

From the Editor

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Peace be upon you Selâmi,
keeper of the tomb of blessed Saint Hüdâyî Mahmûd Efendi,
righteous supporter of God, the Axis of the Universe;
Are you well? Are you prospering?
Are you fed? Are you hungry?
Are you thirsty? Are you slaked?
What do you desire of my poetry?
What do you desire of my sainthood?
Do not you know that the tongue leads one to a bad end?
It is a disgrace!
Enough!¹

This is how Niyâzî-i Mısrî (d. 1694) shows his anger in the letter he writes to Selâmi Ali Efendi (d. 1691). It is clear that Selâmi Ali criticises the famous mystic in various gathering places and here Mısrî advises him, warning him that the bad words he utters will lead him to a bad end. The diary of Mısrî² is very well-known; however, the collection in which this letter is

1 Istanbul University Library, TY 6374, fl. 117b.

2 *Niyâzî-i Mısrî'nin Hatıraları*, ed. Halil Çeçen (İstanbul: Dergah, 2006).

found is also worth noting.³ In the current issue of *Ceride*, we continue our journey following in the footsteps of such texts and continuing to draw attention to ego-documents in Ottoman literature.

The first issue of *Ceride* attracted much interest. The downloads of *DergiPark*⁴ are considerable in number, and the digital copies of our articles uploaded to the author's Academia pages received the same attention. We are striving to ensure that the journal is available for sale to readers through websites.⁵ We have also made efforts to distribute printed copies to libraries nationwide and to have them placed in bookstores. In fact, the journal accomplished all of these aims in the very first issue. Consequently, we attach great importance to ensuring that this journal, published with such great effort, is accessible both digitally and in print to be read not only in Turkey but throughout the world, and find a visible place on bookshelves. While realising that we live in an age of revolution in information technology and at the dawn of artificial intelligence, I am an editor who still values and enjoys printed publications. I am a person who buys and reads newspapers in print at least once a week!

Our editorial board comprises prominent figures from around the world working in the field of ego-documents. I was particularly impressed by the positive feedback I received upon sending them the digital copy of the journal immediately after its publication. Initially, I believed that inventories of ego-documents had already been prepared in Europe and that the recent rapid and exciting phase in thematic studies had been concluded. However, contrary to my initial assumptions, a research group on ego-documents based in the city of Toruń, Poland, had taken the initiative in establishing an email group (Egodocumental network) and organizing international events. They extended an invitation for me to join their group. The network activity generated by this initiative made me realize that research on ego-documents continues to be relevant worldwide. In addition, it is pleasing to ob-

3 For those who have previously mentioned this *mecmua*, see Abdülbâki Gölpınarlı, "Niyâzî-i Mîsrî," *Şarkîyat Mecmuası* 7 (1972), 186, 191-92; Derin Terzioğlu, "Mecmû'a-i Şeyh Mîsrî: Onyedinci Yüzyıl Ortalarında Anadolu'da Bir Dervîş Sülûkunu Tamamlarken Neler Okuyup Yazdı?" in *Eski Türk Edebiyatı Çalışmaları VII: Mecmûa: Osmanlı Edebiyatının Kırkambarı*, ed. Hatice Aynur, et al. (İstanbul: Turkuaz Yayınları, 2012), 296, footnote 3.

4 DergiPark is the leading national platform for publishing academic journals online. See <https://dergipark.org.tr/tr/pub/ceride>.

5 https://www.kitapyurdu.com/dergi/ceride-6-aylik-arastirma-dergisi-cilt-1-sayi-1-haziran-2023/667948.html&filter_name=ceride+dergisi

serve a global increase in the recognition of the Istanbul ego-document group and to notice on international platforms citations of the research being done in Turkey.⁶

After serving on a dissertation jury at Boğaziçi University, I presented a copy of the first issue to Edhem Eldem. Eldem is well-versed on this subject, having taught a graduate seminar on the topic at Boğaziçi's history department and authored related publications.⁷ Following a thorough reading of the journal, he then sent me a lengthy message. In this he raised numerous points that would allow me to reconsider at length both the research framework and potential conceptualisations. One of the most interesting topics Eldem discussed in his e-mail was the issue of "compulsive" and "voluntary" ego-documents; in this issue of *Ceride* you will see how Winfried Schulze also problematizes this subject. I refer here to the following sentence from Kacı's translation of the text: "The first objection to the definition of ego-document proposed here will certainly be to equate 'voluntary' autobiographical texts with expressions 'beyond one's control'." With Eldem's permission, I am here including verbatim this extract from our correspondence: "'Compulsive' ego-documents, i.e., documents inevitably taking this form, such as letters or petitions (*arzıhal*), and 'voluntary' ego-documents, i.e., those written to narrate the self willingly and by choice."⁸ This opportunity to exchange ideas allowed me to conclude that my decision to share the findings of our TÜBİTAK project⁹ in *Ceride* before the project's completion at the end of the 36 months of work was valid, since *Ceride* allows for discussions of some critical matters while a project is ongoing.

In this issue, we include four research articles: a framework article followed by three articles that examine sample ego-documents from the 16th, 17th, and 19th centuries. As in the first issue the first article is by İhsan Fazlıoğlu. His article is based on the opening speech he gave on this subject

6 Here, attention is drawn to the register we published in one of the prominent journals in the field, *IJMES*, as well as to our overall body of work: Stefan Hanß, *Narrating the Dragoman's Self in the Veneto-Ottoman Balkans, c. 1550-1650* (New York: Routledge, 2023), 11.

7 See for example: Edhem Eldem, ed., *V. Murad'ın oğlu Selahaddin Efendi'nin Evrak ve Yazıları: V. Murad ile Cleanthi Scalieri*, vol. I (İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2019); *idem*, ed., *V. Murad'ın Oğlu Selahaddin Efendi'nin Evrak ve Yazıları: Hatırat ve Belgeler (Mukayyet)*, vol. II (İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2021).

8 Edhem Eldem, email message to author, December 22, 2023.

9 Ottoman Ego-Documents: Inventory, Analysis (1500-1800). Duration: 2023-2026.

at the “Ottoman Ego-Documents” symposium¹⁰ organised in 2022. The transcription of the speech, using the video recording we made, was carried out by one of our project members, 2247-C Intern Researcher Scholarship Programme (STAR) Undergraduate Scholarship fellow Betül Sena Kılıç, a student at Boğaziçi University. Fazlıoğlu worked on the transcribed text to convert it into an article. In this article, Fazlıoğlu not only helps to outline a framework for Islamic-Ottoman ego-documents but also draws attention to many works that could be added to the ego-documents inventory.

In this issue, a special file focusing on Şehzade Korkut (d. 1513) has been assembled. Gurulkan, Aliyev, and Ayten from our project team collaborated amongst themselves in dedicating their efforts to this task, concentrating on the prince’s (*şehzade*) fascinating and complex life. Gurulkan and Aliyev provided Ayten with notes, enabling him to produce a comprehensive article on Korkut’s ego-documents. Ayten’s intensive labour produced a text presenting all of Korkut’s ego-documents, primarily *Vesîletü’l-ahbâb*.

In his article Elmin Aliyev focused on another work of Korkut. At first, the intention was to write a book review on *Da’vetü’n-Nefsi’t-Tâliha İle’l-A’mâli’s-Sâliha*,¹¹ which TİMAŞ Akademi had published. The work had previously not been regarded as an ego-document. Moreover, the publishing house had already introduced the text to readers under the label of the “*siyasetname*” (political treatise) series. After a thorough evaluation with the project members within our Ph.D course titled “Ottoman Ego-Documents,” we concluded that the book was indeed a genuine ego-document. Aliyev wrote an excellent review article presenting the text in this context and provided a good assessment of Musa Sancak’s publication.

Kemal Gurulkan compiled and transcribed all the letters he could find belonging to Şehzade Korkut in the Topkapı Palace Museum Archive. As in the first issue, he is publishing the letters under the series called “An Ego-Document from the Ottoman Archives.” After reading Gurulkan’s transcripts, and after a thorough evaluation, we collectively reduced the number of letters to eight, selected in chronological order as in the archival catalogue. While other letters may also contain personal elements, a restric-

10 For the programme, see https://benanlatilari.medeniyet.edu.tr/documents/benanlatilari/olbasem-pozyumprogrami_compressed.pdf.

11 Şehzade Korkud, *Siyasetin Ahlaki Eleştirisi: Da’vetü’n-nefsi’t-taliha ile’l-a’malî’s-saliha*, translation and notes by Musa Sancak (İstanbul: Timaş, 2022).

tive approach led me to present only eight of them. I included those that are personal and regarded as ego-documents in having the potential to reveal the prince in all his vulnerability and sensitivity. The prince describes himself very simply and explicitly as follows:

... it is not hidden that I am naturally of weak disposition and easily affected by minor distempers; I am a fragile-looking person. For this reason, I need a physician, but a suitable one is unavailable. Even if there were one, due to reasons I cannot trust, this letter of affection is being sent to you, and it is requested that you kindly dispatch my former sealer (*nişancı*), Alaaddin, the physician, to me in this matter ...¹²

According to Gurulkan, the letters are addressed to the following individuals:

1. His tutor, [Atik] Ali Paşa
2. His father, Beyezid II
3. His tutor
4. His tutor, İskender Bey
5. To the viziers in the Imperial Council
6. Selim I
7. His brother, Ahmed Bey
8. Selim I

Şehzade Korkut's requests sent to these individuals are either for gifts of very personal items, such as their sword, bow, underpants, or shirt, or else asking for an improvement in the quality of his remaining life. When feeling ill and requesting a doctor, individuals reveal their most personal and fragile moments. Illness and the weakness occasioned by this are human conditions that do not vary, even if you are a prince or a Sultan. One of the frequently addressed complaints in the letters is that the climate of Alanya¹³ does not agree with him and he desires to be sent to Aydın instead. This request, which at first glance may seem like a matter related to state affairs, turns into a personal matter as the writer associates the weather in

¹² See below for letter number 759/109.

¹³ Alanya is a province located in Antalya, a city in the Mediterranean region of Turkey.

the region¹⁴ with his condition and expresses his dissatisfaction at being unable to recover from his illness there. The letters also highlight tensions between the princes. For example, in a letter to his brother Ahmed, Korkut warns Ahmed not to dare to take his son hostage. Even when Selim ascended the throne, Korkut declared “I did not come to stay in the city, but rather to pay a visit to the esteemed Sultan to request an office,” indicating that he had no intention of causing any trouble in Istanbul and only wished to be granted a position where he could feel comfortable.

At our meeting in 2022, Nabil al-Tikriti, a faculty member at Mary Washington University, presented a paper titled “All My Children: Assessing the Ego Documents of Bayezid II’s (d. 1512) Family.”¹⁵ He submitted his presentation to me in the form of an article for publication in a special issue titled “Ottoman Ego-Documents,” to be published in 2024 in the 64th issue of *The Journal of Ottoman Studies*. Upon reading the article, I asked him to narrow down the scope of the term ego-document to avoid diluting its meaning, and to confine it solely to narratives related to Korkut. Al-Tikriti restructured his article accordingly. The article for *The Journal of Ottoman Studies*,¹⁶ published alongside our Korkut collection of articles here, gives an orderly picture of Korkut’s ego-documents.

At our meeting in 2022, we organised a roundtable discussion on the *Sohbetname* of Seyyid Hasan (d. 1688). One of the speakers at this event was Tunahan Durmaz, who is currently pursuing his Ph.D in Florence. Durmaz’s enjoyable article is published in this issue. The author of the last research article is Şükran Fazlıoğlu, a professor of Arabic language and rhetoric at Marmara University’s Faculty of Theology. She also made a valuable presentation on *Alemuddîn*, a work by Ali Mubârek (d. 1893) which narrates the adventures of Alemuddîn, the name of whom gives the book its title, who went to Europe to earn money. She adapted her presentation into an article for *Ceride*, arguing that the character Alemuddîn could be synonymous with Ali Mübarek himself, suggesting that the text may serve as a fictionalized account of the author’s own experiences. Fazlıoğlu supports

14 Certainly, Korkut may be using the weather as an excuse, as Emecen suggests (<https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/korkut-sehzade>), but what is reflected in the letter are his human sentiments.

15 See the footnote number 10 above.

16 Nabil Al-Tikriti, “Prince with Daddy Issues Seeks Sisterly Support: Two Ego-Documents Penned by Şehzade Korkud (d. 1513),” *Osmanlı Araştırmaları/The Journal of Ottoman Studies* 64 (2024). Forthcoming.

this interpretation by referring to another autobiographical work by the same author, titled *el-Hitatu't-Tevfikiyye*, which was later published separately under the title *Hayâtî* [My Life].

The journal continues to include translations. In this issue, we are publishing two articles that stand out for their discussion of the scope of ego-document in Germany. In 1992 Winfried Schulze, an emeritus professor from the History Department at the University of Munich, held a conference in Bad Homburg. Although he published his contribution prepared for the Bad Homburg conference in the *festschrift* volume for Ferdinand Seibt in the same year,¹⁷ the revised version of the article appeared in 1996 in a book titled *Ego-Dokumente: Annäherung an den Menschen in der Geschichte* [Ego-Documents: Approaching People in History], which consisted of conference papers and of which he was the editor in charge.¹⁸ Here, he advocates expanding the concept's scope, stating that "'ego-document,' in all honesty, appears to be a fertile term that does not necessarily have to be limited to autobiographical material in a narrow sense, as Presser understood it." Benigna von Krusenstjern¹⁹ bases her critiques on this article published in 1992; however, with its excerpts of ego-document from various sources, the article referred to constituted a long book- chapter and was unsuitable for publication as an article in *Ceride*. With the author's approval, we preferred to translate the revised article from 1996. Kacir also observed that when the sections enriched with ego-document excerpts from the article published in 1992 were removed, the remaining parts were almost identical. Schulze had contributed to the book *Ego-Dokumente* with an introduction, an article, and a conclusion. I thought it was important to translate the article for Turkish readers, as it seemed to trigger a discussion in Germany regarding the scope of the concept. Schulze questioned the possibility of incorporating various sources that reveal the self, such as "records of tax col-

17 Winfried Schulze, "Ego-Dokumente: Annäherung an den Menschen in der Geschichte?" in *Von Aufbruch und Utopie: Perspektiven einer neuen Gesellschaftsgeschichte des Mittelalters. Für und mit Ferdinand Seibt aus Anlaß seines 65. Geburtstages*, ed. Bea Lundt, Helma Reimöller (Köln: Böhlau, 1992), 417-50.

18 Winfried Schulze, "Ego-Dokumente: Annäherung an den Menschen in der Geschichte? Vorüberlegungen für die Tagung 'Ego-Dokumente'," in *Ego-Dokumente: Annäherung an den Menschen in der Geschichte*, ed. Winfried Schulze (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1996), 11-30.

19 Benigna von Krusenstjern, "Was sind Selbstzeugnisse? Begriffskritische und quellenkundliche Überlegungen anhand von Beispielen aus dem 17. Jahrhundert," *Historische Anthropologie* 2, no. 3 (1994), 462-71.

lections, inspections, questioning of subjects, witness testimonies/interrogations, personal legal declarations, court interrogations, job interviews, pardon requests, confessions (obtained under torture), trade accounts and correspondence records, wills, etc.," under the umbrella term of ego-documents. It was his perspective that every source has the potential to become an ego-document, declaring "Behind the statements in interrogation protocols, the reality of life can be rediscovered, revealing the individual's social class and position in relation to authority." This was an interpretation filled with concerns and possible outcomes that I was unwilling to raise. I asked Tuğba İsmailoğlu-Kacı, who had completed her undergraduate and graduate studies in Vienna and whose German I trust, to translate this article into Turkish. I requested Hilal Görgün, who holds a Ph.D from Freie Universität Berlin and is a faculty member of our department, to translate Benigna von Krusenstjern's article, which could be interpreted as a kind of response to Schulze's broader definition of scope. Both Kacı and Görgün completed these translations competently and quickly. I want to thank them both individually. As a pleasant coincidence, I am writing this editorial introduction from Munich with Schulze's book in front of me and am busily engaged in examining this concept of scope. During my conference titled "Towards an Inventory of Ottoman Ego-Documents: Old and New Findings," at the LMU's Department of Turcology on January 8, 2024, I also referenced Schulze and deliberated on the issues of scope and concept. If one day we can discard the pressure of creating an ego-document inventory and attempt to see the benefit of using ego-documents for a holistic understanding of Ottoman history, then we can expand as we desire, but today we are trying to compile the inventory. Any attempt to expand the scope of ego-document may make the inventory only fit for a waste bin. What von Krusenstjern says, and her objection to Schulze, is precisely this: "... If one of the criteria for self-narratives is to become covert self, this means nothing other than no limits to the source type. A definition that turns almost every text into a self-narrative renders this concept unusable."²⁰

My purpose in presenting the translations is not only to introduce you to Schulze's effort to expand the concept's scope and present von Krusenstjern's response, but also to provide helpful discussions in these two arti-

20 See in the original: Von Krusenstjern, "Was sind Selbstzeugnisse?" 463.

cles. Von Krusenstjern writes an enlightening exposition on why we use the term “ego-document” rather than “autobiographical texts.”

Gülşen Yakar continues to share with the public her ongoing research efforts within our project through the second of her research notes. Both mine and Yakar’s articles, as in the first issue, were translated into English by Yasemin Tuğyan. After her translation, both of us reviewed our articles and gave them their final form.

Furthermore, in this issue we feature four book reviews. In addition, as in the first issue, Burak Muhsin Akın contributed to our series called “An Ego-Document from the Ottoman Archives,” with another striking example from Sultan Ibrahim’s *hatt-ı hümayuns* (imperial decrees).

In the meantime, there has been favourable progress in other directions. My application to the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation titled “Ottoman Ego-Documents: Benefiting from German Libraries and Archives” for the “Research Group Linkage” alumni programme has been approved. Thanks to this programme, which allows for the collaboration between research groups in Turkey and groups of researchers in Germany, we have established cooperation between Istanbul Medeniyet University and Freie Universität Berlin. Elke Hartmann, who previously participated as a member in the DFG project titled “Selbszeugnisse in Transkultureller Perspektive” [Self-Narratives from a Transcultural Perspective] at Freie Universität, and Talha Murat, a Ph.D candidate at the same university, as well as Melike Beyza Abdugarimov from the University of Hamburg, have joined our team for this project. In this programme Gülşen Yakar serves as a junior researcher, taking on responsibilities in both manuscript searches and other research processes. Murat and Abdugarimov are searching for manuscripts in Berlin and Hamburg, respectively. I have also begun searching for materials in Munich, Gotha, and Berlin. We hope the collaborative project between Medeniyet and Freie Universities will enrich the current project. I am pleased that, through this opportunity, our TÜBİTAK team is expanding with new members.

Great care is taken over the selection of our cover image for each issue. The cover of the first issue featured a page from Kabudlu Mustafa Vasfi’s *Tevarih*. *Tevarih* is a unique, illustrated autobiographical narrative. For this issue, we have chosen a page from Seyyid Hasan’s *Sohbetname*. What makes this image interesting is not just the huge script used for the title

Sohbet (chat) but also, from among the many colours available, our choice of pink as the colour for the second issue of the Journal.

Batuhan Aksu, who contributed significantly to the first issue, has now completed his fellowship period. While he was absent we endeavoured to cover his responsibilities, mainly through the assistance of our Associate Editor, Semra Çörekçi. I would like to thank her for dedicating time to the journal among her other responsibilities, and for her efforts to ensure the second issue's publication. Our Assistant Editor, Gülşen Yakar, handled the final proofreadings and undertook to submit the final versions to *DergiPark*. I would also like to express my gratitude to her.

We are now approaching our third meeting on Ottoman Ego-Documents. Scheduled for Spring 2024, we anticipate the participation of from 50 to 60 individuals. The third and fourth issues of *Ceride* will probably focus primarily on selections from Ottoman Ego-Documents-Skopje papers. Of course, we are always happy to welcome new submissions. Readers interested in contributing articles can contact us via e-mail, as provided in the front matter.

I began this introductory piece by using a description of the confrontation between a famous mystic figure from the 17th century and one of his contemporaries. As I conclude, I will once again delve into his disputes, this time with a portrayal of his father-in-law seen within the family circle and with one of Köprülüzâde Fâzıl Mustafa Paşa (d. 1691) from the realm of politics:

This city has been torn by discord for four years and three months, all because of my father-in-law. He wields the imperial decree as his tool. Should he assign a task to the pashas, the aghas, the soldiers, or the subjects, and should any of them oppose it, he orders their execution, dismissal, or exile. The imperial decree comes through Köprî [Köprülüzâde Fâzıl Mustafa Paşa], who delivered it to my father-in-law. He relayed through my father-in-law that, "I do not leave the chaos." He even suggests chaos to the point where I become furious and proclaim, "I am the Mahdi." This is their objective... If I endure these harsh conditions, they will only intensify their pressure on me. They will not cease until I am utterly provoked.

Oh, Köprî! If you were to permit my father-in-law to continue spreading chaos to the extent of setting the world ablaze, I would not stand by him.²¹

21 Istanbul University Library, TY 6374, fl. 52b.

Indeed, life still passes by in such a way, filled with conflicts, fights, and struggles whether within families or beyond, in domestic as well as foreign politics...

In the third issue, we will continue to explore scenes of human life from within the Ottoman Empire, vividly depicted from the perspective of those who lived through them!