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978-0-521-78041-4 - Indo-Persian Travels in the Age of Discoveries, 1400-1800

Muzaffar Alam and Sanjay Subrahmanyam

Excerpt

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CHAPTER I

*Introduction: the travel-account from Beijing
to the Bosphorus*

Travel is the patron of man,
it is the court where status is gained;
travel is treasure, and the master of skill.
If a tree were able to move,
it would not be the victim of the saw and the axe.

...

Hell in this world is the same as travel.

That's why Travel (*safar* سفر) looks like Hell (*saqar* سقر) in writing,

Muhammad Mufid Mustaufi Yazdi (c. 1670)¹

A CONSPECTUS

A thousand years ago, a great Muslim intellectual and polymath, native of the Central Asian region of Khwarizm, embarked on a study of distant and exotic matters, namely matters Indian. A contemporary and sometime correspondent of the celebrated Avicenna (Ibn Sina), this intellectual was no armchair scholar but came to derive his knowledge of India from first-hand experience and travel, related in large measure to his association with Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna (c. 971–1030), who raided northern India on several occasions. As he wrote in the opening passages of his own work, “No one will deny that in questions of historic authenticity hearsay does not equal eyewitness; for in the latter the eye of the observer apprehends the substance of that which is observed, both in the time when and in the place where it exists, whilst hearsay has its peculiar drawbacks.” These drawbacks included the fact that lies were frequently told and transmitted, whether from self-interest and the desire for profit,

¹ For both verses, making opposite claims, see Mirza Muhammad Mufid Mustaufa ibn Najm-ud-Din Mahmud Bafiqi Yazdi, *Jāmi'ī Muḥidī: Persian text of XI century A.H. on history of Yazd, by Muḥammad Mufid Mustawfi Bafiqi*, ed. Iraj Afshar, 3 vols. (Tehran, 1960–3), Vol. III; and the discussion in Chapter 5 below.

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or from ignorance, or even from habitual mendacity. Still, our Khwarizmi intellectual was equally aware that to be an eyewitness was not all: “for the object of eye-witness can only be actual momentary existence, whilst hearsay comprehends alike the present, the past and the future”.² Happy the writer then who not only has been there, and seen what he described, but also has access to the textual traditions of the places he wishes to write about. Happy then the man who can call himself Abu Raihan Muhammad ibn Ahmad al-Biruni (973–1048), author, amongst a variety of other texts, of the work we have cited from above: the *Kitāb fī Taḥqīq mā lil-Hind*.

Were one to eavesdrop on most discussions regarding al-Biruni, however, one could very easily conclude that the man was an outlandish exception, a freak phenomenon in an Indo-Persian (or, in his case, Indo-Perso-Arabic) world where few others cared to reflect on travel and first-person experience. We are often reminded that his work on India (unlike his other works on mathematics and astronomy) was little read for nearly two centuries after it was written, until it was cited by the Persian historian Rashid-ud-Din (d. 1318). In the period that we shall study here too, al-Biruni seems hardly to be a writer whose name is on the lips of every writer and intellectual, although almost all those whom we shall consider in the following pages were fluent readers of Arabic. The fate of the *Kitāb al-Hind* thus seems to lead paradoxically to the ineluctable conclusion of an Oriental lack of enterprise and curiosity, confirming the clichés that so many leading scholars of Islam have long sustained.³ One al-Biruni can hardly be thought to be representative of anything besides his own extraordinary genius.

To whom does the medieval and early modern travel-account really belong then? The reader uneasily astride the twentieth and twenty-first centuries may be forgiven the presumption that such accounts are above all products of the Western pen, setting down what has been seen by the roving Western eye.⁴ The search through bookstores and even libraries

² Edward C. Sachau, *Alberuni's India: an account of the religion, philosophy, literature, geography, chronology, astronomy, customs, laws and astrology of India about A.D. 1030*, 2 vols. (London, 1910); for the text, see Abu Raihan Muhammad ibn Ahmad al-Biruni, *Kitāb fī Taḥqīq mā lil-Hind min maqūlah maqbūlah fī al-'aql aw marzūlah* (Hyderabad, 1958).

³ See Bernard Lewis, *The Muslim Discovery of Europe* (New York, 1982).

⁴ This is certainly the broad impression one has from the massive and recent Jennifer Speake, ed., *Literature of travel and exploration: an encyclopaedia*, 3 vols. (London, 2003), where almost none of the travellers discussed in the present volume find a place. See also Peter Hulme and Tim Youngs, eds., *The Cambridge companion to travel writing* (Cambridge, 2002), which again embodies a rather similar Europe- (and even Anglo-)centred view.

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of today confirms this primarily Occidental leaning of the popular travel-account, and is crystallised in the typical photograph of the author-traveller that accompanies the text: usually a man, dressed in rugged outdoor clothes, he stands squinting against the harsh sun of a distant (and often either tropical or mountainous) land where he finds himself.⁵ In view of the association, moreover, of travel and anthropology that has become very nearly a cliché since Claude Lévi-Strauss penned his *Tristes tropiques* (first published in 1955), the Occidental vocation of even the erudite travel-account is neatly confirmed by author after author.⁶ Less academically, one can equally run the gamut from Frédéric Sauser (1887–1961), better known by his *nom de plume* of Blaise Cendrars, whose celebrated and suggestively titled book, *Bourlinguer* (with its implicit image of an errant sailing ship), sums up the genre with elegance and multi-layered irony, to the hyper-Occidental V. S. Naipaul, each casting his picaresque or jaundiced eye on people and places in various incarnations of both Occident and Orient.⁷

The purpose of this book is resolutely to argue otherwise. However, this is only one of its purposes, for if the empirical demonstration of the falsity of the idea summarised above were all that interested us, the job could be done rather quickly. It would be sufficient, for example, to list the rather copious production of travel-literature in non-Western languages and have done with it, with the mass of materials in Chinese alone being enough to clinch the argument. Yet the problem remains of what this literature meant in different historical and societal contexts, of both its location in a broader canon, and its significance in social and historical processes, going beyond the mere fact of its existence as a sort of exotic curiosity, a subsidiary entry in a universal encyclopaedia under the heading of, say, “Travel-Accounts (Other)”.

Our concern here is with a specific historical period, namely that extending from the fifteenth to the eighteenth centuries, and with a geographical area, that which we shall term as inhabited by “Indo-Persian culture”. Like all cultural zones, this one too is nebulous, far clearer at

⁵ See, by way of a random example, Robert D. Kaplan, *The ends of the earth: from Togo to Turkmenistan, from Iran to Cambodia – a journey to the frontiers of anarchy* (New York, 1996), described by the *New York Times Book Review* on the blurb as “travel writing from hell”.

⁶ Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Tristes tropiques* (Paris, 1955); the standard English translation also appears as *Tristes Tropiques*, tr. John and Doreen Weightman (Harmondsworth, 1976). However, see also, for a general consideration, Clifford Geertz, *Works and lives: the anthropologist as author* (Stanford, 1988).

⁷ Blaise Cendrars, *Bourlinguer* (Paris, 1974); the text was completed in 1947. Naipaul’s acerbic travelogues include *An area of darkness* (London, 1964) and *Among the believers: an Islamic journey* (London, 1981).

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its centre than at its edges. It includes the Indo-Gangetic region of what was termed “Hindustan” in the centuries after the formation of the Sultanate of Delhi in the early thirteenth century, drifts northward in part in the direction of Central Asia, and we shall even find ourselves from time to time in the core of Iran, or as far west as the Ottoman heartland and the Arabian peninsula.⁸ Our central argument concerns the relationship between the definition of this cultural region, and the genre of travel-writing, which we shall submit were intimately related. How, and through what mechanisms, we cannot specify in this introductory chapter, for such an exercise demands rather more patience on the reader’s part. It requires the reader, in sum, to accompany us on several voyages, with a series of travellers from the middle years of the fifteenth century through to the end of the eighteenth century, and to such fabulous, far-away places as Burhanpur, Khwarizm and Mashhad.

The figure of the Oriental traveller conjures up in the modern imagination the world of Sindbad the Sailor from the *Arabian Nights*, a reference that is probably, on balance, more important to a modern Western or westernised audience than to the authors of our period, or indeed to their readers. Immortalised in turn for the English-language reader by that other inveterate traveller and sometime translator, “the careless but fascinating” Sir Richard Burton, the voyages of Sindbad were compared by Burton to Daniel Defoe’s Captain Singleton, but he did equally note that the compiler of the travels had drawn on a number of earlier empirical travel or geographical accounts, including al-Idrisi, Ibn al-Wardī, and also Qazwini’s *‘Ajā’ib al-Makhlūqāt*.⁹ Recent analysts have analysed the role, in much medieval travel literature the world over, of the equivalent of *‘ajā’ib*, which Roy Mottahedeh translates as “marvels, wonders and astonishing things”, and which he also compares to the Latin *mirabilia*.¹⁰ Despite this, however, the name of Sindbad, and his numerous and usually disastrous voyages, are often thought to represent the perverse triumph of “travel fiction” over “travel fact”, and he may thus be opposed easily enough to the quintessential Western traveller, with his empirically

⁸ A recent collection that attempts to explore various aspects of the history of this zone is Muzaffar Alam, Françoise N. Delvoye and Marc Gaborieau, eds., *The making of Indo-Persian culture: Indian and French studies* (New Delhi, 2000).

⁹ Roy P. Mottahedeh, “‘Ajā’ib in The Thousand and One Nights”, in Richard G. Hovannisian, Georges Sabagh and Fedwa Malti-Douglas, eds., *The Thousand and One Nights in Arabic literature and society* (Cambridge, 1996), pp. 29–39. The characterisation of Burton is borrowed from Mottahedeh.

¹⁰ Mottahedeh also notes that *‘ajā’ib* is often found together with *gharīb* (“strange”) and its equivalents, which then yokes it definitively to travel.

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grounded character.¹¹ For the figure of the Western traveller is nowhere better represented than by the thirteenth-century Venetian, Marco Polo (1254–1324), who in himself constitutes something of an industry, ever since his *Description of the World*, written by an amanuensis Rustichello of Pisa, saw light, at the end of the thirteenth century.¹² Even in the late twentieth century, every few years seemed to produce yet another monograph on this visitor to the court of Qubilai Khan in China, and even those writings that are ostensibly aimed at debunking his travels (transforming him, as it were, into a version of the mendacious Sir John Mandeville) eventually wind up confirming by devious means the centrality of this figure.¹³ The closest “Oriental” counterpart that has been found to Polo is in fact a personage from the far west of the Islamic world, namely the fourteenth-century *‘ālim* and traveller from the Maghreb, Ibn Battuta (1304–77), whose travels between the 1320s and the 1340s quite closely parallel those of the illustrious Venetian.¹⁴ Both begin in the western Mediterranean, both contain important sections on India (though Ibn Battuta’s is far more significant in its details of the interior of Hindustan under the Sultans), and both eventually attain the Far East, where Polo’s text is eventually far more plentiful in its details than that of Ibn Battuta, whose stay was considerably shorter and largely limited to the coastal regions.

It seems perfectly just, then, to see Marco Polo’s account as a sort of template, onto which later travellers to Asia are fitted, and which becomes a standard against which even earlier accounts (like those of William of Rubruck, or John of Plano Carpini) are retrospectively measured.¹⁵ In this

¹¹ Thus, see the very ambiguous evocation of the story of Sindbad and the roc at the very outset of Stephen Greenblatt, *Marvelous possessions: the wonder of the New World* (Chicago, 1991).

¹² See for example, H. Watanabe, *Marco Polo bibliography, 1477–1983* (Tokyo, 1986), to which must be added the numerous items from the latter half of the 1980s and the 1990s. The standard translation is Ronald Latham, *Marco Polo: the travels* (Harmondsworth, 1958). The most recent major contribution to Polo-graphy is John Larner, *Marco Polo and the discovery of the world* (London, 1999).

¹³ See the recent controversy around Frances Wood, *Did Marco Polo go to China?* (London, 1995). The recent book by David Selbourne, *The city of light* (London, 1997), purporting to recount a translated version of the travels of one Jacob d’Ancona from 1270 to 1273 (without providing readers either with a text, or with indications of the manuscript’s provenance), seems no more than an attempt to invent a suitable “Jewish Marco Polo”.

¹⁴ R. E. Dunn, *The adventures of Ibn Battuta, a Muslim Traveler of the fourteenth century* (Berkeley, 1986); Ibn Battuta, *Voyages d’Ibn Battūta*, tr. C. Defremery and B. R. Sanguinetti, revised by Stéphane Yerasimos, 3 vols. (Paris, 1997).

¹⁵ See Christopher Dawson, *Mission to Asia* (Toronto, 1980), originally published in 1955 as *The Mongol mission*. Thus, we read (p. xxiii) that William of Rubruck’s narrative is “even more direct and convincing than that of Marco Polo in his own time”.

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view of matters, it is easy enough to treat Ibn Battuta as the Arab version of Marco Polo, and this very fate has equally been reserved for the celebrated seventeenth-century traveller Evliya Çelebi (lately termed “The Turkish Marco Polo”), on whom more below. Having thus “explained” these other travellers, as more or less successful adherents to a school of travel-writing to which they did not, for the most part, really subscribe, we can then do away with the necessity of analysing them in any detail, beyond pillaging them, that is, for one or the other fact. Thus, the relative silence in terms of monographs on Ibn Battuta’s *Rihla*, compared to the profusion on Marco Polo, tells its own tale, both about academic prejudices, and about modern-day readers’ tastes.¹⁶

The travel-accounts we are concerned with also come from a neglected tradition. Some have been edited, a few translated, and selections from some others are available to the specialist reader. Yet they have attracted all too little attention as a corpus, and this is also the case with what one might have expected to be a far better-known corpus, namely the body of Ottoman travel-writings. For the Ottomans possess a number of advantages in comparison with the Indo-Persian world, notably that both proximity and history render the Ottomans almost “European” in the eyes of the early modern historiography. However, a look at the case of the most celebrated of the Ottoman travellers, Evliya Çelebi, is somewhat chastening. Born in Istanbul in 1611, we are aware that Evliya was a well-educated man, who was not merely well versed in Qur’anic studies (which he mastered with a certain Mehmed Efendi), but that he had also studied calligraphy, poetry, Arabic grammar, and even music under the patronage of the palace, where he was trained to be a functionary. From the age of about twenty-nine years, his voyages begin, with a first visit in 1640–1 to the eastern littoral of the Black Sea. Subsequent years see him in the

¹⁶ Ibn Battuta’s account should ideally be read in the context of a far larger corpus of Arabic travel-accounts, which includes Ibn Fadlan, *Voyage chez les Bulgares de la Volga (il y a mille ans)*, tr. Marius Canard (Paris, 1988), and which is discussed for the classical period in Houari Touati, *Islam et voyage au Moyen Age: histoire et anthropologie d’une pratique lettrée* (Paris, 2000). The corpus continues with the embassy-account to Istanbul of Abu’l Hasan ‘Ali al-Tamgruti (1589–90) and the Hajj account of Abu Salim ‘Abdullah al-‘Ayyashi from the seventeenth century. For the former, see Henri de Castries, *Relation d’une ambassade marocaine en Turquie, 1589–1591* (Paris, 1929), and for the latter, Abderrahmane El-Moudden, “The ambivalence of *rihla*: community integration and self-definition in Moroccan travel-accounts, 1300–1800”, in Dale F. Eickelman and James Piscatori, eds., *Muslim travellers: pilgrimage, migration, and the religious imagination* (Berkeley, 1990), pp. 76–9. Also see the valuable recent collection by Nabil Matar, *In the land of the Christians: Arabic travel-writing in the seventeenth century* (New York and London, 2003), which includes the accounts of Ahmad bin Qasim (1611–13), Ilyas Hanna al-Mawsuli (1668–83) and Muhammad bin ‘Abd al-Wahhab al-Ghassani (1690–1).

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Caucasus, Crete, as well as Damascus, Palestine and Syria; then, from the 1650s, the elevation of his patron Melek Ahmed Pasha to the post of Grand Vizier enabled him to prosecute a series of further voyages to the Lake Van region, Bosnia, Albania and Kosovo. The last phase of his travels then takes him to Mecca, which he visited in 1671 as a pilgrim, and the Greek islands, as well as Sudan and Ethiopia, that he was able to visit while resident in Egypt in the closing years of his life. Evliya died, it would seem, in late 1684 or early 1685, leaving his master-work, *Seyahatnâme*, incomplete on his death. Yet, even the unfinished monument is daunting enough. We have before us ten volumes of travels, interspersed with other reflections, to be sure, but taking us from the city of Istanbul and its environs (described in the first volume) to Egypt and regions to its south in Africa, that occupy the tenth tome.

Yet the attention devoted to this monument has been somewhat modest, when all is said and done. In the 1830s, Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall published the first excerpts in translation, while a partial edition of the first volume appeared some years thereafter. Since that date, besides a serviceable if philologically unsatisfactory edition of the ten volumes of the text (published in Istanbul, by various hands, between 1896–7 and 1938), a number of partial translations and studies have appeared, notably a very valuable glossary of the *Seyahatnâme* by Robert Dankoff, and a translation, with a commentary and introduction, of the sections concerning Diyarbekir, by Martin van Bruinessen and Hendrik Boeschoten.¹⁷ Yet, as a recent historian remarks, “Evliya Çelebi is known to historians as an observer of public buildings, such as mosques, *medreses* and city walls, as a valuable source on languages and dialects and, much too rarely, as an artist of narration.”¹⁸ Again, Cemal Kafadar has noted how Evliya’s “gargantuan work seems to have gone largely unnoticed in Ottoman belles-lettres” until the late nineteenth century, despite its indubitable status as “the most monumental example of the first person narrative”, perhaps in the seventeenth-century world as a whole.¹⁹ How can this relative neglect be explained?

¹⁷ Robert Dankoff, *An Evliya Çelebi glossary: unusual, dialectal and foreign words in the Seyahatnâme* (Cambridge, Mass., 1991); Martin van Bruinessen and Hendrik Boeschoten, *Evliya Çelebi in Diyarbekir: the relevant section of the Seyahatname edited with translation, commentary and introduction* (Leiden, 1988).

¹⁸ Suraiya Faruqi, “Red Sea trade and communications as observed by Evliya Çelebi (1671–72)”, in Faruqi, *Making a living in the Ottoman lands, 1480 to 1820* (Istanbul, 1995), p. 231.

¹⁹ Cemal Kafadar, “Self and others: the diary of a dervish in seventeenth-century Istanbul and first-person narratives in Ottoman literature”, *Studia Islamica*, 69, 1989, p. 126.

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Several elements of a response suggest themselves. To begin with, the very size of the text itself is somewhat discouraging, as it does not lend itself to the retrospective imposition of the sort of accessible plot that is available for Marco Polo, or even Hernán Cortés. If well-defined plot there is, it must resemble Proust or Musil in its complexity, rather than the watered-down versions of the *Odyssey* to which readers of the travel-account were doubtless accustomed by the nineteenth century.²⁰ Second, we must take into account the conviction that existed by the eighteenth century in Europe that such late examples of non-European literature offered little by way either of edification or of instruction to the reader, who was better off with the ancient texts of the East, rather than reading writers who were often disconcertingly lacking in the properly exotic, such as it was construed in that epoch. Such specimens of the Indo-Persian travel-account that found rapid approval, and hence were quickly translated, were thus precisely those that compared the Indo-Persian world with Europe, and found the former wanting in crucial respects. Thus, the vogue for the accounts of European travellers to these exotic parts corresponded, quite logically, with a relative neglect of the literature produced in those very parts, unless they came (as did texts in Sanskrit collected during the late eighteenth century) overlaid with a thick veneer of antiquity. A third reason why a text such as that of Evliya Çelebi might have found it difficult to attract a large readership in Europe was the vexed issue of its truth value, in view of the difficulties in regulating the passage between one truth-régime and another in the period. The supernatural intervenes numerous times in his text, which is also full of religious and Qur'anic references. If the text could not be read, as was the *Thousand and One Nights*, for its sheer entertainment, and if it did not meet the increasingly stringent conditions under which “real” scientific and ethnographic knowledge was meant to be produced under the supervision of the academies in Europe, it was difficult to comprehend what one might do with such a literary outpouring.

On the other hand, this view of neglect must undoubtedly be nuanced by taking into account the great celebrity of the personage of Evliya in the Turcophone lands, so widespread that he has been compared to the legendary Mulla (or Khwaja) Nasruddin. As a recent translator of some excerpts of his work into French remarks:

²⁰ Cf. Mary W. Helms, *Ulysses' sail: an ethnographic odyssey of power, knowledge, and geographical distance* (Princeton, 1988).

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Discovered in the beginning of the nineteenth century, the “Book of Voyages” continues to attract the attention of researchers, but also that of the man on the street. In Turkey, Evliya is in effect a personage as famous and sympathetic as Nasreddin Hodja, a legendary personage of the thirteenth century, known for his humour. “I have (or you have) become a voyager like Evliya” (*Seyyah oldum/oldun Evliyā gibi*) is an expression that is often utilised to designate someone who voyages a lot. No historian, no ethnographer, no folklorist who is writing an historical monograph on a town, a region, or a profession, can afford to ignore the work of Evliya Tchelebi.²¹

The lot of Evliya’s work can be usefully compared with three other texts that are from the same broad period. The first, the *Mirāt-ül-memālik* (“Mirror of Kingdoms”) of Seydi ‘Ali Re’is, has been the object of some erudite attention in Europe since the nineteenth-century translation by the Hungarian savant, Arminius Vambéry, and is also relatively well known in Turkey. It relates the travels of its author, an Ottoman admiral of the 1550s, to India and Central Asia, after a shipwreck while fighting against the Portuguese in the western Indian Ocean.²² Another text, that of Mehmed Achik bin Ömer, entitled *Menāzir-ül-‘avālim* (“Visions of the Universe”), recounting the author’s travels between 1575 and 1600, still awaits a complete edition and detailed study, and thus marks one end, as it were, of the spectrum between fame and obscurity. A third author enjoyed far greater, if posthumous, success, and this was not so much by penning travel-accounts as by putting together compendia. The author in question is Katib Çelebi (or Haji Khalifa) (1609–57), among whose works on Ottoman naval battles was one which included a substantial résumé of the work of Seydi ‘Ali Re’is, which was one of the earliest books that was actually printed in Turkish, by the press of Ibrahim Müteferrika in Istanbul in 1729. This work was translated into English in the 1830s, but another of his works, the encyclopaedic *Cihān-numā*, also printed by the same Istanbul press in 1732, was translated earlier still into European languages, something of an irony in view of its own heavy dependence on European sources.²³

²¹ Faruk Bilici, “Introduction”, in Evliyā Tchélebi, *La Guerre des Turcs: récits de batailles extraits du Livre de voyage*, tr. F. Bilici (Paris, 2000), p. 22.

²² See Arminius Vambéry, ed. and tr., *The travels and adventures of the Turkish admiral Sidi Ali Reis in India, Afghanistan, Central Asia and Persia* (London, 1899; reprint, Lahore, 1975). For a recent, and far more satisfactory, French translation, see Seyyidi [Seydi] ‘Ali Re’is, *Le miroir des pays: une anabase ottomane à travers l’Inde et l’Asie centrale*, tr. Jean-Louis Bacqué-Grammont (Paris, 1999); and for a modern Turkish text, Seydi ‘Ali Reis, *Mir’atü’l-Memālik*, ed. Mehmet Kiremit (Ankara, 1999).

²³ Katib Çelebi, *Gihan Numa, Geographia orientalis*, tr. M. Norberg, 2 vols. (Londini Gothorum, 1818).

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Other texts have had to await the twentieth century before attracting any attention beyond that of diligent archivists and cataloguers of manuscripts. Thus, we have the account of a certain Osman Agha ibn Ahmed Temeshvarli, who was imprisoned in Hungary and Austria for eleven years from 1688 to 1699, and who appears to have written his memoirs (which are thus above all an account of captivity, but sharing significant aspects with the travel-account) in the early 1720s.²⁴ First published in a German translation in the 1950s, the text has subsequently been edited, and other translations in European languages have also appeared. Better recognised, and belonging also to a particular sub-genre, are the accounts of Ottoman ambassadors to foreign courts, of which a number of well-known examples exist, in particular from the eighteenth century.²⁵ Evliya Çelebi's account of his visit to Vienna in 1665 is at times counted as one of the earliest amongst these; a significant example, which at times served as a model for other later writers, is the embassy-account of Yirmisekiz Çelebi Mehmed Efendi to the court of the young Louis XV in 1720–I.²⁶ In the same line of accounts, one may equally number the reports from Revolutionary and Napoleonic France of Morali Seyyid 'Ali Efendi and Seyyid 'Abdürrahim Muhibb Efendi, the first dating from the years 1797 to 1802, and the second from 1806 to 1811.²⁷

Taking one thing with another, then, we observe that the early modern travel-account was certainly known and practised in the Ottoman lands, even if the dimensions of the corpus are admittedly more limited than those of the corpuses in Spanish, Portuguese, French, Dutch or English, which were veritably exploding in the sixteenth and especially the seventeenth centuries. Further, unlike the latter cases, the history of these accounts is not intimately linked to that of the printing-press, since few of the Ottoman texts came to be printed until the nineteenth century. The question of the readership of these texts is hence bound up with the sphere of the circulation of manuscripts, something that brings them closer to the Indo-Persian texts that we shall be examining at length below, none of which was printed until the era of the early lithographs of the nineteenth

²⁴ Osman Agha de Temechvar, *Prisonnier des Infidèles: un soldat dans l'Empire des Habsbourg*, tr. Frédéric Hitzel (Paris, 1998).

²⁵ Some thirty such accounts are to be found listed in Faik Reşit Unat, *Osmanlı Seyirleri ve Sefaretnâmeleri* (Ankara, 1968); they concern embassies to Vienna, Berlin, St Petersburg, Paris, Madrid, Morocco, Iran, the Mughal court and Bukhara.

²⁶ For his account, see Julien-Claude Galland, *Le Paradis des infidèles: un ambassadeur ottoman en France sous la Régence*, ed. Gilles Veinstein (Paris, 1981).

²⁷ Morali Seyyid 'Ali Efendi and Seyyid 'Abdürrahim Muhibb Efendi, *Deux Ottomans à Paris sous le Directoire et l'Empire: relations d'ambassade*, tr. Stéphane Yerasimos (Paris, 1998).