JEWIS FROM **KONSTANTINIYYE TO ISLAMBOL**: ISTANBUL JEWRY IN THE 17TH CENTURY ACCORDING TO THE ACCOUNTS OF EVLIYA AND EREMYA ÇELEBI

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By

Okan Cakir, B.A.

The Ohio State University

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Master's Examination Committee:

Dr. Jane Hathaway, Adviser

Dr. Matt Goldish

Approved by

Adviser

Graduate Program in History
ABSTRACT

In this study, I analyze the Jewish community of Istanbul in the 17th Century as reflected in the works of two çelebis, or bureaucrats, namely, Evliya Çelebi and Eremya Çelebi. The former was an Ottoman statesman and a traveler in the Ottoman world who is very well-known among students of Ottoman history. The latter was a preeminent Armenian scholar within the Armenian community of Istanbul who wrote a number of important works in the 17th century, although he is not very well-known by Ottomanists except for some of his works; this is in part because a number of his works are still waiting to be translated into Western languages.

I will concentrate on Istanbul Jewry instead of all Jewish communities under the Ottomans, although I will provide the reader with information on other minorities and on other Jewish communities of the empire when necessary. In addition, to some extent, I will include other opinions on Istanbul Jewry: opinions of Jews themselves as reflected in responsa literature and of European travelers and visitors to the Ottoman Empire during this period.

In this study, I reconsider the so-called millet system and question the insistence on the term “millet system” by some scholars, even those who acknowledge the incorrect
application of this term to the pre-nineteenth-century Ottoman Empire. Then, I suggest a clarification of this issue with reference to works by experts on Ottoman minorities.

In addition, I argue that the Seyahatname is a mirror of rising religious conservatism and restoration attempts within the empire, and therefore its timing and contents are also significant as can be seen from the evidences suggested in this work. Furthermore, I also seek answers for the omission of the Sabbatai Sevi episode in the Seyahatname and other Ottoman sources.

I also suggest that Eremya Çelebi’s works help us to have a better understanding of the Islamization process in Istanbul -especially in the 1660s- and the social and economic rivalry between the Jews and the Greeks around this time. Eremya’s works also give us invaluable ideas concerning the Sabbatai Sevi episode and how one minority was seen from another minority’s perspective.
Dedicated to the lovers of knowledge.
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VITA

January 1, 1981.......................Born - Denizli, Turkey

2002.................................B.A. History, Middle East Technical University, Ankara, Turkey

2002- present.......................Graduate Teaching Associate,

The Ohio State University

FIELDS OF STUDY

Major Field: History

Islamic /Ottoman

Minor Field: Jewish History

Minor Field: Comparative Studies
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

As one of the vital components of the Ottoman society, the minorities of the Ottoman Empire have been studied by a number of scholars. However, although there has been a great deal of research on minorities during the Ottoman "classical age" in the 15th and 16th centuries, and in the period after the Tanzimat reforms of the 19th century, there is a gap concerning the status of minorities in the Ottoman world in the 17th and 18th centuries.

In this study, I would like to contribute to filling in the missing parts of the mosaic composed of 72 millets, that is, 72 communities, as the popular saying about diversity in the Ottoman Empire goes. Since it is not an easy task to study all of the minorities under the Ottoman Empire and since I am most familiar with the Jewish side of the broad picture, I intend to analyze the Jewish community of Istanbul in the 17th century as reflected in the works of two çelebis, or bureaucrats, namely, Evliya Çelebi and Eremya Çelebi. The former was an Ottoman statesman and a traveler in the Ottoman world who is very well-known among students of Ottoman history. The latter was a preeminent Armenian scholar within the Armenian

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1 Çelebi was a title applied to men of the upper classes in the Ottoman Empire between the 13th and the beginning of the 18th century, as a title primarily given to poets and men of letters, but also to princes, as in the case of the sons of Beyazid I (d.1403). For more information, see EI, 2nd ed., s.v. "Çelebi," by W. Barthold-B. Spuler.
community of Istanbul who wrote a number of important works in the 17th century, although he is not very well-known by Ottomanists except for some of his works; this is in part because a number of his works are still waiting to be translated into Western languages.

In this study, I will concentrate on Istanbul Jewry instead of all Jewish communities under the Ottomans, although I will provide the reader with information on other minorities and on other Jewish communities of the empire when necessary. In addition, to some extent, I will include other opinions on Istanbul Jewry: opinions of Jews themselves and of European travelers and visitors to the Ottoman Empire during this period.

In covering Jewish life in the first half of the 17th century, I will make heavy use of the first volume of Evliya's ten-volume *magnum opus*, the *Seyahatname*. As for the second half of the century, I will benefit from some of Eremya Çelebi's works, particularly his poem *The Jewish Bride*, a love story of a Jewish lady and an Albanian Orthodox Christian in the 1660s; his *Istanbul Tarihi*; and finally, another poem by Eremya on Sabbatai Sevi and his conversion to Islam in 1666.

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In providing background information on the Ottomans and minorities under the Ottoman Empire, I will reconsider the so-called *millet* system and question the insistence on the term "*millet* system" by some scholars, even those who acknowledge the incorrect application of this term to the pre-nineteenth-century Ottoman Empire. Then, I will suggest a clarification of this issue with reference to works by experts on Ottoman minorities.

In addition, I will argue that the *Seyahatname* is a mirror of rising religious conservatism and restoration attempts within the empire, and therefore its timing and contents are also significant. In my chapter about Evliya, I will present evidence for this argument.

In considering the *Seyahatname* and Jews in the 17th century, we inevitably confront the Sabbatian movement and its influences on Judaism. Unfortunately, I will be able to look at this very important event in Jewish history only through Eremya Çelebi's works, since Evliya Çelebi does not mention this episode at all in his ten-volume *Seyahatname*! Oddly enough, other Ottoman sources are also silent on the Sabbatian movement, apart from mentioning the apostasy of the Jewish messiah in converting to Islam. However, the mysterious silence of the Ottoman sources on Sabbatianism still intrigues scholars studying this movement. After analyzing the *Seyahatname*, I will also suggest some possible reasons for the absence of the Sabbatai Sevi episode in Ottoman sources.

Considering my findings from the *Seyahatname*, I will also argue that as a reaction against the mistreatment of Muslims by the Ottomans' Christian enemies, especially the Habsburgs and Venetians, and also due partially to the so-called
Ottoman-Jewish alliance, Jews and Christians were regarded separately and even called by different names by Ottoman statesmen and by the Muslim population.

In my chapter on Eremya's works, I will also suggest that Eremya Çelebi's writings help us to have a better understanding of the Islamization process in Istanbul -especially in the 1660s- and the social and economic rivalry between the Jews and the Greeks around this time. Eremya's works also give us invaluable ideas concerning the Sabbatai Sevi episode and how one minority was seen from another minority's perspective.

Now, in my introductory chapter, I would like to provide the reader with the necessary background information on the 17th-century Ottoman world and its minorities, emphasizing the Jews.

1.1. Status of Minorities under the Ottoman Empire

1.1.1. Status of Minorities Under Islamic Rule

Since the Ottoman Empire, as an Islamic state, depended on earlier Islamic regimes' administration of minorities as the basis for its own administration of these populations, initially, I would like to give some brief background information on the status of minorities under Islam.

According to Islamic law (shari'ah), non-Muslim subjects³ (dhimmis) were to be protected by a covenant of protection (dhimma). Since pre-Islamic monotheists who possessed scriptures revealed by God (ahl al-kitab, or "People of the Book") were recognized by the Qur'an, Christians and Jews above all were given the legal

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³ If non-Muslims resident in Muslim domains were not subjects of the Islamic state, they were called musta'mins and subject to different regulations; they were also protected by a covenant (aman) that was only temporary, whereas the pact of dhimma was permanent.
right to live, practice their religions and have a certain amount of autonomy under Islamic rule throughout most of Islamic history. Yet, in return for this protection, they were required to pay a poll tax (jizya) and were subject to various social restrictions as formulated in a purported pact between the non-Muslims and the second Muslim caliph, 'Umar ibn al-Khattab (r. 634-44), known as the Pact of 'Umar. For instance, non-Muslims could not ride horses, build new places of worship, or repair the old ones. They also had to be distinguishable from Muslims in terms of their clothing style and other characteristics. Yet, different Islamic states implemented the regulations regarding non-Muslim subjects with different degrees of rigor. In general, the Ottomans are known for their laxity in applying the Pact of 'Umar regulations.

1.1.2. The Ottoman Administration of Minorities before the Tanzimat

Community life of the non-Muslim religious minorities in the Ottoman Empire was governed by what had become known as the millet system. Under this order, minorities enjoyed a wide latitude of religious and cultural freedom, as well as considerable administrative, fiscal and legal autonomy under their own ecclesiastical and lay leaders.5

In the lines above, Avigdor Levy, an expert on the Jews of the Ottoman Empire, gives the conventional understanding of the Ottoman administration of non-Muslim communities in his edited book The Jews of the Ottoman Empire. He mentions that what we understand from millet is both a religion and a religious community until the 19th century, when the word begins to acquire the meaning of

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4 The existence of such a pact is debatable, and as for the restrictions upon the non-Muslims, some scholars claim that they were put into practice only from the 8th century onwards. See El, 2nd ed., “Dhimmi,” by Claude Cahen.
nation and nationality. Levy claims that the Ottomans inherited this tradition from earlier Middle Eastern empires and that actually this "policy of laissez-faire" was the only reasonable way for such a huge empire to deal with different ethnic and religious groups under its rule.

However, this conventional view of the millet system has been challenged by scholars such as Benjamin Braude and Amnon Cohen in Braude's and Bernard Lewis' edited volume *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire: The Functioning of a Plural Society*. This book was a product of the conference "The Millet System: History and Legacy," held in Princeton in 1978. Although the volume includes contributions by scholars, such as Kemal Karpat, who continue to refer to the old "millet system" concept—in Karpat's case by giving examples from the Balkans—Braude and Cohen insist that this concept has been superseded. Indeed, Braude asserts that the Ottomans used the term millet to refer to the Muslim community (umma) but rarely used it for non-Muslims. He suggests that they also used it when referring to illustrious foreign Christians, as when writing to Christian kings in Europe, or when they referred to a significant non-Muslim figure such as the Portuguese Jewish international merchant Joseph Nasi. Since most Western scholars dealt with these kinds of diplomatic documents, Braude argues, they perceived of the "millet system" as an Ottoman institution. Braude claims that in internal relations the Ottomans generally referred to Christians according to their ethnic origins—thus Rumi (Greek), Ermeni (Armenian), or Latin (Roman Catholic)—and referred to Jews as Yahudi or, rarely, Musevi. They commonly used the term taife (group, people, class, body of men, tribe) or cemaat (congregation, religious community) when they wanted
to refer to a group of non-Muslims. Only after the reform movements in the Ottoman Empire at the beginning of the 19th century did the Ottomans begin to use the term *millet* in the "conventional" sense described above.\(^6\)

Nonetheless, it is interesting to note that in *The Jews of the Ottoman Empire*, Levy starts with the explanation of the *millet system*. He mentions Braude’s article\(^7\) and says that thanks to Braude's contribution, we understand that the earlier assumption of centralized control of the religious communities through the chief religious leaders was incorrect and thus, the old "portrayal of the *millet* system" (which, however, he still calls "*millet system")) was incorrect. Thus, Levy retains the term "*millet system." Although he concedes that it was not a highly centralized system, he does not mention Braude's objections to the very term *millet*, but continues to insist that the term *millet* denoted both a religion and a religious community as a general term.\(^8\) In another part of his work, he mentions that the Jews were called *Yahudiler* or *Yahudi taifes*,\(^9\) however, therefore confusing his reader on the use and meaning of *millet*, *taife* and other terms.

Oddly enough, another outstanding scholar in the field, Stanford Shaw, has a similarly ambivalent attitude toward the assertions of Braude. When reviewing Braude’s and Lewis’ volume, he notes:

He [Braude] correctly points out that the internal structures of the different communities were not as similar as has been supposed and that the term *millet* was not in fact used for non-Muslim as well as Muslim

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\(^7\) Levy, ed., *The Jews of the Ottoman Empire*, 43.

\(^8\) *Ibid.*, 42.

communities until relatively late. One wonders, however, how enlightened the modern reader would be if authors applied to each group the different terms used locally during the periods under discussion.\textsuperscript{10}

Here, he seems to accept and even appreciate the work of Braude, although he perhaps means to suggest that the term \textit{millet} should be retained so as not to cause any confusion for the modern reader; notwithstanding, he disregards the importance of the issue overall. Nevertheless in his book \textit{The Jews of the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic}, published in 1991, he continues to refer to “the millet system” in the conventional sense, conceding only that non-Muslims were called \textit{taife, cemaat,} or most commonly in “later times,” \textit{millet.}\textsuperscript{11} He does not explain the significance of the change in usage or exactly what he means by “later times,” nor does he refer to Braude’s article and his findings on the changing attitude toward minorities that produced the 19\textsuperscript{th}-century \textit{milles}. Instead, he moves on to a discussion of the relations between the \textit{millet} leaders and the sultan. Thus, although Shaw apparently accepts the new concept, he refrains from acknowledging the contribution of Braude’s research.

To sum up, although Braude’s revisionist argument is based on meticulous research and has resulted in a tendency to change the old-school idea of the \textit{millet} system, we have to assume that his article has not had a decisive impact on all scholars of Ottoman Jewry. More interestingly, even if these scholars seem to accept Braude’s arguments, they do not incorporate his revisionist conception of the \textit{millet}


\textsuperscript{11} Shaw, \textit{The Jews of the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic} (New York : New York University Press, 1991), 43.
system into their publications but simply retain the outmoded paradigm of the millet system without offering an alternative.

1.1.3. Jews in the Ottoman Empire during the “Classical” Era (15th-16th Centuries) and the 17th Century\(^{12}\)

Norman Stillman claims that especially during the early periods of the Ottoman Empire, the Ottomans had no conscious general policy toward Jews or non-Muslims. Whatever policies there were, were basically ad hoc and rather liberal. With the exception of enforcing the jizya, there was little that was traditionally Islamic in the early Ottoman treatment of dhimmis.\(^{13}\)

Stillman is in agreement with Gibb’s and Bowen’s claims that the Turkish attitude toward non-Muslims at this time did not accord with the “usual,” much harsher Muslim treatment according to the shari’a.\(^{14}\)

Avigdor Levy asserts that since the Ottomans wanted to preserve law and order and since they needed the Jews in their administration and in their economy, they hired them in important governmental posts during the so-called “classical” age culminating in the reign of Süleyman I (1520-66). The Ottomans tried to protect the

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\(^{12}\) I am aware of Yaron Ben-Na’eh’s works related to my study, but since they are all in Hebrew and the English abstracts do not provide any revelatory information, I was not able to use them in my research. In addition, since these are unpublished studies, there are no reviews yet available. Yaron Ben-Na’eh, “Kehilot Yehudei Istanbul ba-shanim 1650-1750: Mivneh, Irgun u Mosadot ‘al pi Sfurat ha-She’elot ve ha-Teshuvot” (“The Jewish Community of Istanbul in the Years 1650-1750: Structure, Organization and Foundations According to Responsa Literature”), unpublished M.A. thesis, Hebrew University, Jerusalem, 1992; idem, “Ha-Hevrat ha-Yehudit be-‘Are ha-Imperiya ha-‘Oftmanit ba-Me’ah ha-17: (Istanbul, Saloniki ve Izmir)” (“Jewish Society in the Cities of the Ottoman Empire During the Seventeenth Century: Istanbul, Salonica and Izmir”), unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Hebrew University, Jerusalem, 1999.


\(^{14}\) Ibid.
Jews as much as possible to keep trade flowing. As an example of the Ottoman state's protection of its Jewish subjects, Yavuz Erçan mentions Ottoman punishment of Christian accusations of blood libel against the Jews: that is, claims that Jews kidnapped Christian children and used their blood in Passover rituals. For example, in 1633, the state punished a group of Christians who had made such accusations after the innocence of the Jews was proven.

However, Levy claims that the waning of the empire's geopolitical power threw the status of the Jews into question. As noted above, with the rising crisis and conservative movements, the sumptuary laws were implemented and the treatment of minorities became worse in 17th century.

Allegedly, Murad III (r. 1575-94) even ordered the massacre of the Jews of Istanbul, but thanks to the intervention of his mother and the grand vizier, he gave up the idea. According to Stillman, his aim was just to raise money through the threat. He also banned the construction and repair of synagogues.

The Jews' loss of prominence in the eyes of the Ottoman authorities, especially in the 17th century, was due to a number of reasons, according to Baer. Among these reasons were the loss of their contacts with Europe and European universities, the cessation of immigration from the Iberian peninsula, and their lack

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of contacts with the new trade centers in Central and Eastern Europe. Furthermore, the activity of Jewish traders, the number of Jewish tax-farmers, and the importance of Jewish physicians also declined throughout the 17th century.\textsuperscript{20}

The 1660s witnessed the Sabbatai Sevi movement, which caused great trouble for almost all Jewish communities within the empire and Europe. Sevi, the son of a Jewish merchant from Izmir, was a messianic claimant who proclaimed his messiahhood in 1665 after a failed first attempt in 1648. Since the Jews were in constant anticipation of the advent of the messiah, many in the Ottoman Empire and different parts of Europe believed his claim and, abandoning their daily pursuits, prepared to join their messiah. Even in Amsterdam, for instance, a number of Jews sold their property and started to wait for the ships that would take them to Jerusalem for their redemption.\textsuperscript{21} Although he claimed that he would take the sultanate from Mehmed IV, Sevi was arrested by the Ottoman authorities on his way to Istanbul in February of 1666 and afterwards chose to convert to Islam during his interrogation before the divan in September. The emergence and development of the Sabbatian movement have been discussed by a number of scholars, especially by the leading scholar of the subject, Gershom Scholem, in his monumental work.\textsuperscript{22}

In terms of the settlement of Jews in the Ottoman Empire, firstly, it should be noted that starting with the very early ages of the Ottoman Empire, Jews settled in the

\textsuperscript{20} Ibid., 207,208 passim.
\textsuperscript{22} See Ibid. For a recent reappraisal of the movement, see Matt Goldish, \textit{The Sabbatean Prophets} (Cambridge, Mass. : Harvard University Press, 2004).
Ottoman lands and even as early as the 1360s saw the empire's lands as a place of refuge for themselves.\textsuperscript{23} Upon their expulsion from the European kingdoms, considering Jews as trustworthy subjects, Mehmed II resettled the Jews in the Ottoman lands and later, through the Ottoman sūrgān (deportation) system in his newly conquered capital after 1453.\textsuperscript{24} Succeeding Ottoman sultans continued to show an interest in Jews, and after the expulsion of Jews and Muslims from Spain in 1492 as a result of the reconquista (reconquest), a number of Sephardic Jews (or Sephardim in Hebrew—that is, Jews from Sepharad, or Spain) settled in the Ottoman lands together with the Moriscos (Muslims expelled from Spain). The Ottomans regarded Jews as a necessary urban element with the necessary skills in different crafts and more reliable than Christians or Slavs.\textsuperscript{25} As a result of these mass immigrations, the Ottoman Empire during the so-called Classical Age (15th-16th centuries) had the world's largest Jewish population, according to the common belief.\textsuperscript{26}

Until the 17\textsuperscript{th} century, in Anatolia and Rumelia (the empire's eastern European provinces), there were mainly three important centers of Jewish population: Salonica, in what is now northeastern Greece, which had the highest Jewish population of any Ottoman city; Istanbul; and Bursa in western Anatolia. The 17\textsuperscript{th} century also saw the rise of a substantial Jewish population in Izmir with the flourishing of the city from trade. In the course of time, the Sephardim outnumbered

\textsuperscript{23} Halil Inalcık mentions that ever since 1360, the year of the expulsion of the Jews from Hungary, the Jews started to see the Ottoman Empire as a secure place of refuge. See Inalcık, "Foundations of Ottoman-Jewish Cooperation," in Levy, ed., Jews, Turks, Ottomans, 4.
\textsuperscript{24} Ibid., 4-6 passim.
\textsuperscript{25} Levy, ed., The Jews of the Ottoman Empire, 21.
\textsuperscript{26} Ibid., xiii.
the indigenous Jewish populations—Greek-speaking Romaniots in Anatolia and the Balkans, Arabic-speaking Musta’rabs in the Arab lands—and became the dominant group.  

So far as leadership of the Ottoman Jewish population is concerned, there was no hahambası (chief rabbi) with empire-wide authority until the Tanzimat reforms, which began in 1839. Thus, there was no centralized control over the Jewish communities. The congregations in general controlled themselves. They were loosely constructed, mainly due to the reluctance of various groups aiming to preserve their autonomies, and the lay leaders held important roles, as well. With the coming of the 17th century, because of pressure from the state, such as the increasing demand for taxes, and from society, such unity became more and more necessary. Izmir was the first congregation to develop centralized structures and other congregations throughout the empire followed suit. However, it should be kept in mind that according to some scholars, such as Gershom Scholem, the Sabbatai Sevi movement shook the rabbinic authority and paved the way for further internal problems that threatened the unity of the Jewish congregations.

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27 Ibid., 63.
25 A visitor to Istanbul in the early 1670s, Antoine Galland, also mentions that the Jews had to pay very high taxes during this period. He even tells a story according to which the sultan imposed an additional arbitrary tax called çadır akçesi (“tent tax”) after the humiliation of a Muslim by a Jew during a religious debate, although this story seems totally fictitious. Galland (1646-1715) was a famous French Orientalist (the translator of The Thousand and One Nights) who was attached to the French embassy in Istanbul between 1670 and 1673. Antoine Galland, Istanbul'a Ait Günlük Hâtvalar (1672-1673) (Memoirs of Istanbul), commentary by Charles Schiefer, trans. Nahid Sirri Örik (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basimevi, 1987), vol.II, 49.
26 Ibid., 65-67 passim.
30 Scholem, Sabbatai Sevi, 10, 102.
1.2. The Ottoman Empire in the 17th Century: "Crisis and Change"

The 17th century was a century of crisis for the Ottoman Empire. Some old-school scholars claim that the empire was declining towards the end of the 16th century, starting with the post-Kanuni Sultan Suleyman period\textsuperscript{31}. However, this thesis has been superseded by revisionist Ottomanists. These scholars claim that there was not a decline, but a "crisis and change" during this period. They assert that especially in the 17th century, the Ottoman Empire underwent a crisis that was part of the general crisis of the 17th century in a number of European and Asian states.\textsuperscript{32}

According to these historians, there were a number of reasons for the crisis, including the inflation caused by the influx of silver from the Americas at the end of the 16th century, the Long Wars with the Habsburgs, a significant increase in population, and problems in the military and timar systems.

With regard to the military, the number of the Janissaries increased day by day, and they started to interfere in politics, causing the assassination of Osman II in 1622 and Ibrahim I in 1648, but not performing their military duties. Some of them continued to appear on the pay rolls, even though they had abandoned military service entirely and dealt only with trade. Long-lasting wars, especially the siege of Candia

\textsuperscript{31} For instance, see Bernard Lewis, "Ottoman Observers of Ottoman Decline," in Lewis, \textit{Islam in History} (New York: Literary Press, 1973), 199-213 \textit{passim}.

on Crete (1645-1669), almost drained the Ottoman treasury. The Venetians blockaded the Dardanelles in 1656, causing hyper-inflation in the capital. Palace intrigues were at their peak, especially those involving the sultan’s mother (valide sultan), and the Ottomans took refuge in the grand viziers of the Köprülü family, starting with Köprülü Mehmed Pasha(d.1661).^{33}

1.3. The 17th Century Crisis and Its Influence on Minorities

According to Avigdor Levy, the Ottomans treated their non-Muslim subjects well for three reasons: Firstly, the Ottomans followed the Hanafi legal rite of Sunni Islam, the most tolerant Muslim school of law in its treatment of non-Muslims. For instance, in criminal matters involving murder and bodily injury, “the Hanafis, in contrast to other rites, tended to indemnify non-Muslims on the same basis as Muslims.”^{34} Secondly, the Ottomans had a large proportion of non-Muslim subjects before their conquest of the Arab lands in the early 16th century, but afterward, with a much larger Muslim population, conservatism increased. Finally, Ottoman law was pragmatic and allowed sultanic regulations called kanuns, again thanks to the Hanafi school’s characteristics.^{35}

However, with the rise of conservatism and the aforementioned crisis towards the end of the 16th century, Ottoman treatment of minorities started to become harsher and the sumptuary laws included in the Pact of 'Umar were reimposed.^{36} In

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^{34} Levy, ed., The Jews of the Ottoman Empire, 16.

^{35} Ibid., 17.

^{36} Stillman, The Jews of Arab Lands, 92.
addition, the state started to request more taxes from the minorities. In the maltreatment of the minorities, a conservative Islamic movement known as the Kadızade movement was also very influential.

1.4. The Kadızade Movement and Its Effects on Minorities

The Kadızade movement was a conservative Islamic movement in the Ottoman Empire that started towards the end of the 16th century. Followers of the movement, most of whom were preachers from provincial regions, emphasized elimination of innovations (s. bid'a) in Islam and dreamed of reestablishing a community like the first Muslim community in Medina. They were especially opposed to Sufi practices such as dancing (sema), reciting God's names (zikr) as a form of prayer, and playing music. The movement reached its peak in the 1660s under the patronage of grand vizier Köprülü Fazıl Ahmed Paşa. Fazıl Ahmed Paşa supported the leader of the movement, Vani Mehmed Efendi, who became his spiritual advisor, as well as that of the valide sultan and even the sultan himself, thus acquiring enormous influence. When Vani Mehmed converted the Jewish messiah claimant Sabbatai Sevi in 1666, he and his movement gained a great reputation. With the rise of this movement, the empire started to give more importance to conversion of non-Muslims, although in the past this had not been given so much importance. In his Ph.D. thesis, Marc Baer shows the growing importance of mass conversions, especially during the Mehmed IV's reign. Beginning in 1661, Vani Mehmed

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37 Levy, ed., The Jews of the Ottoman Empire, 65.
38 Marc Baer, "Honored by the Glory of Islam: The Ottoman State, Non-Muslims and Conversion to Islam in Late Seventeenth Century Istanbul and Rumelia," unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Chicago, 2001, chs. III and IV passim. Antoine Galland also gives some clues concerning the growing importance of the conversion issue during the second half of the 17th century; for example, he
emphasized the inferiority of the non-Muslims and therefore the importance of the implementation of the sumptuary laws and destruction of taverns in the city, together with the ban on the trade in alcohol. In addition, the influential figures in the administration, namely the valide Turhan Sultan, Fazıl Ahmed Paşa and Vani Mehmed himself, planned to Islamize Istanbul during this period for their own reasons. I will elaborate on the issue of the "Islamization of space" in Istanbul in later parts of this study.

notes the forced conversion of a 5- or 6-year-old Jewish boy. See Antoine Galland, *Istanbul'a Ait Günlük Hâtilar*, vol.1, 156,157.

CHAPTER 2

JEWS FROM THE OTTOMAN PERSPECTIVE: EVLIYA ÇELEBI’S
PORTRAYAL OF THE JEWS IN HIS SEYAHATNAME

On the 10th of Muharrem 1040 (19th of August 1630), an Ottoman statesman named Evliya Çelebi saw the Messenger Muhammad (pbug) with his companions in a dream. Under the shock of this vision, when he wanted to request intercession (sefaat) from the Prophet(pbug), instead of saying "Şefaat Ya Rasulallah!" ("Intercession, O Messenger of God!"), he said, "Seyahat Ya Rasulallah!"("Travel, O Messenger of God!"). Smiling upon this blunder, the Prophet(pbug) granted him both intercession and travel.

After this impressive dream, Evliya Çelebi (1611-1685?), a 17th -century Ottoman traveler and bureaucrat, decided to write down whatever he observed in his travels through the Ottoman lands in his brilliant Seyahatname (Book of Travels). Ultimately, his dream came true: he traveled widely over the course of many years, and his massive travel account has preserved his observations and anecdotes for modern readers.
Evliya's monumental work has been analyzed again and again by a number of scholars. However, as we will point out in detail in the following sections of this study, Evliya Çelebi's view of the minorities of the Ottoman Empire has not received much attention, even though there is a crucial gap in our understanding of minorities in the 17th-century Ottoman world.

2.1. Evliya Çelebi and His Work

2.1.1. Evliya Çelebi's Background and His Education

Evliya Çelebi (1611-1685?) was born in the Unkapanı neighborhood of Istanbul, on the southern shore of the Golden Horn, and what is known about him comes entirely from his Seyahatname. His original name was Derviş Mehmed Zilli, but he used Evliya ("saints," or "friends of God," a sufi allusion) as his pennname. His father was a court jeweler (kuyuncubası). Evliya Çelebi's mother came from the Caucasian region known as Abkhazia (located in the northwestern part of present-day Georgia), a fact that allowed Evliya to forge close ties with future grand vizier Melek Ahmed Pasha, who was also an Abkhazian and a relative. Evliya was presented to Sultan Murad IV (r. 1623-40) by Melek Ahmed Pasha, who was...

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41. In an article about Evliya Çelebi, Cavid Baysun says that when and where he died and the location of his tomb are still unknown. See Cavid Baysun, "Evliya Çelebi'ye ait Notlar," Türküyat Mecmuası XII (1955), 257-64. In a recent article and in his new book, Dankoff only mentions that Evliya "retired into obscurity" in Cairo "after fifty-one years of travel." Robert Dankoff, An Ottoman Mentality: The World of Evliya Çelebi (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 6, and idem, "Evliya Çelebi and the Seyahatname," 611.

42. Ilgür, "Evliya Çelebi," 529

43. Dankoff claims that "this is a conjecture," since Evliya does not mention that he had another name other than Evliya. Dankoff, An Ottoman Mentality..., 31.
then the sultan’s *silahdar* (sword-bearer). Using his skills as a raconteur, entertainer and a *nedim* (boon companion), he became influential at Murad IV’s court. Afterwards, he served a number of patrons as a caller to prayer, Qur’an reciter, tax collector, courier and deputy. However, he generally described his avocation as a traveler and called himself *seyyah-i alem ve nedim-i beni adem* (“world traveler and boon companion to mankind”).

Evliya received a good education in the palace in Islamic and Ottoman sciences and arts. He was especially good at Qur’an recitation and music. From his *Seyahatname*, it can easily be understood that he was a lover of knowledge and had a “liberal mind” relative to the conditions of his period. He tried to learn a number of the languages and dialects that he encountered during his travels, as we understand from his work. For instance, he spoke in Hungarian with some captives on one occasion.44 Again, he says that he learned Latin and Greek from a goldsmith in his father’s shop named Simyon who was an Orthodox Christian. Evliya mentions that he used to listen to the *Tarih-i Yanvan* (or Yanevan, a Greek historian,45 thus, *History of Yanevan*) from Simyon when he was a child and memorize what he heard.46

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44 Evliya, *Seyahatname*, vol. 1, 275.
45 Kahraman and Dağlı suggest this way of reading instead of Yanvan, mentioning that Yanevan was a Greek historian. See Evliya Celebi, *Günlük Türkçesyle Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnamesi: Istanbul*, prep. by Seyit Ali Kahraman and Yücel Dağlı (İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2003), vol. 2 index, 761. However, according to Dankoff, “[T]he “History of Yanvan” is probably the 10th-century Arabic work *Kitab al-‘Unwan* by Agapios. For more information, see the references given by Dankoff in Robert Dankoff, *An Ottoman Mentality...*, 27.
46 Ibid., 33.
2.1.2. Evliya’s Writing Style

2.1.2.1. Writing Styles Employed by Evliya

According to Robert Dankoff, a leading authority on Evliya and his work, throughout the Seyahatname, “there is a clash between two organizing principles: on the one hand, spatial or geographical; on the other hand, temporal or chronological.”

That is, in the first writing style, Evliya is more concerned with a geographical survey of the empire and gives town descriptions, following the same pattern, including a great variety of details from the buildings to parks and from the customs of the people to their dialects. As for the chronological style that he follows, he provides his readers with a record of his travels, together with his interesting adventures along the way. Dankoff says that the first pattern is “imperial in scope” and it has its roots in the memalik (“countries”) and mesalik (“occupations”) tradition of the Muslim geographers. As for the second mode, it is like an autobiographical account of Evliya and follows the riňlah (travel) tradition of early Muslim travelers in giving more information about his personal life.

Evliya was a great companion and raconteur and enjoyed entertaining his audience. Therefore, he gives a wide range of jokes and interesting folktales in his work. He even says that he intended to write a Şakaname (Book of Jokes). For instance, he mentions a man named Hacı Nasır who was swallowed by a big fish

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48 Ibid., 606.
49 Ibid., 616.  
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and managed to survive. He also indulges in wild exaggerations at times, and allegedly even claims that he visited places to which he never actually traveled. 

However, although he is criticized for his exaggerations and folktales, his chief purpose, entertainment, should be kept in mind and his work should be assessed with due consideration for his intended style and audience. Therefore a revisionist approach to his writing style is necessary in future studies.

Incidentally, one scholar has offered an intriguing explanation of Evliya’s exaggerations and sometimes far-fetched stories. Cafer Erkülç, who has written on Evliya, claims that Evliya may have used a macun (gumlike candy or paste) called dilber-i lebi macunu that included hashish and sugar. This substance, Erkülç claims, had an effect similar to today’s narcotics and may have had some influence on Evliya’s writings.

2.1.2.2. Criticism of Some of the Ottoman Sultans

At certain points in his work, Evliya does not hesitate to criticize the Ottoman sultans. For instance, Evliya praises Mehmed the Conqueror (r. 1451-81) in a number of places, yet he also criticizes him, stating that he was hunhar (bloodthirsty) and a kardeş katili (fratricide). By following this path, Evliya contributes to the tradition among Ottoman statesmen of criticizing the great Ottoman sultans—a tradition that would seem to undermine the notion of an Ottoman "classical period," when sultans were above reproach. This widespread idea of an Ottoman Classical Age has recently

51 For instance, his travels to Western Europe and German lands are considered fictional. For a discussion of these issues, see ibid., 610,611,616 and EI, 2nd ed., s.v. "Ewliya Celebi," by J.H. Mordtmann – H.W. Duda.
52 Erkülç, Evliya Çelebi: Hayatı..., 9.
been challenged by Ottomanist historians. One of these, Cemal Kafadar, claims that even Süleyman the Magnificent, Selim I and Mehmed II were criticized, sometimes quite harshly, by Ottoman writers.\textsuperscript{54} Therefore, to see such criticisms of Mehmed II in Evliya's account further challenges the idea of a "classical age." In other words, considering that these sort of criticisms were characteristics of "decline" literature, encountering such unexpected harsh criticisms of the "Classical Age" Ottoman sultans highly undermines the concept of an "Ottoman Classical Age".

2.1.2.3. Ahistorical or Anachronistic Narrations: Entertainment, Mistakes and Different Canons

Evliya makes some interesting mistakes in his travelogue, as well. However, it is hard to determine whether these are his own mistakes or just incorporated in the folktales he reproduces, or whether he mentions them only for entertainment purposes. Regardless, in a number of places, he presents fantastic events or information as fact. He sometimes provides sources and sometimes claims that he himself witnessed certain of these events. For instance, in contrast to standard accounts of the life of the Prophet Muhammad(pbuh), Evliya claims that Abu Lahab (Abu 'Utbah or 'Abdul'uzzah bin 'Abdulmuttalib), the uncle of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), died not because of an illness but because of a divinely designed accident and again that Abu Jahl ('Amr ibn Hisham) died not at the Battle of Badr but at the Battle of Khunayn.\textsuperscript{55} Again his narrations concerning history and especially the early Islamic religious tradition seem at odds with today's canonical accounts. (See


\textsuperscript{55} Evliya, \textit{Seyahname}, vol. 1, 236.
the example of Yahya’s (phub) martyrdom in the section “Jews in Legends,” below.) This may indicate that Ottoman writers benefited from different canonical sources and that some of these traditions were eliminated in the course of time.

A number of fantastic things that Evliya claims to have witnessed can be adduced as examples of his occasional ahistoricism. For instance, at one point, he claims that a Muslim martyr (with an uncorrupted body!) appeared before the Ottoman encampment in Candia on the island of Crete, which the Ottomans had been besieging for twenty-five years, on the night of 30 January 1668 and stimulated the bravery of the Ottoman soldiers just before the end of the siege and victory. Yet another example is the case of Ali Dede the Mute (Söylemez Ali Dede), who predicted the victory at Candia.56 Below, I provide additional examples of ahistorical accounts reproduced by Evliya, such as the fictive kinship between the Ottomans and the French.

However, as noted earlier, it is also possible to assert that these were not mistakes but are mentioned for entertainment purposes, given Evliya’s colorful character.

2.1.2.4. His Sources and His Opinions on Accuracy

Evliya frequently, although not always, mentions his sources. For instance, he claims that he gathered information from a variety of Islamic sources such as Rivayat-i Kurtubi (Tales of al-Kurtubi) and even from non-Muslim sources such as the aforementioned Tarih-i Yanvan (History of Yanvan). Again, he gives some statistics on guilds and mentions that he was able to have a copy of a tahrir (land tenure

56 Dankoff, “Evliya Çelebi and the Seyahatname,” 615.
inventory) made in the time of Murad IV, thanks to his patron Melek Ahmed Pasha.\(^{57}\)

In general, he seems to place importance on being an eyewitness and on accuracy. Sometimes, especially in the case of miracles of non-Muslims, he relies more on speculation, according to Dankoff.\(^{58}\)

2.1.2.5. Evliya and Esoteric Writing

In this part, I would like to give some examples of Evliya's esoteric writing, that is, his tactic of extolling or criticizing a group or certain persons by using an implicit style of narration. In these kinds of cases, only a limited audience who knew the historical context well could understand what Evliya meant by mentioning certain issues, or whom he meant to extol or criticize.

2.1.2.5.1. Portrayal of Some Ottoman Sultans with a Better Reputation

I have already mentioned that in some cases, Evliya criticizes some of the well-respected Ottoman sultans such as Mehmed II. Moreover, Evliya also counters some of the negative accounts of Ottoman rulers and rebels. Here, I will give some examples of this phenomenon.

According to Evliya, in contrast to the conventional wisdom reflected in Ottoman sources and in foreign sources such as Memoirs of a Janissary,\(^{59}\) Bayezid

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\(^{57}\)Evliya, Seyahatname, vol. 1, 217.

\(^{58}\)Dankoff, "Evliya Çelebi and the Seyahatname," 614.

\(^{59}\)Konstantin Mihailović, Memoirs of a Janissary, trans. by Benjamin Stolz, introductory notes by Svat Soucek (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1975), 53. Mükrimin Halil Yinanç mentions that some Ottoman chroniclers, such as Âşıkpaşaâzade and Neşri, and some Byzantine accounts, such as that of Ducas, claim that Bayezid committed suicide by poisoning himself. However, a number of other Ottoman scholars, such as Şükûllâh and Enverî, along with Timur's historians, reject the notion that Bayezid committed suicide or was poisoned but insist that he died of natural causes. This latter option seems more plausible according to Yinanç. Inaleck, however, does not deal with the causes of Bayezid's death in his articles for Diyânet İslam Ansiklopedisi and El 2nd ed. I assume that, benefiting from Yinanç's detailed article, Inaleck accepts his point of view. See İslam Ansiklopedisi, s.v. "Bayezid I," by Mükrimin Halil Yinanç.
the Thunderbolt (r. 1389-1402) did not poison himself at all, but died of grief after his defeat by Tamerlane at the Battle of Ankara in 1402. He suffered from seeing his wife serving Tamerlane and ultimately expired of natural causes in the cage where Tamerlane imprisoned him because of these sorrowful events.\textsuperscript{60}

Similarly, in standard accounts of Ottoman history, Cem Sultan, son of Mehmed the Conqueror, is known as a rebel and even as a traitor who fought his brother Bayezid II (Veli) (1481-1512) for the Ottoman throne. He sought asylum in the Mamluk sultanate, with the Knights of Rhodes, in France, and at the Vatican. These powers wanted to use Cem as a political weapon against the Ottomans, but their plans were foiled when he died in 1499. However, according to Evliya’s account in the \textit{Seyahatname}, Cem Sultan played a crucial role in relations between the Ottomans and the French, strengthening the "kinship" between the two powers.

To clarify Cem Sultan’s role in this matter, I should mention Evliya’s claims regarding the establishment of this kinship. When he informs his readers about the capture of Constantinople by the Ottomans, Evliya relays a story. He claims that as the daughter of the French king was arriving in Constantinople as the bride of the emperor Constantine, she and her entourage were captured by the Ottomans. Mehmed II eventually married this French princess, who was later given the name \textit{Akide Hanim} (Sweet Lady) by the Conqueror’s mentor Akšemseddin. She remained a Christian till her death, yet gave birth to Bayezid II, Cem Sultan and \textit{Şehzade} (Prince) Nureddin Şah, according to the legend. Therefore, Evliya claims that a kinship

\textsuperscript{60} Evliya, \textit{Seyahatname}, vol. I, 35.
between the two dynasties was established in this way. To reinforce his point, he notes the priority given the French ambassador at the Ottoman court over other ambassadors of non-Muslim kingdoms.\textsuperscript{61}

As for the role of Cem Sultan, according to Evliya, Cem ultimately found asylum in France, only to have the Ottomans demand his head. Considering their kinship with the Ottomans, the French king sent someone else's head to the Ottomans and made Cem a lord in his kingdom. Oddly enough, with the help of other French nobles, Cem Sultan and his descendants became kings of France! Evliya claims that the kinship between the two dynasties was doubled thanks to this incredible event.\textsuperscript{62}

However, Christine Isom-Verhaaren claims that the notion of Ottoman kinship with the French was just a myth. The legend of the French princess, she notes, is mentioned by a number of Ottoman scholars, such as Ibrahim Pçevi, Selaniki, Mustafa Ali and even Dimitri Cantemir, son of the governor (voivoda) of Moldavia, who spent part of his life in Istanbul between 1688 and 1710. Although the French rejected this notion of kinship, they were occasionally content with it "if it would further French interests at the Porte"\textsuperscript{63} and allow them to claim priority over other European Christian powers.\textsuperscript{64} Oddly enough, Ottoman writers and later even some high Ottoman officials continued to believe in this myth, even towards the end of the 18th century. Verhaaren tries to explain why this issue of kinship appears in the Ottoman accounts, especially in the 17th century. One reason was the rising

\textsuperscript{61}ibid., 40-45 passim.
\textsuperscript{62}ibid., 42.
influence of religious fanaticism. Secondly, this kinship legend, since it highlights the maternal role, reflected the growing influence of the women of the Ottoman dynasty. Finally, Verhaaren claims that seeing a shift in international power relations against themselves and feeling that France was attempting to place itself on the same level with their empire, the Ottomans wanted to show "the Ottoman might and the Islamic religion triumphing over the plans of the infidels."65

2.1.2.5.2. Criticism of the Kadızadeli

The Kadızadeli movement was a very influential conservative Islamic movement during Evliya's time that emphasized the rejection of innovations(s. *bid'a*) in Islam. In some instances in the *Seyahatname*, I suspect that Evliya criticizes the Kadızadeli s and their ideas by using esoteric writing.

Evliya sometimes manages to criticize a person or a group even while seeming to praise them. In one such case, he first introduces a Kadızadeli leader from Sofia, namely Sheikh Mehmed, the religious advisor of Sultan Murad IV, also known simply as "Kadızadeli," and notes how this sheikh criticized sufi sheikhs for their practices. According to Evliya's account, Kadızadeli was invited to accompany the sultan on a visit to the tomb of the famous sufi poet Mevlana Celaeddin Rumi in Konya, where he would see the Mevlevi (a.k.a. "whirling") dervishes. (Murad would pass through Konya in the course of his 1638 military expedition to retake Baghdad from the Safavids.) Yet Kadızadeli refused to accompany the sultan. Not long afterward, he died in an unexpected way. Evliya implicitly portrays his death as a

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punishment from God for refusing to visit Mevlana's tomb. At the same time, however, he adds that this man was a great scholar and that his death was a great loss.\footnote{Evliya, Seyahatname, vol. I, 164,165.}

Again when he mentions the musicians among the craftsmen who passed in procession before Murad IV during a parade of guilds, Evliya deems it necessary to mention that certain musical instruments were allowed in early Islamic Arabia and that even in his own time it was still religiously permissible to use the tambourine (\textit{def}) and kudüm (a small double drum) in Arabia.\footnote{Ibid., 297.} He mentions that some of these instruments are used even in his own day in sufı rituals.\footnote{Ibid.}

In general, Evliya uses different means of supporting his arguments on music and musical instruments.\footnote{Some examples: At one place he uses a hadith: "Ilanu az-zafafa wa-law bid-dafaf" ("Announce the marriage even with tambourines") (Seyahatname, I, 297). For religious stories, see, for instance, his account of the relationship between the soul and music at the time of creation (Ibid., I, 302). Examples of the practice of music by important religious characters such as pre-Islamic prophets and the companions of the Prophet(pbuh): Ibid., I, 297. The benefits of music to health and the advice of philosophers concerning the good of music, singers and beloved dancers for one's soul: Ibid., I,296. Evliya further claims that it was regarded as permissible for sultans to listen to the music of certain instruments: Ibid., I,302.}

Thus, although Evliya does not criticize anyone explicitly, the reader suspects that he criticizes the Kadźadelix here, since they opposed the use of musical instruments.

In addition, as mentioned before, Evliya Çelebi's affiliation with Sufism, probably with Halveti order, is well-known, and he always praises Sufıs and gives considerable space to their miraculous activities. These attitudes, in addition to his reputation as one of the "liberal minded" men of his day, make it all the more likely that criticism of the Kadźadelix can be found in the \textit{Seyahatname}.\footnote{Ibid., I,297.}
2.1.2.6. Evliya’s Portrayal of His Patron Melek Ahmed Paşa

Throughout his life, Evliya Çelebi never lacked a patron. However, the most important patron of Evliya Çelebi was without doubt his relative on his mother's side, the Aîkhaçian statesman Melek Ahmed Paşa. He served Melek Ahmed Paşa for about twelve years, between 1650 and 1662. Thanks to Evliya Çelebi’s account, we have a good deal of information regarding Melek Ahmed Paşa’s life; indeed, Robert Dankoff has analyzed this information in his book on Melek Ahmed Paşa. Evliya belonged to Melek Ahmed Paşa’s household and he was the paşa’s confidant. They were so close that they even shared their secrets and dreams with each other. Dankoff claims that in general, Evliya defends his patron against criticism by shifting blame for any misdeeds to his officers. However, he does not hesitate to mention the oppression that Melek Ahmed perpetrated.

2.1.3. Significance of the Seyahatname and Its Limitations

2.1.3.1. A History, Memoirs or a Travelogue?

As we mentioned above, in his Seyahatname, Evliya partakes of two genres: the topographical survey and the travel account'autobiography. Although he definitely gives information on his life and history in general, since even Evliya himself does not choose to call his work a “history” book but instead calls it

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70 Dankoff, “Evliya...” 612.
72 Ibid., 7.
73 For instance, see Ibid., 100,143 and 226.
74 See Ibid., 7,12,13; and Dankoff, “Evliya...,” 619.
Seyahatname, we have to conclude that his work is a travelogue, composed of different genres such as autobiography, memoirs, history and finally legends and stories.

2.1.3.2. The Seyahatname's Significance

After his travels of about forty years (between roughly 1640 and 1676), Evliya wrote the Seyahatname in order to describe his journeys to a number of different regions within the Ottoman Empire and in neighboring lands. His work is extremely important since it is the "longest and fullest travel account in Islamic literature, perhaps in world literature." As noted above, thanks to this unequaled travelogue we have the opportunity to understand the topography and cultures of the Ottoman Empire in the 17th century. The work is also very important since it gives us an opportunity to enter the world of an Ottoman bureaucrat and see how he perceived "the others."

As for the work's limitations and problems as a source on minority populations, the first crucial problem is that being an Ottoman bureaucrat, Evliya had distinctive beliefs resulting from his Islamic and Ottoman training in the palace. Since he was a courtier, he sided with the palace and did not hesitate to belittle ethnic and religious minorities. Because of his training in the palace and the Ottoman mentality that he gained in this milieu, it was not unusual for him not to be knowledgeable about the traditions of the minorities and to use derogatory terms when referring to them. In addition, one should be alert to his exaggerations, as well

\[75 \textit{Ibid.}, 605.\]
as when he is relaying facts and when he is joking. A final problem is that since the Seyahatname is a travelogue and not a chronicle, it provides only a general assessment of events and does not deal with details. In addition, since Evliya was not interested in minorities, he mentions them only if they have some specific or influential role in a region or if there are interesting folktales concerning them. He is also very keen on mentioning existing conflicts among religious groups, and only in these cases can we get a sense of the status of the minorities.

2.2. The Seyahatname and the Minorities of the Ottoman Empire

In this section, I will give some examples of how Evliya portrays minorities in general. Sometimes, he talks about non-Muslims when he wants to emphasize the supremacy of Islam and the Ottoman administration in general. For instance, to emphasize the justice (adalet) of the Ottoman state and the just treatment of the non-Muslims ordered by Islamic law (shari’a), he gives the example of Mehmed II and his chief architect, who was a Greek Christian, and their case before the shari’a court after Mehmed II’s maltreatment of the architect. In the end, justice wins out, and the court orders Mehmed II to pay compensation for his oppression of his subject.

At a number of points in the Seyahatname, Evliya mentions the existing problems among religious communities, especially the mutual hatred of various groups. In describing the quarter of Galata, north of the Golden Horn—a neighborhood traditionally inhabited by European merchants—for example, Evliya notes that there are no “infidels” (kefere, by which he means Christians) at the first

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76 For a discussion of this issue, see Ibid., 616.
77 For a detailed discussion of Evliya’s approach to different religious communities and ethnicities, see Robert Dankoff, An Ottoman Mentality..., ch. 2, passim.
78 Evliya, Seyahatname, I, 59.
fortress (başhisar) while at the second fortress, the people of the neighborhood do not allow infidels in, and if they see Christians with arms they kill them at once without mercy. He claims that the neighborhood people have an imperial edict (hatt-ı şerif) allowing them to do so! The reason for this behavior was that these people were refugees from Spain who had suffered horribly there. Most probably this was a settlement of Moriscos, or “crypto-Muslims,” from Spain. Such a circumstance is unheard of in the Ottoman Empire to my knowledge and should be studied further. Evliya mentions other cases similar to this one, suggesting that antagonism among various confessional groups was tolerated, in some cases at least.

It can also be suggested that Evliya sometimes gives his opinion on minorities through the words that he puts in the mouths of some of the characters who appear in the Seyahatname. For instance, during the procession of craftsmen before Sultan Murad IV, the chief architect (mimarbaşı) and the head of the Ottoman military band (mehterbaşı) start to debate on who has the right to pass first before the sultan in the procession. The band leader claims that all of the craftsmen under the chief architect are mezsum ve menhus kafırler (“criticized/cursed and dirty infidels”) and therefore, the members of the military band cannot stand such a “procession of vermin” (bir alay haşerat) to pass ahead of them. 

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79 Ibid., 183.
80 Ibid., 296.
2.3. The *Seyahatname* and the Jews of the Ottoman Empire

2.3.1. Jews in the *Seyahatname*

As noted above, Evliya does not seem terribly interested in minorities and therefore does not deal with them in detail unless the context requires it. However, when he mentions Jews, he uses the customary pejorative terms, such as *Cufud, Cifit, Cuhud, Cahud*, and so on. Again he uses derogatory words and phrases such as *Yahudi leşi* ("corpse of a Jew"), *meli‘un* ("accursed"), *aceb* ("alien"), and *zu‘m-i batllarinca* ("according to their false beliefs").

Yet another example of Evliya's negative opinions on the Jews occurs in his description of the procession of Istanbul’s guilds before Murad IV in 1638. Evliya claims that the Jewish tavern keepers passed last as a sign of disrespect to them (*tahkiren*); he describes them as "a breed of vermin." He also criticizes their tradition of not consuming the food or drink of non-Jews and gives this as a reason for their passing before the sultan as a separate unit.

Furthermore, talking about the Jewish tavern keepers, Evliya claims that "all their deeds are calculated toward treachery and the killing of Muslims, especially anyone named Muhammed." Dankoff claims that even though Evliya does not seem to believe in some libels against the Jews, such as their alleged habit of killing boys named Muhammed, Evliya "does not dismiss the Jewish libel, or argue against it, as

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82 *Ibid.*,316. This is also corroborated in Dankoff, *An Ottoman Mentality...*, 85.
83 Evliya, *Seyahatname*, 1, 316. The translation is from Dankoff, *An Ottoman Mentality...*, 68.
he does with regard to the Kızılbaş [the Shi‘ite sect of the Safavids].” Evliya clearly believes that Jewish hatred for the name Muhammed is genuine. 84

Nonetheless, although rarely, he says positive things concerning the Jews, as well. For instance, he mentions that the guild of oculists (esnaf-i kehhalan) traces its roots to a Jewish woman who healed Moses (pbuh) and therefore became the pir (master) of the oculists. 85 Again, in other places, he praises certain Jews in the music and entertainment sectors. 86

Another significant point concerning the Jews is that when Evliya mentions them, he does not classify them as “infidels” (kefere). Although he calls Christians kefore, he prefers to call the Jews taife-i Yahud or taife-i Cifud (“the community of Jews”). 87 I suspect that this may be mere tradition, or possibly because the Ottomans saw the Jews as their allies against Christians, 88 and the Habsburgs especially. It is also possible that the Christians were seen as a general enemy outside of the empire. It is worth noting, in addition, that Evliya does not employ the term millet for these religious communities, thus reinforcing the arguments against the existence of a so-called millet system before the 19th century.

84 Dankoff also claims that the Greeks and Laz above all hated the Jews. For a detailed discussion of this issue, see ibid., 68,69. Dankoff does not comment on this issue, but I suspect that the hatred of the Greeks for the Jews might have increased due to the economic competition between the two groups, to be discussed in chapter 3. For the competition between these groups, see Marc David Baer, "The Great Fire of 1660...”, 162; and Avigdor Levy, ed., The Jews of the Ottoman Empire, 78. On the other hand, the hatred of Jews by the Laz and the people of Trabzon and its vicinity may also have deep roots and should be studied further.
85 Ibid., 228.
86 Ibid., 203.
87 For instance see Ibid., 163.
Levy also mentions this division in one of his works and the use of this distinction by a number of Ottoman writers. He claims that this division was because of the Ottoman preference for the Jews over the Christians in practice, although there should not have been a distinction according to the shari'ah. He suggests that such a distinction was not to show that the Jews were lesser infidels, but simply to underline that they belonged to a different category. However, I believe that the separation of Jews from "infidels" is a more complex issue and needs further analysis.

2.3.1.1. Jews in History and Legends According to Evliya

At a number of points, Evliya mentions "historical" stories and religious legends concerning the Jews. For instance, when he visits Palestine, or more specifically "City of Kalnseve" (šehr-i Kahlnseve) or "City of Palestine" (he most probably means Jerusalem), he gives the history of the invasion of Judea in 586 B.C. by the Babylonians. He claims, implausibly, that after the Jews killed the prophet Yahya (John the Baptist) (pbuh), the Babylonian emperor Nebuchadnezzar invaded Palestine in revenge for John's martyrdom and massacred and exiled the Jews. (Obviously, this could not have happened since John the Baptist, a contemporary of Jesus [pbuh], lived many centuries after the Babylonian conquest.) By relaying these kinds of stories, Evliya reproduces some of the popular myths about the Jews that he has heard in his travels. It was probably common for Muslims to find "reasons" for the historical "punishment" of the Jews through these tales.

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89 Levy, ed., The Jews of the Ottoman Empire, 28.
90 According to the commentary on the Pact of 'Umar provided by Stillman, the galansuwa was a conical cap worn by Muslims and therefore forbidden to the non-Muslims, since they were not supposed to resemble Muslims in their clothing. The Kalnseve mentioned by Evliya may hark back to this cap. See Norman Stillman, The Jews of Arab Lands..., 157.
91 Evliya, Seyahatname, III, 75; almost the same story appears on p. 39.
Another story told by Evliya reflects popular stereotypes of Jews during Evliya’s time. According to this story, since the Children of Israel (Beni Israil) called the prophet Ezra (Uzeyr) ibnullah (“son of God”)—this is also mentioned in the Quran—92 they were destroyed by divine punishment. Afterwards, they were resurrected and due to their resurrection, whose effects became inherent in Jews, even in Evliya’s time, their faces were narsuz—that is, devoid of light, and hence malicious-seeming, their mouths smelled bad, and they were very weak. This gives an idea about impressions of Jews that were widespread among Muslims concerning during Evliya’s time.93

2.3.1.2. Istanbul’s (Islambol) Jewish Community in the 17th Century according to the Seyahatname

2.3.1.2.1. Islamization of Space in Istanbul and Jews

Because of the great influence of the Kadızadeli movement, together with the mass conversions to Islam, there was also an “Islamization of space” in Istanbul—that is, a largely unremarked expulsion of minorities, especially Jews, from the central parts of the city in the 1660s. A number of Jews were ultimately expelled to Hasköy, west of Galata. A great fire in 1660 was used as an excuse for this expulsion, and also a number of burned churches and synagogues were not allowed to be

93 Evliya, Seyahatname, III, 75. Similar stories concerning the Beni Israil can also be found on pp. 80-81 and in vols. 9-10, where Evliya talks about his pilgrimage to Mecca and relays a number of religious stories.
reconstructed. After the great fire in 1660, the Jews were thought to have been punished by God as they deserved. Evliya Çelebi has this to say about these incidents in the *Seyahatname*: "...By the command of God, all Jewish homes were incinerated and all Jews were banished from that area;" and, "When there was a great incineration in Islambol the filthy homes of Jews residing within Jews’ Gate were destroyed and burned in the flames."

After the great fire, the Valide Sultan Mosque (now known as Yeni Cami), whose construction was started by Safiye Sultan, mother of Mehmed III, in 1597, was finished finally with the efforts of Hatice Turfan Sultan, mother of Mehmed IV. Evliya claims that after the construction was completed, the mosque’s nickname, “Oppression” (*Zulmiyye*), became “Justice” (*Adliyye*). Indeed, Marc Baer argues that treatment of Jews was especially unfair at this time. He elaborates on this issue in a recent article. He claims that the Jews were forbidden to reconstruct their synagogues in the region, although Christians were allowed to rebuild churches even though rebuilding was against the *shari'a*. The Christians were also preferred for governmental positions beginning in the 1660s, since the Jews did not have an educated elite group at this time and since they had also started to lose the trust of the palace due to the Sabbatai Sevi movement. Therefore, especially for the Jews, just after the Sabbatai Sevi episode in the 1660s, there were additional problems due to the changing attitudes of

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95 Evliya, *Seyahatname*, vol. 1, 124-5.
the Ottoman state at this time. Baer also claims that this period reflects an attempt to recover the dynasty’s authority, especially through public works. 99

With regard to the rise of conservatism and the recovery movement within the empire after the great crises of the 17th century, it is also significant that Evliya does not call Istanbul Konstantiniyye or Istanbul, but Islambol ("where Islam abounds"), a name allegedly given by Mehmed II to the city. 100 He says that he calls it Islambol because the public had begun to apply this name to the city, although it is unclear when and how such a tradition may have originated. However, it seems logical that since there was a shift towards more conservatism and Islamization in Istanbul, this tradition of calling the city Islambol might have become widespread during the 17th century. Evliya also calls Istanbul Belde-i Tayyibe ("Pure City").

Furthermore, there is an imperial edict of 1760 ordering all government bureaus to stop using the name Konstantiniyye on coins and official documents but to use Islambol. 101 Although this is a relatively late period and although this order probably resulted from a separate wave of rising conservatism movement in the 18th century, it may also be regarded as a continuation of the conservatism movement in the 17th century. Therefore, I suspect that the Islamization of space issue might have a connection with the spread of the popular name Islambol. I have not come across a scholarly explanation of the use of the name Islambol, 102 although this name was used

99 Ibid.
100 El 2nd ed., s.v. "Istanbul," by Halil Inalcik.
102 For instance, there is no detailed discussion of the name Islambol in Robert Dankoff’s studies on Evliya. Nor do other sources, such as El, 2nd ed., s.v. "Ewliya," by Mordtmann-Duda, deal with the reasons for the use and the development of the name. For different names of Istanbul see Düden Bugüne Istanbul Ansiklopedisi, s.v. "Istanbul’un Adları," by Necdet Sakaoğlu.
by a number of chroniclers of the 17th century, not only by Evliya; thus I believe that this issue should also be considered in detail by experts in the field.

2.3.1.2.2. Observations of Evliya on Istanbul Jewry in General

Evliya makes a number of interesting observations about Istanbul Jewry. For example, in recounting an anecdote concerning crazy dervishes, he relates a story concerning Jews. According to the story, once this dervish wanted to pass under a Jewish coffin that was being carried towards the cemetery. When he tried to pass under it, the Jews were angered and started to run away. Evliya claims to have learned that according to the false (batil) beliefs of the Jews, if a gentile passes under the coffin of a Jew, the deceased will become an evil spirit. However, I do not know of anything related to this kind of a belief in Judaism. It is very likely that it was one of the folk beliefs of the time.\(^{103}\)

Yet, since this dervish was called crazy (mecnun) by Evliya and since the story he narrates is funny, one suspects that he relates it just to entertain the reader and that in this context, Jews were as rich a source of entertainment as crazy dervishes—in other words, this was simply part of the customs and entertainment of his day. Therefore, it is hard to take these kinds of stories seriously.\(^{104}\)

Evliya finds Jewish customs, especially dietary laws, very strange and mentions them occasionally in his work. He claims that Jews were very strict in their customs, which he regards as “false belief” (zu‘m-i batil). For instance, when he talks about doughnut and pancake stores he says:

\(^{103}\) Matt Goldish, email correspondence, 12.3.2004
\(^{104}\) Evliya, Seyahatname, 1, 164.
But in these lokma(doughnut) and gozlememe(pancake) stores there is a stable Jewish overseer, because the Jews use sesame oil (şir-i revgan yağlı) and Muslims use say yağlı (clarified butter). If there is no overseer the Jews do not eat from that store, such a strange zealot cursed people they are.  

We learn from Claudia Roden that Sephardic Jews in Muslim countries used oil instead of butter or clarified butter for cooking due to the ban on combining meat and dairy products. The Jews used olive, corn, peanut, cotton-seed, argan and sesame oil. Roden also mentions a stereotype that "one could smell a Jewish home from the cooking fat." 

In the case of lokma and gozlememe, the Jews were probably worried that Muslims might mix oil or butter from non-kosher sources into what they sold. They kept Jewish overseers, since there is a takkana (Jewish decree) from ancient times ordering Jews to keep an overseer for the production of milk or milk products. In addition, they most likely wanted to make sure that Muslims did not fry pancakes in the same pans in which they fried meat and that they did not use non-kosher animal

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105 Ibid., 231. See also pp. 243 and 262. Evliya says that wrestlers used this şir-i revgan(rugan?) yağlı in oil wrestling (p.278). In another place, Evliya says that şir-i rugan(logan?) yağlı. I believe an oil similar to or the same as şir-i revgan yağlı - was first made by a person from the children of Israil named Hasib-i Mav. Therefore, the Jews preferred to eat şir-i rugan yağlı (milk butter?) or tereyağ (fresh butter). They never used say oil, like Muslims, even if one would threaten them with death (lit., "even if one would kill them"). In fact, Jews comprised most of the fresh butter salesmen in Istanbul. (p. 243). Evliya claims that this kind of butter enhances a fresh, soft semender (fat, fleshy) body and makes it look pink. Because of this, it was said that bodies of the Jewish boys (Yahudi peçeleri or peçeleri) were soft like earlobes (p.262). Dankoff claims that Yahudi peçeleri were pretty boys or male prostitutes, probably due to a love poem about one of them (see, for instance, Seyahatname, p. 308) (Dankoff, An Ottoman Mentality..., 68). Yet I do not think that all of the references to Yahudi peçeleri give the same meaning. For other references to Yahudi peçeleri, see Seyahatname, vol. I, pp. 176, 308 and 316. This shows that the use of different oils by the Jews was causing other communities to produce interesting stereotypical rumors with different reasonings, since they did not know the real reasons. --common trend in the past and even today. In addition, Evliya gives information on the separateness of the Jewish butchers as well (p. 242).


107 I thank Prof. Matt Goldish for the clarification of this issue. Matt Goldish, email correspondence, 12. 3. 2004.
fat when they fried. This shows that, similar to other contemporary congregations outside of the Ottoman Empire, the Jews of Istanbul were also strict about observing the dietary laws and halakha (Jewish law). In eastern Europe at this same time, the Jews were very strict in their dietary laws and even in their transactions with gentiles. For instance, selling wine to the Gentiles was debated for a long time.\footnote{Jacob Katz, *Tradition and Crisis: Jewish Society at the End of the Middle Ages*, trans. and with an afterword and bibliography by Bernard Dov Cooperman (New York : New York University Press, 1993), 18.}

Thanks to the inventory from the reign of Murad IV that Evliya exploited, we can get an idea on the occupations that Jews typically pursued, as well. According to this inventory, the Jews were especially influential in trades such as the customs\footnote{Evliya, *Seyahatname*, 1, 261.}, jewelry,\footnote{Ibid., 272.} leather,\footnote{Ibid., 284.} satin\footnote{Ibid., 294.} and silk\footnote{Ibid., 282.} trades. This seems to correspond to the information provided by Avigdor Levy on the common professions of the Jews in the so-called classical period.\footnote{Ibid., 282.} Some Jews followed "non-traditional professions," too, according to Evliya. He mentions Jewish tavern keepers, musicians and comedians.\footnote{Ibid., 282.}

2.3.1.2.3. Speculations on Relations between Evliya and the Jews

Finally, I want to introduce some thoughts on Evliya's possible relationships with certain Jews. As we mentioned earlier, Evliya's father was a kuyumcubası (court jeweler). Jewish overrepresentation in jewelry-making

\textsuperscript{109} Evliya, *Seyahatname*, 1, 261.
\textsuperscript{110} Ibid., 272.
\textsuperscript{111} Ibid., 284.
\textsuperscript{112} Ibid., 294.
\textsuperscript{113} Ibid., 282. They were also very influential in the silk trade in Bursa during this period. See Haim Gerber, "The Jews in the Economic Life of the Anatolian City of Bursa in the Seventeenth Century: Notes and Documents," *Sefunot* 1/16 (1980), xxi, xxii, English abstract.
\textsuperscript{115} See Evliya, *Seyahatname*, 1, 307,308,316, for instance.
(kuyumculuk) during this period is very well-known; their concentration in this trade in Istanbul was noted previously. During this period, too, a significant number of Jews acted as brokers and held the profession of money-changer (sarrafi). It is possible that in order to obtain jewelry, Evliya's father might have cultivated contacts with Jews, and Evliya therefore might have been acquainted with some of his father's contacts. At one point in the Seyahatname, Evliya mentions that his family's jewelry shops were located in Unkapani, where he was most in contact with different ethnic groups. It is also known that especially before the great fire of 1660, Jews were concentrated in this part of Istanbul, and their stores were also located there. As noted earlier, Evliya mentions in the first volume of the Seyahatname that he had read and discussed books such as Tarih-i Yanvan (History of Yanvan) with a goldsmith in the family store named Simyon, who was probably a Rum—that is, a Greek Orthodox Christian living in Ottoman lands. Furthermore, he notes that he used to visit a number of taverns in Istanbul, some of which were probably run by Jews; elsewhere in his work, indeed, Evliya expresses antagonism toward Jews who run taverns. He also mentions some popular Jews who were well known as entertainers and were very popular because they played certain musical instruments. Moreover, he used to see

116 Actually, the Jewish money lenders were not so significant in the Ottoman Empire since this business was also run by Muslims and the Jews did not have any advantage over them. See, for instance, Haim Gerber, "The Jews of Edirne (Adrianople) in the 16th and 17th centuries," Sefunot 3/18 (1985), vii,viii, English abstract. In the 17th and 18th centuries, the number of Jewish moneylenders continued to decrease. On this issue, see, Eliezer Bashan, "Jewish Moneylending in Constantinople and Smyrna During the 17th-18th Centuries as Reflected in the British Levant Company's Archives," The Mediterranean and the Jews (Ramat-Gan : Bar-Ilan University Press. 1989),57-73; Leah Bornstein-Makovetsky, "Jewish Brokers in Constantinople During the 18th Century According to Hebrew Documents," The Mediterranean and the Jews, 75-104.

117 Evliya, Seyahatname, I, 33.

118 Ibid., 315,316.

119 Ibid., 303.
a number of Jews in places that he visited, particularly important urban centers and their customs and mints; some of these were influential officials, such as the customs director (Gümürük emini) Çufud Yahya Ağa in Salonica.\textsuperscript{120} Finally, Evliya was a liberal man compared to a number of his contemporaries. He tried to learn different foreign languages, benefited from foreign histories such as the \textit{Tarih-i Yanvan}, had conversations with foreigners, attended some peace negotiations with the Hapsburgs, and did not hesitate to mention what he learned from them. Thus, it is possible that Evliya had relations with Jews and even had close contact with certain Jewish individuals. Admittedly, these claims concerning his possible relations with Jews remain speculations for the time being. Evliya's book of travels is the only known source of information on his life, and in it, he makes no unequivocal references to relations with Jews. Notwithstanding, further research may reveal information that will flesh out these speculations.

2.3.1.2.4. Missing Pieces: What Is Included and What Is Excluded on Jews (Speculations on the Reasons for the Exclusion of the Sabbatai Sevi Movement)

Interestingly, Evliya does not mention the Sabbatai Sevi incident in his ten-volume work, although it was an extremely important issue not only for the Jews but also for the Ottoman government because the upheavals that the movement caused among the empire’s Jewish population triggered upheavals in the empire’s economic life. Why does Evliya not mention such an important episode? We know that Vani Mehmed Efendi converted the false messiah, and that Sabbatai Sevi’s conversion had

\textsuperscript{120} \textit{Ibid.}, 74.
a great impact among both Muslims and Jews and gave new impetus to the Kâdîzâdelis.

Other Ottoman chroniclers are also silent on this issue, or they mention only Sabbatai Sevi's conversion. Why are Evliya and other Ottoman sources silent on what is arguably one of history's most important Jewish messianic movements? There are several possible explanations. One is the fact that key Ottoman sources for the period in question, particularly the archives of İzmir, are destroyed. Other relevant archival documents have yet to be located, according to some scholars. Secondly, according to some scholars, the Sabbatai Sevi episode simply was not terribly important in the eyes of Ottoman writers.

On the issue of Evliya's knowledge of the Sabbatian movement some questions come to mind. Evliya visits Kara Mustafa Pasha, the son-in-law of the Köprülü family who in 1676 became the grand vizier, following Köprülü Fazıl Ahmed Pasha, at the palace in Edirne to report on his journey after his travel in the Caucasus and southern Muscovy region, sometimes between January 1667 (the date of his return to Azov) and May 1667 (his return to Istanbul). Then, he stays in Istanbul until the end of 1667 and decides to join the Crete campaign. On his way out

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122 Scholem says that other than one letter written by the grand vizier to Osman Pasha (Scholem does not specify the identity of this Osman Pasha), all of the Turkish archives concerning Sabbatai have been lost. See Gershom Scholem, Sabbatai Sevi, 876. Küçük agrees on this issue and especially asserts that the 1648–1676 portion of the Mühimme defters in the Prime Ministry Archives, where orders from the Sublime Porte were recorded, were also lost. He raises the possibility of a conspiracy theory. (He probably means that the Sabbatians might have destroyed these documents.) See Küçük, Dönemler ve Dönemlik Tarihi, 166.

123 Jane Hathaway suggested this in a conversation, according to Matt Goldish in Goldish, The Sabbatean Prophets, footnote 131.
of the city, he stops at the palace and presents some gifts to Sultan Mehmed IV. Leaving the palace, he travels through Greece and, after the conquest of Crete in September 1669, he spends some time in Greece and Albania. Returning to Istanbul again in December of 1670, he stays there until his pilgrimage, starting in May 1661.\textsuperscript{124} Considering the proximity to the Sabbatai Sevi episode of the dates of his visits to the palace, Istanbul and the Balkans, and his close ties to the grand vizier and the sultan himself, it seems almost impossible for Evliya not to have had detailed knowledge of the Sabbatai Sevi episode. In addition, how could it be that a skillful statesman and a boon companion such as Evliya, who is knowledgeable on everything going on throughout the empire, never hears about the Sabbatai Sevi incident? Again, it seems impossible that Evliya did not have a chance to hear about the Sabbatai Sevi episode or its influences in several places that he visited before his death, which was supposedly in 1685. It is true that he spent his final ten years in Egypt and Sudan, yet it still seems strange that he evidently had no clues about the aftermath of the Sabbatai Sevi movement.

Another possibility is that the Sabbatai Sevi episode is excluded in the \textit{Seyahatname} because of "a period of relief" under the Köprülü family, especially after the conquest of Crete and some other successes under Fazıl Ahmed Pasha. It can be suggested that since the empire was no longer in a period of crisis, the Ottoman chroniclers and Evliya did not put so much emphasis on minorities, since only during times of crisis do chroniclers tend to mention problems regarding minorities.\textsuperscript{125}

\textsuperscript{124} Dankoff, \textit{An Ottoman Mentality}, 5,6 and 10,11 \textit{passim}.
\textsuperscript{125} I would like to thank to my colleague Günhan Börekçi for pointing out this possibility.
However, these explanations do not suffice to explain the silence of Evliya on Sabbatianism. One might also suggest that in view of the general trend toward restoring the vitality of Islam in the Ottoman state at this time, Muslim chroniclers and observers chose not to mention the episode. However, the chroniclers may have regarded Sabbatai Sevi’s conversion by Vani Mehmed Efendi as a sign of the supremacy of Islam and the Ottoman state, and therefore mentioned it. It is possible that Evliya does not mention Sabbatai Sevi’s conversion because it occurred in Edirne, and Evliya might not have had knowledge of that particular event, although it still seems strange that he does not even note the impact of the conversions of Sabbatai Sevi’s followers on society, as I mentioned above. Notwithstanding, he does mention the great fire of 1660 and how the houses of infidels burned down "with the help of God," as noted above, and thus alludes to the supremacy of Islam and the imperial authority.

2.4. Conclusion: The Seyahatname Revisited

In this chapter, I have dealt with Evliya Çelebi’s Seyahatname and argued that the timing of the work is important. Written between roughly 1640 and 1680, the Seyahatname serves as a mirror of the rise of conservatism and Islamization of space in Istanbul. It also witnesses the attempts to recover authority and legitimacy within the Empire. The author of the Seyahatname, although allegedly a liberal-minded man by the standards of his time, contributed to the accumulation and spread of the Islamic heritage of Istanbul and the empire. His use of the name Isambol, his claim of Ottoman kinship with the French royal family, his praise of the great fire of 1660, and his exaltation of past sultans are also significant. Overall, I believe, he supports
Islamic and imperial symbols, and therefore the relative absence of Jews in the
*Seyahatname* should be reconsidered. Is it possible that the Sabbatai Sevi incident is
so rarely mentioned in the chronicles and in the *Seyahatname* because it challenged
the supremacy of Islam and the Ottoman dynasty?

Thanks to the *Seyahatname*, we can see how an Ottoman statesman perceived
minorities under the Ottoman Empire, and how his thoughts and observations reflect
the views of both bureaucrats and the general population of the seventeenth century
on "the other."
CHAPTER 3

JEWS FROM THE ARMENIAN PERSPECTIVE: EREMYA ÇELEBI’S

PORTRAYAL OF THE JEWS IN HIS WORKS

In the previous chapter, I concentrated on Jewish life in Istanbul, especially during the first half of the 17th century, as reflected in Evliya’s Seyahatname. In this chapter, I will focus on the second half of the century, especially the period between the 1660s and 1680s, using the work of the Armenian author Eremya Çelebi.

I will make use of three of Eremya Çelebi’s works. Firstly, I will benefit from his poem The Jewish Bride, which concerns the love story of a Jewish woman and an Albanian Orthodox Christian man during the 1660s. The second of Eremya’s works that I will use is his History of Istanbul (İstanbul Tarihi), which gives an impression of Istanbul and the living conditions of the minorities, including the Jews of Istanbul, in the second half of the 17th century. Finally, I will examine Eremya’s poem together with another account by an Armenian priest named Arakel, both of whose accounts are mentioned in Galante’s work on Sabbatai Sevi and the influence of the Sabbatian movement on Istanbul Jewry.126

126 Eremya Çelebi Kömürçiyan, Eremya Çelebi Kömürçian’s Armeno-Turkish poem “The Jewish Bride,” eds. Avedis K. Sanjian and Andreas Tietze (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1981); idem, Sahte Yahudi Meshti Sabetay (The False Jewish Messiah Sabbatai) in Abraham Galante, Sabetay Sevi ve Sabetaycilerin Gelenekleri, 114-130; Armenian Priest Arakel, Badmotyoun Arakel Variabet Tavrijesvo (Historical Documents Concerning a Priest-Physician from Tabriz named Arakel) in Abraham
After providing some general information on Eremya Celebi and his works, I will proceed to analyze his views on Istanbul Jewry in the second half of the 17th century through the aforementioned works.

3.1. Eremya Çelebi and His Works

3.1.1. Eremya Çelebi’s Background and Education

Eremya Çelebi (1637-1695) was a great Armenian scholar in the Ottoman Empire who composed numerous literary works in a number of genres, including religious and didactic works, histories, diaries, and lyrical poetical works. He was among the preeminent scholars of his age who gained respect among other religious communities, including Muslims. He was also very knowledgeable about the empire’s structure, its capital, Istanbul, and inter-communal relations among the so-called millets of the Ottoman Empire.

Eremya Çelebi’s family had to migrate from the eastern regions of Anatolia because of the Jalali insurrections, a feature of the aforementioned crisis within the Ottoman Empire, and finally settled in Istanbul. Eremya was born there in 1637. He was first adopted by an influential Armenian, Ambakum, who supplied flour and bread to the Ottoman army and later on, after Ambakum’s death, he was patronized by Abro Çelebi, again a very influential Armenian with close ties to the government. He had a good education and learned a number of languages, including Turkish, Greek, Latin and some other European languages. He always stayed a layman.


127 Shortly after his birth, with his parents’ consent, Ambakum, who patronized Eremya’s family, adopted him, since he did not have any children. Sanjian and Tietze, The Jewish Bride, 15 and Hrand Der-Andreasyan, “Eremya Çelebi Konuçu’sun: Hayatı ve Eserleri,” in Eremya Çelebi, Istanbul Tarihi, x.
although he had the chance to climb the ladders of success in the church. He knew his community and its problems very well and was well-known by the notables and different confessional communities. According to some historians, he held various offices in the government, including offices in European embassies. Although there is no solid evidence suggesting this, it is known that he was very active in his community.\textsuperscript{128} He may have had some important connections thanks to his patron Abro Çelebi, however.

3.1.2. Eremya’s Works and Writing Styles

3.1.2.1. Eremya’s Writing Styles

As noted above, Eremya composed different important literary works in different genres and even a five-volume history of the Ottoman Empire that awaits translation from Armenian. Above all, he was a very well-known poet and used his poetry in a variety of works such as lyrical, religious, and historical works and even for calendrical themes. In addition, he produced works in prose such as histories, chronicles and his memoirs.\textsuperscript{129} A number of his works remain in manuscript. Only a few of his works have been translated into European languages. Among the well-known ones \textit{The History of Istanbul in the 17th century}, his poem \textit{The Jewish Bride}, and another poem on Sabbatai Sevi can be mentioned.

3.1.2.2. Eremya’s View on the Kadızadeli Movement and Islamization

Eremya calls the leading Kadızadeli leader Vani Efendi “\textit{Meş’um vaiz Vani Efendi}” (“Inauspicious Preacher Vani Efendi”). According to his account, Vani Efendi urged the sultan either to raise taxes on the \textit{dhimmis} or to kill all kefere

\textsuperscript{128} \textit{Ibid.},16.
\textsuperscript{129} \textit{Ibid.},21.
("infidels," yet it is not clear in the text if Vani means Christians or all infidels). 130

This evidence also supports Baer's arguments on Vani Efendi's urging the
Islamization of Istanbul in the 1660s. 131 Related to this issue, Eremya notes that Vani
Efendi caused the destruction of some of the newly reconstructed churches after the
Great Fire of 1660 in Istanbul by convincing the grand vizier, his patron Fazil Ahmed
Pasha. 132 In contrast, when a great fire broke out in Kumkapi, on the northern shore of
the Sea of Marmara, during the reign of Sultan Ibrahim in 1645, the situation was
quite different, according to what we learn from Eremya Celebi's Istanbul Tarihi
(History of Istanbul). When he visits the site of the fire, the sultan sees the burned
churches and asks why his servants did not reconstruct them. When they reply that
they were waiting for his decree, he gives the imperial ferman at soon as he returns to
the palace. 133

3.1.3. Significance of Eremya's Works and Their Limitations

Eremya was a very influential person within the Armenian community and
established important relations with other communities, as well. In addition, Abro
Celebi, who adopted Eremya at a very early age and patronized him, seems to have
been an important figure in Istanbul, and he probably opened the doors to success for
Eremya. These characteristics most likely enhanced his knowledge of the empire

130 Eremya Celebi, Istanbul Tarihi, 40.
131 Marc Baer, "The Great Fire of 1660...", 160,164. Vani Efendi's intolerant stand against non-
Muslims and his urge to make Istanbul a completely Muslim city is also discussed in Madeline C. Zilfi,
The Politics of Piety. The Ottoman Ulema in the Postclassical Age (1600-1800) (Minneapolis, MN:
Bibliotheca Islamica, 1988), 150-159; see especially 152 on Islamization.
132 Mikayel Camikyan (1738-1823), Badmutyan Hayots (Ermeni Tarihi/History of the Armenians), 3rd
vol. (Venice, 1786), 691,692, quoted in Eremya Celebi, Istanbul Tarihi, 85.
133 Ibid., 81. For a good example of the process of Islamization, which started slowly after the
conquest of Istanbul and continued during the 17th century, see also notes by Der-Andreasyan in
Eremya Celebi, Istanbul Tarihi, 234. Andreasyan says that by Eviyos's time, the Muslim population
had increased in Galata and that mosques started to appear there one by one.
and of other minorities. In addition, an outsider’s view of the Jewish community allows us to see events from a different point of view; that is, what we have here can be called “a minority from another minority’s point of view.” When one considers the conflicts among Turks, Jews, and other minorities, including the Christians, it is valuable to have an Armenian’s point of view on these events, sometimes as a representative of the 2\textsuperscript{nd} side and sometimes as a representative of the 3\textsuperscript{rd} side.

Nonetheless, when tracing the fortunes of the Jewish community, one has to take Eremya’s works with a grain of salt for a number of reasons. Initially, even though Eremya did not become a clergyman, he always backed Christianity and as an influential Armenian, also tried to shore up the Armenian communal identity.\textsuperscript{134} In his poems concerning the Jews, his antagonism toward the latter therefore can easily be recognized. Overall, Eremya was an outsider so far as Istanbul Jewry is concerned, and even a hostile outsider. Secondly, today’s historian cannot trust Eremya’s sources, since they are not mentioned in general and he might not have had reliable knowledge and information on Istanbul Jewry and events occurring at this time, such as the Sabbatai Sevi incident. It is possible that he added some hearsay accounts and interpreted some information as he deemed fit. Moreover, since some of the writings that I am using here were probably written for entertainment purposes, such as Eremya’s poem \textit{The Jewish Bride} and his poem on Sabbatai Sevi, he might have changed some information according to his poetic style and also included some exaggerations.

\textsuperscript{134} Sanjum and Tietze, \textit{The Jewish Bride}.46.
3.2. Eremya’s Works and the Jews of Istanbul

3.2.1. Istanbul Jewry in the 17th Century as Portrayed in *The Jewish Bride*

3.2.1.1. Introduction to *The Jewish Bride*

Initially, I will analyze one of Eremya Çelebi’s lyrical poems, *The Jewish Bride*, the title given by its editors, Sanjian and Tietze, who thought that the original long title of 3-4 lines was extremely old-fashioned and kept the New York Public Library’s short title.\(^{135}\) This poem tells the following story: After the Sabbatai Sevi incident, in the 1660s, Mrkada, a young Jewish lady who lives in Istanbul with her merchant family, falls in love with an Albanian Orthodox Christian baker whose name is Dimo. Upon the request of Dimo, she agrees to convert to Christianity and they escape to Wallachia (part of present-day Romania) to marry. The prince of Wallachia accepts them with great joy and organizes a great wedding for the couple. Learning about the “abduction” of her daughter, the mother alerts the Jewish community and the Ottoman authorities. This incident, of course, creates conflict between the Jews and the Greeks, who had historically been antagonistic and had suffered tensions recently because of the Sabbatai Sevi incident. The mother even pleads to the Sultan in the imperial *divan* to order her daughter to return; however, all her efforts are in vain. The poem ends with the sorrowful death of the mother because of her grief. Given the work’s popularity and the minute details provided in

\(^{135}\) The long title in Armenian and its English translation: *Vasn ekmekji arnavud Dimoyi umenn, or streaxzaghyjik mi hreyi Mrkada anan ev surb khordedj karoze nma zKristos ev aghjikn khostana ertal end nma ur ev kamitsi manuken* (The Story of the Arnavud Baker Dimo who fell in love with the Jewish maiden Mrkada and preached Christ to her with holy inspiration, and the maiden consented to accompany the youth wherever he wished to go.) See Sanjian and Tietze, *The Jewish Bride*, 39.
the Greek version, which even gives an exact date (July 15th, 1667) for the abduction of the lady and what Abraham Galante suggests in a brief note in one of his studies, this event may really have happened.

As a primary source, the poem could shed light on intercommunal relations in the empire, the nature of the Jewish community of Istanbul, and other key issues related to the second half of the 17th century. My aim in this part of my study is to explore these issues and ask some key questions, such as what was the nature of relations among the Jews, the state, and other minorities? Does the poem offer clues to the practices of the Jews during this period? And does the poem reflect the aftereffects of the Sabbatai Sevi episode?

Ereyma Çelebi composed two versions of this poem: one in Armenian and the other in Armeno-Turkish, that is, Turkish written in Armenian letters. There is also a very popular Greek version, as noted above, which was probably one of the first versions of the poem, written by an anonymous author. In fact, Ereyma apparently translated and edited the Greek version. That version has a more “serious, religious theme.” Avedis K. Sanjian, one of the editors of the critical edition of The Jewish Bride, claims that both the anonymous Greek author and Ereyma benefited from a common shorter, earlier version written immediately after the incident. The Greek version was first published in Venice in 1668 and Ereyma's versions were written later. Concerning this issue, Sanjian claims that since

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137 Sanjian and Tietze, The Jewish Bride, 43.
138 Ibid., 39.
139 The original edition of this Greek version was republished in 1877 according to Sanjian (Ibid., 39): Emile Legrand, Recueil de poèmes historiques en Grec vulgaire (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1877), 129-189.
according to the Armeno-Turkish version, the kaymakam (deputy) of Grand Vizier Fazil Ahmed Pasha was (Merzifonlu) Kara Mustafa Pasha, Eremya’s poem must have been written no later than June, 1670, the end of Mustafa Pasha’s term as kaymakam. There are a number of similarities and differences between the Greek and Armeno-Turkish versions. The Greek version contains "more and exact information" and I will make use of some important information from the Greek version as pointed out by Sanjian in my analysis of the poem, as well.

Besides the love story, Eremya emphasizes the superiority of Christianity over other religions, especially Judaism in this case. Furthermore, similar to his Armenian contemporaries, Eremya could not openly show the inferiority of Islam, according to his beliefs, yet he tries to imply it. In addition, Eremya, as in his other works, tries to underscore the importance of protecting the Armenian ethnic and religious identity within the empire, resisting Ottoman assimilationist policies, according to Sanjian—an interpretation that seems proto-nationalist. This information on Eremya’s works is also striking since it seems to reflect the ongoing Islamization process, especially in the 1660s, noted earlier.

As for the Turkish version of the poem, it needs to be analyzed by historians, since the editors and the reviewers have generally stressed only its linguistic aspects.

As a primary source, there are some problems with the poem. First of all, it is a lyrical poem and does not deal with historical details. Most of the poem emphasizes the love story and was probably written for simple entertainment and some limited

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140 Ibid., 39-41, passim.
141 Ibid., 39.
142 Ibid., 46.
didactic purposes. For the sake of poetry and art, Eremiya might well exaggerate or conceal some very important features of Jewish life. Secondly, since this is a poem written from an outsider's perspective, it cannot present the influence of the events within the Jewish community and the Jews' own perceptions. On the contrary, the author intends to mock the Jews and shows his antagonism towards them and their beliefs in a number of ways in the poem. He takes a satirical tone towards the Jews in general. According to a reviewer, the Armenian version is more neutral whereas the Turkish version has a polemical edge towards the Jews and is more detailed.\(^{143}\)

Therefore, we have to be alert to these kinds of shortcomings in this material when scrutinizing it.

3.2.1.2. The Jewish Bride on Istanbul Jewry

Here, I will point out some inferences and questions concerning the historical aspects of the poem.

From the very beginning of the poem, the author's mocking and sometimes insulting tone towards the Jews becomes evident. For instance, he habitually uses Çifud\(^{144}\) and Zhit,\(^{145}\) both of which are derogatory terms for Jews. The former epithet in particular was commonly used by writers during this period, as we also saw in Evliya Çelebi's work. Eremiya also uses a number of insulting words and stereotypical adjectives to describe the characteristics of the Jews, such as "cursed" and "stingy,"\(^{146}\) although these may be regarded as generic insults, they may also be

\(^{143}\) Bodrogligeti, review of The Jewish Bride, 546.

\(^{144}\) Sanjian and Tietze, The Jewish Bride, 75.

\(^{145}\) Ibid., 114.

\(^{146}\) Ibid., 126
directed toward the character of Jews specifically since the bride in question comes from a rich merchant family. The Greeks in particular mock the Jews, and especially the mother, after the incident a number of times.147

Eremya suggests that the Albanian baker delivered bread to the Jewish family. This seems curious when we consider that the Jews were strict in terms of *halakha*. According to Jewish dietary law, they would need to make sure that the bread was kosher. It is possible that they had an overseer or made arrangements with the baker concerning the ingredients, as noted in Evliya’s *Seyahatname*.

In Judaism, religious identity passes through the mother. Despite this fact, however, when the baker reveals his love for the young lady, the mother suggests that he convert. Towards the end of the poem, she makes it explicit that she regards it as possible for him even to become the chief rabbi of the community (this may be exaggerated).148 This seems significant since she does not see a problem in a marriage like this at all and even suggests that a Gentile could become a leading figure in the Jewish community after conversion.

The mother also points out that the baker will wear a blue hat after his conversion,149 suggesting that some clothing restrictions applied to Jews in Istanbul during the seventeenth century. Specifically, the color of their headgear appears to have been regulated; it is also possible that they were forbidden to

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wear turbans, as Muslims did. This, however, was a considerably milder restriction than the yellow badges imposed on Jews in Europe at this time. 150

In another stanza, the Jewish girl accepts conversion to Christianity very quickly. Here, the author may wish to show the superiority of his religion, since the Albanian does not accept Judaism when he is asked to convert, or even after his successful courtship of the girl. However, if this incident really occurred, considering the fluid identities of the age 151 and the timing of the event just after the conversion of Sabbatai Sevi, which was a source of great shame to the Jews, the girl may have begun to question her Jewish identity, although she probably had a good religious education if her family came from the merchant class. I would suggest that the weakening rabbinical authority and the influence of the Sabbatian movement may have made conversion easier and further weakened the Jewish girl’s belief.

We learn from the Greek version of this poem that the Jews of Constantinople went to the chief rabbi upon learning of the girl’s abduction, and the rabbi recommended that they punish their "mortal enemies"—that is, the Greeks—by bribing the Ottoman officials, especially the kaymakam (in this case the chief official of that particular district), with thirty purses of money. The Jews wanted to hang the couple upon their seizure, yet all their efforts were in vain. Twelve of the imperial guards

known as *bostancı* were sent to search for the couple but were unable to find them. Furthermore, when their horses were stolen on the way back, they demanded reimbursement from the Jews. In addition to all this, the Jews suffered the constant mockery of the Greeks and Albanians in Istanbul, who called them "Albanian Wife" (*Arnavut karısı*). They had to pay additional bribes to the *kaymakam* and chief of police (*subaşı*) to silence these hecklers, although they continued to harass the Jews for a long time.\(^{153}\)

After the couple’s disappearance, when the girl’s mother despair of seeing her daughter again, she starts to lament and curse the Albanian. In one stanza, she wishes to put him in "the cellar of the Rabbis."\(^ {154}\) This shows that the Jews had autonomy to some extent. They were able to punish criminals in their own small prisons underneath their synagogues, and this must have been an effective and well-established system of punishment, since the mother does not mention a well-known Ottoman prison such as Yedikule, for instance. The fact that the poet is well-aware of this prison is one more indication that his knowledge of Jewish and Muslim community life is quite solid, although he does make occasional errors, as the editors point out.\(^ {155}\) Notwithstanding the mention of “the dungeon of the rabbis,” it seems unlikely that the Jewish community authorities could have punished the Albanian themselves had they been able to capture him. The mother herself seems to realize

\(^{152}\) *Bostancı* were imperial guards who had jurisdiction over the shores and waters of the Bosphorus and were frequently charged with the execution of grandees (New Redhouse Turkish-English Dictionary [Istanbul: Redhouse Yayınevi, 1981]).

\(^{153}\) Sanjian and Tietze, *The Jewish Bride*, 42.


\(^{155}\) *Ibid.*, 140-142 passim; for the mistake see 140, stanza 200. There are references showing Eremya’s knowledge of Islam to some extent in his *İstanbul Tarihi*, as well. At one point, for example, he gives information on Mevlana and the Mevlevi he has encountered. See Eremya Çelebi, *İstanbul Tarihi*, 40.
this, since she pleads to the Ottoman authorities and even eventually to the sultan. If
the Ottoman authorities arrested him, they would probably punish him themselves
since this was a case between two different minority communities. Of course, it is
always possible that the mother’s outbursts are products of artistic license and
exaggeration. Nonetheless, this stanza suggests that the Jewish community had an
autonomous mode of punishment at least for intracommunal crimes, such as the
violation of Jewish law.

According to Halil İnalcık, one of the preeminent scholars of Ottoman history,
in the Near Eastern state tradition, justice (adalet) is one of the pillars of the state.
Therefore, İnalcık suggests that in a number of imperial decrees (fermans) and
petitions, key words pertaining to justice are emphasized.\textsuperscript{156} Again, İnalcık suggests
that in a number of ferms (imperial decrees) and petitions some key words are
emphasized.\textsuperscript{157} Among these words zulum ("oppression") is important, and in this
poem, the Jews say that they have never seen such zulum before although they have
been Ottoman subjects for centuries. Again when the Jewish communal authorities
advise the mother on how to present her case to the imperial divan, they say: “Say: ‘I
have been wronged,’” which can also be translated as “Say: ‘I have been
oppressed.’” Thus they show the importance of this key word in the Ottoman imperial
council.

\textsuperscript{156} Halil İnalcık, \textit{The Ottoman Empire: The Classical Age 1300-1600}, trans. Norman Itzkowitz and
Colin Imber (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1973), 89. The divan also functioned as a kind of a
cabinet in today’s understanding, where decisions were made by the members representing the
political, judicial and financial departments of the government. For more information, see \textit{ibid.}, 89-
103 passim. See also Halil İnalcık, \textit{Osmanlı'da Devlet, Hukuk, Adâlet (State, Law and Justice in the
Ottoman Empire)} (Beyoğlu, Istanbul: Eren, 2000).

\textsuperscript{157} \textit{Ibid.}, 91.
In addition, every subject within the empire was able to petition to the divan directly as of the 15th century\textsuperscript{158} and therefore, although this was a relatively minor case, the mother is able to present her case in a court as high as the imperial council. This also shows that the divan continued to function as a court to hear cases during this period, as well.

There are also a number of references to and mockery of the Sabbatai Sevi incident. During this time the Jews were asked by their Muslim and Christian neighbors about the coming of the messiah in a satirical way, such as: "Has Çifut/Prophet / Hakham / Yezid\textsuperscript{159} come?" They even composed songs to mock the Jews at this time.\textsuperscript{160} To stop the insults against them, the Jews had to give wine barrels to the agha (head) of the Janissaries.\textsuperscript{161} Thus, their shame was unbearable, and in Eremya's poem, there are references to these jokes at the Jews' expense. For instance, at one point, Eremya Çelebi says: "This has surpassed the story of Geldi [lit., 'He came']", meaning that the conflict over the abduction of the Jewish girl surpassed the Sabbatai Sevi incident.\textsuperscript{162}

In another stanza of the poem, Eremya Çelebi blames the Jews for bringing false witnesses to the court to achieve their aims. They rejoice when they hear that if they bring witnesses bearing false testimony, then the authorities can arrest innocent

\textsuperscript{158} Ibid., 91.
\textsuperscript{159} Here, "Yezid" alludes to the Umayyad caliph Yezid (Yazid) ibn Mu’awiya (r. 680-83), who is widely reviled among both Sunni and Shi’ite Muslims for usurping the caliphate from the family of the Prophet Muhammad and for ordering the massacre of Husayn ibn ‘Ali and his family at Karbala in 680. This seems to have been a common insult in the 17th century.
\textsuperscript{160} Galante, Sabetay Sevi ve Sabetaycilirm Gelenekleri, 118.
\textsuperscript{161} Ibid., 119.
\textsuperscript{162} Sanjian and Tietze, The Jewish Bride, 123. See also 116.
Greek merchants, according to the poem.\textsuperscript{163} This implies that they commonly brought false witnesses, an accusation that emphasizes the hatred of the author towards the Jews.

During the interrogation of the Greek merchants at the divan, when asked if they were responsible for the abduction of the Jewish girl, they say that the (elopement) of virgins, especially "those of the impure Jewish race" is none of their business and they were not affiliated with the event at all.\textsuperscript{164} Yet, it is noteworthy that they claim here that the Jewish race is "impure." In another stanza, when the Albanian baker Dimo writes to his brother, who is with his family in Wallachia, he says that he has been harassed by whoever hears about his love for Mrkada (probably meaning especially Christians), since she is a mekruh Çifid kizi ("an impure Jewish girl").\textsuperscript{165} This reminds one of the racist claims of the Spaniards against the conversos (Jewish converts to Catholicism in Spain), concerning the "impurity" of their blood during the early modern period, as pointed out by Rosenstock.\textsuperscript{166} It is possible that the Jews were humiliated with claims of the "impurity of their blood" by the Christians in Istanbul, as well.

However, the Jews cannot achieve their aims, since the authorities claim that according to shari'\'a, they cannot accept non-Muslims as witnesses.\textsuperscript{167} First of all, this implies that the non-Muslims could not be witnesses, even though the case was

\textsuperscript{163} Ibid., 153.
\textsuperscript{164} Ibid., 151.
\textsuperscript{165} Ibid., 87.
\textsuperscript{166} Rosenstock claims that the conversos, and all Jews were accused of having "impure" blood, since they were "the children of the devil"(John 8:44) and that was why they also killed Jesus(decide). Bruce Rosenstock, "Messianism, Machismo and 'Marranism': The Case of Abraham Miguel Cardozo," in Daniel Boyarin, Daniel Izkovitz, and Ann Pellegrini, eds., \textit{Queer Theory and the Jewish Question} (New York:Columbia University Press,2003), 203.
\textsuperscript{167} Sanjian and Tietze, \textit{The Jewish Bride}, 154.
between non-Muslims. Sanjian agrees with this and claims that Jews were not accepted as witnesses because the case was heard in a Muslim court. Yet, according to Yavuz Ercan, non-Muslims could be witnesses without any problem in this kind of a case and they had the complete right to be witnesses for other dhimmis. Or did the authorities refuse the Jews' request on the pretext that the Jews might have provided false witnesses? Certainly, this was not the first case between different religious minority communities of the empire to be tried in a Muslim court, yet this case seems contradictory to standard procedure.

The tension and even hatred were not only one-sided certainly. At a number of points in the poem, the Jews express a preference for Muslims over Christians in their social relations. According to conventional accounts of Jewish life under the

168 Sanjian and Tietze, The Jewish Bride, 44. Schacht and Hamilton agrees on the issue that dhimmis cannot be witnesses in the Muslim court, unless the case is among the dhimmis, that is, similar to this case that we are dealing with here. In fact, Hamilton mentions that according to some Muslim scholars dhimmis did not have a right to be witnesses at all, since the non-Muslims "could not be just". Bilmèn also asserts that non-Muslims cannot be witnesses. See Joseph Schacht, An Introduction to Islamic Law (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1964), 132; Ömer Nasuhi Bilmèn, Hukuk-ı İslamiyye ve Istilahat-ı Fikhiyye Kamasu (Istanbul : Bilmèn Yayinevi, 1976), vol. 8, 170; Ali ibn Abi Bakr Marghinani, The Hedaya, or Guide; a Commentary on the Mussulman Laws, trans. Charles Hamilton, 2d ed. (Lahore: New Book Co., 1957), 362.

169 Ercan, Osmanlı Yönetiminde Gayrimüslimler , 250. Yet in cases between non-Muslims and Muslims, non-Muslims were not accepted as witnesses, although a Muslim had the right to be a witness: Ibid. However, in practice, it was not uncommon for the non-Muslims to be accepted as equal witnesses, sometimes by taking oaths. See Ronald C. Jennings, "Zimmis(Non-Muslims) in Early 17th-Century Ottoman Judicial Records: The Sharia Court of Anatolian Kayseri," Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient 21 no.3 (1978): 257-261; and Najwa Al-Qattan, "Dhimmis in the Muslim Court: Documenting Justice in Ottoman Damascus, 1775-1860," unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, Harvard University, 1996, ch. 3 passim. Some of the oaths were humiliating for the non-Muslims and were "reminiscent of the notorious oath More Judaico in Europe." See Stillman, The Jews of Arab Lands..., 72-73. For an earlier example from the second half of the 8th century see pp. 165-166 and for an oath from the Mamluk period see pp. 267-268.

170 The application to government courts by Jews was very common. For some examples, see G. Goitein, A Mediterranean Society..., vol. 2, 398-402; for the High Middle Ages and for a number of examples during the 17th century in the Ottoman context, see Marc Baer, "Honored by the Glory of Islam...", 244-263 and 263-276 passim. Goitein says that the Jews used the Muslim courts especially for three reasons: firstly, if the Islamic law seemed more advantageous for them (especially in terms of inheritance, this was very common); secondly, if one of the sides was not satisfied with the Jewish court's decision; finally, to secure the legality of deeds so that they could be used as proofs in the case of litigation at a Muslim court. S.D. Goitein, A Mediterranean Society..., vol. 2, 398.
Ottomans, the Jews regarded themselves as close to the Ottomans, just as the
Ottomans were lenient toward Jews during their conquests, partially because of the
fact that they were a minority, relative to the Christians, in the conquered territories.
Yet, this standard view was recently challenged on the grounds of Bayezid II's
conservatism.\textsuperscript{171} Eremya conveys this sentiment in one stanza of his poem, when the
mother says:

\begin{quote}
Woe that she has become a Christian!
We would not have minded, if she had married a Turk. \textsuperscript{172}
\end{quote}

This may also reflect the Jews' perception of Christians as idolaters, whereas they
regarded the Muslim Ottomans as monotheists like them. As noted in Chapter 2, the
Ottomans in some cases saw the Jews as allies against the Christians. \textsuperscript{173}

3.2.2. Istanbul Jewry in the 17\textsuperscript{th} Century As Portrayed in \textit{Istanbul Tarihi} (History of
Istanbul)

Eremya wrote his \textit{Istanbul Tarihi} upon the encouragement of Vardapet
Vardan (1630?-1704), who was a well-known Amenian scholar and the head priest
of a monastery in Bitlis, a city in eastern Anatolia, and dedicated his work to Vardan,
as well. This work was intended to be a short description of Istanbul with some short
stories, through an imaginary trip around the coastal parts of the city. Eremya wrote
this work in a poetic style and the language of the book is \textit{kirapar}, that is, the old

\textsuperscript{171} Avigdor Levy ed., \textit{The Jews of the Ottoman Empire}, 11. Levy claims that the official policy during
the time of Bayezid II tried to control and curb Jewish settlement in Istanbul. In addition, Bayezid II
tried to apply Islamic law strictly towards the non-Muslims. He was responsible for the closure of
some synagogues, the restriction of some of the privileges given to the minorities, and even the
conversion of some prominent Jews under pressure. \textit{Ibid.}, 11 and 22.

\textsuperscript{172} Sanjian and Tietze, \textit{The Jewish Bride}, 116.

\textsuperscript{173} See "Jews in the Seyahatname" in the second chapter and footnote 75.
Armenian. Some of the words are identical to the Turkish of the time. Eremya started to write the book in 1661 and after some intervals he managed to finish it in 1684. The first two chapters of the book were written between 1661 and 1664. However, the chapters that contain information related to Istanbul Jewry were written between 1673 and 1684.

In terms of the settlement style of Jews and Armenians in the 1670 and 80s, Eremya mentions that Armenians lived not in separate quarters, but mixed with other groups in the city. Yet, we know that although there were no ghettos, Jews tended to live together in separate neighborhoods.

Again, at a number of points, Eremya claims that Jews, especially wealthy ones, always lived by the sea. For instance, in the district of Balatkapısi, south of the Golden Horn, Jews lived in the outer parts that are close to the sea whereas other communities lived in the inner parts. Again in Ayazmakapısi, which was very close to Unkaplı in the old city, some rich Turks constructed yalıs (villas by the sea) and then rented them to Jews. This may be a sign of the relative wealth of some Jews during this period, since waterfront property should be more expensive as it is today. Eremya provides us with a number of examples of this phenomenon. On this issue, Uriel Heyd claims that although they used to "live at some distance from

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174 Hrand Der-Andreasyan’s introduction in Eremya Çelebi, İstanbul Tarihi, xxiii, xxiv passim.
175 Eremya Çelebi, İstanbul Tarihi, 58, 59.
176 Ibid., 19. At another point, he mentions that there were very arrogant Jews in Kuruçeşme, which is between Arnavucaköy and Ortaköy, although he does not give a clear explanation for this. He probably means that their wealth made them arrogant: Ibid., 41.
177 Ibid., 16.
178 For more examples, see Ibid., 17, 19, 36, 41, 48. Eremya even indirectly criticizes this situation, implying his resentment of it: Ibid., 47.
the shore" in 1638, the Jews started to settle "either on or near the shores of the Golden Horn or the Bosphorus" after the fires of 1633 and 1660, as reflected in the poll-tax registers of 1683 and 1691.¹⁷⁹

As a reference to the Jews’ tendency toward self-isolation, Eremya notes that the Jews even also had their own bazaars (çarşılı) in a number of neighborhoods, such as Hasköy and Okmeydani, where they lived together with Greeks.¹⁸⁰ Furthermore, he says that Hasköy had the largest Jewish population of any neighborhood in Istanbul during this period. This district seems to have had considerable sea traffic with its docks and ships from important places. Apparently, after their expulsion from the central parts of the city and their concentration in outer parts of the city, such as Hasköy, the Jews contributed to the development of trade in these quarters, as well.

From Eremya’s account, we realize that the Jews of Istanbul worked in a number of different fields, especially related to their community’s needs; here, Eremya’s account corroborates the information provided by Evliya Çelebi. For instance, Eremya says that near the New Mosque at Eminönü—probably around the 1680s—there were around 100 Jewish butchers and green-grocers.¹⁸¹ The Jews who settled in Eminönü before the 1660s were mainly Karaites—that is, Jews who reject the rabbinical oral tradition. When the New Mosque was constructed, the Karaites were given new houses in Hasköy and the state gave life-time tax-exemption to forty

¹⁷⁹ Uriel Heyd, “The Jewish Community of Istanbul in the 17th century,” Oriens 6 (1953): 312,313. At the end of the expulsion of the Jews from the central parts of the city, the Romaniot Jews "succumbed to the Sephardim whose predominance they had so long resisted." Ibid., 313.
¹⁸⁰ Ibid., 19,32, 47.
¹⁸¹ Ibid., 15.
members of the congregation. Yet, since the location of their synagogue could not have been sold according to the law, the state gave an annual rent to them.¹⁸²

Again in Kasımpaşa and nearby neighborhoods north of the Golden Horn, there were a number of Jewish homes, again by the sea, with stores underneath the living quarters. Eremya says that the Jews also sold fish to guests, suggesting a different profession here. He also mentions that there were Jewish butchers in these districts, as well.¹⁸³ However, as a contradiction between çelebi, Evliya claims that in Kasımpaşa, the Jews only kept their shops but in the evenings went back to their homes in other neighborhoods. This difference may also reflect the different periods when Evliya and Eremya composed their works, as well, even though Eremya and Evliya were contemporaries.¹⁸⁴

When Eremya describes the slave market in Istanbul, he notes that there were a number of Jewish slave owners who trained their slaves to acquire exotic skills such as dancing and singing, and sold them in the market.¹⁸⁵

Similar to Evliya’s Seyahatname, Eremya’s account provides us with examples of peaceful symbiosis, as well as the conflicts of the period, among Jews and other confessional communities of the empire. As a good example of the reciprocal influences among the different groups, the veneration of a Muslim saint, Cafer Baba, in the Zindankapi neighborhood of Istanbul can be given. According to Eremya’s account, there were separate sections at Cafer Baba’s tomb complex for

¹⁸³ Ibid., 17.
¹⁸⁴ Ibid., 209.
¹⁸⁵ See ibid., 56,57, and pp. 298-99 n. 6.
women and men, as well as separate sections for different communities of the empire, such as sections for Turks, Jews, and Christians. He mentions that among the visitors to the tomb, there were debtors and murderers who came to pray for the saint’s help.\textsuperscript{186} It is interesting that, similarly to the custom in other parts of the empire and to our observations today, the tomb of a saint of a certain religion may attract visitors from different religions.

Again an ayazma (sacred fountain of the Greeks) in Hasköy was a subject of similar veneration by different groups in Istanbul, since the water was believed to have healing power. Eremya mentions that even Turks sacrificed animals at this site “even [in] those days.” In addition, there was a “kore of Jews” (Jewish cemetery) close to this place.

However, the symbiosis was not without conflicts, and serious tensions erupted between the Jews and Greeks over some Jewish customs that were seen as disrespectful by the Greeks. These two communities were consistently antagonistic toward one another, as portrayed in Eremya’s \textit{Jewish Bride}.\textsuperscript{187} When one considers the bigger picture at this time, the Sabbatai Sevi incident and the abduction of the Jewish lady (if it really occurred) and the continuous struggles\textsuperscript{188} between the Greeks and the Jews might have triggered these kinds of conflicts during this period.

Eremya also gives some important insights about the Jewish beliefs and practices of his days. For instance, he mentions that the Jews had cemeteries in

\textsuperscript{186} \textit{Ibid.}, 15, 16.
\textsuperscript{187} \textit{Ibid.}, 32.
\textsuperscript{188} Maybe the conflicts were exacerbated by the financial rivalry of the period, such as the shift of governmental jobs from the Jews to the Christians, which was also partially due to the lack of trust of the government in the Jews. On this power struggle between the two groups also see Marc David Baer, "The Great Fire of 1660...", 162; and Avigdor Levy, ed., \textit{The Jews of the Ottoman Empire}, 78.
Hasköy and Kuzguncuk and that they considered the latter to be part of the soil of Jerusalem. 189 This issue also seems interesting and deserves to be analyzed in detail.

Towards the end of his work, Eremya criticizes the maltreatment of people, especially Greeks, who had to give bribes to visit their ziyaretgahs (religious centers), 190 and Armenians, by the Bostancıbașı and the Bostancılar under his command, and provides related stories of their oppression. 191 As noted above, these were imperial guards who had jurisdiction over the shores and waters of the Bosphorus. Eremya gives some examples related to their arbitrary and unjust behaviors towards Armenians as examples of their oppression. These imperial guards also frequently took bribes from people. At one point, Eremya says:

May God protect all of us from the oppression, beatings, punishments and dungeon of the Bostancıbașı. Because in several places some people who had to suffer from his beatings became Muslims. 192

Eremya does not explain, however, whether the Bostancıbașı forced some people to convert to Islam or whether they chose to accept the dominant faith due to the advantages of being Muslim. This "forced conversion" issue may be related to the ongoing policy of conversion around this time as mentioned by Baer and Zilfi 193 and needs to be studied in greater detail. At any rate, this episode shows that during this period, even in the capital, the minorities faced difficulties due to maltreatment by some of the government officers.

189 Komurjian, Istanbul Tarihi, 277.
190 Ibid., 51.
191 Ibid., 50, 51, 52.
192 Ibid., 52.
193 Baer, "Honored by the Glory of Islam...," chs. III and IV; and Madeleine Zilfi, The Politics of Piety..., 150-159 passim.
Some contradictions also exist between Evliya and Eremya Çelebi. However, I suspect that these differences result from the fact that the two authors visited these places during different periods, although this issue deserves further investigation. One of these differences has to do with the residences of Jews in Kasımpaşa, noted earlier. In another contradiction, although Eremya says that there were no Turks in Kuruçeşme,\(^\text{194}\) his contemporary Evliya mentions that there was a mosque and a Muslim neighborhood with a bath here, as Der-Andreasyan has pointed out.\(^\text{195}\) It is also possible that one or both authors made wrong observations or provided anachronistic information.\(^\text{196}\)

3.2.3. The Sabbatai Sevi Episode according to Eremya’s Poem Sahte Yahudi Mesih\(^\text{197}\) Sabetay (The False Jewish Messiah Sabbatai)

In dealing with the Jews of the Ottoman Empire in the 17\(^{th}\) century, one cannot overlook one of the most important messianic movements in Jewish history, that is, the Sabbatai Sevi movement, and its influences on Istanbul Jewry, if any. Thus, in this part of my study, I will examine this movement and its influence on Istanbul Jewry through the accounts of two related Armenian sources, with an emphasis on Eremya Celebi’s poem on Sabbatai Sevi. I will use Eremya’s Poem on Sabbatai Sevi and some inferences from the translation of Badmoutyoun Arakel Variabet Tavrijesvo (Historical Documents Concerning a Priest-Physician from Tabriz named Arakel)\(^\text{198}\). Given the numerous similarities between the two works and

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\(^{194}\) Komurjian, *Istanbul Tarihi*, 41.

\(^{195}\) See ibid., 258 n. 74.

\(^{196}\) Minna Rozen mentions some of the anachronistic information given by Evliya related to the Jewish neighborhoods such as Hasköy, for instance. See Minna Rozen, "Public Space and Private Space Among the Jews of Istanbul in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries," *Turchia* 36 (1998), 340, 341.
since Arakel mentions Eremya's work in his study, I believe he benefited from Eremya's poem. (I use the translations of these two sources provided in Abraham Galante's work.)

3.2.3.1. An Analysis of Two Armenian Accounts of Sabbatai Sevi

Although Gershom Scholem mentions Eremya Çelebi's and Arakel's accounts in his work on Sabbatai Sevi, there are sections pertinent to the status of Istanbul Jewry in 1660s that he does not cover.

Eremya claims that Sabbatai Sevi went to Jerusalem some time after he proclaimed his messiahhood in 1665. However, he does not mention Sabbatai Sevi's expulsion from Izmir, so perhaps he did not know about this incident. This lacuna suggests that Eremya had just a general idea of the early course of Sabbatai Sevi's movement. Again according to Eremya, Sabbatai Sevi requested a special welcome in Jerusalem, relying on his popularity at this time.

As noted in the above analysis of Eremya's poem The Jewish Bride, the Jews were humiliated by Istanbul's populace after the arrest of Sabbatai Sevi. They were constantly asked, Geldi mi? ("Has [the messiah] come?"). Arakel also mentions the same humiliation in his account. Eremya also says that games were even invented to mock Jews at this time. The humiliation was so much that the Jews had to bribe the agha of the Janissaries in Istanbul to silence the hecklers.

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198 Ibid., 113-143.
199 Scholem first mentions these two accounts when he gives different accounts of the voyage of Sabbatai Sevi to Constantinople. See Scholem, Sabbatai Sevi, 447 n. 272.
201 Ibid., 118, 133, 134.
202 Ibid., 118.
203 Ibid., 134, more detailed in Eremya's account on p. 119.

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Ereyma claims that even Jewish women, who ordinarily did not go out in public—an observation that gives some idea of the conservatism of Istanbul’s Jewish community and its similarities to the Muslim community—did their best to visit Sabbatai Sevi when he was imprisoned.\textsuperscript{204}

During the summer of 1666, the Jews had great expectations for the messiah, Sabbatai Sevi. According to Ereyma’s account, some of the Jewish elders declared that Sabbatai would be their king, and he would destroy the Christians, take over the governmental authority and force the Turks to pay \textit{hararç} (a tax paid by the non-Muslims). The Jews kept praying and even started to indulge in strange acts such as dancing, looking at the sky, grinding their teeth, and salivating.\textsuperscript{205} Ereyma obviously exaggerates the issue, yet at the same time, he clearly conveys his point of view as an Armenian Christian. Later on, he claims, a solar eclipse occurred on 2 July 1666, during those days when the Jews were waiting for signs of the messiah. At this, the Jews claimed that they had been waiting for just such an event and started preparations for a magnificent feast for the advent of their messiah.\textsuperscript{206} According to both Armenian accounts, there were even rumors\textsuperscript{207} suggesting that the Jews had started to bear arms since they wanted to be prepared to establish their kingdom by forcibly throwing off Muslim rule once the messiah arrived.\textsuperscript{208}

In Istanbul and in several places around the world (where exactly is not clear in the poem), Jews and Christians began to debate the validity of Sabbatai Sevi’s

\textsuperscript{204} Ibid., 120.
\textsuperscript{205} Ibid., 124.
\textsuperscript{206} Ibid., 125.
\textsuperscript{207} According to Ereyma this was the reality rather than a rumor. See Ibid.
\textsuperscript{208} Ibid., 139.
movement. Then, they made vows contingent on the result of Sabbatai Sevi’s mission. The Christians promised to convert to Judaism if Sabbatai Sevi proved to be the real messiah, whereas the Jews said: “If Sabbatai’s sayings prove to be wrong, put all of us to the sword.” They recorded their promises before the divan (possibly an exaggeration), judges and the civil authorities and started to wait for the end.

Notwithstanding, Scholem claims that it was not “the boldness of the Jewish talk about the coming of the messianic kingdom” that alerted the Ottoman authorities, but rather the disruption of trade, especially foreign trade, which was for the major part controlled by the Jews. He also mentions that a number of Jews made preparations for their voyage to the Holy Land and this also led to the suspicion of the government and the Turkish population, causing serious clashes between them.

Thus, Scholem agrees that the Sabbatian movement had a visible impact on Istanbul Jewry.

In Eremya’s other poem about Sabbatai Sevi, mentioned above, the author gives the impression that a rabbi from Poland converts to Islam. After seeing the

209 Ibid., 126.
210 Ibid., 140.
211 Scholem, Sabbatai Sevi, 449.
212 Oddly enough, there is no mention of Sabbatai Sevi in the responsa of two leading rabbis of Istanbul who were contemporaries of Sevi. Weissberg notes his amazement at the silence of the rabbis. See Victor H. Weissberg, “Jewish Life in Seventeenth Century Turkey as Reflected in the Responsa of Rabbi Jacob Alfandari and Rabbi Joseph Katzavi,” unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Hebrew Union College (Cincinnati), 1970, 267. There is also no mention of dönmes (Sevi’s followers who converted to Islam but kept Sabbatian practices secretly) but only of apostates in general: ibid., 254. Weissberg says that the rabbis advised good relations with apostates in the hope that they would return to Judaism: ibid., 258. Reasons for this advice included the Jewish perception of Islam as a monothestic religion and not an “idolatrous” religion like Christianity, and the possibility that Jewish widows could marry apostates. See Ibid., 257 and 255, respectively. For the relations of Jews with gentiles during this period see ibid., chapter 6 especially. I have been unable to acquire a paper by Cengiz Şişman in which the author makes the counter-argument that the Sabbatian movement did not have much influence in Istanbul: Cengiz Şişman, “The Sabbatian Movement (1665-66) and the Fate of Ottoman Jewry,” presented at the Middle East Studies Association Annual meeting, Anchorage, Alaska, November 2003.
damage that Sabbatai Sevi has done to his religion and the shame of the Jews, the rabbi decides to convert and even informs the authorities of Sabbatai Sevi’s wrongdoings, thus triggering Sabbatai Sevi’s trial and his own conversion. Schollem mentions that this rabbi was R. Nehemiah Kohen and he was, in fact, an apostle of Sabbatai Sevi, according to some accounts. Yet, when he came and met Sabbatai Sevi, they started to dispute the validity of Sabbatai Sevi’s messiahship. Nehemiah claimed that since he was the Messiah ben Joseph (the pioneer messiah who heralds the advent of the real messiah, Messiah ben David) and had not finished his mission yet, Sabbatai Sevi could not be the Messiah ben David. As for the apostasy of the rabbi, Schollem mentions that accounts are divided on the accuracy of the incident, and the issue remains uncertain. According to some accounts, Nehemiah professed his Jewish faith again upon returning to Poland. Incidentally, Schollem points out another possible explanation for the brief conversion of the rabbi, that is, his fear of the vengeance of the Sabbatians, which is corroborated by Nehemiah’s own account. Furthermore, lacking the necessary Ottoman archival documents on the issue, Schollem claims that "it is impossible to determine to what extent Nehemiah’s action was the immediate cause of the subsequent events (that is, the trial and the apostasy of Sevi[italics are mine])."

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213 Galante, Sabetay Sevi ve Sabetaycılardan Gelenekleri, 127, 141.
214 Schollem, Sabbatai Sevi, 660.
215 According to another account, Nehemiah was a skilled kabbalist and tried to disprove the messianic claims of Sabbatai Sevi by referring to kabbalistic books (ibid., 663). Yet, Schollem leans more towards the first account mentioned above, although preserving certain elements of the second account (ibid., 665).
216 Ibid., 666-668 passim.
217 Ibid., 668.
Interestingly, in both Armenian accounts, the trial and conversion of Sabbatai Sevi (Thursday, 16 September 1666\textsuperscript{218}), were public events.\textsuperscript{219} Moreover, both accounts profess that Sabbatai Sevi claimed that he had been a Muslim for twenty years by then: “It has been 20 years for me to deal with his [Muhammad’s] book and believe and practice it.” \textsuperscript{220} Concerning these issues, Scholem evaluates a number of accounts and, preferring the Ottoman sources, claims that the trial was confined to a small gathering of high officials of the divan, while the sultan witnessed the event from behind the kafes (a latticed alcove).\textsuperscript{221} Therefore, we can surmise that Eremya derived his account from hearsay or exaggerated the events for the sake of emphasizing the “triumph” of Christianity. As for Sabbatai Sevi’s alleged study of Islam and departure from his faith twenty years before his public apostasy, Scholem regards it as likely that Sabbatai Sevi would have claimed that he had not followed the traditional halakha for twenty years.\textsuperscript{222}

Finally, I would like to mention a point that Scholem did not address concerning the aftermath of Sabbatai Sevi’s conversion. Eremya Çelebi claims that since the Ottomans wanted to Turkicize Sabbatai Sevi, they sent him to Vani Efendi’s school, where Sabbatai Sevi became a classmate of Ghilinoz.\textsuperscript{223} Galante leaves a question mark after the name Ghilinoz, and I found no mention of this name in Scholem’s work. Scholem merely notes that Sabbatai Sevi became Vani’s student and that while teaching Sevi Islam, Vani also acquired some knowledge concerning

\textsuperscript{218} Ibid., 674.
\textsuperscript{219} Galante, Sabetay Sevi ve Sabetayciların Geleinekleri, 128, 141, 142.
\textsuperscript{220} Ibid., 142.
\textsuperscript{221} Scholem, Sabbatai Sevi, 674.
\textsuperscript{222} Ibid., 680.
\textsuperscript{223} Galante, Sabetay Sevi ve Sabetayciların Geleinekleri, 130.
the Jewish faith. However, I suspect that since the recently converted hekimbaşi (chief physician of the palace) Hayatizade’s original name is given as Guidom, according to one of the sources mentioned in Scholem’s work, this may the identity of Sabbatai Sevi’s “schoolmate.”

3.3. Conclusion: A Minority from Another Minority’s Perspective

Eremya Çelebi’s Armeno-Turkish poem *The Jewish Bride* gives us a number of different clues concerning the state of the Ottoman Empire, the state of intercommunal relations, and especially the state of the Jewish community of Istanbul just after the Sabbatai Sevi incident. As we have mentioned earlier, there are naturally several shortcomings to this source. The author’s partiality as an outsider and especially as an Orthodox Christian gives us only one perspective from which to view the events. In addition, since his work is a lyrical poem, we cannot derive many details of events from it, since a chronological recounting of events was not the author’s intention. Yet, all in all, the poem does provide valuable indications of the status quo ca. 1666. Historical analysis of this poem is a desideratum.

Thanks to Eremya’s *İstanbul Tarihi* we have information on Istanbul Jewry from an Armenian scholar’s perspective. This source also gives valuable insights on the escalation of the struggle between the Jews and Christian communities, especially the Greeks, after the Great Fire of 1660, also reflecting the social and economic rivalry between these minorities.

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224 Ibid., 727.
225 Some accounts claims that he was a pious Jew, whereas some claim that he was forced by the sultan to apostasize: Scholem, *Sabbatai Sevi*, 675,676 passim. Baer claims that the latter was certainly the case: Baer, “Honored by the Glory of Islam...,” 200,201.
226 There is a good deal of debate concerning this name, though. Scholem, *Sabbatai Sevi*, 676, footnote 245.
Finally, Eremya Çelebi’s poem on the Sabbatai Sevi incident shows us the turmoil among Istanbul’s Jews and their relations with other minority communities of the empire during this problematic period, while also giving some insights into the knowledge of the Armenian community, as another minority community, about this episode.
CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSION

In this study, I have analyzed the condition of Istanbul Jewry in the 17th century through the works of an Ottoman statesman, Evliya Çelebi, and an Armenian scholar in Istanbul, Eremya Çelebi. Thanks to their works, we now have a better understanding of the position of the Jews as one minority community within the empire.

I also pointed out numerous problems in the conventional understanding of the Ottoman system of administering minority populations, if there were a uniform system before the 19th century, and recommended a clarification of this issue in future research on Ottoman minorities.

In my second chapter, I dealt with Evliya Çelebi's Seyahatname, arguing that the work is a mirror of the rise of religious conservatism and the Islamization of space in Istanbul during the 17th century. It also attests to attempts to recover state authority and legitimacy within the Ottoman Empire. The author of the Seyahatname, Evliya Çelebi, although allegedly a liberal-minded man by the standards of his time, contributed to the stress on the Islamic heritage of Istanbul and the empire, playing a
role that suited the general tendencies of his times. In connection with this issue, I also believe that the increasingly widespread use of the name Islambol during this period should be analyzed further.

Also in the second chapter, I noted that in Evliya's *Seyahamame* and in other Ottoman sources, there is no mention of the Sabbatian movement apart from brief mention of the conversion of Sabbatai Sevi in some chronicles. I suggested possible reasons for the silence of the sources from the Ottoman side on the Sabbatai Sevi movement, such as the influence of the "restoration" noted above.

In my chapter on Evliya's work, I also showed that the Christians were called *kefere*, whereas the Jews were referred to as *Yahud, tâife-i Yahud, tâife-i Cufud*, and so on, and were regarded differently from Christians by statesmen and by the Muslim population in general. I suggested that the reason for this perspective might have been the Ottomans' ongoing conflicts with external Christian enemies, especially the Habsburgs and Venetians, and also the so-called Ottoman-Jewish alliance against the Christians. I also noted that Evliya's use of other terms than *millet* reinforces the argument against the existence of a so-called *millet* system before the 19th century.

In my third chapter, using three works of Eremya Çelebi, I tried to widen our understanding of the atmosphere for the Istanbul Jewish community during the second half of the 17th century, emphasizing the period between 1660s and 1680s.

Considering the lack of a historical analysis of Eremya's poem *The Jewish Bride*, I attempted such an analysis in order to shed light on the state of intercommunal relations, and especially the state of the Jewish community of Istanbul, just after the Sabbatai Sevi incident. Thanks to Eremya's *Istanbul Tarihi*, we
have some crucial information on Istanbul Jewry from an Armenian scholar’s perspective as an outsider and a member of another minority community, after the Great Fire of 1660. As noted in that chapter, this source is also vital since it provides us with clues on the emerging power struggle between the Jews and the Christians, especially the Greeks, after the Great Fire of 1660 and the Sabbatai Sevi episode.

Finally, Eremya Çelebi’s poem on the Sabbatai Sevi incident gives us a better understanding of the turmoil among Istanbul’s Jews and their relations with other minority communities of the empire. Furthermore, we have a better idea of how different phases of the Sabbatai Sevi movement were regarded by members of another minority community.

Further research on these works by Eremya no doubt will enhance our understanding of the status of the Jews and minorities in general during this problematic period of Ottoman history. Eremya Çelebi’s works on the minorities and the empire await translation and analysis for a better understanding of this period of Ottoman history, just before another turning point, the second siege of Vienna, and its consequences.
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