while Mamluks were clean-shaven.<sup>84</sup> Problems among these two groups were common; however, for the early modern period, the rifts between the two were not ethnic-based or nationalistic. Rather, they were based on the soldiers’ economic power, social background, or opposing mentalities.<sup>85</sup>

Similar to the problems raised with the definition of *Arabs* and *Rumîs*, it is equally difficult to come up with a clear-cut answer to the question of who the *Acems* were. In the Ottoman world, *Acem* characteristically meant Persian or, in some instances, foreign.<sup>86</sup> Doris Behrens-Abouseif indicates that the term was used to refer to Persians or *Turks* from Azerbaijan. In the relevant footnote, the author mentions a *Rumî* known as Mahmud al-‘Acemi, from Tabriz.<sup>87</sup> This example portrays the complexity of the questions regarding the

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<sup>81</sup> Hathaway, *Evlâd-i 'Arab*, 207.

<sup>82</sup> Hathaway, *Evlâd-i 'Arab*, 203-216.

<sup>83</sup> Winter, *Ottoman Egypt*, 14-15.

<sup>84</sup> Winter, *Re-emergence of Mamluks*, 92.

<sup>85</sup> Winter, *Ottoman Egypt*, 15; see also Winter, *Re-emergence of Mamluks*, 99.

<sup>86</sup> The dictionary definition for the word *Acem* is as follows: (I) (1) Persian, (2) *pop.* non-Persian native of Iran, esp. a Shiite Turk from Azerbaijan. (II) *Irnd.* the non-Arabs, the non-Arabic speaking nations, esp., Persians. *Redhouse Turkish/Ottoman - English Dictionary*, s.v. "Acem". In Gustav Bayerle’s *Pashas, Begs, and Effendis: A Historical Dictionary of Titles and Terms in the Ottoman Empire* (Istanbul: Isis, 1997), ‘Acem is defined as Persia, and also as any foreign region.

<sup>87</sup> Behrens-Abouseif, *Egypt’s Adjustment*, 98.

identification of *Rumîs*, *Turks*, *Arabs*, and *Acems*, and the frequent overlaps of these identities. This example also shows that none of these terms could have referred to pure ethnic distinctions associated with the contemporary nationalistic mindset.

## 2.2. Istanbulites in Egypt

As this thesis aims to understand the perceptions of two Istanbulites toward Egypt, it is necessary to understand how Evliya Çelebi and Mustafa Âli became Istanbulites, a term that meant much more than being a native to the city. In the case of Istanbul, one is not born, but rather *becomes* an Istanbulite.<sup>88</sup> This term referred to a cultural sphere of belonging and etiquette. For instance, the dictionary definition for *Istanbul efendisi* is not a man from Istanbul, but a “real gentleman.”<sup>89</sup>

Evliya Çelebi was born in Istanbul into a family with close connections to the imperial court. He was raised in his father’s house in Unkapanı where he received his early education, and he sometimes accompanied his father to court. His advanced training in Islamic and Ottoman sciences and arts prepared him for being an Istanbulite gentleman; consequently he served the sultan and several pashas. But, he acknowledged that his ancestral town was Kütahya, and he was acting as the *mütevelli* of his forefather Kara Mustafa Beg’s *waqf*.<sup>90</sup> In Dankoff’s words:

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<sup>88</sup> An interesting treatise about the life and etiquette of 18<sup>th</sup> century Istanbul is *Risale-i Garibe*. Hayati Develi (ed.) *XVIII. Yüzyıl İstanbul Hayatına dair Risâle-i Garîbe*. (Cağaloğlu, Istanbul: Kitabevi, 1998).

<sup>89</sup> *Redhouse Turkish/Ottoman - English Dictionary*, s.v. "Istanbul efendisi".

<sup>90</sup> Dankoff, *Ottoman Mentality*, Ch 1: Man of Istanbul, 9-47.

“Evliya was a Sunni Muslim, an Ottoman *Turk*, an Istanbulite, and a graduate of the Ottoman palace. He identified with the Ottoman elite, who shared these points of reference.”<sup>91</sup>

Evliya Çelebi’s perception of other places was shaped by his education and Istanbulite/*Rumî*, identity. This “special way of looking at the world” is a reflection of his “Ottoman Mentality,”<sup>92</sup> characterized by features like “Islam, Persianate culture, Turkish language and traditions, Ottoman dynastic interests, and the imperial outlook of Constantinople, with its Roman-Byzantine and *Rumelian-Anatolian* aspects.”<sup>93</sup> In that respect, Evliya Çelebi can be seen as the “archetypal” Ottoman intellectual.<sup>94</sup> His narrative is especially valuable to uncover the “Ottoman Mentality,” as he was one of the few Ottoman intellectuals who included autobiographical details in his narrative. For example, he didn’t shy away from sharing with his readers that he had been cured after twenty years of impotency.<sup>95</sup>

Likewise, Mustafa Âli’s *Description of Cairo* is very noteworthy for the purposes of this thesis because of his narrative’s subjectivity. Mustafa Âli’s own assessments and their explicitness make *Description of Cairo* a prominent source to trace the Ottoman literati’s perceptions toward Egypt and Egyptians.<sup>96</sup> Some even argue that the *Description of Cairo* is “too literary to be dependable” although it has many keen, lively, and sound remarks about Egyptian society.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> Dankoff, *Ottoman Mentality*, 48.

<sup>92</sup> *An Ottoman Mentality: The World of Evliya Çelebi* is a telling title.

<sup>93</sup> Dankoff, *Ottoman Mentality*, 7.

<sup>94</sup> Dankoff, *Ottoman Mentality*, 7.

<sup>95</sup> In EÇS, V.1, xxx. According to Dankoff, this healing is more of a cliché. For a detailed discussion of the topic, see Dankoff, *Ottoman Mentality*, 118-119.

<sup>96</sup> Behrens-Abouseif, *Egypt’s Adjustment*, 13.

<sup>97</sup> Winter, *Ottoman Egypt*, 3.

Unlike Evliya Çelebi, Mustafa Âli was not born in Istanbul, as his full name Gelibolulu [from Gallipoli] Mustafa Âli indicates:

“My home is the land of Gelibolu;  
It is a crossroads, the path to Arabia and Persia.  
That marvelous spot, at the edge of the sea!  
Its gardens and meadows are like those of pure Heaven.”<sup>98</sup>

These lines of Mustafa Âli depict clearly that he, too, praised his homeland, even though he was an Istanbulite due to his roles in the literate elite circles of Istanbul. Mustafa Âli started his formal education with the age of six, and during the early years of his instruction, he started learning both Arabic and Persian. As a result of being a successful student, and benefiting from his family’s connections, he went to Istanbul at the age of fifteen to start with *medrese* education. His access to higher level education enabled him to pursue a scholarly career.<sup>99</sup> At the end, he chose a bureaucratic career rather than a religious one, and he was one of the most prolific writers of the early modern Ottoman world.<sup>100</sup> As in the case of Evliya Çelebi, Mustafa Âli’s life and his writings on Cairo shed light on the “Ottoman Mentality.” Both authors were Istanbulites in Egypt, which shaped their accounts on Egypt and Cairo.

The centrality, fertility, and uniqueness of Egypt stand out in both Evliya Çelebi’s and Mustafa Âli’s narratives, and similar observations are available in almost every work on Egypt. They both referred to the *hadiths* and sayings praising Egypt as a prosperous country, similar to a paradise on earth, and the home of saintly men.<sup>101</sup>

The dialogue Evliya Çelebi penned reflects all these features beautifully:

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<sup>98</sup> Lines are written by Mustafa Âli in 1593, in his *Sadef-i sad Güher (The Lustre of a Hundred Jewels)*. Cited and translated by Cornell Fleischer. In Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and Intellectual*, 13.

<sup>99</sup> Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and Intellectual*, 21-33.

<sup>100</sup> For a detailed account of Âli’s education and early career-building steps, see *The Making of an Ottoman*, in Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and Intellectual*, 13-40.

<sup>101</sup> See for example DC, 29.

They asked “*Oh my friend? Where are you from?*”  
 The wise and elegant fellow replied, “*From Egypt*”  
 They asked “*From which neighborhood are you?*”  
 The fellow said “*From the Bagdad neighborhood.*”  
 They said “*You, elegant fellow, the travel between Bagdad and Egypt would take three months over the desert. What kind of answer is this?*”  
 The fellow answered “*What I call Egypt is the world. Maybe Egypt is the Mother of the World. The provinces Bağdâd, Basra, Lahsa, Yemen, Aden, Sa ‘îd, İsvân and Sudân are all the neighborhoods of Egypt.*” Indeed the fellow’s words were pearls of wisdom.<sup>102</sup>

Although the lands of *Rum* were the geographical and theological center of the Ottoman intellectuals’ world, Egypt was the mother and the center of the earth as a consequence of its location, prosperity and distinctiveness. Evliya informed his readers about the names of Egypt, the lands were called *Mısır, Makdoniyye, Efsus, Fustât, Mısrâyim, Ümmü Dünyâ* [mother of the world], *Kâhire-i Mu‘izziyye, Kâhire*.<sup>103</sup> It was named the “mother of the world” because in Egypt, there were all types of animals, various people from seventy two nations (*millet*) speaking 140 languages, people from the four different schools of jurisprudence; and they were all maintained by the divine support.<sup>104</sup> Evliya said that God gave the Earth a fertility of [the level of] ten; nine was given to Egypt, and the remaining one to the rest of the world.<sup>105</sup> Egypt was known to be a land where from

<sup>102</sup> “*Ey bürâder, ne diyârlısın?*” derler. *Ârif herîf-i zarîf, “Mısırlyam”, demiş. “Mısır’ın kankı mahallesindensin?”, demişler. Herîf, “Bağdâd mahallesindenim”, demiş. Sâ ‘il demiş kim: “Ey zarîf herîf, Bağdâd ile Mısır’ın mâbeyni çölden üç aylık yoldur. Bu ne cevâb verişdir”, demişler. Herîf eydir: “Mısır dediğim, dünyâdır. Belki Mısır Ümmü Dünyâ’dır. Bağdâd ve Basra ve Lahsa ve Yemen ve Aden [ve] Sa ‘îd ve İsvân ve Sûdân vilâyetleri Mısır’ın etrâfında birer mahallesidir” demiş. Hakkâ ki herîf kelâmında dür dizmiş.” in EÇS, V.X, 94.*

<sup>103</sup> The fact that *Mısır* (modern Turkish term for Egypt) was both used for the entire geographical region and for the city Cairo creates ambiguities in some instances.

<sup>104</sup> “*Ve Mısır’a Ümmü Dünyâ dediklerinin aslı budur ki cemî‘i dünyâda olan ecnâs-ı mahlûkât ve yetmiş iki millet ve yüz kırk lisân kelimât eden halk ve mezâhib-i erba ‘a kavmi bu Mısır’da mevcûd olup Mısır sebebiyle bu kadar mahlûk-ı Hudâ’yı Cenâb-ı Rab besler. Anıniçün Ümmü Dünyâ derler.” in EÇS, V.X, 259.*

<sup>105</sup> “*Cenâb-ı Bârî rûy-ı arza on berekât vermişdir, tokuzu Mısır’a, biri cümle dünyâyâ vermişdir, zîrâ iklim-i âhardır.” in EÇS V.X, 17.*

a single wheat germ hundreds of ears of grain grew, and in each ear of grain there were 100 green seeds.<sup>106</sup>

Apart from being the “mother of the world,” Egypt had an outstanding position among the Ottoman provinces as a result of its lands’ immensity and resourcefulness. Egypt’s significance to the Empire was twofold, both strategic and economic. Militarily, this province was a very important base for operations around Red Sea, Yemen Ethiopia (Habesh), and the Hijaz. Moreover, the conquest of Egypt created a great financial benefit. In addition to the high agricultural revenues and taxes, these lands had a great income from trade activities and customs. This economic surplus was used to finance the governor’s household, army, and operations based in Egypt. Additionally, the Egyptian treasury contributed to the expenses of the annual Hajj caravan, as well as pious and charitable projects. In addition to these monetary contributions, Egypt transferred various harvests and products like sugar, rice, lentils, and coffee to the imperial kitchens and shops.<sup>107</sup>

To understand the immensity of the province as well as its contributions to the Ottoman Empire, it should be sufficient to note that shortly after the Ottoman conquest, Egypt and Syria supplied one-third of the whole Empire’s income.<sup>108</sup> Evliya recounted that each year Egypt was able to provide the thirty fold of the Egyptian treasury. Each Egyptian treasury was registered as a new unit of measurement: 1,200 Egyptian purses, or *kîse-i Mısırî*.<sup>109</sup> Nevertheless, Egypt’s prosperity was not everlasting. Mustafa Âli reported that

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<sup>106</sup> “*Ve ol kadar zirâ ‘at edüp hubûbât-ı ganâyime mâlik oldular kim bir buğday dânesinden niçe yüz başak hâsıl olup her başakdan, âye[t]: "... her başakda yüz dâne (habbe) bulunan..."* in EÇS, V.X, 10.

<sup>107</sup> Winter, *Ottoman Egypt*, 5.

<sup>108</sup> Behrens-Abouseif, *Egypt’s Adjustment*, 25; 49-50.

<sup>109</sup> *Hâsıl-ı kelâm cümle Mısır’ın iş erlerinin kavlı-i sahîhleri üzre beher sene Mısır’dan otuz Mısır hazînesi mîrî için hâsıl olur, deyü tahrîr olunmuşdur. Ve her hazînesi bin ikişer yüz kîse-i Mısırî olmak üzredir.*” in EÇS, V.X, 81.

*kîse-i Mısırî*: “For large sums appearing in the Ottoman financial registers originating in Egypt, a new unit of account came into use in the seventeenth century, the *kese-i Mısri* (“Egyptian purse”) which equaled 25,000 *paras*. The *kese* was also used for *akçes* elsewhere in the Empire, with the *kese-i Rumî* equalling 50,000 *akçes*. The *kese-i Mısri* of 25,000 *paras* equalled 60,000 *akçes* regardless of the exchange rate between the two units.”

Egypt was no longer a profitable province at the turn of the seventeenth century, and the tributes were in decline.<sup>110</sup> Apparently, Egypt was touched by the seventeenth-century crisis.<sup>111</sup>

There is no consensus in the secondary literature on the impact of the Ottoman conquest to the flourishing of Egypt. However, most scholars note that the Ottoman rule in Egypt was “pragmatic.”<sup>112</sup> I believe this pragmatism was related to the preservation of the existing Sunni-Islamic tradition in Egypt as the Ottomans had to legitimize their conquest over a Sunni-Muslim population.

Winter argues that the Ottoman conquest meant Egypt had to integrate with an enormous empire. This coalescence led to a long period of affluence and effective governance. Before the conquest, Egyptian economy was suffering. The stability of Ottoman rule brought development and success — at least for a time. Cairo was at the center of the Empire’s commerce networks, and the economy thrived on the annual pilgrimage. The international coffee trade was a profitable business, and was popular among Egyptian merchants; it had even started to replace the spice trade. Ottoman elites in Egypt were also voracious consumers of luxury products, which accelerated the trade activity further.<sup>113</sup> Winter argues that the criticized growth of the Egyptian army’s and bureaucracy’s size was due to the “relatively good life” in Egypt and its “remoteness from

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In Şevket Pamuk, *A Monetary History of the Ottoman Empire* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000) 97: footnote 21.

<sup>110</sup> Behrens-Abouseif, *Egypt’s Adjustment*, 49-50.

<sup>111</sup> This crisis and the question of decline are already introduced in the introduction, and further discussion of these would be beyond the scope and aim of this thesis.

<sup>112</sup> Behrens-Abouseif, *Egypt’s Adjustment*, 274; also Winter, *Cultural Ties*, 200.

<sup>113</sup> Winter, *Cultural Ties*, 6.



the center.”<sup>114</sup> This change of the governing bodies can be described as a shift from being a military center into a source of revenue for the imperial center.<sup>115</sup>

Conversely, Behrens-Abouseif draws attention to the fact that the imperial preferentiality was for the capital, Istanbul.<sup>116</sup> The former imperial center of Mamluks, Egypt, was turned into an Ottoman province. Consequently, Cairo turned into a provincial center rather than an imperial one.<sup>117</sup> The economic boom was not accompanied by a cultural renaissance. Since Cairo was turned into a province, Egyptians lacked the support of a royal court to sponsor large-scale artistic projects.<sup>118</sup> The diminishing number of historical narratives in Egypt may be a consequence of this new provincial status.<sup>119</sup>

The Ottoman administration dealt with Egypt differently than other provinces; Egypt was treated as an exceptional case. The *timar* system was not applied to Egypt. Winter argues that Ottomans were aware of Egypt’s prosperity and functioning of agricultural and irrigational networks, so they did not intervene in the existing practices.<sup>120</sup> However, Hathaway criticizes other historians, arguing that they overlook the administrative changes in Egypt. Before the Ottoman conquest, there were *iqtas*, similar to the *timars*, in the Ottoman lands. Instead of keeping the *iqta* system, Ottomans introduced a new regime of

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<sup>114</sup> Winter, *Cultural Ties*, 7.

<sup>115</sup> Hathaway, *Egypt in the Seventeenth Century*, 36.

<sup>116</sup> Behrens-Abouseif, *Egypt’s Adjustment*, 221.

<sup>117</sup> Nelly Hanna, "Culture in Ottoman Egypt," in *The Cambridge History of Egypt: Modern Egypt, from 1517 to the end of the twentieth century. The Cambridge History of Egypt 2*, ed. M. W. Daly and Carl F. Petry, (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998) 88. For a critical approach toward the center-periphery discussion in the Ottoman Empire, see Alan Mikhail, *Nature and Empire in Ottoman Egypt: An Environmental History. Studies in Environment and History*. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011) 24-25.

<sup>118</sup> Behrens-Abouseif, *Egypt’s Adjustment*, 231.

<sup>119</sup> Winter, *Ottoman Egypt*, 2.

<sup>120</sup> Winter, *Ottoman Egypt*, 4.

tax collection by appointing *amins* from the center. During the seventeenth century they were replaced by tax farmers.<sup>121</sup> That the *timar* system was not applied in Egypt attracts Evliya Çelebi's attention, too. He mentions according to laws of Selim there were no *timar* or *zeamet* on the lands of Egypt.<sup>122</sup>

### 2. 3. Centrality and Superiority of the Homeland

Egypt was a prosperous country, and even became a second home for Evliya Çelebi. Cairo was brimming with possibilities for patronage and urban life. In that respect, it was similar to Evliya's hometown, Istanbul. Dankoff argues that Cairo's prominence as Evliya's "second home" presents itself in the comprehensive portrayal of Cairo, making up five percent of the whole *Book of Travels*, and the half of the tenth volume.<sup>123</sup> Both Evliya and Mustafa Âli emphasized the centrality and superiority of the lands of *Rum*, and its center Istanbul. Beyond being the center of the Ottoman Empire, Istanbul was "naturally" the center of the world. Although there are significant parallels in the books on Istanbul and Cairo, through closer reading, it is evident that Istanbul was the reference point for Evliya's understanding of the world and his comparisons.<sup>124</sup> First, as already mentioned, it was the capital city of the Empires. Second, Evliya was born and raised in Istanbul, and he returned

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<sup>121</sup> Jane Hathaway, "Mamluk Households' and 'Mamluk Factions' in Ottoman Egypt: a Reconsideration", in *The Mamluks in Egyptian Politics and Society*, ed. Thomas Philipp and Ulrich Haarman (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998) 108.

<sup>122</sup> "Ammâ bu dîvân ı Mısır'da sâ'ir eyâlet gibi tîmâr ve ze'âmet defterdârı ve defter emîni gibi kimesneler yokdur. Kânûn ı Selîm üzre cümle eyâlet i Mısır'da tîmâr ve ze'âmete müte'allık bir şey yokdur. Zîrâ cümle Mısır eyâleti hîn i tahrîrde cümle mîrî kayd olunmuş kurâlardır kim erbâb ı tîmâr ve zu'amâ ve çeribaşı ve alaybeği istimâ' olunmamışdır." in EÇS, V.X, 80.

<sup>123</sup> Dankoff, *Ottoman Mentality*, 47.

<sup>124</sup> Dankoff, *Ottoman Mentality*, 1; 46.

there recurrently as he was traveling. It was also the place where he served as a boon-companion to Sultan.

Evliya's comparisons to *Rum* cover a wide range of topics reflecting on the daily life in Egypt. For example, Evliya Çelebi was surprised to see the Egyptian bathhouses – to him, they were bizarre. Egyptians used several lead cauldrons for hot water and by transferring water from one to the other, they were able to have hot water at all times. By contrast, they had separate reservoirs for hot and cold water in *Rum*.<sup>125</sup> Also, when talking about the lack of wood in Egypt, Evliya makes a quip about the necessities of Egyptian people. After explaining that wood was not a natural resource in Egypt, he informed his readers that all the timber was imported from *Rum*, making it a scarce and expensive resource. Because of the lack of wood, Egyptians used dried cattle dung instead. He jokingly concluded that the whole Egyptian society was dependent on excrement.<sup>126</sup>

Winter interprets Evliya Çelebi's constant references to Istanbul as indicative of his homesickness. He argues that Evliya pursued things that would awaken memories of Istanbul, and he chooses supporting examples from the descriptions of Cairo's architecture by tracing phrases like *Rumî style*, *Rumî minaret*, *Istanbul style*. These are, according to Winter, perceptions of a traveler or an outsider.<sup>127</sup> In the tenth volume, Evliya occasionally

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<sup>125</sup> “*Ve suları aslâ sovumak bilmez, şeb [ü] rûz germâb durur. Zîrâ her hammâmın biri biri üzre dörder beşer kat kurşum kazanları vardır, birbirinden taşup hammâm içine cereyân eder. Anıniçün dâ'imâ ıssıdır. Ammâ Rûm'da ısıcak su hazînesi ve soğuk su hazînesi başkadır ve anların kazanı bakırdır. Ammâ Mısır'ın beşer altışar kazanı cümle kurşumdur. Aceb temâşâdır, bir diyâra mahsûs değildir, vâcibü's-seyr akla muhâlif bir san'atdır.*” in EÇS, V.X.,142.

<sup>126</sup> “*Hulâsa-i kelâm bâlâda tahrîr olunan meyvelerin ve eşcârâtların birisi bu Mısır diyârında olmaz. Cümle kereste ve ahşâbât Rûm'dan gemilerle gelmeğe muhtâcdır. Anıniçün odun kıtdır. Bir hamle odun seksen vukiyyedir, yigirmi otuz paraya fûrûht olunur. Ba'zı mahalde tûtiyâ-misâl attâr dükkânlarında vukiyyesi bir paraya bey' olunur. Rûm'dan tüccâr odun getirsinler deyü odundan gümrük alınmaz. Anıniçün cümle Mısır a'yân [u] eşrâf kibârı nebâtât [u] giyâhâtdan hâsıl olmuş gâv u bakar cüllesi ya'nî sığır tezeği yakarlar. Cümle halkı boka muhtâcdır*”. in EÇS, V.X, 272.

<sup>127</sup> Winter, *Cultural Ties*, 199. In contrast, Kafesçioğlu argues that Evliya was careful and attentive enough to point to every single building in *Rumî style*. In Kafesçioğlu, *Rûmî Kimliğin*, 63.

mentions his desire to go back home – or at least the reader gets the impression that he still had close physical and emotional ties to Istanbul. During his visit to Dimyât, he sent to his home in Istanbul excessive amounts of rice, lentil, linseed, chickpea, and other necessities.<sup>128</sup> As he was in Egypt, during his visits of the tombs and shrines, he cited the opening chapter of the Qur'an in the memories of the deceased, and prayed for divine blessing so that they could go back to the lands of *Rum* in peace.<sup>129</sup> In another instance, he offered to go to *Âsitane* to bring a petition to the Sultan.<sup>130</sup> All these examples demonstrate that Evliya Çelebi had in mind to return to Istanbul. The changing conditions around Evliya Çelebi during his travels may have contributed to his mindset. Although he was not traveling alone and he seemed to have been prepared and protected in most cases, there are some instances in which he was uncomfortable. On one occasion, he mentioned that he and his companions were lacking nourishment, and finding bread and butter, they became invigorated.<sup>131</sup> Evliya may have been homesick during his stay in Egypt; however it does not explain why he used Istanbul specifically as a point of reference throughout the *Book of Travels*, as there is no question about his avaricious wanderlust. Once, Evliya compared a stay of six months in Istanbul to a prison.<sup>132</sup> (However, I believe that this comparison was more of a narrative element to prepare his readers for the upcoming travels.)

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<sup>128</sup> “*Dimyât'a dâhil olup ertesi İslâmbol'da hânemize firâvân pirinç ve mercimek ve ketân ve nohud ve sâyir levâzımâtlar gönderüp.*” in EÇS, V.X, 392-393.

<sup>129</sup> “*Herbirin ziyâret etdikce birer Fâtiha ile yâd edüp selâmetle Rûm'a çıkmamıza himmetlerin ricâ ederim.*” in EÇS, V.X, 464.

<sup>130</sup> “*Arzı hakîre verin, bu ahvâle vâkıf oldum, Mısır vezîrine götüreyim, andan efendimize i'lâm [Q 336b] edeyim, [P 333b] andan murâdınız üzre Âsitâne'ye gideyim, dediğimizde...*” in EÇS, V.X, 487.

<sup>131</sup> “*Bu mahallerde bizim beksumâtımız hod kalmamış idi. Ekmeği tereyağ ile yiyüp tâze cân bulduk.*” in EÇS, V.X, 435.

<sup>132</sup> “I remained in Istanbul for six months, and it was like a prison.” In Dankoff, *Ottoman Mentality*, 6. In original: “*Ammâ İslâmbol'da altı ay meks edüp başıma zindân oldu.*” EÇS, V.IX, 6.

## 2.4. Tension between the Lands of *Rum* and Egypt

There is a striking episode in the first volume of the *Book of Travels*, that describes the tension between the center, Istanbul, and the “center-turned-into-a-province,” Cairo.<sup>133</sup> In Evliya Çelebi’s *Book of Travels*, one of the best-known parts is the procession of the guilds in Istanbul.<sup>134</sup> There, Evliya recounted an argument between the butchers and the merchants of Egypt.<sup>135</sup> According to the imperial decree, he narrates, it was the butchers’ turn in the procession. However, the merchants of Egypt requested priority, claiming that they were fulfilling a more important task by providing the city with affordable grains than the “bloody and tricky” butchers – who were, according to the merchants, causing the plague. The butchers defended themselves by underlining the importance of meat and their own generosity. They accused the merchants of profit seeking, which is unlawful according to Qur’an. The butchers pointed out that rice, hemp, lentils, and sugar were goods that were already available in the Ottoman lands, thus meaning there was no need for the Egyptian products. They claimed this was true for other Egyptian goods: coffee was not religiously condoned, and henna was easily replaceable. The merchants of Egypt replied by emphasizing the higher quality of their products, while questioning what the butchers’ contributed to the public treasury. At this point, the butchers could not reply, and the

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<sup>133</sup> As Dankoff includes the translation of this anecdote in *Ottoman Mentality*, I will be using his translation.

<sup>134</sup> In the symposium, *Evliya Çelebi’nin Yazılı Kaynakları* (17-18<sup>th</sup> of June 2010, Yıldız Teknik University, Istanbul), Feridun Emecen presented his article, *Seyyah ve Belge*. In his article, Emecen questions to what extent Evliya used official documents. In the symposium, he raised the doubt that the documents Evliya claimed to be using are disputable because of several inconsistencies throughout his narrative. It is also significant to note that the description of the guilds’ procession was supposedly based on an official document.

<sup>135</sup> On the merchants of Egypt: Although in Dankoff’s translation they are referred as the “Egyptian merchants”, I will refer them as merchants of Egypt, because in the Ottoman original, the phrase is “Mısır tüccarları.” This usage indicates to the merchants participating in trade activities between Egypt and Ottoman Empire, though they were not necessarily of Egyptian origin. I am grateful to Prof. Metin Kunt for drawing my attention to the loss of meaning in translation.

merchants declared their own great contribution to public treasury and requested again, “as a matter of justice,” a higher rank in the procession. Citing the *hadith* “[t]he best of men is he who is useful to mankind,” *Şeyhülislam* Yahya Efendi and *Mu’id* Ahmed Efendi supported the argument of the merchants, and the Sultan approved their request.<sup>136</sup>

It would be anachronistic to call this story “nationalistic,” but in some respects it has a proto-nationalist or mercantilist tone, seen with its claim that Ottomans did not need Egyptian goods. It is interesting that when the two parties appealed to authorities, they both referred to the Qur’an and the prophetic *sunna* to support their arguments. All in all, the story is both amusing and thought provoking, as it portrays the tension between Egypt and the center. It may also be read as a reflection of the fact that the Ottoman presence in Egypt was a topic that was discussed. Clearly, the affluence of Egypt and its large contribution to the treasury were impossible to ignore. However, according to the butchers who were living and working in the center, the merchants were the “others,” and the merchants’ products were not essential for the subsistence of the center. It is also worth mentioning that the victors of the story are the merchants. This suggests that at least among higher circles, Egypt’s contribution to the Empire was praised. Egypt as the geographical other and Egyptians as the others would be discussed further in the following chapters.

## 2.5. Mustafa Âli and Evliya Çelebi on *Rumî* Identity

Contemporary historians also tried to define *Rumî* identity. In that respect, Âli’s definitions are eminent and cited by many authors as they discuss the limits of *Rumîness*. As mentioned earlier, in the cultural context, *Rum* translated to the Anatolian and Balkan regions of the Ottoman Empire where the Ottomans settled in and expanded. Âli was

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<sup>136</sup> *Mu’id: The assistant of the scholars in madrasa. (DİA, V. 31)*. Dankoff, *Ottoman Mentality*, 87-89.

apparently “enthusiastic” about and “proud of” his *Rumî* origins and he was motivated by Ottoman expansion.<sup>137</sup>

In his world history, *Küh'ül Ahbar*, Âli defined *Rumîness* as follows:

“Those varied peoples and different types of *Rumîs* living in the glorious days of Ottoman dynasty, who are not generically separate from those tribes of Turks and Tatars ... are a select community and pure, pleasing people who, just as they are distinguished in the origins of their state, are singled out for their piety [*diyânet*], cleanliness [*nezâfet*], and faith [*akîdet*]. Apart from this, most inhabitants of *Rum* are of confused ethnic origins. Among its notables there are few whose lineage does not go back to a convert to Islam ... Either on their father or their mother’s side, the genealogy is traced to a filthy infidel ... The best qualities of the progenitors were then manifested and gave distinction, either in physical beauty or spiritual wisdom.”<sup>138</sup>

Fleischer asserts that Mustafa Âli was aware of being:

“the product of a specific cultural, historical, and geographical complex. Once in the Anatolian heartland, Âli, on the level of popular piety or in his Sufi persona, could identify with the popular culture specific to his “homeland,” as well as the cosmopolitan high culture within which he had been trained in Istanbul.”<sup>139</sup>

Mustafa Âli’s identity as a bureaucrat and literati, as well as his understanding of history was shaped by two different yet intersecting traditions. He associated himself with the characteristic local cultures of Anatolia and Balkans as a *Rumî*, a native to the Ottoman lands. In addition, he went through the Ottoman education system that belonged to Islamic tradition that carried on the legacy of Arabo-Persianate high culture.<sup>140</sup> The *Rumî* identity and the image reflected by Âli in the eve of the seventeenth century can be considered as an identity in which Ottomans projected Sufi features on Central Asian and Islamic ones. This

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<sup>137</sup> Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and Intellectual*, 254-255; Kafadar, *Rome*, 11.

<sup>138</sup> In *Küh'ül Ahbar* I, 16. Cited and translated by C. Fleischer. Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and Intellectual*, 254.

<sup>139</sup> Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and Intellectual*, 168.

<sup>140</sup> Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and Intellectual*, 254.

is important because it attracts attention to the multi-linguistic, multi-religious, and multicultural nature of the Empire.<sup>141</sup>

Evliya Çelebi wrote that the *Rumî* people were generous and upright.<sup>142</sup> However, unlike Mustafa Âli, he did not introduce a definition for *Rumî* people. Rather, he let his comparisons between Egypt and *Rumî* speak for themselves. One of the strongest examples in that respect is the description of *hamâsîn* days in Egypt.<sup>143</sup> In these “cursed” fifty days, Egyptian people faced several disasters and illnesses. People were exhausted and weak; many died of the plague and newborns suffered from diseases. The survival rate was very low. In a stark contrast to the miserable experiences of the Egyptian people, these days were good days for the lands of *Rum*. Because of the mass deaths and the dissolving of towns, the governor received all escheated property, bolstering his land values. Evliya adds: “As a mystery of God, these black *hamâsîn* days of Egypt corresponded to the nice spring days of *Rum*.”<sup>144</sup> Likewise, while the lands of *Rum* were suffering under harsh weather conditions, Egypt experienced fresh spring days.<sup>145</sup>

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<sup>141</sup> Özbaran, *Osmanlı Kimliği*, 122.

<sup>142</sup> “*Rûm halkı necîb ü reşîd mukallidîrler.*” in EÇS. V.X, 129.

<sup>143</sup> “khamsin, also spelled Khamseen, or Chamsin, hot, dry, dusty wind in North Africa and the Arabian Peninsula that blows from the south or southeast in late winter and early spring. It often reaches temperatures above 40° C (104° F), and it may blow continuously for three or four days at a time and then be followed by an inflow of much cooler air [...] On its forward side, the centre brings warm, dry air northward out of the desert, carrying large amounts of dust and sand; on its rear side, it brings cool air southward from the Mediterranean. The name khamsin is derived from the Arabic word for “50” and refers to the approximately 50-day period in which the wind annually occurs. (khamsin. (2011). In Encyclopædia Britannica. Retrieved from <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/316239/khamsin>).

<sup>144</sup>“*Zîrâ Mısır'da hamâsîn günleri ta 'bîr ederler elli gündür, Allâhümme âfinâ, aşağı şehir-i Mısır içre halka bir nühûset ü kesâfet ve emrâz-ı muhtelifeler ârız olup elli gün Mısır halkı bî-tâb ü bî-mecâl sersem ü serserî gezerler. Ve bu günlerde tâ 'ûndan bezerler, hâl [ü] ahvâl-i pür-melâlleri perîşân-hâl olup dörd beş aylık ma 'sûmlarının beynileri üstü çatlayup merhûm olur ve müsîn âdemlerin dişine başına kaşına ve kuşuna inhidâr entüp kimi merhûm kimi halâs olur. Hazret-i Mûsâ'nın kavm-i Fir'avn'a bed-du'â edüp elli gün belâ nâzil olan hamâsîn günleridir kim Mısır halkının, "Âh hannâk, hinnâm, hamâsîn" deyü hayf etdikleri günlerdir. Ve bu günlerde Mısır paşasının yüzü güler, zîrâ çok köyler mahlûl olup niçe bin akçe dahi mahlûlât gelüp paşaya âyid olur. Ammâ hikmet-i Hudâ bu Mısır'da hamâsîn*



When Evliya referred to *Rum*, most of these references praised its preeminent natural features. For example, during his visit to the city of Reşîd, Evliya stated that the water and the weather of the city were similar to *Rumî* features.<sup>146</sup> Because of this resemblance, the people in Reşîd were thus praised. The similarity to *Rumî* in its weather and the quality of waters, the people of Reşîd were deemed friendly and amicable.<sup>147</sup> Beyond showing a close comparison to *Rum*, this example – among many others – exemplifies Evliya’s ode to *Rum*. In most of Evliya’s nods to *Rum*, similar inferences are possible. I believe that these repetitious references to *Rum* were intended by Evliya Çelebi as compliments, in addition to providing a point of reference for *Rum*.

### 2.5.1. Locals and Physical Appearances

The inevitable confrontation of people with different ethnic origins, cultures, and languages make ethnic stereotypes unavoidable. The rapid population change in the expanding Empire only accelerated the formation of “negative stereotypes” and “derogatory labels.”<sup>148</sup> These stereotypes function as symbols, and emerge as a result of

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*bed günleri Rûm'un bahâr mevsiminde letâfeti günleridir, aceb hikmetdir*”. in EÇS, V.X, 160.

<sup>145</sup> “*Bu mahalde Rûm'da kış kıyâmet iken Mısır'da tâze bahâr olup atlar çayıra çıkar,*” in EÇS, V.X, 186.

<sup>146</sup> Reşîd was a city along the coast of line, and the city was marked on the Evliya Çelebi’s map. See Nuran Tezcan and Robert Dankoff, *Evliya Çelebi'nin Nil Haritası (Dürr-i Bi-Misil in Ahbar-ı Nil)* (Istanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2011).

<sup>147</sup> *Evsaf-ı şehri müzeyyen benderi Reşîd: Ve bu şehrin âb [u] havâsı Rûm havâsına müşâbeheti vardır. Ve âb [u] havâsı Rûm havâsı olduğundan mahbûb u mahbûbesi memdûhdur... Âb [u] havâsinin letâfetinden mâ'adâ Rûm bâğları gibi bâğlarında âbdâr üzüümü olur. Ve halkı gâyet garîb-dostlardır,* in EÇS V.X , 374.

<sup>148</sup> Hathaway, *Evlâd-i 'Arab*, 213.

existing social, political, and economic conditions in society. Another characteristic of these ethnic stereotypes is the fact that they are fluid; if they are static, they often disappear. However, if the ethnic stereotypes survive over a long period, they may reach “autonomy” and start to be perceived as “historical realit[ies]”.<sup>149</sup> Ethnic stereotypes are not based on analytical investigation but they are projections of “a priori expectations.” These assumptions shape further perceptions and prejudices, which are usually accepted rather than disregarded.<sup>150</sup> For example, although Evliya Çelebi has been traveling his entire life, his narrative was not free of ethnic stereotypes either. An example denoted by Dankoff includes a description of Kurds as “crude, rebellious, and contentious.” Likewise, gypsies were “tyrannical, good-for-nothing, thieving, and irreligious”; and Jews were “narrow-minded and fanatical.”<sup>151</sup> Discussing all these would be beyond the scope of this thesis; however, at least as an impressionistic observation, it attracts readers’ attention that these stereotypes overlap with existing ones about the lands of *Rum* today. The reflections of the perceptions created by these stereotypes and their reproduction by the society contributed to the complexity of shifting identities in the early modern world.

Talking about the Ottoman past or about the lands of *Rum* presents difficulties, especially when using ethnic and geographic identity markers. One of these is the sheer scope of the Ottoman Empire, and the variety of ethnicities, languages, and cultures living side by side. Neither the identities nor the perceptions were static. Looking at different sources from diverse locations, or at different linguistic or ethnic backgrounds, may paint differing pictures of the very same empire. Additionally, most of the identity and ethnicity markers and labels are still in use today; even if their uses and perceptions by society have shifted considerably. Lastly, the impact of nationalistic histories and historiographies and their emphasis on “pure” nations veil the complex nature of the Early Modern period.

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<sup>149</sup> Ulrich W. Haarmann, "Ideology and History, Identity and Alterity: The Arab Image of the Turk from the Abbasids to Modern Egypt," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 20/2 (1988) 176.

<sup>150</sup> Haarmann, *Ideology and History*, 178.

<sup>151</sup> Dankoff, *Ottoman Mentality*, 66-67.

In the *Description of Cairo*, Mustafa Âli's comments on the physical appearances of the Egyptian people provide a clear example of his *Rumî*-centric world view. In his rush to describe every "blameworthy" feature of Egypt and its people, Mustafa Âli made very noteworthy remarks on the scarcity of beautiful people in Egypt. According to Âli, this feature of Egyptians has nothing to do with Egypt's corruption, deterioration, or decline but has continued from Egypt's ancient times until present. In Egypt, if a good-looking man appeared, it was certain that he or his father was a *Rumî*. Those with *Rumî* ancestors in the first, second and third generation looked better than "pure" Arabs, although beauty deteriorated with each generation. From the fourth generation onwards, they looked like *Tats* (other Arabs) "those unbecoming, ugly ones, namely [pure] Arabs both on the father's and mother's side."<sup>152</sup> This section in the *Description of Cairo* completely overlaps with Âli's definition of *Rumî* in *Küh'ül Ahbar*, especially with the description of the *Rumî* people as a beautiful ethnic group having the best features of various ethnic groups.<sup>153</sup> In contrast to the modern chauvinistic tendencies of praising pure identities and ancestral lineages, mixed background was preferred. Kafadar argues that Mustafa Âli's appraisal of "hybridity" may be glamorized by some of the contemporary readers, however this definition had its own problems and "even a touch of chauvinism." However the *Rumî* definition is remarkable, especially in relation to the perception of identity and identity formation. This fusion of different ethnicities made Âli especially proud, due to the combination of the best features. It is also significant that the *Rumî* identity did not have a direct relation to the state. This identity was neither created nor used by the "official discourse" of the state.<sup>154</sup>

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<sup>152</sup> *DC*, 40.

<sup>153</sup> See footnote 138.

These ethnic groups are enumerated by Âli as follows: *Arnavud, Çerkes, Abaza, Hirvat, Frenk, Macar, Gürcü, Rus, Erdel, Boğdan, Eflak* and *Alman*. Quoted by Mustafa İsen, *Gelibolulu Mustafa Âli* (Ankara: Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı Yayınları – Türk Büyükleri Dizisi; 1. edition, 1988) 67.

<sup>154</sup> Kafadar, *Rome*, 12.

It is remarkable that Evliya Çelebi, like Mustafa Âli, said that on Egyptian lands there were no men or women who were praised [beautiful]. Some powerful men took virgins from Behce, Hınadı, Hazarî Urbanı, or they brought distinguished and exceptional females from lands of *Rum*, each worth an Egyptian treasury. Likewise, beautiful young men and women were brought from outside as there were no “charmners” in Egypt.<sup>155</sup> Regarding the ethnic mixture of *Rumîs* with Egyptians, Evliya Çelebi had a similar approach to Âli, though less critical. If the Egyptian men conceived a child from the non-Egyptian women, their children would have again *cimroz* eyes – they would necessarily have an Egyptian physical feature.<sup>156</sup> It is notable that Evliya specifically praised the women from Khazar, as his mother was of Khazarian origin.<sup>157</sup>

### 2.5.2. Language(s)

Before the Ottoman conquest, Egypt was ruled by the Mamluks. After seeking power in Egypt, instead of establishing a dynasty, Mamluks continued recruiting slaves (*mamluks*) and established their own ruling elite. The children of the former generations of the ruling

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<sup>155</sup> “*Ammâ cemî’i diyârın mahbûb [u] mahbûbeleri memdûh-ı âlemdir, ammâ bi-emrillâh Mısır’ın merd [ü] zenânında mahbûb u mahbûbe olmaz, aceb hikmetdir. Meğer ba’zı devlet-mend âdemler Behce ve Hınâdî ve Hazarî Urbânından kızlar alırlar, ve Rûm’dan mümtâz [u] müstesnâ mahbûbe duhter-i pâkîze-ahter nâ-şüküfte gonca-fem bâkireler getürürler kim herbiri birer Mısır hazînesi değer ... Ve mahbûb gulâmları yine taşra diyârlardan gelmişdir. Yohsa Mısır’da dilber olmaz, olursa mu’ammer olmaz*”. in EÇS, V.X, 274-275; and “*Ammâ şehri-i Mısır’ın hâricinde kurâ ve kasabâtlarda Sa’îdî ve Bedevî mahbûbeleri olur kim merâlî ve gazâlî Hoten âhûsu gibi mukehhal gözlü, şîrîn sözlü ve münevver yüzlü perî peykerleri olur kim medhinde lisân kâsırdır.*” in EÇS, V.X, 275.

<sup>156</sup> “*Ve bu mertebe memdûh-ı âlem olan mahbûbe-i cihândan bir dürr-i yetîm yek dâne tevellüd etdikde hikmet-i Hudâ yine gözleri cimroz olur.*” in EÇS, V.X, 275.  
cimroz /cimloz: gözleri çapaklı (having crust round the eyes). EÇOS, s.v. “cimroz”.

<sup>157</sup> “*Ammâ Hazarî kızları var kim serâmed ve serbülend, kaddi bülend, kıyâfeti şeh-levend, balaban kızlar olur kim gûyâ bizim vâlidemizdir.*” in EÇS, V.X, 275.

elite were marginalized. Consequently, the members of the Mamluk ruling elite were separated from local society. They were loyal to the ruling body and established solidarity only among each other. The potential candidates for recruitment were young Turkish and Circassian boys in the Kipchak steppes and northern Caucasus. (Clearly, these lands were unlike Egypt considering their language and culture.) The Ottomans took over the Mamluk kingdom as a result of the battles of Marj Dabiq and al-Raydaniyya in 1516 and 1517, respectively. However, Mamluks survived the Ottoman conquest and their households became powerful in Egypt from the end of the sixteenth century onward.<sup>158</sup>

Most of the Mamluks were of Circassian origin, but they learned Turkish in Egypt and Syria.<sup>159</sup> As the governing body was Turkish-speaking, they were referred as ‘*Atrak*’ (also *etrak*, plural of *Turk*) in the chronicles.<sup>160</sup> Ayalon cites Ibn Khaldun, who wrote that the Circassians were *min al-Turk* (of the Turks). However, he admits that *Turk* has been used for many different purposes in different primary sources as discussed earlier. In contrast to Winter, Ayalon argues that:

“classifying the Circassians as *Turks* by race is most unusual in Mamluk sources. Usually they are mentioned as different from and antagonistic to the *Turk*. The Circassians may be called *Turk* only as far as this term is synonymous to Mamluk.”<sup>161</sup>

The Mamluks ruled over a native Arabic-speaking population, and administration was carried on in Arabic. Winter summarizes the situation: The Mamluk culture was Arabic and Islamic despite the “Turkish identity” of the ruling elite.<sup>162</sup> The Ottoman

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<sup>158</sup> Ulrich Haarmann and Philipp, “Preface,” in *The Mamluks in Egyptian Politics and Society*, ed. Thomas Philipp and Ulrich Haarmann, (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998) xi-xii. For the question how Mamluks survived under the Ottoman rule, see Michael Winter, *Re-emergence of Mamluks*; and Jane Hathaway, *Mamluk Households*.

<sup>159</sup> For a detailed account on the Circassians, see David Ayalon, “The Circassians in the Mamluk Kingdom,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 69/3 (1949).

<sup>160</sup> Winter, *Cultural Ties*, 187.

<sup>161</sup> Ayalon, *Circassians*, 136.

<sup>162</sup> Winter, *Cultural Ties*, 187.

conquest in 1517 lead to the spread of Turkish-speaking populations in Egypt and Syria. The first Ottoman governors in Syria and Egypt were Mamluks, but all the provincial governors who followed were sent from the imperial center.<sup>163</sup>

It is remarkable that the *Rumîs* called their language Turkish and recognized its relation to the language spoken by *Turks*. They actually spoke a finer Turkish, as mentioned before. In addition to that, the Ottoman intellectuals were called *Turks* by “others” who were indifferent to Ottoman intellectuals’ own self-descriptions. Even the Ottoman elite designated themselves as *Turks* when using Byzantine and European sources.<sup>164</sup> For example, although Mustafa Âli connected Turkish ethnicity with the Ottoman state only by referring to its founders, he associated Turkish language with “Ottomanness.”<sup>165</sup> Similarly, it is previously mentioned in this chapter that the people who were called Arabs were not necessarily the Arabic-speaking people, and vice versa. There was not a simple correlation between the identity markers and the relevant languages. Additionally, the Ottoman Empire was not monolithic with regard to the native languages of its ruling elite. All the recruited members of the ruling elite had to learn Turkish. However, as Kunt suggests, it is very likely that they continued to use their native languages while talking with people from similar ethnic origins.<sup>166</sup>

Behrens-Abouseif highlights the fact that Turkish was spoken and written by Mamluks even though Arabic was the official language during the Mamluk period. She argues that the Ottoman conquest of Egypt therefore could not have caused a “cultural shock.”<sup>167</sup> However, it should be noted that Kipchak Turkish was considerably different

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<sup>163</sup> Winter, *Cultural Ties*, 187-188.

<sup>164</sup> Kafadar, *Rome*, 11; For a different approach arguing that Ottomans had no problem with calling themselves Turks, see Erdem, *Türk İmaj(lar)ı*.

<sup>165</sup> Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and Intellectual*, 256.

<sup>166</sup> Kunt, Metin. "Ethnic-Regional (Cins) Solidarity in the Seventeenth-Century Ottoman Establishment," *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 5 (1974): 235.

<sup>167</sup> Behrens-Abouseif, *Egypt's Adjustment*, 20.

from the Turkish spoken in the lands of *Rum*, and language was not the only factor which could have induced a cultural shock.<sup>168</sup>

Mustafa Âli comments on the differences between the Turkish spoken in the lands of *Rum* and Kipchak Turkish. In the relevant footnote, Tietze explains that in Kipchak Turkish, “*kelemen*” stands for “I come,” but to *Rumîs* it sounds like “I can’t come,” and thus results in misunderstandings. “When told to come to their senses they do not listen, they don’t understand the word “I can’t come (*gelemen*)” and never cease to say “kelemen” (i.e. I come) ...”<sup>169</sup> Âli’s remark makes it evident that Mamluk dialect lived after the Ottoman conquest.<sup>170</sup>

In contrast to Behrens-Abouseif’s claim, Winter draws attention to the language barriers between the Egyptian people and the Ottoman officials. It is known that the Ottoman bureaucrats were trained in Arabic, at least their formal education had an emphasis on the Arabic religious texts. However, not all of the Ottomans were very well educated. One should necessarily distinguish between the ulama and other Ottoman bureaucrats. In any case, the colloquial Arabic was different. This, according to Winter, may be the cause of some Egyptian’s negative perception of the Ottoman officials. Some Egyptians (and in this example, Ibn Iyās), thought that Ottoman qadis were ignorant. This prejudice may have changed after some time, since some Arab chroniclers began to admire Ottomans. In this process, many Syrians and Egyptians ended up learning Turkish, as it was the language of the ruling elite, and as the body of administration lived in Egypt, they established their families there. This fact, according to Winter, must have assisted to the dissemination of Turkish language and culture in Egypt.<sup>171</sup> As an example of the

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<sup>168</sup> Although it belonged to the Northern group of Western Turkish, Kipchak language was formed in Egypt and Syria (DĪA, V.25). For detailed information on Kipchak Turkish, see Jale Demirci, “Cumhuriyetin 80. Yılında Kıpçak Türkçesi Çalışmaları,” *Türkoloji Dergisi* 16:2, (2003).

<sup>169</sup> DC, 37.

<sup>170</sup> DC, 37: footnote 36.

<sup>171</sup> Winter, *Cultural Ties*, 188-189.

bilingualism in Egypt, Al-Jabarti reported that his father had been teaching classes in both Arabic and Turkish, and he had two different assistants for different native speakers.<sup>172</sup>

Evliya Çelebi's writings were exhaustive in content, and languages were no exception. He referred to Arabic as "the language of heaven," and he underlined its sacred character in Islamic tradition, and noted its status as the language of Qur'an, the word of God.<sup>173</sup> However, Evliya Çelebi was conscious and well-educated enough to distinguish between different dialects of Arabic. Commenting on the people of Egypt, Evliya denotes that they were Arabic speaking, but unlike *Mecca*, *Medina*, *Bagdad*, *Mevâl*, and *Şam Urbani*, they did not speak with eloquence and fluency.<sup>174</sup> Another anecdote from Evliya Çelebi's narrative is a great example to the fact, that the *Rumî* people were well aware of the fact that they were speaking Turkish. As Evliya Çelebi was in *Funcistan*, he was very pleased with and revived by being welcomed in a correct and clear Turkish greeting. More interestingly, he uses the phrases "correct *Rumî* language" and "correct Turkish" interchangeably. This makes clear that the archetypical "Ottoman Mentality" did not differentiate between the languages of *Rumî* and Turkish.<sup>175</sup> Elsewhere Evliya Çelebi argued that Arabic language was rhetorical, and that Persian was elegant. In support of these arguments, he cited an Arabic phrase giving voice to a common recognition: "Arabic is a fluent language, Persian is delicate, and Turkish is a blunt language. Other languages than these are ugly."<sup>176</sup> It is surprising that Evliya Çelebi did not write anything more in support of Turkish, but it did still make it into the list of the three best languages.

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<sup>172</sup> quoted in Winter, *Cultural Ties*, 190.

<sup>173</sup> "cennet lisânı olan Arabî" in EÇS, V.X, 10; "cennet lisânı, Arabî" in EÇS, V.X, 35.

<sup>174</sup> "Lisânları Arabîdir, ammâ Mekke ve Medîne ve Bağdâd ve Mevâl ve Şâm Urbânı gibi fesâhat u belâgat üzre tekellüm etmezler." in EÇS, V.X, 274.

<sup>175</sup> "lisân-ı fasîh Rûmca "Safâ geldin, hoş geldin" dedikde cânım yerine geldi. Meğer fasîh Türkçe bilirmiş" in EÇS, V.X, 444.

<sup>176</sup> "Ammâ lisân-ı Arabî vâzih lisândır ve fesâhat ü belâgatlidir. Ammâ Farsî şîrîn ve zarâfetli lisân-ı latîfdir. Hattâ "el-Arabî fesâha ve'l-Acemî zarâfe ve't-Türkî kabâha ve gayru'l-lisân necâse" [Arapça akıcı bir dil, Farsça ince, Türkçe kaba bir dildir. Bundan başka diller ise çirkindir] demişler." in EÇS, V.X, 470.



However, Mustafa Âli seems to differentiate between colloquial Turkish and the eloquent one spoken among *Rumîs*. In 1592, he wrote:

“The astonishing language current in the state of *Rum*, composed of four languages [West Turkish, Çagatay, Arabic, and Persian], is a pure gilded tongue which, in the speech of the literati, seems more difficult than any of these. If one were to equate speaking Arabic with a religious obligation [farz], and the use of Persian with a sanctioned tradition [sünnet], then the speaking of a Turkish made up of these sweetnesses becomes a meritorious act [müstahabb], and, in the view of those eloquent in Turkish, the use of simple Turkish should be forbidden.”<sup>177</sup>

It is necessary to mention the negative attitude toward Turkish was not political, nor were they manifestations of ethnic nationalism. Such claims would be anachronistic and did not have their place in the early modern Ottoman world.<sup>178</sup>

## 2.6. Conclusion

“And in *Rum*, it is called Egyptian pumpkin, in Egypt it is called *Rumî* pumpkin, it is a round pumpkin...”<sup>179</sup>

As the quote by Evliya Çelebi nicely depicts, there were no clear-cut boundaries of the lands of *Rum*; the multiple identities on these lands were complex and their definitions depended on the beholder’s position and background. Both Mustafa Âli and Evliya Çelebi were *Rumîs*, meaning that they were from the core lands of the Ottoman Empire, and were of a similar cultural background. As *Rumîs*, they were of a mixed ethnic origin (a combination of the best possible features) and they were healthy and beautiful – unlike

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<sup>177</sup> from *Küh’ül Ahbar* I, 11, quoted and translated by Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and Intellectual*, 22.

<sup>178</sup> Winter, *Cultural Ties*, 191.

<sup>179</sup> “*Ve Rûm'da Mısır kabağı derler, Mısır'da Rûm kabağı derler, bir müdevver kabaktır...*” in EÇS, V.X, 270.

their Egyptian counterparts. The way they perceived the Egyptians was shaped accordingly. Their observations of the appearances, ethnicities, and languages of others had an important place in their accounts, and reflected their *Rumî*-centric worldview. In all things – be it the weather or the culture – Egypt was defined by what it was not: *Rumî*. However, both authors appreciated Egypt’s prosperity and they benefited from the conditions in Cairo, both authors allowing them to compile their narratives as residents of the provincial center.

### **3. CAIRO AND EGYPT FROM A *RUMÎ* PERSPECTIVE**

Both Evliya Çelebi's and Mustafa Âli's narratives on Cairo are vivid, colorful, and engrossing. Their accounts are further enriched with powerful descriptions, personal commentary, and humorous quips. In most cases, the land of *Rum* is their point of comparison and reference, as discussed before. Since the aim of this thesis is to question if Egypt served as an "Orient" for early modern Ottoman literati, I will trace some recurrent topics of these narratives that echo the clichés of the discourse of Orientalism. For example: the "strange" manners and customs of Egyptians, including piety, cleanliness, health and festivities; their public visibility; their beauty and sensuality; and the despotic measures on these lands. These themes provide a good lens to view the Ottoman attitude toward Cairo and Egyptians. To have a more balanced picture, I will also briefly mention the views of some Egyptian literati toward Ottomans.

#### **3.1. Manners and Public Behavior**

Neither Evliya Çelebi's nor Mustafa Âli's descriptions of Egypt were limited to the geographical features or government. These Ottoman literati were attentive enough to record practices, manners, customs, and public life – essentially anything that constituted daily life in Egypt. To attract readers' attention and curiosity they often

emphasized the uniqueness, rather than the likeness, of Egypt to the lands of *Rum*. I believe that these comparisons were used as a stylistic device, and the authors intentionally focused on the practices that were unfamiliar to the readers in the core lands of the Empire.

It can be inferred that Evliya Çelebi saw a lot before he settled in Cairo to write his *Book of Travels*, as he had been traveling throughout his whole life. This lifestyle, spent among places, cultures, and different customs, made him more open-minded and multi-cultural. And yet, being a “worldly man” did not prevent him from pointing out each and every fact that deviated from the “norms” he had known in Istanbul. He touched upon topics that were covered by Mustafa Âli, who is seen as being more judgmental and critical toward different practices.

Although Evliya Çelebi had seen and travelled enough, he was also aware that he was an exception, and his addressees were more attached to the *Rumî* way of perceiving the world. Predicting his readers’ reactions, Evliya added his famous phrase, “not disgraceful” (*ayıp değil*), when describing odd manners and customs. Dankoff analyzes the use of the concept “disgrace” in Evliya Çelebi’s narrative in his eminent article, *Ayıp Değil*.<sup>180</sup> Dankoff asserts that Evliya used the preface “disgrace” in two different ways. First, it reflected Evliya Çelebi’s (or the speaking person’s) moral judgment, and the reference point was the culture of Ottoman elite and Istanbul. In such instances, Evliya Çelebi assumed that his readers were of the same opinion and moral standard. Second, “disgrace” was mentioned to acknowledge the public opinion of a given region.<sup>181</sup> Evliya used this phrase while mentioning the practices or traditions that were accepted in the relevant society but that may not be welcomed by his addressees. In the first volume on Istanbul in the *Book of Travels*, the phrase “not disgraceful” is not used. This remark is telling because it supports the argument that Istanbul was the point of reference for Evliya Çelebi; therefore there is no need for justification. However, “setting his foot out of Istanbul” in Egypt, Evliya Çelebi felt it necessary to use this explanatory phrase most frequently. This may well be because of Egypt’s own

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<sup>180</sup> Robert Dankoff, “Ayıp Değil!,” in *Çağının Sıradışı Yazarı Evliya Çelebi*, ed. Nuran Tezcan (Istanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2009).

<sup>181</sup> Dankoff, *Ayıp Değil*, 109.

peculiarities.<sup>182</sup> Evliya Çelebi's approach is described by Dankoff as a "guarded tolerance" that declares, "it is their custom, so we cannot censure it."<sup>183</sup> It is not clear if Evliya Çelebi was "bemused" or "sympathetic" toward the situation in each case. However, it is essential to recognize that Evliya Çelebi was respectful toward differences and he was consistently against any fanaticism.<sup>184</sup>

Although Evliya Çelebi criticized zealous acts, he frequently voiced his support of despotic measures. One of the outstanding topics in Evliya Çelebi's narrative is the importance and necessity of the authority:

"Without capital punishment, for the sake of the reform of this world, it would be impossible to maintain control over the *fellahin* of Egypt, where even the preachers — with kohl on their eyes, prayer-beads in their hands, and toothpicks in their turbans — provide aid and cover to bandits and thieves."<sup>185</sup>

Evliya resembled janissaries' actions in Egypt to the old despotic rule of the Pharaohs.<sup>186</sup> However, he pointed to the need of killing people to restrain the Egyptian *fellah*, because without strong measures it would be impossible to suppress them.<sup>187</sup> This emphasis on an oppressive rule stemmed from Evliya's opinions of the *fellahin*. According to Evliya Çelebi, these *fellahin* were of willful, hostile, and tyrannical nature.<sup>188</sup> That is why Egypt needed a dictatorial ruler. If there were no officials around, the *urban* (Bedouins) and *fellahin* would have killed each other.<sup>189</sup> Evliya Çelebi accepted and supported the necessity of authority, but he also criticized the government in Egypt for their affluence derived from over-taxation and exploitation of the poor.

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<sup>182</sup> Dankoff, *Ayıp Değil*, 114; 116-117.

<sup>183</sup> Dankoff, *Ottoman Mentality*, 82.

<sup>184</sup> Dankoff, *Ottoman Mentality*, 82.

<sup>185</sup> Dankoff, *Ottoman Mentality*, 84.

<sup>186</sup> Dankoff, *Ottoman Mentality*, 114.

<sup>187</sup> "Islâh-ı âlem için böyle âdem katl etmese Mısır fellâhının zabtı rabtı mümkün değildir... Hemân Mısır'a bir hâkim-i cebbâr lâzımdır..." in EÇS, V.X, 43.

<sup>188</sup> "Allâhümme âfinâ, Mısır fellâhları kavm i Fir'avnî bir alay kavm i cebbârîn ve anûd, hasûd, fessâk kavimdir, görmeğе muhtâc kavimler." in EÇS, V.X, 185.

<sup>189</sup> "Yohsa hâkim tarafından âdem olmasa Urbân ve fellâhîn birbirlerini katl ederlerdi." in EÇS, V.X, 184.

Likewise, Mustafa Âli chastises the *kaşifs*, the provincial governors, because of their despotic and ruthless rule.<sup>190</sup>

Both authors argued that drinking from the Nile River was another cause for the inherent despotism. Evliya Çelebi explained that the tyranny on Egyptian lands was the consequence of the Egyptian climate and environment. *Even* [emphasis added] people from the lands of *Rum* turned into tyrants if they drank from the Nile for three years. The water from the Nile turned women into impudent and immoral humans. The horses became evil-natured.<sup>191</sup> Similarly, Mustafa Âli explained that the “Pharaonization” was caused by the water of the Nile, and as a consequence, the governors of Egypt became autocratic. This “Pharaonization” was inherited from pre-Islamic history of Egypt.<sup>192</sup>

In a similar fashion, Evliya’s encounters with the “others” in his travels and his self-representations contribute to this portrayal. In his travel along the Nile River, Evliya Çelebi went to the great city and fortress of Arbacı and met the local people. The locals were shocked to see Evliya’s white skin, as they had neither traveled to *Rumî* lands nor been visited by *Rumî* people. They even thought that someone had peeled off his skin. As this was a first-time encounter with a *Rumî*, Evliya’s account is a telling self-representation as he informed the locals about his Empire, legacy, and the customs of white-skinned people. Apparently, Evliya’s story was unbelievable to them; they

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<sup>190</sup> DC, 56.

<sup>191</sup> “Âb [u] havâsının hükmü üzre cebbârlardır.” in EÇS, V.X, 24; “*Ve bu Nil suyunun ve baklasının hâssasındandır ki suyundan üç sene içen eğer Rum âdemi dahi olursa bî-rahim ve cebbâr olur. Ve zenânesi gâyet mahbûb olup kalîlü'l-edeb ve kalîlü'l-hayâ olur. Ve atları Nil suyun nûş edüp olup Katıyye ve Ümmü'l-Hasan çölün çıkup değme hâliyle bir gayrı diyâra varmaz.* in EÇS, V.X, 185; “*Zîrâ âb-ı Nil'i nûş edenin hükmü cebbâr ve mütekebbir olmaktadır, zîrâ Ferâ'ine tahtıdır.*” in EÇS, V.X, 219.

<sup>192</sup> The discussion of Oriental despotism and hydrolic civilization is one of the important issues in historiography. Karl Wittfogel introduced his thesis in his well-known book, *Oriental Despotism*, and he argued that the civilizations in need of large-scale irrigation tended to become more authoritative. See Karl Wittfogel, *Oriental Despotism*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1957). For critiques of Wittfogel, see for example, William P. Mitchell, “The Hydraulic Hypothesis: A Reappraisal,” *Current Anthropology*, 14/5 (1973). In his most recent study on Egypt, Alan Mikhail elaborates on irrigation in detail. He criticizes the thesis of Wittfogel as the historical facts did not support the argument empirically. For further analysis, see Alan Mikhail, “Beyond Wittfogel,” in *Empire by Nature*, 31-37.

were unsatisfied and asked Evliya to undress. That was unacceptable for him, and Evliya politely rejected this demand, instead informing them about the manners and customs of *Rumî*. This anecdote deserves special attention because it indicates that Evliya was very unique by traveling to the lands where no one from his own lands went before, and where the visiting *Rumî* people were the exotic “others.”<sup>193</sup>

As both authors focused on the differences rather than similarities of Egypt with their homeland, the “dark side” of the public life in Egypt has been one of the repeated topics in their narratives. One of the more powerful descriptions is provided by Evliya Çelebi. Egypt was a land...

“...where there were many horses, but no horseshoers; many sick people, but no physicians; many ruptured people, but no surgeons; many men, but no rulers they don’t allow to be ruled; many qadis, but no one in the courts telling the truth; and many false witnesses; and many obdurate people but no one talking because of (?) the apathy; many soldiers, but no officers (they treated soldiers as companions); and a large treasury, but no honest bookkeepers. These sayings are still being told in Egypt.”<sup>194</sup>

By stating this, Evliya Çelebi drew a very pessimistic portrayal of the life in Cairo. Although these statements were just sayings, Evliya stated that these proverbs were still mentioned in the Egyptian society. At this point, the “declaration of atrocious circumstances of Egypt” (*beyân-ı ahvâl-i kubhiyyât-ı Mısır*) would be proper to mention as they will contribute to this cynical portrayal. However, Evliya Çelebi, too, agreed that most of these features were not specific to these lands. These features and circumstances were listed as follows: the guild of brothels, the guild of prostitutes working at home, the brothel of minors, *şeyhü’l arasat* (the three people who recorded all prostitutes and young men), the sergeants of brothels, the female whoremongers, the guild of *bazara gidenler* (people who went to the market, cheated and made people

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<sup>193</sup> For the complete story, see *Evsâf-ı şehri azîm ve kâr-ı kadîm kal’a-i Arbacı* in EÇS V.X, 455-456.

<sup>194</sup> “*Kim Mısır’da at çokdur, üstâd-ı kâmil na’lband yokdur, cümle himâr na’lbandıdır; ve marîz çokdur ve hekîm ü hâkim yokdur*” in EÇS, V.X, 206-207; “*Atı çok, na’lbandı yok; marîzi çok, hekîmi yok; debesi çok, kat’-ı fîtk eder cerrâhı yok; âdemi çok, hâkimi yok, hükm etdirmezler; kadısı çok, mahkemelerinde doğru söyler yok; ve yalan şâhidi çok ve lecûc ve lecûc kavmi çok, meskenet ile kelimât eder yok; ve askerî tâ’ifesi çok, zâbitleri yok, askere müdârâ ederler; ve tahsîl hazînesi çok, müstakîm muhâsebecisi yok. Bu kelimâtlar hâlâ Mısır içinde darb-ı mesel olmuşdur, efvâh-ı nâsda söylenir.*” in EÇS, V.X, 272.

sleep, afterwards they stole their property and even killed these people), the sheikh of beggars, the guild of oil lamp makers, the guild of black slave merchants, the guild of circumcisers of black Arabs, the guild of rugs, the guild of donkey riders, the guild of donkey dressers, the guild of pickpockets ... etc.<sup>195</sup> Few of these and other guilds were unique to Egypt, and Evliya Çelebi denoted the ones who were peculiar to these lands. These unique features included some actions of the guild of beggars, the guild of oil lamp makers, the guild of circumcisers of black Arabs. The skills of the pickpockets and thieves in Egypt were described with a compelling metaphor: talented thieves were able to steal the kohl from one's eye. However, the Egyptian masters are unlike that, they can steal the eye and leave the kohl behind.<sup>196</sup> In the case of the pickpockets it is significant to note that Evliya Çelebi referred to their close connections with *subaşı*, the head police officer. Evliya argued that all the pickpockets and thieves were registered in the books of *subaşı* and if he wanted, he could find any stolen item in an hour.<sup>197</sup>

In his narrative, Mustafa Âli separates the “blameworthy features” of Egypt into two groups. Some of the behaviors and manners were old conventions. The other category consisted of the new habits that Mustafa Âli did not observe in his previous trip to Cairo.<sup>198</sup> Âli described the new deteriorated conditions with a very powerful metaphor:

“Cairo, which carries the name Mother of the World, was befallen by all sorts of chronic diseases. Above all, her character of being a procuress like Delle and a crafty prostitute in respect to whores and lesbians has become evident. Under these circumstances, her bastard children, planted by illegitimate loins in abject

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<sup>195</sup> *Beyân-ı ahvâl-i kubhiyyâ-ı Mısır ve subaşı esnafları*, in EÇS, V.X, 204-206. It is unclear in some instances (e.g. oil lamp makers) why Evliya included these under *kubhiyyât*.

<sup>196</sup> “Gözden sürmeyi çalar derler, ammâ Mısır'ın hırsız eyle değildir, sürmeden gözü çalup göz sürmesi yerinde kalur. Bu mertebe yankesicisi ve hırsızı vardır.” in EÇS, V.X, 327.

<sup>197</sup> “*Subaşı murâd edinse serîka olunan eşyâyı ol sâ'at [Y 179a] bulur. Zirâ cemî'i neşşâl ve hırsızlar anın defterindedir,*” in EÇS, V.X, 206. The issue about *subaşı* is also mentioned by Faroqhi, *Cairo's Guildsmen*.

<sup>198</sup> DC, 40.



wombs, have grown up and multiplied; the male ones have turned out rotten progeny, the female ones ignoble prostitutes.”<sup>199</sup>

Âli’s criticisms also covered the business and military life that were, according to him, totally chaotic. One of the belabored topics in Mustafa Âli’s narrative was the manner of the “wretched” *jundis*, the soldiers. Âli criticized their lust for the “native beardless youth.”<sup>200</sup> Their indecent behaviors were distinguishable from the way they ate, spoke, and behaved as rebels. Âli compared the actions of *jundis* with the proper behaviors of the soldiers in *Rumelia* who fought for their faith in an honorable manner. Compared to the success of the defenders at the *Rumelian* borders where the fight was against infidels, *jundi*’s occasional fights and victories against Arab tribesmen were poor and inferior.<sup>201</sup>

Regarding common men’s public behavior, Mustafa Âli noted that men were not ashamed of riding donkeys — more than one man could be seen on a donkey, though Âli is critical of this action, as it was a burden for donkeys.<sup>202</sup> Of course, it is impossible to think that Evliya Çelebi, the curious traveler, would not refer to the donkeys.<sup>203</sup> Evliya Çelebi reported that all the donkeys, mules, camels, and sheep went around the bazaar in herds. The extensive amount of donkeys throughout Egypt was remarkable. The donkey riders were all yelling on the streets. Interestingly, Evliya Çelebi added that

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<sup>199</sup> DC, 26.

<sup>200</sup> DC, 44; 52-54.

<sup>201</sup> DC, 54-55.

<sup>202</sup> DC, 42.

<sup>203</sup> Donkeys attracted the attention of not only the Ottoman travellers, but also the Westerners: “‘*Donkey riding is universal,*’ Taylor remarked, and ‘*no one thinks of going beyond the Frank quarter on foot.*’ *Careering through the streets on these ‘long-eared cabs,’ the tourist gaze was acutely physical. ‘There is no use in attempting to guide the donkey,’ Taylor advised, ‘for he won’t be guided. The driver shouts behind; and you are dashed at full speed into a confusion of other donkeys, camels, horses, carts, water-carriers and footmen.’*” Taken from Taylor, *Journey op. cit.*, 37-8; quoted by Derek Gregory, “Performing Cairo: Orientalism and the City of the Arabian Nights,” in *Making Cairo Medieval*, ed. Nezar Al-Sayyad, Irene Bierman and Nasser Rabat, (Lanham MD: Lexington Books/Rowman and Littlefield, 2005).

some donkey riders intentionally drove the mules among half-witted *Rumî* men.<sup>204</sup> This fact may signify that *Rumîs* in Egypt were identifiable; at least their “half-witted ones” were distinguishable on the crowded streets of Cairo.

Women were frequently referred in both Mustafa Âli’s and Evliya Çelebi’s narratives. Both authors felt the urge to inform their readers about the plenitude and recurrent public visibility of women in Egypt. Evliya was surprised to see that the Egyptian elites and women were donkey riders, too. It was “not disgraceful” for them to ride donkeys, and go to the promenades and public places on them. Referring to Istanbul, Evliya Çelebi added that the boats used in Istanbul to go such places were replaced by donkeys in Egypt.<sup>205</sup>

In a more judgmental approach, Mustafa Âli was astonished that the women in Egypt rode donkeys:

“[The fact that] their women, all of them, ride donkeys! Even the spouses of some notables ride on donkeys to the Bulak promenade. Week after week they mount their donkeys and dismount like soldiers. Moreover, when they marry a daughter off they let her ride on a donkey and seventy or eighty women ride [with her], while the only things visible in terms of weapons are their shields. People of intelligence find that this unbecoming behavior constitutes a serious defect for the city of Cairo, because in other lands they put prostitutes on a donkey as punishment. In Cairo, the women mount donkeys by their own free will and expose themselves [to the eyes of the public]; therefore it appears appropriate that for punishment they be put on camels.”<sup>206</sup>

It was reported that the first Ottoman qadi-*asker* in Egypt was not welcome, especially by women, because the qadi took some measures to limit the women’s rights. One of these rights regarded donkeys; according to the new rules, women were not

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<sup>204</sup> “*Ve bu Mısır'da olan devâbât makûlesi ya 'nî at ve katır ve cemâl ve sığır ve câmûs ve koyun ve keçi çârsû-yı bâzârda sürü sürü gezerler. Ve eşek çokluğu şehri-i Mısır'ı dutmuşdur. Sokaklarda zahrek ve cenbek ve vechek ve yemînek ve yesârek deyü hammârların feryâdından geçilmez. Ve ba 'zı hammârlar, "Tarîk yâ seyîdî, tarîk" diyerek kasden Rum âdemlerinin eblehlerin eşeğe çiğnedirler.*” in EÇS, V.X, 81.

<sup>205</sup> “*Zirâ Mısır'ın a'yân [u] eşrâfi ve cümle nisvân-ı sâhib-isyânları har-süvârdırlar. Eyle fârisü'l-himârdırlar kim Özbekiyye ve Salîbiyye ve Eski Mısır ve Bulak'a ve Kayıtbay'a varınca avretler zahrek hüşşek diyerek cirid oynayarak gümüş rahatlı ve katîfe abâyili alaca hinnâli eşeklerle ezemek ayıb değildir. Zirâ Mısır'ın kayığı ve peremeleri cümle eşekdir*” in EÇS, V.X, 81.

<sup>206</sup> DC, 41.

allowed to leave their houses or ride donkeys. Such actions resulted with serious sanctions like being “beaten” and “dragged throughout the streets with their hair tied to a mule’s tail.” Ibn Iyas reported that – *like in Istanbul* [emphasis added] – women were expected to ride mules. Donkey drivers were not allowed to let the women ride. If they did, they could face capital punishment. The Ottoman qadi claimed that the Egyptian women were demoralizing the soldiers by such improper actions. The Egyptian men were “rather pleased” by these new measures, but the female opposition secured the abolishment of some of these attempts. At the end, women were allowed to leave their houses to visit their relatives, and to go to bathhouses or cemeteries. All in all, referring to the quote above by Mustafa Âli, it is assumed that these new regulations did not have a real impact on the daily life and manners of Egyptians. Mustafa Âli reported that the women kept mounting donkeys.<sup>207</sup> It is also ironic that “The Tale of Qadi-Mule” in the *Arabian Nights* ridiculed qadis because of their irrationality and greed.<sup>208</sup>

The daily appearances of women, as well as the large amount of festivities were some of the fancier features of the life in Egypt. Both Mustafa Âli and Evliya Çelebi pointed out the high frequency of social gatherings, public festivities, and other similar excursions. According to Mustafa Âli, for Egyptians it would be unacceptable to celebrate just the two sacred fests of Islam, as it is the case in the lands of *Rum*.<sup>209</sup> In the “blameworthy features” of Egypt, Âli criticized this behavior. He argued that knowledgeable men were well aware that these days, spent only with entertainment, were harmful. However, for the idle ones, these festivities were very entertaining times.<sup>210</sup>

Evliya Çelebi was not an idle man, and he seemed to enjoy the vivid atmosphere of festivities; Cairo was a “somewhat exotic place where the arts of enjoying life were

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<sup>207</sup> Behrens-Abouseif, *Egypt's Adjustment*, 75. The place and impact of the Ottoman qadi in Egypt was also a topic of discussion. Winter argues that qadi's impact on either religion or society was barely existent and Egyptians did not think that the qadi was on their side. Winter, *Cultural Ties*, 193;196.

<sup>208</sup> Behrens-Abouseif, *Egypt's Adjustment*, 81.

<sup>209</sup> DC 25-27; 36; 49.

<sup>210</sup> DC 27.

perhaps more prominent than in Istanbul.”<sup>211</sup> In Istanbul, the puritanical *Qadizade* movement was taking place, and what Evliya Çelebi witnessed in Cairo was in most instances impossible in Istanbul. However, Evliya Çelebi’s narrative attempted to be a “cautionary tale.” Evliya must have thought that “Cairo offered perhaps more than its fair share of illicit pleasures.”<sup>212</sup> In general, Evliya Çelebi’s attitude towards festivities was in open. For example, he was amazed by the fireworks of the Egyptian masters. Having Istanbul as his reference point, Evliya acknowledged the superiority of Egyptian fireworks and added that in Istanbul, such firework displays would have been impossible and mused that Egypt must be divinely protected.<sup>213</sup>

The descriptions of festivities by Evliya Çelebi create an image of the Orient similar to the *Arabian Nights* tales. In most of these festivities, lovers enjoyed the Egyptian nights while swimming and diving naked in the Nile River, and flirting with their companions. All people were entertained by the excursions on the Nile, music, and wine. None of these pleasures were “disgraceful” in these feast days. Though, the social status difference created a division among entertaining activities and their reception. The festivities along the Nile took place within the city, and people who attended were of higher social rank. In the second estuary, there were other celebrations where people enjoyed various pleasures. But Evliya added that unlike the former party attended by upright and virtuous people, this was the place of “ignominious people and riffraff.”<sup>214</sup>

Among the twelve festival processions of Egypt, the most appealing ones were the ones with women’s processions, and the highlight was the celebration of the night of *muhtesib*. This night, Evliya recounted, it was impossible to restrain women in Egypt from attending the procession. For the legitimization of this improper behavior of

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<sup>211</sup> Faroqhi , *Cairo’s Guildsmen*.

<sup>212</sup> Faroqhi , *Cairo’s Guildsmen*.

<sup>213</sup> “...bin yüz pâre âlât-ı âteşbâzlık san ‘atı Frengi mahsûs iken bu Mısır üstâdları bu Nîl kesiminde sihir mertebesinde san ‘atlar icrâ eyleyüp arz-ı mahâret edüp fişekler ile şeb-i muzlimi rûz-ı rûşen etdiler.” in EÇS, V.X, 180, and “Eğer ol âteş İslâmbol’da olsa ne ‘ûzu billâh tarfetü’l-ayn içre İslâmbol berbâd olurdu. Hudâ Mısır’ı hıfz [u] emânda etmişdir.” in EÇS, V.X, 201.

<sup>214</sup> For a more detailed description of the festivity and relevant activities, see EÇS, V.X,154. “*Ammâ erâzîl ve haşerât yeridir, şehir içindeki halîc gibi ehl-i irz yeri değıldir.*” in EÇS, V.X, 155. See also, DC, 35.

women, Evliya added that their marriage contracts were made accordingly. On this night, the husbands could not even ask after their wives' whereabouts, and Evliya found this very surprising.<sup>215</sup>

In the stratified Ottoman society, social class and public behavior were closely related. Mustafa Âli informed his readers about socially improper and unacceptable behaviors of men toward women in a wedding ceremony. Âli presented the justification of men as such: "thus [they] have found it from our fathers." Âli added that such manners were never seen in the wedding ceremonies of the respected and prominent families, but only by peasants and other "abject and impudent" people from "lower classes."<sup>216</sup> Morally improper actions were unacceptable to Âli.

One of the most visible markers of different social classes was one's clothing. This is probably one of the reasons why both Evliya Çelebi and Mustafa Âli informed their readers about the appearances of locals. Evliya Çelebi wrote that everyone wore clothes that reflected their aptitude.<sup>217</sup> The emphasis on the fact that the Egyptian people did not wear underwear was contributing to the portrayal of the naked lovers in festivities. In the section on Cairene women, Evliya Çelebi commented on their appearances via comparison with *Rumî* women. Evliya explained to his readers that all Cairene women were without underwear and the women with underwear on were *Rumîs*.<sup>218</sup>

In the narrative of Âli, it is also evident that *Rumî* women and locals were distinguishable by their appearances:

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<sup>215</sup> "şehir-i azîm Mısır'ın on iki alay-ı ıydı vardır. Biri dahi bu muhtesib gecesı alay-ı azîmdir ki âşıkân [u] ârifân bu alaya ıyd-ı Nisvân derler. Zîrâ bu gece şehir-i Mısır'da avretin zabt etmek mümkün değildir, elbette ol gece alay temâşâsına giderler. Zîrâ akd-i nikâhda bu gece alaya gitmek şartıyla nikâh olunmuşdur, kânûn-ı Mısırî böyledir.... Hâsıl-ı kelâm ba'zı âdemler ol gece ehline kande idin, deyü su'âl edemez, aceb temâşâdır. Ve cümle halk-ı Mısır ramazân-ı şerîf gecesidir, deyü safâlarından şeb-bük fashı ederler." in EÇS, V.X, 191; for similar discussions see also EÇS, V.X, 207.

<sup>216</sup> DC, 48.

<sup>217</sup> "Ve herkes isti 'dâdına göre esvâb geyerler." in EÇS, V.X, 274.

<sup>218</sup> "Ve cümle zenâneleri dahi donsuzdur. Meğer Rum hâtûnları ola kim don geyeler." in EÇS, V.X, 274, for further details on clothing, see EÇS, V.X, 274.

“[Strange] are also the various ways of dressing by the Egyptian women. While the Turkish [*Rumîye*] women [in Egypt] are elegantly dressed in white wraps and black lace veils, the Arab women wind gem-decorated turbans around their heads and their shawls which they call *habara* and their unattractive behavior are *à l'arabe*.”<sup>219</sup>

Not only women, but also the *fellâhs* wore no underwear.<sup>220</sup> According to him, this lack of clothing was the reason why *bastinado* punishment was not used in these lands. As all the *fellahs* didn't wear underwear, if their feet were beaten, their genitalia would be visible. So, the way of punishment was using a timber stick to hit their knees and backs.<sup>221</sup> The fact that the *jundis* did not wear underwear disturbed Mustafa Âli, too.<sup>222</sup> Not only common people or soldiers were without underwear, but also the members of *ulama*.<sup>223</sup>

The public appearance of children also attracted Mustafa Âli's attention as they were running around naked without feeling the necessity to cover up their genitals. Likewise, most of the black Arabs were naked covering only their genitalia. Âli likens these black Arabs to herd animals lacking intelligence.<sup>224</sup>

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<sup>219</sup> DC, 42.

<sup>220</sup> “*Ammâ aslâ çakşır geymezler, fi's-sayfi ve'-ş-şitâ [Y 243a] baldırı çıplak gezerler. Ve niçe kerre yüz bin donsuz gezer fellâhlardır.*” in EÇS, V.X, 274.

<sup>221</sup> “*Zîrâ Arabistân'da falaka yokdur, zîrâ cümle fellâh donsuzdur, ayaklarına döğseler dübürleri açılır, anın için Arabın dizine ve götüne kızıl ağaç ile ururlar.*” in EÇS, V.X, 282.

<sup>222</sup> “The fact that they do not wear underwear explained by Mustafa Âli at one point as “... because they say, they are only for respectable people, they regard is at befitting....” DC, 66.

<sup>223</sup> “*Ulemâsı ise evlâ bi't-tarîk aslâ don geymezler, hemân şallak [u] mallak gezerler.*” in EÇS, V.X, 274.

<sup>224</sup> DC, 43.

### 3.2. Beauty and Sensuality

The attitude of both Evliya Çelebi and Mustafa Âli toward beauty and sensuality — especially of women — is significant to trace their mentality towards the “other.” In that respect, Cairene women were the “others” not only because they were natives to Egypt but also because they were women.

In *Description of Cairo*, a fairly large part of the work was about women. Women and their behavior were described in both sections as “praiseworthy” and “blameworthy” features. Âli noted that one of the praiseworthy features in Egypt is the clean white covers of women, thus Âli resembled women angels. As a result, the *Rumî* women publicly demonstrated their *Rumî* character and exceptional manners by carrying black veils that made them visually recognizable among Egyptians. The headscarves of the Cairene women were less neat than their *Rumî* counterparts, but when they were unveiled, they had beautiful and fresh faces. Mustafa Âli added that he *heard* that these women were sensually attractive during sexual intercourse. The virgins in Cairo veiled their faces with a red cloth to depict that “their maidenhood has not been soiled with blood.”<sup>225</sup>

Âli continued his comments on women in the section of “blameworthy features.” He repeated that the Egyptian women were not exceptionally charming in their looks but they were praised for their sensuality. He gets graphic as he describes Cairene women as making “all sorts of movements during intercourse ... [and] motions like an Arabian horse that has slipped out from under its rider, thereby enchanting sexual

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<sup>225</sup> DC, 35. On women’s clothing, see DC, 42. In Orhan Şaik Gökyay’s version of the book, the explicit manner of Mustafa Âli are criticized and Şaik tells that he leaves out this parts without explanation. Gelibolulu Mustafa Âli, *Hâlâtü'l-Kahire mine'l-âdâti'z-zâhire*, ed. Orhan Şaik Gökyay (Ankara: Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı Yayınları , 1984) 37; footnote 113.

enjoyment” and they had lips “delicious as the cane sugar of Egypt.”<sup>226</sup> The Ethiopian slave girls were especially pointed out as their “coital organs are narrow and hot.”<sup>227</sup>

Âli’s remarks on the physical beauty were already mentioned in the previous chapter but it would be necessary to recall that he singled out the exceptionality of the beautiful people among the Egyptians. Âli argued that a good-looking person was often a *Rumî*, or at least descended from one. Those with *Rumî* ancestors in the first, second, and third generation looked better than the “pure” Arabs, although the beauty deteriorated with each generation. From the fourth generation onwards, they looked like *Tat* (other Arabs) “like those unbecoming, ugly ones, namely [pure] Arabs both on the father’s and mother’s side.”<sup>228</sup> These verses of Mustafa Âli depict his views about the beauty of black women clearly who marry a *Rumî* youth:

“When a youth of angel-like nature /  
takes (i.e., marries) a black-faced and ugly girl/ .../  
Finally, a dark faced one will be born/  
no prosperous son will develop out of him.”<sup>229</sup>

On this instance it is remarkable that he was not in favor of the ethnic mixture with Egyptian people. This attitude may seem contradictory to his appraisal of *Rumî* people because they were of mixed ethnic origins. Apparently, Âli favored mixed ethnic origins of *Rumîs*, but not their further mixtures with others.

The beauty and the public visibility of women were among the outstanding topics in *Book of Travels*, too. Referring to women, Evliya Çelebi used disparaging phrases like “*nisvân-ı or bintân-ı or zenân-ı sâhib-ısyân*,” as women were of rebellious nature. Dankoff argues that the rhymed phrases Evliya used when referring to women should not be taken too seriously.<sup>230</sup> Being loyal to his encyclopedic tendency, Evliya listed the names of women in Egypt: “*Meryem, Havvâ, Azrâ, Safâ, Varka, Verdî, Ümmühân*,

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<sup>226</sup> The source of Mustafa Âli is claimed to be “*the experienced womanizers and of men of culture.*” DC, 40.

<sup>227</sup> DC, 51.

<sup>228</sup> DC, 40.

<sup>229</sup> DC, 51.

<sup>230</sup> Dankoff, *Ottoman Mentality*, 110.



*Külsûm, Râbi'a, Rukıyye, Zeyneb, Sitiyye, Züleyhâ, Zaliha, Sâliha, Dümerye, Acîbe, Şinâs, Tâhire, Sâmi'a and Mâhiye*” – and as expected, he acknowledged that there were still more names. It is noteworthy that Evliya differentiated between the names of Egyptians and the Ethiopian concubines whose sexual abilities were praised by Mustafa Âli. According to Evliya, the names of Ethiopian concubines — *Hasîse, Fesîse, Kasîse, Nefîse, Fitne, Eşmîne, Şemsiyye, Şemmûne, Reyhâne, Hediyye, Verdiyye, Hamrâ, Kamrâ, Amberiyye, Cemîle* — were fascinating.<sup>231</sup> It appears that the names of women were markers of their social status, thus gender as a category was not homogenous. Women were from different social strata and moral status and they should be considered accordingly.

Like Mustafa Âli, Evliya Çelebi wrote that on Egyptian lands there were no men or women who were praised as being beautiful.<sup>232</sup> Some powerful men took virgins from Behce, Hinadi, Hazari Urbanı or they brought distinguished and exceptional females from lands of *Rum* each worth of an Egyptian treasury. Evliya especially praised the women from Khazar, as his mother was of Khazarian origin.<sup>233</sup> Beautiful young men and women were conveyed from outside as there were no “charmners” in Egypt.<sup>234</sup> Regarding the ethnic mixture of *Rumîs* with Egyptians, Evliya Çelebi had a

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<sup>231</sup> “*Esmâ'-i nisvân: Meryem ve Havvâ ve Azrâ ve Safâ ve Varka ve Verdî ve Ümmühân ve Külsûm ve Râbi'a ve Rukıyye ve Zeyneb ve Sitiyye ve Züleyhâ ve Zaliha ve Sâliha ve Dümerye ve Acîbe ve Şinâs ve Tâhire ve Sâmi'a ve Mâhiye ve niçe turfe esmâları var, ammâ bu kadar tahrîr etdik. Ve Habeşe cevârîler esmâları var kim âdem hayrân olur. Meselâ Hasîse ve Fesîse ve Kasîse ve Nefîse ve Fitne ve Eşmîne ve Şemsiyye ve Şemmûne ve Reyhâne ve Hediyye ve Verdiyye ve Hamrâ ve Kamrâ ve Amberiyye ve Cemîle ve bunun emsâli niçe nâmları vardır kim tahrîrinde melâlet vardır.*” in EÇS, V.X, 275.

<sup>232</sup> These features of women are already discussed in the previous chapter, under *Locals and Physical Appearances*. For the sake of consistency of the topic “beauty and sensuality,” they are repeated. For the previous section, see p. 44.

<sup>233</sup> “*Ammâ Hazarî kızları var kim serâmed ve serbüend, kaddi büend, kıyâfeti şehlevend, balaban kızlar olur kim gûyâ bizim vâlidemizdir.*” in EÇS, V.X, 275.

<sup>234</sup> “*Ammâ cemî'i diyârın mahbûb [u] mahbûbeleri memdûh-ı âlemdir, ammâ bi-emrillâh Mısır'ın merd [ü] zenânında mahbûb u mahbûbe olmaz, aceb hikmetdir. Meğer ba'zı devlet-mend âdemler Behce ve Hinâdî ve Hazarî Urbânından kızlar alırlar, ve Rum'dan mümtâz [u] müstesnâ mahbûbe duhter-i pâkîze-ahter nâ-şüküfte gonca-fem bâkireler getirürler kim herbiri birer Mısır hazînesi değer ... Ve mahbûb gulâmları yine taşra diyârlardan gelmiştir. Yohsa Mısır'da dilber olmaz, olursa mu'ammer olmaz.*” in EÇS, V.X, 274-275; and “*Ammâ şehir-i Mısır'ın hâricinde kurâ ve kasabâtlarda Sa'îdî ve Bedevî mahbûbeleri olur kim merâlî ve gazâlî Hoten âhûsu gibi mukehhal gözli,*

similar approach to Âli, though less critical. If the Egyptian men conceived a child from the non-Egyptian women, their children would have *cimroz* eyes as common among Egyptians, they would necessarily have an Egyptian physical feature.<sup>235</sup>

Writing his observations on Dimyat, Evliya pointed out that women were not allowed to go out. The women only left their houses at night with lamps. To go out for women was “disgraceful” in this town, consequently Dimyat was portrayed as an upright and virtuous (*ehl-i ırz*) town.<sup>236</sup> A very stark contrast to the city of Dimyat was the old city of Zeyla’. Sexual intercourse in this city was common and available; especially because of the exceptionality and abundance of virgins whose virginity regenerated itself.<sup>237</sup> It is astonishing that Evliya Çelebi did not adopt a judgmental approach in these cases, rather, he just mentioned the virtuous nature of Dimyat.

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*şîrîn sözlü ve münevver yüzlü perî peykerleri olur kim medhinde lisân kâsırdır.*” in EÇS, V.X, 275.

<sup>235</sup> “*Ve bu mertebe memdûh-ı âlem olan mahbûbe-i cihândan bir dürr-i yetîm yek dâne tevellüd etdikde hikmet-i Hudâ yine gözleri cimroz olur.*” in EÇS, V.X, 275. For the definition of *cimroz*, see footnote 156.

<sup>236</sup> “*Ve bu şehirde [Dimyat] şeyhü'l-beled defteriyle üç kerre yüz bin âdem vardır. Hamd-ı Hudâ bu kadar ecnâs-ı mahlûkât olup bâbullûk nâmında fâhişehâne bi'l-ittifâk yokdur. Gâyet ehl-i ırz vilâyetdir. Bu şehrin dahi nisvân-ı sâhib-isyânları çârsû-yı bâzâra çıkmak ayıbdır, gece fânûslarla gezerler.*” in EÇS, V.X, 389.

<sup>237</sup> “*Ve cimâ'ı bu şehrin gâyet lezîzdir. Ve Hitâyî dedikleri zenânelerinden kûsâm-ı hâsıl-ı kâm masdar-ı insân-ı kân bu diyâra mahsûsdur. Her cem 'ıyyetde bâkire bulunur mahbûbeleri vardır.*” in EÇS, V.X, 490. In EÇOS, Dankoff explains that Evliya Çelebi as a combination of Persian *kûs* and Turkish word for genitalia (EÇOS, s.v. “*kûsam*”). *Hitayi*, is used for young girls whose virginity rejuvenated. Dankoff adds that the word may be related to Hitay, meaning Turkistan, China (EÇOS, s.v. “*Hitayi*”).

### 3.3. Piety, Purenness, Uprightness

Considering the religious life in Egypt, there is not a single attitude toward the religious life in Egypt. Egypt was predominantly Sunni-Muslim, it housed the most prominent Islamic education center of the early modern world, Al-Azhar, and it was an important hub on the way to the Islamic pilgrimage. Âli praised Egypt as it was the “abode of saintly men” and the land of the prophets.<sup>238</sup> He appreciated the custom that people woke up during the night canticle and praised God.<sup>239</sup>

However, there were some strange or improper customs which Âli harshly criticized. For example, special female mourners were hired during funerals, who grieved over the deceased as if they were close relatives. Âli was especially critical of women who went to cemeteries pretending they were fulfilling religious obligations, but whose aim was to meet with men, and even to engage in sexual intercourse. The author also disapproved of the ruling governor, because he was aware of these misbehaviors and didn’t take any measures to prevent them.<sup>240</sup>

While enumerating the “blameworthy features,” Mustafa Âli harshly criticized the way the Egyptian preachers performed religious prayers. Unlike the modest preachers in the lands of *Rum*, they did not hesitate to climb at the highest point of the pulpit — the “seat of God’s prophet.” They even did not turn their backs toward *mihrab*. Âli was also cynical about the *dervishes* from the religious orders that are not in agreement with their *Rumî* counterparts.<sup>241</sup> In short, according to the Mustafa Âli’s portrayal, Egyptians were living in conflict and without harmony.<sup>242</sup>

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<sup>238</sup> DC, 31.

<sup>239</sup> DC, 40.

<sup>240</sup> DC, 41.

<sup>241</sup> DC, 46-47.

<sup>242</sup> DC, 49.

Although different manners and customs in religious performances were observable, it was impossible to overlook that Egypt was a very important capital for the education and Islamic learning. The eminence of Al-Azhar has been asserted by many contemporary or modern scholars.<sup>243</sup> In Evliya Çelebi's account the prominence of Al-Azhar as a respectful scientific institution was emphasized. Winter adds that even "the prejudiced" Evliya Çelebi was showing reverence toward Al-Azhar and its scholars.<sup>244</sup> It is also significant to remember that some of the classes taught in Al-Azhar were in Turkish. In the example given in the previous chapter, Al-Jabarti reported that his father had been teaching classes in both Arabic and Turkish, and he had two different assistants for different native speakers.<sup>245</sup> Focusing especially at the eve of the seventeenth century, Al-Azhar was attracting considerable amounts of students from various Ottoman provinces.<sup>246</sup> As an institution, Al-Azhar prospered under the Ottoman reign, however we cannot speak of an Ottoman intervention into its academic or religious undertakings.<sup>247</sup> The thriving Al-Azhar may well be an Ottoman reflection toward the former Mamluk patronage.<sup>248</sup>

Though Egypt was the heartland of prominent scholars and religious education, this did not have a practical impact on daily issues. Evliya reported that lawful treatment in Egypt was impossible.<sup>249</sup> Evliya Çelebi criticized the ulama of Egypt because of their corruption. The Al-Azhar ulama could easily be bribed to receive a *fetwa* according to one's own interests.<sup>250</sup> Still, the general attitude of Evliya Çelebi toward Egyptian ulama and education was positive as he described Egypt as "a bizarre and peculiar

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<sup>243</sup> See Hanna, *Culture*, 99-100; Winter, *Cultural Ties*, 192.

<sup>244</sup> Winter, *Cultural Ties*, 192.

<sup>245</sup> Winter, *Cultural Ties*, 190.

<sup>246</sup> Hathaway, *Egypt in the Seventeenth Century*, 57.

<sup>247</sup> Winter, *Re-emergence of Mamluks*, 24, see also Winter, *Cultural Ties*, 193.

<sup>248</sup> Behrens-Abouseif, *Egypt's Adjustment*, 94.

<sup>249</sup> Winter, *Cultural Ties*, 193. The original text: "*Hâsıl-ı kelâm Mısır diyârında ihkâk-ı hak olmak ihtimâli yokdur*" in EÇS, V.X, 86.

<sup>250</sup> Dankoff, *Ottoman Mentality*, 114.

climate that is dependent on knowing.”<sup>251</sup> According to the narrative of Evliya, the judges were incomparable to others — they were utterly clever. The children were well-mannered, mature, and discerning; and there were 57,000 people that memorized the Qur’an, and people reciting Qur’an were all around. Evliya argued that there were 174,000 ulama, qadis, and teachers. The *imams* and *hatibs* were more than 10,000, and there were 10,000 sheiks. In the classrooms of Al-Azhar, there were 12,000 ulama, with books and *misvaks*. Evliya Çelebi has been criticized because of his exaggeration of numbers, and I do not claim that these numbers refer to exact amounts. However, these figures are significant because they show the high frequency of ulama as well as their wide range within Egyptian society.

### 3.4. Cleanliness, Health

The comparisons of Evliya with *Rum* were not always with the lands or people living on the lands of *Rum*. Sometimes he compared the Egyptian people with *Rumîs* who lived and worked in Egypt. For instance, while listing the features of *Ezher i Kâyid*, the famous Al-Azhar, Evliya referred to the *Rumî* people in Al-Azhar praising their cleanliness. He told his addressees that the mosque is full with the educated and learned men of Egypt. Scholars taught there in more than 170 different classrooms. The *revâk* of the *Rumî* constituted another part, and all the *Ervâm* (pl. of *Rumî*) were sitting there. This part of the mosque was very clean, and all the people in *revâks* were inclined

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<sup>251</sup> “Mısırı bilmeğe muhtâc iklim-i garîbe ve acîbedendir. Ulemâ ve fuzalâsı ulûm-ı garîbe ve fûnûn-ı şettâyâ mâlikdir. Ve hukemâsı bî-kıyâsdır, tabî’atları gâyet zekîlerdir. Ve sibyan-ı ebcedhânları gâyet necîb [ü] reşîd ve tîz-fehm olduklarından elli yedi bin hâfız-ı Kur’ân vardır. Hâlâ cümle dükkânlarda ve her köşe başında ve ekseriyyâ hammâm kapularında ve Rumeli meydânında tilâvet-i Kur’ân eder a’mâ hâfız-ı Kelânullâhları vardır. Ve cümle yüz yetmiş dörd bin ulemâ ve kadı ve ders-i âmları vardır. İlm-i hadîs ve ilm-i tefsîr bu Mısır’a mahsûsdur. Ve on binden mütecâviz e’imme ve hutebâsı ve on bin meşâyih-i kirâmı vardır. Hemân câmi’-i Ezher revâk-ı râyları içre mevcûd on iki bin eli kitâblı ve beli misvâklı ulemâsı mevcûddur.” in EÇS, V.X, 86.

to go to *Rumî revâk*. These people also had well-established *waqfs*. In contrast to the *Rumî revâk*, the *revâks* of Iraqis and Moorish people were not immaculate.<sup>252</sup>

In the *Book of Travels and Description of Cairo*, the parts about the cleanliness and health of the people give the impression that most of the Egyptians suffered from diseases and unsanitary conditions. In the words of Âli, the situation was as dreadful as follows:

“Most of the people of Egypt are affected by some diseases and ailing. One rarely meets a person whose eyes are bright and round, who is [not] himself nor his male sex organ suffer from an illness, and whose physical health is manifest. Most of them have [scrotal] hernias, their testicles are vessels filled up to the brim ... Perhaps even in the children of the Turks (*Rumî*) that are permanently settled in Egypt these diseases show by and by.”<sup>253</sup>

Apart from the physical diseases, both Mustafa Âli and Evliya Çelebi refer to mental illnesses, stating that the climate drew Egyptians to melancholy. Evliya further argued that because of women’s deception and tricks, the whole society was under their enchantments. The men who were prone to melancholy were sent to lunatic asylums for healing. However, without a decree from the Ottoman governor, they would not possibly be sent to the asylum.<sup>254</sup> Âli thought that while the mental hospitals were lacking patients, some of the coffee-houses were full of “drooling madmen deprived of reason and understanding.” Âli added that it was unlikely to find a coffee-house where “the fine, educated men of *Rum* or one where the scholars of the Arabian and Persian lands would assemble.”<sup>255</sup>

Besides the lunatics, the *Rumî* observers seemed to have paid great attention to the eyes of the people. Apparently in seventeenth-century Egypt many people had eye and

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<sup>252</sup> “*Evvelâ câmi ‘ içi ulemâ-yı Mısır ile mâl-â-mâldir. Yüz yetmiş yerde müderrisîn ders takrîr ederler. Andan revâk-ı Rumî başka bir köşedir. Cümle Ervâm kavmi anda sâkinlerdir. Ve gâyet pâkdir, cümle revâk halkı bu Ervâm revâkına mâyillerdir. Ve evkâfları metîndir. Ve revâk-ı Irâk. Ve revâk-ı Mağribî, nâ-pâklerdir.*” in EÇS, V.X, 110.

<sup>253</sup> DC, 43.

<sup>254</sup> “*Ammâ bu Mısır'ın âb [u] havâsı yübûset üzre olduğundan cümle halkı sevdâyîdir. Ve mekr-i zenânî çok olmağile ekseriyyâ halkı meshûr ve memkûrdur. Hemân ol âdemi ahâlî-i mahalle paşaya arz edüp buyurdu-yı şerîf ile bîmârhâneye koyup tîmâr ederler. Buyurdu olmasa bîmârhâneye komazlar.*” in EÇS, V.X, 144.

<sup>255</sup> DC, 38.

vision problems. Both Evliya Çelebi and Mustafa Âli referred to the abundance of blind people. According to Evliya, the discrepancy of the eyes of Egyptian people was — again — blamed on the weather. The beautiful weather turned the eyes of the people to the beautiful eyes of gazelles. However, people from the south of Egypt had *cimloz/cimroz* eyes.<sup>256</sup> The references to the *cimloz* eyes are very common in Evliya Çelebi's narrative.<sup>257</sup> The eyes of the *Kuloğlu* were used as a synonym to *cimloz* eyes, probably referring to Mamluks as *Kuloğlu*. Likewise, Mustafa Âli mentioned that “one rarely meets a person whose eyes are bright and round.”<sup>258</sup> Instead of blaming the climate, Âli argued that the cheap, heavy, and indigestible food (fried cheese) they consumed on a daily basis caused blindness, and Âli criticized Egyptians using this pun: “[I]t causes a weakening of vision and leads to blindness; they still stretch out their hands for it in blind greed.”<sup>259</sup>

Beyond pointing out the illnesses and blindness in the society, they emphasized the inefficiency to deal with these illnesses and problems. For example it is recurrently mentioned that although so many people had such eye problems, there were no oculists in Egypt.<sup>260</sup>

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<sup>256</sup> For the definition, see footnote 156.

<sup>257</sup> “*Havâsının letâfetinden evlâdlarının gözleri mükehhal merâlî ve gazâlî gözlü olur. Ammâ aşağı Mısırlı gözleri cimloz ve koncoloz gözlü olur. Aceb hikmetullâhdır.*” in EÇS, V.X, 105. “*Ammâ Mısır şehrinde hâsıl olan evlâdların bi-emrillâh gözleri kuloğlu [Kuloğlu?] gözlerine döner. Mısır'ın bu kelâm darb-ı meselidir, ya'nî gözleri cimroz olur.*” in EÇS, V.X, 164. “*Bu darb-ı mesel gâyet sahîh kelâmdır. İki âdemin biri bi-emri Hudâ alîl olup gözleri cimroz olur. Bu dahi darb-ı meseldir kim bir âdem bir şey'e bir hoş nazar edemese, "Senin gözlerin Mısır kuloğlusu gözüne benzer" derler.*” in EÇS, V.X, 206-207.

<sup>258</sup> DC, 42.

<sup>259</sup> DC, 84.

<sup>260</sup> “*İki âdemin biri bi-emri Hudâ alîl olup gözleri cimroz olur*” ... “*alîl a'mâ çokdur, kehhâl yokdur*” in EÇS, V.X, 207. “*Evvelâ Mısır'da çeşmi alîl ve müşevveşü'l-uyûn âdemin hisâbını Cenâb-ı Bârî bilir. Ma'a hâzâ yine böyle iken üstâd-ı kâmil kehhâlî yokdur*” in EÇS, V.X, 272.

### 3.5. The Other Side of the Story: Egyptians' View of *Rumîs* in Egypt

Although the main question of this thesis is about the gaze of the imperial center toward Egypt, it would also be an interesting project to look at the flip side of the story — namely the gaze toward the Ottomans. Although to trace this perspective would be beyond the scope of this thesis, a short overview based on secondary sources will contribute to the integrity of this project. In that respect, the views of the Egyptian ulama, whose features were discussed above, would be presented.

Behrens-Abouseif focuses on Egypt's conquest of to trace the respective relations of Ottomans and Egyptians. Ottomans tried to justify their conquest religiously, though that was not easy considering the predominantly Sunni-Muslim population of Egypt. Because of that, the Ottomans put forward the despotic rule of the former Mamluk leader, his disrespect towards *sharia* and the corruption of the qadis.<sup>261</sup> At the phase of Ottoman conquest, the most eminent chronicler of Egyptian tradition, Ibn Iyas, was particularly hostile toward the Ottomans. He portrayed the Ottomans as disobedient men and bad Muslims. He criticized their irreligious attitudes like not fasting during Ramadan, and consuming alcohol and hashish. Ottoman soldiers were represented as thieves and accused of being sexual abusive. The chronicler compared Ottomans to Mamluks and went so far as to prefer the behavioral patterns of the latter. The comparison between the “irreligious Ottomans” and “more devout Mamluks” was a recurrent topic among contemporary Egyptian literati.<sup>262</sup>

Ibn Iyas' chronicle was translated into Ottoman Turkish by al-Diyarbakri, an Ottoman qadi who entered Egypt with the Ottoman army. His work is more than a simple translation — he made significant changes and added two and a half years to the chronicle.<sup>263</sup> Diyarbakri reported that Egyptians, in contrast to Magribis, were hostile

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<sup>261</sup> Behrens-Abouseif, *Egypt's Adjustment*, 138.

<sup>262</sup> Winter, *Re-emergence of Mamluks*, 91.

<sup>263</sup> Winter, *Ottoman Egypt*, 1; see also Behrens-Abouseif, *Egypt's Adjustment*, 137.



toward the Ottomans. In his account, Diyarbakri wrote that an Egyptian was decreed to be killed as he publicly demanded the end of Ottoman rule.<sup>264</sup>

The antagonistic attitude toward the Ottoman rulers changed in the following generation. Al-Sha'rani, al-Jaziri, al-Nahrawali, and Ibn Abu'l-Surur were examples of the new generation of historians.<sup>265</sup> For instance, Ishaqi praised Selim as a brave and upright emperor who emancipated Egyptians from the immoral reign of Sultan al-Ghuri of Mamluks. In this second phase, the Arab chroniclers and historians glorified Ottoman sultans because of their wars against the infidels, and their good conduct of the sacred cities and territories of Mecca and Medina.<sup>266</sup>

In *Ideology and History, Identity and Alterity: The Arab Image of the Turk from the Abbasids to Modern Egypt*, Haarmann traces the image of Turks as perceived by the Arabs by utilizing research materials from Egypt.<sup>267</sup> He argues that the usual stereotype of the Turks – as the “uncouth as savage, yet at the same time brave and upright Turkish ‘barbarian,’” turned into a brutal, power-seeking figure.<sup>268</sup> It is interesting that the “usual stereotype” of the Turks closely resembled the Turkish stereotypes of Arabs. As in any stereotyping process, Arabs tended to ignore the differences among Turks and instead categorized them under a standardized identity of Turkish “others.” (This is mentioned in the pervious chapter, with the extensive use of the word *Turk* covering different ethnic or social backgrounds.) Apparently, it is not easy to talk about a simple and non-complex relationship between Cairo and Istanbul, and many factors such as social status, and political conditions were influencing these complex relations.

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<sup>264</sup> cited in Behrens-Abouseif, *Egypt's Adjustment*, 136.

<sup>265</sup> Winter, *Ottoman Egypt*, 6.

<sup>266</sup> Behrens-Abouseif, *Egypt's Adjustment*, 136.

<sup>267</sup> To my understanding, Haarmann uses Turks as Ottomans, so considering the sensitivities of this study calling them *Rumîs* would be more correct. However, to be loyal to Haarmann's article I will refer to Turks – though having in mind that the people under discussion were actually *Rumîs*.

<sup>268</sup> Haarmann, *Ideology and History*, 177.

### 3.6. Conclusion

The so-called Orientalist tales and narratives drew an “exotic” picture of the Orient, although these were in most cases constructions of the authors and did not reflect reality. In this chapter, the observations of two Ottoman literati are portrayed. As seen in the examples above, their narratives bore similarities to the narratives and tales about the Orient. Both authors recorded the customs, manners, and practices that deviated from the norm (the norm being the lands of *Rum*). Egypt was a “strange,” “exotic place” for the *Rumîs* coming from the central lands. The culture was more colorful, considering the frequent public visibility of women and seemingly constant festivities — and most of these customs were not considered “disgraceful” in these lands. Primal characteristics were stronger: rulers were more despotic, sensual pleasures were higher. *Rumîs* living in Egypt were distinguishable by their appearances, and this strengthened the contrast portrayed by the authors. However, it is important to note who the “others” were continued to depend on the speaker; and at least for some decades after the conquest Egyptians, too, had a cynical attitude toward *Rumîs*.

#### 4. AN OTTOMAN ORIENTALISM

Both Mustafa Âli and Evliya Çelebi internalized the *Rumî* identity and acknowledged the social norms of the lands of *Rum*. Their reflections on the various topics discussed in the previous chapter inevitably reminds the readers of Edward Said's eminent book, *Orientalism*. In this chapter, after providing a background on Orientalism and Ottoman Empire, I will try to place Mustafa Âli's and Evliya Çelebi's narratives within the discourse of Orientalism. I argue that the authors' attitudes toward Egypt and Egyptians strongly echo the discourse of Orientalism. However, in the Ottoman case, the perception of Cairo cannot be justified by claiming that it was further east of the center. Appropriating such qualities to the Orient would be an essentialist approach. In the early modern Ottoman world, talking about a powerful imperial center (as a point of reference) and its peripheries would be more suitable. Still, the inevitable associations of the *Book of Travels* and *Description of Cairo* with the claims and narratives of discourse of Orientalism should be discussed in more detail.

In this chapter, I will first give a brief overview of Said's accounts of *Orientalism*. In doing so, I will refer to the possible overlap between the early modern Ottoman context and the modern phase of Orientalism. Then, I will mention some of the critiques of Said's *Orientalism*. These critiques raise the possibility of Orientalism's existence as early as the early modern period, and they emphasize its complexity as a discourse. Finally, I will make a literature review on Ottoman Orientalism to question if Mustafa Âli and Evliya Çelebi were "Ottoman Orientalists."

#### 4.1. Orientalism and the East: A Background

In *Orientalism*, Said argues that, “the Orient was almost a European invention, and had been since antiquity a place of romance, exotic beings, haunting memories and landscapes, remarkable experiences.”<sup>269</sup> Underlining the fact that the idea of the Orient was a counterpart to the definition of “Europe,” Said explains that:

“The Orient is not only adjacent to Europe; it is also the place of Europe's greatest and richest and oldest colonies, the source of its civilizations and languages, its cultural contestant, and one of its deepest and most recurring images of the Other. In addition, the Orient has helped to define Europe (or the West) as its contrasting image, idea, personality, experience. Yet none of this Orient is merely imaginative. The Orient is an integral part of European *material* civilization and culture.”<sup>270</sup>

Explaining the different functions of Orientalism is beyond the aim and scope of this chapter. However, it is significant to note that Said analyses Orientalism as a discourse, and this chapter will have a similar approach. Although Said adds that the subject of Orientalism may be extended to the period of Antiquity, his emphasis is on the modern phase. Said starts this modern phase with Napoleon’s invasion of Egypt in 1798.<sup>271</sup> In that respect, “Orientalism” mainly refers to the British and French colonialism.<sup>272</sup>

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<sup>269</sup> Edward Said, *Orientalism* (London: Pinguin Books, 2003) 1.

<sup>270</sup> Said, *Orientalism*, 1-2.

<sup>271</sup> Said argues that this phase was important because of the “new awareness of the Orient” as well as new sources. He sees the Napoleonic invasions as “an invasion which was in many ways the very model of a truly scientific appropriation of one culture by another apparently stronger one”(Said, *Orientalism*, 42). For a critique challenging the model in which the Middle Eastern modernity started with Napoleon’s invasion, see Dror Ze’evi, “Back to Napoleon? Thoughts on the Beginning of the Modern Era,” *Middle East in Mediterranean Historical Review*, 19/i, (2004). Ze’evi argues that both the European as well as the Arab historiography internalized the same periodization. According to this approach Napoleon’s invasion of Egypt was “the first impetus for change in the Middle East.” On the contrary, Ze’evi argues that instead of seeing the West as responsible for Modernity, or looking for local origins of the Modernity in the

Saidian definition of Orientalism is criticized because of its “neglect of what the ‘Orient’ did with Orientalism.”<sup>273</sup> In the light of the *Rumî* narratives on Egypt, would it be appropriate to talk about an invented “Ottoman Orient”? While keeping in mind that the “Orient is not an inert fact of nature,” it would be an interesting mental exercise to re-write Said’s paragraph quoted above for an Ottoman context.<sup>274</sup>

“The [Ottoman] Orient was almost an Ottoman invention, and had been since antiquity a place of romance, exotic beings, haunting memories and landscapes, remarkable experiences.”

“The [Ottoman] Orient is not only adjacent to [the core lands of the Ottoman Empire]; it is also the place of [Ottoman’s] greatest and richest and oldest [provinces], the source of its civilizations and languages, its cultural contestant, and one of its deepest and most recurring images of the *Other*. In addition, the [Ottoman] Orient has helped to define [Ottoman identity] as its contrasting image, idea, personality, experience. Yet none of this Orient is merely imaginative. The Orient is an integral part of [Ottoman] *material* civilization and culture.”

Of course, the aim with this exercise is not to make a broad generalization for the Ottoman context and fall into the same trap as Said did. Rather, my aim is to draw attention that it is possible to replace Said’s “Europe” with Mustafa Âli’s and Evliya Çelebi’s “core lands of the Ottoman Empire” when considering narratives as primary sources. A closer look at the paragraph above would provide a clearer picture.

In sharing their extraordinary observations, both Mustafa Âli and Evliya Çelebi emphasized the “romantic” experiences of the Egyptian people, their different manners, and customs. Cairo was, as Said said of the Orient, a “place of romance, exotic beings, haunting memories and landscapes, remarkable experiences.” Egypt was located next to the lands of *Rum*, it was the most lucrative province, and a center of civilization and of languages. In the narratives about Egypt, geographic, ethnic, economic, and educational lines defined the images of “others.” It is evident that the Ottomans shaped their

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same region, a new framework of analysis is necessary. (Ze’evi, *Back to Napoleon*, 79; 91).

<sup>272</sup> Said, *Orientalism*, 3-4.

<sup>273</sup> Baki Tezcan, “Lost in Historiography: An Essay on the Reasons for the Absence of a History of Limited Government in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire,” *Middle Eastern Studies*, 45/3 (2009): 499.

<sup>274</sup> Said, *Orientalism*, 4.

identities as *Rumîs* in contrast with the “others,” or the local Egyptians. Thus, Egypt was certainly an “integral part of the Ottoman material civilization and culture.”

The historical contexts of Said’s *Orientalism* and early modern Ottoman Empire are substantially different. Said refers to a period of an imperialist domination by colonial powers. But, in more general terms, the relationship between the East and the West relies on power relations, domination, and hegemony. As a consequence of these power relations “the Orient was created,” or, in Said’s terminology, it was “Orientalized.”<sup>275</sup> In that context, the West had a flexible “positional superiority” and Orientalism helped justify the colonial rule.<sup>276</sup>

In the Ottoman case, there is a powerful imperial center with positional superiority, as revealed by centrality of *Rum* and Istanbul in the examples. To those in the center, Egypt was a distant province, both physically and mentally. The relationship was not the one between the colonizer and the colonized; however, there is no question that the Ottoman imperial center was powerful and claimed moral superiority over the lands it ruled. This claim of moral superiority was very clear in Evliya Çelebi’s and Mustafa Âli’s narratives, as both authors internalized and praised the norms of the center without ever questioning them. Then, did the Ottoman intellectuals “Orientalize” their Eastern provinces or peripheries?<sup>277</sup> And, did the Ottomans try to legitimize their conquest over Muslim lands? These questions are not simple enough to answer in a few sentences; however it will be helpful to keep these in mind while discussing further questions of Ottoman Orientalism.

Said argues that the Western visitors who traveled to the Orient went there first as Europeans and Americans, then as individuals; and being European or American was not an “inert,” or passive, condition.<sup>278</sup> Likewise, “an Oriental man was first an

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<sup>275</sup> Said, *Orientalism*, 5.

<sup>276</sup> Said, *Orientalism*, 7; 39.

<sup>277</sup> A further question would be the Ottoman center’s perspective towards its non-Eastern peripheries. This discussion will be beyond the physical limits of this study, however it may contribute significantly to the content, as it will help to clarify if this Ottoman perception was towards the peripheries.

<sup>278</sup> Said, *Orientalism*, 11.

Oriental and only second a man.”<sup>279</sup> In light of this statement, I will argue that both Mustafa Âli and Evliya Çelebi were *Rumîs* and Ottoman intellectuals first in Egypt, and individuals second. Their *Rumîness* was shaped at the center, and their values were created accordingly.

Said’s claim that the Orientalist “confirm[ed] the Orient in his reader’s eyes,” rather than challenging the existing assumptions and perceptions, would thus be applicable to the early modern Ottoman context as well.<sup>280</sup> Both Mustafa Âli and Evliya Çelebi were knowledgeable about the older sources on Egypt: Were they, too, only confirming the existing beliefs among their addressees? As an inevitable consequence of this confirmation, the Oriental subjects were isolated as essential beings. Said argues,

“We will have a homo Sinicus, a homo Arabicus (and why not a homo Aegypticus, etc.), a homo Africanus, the man—the “normal man,” it is understood — being the European man of the historical period, that is, since Greek antiquity.”<sup>281</sup>

In the Ottoman case, “the normal man” would be the *Rumî* from Istanbul. Did Mustafa Âli and Evliya Çelebi describe the homo Aegyptus as well? Especially Âli’s category, “the blameworthy features of Egyptians from Ancient times” speaks for it. However, it is necessary to underline that both Ottoman intellectuals were aware of different levels of “otherness” like ethnicity, class, gender, and mode of living, and they classified people accordingly. Besides their “pro-Istanbul biases” and sweeping generalizations, their narratives are multifaceted. However, it is evident that they considered themselves the “normal men” as *Rumîs*.

Placing the early modern Ottoman world in the discourse of Orientalism as the power center, as I have done, can be problematic. First, it can be viewed as anachronistic, because the discussion is closely associated with the modern era and colonialism. Second, the Ottoman Empire was itself considered “the Orient,” and Said’s *Orientalism* offered no exception. However, as Albert Hourani nicely put, the Ottomans were the “Romans of the Muslim world” with “a bureaucracy, a legal system,

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<sup>279</sup> Said, *Orientalism*, 231.

<sup>280</sup> Said, *Orientalism*, 65.

<sup>281</sup> Said, *Orientalism*, 97.

and Sunni Islam itself, with its balance between two ways of looking at religion, as a system of ideal social behavior and as a path toward experiential knowledge of God.”<sup>282</sup>

It is remarkable that Said does not refer to any sources from within the Empire, nor does he look closer at the Empire, even though Egypt, a former Ottoman province, was at the center of most of his primary sources.<sup>283</sup>

In the discussion of Orientalism, the Ottoman Empire is “dismissed as a sort of epiphenomenal, (and dare one say it, quintessentially ‘Oriental’) creature.” Said’s overlook of the Ottoman Empire is interpreted as “fal[ling] into much the same trap as the writers he criticizes in his epic *Orientalism*.”<sup>284</sup> Esin Akalın argues that Said intentionally omits the Ottoman Empire so that it would be easier to describe a more homogeneous East without considering the mixed, complex, and changing relations of the Ottoman Empire with the West.<sup>285</sup> If he included the Ottoman Empire in his discourse, Said would challenge the Western representations of the East as weak and inferior.<sup>286</sup> Critiques of *Orientalism* find fault with Said’s “model of fixity” and “historical and theoretical simplifications” because his generalizations turn to be “ahistorical” and “ageographical”; and his portrayal turns to be “static” and

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<sup>282</sup> Albert Hourani, “How Should We Write the History of the Middle East?” *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 23/ 2 (1991): 130.

<sup>283</sup> In the introduction, Said excuses that due to the practical reasons he had to leave out many sources. Rather than relying upon a set of books, he follows “historical generalizations.” (Said, *Orientalism*, 4) However, to trace these generalizations Said selects the “best suited” ones for his study. (Said, *Orientalism*, 16) This may well be the reason why the Ottoman Empire is almost non-existent in *Orientalism*.

<sup>284</sup> Selim Deringil, “They Live in a State of Nomadism and Savagery: The Late Ottoman Empire and the Post-Colonial Debate,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 45 (2003): 313.

<sup>285</sup> Esin Akalın, “The Ottoman Phenomenon and Edward Said’s Monolithic Discourse on the Orient,” in *Challenging the Boundaries*, eds. Isil Bas & Donald Freeman, (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2007) 112. The critiques of Said’s *Orientalism* are of course not limited to the discussion of the Ottoman Empire or to the fixity of Said’s model. However, to discuss all the critiques here would be impossible. As an example of several points of critique, see Robert Irwin, *For the Lust of Knowing: The Orientalists and their Enemies* (London: Allen Lane, 2006) 6-8.

<sup>286</sup> Akalın, *Ottoman Phenomenon*, 118.



“monolithic.”<sup>287</sup> Neither the Western subjects nor the texts on the Orient were homogeneous and monolithic. However, in the discourse of Orientalism the West is perceived as the “universal norm.”<sup>288</sup> In short, it is necessary to recognize that “each of these Orientalisms is internally complex and unstable.”<sup>289</sup> Different variables like class, race, gender, and sexuality, as well as their interactions and contradictions should be included in the discussion.<sup>290</sup> In both *Book of Travels* and *Description of Cairo* class, ethnic differences (not necessarily race), gender, and sexuality were important markers in defining the “others.” Broader and multilayered perspectives of Orientalism would help place the Ottoman Empire and its complex relations in the discourse of Orientalism.

Considering the emphasis and amount of detail given to the subject of Oriental women in the Orientalist narratives, this same topic’s recurrence in the works of Mustafa Âli and Evliya Çelebi signifies the importance gender variable for this context. The representations of the Orient are closely linked with “sexual imageries, unconscious fantasies, desires, fears, and dreams.”<sup>291</sup> In Meyda Yeğenoğlu’s words the “Orient [is] seen as the embodiment of sensuality.”<sup>292</sup> In that respect it is helpful to remember that sensuality, too, was a powerful narrative element in both early modern Ottoman sources as well.

Several authors discuss the possibility of an “early” Orientalism. For instance, Daniel J. Vitkus refers to the existing Oriental stereotypes, focusing on the European’s

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<sup>287</sup> Akalın, *Ottoman Phenomenon*, 112; 119. See also Meyda Yeğenoğlu, *Colonial Fantasies: Towards a Feminist Reading of Orientalism*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998) 79. Derek Gregory, “Between the Book and the Lamp; Imaginative Geographies of Egypt 1849-50,” *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 20, (1995) 30.

<sup>288</sup> Yeğenoğlu, *Colonial Fantasies*, 6; 71.

<sup>289</sup> Akalın, *Ottoman Phenomenon*, 121.

<sup>290</sup> Gregory, *The Book and the Lamp*, 31.

<sup>291</sup> Gregory, *The Book and the Lamp*, 26.

<sup>292</sup> Yeğenoğlu, *Colonial Fantasies*, 73.

“distorted” image of Islam during the Middle Ages.<sup>293</sup> Tracing Orientalism back in time, he argues that the discourse of Orientalism developed in a period prior to colonialism, and the “relationship was one of anxiety and awe on part of Europeans.”<sup>294</sup>

Likewise, Suzanne C. Akbari examines the continuities connecting the medieval and modern forms of the discourse of Orientalism to discover the origins of the modern Orientalism. She denotes that the binary oppositions of the East and the West are not frequent in medieval accounts. Traditionally, the world was defined by continents, cardinal directions, or the seven climatic zones. In the medieval mentality, the Orient was “the place of origins and of mankind’s beginning; it was also, however, a place of enigma and mystery, including strange marvels and monstrous chimeras, peculiarities generated by the extraordinary climate.”<sup>295</sup> It is possible to talk about Orientalism during the Middle Ages, however it was “rather different” than the modern Orientalism of the early nineteenth century.<sup>296</sup>

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<sup>293</sup> Daniel Vitkus, “Early Modern Orientalism: Representations of Islam in Sixteenth and Seventeenth-Century Europe,” *Western Views of Islam in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, eds. D. Blanks and M. Frassetto, (NY: St. Martin's Press, 1999) 209.

<sup>294</sup> This was, according to Vitkus [during] “the cultural flourishing and supremacy of the Muslim world, particularly in the example of al-Andalus”. Vitkus, *Early Modern Orientalism*, 210-211.

<sup>295</sup> Suzanne Conklin Akbari, *Idols in the East: European Representations of Islam and the Orient, 1100–1450* (Ithaca, NY, and London: Cornell University Press, 2009) 3.

<sup>296</sup> There are different suggestions to mark the starting point of Orientalism as a discourse. Akbari claims that Orientalism has different stages of development. Starting with the Napoleonic invasion of Egypt is one possibility, as Said suggests. However, Akbari argues that the raising Western awareness toward the Ottoman power denotes another important phase specifically referring to the period after the conquest of Istanbul. (Akbari, *Idols*, 18). In that perspective, her thesis is closer to Vitkus, who traced the roots of Orientalism back to a period where the comparative advantage of the East was rising. Likewise, Robert Irwin looks for the origins of Orientalism in his critique of Said’s *Orientalism*. After enumerating several starting points like Ancient Greece, the Council of Vienne, or Bonaparte’s invasion of Egypt; he finally chooses to locate it in sixteenth century. (Irwin, *For Lust of Knowing*, 6-8).

#### 4.2. The Question of Ottoman Orientalism :

##### Mustafa Âli and Evliya Çelebi, Early Modern Ottoman Orientalists?

Tracing the roots of the Orientalism back to the early modern period is possible, as discussed before. A further discussion is the question of an “Ottoman Orientalism.” Makdisi coined the phrase “Ottoman Orientalism,” and he argues that in the modern period, every emerging nation “creates its own Orient.”<sup>297</sup> Makdisi extends the scope of Said’s Orientalism by introducing the Ottomans’ representations of their Arab peripheries. This attempt makes the discussions of Orientalism more complex, as it extends the discourse behind the clash of the binary oppositions – the East and the West. Makdisi’s most interesting argument is about the impact of the nationalistic modernization project. He argues that in the Ottoman Empire, the existing discourse of “religious subordination,” was replaced by a notion of “temporal subordination.” In this system, the center had the desire and power to “reform” and “discipline” its “backward peripheries.” This argument relies on the presumption that the Ottoman Empire adopted the superior and progressive character of the West, and the Ottoman reform agenda was created accordingly. Respectively, Makdisi affirms that the Ottoman Orientalism was a prevalent and characteristic feature of the Ottoman modernization. Thus, it helped shape a modern Ottoman Turkish nation. Similar to the Western colonialist agenda, this discourse of Orientalism served to legitimize the imperial center’s rule over the ethnic or religious others.<sup>298</sup>

Makdisi places the concept of time at the center of Ottoman Orientalism. Istanbul was not only the capital and the center of the Empire, but it was also the “temporally highest point.” The “gaze” from the center to the provinces was not only looking at a physical distance, but also at a temporal one. This approach, according to Makdisi, was a major rupture to the Ottoman past. In the pre-reform period, he argues, there was religious and ethnic separation. However, the center and periphery were coeval.<sup>299</sup> The notion of time is emphasized by Dror Ze’evi, too. As Ze’evi discusses the modernization of the Middle East, he introduces an important aspect of travel toward

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<sup>297</sup> Makdisi, *Ottoman Orientalism*, 768.

<sup>298</sup> Makdisi, *Ottoman Orientalism*, 768-770.

<sup>299</sup> Makdisi, *Ottoman Orientalism*, 771.

the East. Traveling to the Orient was perceived as “time traveling” as well. Closely linked to the understanding of a linear and progressive history, the Eastern provinces were assumed to be in a more primitive stage of their evolution. Ze’evi refers to Fabian’s concept of the “denial of coevalness.” Although the East and the West were contemporaries, they were not “coeval;” the Eastern cultures were “consigned to an imaginary waiting room of history.” (In simple terms: the Eastern cultures are stuck in the past.) This, again, served as justification of the colonial rule.<sup>300</sup> This perspective of time denotes the complex character of the Orient, as it portrays that the East, in this case, the Ottoman Empire, was not stagnant. In contrast, it moved toward modernity at a different pace.<sup>301</sup>

Although Makdisi’s arguments on Ottoman Orientalism are limited to the late Ottoman period, he refers to Evliya Çelebi and his ethnic stereotyping. Makdisi argues that the legitimacy of the Ottoman Empire during the Early Modern Period was achieved by its Sunni Islamic identity, and he refers to Evliya Çelebi as an Early Modern example of ethnic and religious consciousness:

“The seventeenth-century *Book of Travels* ... of the famous Ottoman chronicler Evliya Çelebi, expresses this fusion of privilege, urbanity, class, patronage, and Sunni Islam that defined being Ottoman. If Istanbul was the “abode of felicity,” the frontiers of the empire were its antithesis: regions where heresy flourished, locales of strange and often comical stories, and arenas where Ottomans “proved” their Islamic identity and yet reconciled themselves to the fact of a multi-religious and ethnic empire. The *Book of Travels* reveals just how deep the religious and ethnic consciousness of Ottomans ran in the late seventeenth century. For example, Çelebi’s description of his patron Melek Ahmed Pasha’s punishment of the “dog worshippers, worse than infidels, a band of rebels and brigands and perverts, resembling ghouls of the desert, hairy heretic Yezidi Kurds” near Diyarbakir in Anatolia reflects one of the central tenets of the Ottoman imperial system: not simply the existence of a profound difference between Ottoman rulers and many of the subjects they ruled but the unbridgeable nature of this difference.”<sup>302</sup>

Although Makdisi is attentive enough to draw attention to Evliya Çelebi’s narrative, he does not make a theoretical attempt to explain these ethnic stereotypes and prejudices in the seventeenth century or look for continuities. He just mentions the deep

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<sup>300</sup> Ze’evi, *Back to Napoleon*, 74. See also Makdisi, *Ottoman Orientalism*, 771-772.

<sup>301</sup> Makdisi, *Ottoman Orientalism*, 771-772.

<sup>302</sup> Makdisi, *Ottoman Orientalism*, 773-774.

ethnic and religious differences in the Empire, as well as the “Ottoman monopoly over the metaphors of Islam.”<sup>303</sup> I argue that an extensive approach to a so-called Ottoman Orientalism should not disregard the pre-Tanzimat period and dismiss the tensions between the center and peripheries.

In another study on Ottoman Orientalism, Deringil argues that the Ottomans adapted colonialism as “a means of survival” during the modernization process. Modernization necessitates the homogenization of the core lands of the Ottoman Empire, the lands of *Rum*. In this process, the Arab provinces were degraded to colonial status; this is described as “borrowed colonialism” and it imitated Western colonialism. As colonialism was a way of survival for the Ottomans, they were not oppressive like their European counterparts.<sup>304</sup> This “borrowed colonialism” had two components. One element had its roots in the Ottoman traditions, and the other element was new; it was the end result of the nineteenth-century Ottoman process of reformation.<sup>305</sup> Likewise, the Ottoman stance toward the nomadic people in peripheries demonstrates both a modern and a traditional character. The nomads were in most cases the “objects” of Ottoman Orientalism. The traditional approach relies upon the Ibn-Khaldounian perspective, civilizations progress as a result of their confrontation with the nomadic people. What was new, according to Deringil, is the internalization of the civilizing mission. This mission was taken over from the Western colonialism.<sup>306</sup> Like Makdisi, Deringil does not extend the question of Ottoman Orientalism to the Early Modern Period. To understand “borrowed colonialism,” the author asks when religion was sufficient anymore to unite the relationships of the Ottoman people with the natives.<sup>307</sup> The break, according to Deringil, is “at the point that the stance of *moral superiority* leads to a position of *moral distance*, this perceived sense of ‘them’ and ‘us.’”<sup>308</sup> In the

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<sup>303</sup> Makdisi, *Ottoman Orientalism*, 774.

<sup>304</sup> Selim Deringil, *Nomadism and Savagery*, 312-313.

<sup>305</sup> Deringil enumerates the traditions as “true practices of Islamic Ottoman empire building; the Caliphate, the Sharia’, Hanefi Islamic jurisprudence, guilds, and Turkish/Islamic law (*kanun/yasa*).” (Deringil, *Nomadism and Savagery*, 316).

<sup>306</sup> Deringil, *Nomadism and Savagery*, 316-317.

<sup>307</sup> Deringil, *Nomadism and Savagery*, 315; 341.

<sup>308</sup> Deringil, *Nomadism and Savagery*, 341; emphasis by author.

light of the prior arguments in this thesis, it would be necessary to ask: Could we not talk about a moral superiority and moral distance as early as in the Early Modern Period, when it is not possible to speak of a colonialism to borrow?

With a special focus on the tensions between nomads and settled people in the peripheries of the Empire, Şükrü Hanioglu rejects Makdisi's thesis.<sup>309</sup> According to Hanioglu the Ottomans adopted and internalized the notions of time and progress. As a result, the Ottomans started to clash with the communities that were assumed to be "backward" and that were resisting "progress." The clashes with *Dürzis* or *Yemeni Zeydis* did not arise because these groups were "Arabs," but rose instead because of clashing ideology. For example, Hanioglu argues that the Ottomans would not have any problem with a scholar in Damascus, or with a merchant in Bagdad – but if the scholar or merchant opposed the progress, the Ottomans would be quick to label them as "barbarous" and "backward." Hanioglu asserts that the monolithic Arab portrayal and the discourse built upon this depiction manifest a too-racist Turkish Orientalism. "In contrast to the Ottomans who were able to understand the shared qualities of the Turcomans on the Taurus, and the nomads in the Asir Province, the republican Turkish elite tried to describe the 'Eastern' people with their own values."<sup>310</sup> Referring to the question of "Where are we in the process of Westernization?" Hanioglu argues that Turks are now on the phase of the "Turkish Orientalism" – creating their own East.<sup>311</sup>

The Turkish reaction to Said's *Orientalism* is "mixed." Turkish readers were already aware of the misrepresentations of Islam and Middle East; and that very attitude toward Turks was already criticized in Turkish literature before the publishing of Said's

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<sup>309</sup> For another critique of Makdisi's arguments, see M.A. Kayapınar, "Ussama Makdisi ve Osmanlı Oryantalizmi", *Dîvân, İlmî Araştırmalar*, 20 (2006): 311-317. According to Kayapınar, Makdisi's article is an example of anachronism. The author opposes Makdisi's argument by rejecting the ethnic and religious differentiation among the Arabs and Ottomans. However, Kayapınar portrays a monolithic Ottoman Empire and he argues that there were reason for historical, cultural, ethnic or geographic differentiation between the Ottoman elite and the Eastern subjects of the Empire.

<sup>310</sup> Asir Province: Today, in the lands of Saudi Arabia.

<sup>311</sup> Şükrü Hanioglu, *Osmanlı Yapamadı*.

“*Orientalism*.”<sup>312</sup> Paradoxically, the discourse of Orientalism was internalized and then reproduced from the Late Ottoman Period onward, especially with the agenda of Westernization.<sup>313</sup> The Ottomans were “a target and an object of Orientalism,” but they also adapted Orientalism to justify their own Westernization project. This adaptation was multifaceted: Ottomans were “internalizing it, sometimes deflecting or projecting it, sometimes opposing or subverting it, sometimes simply accepting and consuming it.”<sup>314</sup>

In *Orientalism alla Turca*, Christoph Herzog and Raoul Motika present the theme of the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Ottoman voyages into the Muslim outback, namely to the “Caucasia, Central Asia, Afghanistan, and Muslim India in the East; Saharan and Sub-Saharan Africa in the West; the Volga-Ural region in the North; as well as the Sudan and Ethiopia in the South.”<sup>315</sup> Like the previous sources mentioned, this article covers the Late Ottoman Period. However, its arguments allow readers to compare the later period with the early modern phase. First, travel does not inevitably mean a confrontation of the West and the East; there were many Ottoman travelers who traveled to the so-called “Muslim outback.”<sup>316</sup> The motivations of these travelers were not very different from that of Evliya Çelebi and Mustafa Âli. For instance, Ahmed Mithad, the prolific author of the late nineteenth century, explained that:

“the desire to go to the neighbouring families’ houses in order to see in what circumstances other people are living is undoubtedly different from the desire to

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<sup>312</sup> Baki Tezcan refers to the work of Köprülü, *Some Observations on the Influence of Byzantine Institutions on Ottoman Institutions*. Tezcan, *Lost in Historiography*, 495.

<sup>313</sup> Tezcan, *Lost in Historiography*, 497.

<sup>314</sup> Edhem Eldem, “Ottoman and Turkish Orientalism,” *Architectural Design*, 80, (2010).

<sup>315</sup> To discuss the individual travellers and their travelogues would be beyond the scope and aim of this chapter, however it is significant to note that the article provides a comprehensive overview of the travellers to the East and their accounts in the Late Ottoman Period. Christoph Herzog and Raoul Motika, “Orientalism “*alla turca*”: Late nineteenth/ Early 20th Century Ottoman Voyages into the Muslim ‘Outback’,” *Die Welt des Islams*, New Series, 40/2, Ottoman Travels and Travel Accounts from an Earlier Age of Globalization, (2000) 141.

<sup>316</sup> Herzog and Motika, *Orientalism “alla turca”* 140.

go further and see wonders and curiosities (*acaib ve garaib*) along the way yonder.”<sup>317</sup>

The emphasis on the strange (*acaib* and *garaib*) in the accounts of Evliya Çelebi and Mustafa Âli was very obvious. The scope of these later accounts also seems comparable to early modern texts as they cover a wide range of topics from manners to the environment and beyond:

“These consist not only of things related to human beings as in the example of the multiplicity of male or female spouses we have given, but includes extraordinary things of the flora and the fauna and other matters.”<sup>318</sup>

From a central perspective, the Muslim outback began “soon beyond the core lands.” Thus, I believe that the late Ottoman travelers had a similar approach toward the lands of *Rum* like their early modern counterparts; or at least, there is continuity. The construction of “otherness” was multilayered, but it denoted the positional and moral superiority of Ottomans from the core lands.<sup>319</sup>

It is interesting to look at two Iraqi travelogues by al-Suwaidi and al-Alusi. In contrast to the case of Mustafa Âli and Evliya Çelebi, these scholars were not from the imperial capital, but they were provincial ulama.<sup>320</sup> Fattah’s article, *Representations of Self and the Other*, particularly focuses on the issue of “communal self-awareness” and “identity” asking:

“How did pre-modern travelers envisage themselves and the ‘other’? What allowed some of them to create “imagined communities” of like-minded sojourners, incorporating space, ideology, and shared origin into a notion of exclusive commonality? How did travel contribute to the emergence of theories of “national” exceptionalism from among the fluid traditions of decentralized imperial control?”<sup>321</sup>

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<sup>317</sup> Ahmet Midhat, *Tercüman-ı Hakikat*, quoted in Herzog and Motika, *Orientalism "alla turca,"*145.

<sup>318</sup> Herzog and Motika, *Orientalism "alla turca,"*146.

<sup>319</sup> Herzog and Motika, *Orientalism "alla turca,"*195.

<sup>320</sup> Hala Fattah, “Representations of Self and the Other in Two Iraqi Travelogues of the Ottoman Period,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 30/1, (1998): 54.

<sup>321</sup> Fattah, *Two Iraqi Travelogues*, 51.



Because very similar questions were posed by this thesis, it is interesting to look at the travel narratives of two provincial ulama. Traveling contributed to the “development of [the traveler’s] self awareness.”<sup>322</sup> The confrontation with “others” added to an integral part of identity formation, as several examples in the second chapter of this thesis clearly depicted. The intellectuals on the way establish a firm belief in the superiority of their own traditions through comparison of different cultures, and thereby they helped to shape a more localized identity. As Fattah states, “travel gave the journeying scholar the opportunity to distance himself from the more “venal” and “corrupt” practices undertaken in neighboring Muslim societies and to compare these practices with the more “upright” and “equitable” moral code of his home region.”<sup>323</sup> The two protagonists of this thesis, Mustafa Âli and Evliya Çelebi, never questioned the uprightness of the moral codes in Istanbul; rather they recorded that Egyptians’ manners diverged from the normal into the realm of “venal” and “corrupt,” as seen in the third chapter.

Taking all this into account, it is still too far-fetched to claim that Mustafa Âli and Evliya Çelebi, two early modern Ottoman intellectuals, were Orientalists. As noted throughout this thesis, “Orientalism” has many modern connotations, and it is closely linked to industrialism, colonialism, and the rise of the West. However, the echoes of Orientalism in these narratives beg for some kind of explanation. Following Fattah’s arguments on the “localized identities,” I argue that the central position of the lands of *Rum* plays an important role in identity formation. In his article, *Gurbet*, Hakan Karateke deals with the question of Ottoman Orientalism by using the short stories of Refik Halit Karay. Although his primary sources are from the early twentieth century, a comparison with the early modern Ottoman period is valid and meaningful, because “[j]ust as Istanbul was the center of the world for Evliya Çelebi, the seventeenth-century globetrotter, so is the city the counter-reference of every place for Refik Halit.”<sup>324</sup> In *Ottoman Orientalism*, Makdisi’s emphasis was mostly on nation-state formation. Instead, according to Karateke, Ottoman Orientalism was shaped by a “regionalistic

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<sup>322</sup> Fattah, *Two Iraqi Travelogues*, 51.

<sup>323</sup> Fattah, *Two Iraqi Travelogues*, 52.

<sup>324</sup> Karateke, *Gurbet*.

referential system,” one center being the reference point; and “all other parts of the imperium [earning] their ‘oriental’ statuses with regard to their spatial and cultural distance to this center.” This argument does not reject Orientalism’s complex relations with Westernization and modernization, but it emphasizes that it was not necessarily the consequence of European influence.<sup>325</sup>

### 4.3. Conclusion

“Perhaps Cairo really was a city where a prosperous Ottoman gentleman of the seventeenth century might go to enjoy himself, comparable in that sense to contemporary Venice or present-day Paris.”<sup>326</sup>

As mentioned previously, Dankoff asserts that Evliya Çelebi used the phrase “not disgraceful” most frequently when describing Egypt, and this may well be because of Egypt’s own characteristics as a distant province.<sup>327</sup> In Cairo, both Evliya Çelebi and Mustafa Âli observed many customs, manners, and attitudes that were strictly divergent from the standards set and observed in the imperial (and perceived) center. Their elaborations on this etiquette strongly echo themes found in later discourse of Orientalism. However, in the secondary literature, the discussion of “Ottoman Orientalism” is mostly limited to the late Ottoman period and Westernization process. A closer focus on the narratives of Evliya Çelebi and Mustafa Âli depicts that in the early modern period, too, the Ottomans from the central lands of the Empire “orientalized” their faraway provinces by emphasizing the “strange” and “exotic” traits. Such a focus also extends the limits of the studies on the topic as it emphasizes the complex, multifaceted, and dynamic nature of Orientalism by including the internal tensions of an “Eastern” power.

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<sup>325</sup> Karateke, *Gurbet*.

<sup>326</sup> Faroqhi, *Cairo’s Guildsmen*.

<sup>327</sup> Dankoff, *Ayıp Değil*, 114; 116-117.

Obviously, we cannot be sure if at least some of Cairo's "disgraceful" features were present in Istanbul as well. It would not have been considered proper to note these features in writing when referring to the imperial capital.<sup>328</sup> After having discussed all these, I find it safe to claim that in the early modern period, Cairo served as a kind of "Orient" for an affluent and powerful Ottoman coming from the imperial center, Istanbul.

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<sup>328</sup> Faroqi, *Cairo's Guildsmen*.

## 5. CONCLUSION

The main objective of this thesis has been to analyze if Cairo served as a type of “Orient” for early modern Ottoman literati. The intended goal in questioning how Cairo was perceived is to provide an alternative framework for studies on Ottoman Orientalism. For the study, the narratives of two Istanbulite literati, Mustafa Âli and Evliya Çelebi, are chosen. Since my priority was to portray the perception of Ottoman literati toward their “others,” their accounts on Cairo has been appropriate for this goal as they were subjective and reflected the authors’ mentalities. The last volume of Evliya Çelebi’s *Book of Travels* provided a rich account for the way of life in Cairo and Mustafa Âli’s *Description of Cairo* provided insights from a more judgmental Ottoman intellectual.

To question if it the Cairenes were “others” for the Ottomans living in the core lands of the Empire, *Rumîs*, this thesis first investigated how a *Rumî* literati defined himself and the world around him. *Rumîness* was a layered and multifaceted early modern identity, and it is impossible to assign fixed boundaries to either the lands of *Rum*, or the *Rumî* characteristics. *Rumîs* were proud of their mixed ethnic background and they praised the manners and customs in the core lands of the Empire. As both Mustafa Âli and Evliya Çelebi embodied the *Rumî* identity in Egypt, their narratives have underlined the centrality and superiority of their homeland. The narratives on the “other” include anecdotes about the way others perceived the authors; so, their

elaborations on locals, their physical appearances, and language provided a good framework to trace different facets of *Rumî* identity.

Another goal of this thesis has been to question if it is accurate to discuss an “Ottoman Orient” that was invented by *Rumîs*. To answer this question, this thesis traced some of the recurrent topics of discourse of Orientalism in the mentioned narratives. Manners and customs of the Egyptians were considered “strange” and “exotic” by Evliya Çelebi and Mustafa Âli. They were confounded by the different norms of public behaviors, and reported on these in length, sometimes even in a hyperbolic manner. After enumerating several examples in the previous chapters, it is safe to claim that at least their discourse “Orientalized” the distant and most lucrative province of the Empire. Among these, specifically the examples that touched upon: the beauty and sensuality of women, Egyptians’ romantic and implausible experiences, despotic measures, and hygienic practices closely echo the tales of the Orient. The “Oriental” status of Egypt was defined by its physical, cultural, and perceived distance to the lands of *Rum* – especially to the capital, Istanbul. Though, as exemplified by Egyptians’ view of *Rumîs*, “otherness” was really determined by the position and norms of the authors.

The argument of an “Oriental status” of an Egyptian province has necessitated a reconsideration of the literature on the “Ottoman Orientalism.” The existing studies on Ottoman Orientalism predominantly focus on the late Ottoman period, arguing that the “Orientalism” was a result of Western influence, or Westernization project. The discussion on the Orientalism in general covers the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and therefore, the connotations of the term are closely related to modern phenomena such as colonialism, industrialism, and cultural imperialism. However, few studies that extend the limits of the discussion back to earlier periods depict the possibility of an early modern Orientalism – this deeper focus on the “East” itself provides a clearer picture. This thesis argues that the Ottoman Empire, considered in a way as the “Orient” itself, has similar tensions between its center and peripheries, and in that respect it contributes to the literature on Orientalism. It would still be misleading and anachronistic to label Mustafa Âli and Evliya Çelebi as “Orientalists,” but they certainly “other”-ize (and in some degree) “Orientalize” Egypt and Egyptians.

The tendency to project “Orientalist” identities as defined in this thesis therefore assists in our understanding of early modern world and discourse of Orientalism. The elaborations of this research will serve as a base for future studies on the perceptions of *Rumîs* of the peripheries, and add to a growing body of literature on peripheries in the Ottoman Empire. It is significant to remember that there was not just a single center and peripheries attached to it; however, there was a complex network of relationships. In that context, Egypt was both a former-center-turned-periphery, but also a center for different networks as well.

Finally, a number of important limitations need to be considered which were briefly mentioned in the introduction. The current study was limited to the narratives of Mustafa Âli and Evliya Çelebi, and it was acknowledged that looking at other contemporary Ottoman sources will add to this discussion. Likewise, inclusion of similar narratives by European travelers will create a very fertile basis for comparison. Lastly, the study did not evaluate the use of primary sources of Egyptian literati, which would further contribute to the understanding of the perceptions. But exploring all of these sources would have been beyond the scope and limits of this thesis. However, this study has successfully directed attention to the possibility of an early “Ottoman Orientalism” and raised valid questions in need of further research, which I hope will be addressed by future studies.

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