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**The “Others” Of Evliya Çelebi
The Infidels, The Sinners, The
Insects, and The People
Nonsectarian In *The Book Of
Travels (Seyahatnâme)***

**Evliya Çelebi'nin “Öteki”Leri
Seyahatnâme'de Kefere, Fecere, Haşere ve
Mezhepsizler**

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Abstract

Evliya Çelebi's *Seyahatnâme* is a highly important work reflecting not only the culture of 17th century Ottoman Empire, but also the cultures of Asian, European and African communities which represent the identities of three big continents. The work is a valuable resource as it guides studies in different branches of human sciences such as history, ethnology/anthropology, sociology and geography. Almost all of the books of travels, which basically reflect a specific era, are significant and valuable. Evliya Çelebi's *Seyahatnâme* is especially important as it is more comprehensive and it has a more vivid and interesting narrative.

Books of travels have always attracted the attention of scientists as they are reference works that shed light to the history, culture, belief, customs, behavior patterns in an era; they

Öz

Evliya Çelebi'nin *Seyahatnâme*'si, 17. yüzyıl Osmanlı kültürünün yanı sıra Asya, Avrupa ve Afrika gibi üç büyük kıtanın kültürünü tanımak bakımından önemli bir eserdir. Bu öneminden dolayı da tarih, etnoloji/antropoloji, sosyoloji, coğrafya gibi beşeri bilimlerden değerli bir kaynak olma niteliğini de taşır. Esasında bir döneme ve zaman zaman öncesine tanıklık eden seyahatnâmelerin hemen hepsi önemli ve değerlidir; Evliya Çelebi'nin *Seyahatnâme*'sinin önemi, diğerlerinden daha kapsamlı, daha ayrıntılı ve daha ilginç bir anlatıya sahip olmasıdır.

Seyahatnâmeler bir dönemin tarihini, kültürünü, inanç ve davranış kalıplarını, toplumların ve kültürlerin birbirleriyle ilişkisini gösteren başvuru kaynakları olarak biliminsanlarının dikkatini çekmiştir. Herodot'tan, Marco Polo'ya; Kristof Kolomb'dan, Kaptan Cook'a;

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additionally reveal the relationships between different cultures. All of the travelers such as Herodotus, Marco Polo, Christopher Columbus, Captain Cook, İbn-i Battûta and Evliya Çelebi present the readers the opportunity to learn different cultures of the places they visited.

All of the books of travels are important references, but there are some important points that should be taken into consideration while analyzing these sources. Reliability is one of these points. Most of the writers in their travel books are naturally members of their cultural tradition, thus reflect their personal viewpoints while “observing” other communities. Some of the travelers preferred to see different cultures and communities on the basis of a complete subjectivity, by representing the state or belief that they were born into. On the other hand, it would be unfair to claim that all of the travelers had negative views about the cultures or communities that they observed. Similarly, it would be naïve to believe that all of the chronicles written by travelers are correct and objectively presented.

Evliya Çelebi, who had the opportunity to travel for more than fifty years around different parts of the world, is different from the other travelers as he had objective evaluations about the communities he saw. This common assumption is partially true but when looked into *Seyahatnâme* carefully, it is seen that Evliya Çelebi is not always “neutral” in his approach about different societies and cultures. For example he used some of words as “The infidels” (kefere), “the qizilbash” (“the red head”, a derogatory term for Alevis and/or Shi’is), “the yezidis”, “ugly-faced” black men, etc. for expressing some “foreign” societies. The goal of this analysis is to demonstrate the discriminative language used by Evliya Çelebi through samples in his works –

İbn-i Battûta’dan Evliya Çelebi’ye bütün seyyahlar gezdikleri yerlerin farklı kültürlerini tanıma imkânı sağladılar.

Bütün seyahatnâmeler önemli referans kaynaklardır, ancak dikkat edilmesi gereken hususlar da vardır. Bu, eserlerde yer alan bilgilerin güvenilirliği meselesidir. Seyahatnâme yazarlarının çoğu, doğal olarak içinde yetiştikleri kültürler tarafından yoğrulmuşlardır. Dolayısıyla “gözlem”ledikleri toplumları değerlendirirken yükledikleri bu değerleri safdışı bırakmaları pek mümkün olmayabilir. Nitekim bazı seyyahlar gezdikleri yerlerin kültürlerini ve toplumlarını, bağlı oldukları devletin ya da inancın çerçevesinden görmeyi tercih etmiştir. Bununla beraber bütün seyyahların farklı kültürleri/toplumları her zaman olumsuz bir şekilde değerlendirdiğini, bütün gözlemlerinin hatalı, yanlış ve yanıltıcı olduğunu iddia etmek doğru olmaz. Ancak, bu, bütün yazdıklarının doğru ve nesnel gözlemlere dayandığını da kabul etmek anlamına gelmez.

Elli yılı bulan bir sürede çok geniş bir coğrafyayı gezme imkânı bulan Evliya Çelebi’yi diğer seyyahlardan ayıran önemli özelliğin, karşılaştığı toplumlara ilişkin nesnel değerlendirmeler yaptığı yönünde geniş bir kabul vardır ki kısmen doğrudur. Ancak *Seyahatnâme* dikkatlice incelendiğinde Evliya Çelebi’nin de farklı toplumlar ve kültürlere yaklaşımında her zaman “tarafsız” olmadığı, mesela “kefere”, “kazılbaş” “yezidi” veya “çirkin suratlı” zenciler gibi “yabancılar” sözkonusu olduğunda onları nasıl ötekileştirdiği açıkça görülür ve işte bu incelemede, Evliya Çelebi’nin karşılaştığı toplumlarla ilgili nasıl ötekileştirici bir dil kullandığı -*Seyahatnâme*’nin önemi ve değerinden bağımsız olarak- örneklerle gösterilecektir.

apart from the importance and value of **Anahtar Kelimeler:** *Evliya Çelebi, Seyahatnâme, Seyahatnâme’de Ötekiler, Kefereler, Haşerat*

Keywords: *Evliya Çelebi, The Book of Travels By Evliya Çelebi, The Others in Seyahatnâme, Infidels, Insects*

Introduction

Social/Cultural anthropology had been acknowledged as a branch of science focusing on the past or present “primitives” since the very first day of its existence. Towards the end of 1900s, during which most of the “primitive societies” had vanished from history, various social scientists started to define anthropology as “the science of the Other”. While anthropologists and ethnologists mostly started to direct their interest towards “modern societies” by 1950s, some of them were still interested in the history and culture of ancient societies. The best way to know and analyze the ancient societies and culture is to explore original ancient works. Anthropologists, ethnologists, sociologists, historicists and other scientists working on human sciences have always believed that the works of travelers, merchants and missionaries are significant references that tell us the way of living in the ancient, middle and new ages; however, parallel to the decrease in the interest towards “modern primitives”, while some scientists started to focus on understanding ethnic issues in modern societies besides analyzing different types of relationships and lifestyles, some others started making cultural studies based on the works of travelers, missionaries and literary men. In other words, the new “field” or “research object” of some researchers works were written by others.

The aim of this study is to discuss the issue of “the Other” in Evliya Çelebi’s *Seyahatnâme*. *Seyahatnâme* is surely not a theoretical work of anthropology, sociology or folklore; but it should be noted that it is more of a literary work.¹ On the other hand, explaining *Seyahatnâme* merely as a literary work wouldn’t be a complete definition. The work can be described as a primary source that gives important and valuable information to various disciplines.

There were various societies and cultures in 17th century that are called “the Others”² by the members of Muslim and Ottoman societies (Turkishness-in a sense); these “Others” are the main

¹There are various studies stating and suggesting that Evliya Çelebi’s *Seyahatnâme* is a literary work. Dankoff and Tezcan are two of these researchers.

²Firstly, it is important to explain the notion of “the Others” used in the books of travels. The concept of Others, as is known, is one of the most popular concepts used in today’s world and it is basically related to “postmodernism”. In this respect, it is a controversial norm and highly criticized as it promotes discrimination and “racism”. But in the context of this study, it

focus of this study. It is attempted to determine how communities labeled as “the ones that aren’t one of us” are presented, described in *Seyahatnâme*. On the other hand, the types of judgments they faced and the viewpoints about them in *Seyahatnâme* will be presented to the readers.

The ten volume modern Turkish edition of *Seyahatnâme* was carefully reviewed for this purpose. Evliya Çelebi met various ethnical and religious communities that had different cultural practices; he had the chance to have direct interaction with most of these communities. Mentioning all of these communities would exceed the limits of this study; for the reason, the most intriguing groups that would best represent the idea of marginalization were chosen and listed below. At this point, it would be helpful to briefly mention the relationship between books of travels and social/cultural anthropology.

Books of travels, *Seyahatnâme* and anthropology

Human scientists who analyze societies, civilizations and cultures of the past naturally refer to first manuscripts or works of missionaries, travelers or people who had the chance and ability to write what they experienced. These written sources give significant information about ancient societies and their cultures. Anthropologists can obtain important data from these resources about the cultural structure of a specific period, changes in social or cultural life, interactions between different cultures and traces of these ancient cultures in today’s world. For instance, the notes kept by Captain Cook and his crew enlighten us about Hawaiian society and culture. Cook analyzed the interactions, experiences and incidents of Sahlins (1998, p. 109) with Hawaiians and created anthropological data on the basis of these analyses.

On the other hand Herodotus is recognized as a historicist, an ethnologist and anthropologist (Hartog, 1997). It is possible to reach anthropological/ethnological data about his period in his book of travels named *Travels with Herodotus*. For instance, according to the book, Lydian women used to prepare their dowries by selling their body, and the Lydian give them the freedom to do so (Homer 1973, p. 56); people of Argos used to shave their head after they were defeated by Lacedaemons while Lacedaemons started to grow hair after the battle (1973, p. 51). It is possible to reach such anthropological/ethnological information from this book. İbn-i Battûta, recognized as the father of ethnology and anthropology by some scientists (“Preface” by A. Sait Aykut, 2000, p. 24, 37), gives anthropological and ethnological information about a large area in his *Seyahatnâme (Rihle)*. For instance, he writes one of his personal experiences in India (the island of Ceylon); the locals don’t eat together with strangers, children who haven’t reached puberty aren’t allowed to eat some specific food, they

is important to ask these questions: “How scientific is it to analyze and evaluate an era, works and authors, going back to three hundred years ago, on the basis of the notion of “the Other”? Would it be reliable to interpret such old works from the perspective of 2010?” These questions not only involve *Seyahatnâme*, but also all of the works written before the last quarter of last century. Is there a risk of separating *Seyahatnâme* or another work from its specific context while trying to evaluate the notion of the Other in it? The expression of the Other may not be used as a notion or concept by Evliya Çelebi in his *Seyahatnâme*. Would it cause misinterpretation or anachronism to use this notion in order to analyze the whole work? It is not possible to answer all these questions here, but it can be said that: Although the Other and Otherization are new concepts in social sciences, it is possible to find numerous examples of them in ancient works; these concepts are as long as mankind. On the other hand, it is sometimes inevitable to use the logic of this century while trying to understand and analyze the past from today’s perspective. Social sciences researchers use this method as it would be impossible to make analysis about the past.

are beaten or punished if they do so; in addition to these, they become “dirty” and can only be cleaned by eating cow scat according to this community (İbn-i Battûta, 2000, p. 295).

Marco Polo, who wrote his observations and personal experiences in his book of travels, presents valuable information about his period to researchers and readers. The work presents interesting anthropological/ethnological details about the daily life of people, relations between the public and governors living in a vast area (from Europe to China). For instance, not only we get to know Kublai Khan as a soldier or a statesman, but also we get the chance to understand the folkloric and ethnographic richness of different ethnic and religious groups living under Mongolian rule. Marco Polo gives detailed description about the richness of their cuisine, weddings, and feasts at the weddings, clothing and relationships in marriage. In a part of his book, he tells Tatar customs to the readers. According to his writings, when a father dies, the son can marry all of the wives of his father (except for his mother) or his deceased brother’s wife (sister-in-law/levirate) (Marco Polo, 1886, p. 132). This information is valuable as it is possible to have an insight about marriages of that time and make comparisons between different societies’ marriage customs.

These data in the books of travels are valuable for most of the social scientists, especially for the ones working in the areas of anthropology and ethnology. These data are important in comparing societies and cultures; they are used for understanding changes, transformations, interactions in societies and making comparisons between them. Evliya Çelebi, who can be classified as an anthropologist (Aydın, 2011), gives important data that can be used for these purposes in his *Seyahatnâme*.

However, there are some specific points to be taken into consideration while referencing books of travels in general. It is important to note that writers may exaggerate incidents, they may be subjective, their viewpoints may be shaped by the belief system or religion that they were born into, they may reflect the political views of their country or empire in their works or they may give unbelievable or unreliable examples.

Evliya Çelebi was not only a traveler, but also a missionary of Ottoman Place. He sometimes introduced himself as the representative of Mehmed the 4th, the Sultan of Ottoman Empire. He was under the protection of Melek Ahmet Pasha;³ they were relatives and close friends. Evliya Çelebi, besides being a “traveler”, was a civil servant who used to carry out the duties given by Ottoman Pashas; he sometimes used to actively participate in wars and he served as a soldier in Ottoman Army. Who used to take his share in plunders. On the other hand, according to this book, he sometimes worked as a missionary.

Evliya Çelebi was basically a “statesman”. In a few examples such as Babai movement, he had an approach that was different from Ottoman’s official viewpoint. It is important to note that while he had a partial sympathy for the Babai (see. Dankoff, 2010; 2006), he generally believed that what is good according to Ottoman Empire is good for him, and what is bad according to the Empire is bad for him as well. His evaluations about Qizilbash (Ottoman Turkish for Red Heads) clearly show his approach in this respect. Shortly, Evliya Çelebi, like other European travelers and missionaries, looked

³Melek Ahmet Pasha, was married to the daughter of Murad the 4th. He carried out various highly important duties in the Empire such as governorship, ministry. Evliya Çelebi, emphasizes that he is the companion of Melek Ahmet Pasha; they are related as their mothers are milkweed.

at the societies he met mostly from the viewpoint of the dominant belief in his state (Islam and Ottoman Empire); this is why, it can be said that orientalist and occidentalist approaches are combined in his work *Seyahatnâme*.

Orientalism and occidentalism in *Seyahatnâme*

Orientalism, is a brief, concise and striking expression that represents the viewpoint of the West about the “East”. It is “looking” at East with a Western viewpoint. According to Edward Said, who is the pioneer of “orientalism”: “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.” (1979, p. 1). So, “the Orient” is not limited with the Orient in an area from the Middle East to China and Japan; it stands for the whole of spaces that involves civilizations except for the Western civilization. According to the Classical Orientalist viewpoint, every single civilization is “the Other” except for the “Western Society”. Western travelers, missionaries, merchants have taken orientalist attitude in relation to every society with whom they get into interaction since Middle Ages. Some Orientalists involving anthropologists see and present “the Orient” generally as uncivilized, non-believer (infidels), dirty, immoral beings.

It is generally accepted that Evliya Çelebi adapts a less prejudiced, less subjective and more humanitarian approach towards people from different beliefs and ethnic groups with different cultural practices when compared to other European travelers of his time; this is partially true. As can be seen below, he sometimes follows a similar path with that of orientalists about people of “non-literate religions and belief systems”. On the basis of his expressions, it can be said that he adapts a type of Orientalist viewpoint in some respects. He expresses his opinion without restraint especially about societies which used to have connection with Islam, but chosen to reject it in time; Evliya Çelebi uses harsh expressions about these societies (Dürzi, Nusayri, Çevkani, Mervani, Hubari, etc.); so, he has this certain classical attitude of Orientalists towards the ones that aren't under the guidance of his belief system or governance (Islam or Ottoman Empire). He embraces this orientalist approach towards his “Orient” while he is a certain occidentalist towards the West.

Suavi Aydın (2011, p. 261 n. 372) states that Evliya Çelebi is “the first occidentalist Turk”. Although he doesn't have a strong historical basis and academic background like orientalism, occidentalism is like a reflection of it in the mirror. Orientalism attempts to understand, interpret and explain the “Orient” with an academic and Western viewpoint (Said, 1979, p. 2) while occidentalism is originated as a reaction to the hegemony of the West and its orientalist viewpoint. It functions as a theoretical analysis of otherization of the West (Özçelik, 2015, p. 109-10).

Evliya Çelebi is an occidentalist as an observer, representative, traveler and authority of a strong Emperorship. According to Arzu Erekli, he turns the West into a feminine being and marginalizes it; the West is weak, thus female, while the Orient is strong, thus male (Erekli, 2009, p. 154). Evliya Çelebi was a member of Ottoman Empire who used to rule over a big part of the world; as a representative of this Empire, he gives the impression of an occidentalist to the people of today's world. He used to humiliate the West in terms of religious belief and everyday practices; according to him, Ottoman Empire was much developed and improved when compared to the nations in the West.

On the other hand, he sometimes adored the agricultural, medical, technical developments in the West and praised these aspects. These two different approaches are the reflections of his occidentalist viewpoint in *Seyahatnâme*: The West is both positive and negative “Other” for Evliya Çelebi.

Briefly, it can be said that Evliya Çelebi adapts both orientalist and occidentalist viewpoint. It is obvious that these viewpoints in his work are related to the environment, era and education of him. Namely, they are established on the basis of Evliya Çelebi’s personal story. It is important to give a brief information about Evliya Çelebi before focusing on the expressions about the Others and otherization in *Seyahatnâme*. “Identity” and “relation” of books of traveler authors can be determinants that shape their ideas about others.

Briefly Evliya Çelebi

Evliya Çelebi’s father Mehmet Zıllî Efendi wasn’t a member of the dynasty, but he served in Ottoman Palace and he had close relationship and connections with important figures of the period. Mehmet Zıllî Efendi’s house was often visited by the pioneers of that era. Relationships built with these figures were significant elements that shaped Evliya Çelebi’s personality and determined his future.

Evliya Çelebi completed his education in Enderun mektebi (Special schools in the Ottoman Palace). He got the chance to get private education from professionals. Istanbul was an important starting point for his future dreams; he found the resource of cultural richness and diversity in that city. Evliya Çelebi, benefited from İstanbul, was raised as an “Istanbul child and young man” and he was a highly curious boy “who saw everywhere, met everyone and was interested in everything” (Tezcan, S. 2011, p. 13). Another important factor that led him became “the traveler of the world” (for Ottoman Turkish Seyyah-ı Alem) was a dream he saw.

Evliya Çelebi’s life as a traveler and starts with a dream; he says that a dream is the starting point of his journey. He sees Muhammad, the first group of people who convert to Islam, including some of his relatives, in his dream. He gets excited and doesn’t know what to do. Sa’d İbn-i Ebî Vakkas helps him and gives him some advice about what to do when he sees the Prophet. He says his prayers and attempts to ask for intercession when he sees the Prophet. As he is very excited, he says “siydhât O apostle of God!” (seyahat: travelling) instead of “shifuat O apostle of God!” (shifuat: intercession). Upon Evliya Çelebi’s words, the Prophet says that: “The prophet smiled, and said Shifuat and siydhât (i. e. intercession and travelling) be granted to thee, with health and peace!”. He opens the door of a lifelong experience: Fifty years of travels. At the end of the dream, Sa’d İbn-i Ebî Vakkas gives one last piece of advice to Evliya Çelebi. This important advice shapes the frame of Evliya Çelebi’s *Seyahatnâme*.

"Go, be victorious with thy bow and arrow; be in God's keeping, and receive from me the good tidings that thou shalt visit the tombs of all the prophets and holy men whose hands thou hast now kissed. Thou shalt travel through the whole world, and be a marvel among men. Of the countries through which thou shalt pass, of their castles, strong-holds, wonderful antiquities, products, eatables and drinkables, arts and manufacturers, the extent of their provinces, and the length of the days there, draw up a description, which shall be a monument worthy of thee. Use my arms, and never depart, my son, from the ways of God. Be free from

fraud and malice, thankful for bread and salt (hospitality), a faithful friend to the good, but no friend to the bad.” (Evliya Çelebi, 2008a 1/1, p. 5).

As mentioned in the advice above, Evliya Çelebi makes detailed descriptions about various aspects of the places he travels, especially about the architectural features, castles, climate, water of those places; he writes about the wars in which he personally participates or the ones that he hears of. In addition to these advices, he tells stories about people he sees, physical aspects, beliefs, behaviors of these people, their relations with one another and with the rulers on the basis of his observations or stories he hears. Sometimes he gives some elaborate descriptions and makes interpretations about societies and cultures while he classifies, criticizes and judges folks and people for their culture, attitude and appearances, just like a Middle-Age Westerner Orientalists.

Evliya Çelebi started his journey from Istanbul as suggested by the sheikh of Kasımpaşa Mevlevihane (lodge used by Mevlevi dervishes) (2008a 1/1, p. 5); he travelled from Russia to Arabia, from Egypt to Sudan and Vienna for half a century. He visited some places more than once. Non-Muslims, infidels, people non-sectarian were the most essential characters used for reflecting religious and belief elements; Black Men, Gypsies, Yezidi, sometimes Turks (Etrak), Kurds (Ekrad) were characters used to reflect ethnic and religious aspects in *Seyahatnâme*. However, characters in *Seyahatnâme* usually have bad reputation and they are never pictured as good individuals.

The Others in *Seyahatnâme*

Evliya Çelebi is a very inquisitive character as a traveler. He outlines the ethnography of the places he goes, makes detailed descriptions of people he meets and he takes great pleasure in doing so. As a person who sees numerous different ethnic and religious groups throughout his travels, he always gives effort to learn more about them and obtain more detailed knowledge about their aspects.

It can be seen that in *Seyahatnâme* Evliya Çelebi sometimes prefers positive descriptions about the places and people while he makes negative statements about others. In this respect, it is possible to find “detailed and emphatic description of what is perceived as strange, other, and different by the other eminent Ottoman writers” in *Seyahatnâme* (Ayдын, 2011, p. 261); at this point, it is important to note that he mostly finds different people, cultures and societies *unpleasant*. Besides, he uses insulting expressions for societies that he dislikes, especially non-Muslims or the ones that don’t appeal to him. As part of the topic of this study, Evliya Çelebi’s judgments and assessments about the societies he observes will be analyzed; but the societies “otherized” by him is the center of this study.

As a person who had a good religious education and received Ottoman discipline at the same time, Evliya Çelebi had a primarily religious perspective about “foreign” societies, folks, relationships and battles. He naturally placed his personal religious beliefs (Islam) at the center of his stories. Similar to the Western travelers and religious leaders of the era who labeled all of the non-Christians as “infidels, pagans and perverts”, Evliya Çelebi defined all of the non-Muslims as “infidels, pagans and people non-sectarian”. Dankoff has an appropriate statement about these:

“Evliya didn’t completely eradicate some attitudes that can be defined as ethnic stereotyping. For instance, Kurds are rude, rebellious and obsessive about the issues of honor. Gypsies are ‘tyrant, useless, thieves and non-believers’. Jews are narrow minded and conservative

(*muta’assib mel’unlar*). They never eat the meat of animals slaughtered by Muslims; they don’t consume purified oil (‘say yağ’) like Muslims, they only use sesame oil and butter. They don’t even buy pastries from the shops in which there is no inspector about purified oil. “They won’t eat even if you kill them’ says Evliya.” (2006, p. 67-68; 2010, p. 87).

Qizilbash are similarly stereotyped by the writer over Persians. The terms bad (bed-me’a), treacherous (kallaş), rabbles (evbaş), shaved-head (ser-tıraş) or unshaven (na-tıraş) and vile (tülüngi) are used for Qizilbash and the Persian Shia in *Seyahatnâme* (Dankoff, 2006, p. 67; 2010, p. 86). Although Evliya Çelebi frequently uses the words “infidels and sinners” in *Seyahatnâme* for Armenians, Jews and Greeks, he sometimes brings out their positive aspects. There is a list of descriptions Çelebi makes in his *Seyahatnâme* about other “folks”; the list follows a pattern from relatively soft expressions towards harsher ones.

Basically rebellious, savage, fierce Turks (Etrak), but...

Turkish (Etrak) folks are frequently mentioned in *Seyahatnâme*. Turkishness of Ottomans is sometimes mentioned directly, sometimes emphasized through the words of “infidels” (Evliya Çelebi, 2010d 2/6, p. 391; 2011a 1/7, p. 74, 85). Evliya Çelebi states that he is essentially Turkish in a few parts of his book. “The Great Master Ahmet Yesevi” has a special value for Evliya Çelebi: “He is our great Father: Türk-ü Türkan Ahmet Yesevi” (2010c 1/5, p. 136). These are positive expressions used for the Turkish folk; however there are some negative expressions about Turks in *Seyahatnâme*. Especially peasant Turks, Turkmens, Turkmen Etrak and Qizilbash Turkmens are “rebellious, savage, furious and swindlers” for Çelebi. Tosya, Bolu and Dört divan Turks also belong to this group. Evliya Çelebi expresses that they are basically rebellious, savage and fierce men while describing the profane language used by them. On the other hand, he writes about their “positive” parts by using the conjunction “although” in his sentences: “The public is highly helpful to the poor although they are Turks” (Evliya Çelebi, 2008a 1/2, p. 204, 207). He emphasizes that people of Karacalar Village around Bolu are stubborn and swindler (through the use of another conjunction):

“But Etrâks are stubborn. They sell a piece of wood for forty times to their guests. They lay that wood in the water every night. The man who buys that wood has to buy timber (with a price of 10 akçe (Ottoman currency) to light that wood. When a wise traveler pounds nails in that wood, and takes a journey to Revan and comes back from his travel three years later, he sees that the villagers want to sell him that wood again. He tells this story to the public to show how sly they are. They are as stingy, ungenerous, mean and greedy as that; they say that this wood is as old as forty years old and praise it.” (Evliya Çelebi, 2008a 1/2, p. 207).

Evliya Çelebi claims that the public of Sinan Pasha Village around the city of İzmir belongs to Etrak folk who are as pernicious as rats (Evliya Çelebi, 2011c 1/9, p. 40). He tells about the Turkmen Thai folk living in Mardin plains and he states that it is difficult to collect tax from them; he also describes this community as a “cursed folk”. He writes about Selim Shah’s (Yavuz Sultan Selim) order about the massacre of four thousand “Fierce Turkmen” (Qizilbash Turkmen) living in Göksun uplands in city of Maraş (Evliya Çelebi, 2006a 1/3, p. 70-71); his expressions in the story indicate that

he not only keeps the record of the incident, but also appraises and supports the massacre. There are some similar statements in other parts of his book. For instance, he writes that Yıldırım Bayezid conquered seventy Sanjaks (administrative region under the Ottoman Empire) during his 67 years of life and 14 years of reign; he rescued these Sanjaks from Turkish brigands and infidel enemies according to Çelebi. Fatih Sultan Mehmet demolished some parts of the castle in “Karaman Ereğlisi” in order to prevent rebellious, troublesome Turks from taking shelter in there (Evliya Çelebi, 2006a 1/3, p. 39). Evliya Çelebi sometimes appraises Turks for their bravery, honesty but when it is about “peasant Turks” and “Turkmens” (Qizilbash) negative clichés replace these praises. These Turkmens and peasant Turks are harmful, bad, dangerous and swindler folks according to Evliya Çelebi.

Arabs with the eyes of gazelle, with the face of glory

Arabs are a highly distinguished folk in the eyes of Evliya Çelebi. It is possible to say that emergence of the religion of Islam and Prophet Mohammad from within this community is the reason of this privilege. Not only Arabs but also Other Muslim communities are praised by Evliya Çelebi when it comes to Islam: “Circassian, Abkhasian, Laz, Albanian, Oman Arab, Thai Arab and Keys Arabs are all brothers and descended from Quraysh folk; the ultimate wisdom of Cenâb-I Bârî [the God that does the best of everything] indicates that he wants to adorn the earth with these folks.” (Evliya Çelebi, 2008a 1/2, p. 125). He praises the city of Hama and women of that city for their decency and he relates these aspects with “Arabia”: “There are women with the eyes of gazelle, they have natural kohl in their eyes, they utter beautiful words, and they are decent as they are in Arabia. (Evliya Çelebi, 2006a 1/3, p. 83).

The writer mentions that there are cursed ones in the Arab folk too; “Semek Arabs, living around Bük Lake near Rakka Castle, they say, is a cursed folk” (Evliya Çelebi, 2006a 1/3, p. 215) is one of these according to Evliya Çelebi. He writes about an ugly person in the one part of his book, about the experiences of Gülâbi Agha: “When a Janissary knocks the door, a dirty, pissy black faced gross Arab with big ugly lips appears at the door, in desolate, dark corner.” (Evliya Çelebi, 2008a 1/1, p. 95). It is impossible to understand whether this person, humiliated for his appearance, is a Black man or an Arab. There is one clear impression that readers can have in this story: Evliya Çelebi compares that figure to a monster because of his appearance.

Evliya Çelebi uses negative clichés about Arab peasants just like Turkish peasants (Turkmen). According to him, “Urban/Badouin Arabs” (Urban Arabs: The Arab folks that live in the deserts/urban⁴) are faithless, non-believer insects and brigands (Evliya Çelebi, 2011d 2/9: p. 559, p. 640; 2011f 2/10, p. 685; Dankof, 2010, p. 83; Dankof, 2006, p. 64). Not all of the Arabs are insects or non-believers, the part of the Arab folks living in villages or desert are these ones. According to him, most of the Arab peasants (or Arabs that live in desert) are rebellious and plunderers. On the other hand: “The people has oil complexion, there are girls as shiny as stars in Behice and Bınadı Urban; men and women are as beautiful as the sun and they are like Hınadı lovers.” (Evliya Çelebi, 2011f 2/10, p. 714). The notion of urban isn’t only used for defining Arab folk. Urban is desert, it is a big

⁴The term “urban” used by Evliya Çelebi is different from that of English. It is specifically used to define people living in the desert or village.

or small settlement; it is basically used for the settlements of black men rather than Arabs. For instance, African urban (Africa at the south of Egypt/ Africa desert) is the land of Black men. Çelebi’s ideas about these people are also generally negative. His observation and “expression” about Abyssinian desert (Ethiopia) is noteworthy:

“As you go along Nil river towards south, you will come across Abyssinian from the direction of Qibla (Kaaba in Mecca). These areas are full of naked desert people; they are rebellious and sun-burnt, they are completely destitute, faithless and look like animals. They are not subjects to Ethiopia, Ibrim or Funj Padishahs. They are a group of animal-like, naked vagabonds who look like insects.” (Evliya Çelebi, 2011f 2/10, p. 888).

Evliya Çelebi’s observations and assessments about black men are presented below in details.

Wild, insect (Muslim) Kurds (Ekrad)

Muslim Kurds (Ekrad) are one of the ethnic and religious groups about whom Evliya Çelebi uses relatively less negative expressions. He only uses the cliché “insects” for Kurds a few times (2010a 1/4, p. 282, 276, 342). He talks about the “Kurdish stubbornness” (2010a 1/4, p. 179), and theft (2010a 1/4, p. 397, 404). For instance, while describing İmâdiye “the big Kurdish province” he emphasizes that they are a group of wild rebellious brigands settled in the mountains (Evliya Çelebi, 2010b 2/4, p. 710). While talking about Malazgirt Castle, he praises Kurds by using the conjunction “but”. “They are Kurds, but they obey şer’-i şerif (Islamic law in Ottoman Empire as they are Shafi’i.” (Evliya Çelebi, 2010c 1/5, p. 64). As is seen, Evliya Çelebi interprets Kurds around Malazgirt in the frame of his personal religion/belief. Çelebi believes that Kurds are “good people” only as they are Muslim, Shafi’i and they obey “şer’-i şerif”.

Infidel Greeks, necessary sewer-men Armenians and Cursed Jews

Evliya Çelebi doesn’t use many negative expressions about Greeks, Armenians and Jews. They are basically “infidels” and “sinners”, as he often repeated. But his special viewpoints about each of these communities can be better understood when his observations, ideas and interpretations are specifically analyzed; the clichés used for them can be analyzed when we take a closer look.

Infidel Greek.

Evliya Çelebi makes a comparison between Muslims and “infidel Greeks” while describing the conquest of Yanya Castle. There are various other similar comparisons in his stories about wars; these examples reflect how non-Muslims are “otherized”. Such an otherization continues over women (social gender) (see. Erekli, 2009; 2011). Evliya Çelebi explains war methods used by the opponents in wars as a Muslim, a member of Ottoman Empire. For instance, while describing the battle tactics of “Infidel Greeks”, he uses expressions such as treachery, deception, and betrayal; but he uses the words of heroism, bravery, reputation and honor to describe the tactics of Ottoman soldiers (Muslim/Turkish) (see. Dankoff, 2006). He praises ten infidel Greeks who converted to Islam and named themselves Burmalı something, Burmalı Sinan and became honorable (Evliya Çelebi, 2008a 1/2, p. 179). Evliya Çelebi builds a direct relation between Islam and honor; he indicates that before

converting to Islam, these Christian soldiers were dishonorable. This is one of the numerous examples showing that Evliya Çelebi puts religion at the center while observing other communities.

Evliya Çelebi tells the outskirts of Kızılhisar and describes the women of this town under the title of “Cautionary scene” (2011b 1/8, p. 242). According to his narrations, these Greek women don’t wear any underwear and sew a few pieces of lead in their skirts to keep them from flying and showing their ugly sexual organs. Although this narration of “cautionary scene” seems to be an objective observation, Evliya Çelebi basically indicates that these women are “corrupted”; Greek boys are similarly blamed for being “corrupted”. Evliya Çelebi classifies İstanbul’s actors, musicians and comedians and includes Greeks working in the city:

“300 tough guys in Yedikule, Narlıkapı and Sulu Monastery come together and make a group of people including bastard Greeks, Armenians and boys; but gay [“mahbub”] golden-hair dancer Dimitraki with the eyes of gazelle, Lefteraki, Yanaki and Mihayilaki Greek dancers cause trouble in Istanbul, steal from people and leave nothing behind for them. They are successful in their acts as bagel-sellers, racketeers and silver-diggers and they are professional in singing Greek songs.” (Evliya Çelebi, 2003b 2/1, p. 647).

The expressions of “bastard Greek boys” and “Armenian city boys” and “steal from many people and leave nothing behind for them” and “dancer, golden-hair boys with the eyes of gazelle...” are attention grabbing. It is important to note that negative clichés are used by the writer for almost all of the non-Muslim communities living in “Greek lands”; not only the Greeks living in Istanbul under the reign of Ottoman Empire, but also the West in general is turned into feminine beings (Erekli, 2009) by Evliya Çelebi. On one hand, he warns the readers as Greek and other non-Muslim boys used to seduce men (probably Muslim men), on the other he emphasizes the beauty of these boys.

Evliya Çelebi praises sons of non-Muslims in *Seyahatnâme*; beauty and flirtatious behaviors of Greek boys are praised; they are turned into sexual objects and this may include the entire “Europeans” in some parts of Çelebi’s stories. The writer describes a scene from a battlefield in the section of “Mediterranean Chief Artisans”: “After the black gun smoke rises in the air, all of the Muslims board the boat. They take the treasures, hunt the beautiful Western boys, kiss them on the neck, tie their beard, turn their flags upside down, put aside the ships and praise Mohammad.” (Evliya Çelebi, 2003b 2/1, p. 508). Evliya Çelebi not only otherizes Greeks but also almost all of the non-Muslim Westerners through clichés such as bastards or Westerners with ugly complexion. (Evliya Çelebi, 2008b 2/2, p. 527; 2006a 1/3, p. 66). One of the most frequently used clichés in *Seyahatnâme* “infidels” turns boys into sexual objects. Infidel boys attract the attention of men and amuse them with their beauty and charm.

Evliya Çelebi praises Tırnovi, a Greek town: “The lovers, the beloved and infidels are healthy as the water and the climate is nice.” He uses highly positive, attractive expressions about the women in Tırnovi: “There are girls with shiny faces like the moon, well-dressed, nice looking women live in that city. But there are sixteen churches, almost two thousand patriarchs, metropolitan community churches, priests, monks, pastors and head priests. Shortly, it is a filthy town, there is no meaning or good in writing about it, and it is a wicked area full of infidels.” (Evliya Çelebi, 2011b 1/8, p. 189). A

perfect town with beautiful weather, water, women and young girls suddenly becomes filthy and terrible as it is a field of “non-believers”. These contradictions are frequently used in *Seyahatnâme*: The weather, water and thus people in the region are beautiful and healthy but the folk is infidel!

Highly necessary sewer-men Armenians.

Evliya Çelebi mentions Armenians in various parts of *Seyahatnâme*. In his first book which is about Istanbul, he writes that Armenians in Istanbul have bad jobs such as cleaning sewers, then he continues: “This community in Istanbul mostly involves Armenians from Kayseri. They smell a little bad. But they are highly necessary; Serkiz, Vartan, Derder, Aşvadır and Mohan named shit cleaners.” (Evliya Çelebi, 2003b 2/1, p. 475).

He continues the same topic in the following page and disseminates this filth over the entire Armenians instead of just the Armenians in Istanbul who came from Kayseri. This “filth” isn’t because of the job they do; all Armenians are filthy because of their ethnicity: “[Armenians] are defeated and filthy, but they are necessary for Egypt and Istanbul. Istanbul becomes clean thanks to the service of this community.” (Evliya Çelebi, 2003b 2/1, p. 634). Evliya Çelebi humiliates Armenians by stating that they are “infidels and sinners”; on the other hand, he praises them as they are professionals and careful in what they do.

Cursed Jews.

The most important insulting cliché used by Evliya Çelebi for Jews goes back to a story in Trabzon. He states that this incident is the reason why Muslims don’t like Jews at all and tend to kill them whenever they get the chance. Evliya Çelebi doesn’t tell this story as an objective narrator; he takes a position as Muslim and gives the impression that Jews deserve to die, which is supported by the title of this specific part in the book: “A really nice story” (Evliya Çelebi, 2008a 1/2, p. 115). Here is the summary of this incident which explains the reason why there is not even a single Jew in Trabzon: Two brothers get lost in Trabzon during the reign of Selim the 1st, and they cannot be found. One day, a dervish walking through the open market sees a piece of polished leather; as he takes a close look at it, he sees something written in code. He then understands what is written; a group of Muslims have been working in a tannery owned by Jew according to the code. These men have been working there for twenty years, they cannot go out of this place, they have been persecuted and they are waiting to be rescued. The dervish appears before the Padishah and tells him what he learnt. The Padishah sends soldiers to the tannery; the lost two brothers are sewn to each other from the hide of their backs. The soldiers also learn that hundreds of innocent people (named Mehmed) are slaughtered and/or working as slaves in that place. Upon these, Trabzon townspeople come together, close the gates of the castle and slaughter all of the Jews including women, children and baby boys in the cradle and clean the city.” After this incident, people living in Trabzon “have the decree to kill any Jew they come across; this is why, there is no Jew in Trabzon.” (Evliya Çelebi, 2008a 1/2, p. 115). After this “really nice story” he reminds the readers that Trabzon folks don’t like Jews: “People living in Trabzon don’t like Jews. They are true believers, they pray to the one and only God, they are the followers of Sunnah, and they are tender-minded and mature. May God bless them all.” (Evliya Çelebi, 2008a 1/2, p. 116).

Evliya Çelebi mentions that “Trabzon Muslims aren’t the only ones that don’t like Greek infidels” in Yeniköy, Muslims in Istanbul doesn’t like Jews according to Evliya Çelebi. The reason of this is basically the story above. “There is not even a single sign of a Jew in here (Yeniköy); if they see a Jew, they will kill him. Lâz folk and Greek infidels never like Jews.” (Evliya Çelebi, 2003b 2/1, p. 429; for a similar expression, see 2006b 2/3, p. 460-461).

Besides these stories, Evliya Çelebi uses some negative clichés about Jews. He states that the reason of their evil spirit goes back to a long time ago and he claims that they murdered many prophets. He bases these claims on the exegesis and history books written by Muslims:

“These folks are cursed and old, they are quite conservative, sometimes they deny the existence of God. Four thousands out of 124.000 prophets didn’t die peacefully in their beds. All of them are murdered by those Jews. It is written in all of the exegesis and history books; they martyred prophets such as John, Zechariah and Circis [...]” (Evliya Çelebi, 2006a 1/3, p. 160).

In another part of his book (Evliya Çelebi, 2006a 1/3, p. 165) about prophet Usair, Evliya Çelebi explains the reason why Jews have that foul breath and pale skin. According to his story:

“The real reason why Jew folks still have pale skin, weak and have foul breath is that, Jews are descended from the Jew community who were once dead but came back to life upon the prayer of prophet Usair. They have foul breath and there is no light in their eyes because of that.” (Evliya Çelebi, 2006a 1/3, p. 165).

Evliya Çelebi, who uses such “historical” clichés for Jews thinks that there is a side of Egyptian Jews that should be praised; but he reminds of this general stereotype even when he uses positive words.

“Jews are always professional in cheating and doing evil deeds everywhere; they are cursed. But the ones who live in Egypt are so honest that when a person who receives his ulufe (service pay in Ottoman Empire) and realizes that there is a mistake (in the printing/production of the money), he can go to a Jew moneychanger on his way and change it without hesitation as they never try to cheat.” (Evliya Çelebi, 2011e 1/10, p. 145).

He, on the other hand, continues making negative analogies by presenting different folks in his stories: “[In Trabzon] Laz and Jew folks always have trouble. Both of these folks are serious troublemakers.” (Evliya Çelebi, 2006b 2/3, p. 461). As a result, it can be said that negative Jew stereotypes are also used by Evliya Çelebi in his book.

Thief, ugly, non-believer Gypsies

Gypsies aren’t mentioned very often in *Seyahatnâme*; but stereotypes used for them such as thieves, ugly people, liars, and bastards are used by Evliya Çelebi. Çelebi sometimes calls them Gypsies, while he sometimes prefers using the expression Coptic (He sometimes uses this word for Egyptians).

He describes musician, actor, comedians in his books and writes about the Gypsies in Istanbul: “Most of the Gypsy singers, musicians and female dancers are bastards from Balatşah Neighborhood.” (Evliya Çelebi, 2003b 2/1, p. 646). The word “bastard”, usually used as an insult, is used by Evliya

Çelebi like a very ordinary, normal expression. While talking about “Edirne, the festive city”, he repeats the clichés of aggressive and annoying: “There are five neighborhoods full of contentious Coptics (Gypsies). They don’t stop fighting day and night.” (Evliya Çelebi, 2006b 2/3, p. 590). The cliché of aggressive, noisy Gypsies are used in *Seyahatnâme* once again.

According to Evliya Çelebi,

“Coptic folk in Rumelia, in other words Gypsies, are wicked and poor. These people used to extort even the dead; when they were -soldiers of Pharaoh, Holy God stated that “*and followed the order of every obstinate tyrant*” [Qur’an, Hud, 59]. They (Gypsies) are really tyrants, thieves, ugly, non-believers who don’t follow the order of a founder. They introduce themselves as Muslims, but they are even more despicable than non-believers.” (Evliya Çelebi, 2011b 1/8, 91; emphasis in original).

As seen, Evliya Çelebiotherizes Gypsies by using a text from the holy book Qur’an. Moreover, although some Gypsies seem to be Muslims, they are so invaluable that they cannot even be classified as non-believers. He humiliates Yezidi in a similar manner, which will be presented in the following pages.

Evliya Çelebi uses negative expressions about the language of Rumelia Gypsies and humiliates Gypsies in general. He states that Rumelia Copts have twelve “gross, ugly” languages. He writes that: “May Holy God protect other people from their evil deeds. But as a world traveler needs to understand the language of these people, please don’t blame me for writing such nonsense. This Gypsy folk tore my heart out and turned my tears into blood.” (Evliya Çelebi, 2011b 1/8, p 93). Evliya Çelebi apologizes from readers as he had to mention their invaluable language and took their time. Moreover he feels humiliated as he has to analyze them!

Faithless, ugly Black men who look like beast

When the expressions, statements and judgments about Black men in *Seyahatnâme* are analyzed, it can be said that there are many similarities between Orientalist viewpoint and Evliya Çelebi’s viewpoint about this folk. Some of the Middle Age travelers and discoverers classified natives in South America and Australia Aborigines according to their appearance and placed them in a lower class in the racial classification. Evliya Çelebi adapts a similar process and analyzes Black men on the basis of their physical aspects besides their traditions, customs and beliefs.

For instance, Evliya Çelebi describes a folk living along Nile “Their faces are black and some of them are ugly” (Evliya Çelebi, 2011f 2/10, p. 594). He describes Ebuhrtribeas “They are 800 Black Arabs with bad, ugly black faces; they have filthy appearance and black hair. They don’t know anything about religion, faith or proper relationship [...]” (Evliya Çelebi, 2011f 2/10, p. 901). Various African Black ethnic groups are described with similar expressions: “Beni Halfa tribe is made of seven thousand ugly individuals who believe in no religion [...]” (Evliya Çelebi, 2011f 2/10, 910). There are “various types of men and women slaves with black complexion and red faces” in the Desert of Idris, and at the same time there are “ugly Afnuvî black men with huge lips” (Evliya Çelebi, 2011f 2/10, p. 927). Evliya Çelebi mentions that there is a community living in Şibeyke region, and he states that

“They are completely naked, rebellious and burnt under the sun; they are in want of a piece of bread and they look like animals” (Evliya Çelebi, 2011f 2/10, p. 888).

Evliya Çelebi uses some more carefully chosen words for the city of Sennare in Sudan probably because they are Muslims; he even makes some compliments about women living there. But he feels the need to make comparison while using some poetic expressions about this folk “who excites the lover [who evokes desire in men]” from the other “ugly Black Men with huge lips” and he separates this peoples from the other African communities who are “bad, immoral, huge people with the height of a goblin”.

“There are numerous lovers and the beloved with black complexion. One may think that they are like the ugly black men with huge ugly lips, but they are not. There are so many men with soft and beautiful lips and beautiful looking women who talk and walk softly in this place; they burn the heart of men with the looks in their eyes. They have eyes tinged with kohl by the hand of God; they have the eyes of gazelle, the way that they speak is appealing, they are kind and tall. Whoever sees them gets attracted. [...] These people aren’t basically evil like Bankala, Donkola, Afnu, Bornu, Kirmanka and Bağaniskifolks. Their rulers [kings/leaders, chiefs] aren’t ugly [...]. They don’t have huge heads, lips; they don’t have the feet of elephants or height of monsters; they are neat, nice and witty; they have small lips, dark complexion, small nose like date palms and they have dimple on the chin. They have white, shiny teeth between the lips like pearls and beautiful black face; each one of these teeth is like a Hormuz pearl.” (Evliya Çelebi, 2011f 2/10, p. 958-59).

Evliya Çelebi frequently mentions that there are people who don’t believe in God or a creator; these people make kebab with the flesh of any animal of men they catch (Evliya Çelebi, 2011f 2/10, p. 992). Some people are completely naked and “like animals”. As these people don’t wear regular clothes, the writer associates them with animals: There is a piece of flower in the private parts of their body, but one can see these parts when they move. They are a group of creatures like animals.” (Evliya Çelebi, 2011f 2/10, p. 721).

Non-believer, unfaithful, treacherous Qizilbash

One of the other belief groups humiliated and negatively described and judged by Evliya Çelebi is Qizilbash. He uses various insulting expressions such as non-believers, non-religious, pervert men with terrible lives and bad jobs, traitors, cheap trash, shaved-head and filths. He doesn’t consider the ethnic origin of Qizilbash (Kurdish, Turkish/Turkmen, Persian, etc.) and completely otherizes them.

Evliya Çelebi doesn’t believe that the Qizilbash call themselves Muslims; according to him they cannot be Muslims (Evliya Çelebi, 2010b 2/4, p. 447). Based on the problems of these people with Ottoman rulers, Evliya Çelebi claims that they revolted. He uses humiliating and marginalizing expressions for Qizilbash while he prefers the expressions “Muslim army” and “Muslim martyrs” for Ottoman soldiers.

He writes these in the section that involves a story about the conquest of Revan: “Many Qizilbash were in a dark well with the help of God; a dark gunpowder rouse above the inner castle as they started fighting again. As all of the Muslim martyrs completely slaughtered Qizilbash in Baghdad;

there was blood everywhere. This is how Baghdad was conquered and the revenge of Muslim martyrs in Revan was taken.” (Evliya Çelebi, 2003a 1/1, p. 182). Evliya Çelebi uses the title of “The Army of Islam” (2010b 2/4, p.471) for the ones who defeated Qizilbash. Evliya Çelebi completely detests Qizilbash. He uses humiliating expressions at every chance. He personally can murder or punish these people. One day, he gets this chance in the city of Kehriz [Kehriz city]. “May God destroy the city [the city of Kerhis]. All of the people living there is Shia and Teberrâi. I almost lost my mind when I heard that they swear Omar (God forbid!). But I was weak and helpless; it was easy to murder that cursed infidel at that time, but I couldn’t.” When messengers from land of the Greek (Anatolia) come to Persia, they are free to murder them (Qizilbash) that they found guilty. Because, “they are free to murder (punish) four cursed Qizilbash in response to the death of four elected friends (Ebu Bakr, Omar, Osman and Ali) A person who murders a Qizilbash shall never be questioned or punished.” (Evliya Çelebi, 2008a 1/2p. 278). In another occasion, he gets the chance to punish a Qizilbash (Rafizi). “When a Muezzin was chanting the adhan, and he chanted the part Eşhedü enne Muhammeden Resûlullah; Qizilbash said that ‘Ali is God’s guardian’ and continued ‘Oh the enemies of Ali and Kerbelâ martyrs’, and said ‘I will tell you about the legends of them’...” Evliya Çelebi sees that but doesn’t give a response. He orders the others bring that man and upon the order of the religion, he slashes him with a whip as mentioned in the Sunnah; he continues to whip him for exactly 100 times and dips the whip a few times in the pool. He says “for the love of Ebubekir, Omar, and Osman” whenever Qizilbash says “Help, oh Ali (Medet ya Ali)!” He purifies the damned from his curse (Evliya Çelebi, 2010a 1/4, p. 409). Evliya Çelebi is no more a mere observer or traveler; he is a missionary, a man of religion and an Ottoman officer.

In the section about Göğemli village, Evliya Çelebi takes calling the folk of Dobruca “Qizilbash” as an insult: “Dobruca folk are humiliated and disliked a bit; they are accused of being Qizilbash (Şahseven). God Forbid, they don’t like the Shah, but they honestly love the God’s beloved Muhammad Mustafa, the Sultan of the Sultans. They have true faith, they are real Muslims, they welcome quests and they are moderate, gentle, conversationalist people.” (Evliya Çelebi, 2006b 2/3, p. 462). He has a similar viewpoint about the folk around Dömbülî Castle. As he didn’t see any inn or drunk in the neighborhood, he doesn’t believe that they are Qizilbash. “This market, sultan markets and coffeehouses are quite fancy. In fact it is the land of Qizilbash, but I didn’t see any inn or any drunk. It really is a shame and forbidden in Islam. They are more flexible in other parts of life.” (Evliya Çelebi, 2010a 1/4, p. 423). The cliché or stereotype of Qizilbash is also reflected in this interpretation of Evliya Çelebi. But there is a difference: Evliya Çelebi thinks that as there is not an inn or a drunk person in this town, these people are more “like us”.

Nusayri (Arab Alawites), another Alawite group is mentioned in a section of the book, they are negatively judged in that section. While continuing his narrations about Latakia, Evliya Çelebi writes these about Nusayri: “All of them are of Nusayri sect and thy secretly worship when the sun comes out. They perform the ritual prayers of Islam in the public and fathers marry daughters before they get married to someone else.”⁵ (Evliya Çelebi, 2011c 1/9, p. 414).

⁵The expression of Evliya Çelebi “Nusayri fathers marry daughters before they get married to someone else” isn’t completely clear. Based on the approach of Evliya Çelebi towards the notion of “Others”, it can be concluded that according to him, these fathers get into sexual interaction before marrying their daughters to someone else.

Evliya Çelebi, who repeats the clichés about Qizilbash, gives wide coverage to one of the most famous stories about Alawite: “The candle died”. He states that the incident of blowing out candle is about Sheikh Safi, a miracle worker; he states that this tradition continued for a time, but it was forbidden as the story was misunderstood after a while. Evliya Çelebi adds that he traveled various places such as Persia, Erzurum, Baghdad, Tebriz, Sivas, Bozok and Dobruca and he heard about the story of candle, but he never personally saw the practice. “But people like gossiping and humiliating others; they are cruel and slanderous.” He emphasizes that these rumors are spread by hateful people (Evliya Çelebi, 2010a 1/4, p. 416-418). His special expressions and efforts about this issue can be regarded as one of the good examples indicating that Çelebi is sometimes “fair” although there are various examples of his approach as a writer who otherizes others.

Yezidi (Ézidi)⁶, worse than infidels and sinners

Out of all the people he met, Evliya Çelebi uses the harshest words for Yezidi; he uses highly insulting expressions for these people who are more like animals for him. Wigrams went to the settlements of Yezidi approximately three hundred years after Evliya Çelebi and made some observations in those areas; they determined that this common otherizing thought among Muslims still continue today. *The Cradle of Mankind: Life in Eastern Kurdistan*, published by the Wigrams in 1914, they mention these observations:

“The Yezidi form one of the recognized *millet*s, or subject religious sects, existing in the Turkish Empire. But recognition in their case by no means implies toleration. They are universally abhorred as outcasts—almost as ‘untouchables’—like the *cagots* of the Pyrenees, or the lowest *pariahs* of Hindustan. A Christian is a ‘dog’ to a Moslem, and a Jew ranks many octaves lower; but there is no room on the chromatic scale to show the position of a Yezidi: he is the sort of human being that is less regarded than a beast.” (Wigram & Wigram, 1914: p. 89).

This observation and viewpoint of Wigrams about Yezidi is clearly presented to the readers in *Seyahatnâme*.

Evliya Çelebi humiliates Yezidi for their appearance and belief by using various harsh expressions such as insect, people non-sectarian, faithless, savage, bestial, goblin-faced, dirty peoples, damned-faced and people with horse teeth. This viewpoint is similar with various Western travelers, missionaries and writers since the Middle Ages. They used some similar expressions for people outside their societies such as Africa, America, Australia locals at the beginning.

There are numerous statements about different ethnic and religious groups in *Seyahatnâme*, some of which are mentioned above; but it can be said that Evliya Çelebi prefers the harshest expressions for Yezidi; the most hostile, humiliating, otherizing expressions are used for this group of people. Evliya Çelebi writes these about this group: “There are faithless people who live in Durzî Mountains, with White and Red complexion; Yezidî, Mervanî, Teymanî and Nusayrî peoples are some

⁶Yezidi peoples don’t like the fact that they are associated with Yezid, the son of Muaviye. They emphasize that they shall be called “Ézidi” (Kurdish) instead of “Yezidi”; they take it as an insult. The word Yezidi is used in the study as it is used to define these peoples in the related literature.

of them. The most wicked and accursed among these is Kurdish Yezidi.” (Evliya Çelebi, 2010a 1/4, p. 98-99).

Evliya Çelebi, firstly tries to explain the origin of Yezidi and claims that the roots of this belief system go back to Yezid, the son of Muaviye. This is the basic and most important reason why Yezidi are seriously assaulted by Evliya Çelebi. According to him, Yezidi, descending from the Muaviye’s son Yezid, slaughtered Hussein and his soldiers in the war of Kerbala by leaving them thirsty (Evliya Çelebi, 2010b 2/4, p. 606). This is a significant incident according to Evliya Çelebi and it caused a bad reputation. Although this incident attributed to Yezidi in *Seyahatnâme* (the incident of Kerbala) has nothing to do with them, but Evliya Çelebi believes that. Moreover, he claims that the name Yezidi end the belief system is rooted from the son of Muaviye, Yezid; although he associates the origin of Yezidi belief with Yezid bin Muaviye, he titles them as “Hairy Mountain Kurds”.

According to Evliya Çelebi, Yezidi are “people non-sectarian”; they worship various animals and devil. “Yezidi aren’t obedient to the orders of God, loyal or faithful people. Some of them worship dog, goat, rooster or to the sculpture of devil.” (Evliya Çelebi, 2006a 1/3, p. 142). On the other hand, he sometimes praises them for their bravery; but right after such positive statements, he uses highly humiliating expressions for them: “These accursed Yezidi Kurds [...] are really brave, but all of these courageous infidels worship black dog.” (Evliya Çelebi, 2010a 1/4, p. 97). According to Çelebi, dog so important and valuable for Yezidi that when they see a person throwing a stone at a dog, they kill him right away. They celebrate when a dog is born, they bury black dogs to dog cemetery heavily lamenting. They serve kebabs made of sheep meat to their dogs (Evliya Çelebi, 2010a 1/4, p. 98-99). Evliya Çelebi develops analogy between Yezidi and dogs. He suggests that Yezidi Kurds “danced like mad dogs” and “barked like dogs” during a war with Melek Ahmet Pasha, for whom he personally fought.” (Evliya Çelebi, 2010a 1/4, p. 298; 2008b 2/2, p. 334). Fighting like a mad dog, attacking the enemy by barking are attitudes of enemies; dog-lover Yezidi are such enemies according to Evliya Çelebi who adds a different dimension to the issue; he creates a world of fantasy while humiliating this folk.

Evliya Çelebi states one negative adjective after another about “Sincar Mountain Hairy Kurds”: “They call one side of Sincan Mountain as Hairy Mountain; there are 44-45.000 Yezidi and Bapirî dog worshippers, worse than infidels and non-believers; they are a number of wild, brutal, rebellious, goblin-faced hairy infidel Yezidi Kurds.” (Evliya Çelebi, 2010a 1/4, p. 91). Evliya Çelebi really portrays these people, “worse than infidels and non-believers”, in the shape of “goblins”. He portrays them like science-fiction characters (bad, ugly, harmful characters).

“These people are generally short, their heads are like cabbage, they don’t have neck, and it looks as if their head is directly connected to their body. But they have wide shoulders and their breasts are wide and full of hatred; their waist and biceps are thick, they have splayfoot, they have huge hands and feet, but they cannot ride horses. Their eyes are black and circle, they have quite thick eyebrows. They are called “people with eight-moustaches” by other Kurds. There are a lot of hairs in their face; there are hairs coming out of their moustache, two eyebrows, and twonose holes. Their bodies are like sheepskin; they really look strange, ugly, and massive and they have huge faces. Their children are small until they reach ten; but after that age, they have Yezid-faces, they become hairy as if they are 20 years old.” (Evliya Çelebi, 2010a 1/4, p. 98).

Evliya Çelebi who defines Yezidi as insects, mentions that they are insect holes. He establishes a relationship between them and animals such as flea, scorpion and centipede. It is as if all these animals are created together with Yezidi, or they are created for them:

“As louse, flea, scorpion and centipede are created in Sincar Mountain, the Kurds know how many of them live in that mountain. There are lice in the hair and beard of Sincar Mountain Kurds; these insects live in their hairs. Lice even live in their ears and nose holes. But they are not uncomfortable with lice and flea. As their bodies are like hairy white dogs, they look like a group of goblin faced faithless and cruel peoples.” (Evliya Çelebi, 2010a 1/4, p. 88).

There are some strange “information” about Yezidi in *Seyahatnâme*, which lead readers think that Yezidi, who are portrayed as goblins, are not homo-sapiens and as far as it is seen, Evliya Çelebi personally believes the stories he tells. For instance, he states that pregnancy of Yezidi women continues three months longer than the pregnancy duration of normal human beings: “They give birth after a year of pregnancy” and “they firstly give black dog milk to their babies.” (Evliya Çelebi, 2010a 1/4, p. 98-99). Marriage of these women, who give birth in one year, cannot be “normal”. “Polyandry” which means marrying more than one man is presented to the readers with a viewpoint, beyond a simple presentation. Indicating how immoral Yezidi are:

“One woman gets married to seven and eight men. When she gives birth to a bastard, seven or eight fathers gather at one place. The mother gives an apple to her child. They believe that the child’s father is the one to whom the child gives the apple. The mother is under the protection of that man from now on; no one can say anything to her.” (Evliya Çelebi, 2008b 2/2, p. 334).

Evliya Çelebi brings up the cliché of “blowing up the candle” in the context of Yezidi. “The folk famous for blowing off the candle in the land of Persia is a part of this group.” (Evliya Çelebi, 2008b 2/2, p. 334). While he almost completely refuses this statement about Qizilbash, he definitely confirms this when it comes to Yezidi. Although he doesn’t sympathize with Qizilbash, he believes that they are superior to Yezidis; his expressions about Yezidi are much harsher than the expressions he uses for Qizilbash. As emphasized above, the ethnic and religious group accused and humiliated with the harshest expressions in *Seyahatnâme* is Yezidi.

Result

Evliya Çelebi’s *Seyahatnâme* is a very important source for researchers working in the field of human sciences as mentioned at the beginning of this study. It is possible to prepare a monograph of 17th century Ottoman Empire by using *Seyahatnâme*. The work gives the opportunity to understand and know Ottoman Empire and its subjects; in addition to this, it is possible to understand the lifestyles of different societies and cultures on a wide geography. On the other hand, a work shouldn’t be seen as an uncriticizable source; a traveler naturally writes about the places he sees, but it is known that most of them write not only about what they see, but also about what they hear, learn and feel. People and communities that are different in terms of religion/belief, physical features or culture can

sometimes be categorized starting from the “closest to us” towards “the furthest”. This classification can be based on the degree of “us”, “closest to us”, far from us” and “not from us”. Any researcher who wants to use these data should take these issues into consideration, including the ones who want to work on Evliya Çelebi’s *Seyahatnâme*.

Almost everyone accepts that as a traveler who had the chance to travel around the world for half a century during 17th century, Evliya Çelebi had a lot of knowledge and put what he learnt into writing. Moreover, it is commonly believed that he is relatively more objective than most of the travelers in his observations, narrations and interpretations. But it should be accepted that he may have acted according to the “spirit of the time”. He is after all a subject (Muslims and Ottoman) and there are object(s) (infidels, Qizilbash, Yezidi etc.). Evliya Çelebi generally looks at the others from the perspective of the dominant, the subject. Çelebi is not merely a traveler in *Seyahatnâme*; he is a government officer, Ottoman soldier, Muslim, missionary working for a big and dominant country.

There is a remarkable amount of exaggeration in *Seyahatnâme*; it not just for the purpose of adding the element of “fun”; he sometimes uses some expressions that evoke the feeling of “exaggeration” in the reader. Evliya Çelebi surely has some reasons for doing so; he wants to create an entertaining work that satisfies the literary desire of readers (Özay, 2011a, p. 306; 2011b, p. 63; Dankoff, 2006); he naturally wants people in different era read his book and take pleasure in doing so. But if the purpose of using the books of travels, including *Seyahatnâme* as sources knowledge and data, it can be misleading as they are not basically written for this purpose.

Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar writes that he reads *Seyahatnâme* for “taking literary pleasure” (1969, 16-17). His reaction to the claims of exaggeration is: “I don’t read it for criticizing it, this is why, I always win.” If you are reading *Seyahatnâme* as a literary work, you see exaggerations as small details and give answer to the questions in your mind. But if you want to benefit from the source for making a scientific research, you should always take the issue of “objectivity” into consideration. This is why, the data presented in *Seyahatnâme* should be viewed with suspicion; they must be compared with other data in the literature if possible, and be carefully analyzed.

When *Seyahatnâme* is analyzed in details, it can be seen that Evliya Çelebi clearly otherizes many different societies, belief systems and lifestyles. Exaggerations, insulting expressions, clichés about the looks of individuals may sometimes be “amusing” for readers although they are a little annoying especially when physical aspects are mentioned. For instance, a child with large-head, awkward mouth and nose (Evliya Çelebi, 2008 2/2, p. 465-67) and Nemse King with long head like a pumpkin, eyes of an owl, mouth and teeth of a camel may sound humiliating, but readers think that these kinds of depictions are “pleasant analogies”. These types of storifications have been used for a long time by many writers. For instance, J. J. Rousseau *Confessions* depicts a Lazarist that he doesn’t really like a monster:

“At the seminary there was a confounded Lazarist, who took charge of me, and disgusted me with the Latin which he wanted to teach me. He had sleek, greasy, black hair, a gingerbread face, a voice like a buffalo, the look of a night-owl and a beard like boar's bristles; his smile was sardonic, his limos moved like those of a jointed doll. I have forgotten his hateful name, but his frightful and mawkish face has remained in my memory, and I can scarcely think of it without a shudder.” (Rousseau, 1904, p. 106).

But when such exaggerations are made about different ethnic and religious groups, or when they are directly directed towards these groups, they may become humiliating, excluding or blaming expressions. Researchers should be careful in their analysis.

It can be claimed that Evliya Çelebi “may not have written that piece for the purpose of a reference” or he “may not have written it to complete a duty” (Tezcan, S. 2011, p. 15),⁷ or some researchers can say that he didn’t even think about some of the findings determined by modern researchers in his book. He would naturally expect his work reach as many people as possible when he decided to put his fifty years of experience and observations into writing. So, it can be said that he would naturally guess that his narrations could be used as reference or source of information. But different from these “assumptions”, it is important to note *Seyahatnâme* is “a tremendous resource for scientists” (Tezcan, S. 2011, p. 15) and it turned into an “object of research”, just like this study. Thus, it is important to be careful and warn people working in the area. It is one thing to claim and believe that Evliya Çelebi is different from the European travelers before or after his era it is another to analyze and adapt a “critical” approach about his evaluations and viewpoint towards the other/different societies and cultures.

Despite the examples and criticisms mentioned above, it is possible to say that there are differences between Evliya Çelebi and the Western travelers; Evliya Çelebi’s viewpoint is more objective when it is compared to the Western travelers of the same era.⁸ But this doesn’t mean that *Seyahatnâme* of Evliya Çelebi has no element of otherization or he reflects no trace of orientalism. At this point, one thing should be emphasized for the last time; some negative and sometimes humiliating expressions used in *Seyahatnâme* by Evliya Çelebi don’t devalue the work or decrease the importance of Evliya Çelebi as a historical figure who was a valuable traveler and writer of the period.

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⁷Evliya Çelebi might not have written his work as a reference, but it is possible to say that he wrote a ten volume work in order to perform a duty. At the beginning of his work, he explains a dream he saw to the readers and he writes about the suggestions made by people who interpreted the dream. He was assigned a duty by the prophet through his dream; Ebi Vakkas who guides him in his dream and Sheikh Abdullah Dede who interpreted his dream said that he had a responsibility, a mission to complete. He gladly accepted this “mission” and responsibility.

⁸Although it is commonly accepted that, Evliya Çelebi is more “objective” about societies and cultures he come across when compared to “some” Western travelers, this belief shouldn’t be overrated. Claiming that “all” of the Western travelers, merchants and missionaries otherized other societies and cultures would be exaggerative and ethnocentric. On the other hand, such a claim would cause “academic otherization”. Some of the Western travelers used to transmit their observations and experiences in an objective manner. Marco Polo is one of them.

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