

EVLIYA BEGINS THE *Book of Travels* with a volume devoted to Istanbul, the capital of the Ottoman Empire and his birthplace. The volume opens with an account of the dream he has on his twentieth birthday, 19 August 1630, in which the Prophet Muhammad blesses his desire to travel. It proceeds with a historical and geographical survey of Istanbul, including its suburbs along the Golden Horn and the Bosphorus.

The opening volume of the *Book of Travels* is like a guidebook to Istanbul as well as a tribute, offering a vast panorama of life in the city, with descriptions of buildings, monuments and gardens, dress and cuisine, types of occupations and social groups. It also provides a template for Evliya's narrative and descriptive styles, which aim both to instruct and amuse. And as the centre of his world, Istanbul would become the touchstone and measure of everything he witnessed during his travels.

We have included here Evliya's description of one of the great imperial mosques of the city; also the churches and taverns of Galata; and the pleasure park of Kağıthane.

The systematic nature of Evliya's account is reflected in the chapter divisions – a feature found only in this and in the final volume. By far the longest is chapter 270, comprising the 47 guilds of Istanbul craftsmen and merchants parading before the sultan. The excerpts included here (furriers, circumcision barbers, tightrope walkers) give the flavour of these sections that are such rich sources for Ottoman life.

1. Introduction: The dream

In the Name of God the Compassionate the Merciful, and to Him we turn for help.

Praise be to God who has ennobled those honoured with worship and travel, and has vouchsafed for me the path to the holy places and shrines. May blessings be upon him, who laid the foundations of the fortresses of Sharia (the sacred law of Islam), and established them on the basis of prophethood and tariqa (the mystical path of Sufism), and upon his good and pure family. And may abundant blessings and the most excellent salutations be upon him, the protector endowed with exceptional character, the most noble and perfect of creation, the model for prayer who said, 'Pray as you saw me,' the infallible guide, Muhammad, who spoke Arabic best. In his honour, God, the Lord of the Realms and Creator of the Heavens, made the earth a pleasant home for the sons of Adam and made them the most noble of all the creatures:

*Blessed be God, who ordered all affairs by His will,
Without oppression, and without injustice!*

May blessings be upon the shadow of God on earth and good order of terrestrial things, sultan and son of the sultan, Sultan Gazi Murad Khan IV, son of Sultan Ahmed Khan, son of Sultan Mehmed Khan (III), son of Sultan Murad Khan III, son of Sultan Selim Khan II, son of Sultan Süleyman Khan, son of Selim Khan I, son of Bayezid Khan II, son of Sultan Mehmed II the Conqueror. *May God's mercy be upon them all.*

May God's mercy be especially upon Sultan Murad (IV), the *gazi* khan, may his earth be sweet, the Padishah majestic as Jamshid, the conqueror of Baghdad, with whose service I was honoured when I began these jottings. It was in the year 1041 (1631), in the time of his reign, that while making tours and pleasure outings to the villages and towns and thousands of parks and Iram-like rose gardens around the pleasant land (*belde-i tayyibe*, cf. Koran 34:15), i.e. Constantinople, the desire to make extensive travels came to mind.

I beseeched the Creator at every moment to grant me health of body, complete journey, and faith to the last breath, asking myself, 'How can I get free of the pressures of father and mother, teacher and brother, and become a world traveller?' I was always on good terms with heart-wounded dervishes and glad to converse with them. And when I heard a

description of the seven climes and the four corners of the earth, I longed to travel with all my heart and soul. So I became utterly wretched, a vagabond crying out, 'Might I roam the world? Might it be vouchsafed to me to reach the Holy Land, Cairo and Damascus, Mecca and Medina, and to rub my face at the Sacred Garden, the tomb of the Prophet, glory of the universe?'

By God's wisdom – **Reason for travelling and roaming the land** – this humble one and poor supplicant full of fault = world traveller and boon companion of mankind, Evliya the unhypocritical, son of Dervish Mehmed Zilli – always desired God's guidance in dreams while praising Him abundantly, and sought His succour for a sick heart while reciting Koranic chapters and verses. So I lay down on the pillow of lamentation, in the corner of my hovel, in my birthplace Istanbul, to a sleep of wish fulfilment. It was the night of Ashura in the month of Muharram, the year 1040 (10 August 1630), in a state twixt sleep and wake, that I had a dream.

This humble one saw myself in the Ahi Çelebi mosque, near the Yemiş landing – a mosque built with money lawfully acquired, an ancient mosque where prayers are accepted by God. There were soldiers bearing arms. The door was opened and the light-filled mosque was crowded with a luminous congregation, who were busy performing the dawn prayer. It seems that I stood motionless at the foot of the pulpit and gazed in astonishment at this congregation with their beaming faces.

'Good sir,' said I, turning to the person beside me, 'please tell me who you are, and what your noble name is?'

'I am one of the Ten Promised Paradise, the patron saint of archers, Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas,' he replied. I kissed his hand and said, 'And who, good sir, are the lovely congregation immersed in light on this right side?'

'They are the spirits of the prophets. In the row behind them are the spirits of the saints and the pure ones. And these are the spirits of the Companions of the Prophet, the Emigrants (from Mecca), the Helpers (in Medina), the People of the Bench (*Arbab-i Suffa* – a group of pietists during the lifetime of the Prophet), the martyrs of Karbala, and the Friends. Those to the right of the prayer niche are Abu Bakr and Umar; those to the left, Uthman and Ali. The man in front of the prayer-niche wearing a cap is Uways al-Qarani, the Prophet's brother in this world and the next. The dark-skinned man at the left wall of the mosque is Bilal the Ethiopian, your patron saint and the caller to prayer of the Prophet. The short-statured

man who groups the congregation into rows is Amr Ayyar al-Zamiri. These soldiers marching with the standard, whose garments are dyed red with blood, are Hamza and all the spirits of the martyrs.'

Thus he pointed out to me the entire congregation, one by one. As I gazed at each in turn, I held my hand to my breast, nodding in acquaintance, and I found my soul refreshed.

'Good sir,' I asked, 'what is the reason of this congregation's gathering in this mosque?'

'The fleet-footed Tatar soldiery, among the Muslim forces in the vicinity of Azov, have come here to Istanbul which is under the protection of the Prophet. Later we will go to help the Crimean Khan. Now the Prophet is coming to perform the morning prayer. With him are Hasan and Husayn and the rest of the Twelve Imams, and the rest of the Ten who were Promised Paradise. He will signal you to begin the call to prayer. So cry out loud, *God is great*. After the salutations, recite the Throne Verse (2:255). Bilal will repeat, *Glory be to God*, and you, *Praise be to God*. Bilal will repeat, *God is great*, and you, *Amen, Amen*. The entire congregation will join in to profess His unity. Then after you say, *And blessings upon all the prophets and messengers, and praise be to God, Lord of the Universe*, rise immediately and kiss the Prophet's hand while he is sitting in the prayer niche. Say, *Intercession, O Messenger of God*, and make an appeal.'

Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas gave all these instructions while sitting at my side. What should I see next?

A clear light broke through the door of the mosque. While the inside had already been filled with light, it was now *light upon light* (24:35). All the noble Companions and the spirits of the prophets and the saints rose to their feet and stood ready. The Prophet appeared felicitously at the foot of his green standard, with face veiled, staff in hand and sword girded at his waist. Hasan stood on his right and Husayn on his left. He placed his right foot inside the light-filled mosque, uttering, *In the name of God*. Then he removed the veil from his face and said, *Peace be with you, my community*. The entire congregation replied, *And with you be peace, messenger of God, lord of the religious communities*.

The Prophet at once advanced towards the prayer-niche and performed the two prostrations of the dawn prayer. This humble one was overcome with fright and my body trembled, yet I was able to observe all of his features. They were just as described in the *Hilye* of Hakani (on the Prophet's physiognomy, completed 1599). His veil was of crimson

Kashmir cloth. His turban was a white Arab-style turban with twelve bands. His mantle was of camel hair, yellowish in colour. On his neck was a yellow woolen shawl. On his feet were yellow boots. And a toothpick had been stuck in his turban.

After the salutation, the Prophet looked upon this humble one, struck his right hand on his knee, and commanded me to begin the call. I started immediately, according to Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas's instructions, by intoning in the *segah* musical mode, *May God bless our lord Muhammad and his family and grant them peace*, and completed the call with *God is great*. Then the Prophet, in the same mode and with a mournful voice, recited the Fatiha and followed it with the decade of verses beginning: *We gave Solomon to David, and he was a good and faithful servant* (38:30). The entire congregation listened, the Prophet leading them in prayer. After the salutation, this humble one recited the Throne Verse. Bilal repeated, *Glory be to God*, and I, *Praise be to God*. Bilal repeated, *God is great*, and I did the call to prayer in sequence with Bilal. Following the benediction there was a royal *tevhid* that made me drunk with divine love, as though I had just awakened from sleep.

To sum up the dream: I completed my duties according to Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas's instructions. The Prophet recited *Ya Sin* (Sura 36) in the *uzzal* musical mode with a doleful voice, *al-Nasr* (Sura 110) three times, and the *Mu'avvizeteyn*. Bilal recited a Fatiha. As the Prophet rose to his feet in the prayer niche, Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas at once lay hold of my hand and brought me before him, saying, 'Your loving and faithful servant, Evliya, begs your intercession.'

He told me to kiss his blessed hand. As I shamelessly put my lips on that blessed hand, out of awe and dread, instead of saying '*Intercession (sefa'at), O messenger of God!*' I said, '*Travel (seyahat), O messenger of God!*' The Prophet smiled and replied, '*My intercession and my travel and my pilgrimage, may God give you health and well-being.*' He recited a Fatiha, and all the noble Companions recited it after him.

I kissed the hands of everyone present in the assembly and received each one's blessing. Some of their hands smelled of musk, some of ambergris, some of hyacinths, some of roses, some of sweet basil, some of wild basil, some of violets, some of carnations. But the scent of the Prophet was of a blooming saffron rose. And when I kissed his right hand, it felt as if it had no bones and was soft as cotton. The hands of the other prophets were scented with quinces. The hand of Abu Bakr had a scent of melons, Umar's of ambergris, Uthman's of violets, and Ali's of jasmine; the hand

of Hasan smelled of carnations and that of Husayn of white roses. *May God be pleased with them all.*

When I had duly kissed the hands of the entire congregation, the Prophet again recited a Fatiha and his Companions repeated it in a loud voice. *Peace be with you, O brethren!* the Prophet pronounced from the prayer-niche and made his way out of the mosque. The Companions gave this humble one various benedictions and they too left the mosque. Only Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas removed his bow-and-arrow case from his waist and girded it on mine, uttering *God is great*.

'Go forth,' he said. 'Perform the *gaza* with bow and arrow. Be in God's protection and safety. And receive these good tidings: Of all the spirits you met in this assembly and whose hands you kissed, you are vouchsafed to visit their tombs. You will be a world traveller and unique among men. The well-protected kingdoms through which you pass, the fortresses and towns, the strange and wonderful monuments, and each land's praiseworthy qualities and products, its food and drink, its latitude and longitude – record all of these and compose a marvellous work. Make use of my weapon and become my son in this world and the next. Do not abandon the path of truth. Be free of envy and hatred. Pay the due of bread and salt. Be a faithful friend but no friend to the wicked. Learn goodness from the good.'

Having finished his counsel, he kissed my brow and departed from the mosque.

Waking from the sleep of comfort, I was in a quandary, uncertain whether it was a dream or reality or a true vision. As I pondered, my mind was at ease and my heart filled with joy. At dawn I performed my ablution and the morning-prayer, then crossed over from Istanbul to Kasımpaşa and consulted the interpreter of dreams, Ibrahim Efendi, who gave these good tidings, 'You will be a globe trotter and world traveller. Your journey will be sealed with a good ending. You will be admitted into paradise by the intercession of the Prophet.' And he recited a Fatiha.

Next, I went to Abdullah Dede, the sheikh of the Mevlevi convent in Kasımpaşa. I kissed his hand and again related my vision. He told me, 'Since you have kissed the hands of the twelve Imams, you will be a champion in this world. Since you have kissed the hands of the Ten Promised Paradise, you will enter paradise. Since you have kissed the hands of the first four caliphs, you will have the honour of conversing with all the padishahs in the world and will be their boon companion. Since you have beheld the beauty of the Prophet, kissed his hand, and received his blessing,

you will attain happiness in both worlds. Following the counsel of Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas, do your utmost to chronicle our dear Istanbul; then you will surely obtain the lot that is decreed for you, in accordance with the dictum, *What is destined will happen.*¹

He gave me seven rare and valuable books of chronicles and said, 'Go forth, may your affair come out right. A Fatihal' Having received his benediction, this poor humble one took the treasure of books to a corner of my hovel. And now, having studied some of those histories, I begin the account of my birthplace, the envy of kings and harbour of vessels, mighty fortress of the province of Macedon — Istanbul.

2. The Süleymaniye Mosque

Description of the Mosque of Sultan Süleyman

May God's mercy and forgiveness be upon him

It was begun in the year 951 (1543) and finished in the year 963 (1557), and is an exemplary mosque beyond description. The learned men who compose histories, and thus strike the die on marble, have confessed the inability and failure of the best chroniclers to celebrate this unequalled mosque. Now, this humble Evliya ventures to write down its praises as much as I am able.

First, this mosque divides in half the ground of the old palace that the Conqueror had earlier built. On top of the high hill, Süleyman Khan built a unique mosque overlooking the sea. How many thousands of master architects, builders, labourers, stonemasons and marble cutters from all the Ottoman dominions had he gathered! And for three whole years 3000 galley slaves, foot-bound in chains, would lay the foundation deep into the ground, so deep that the world-bearing bull at the bottom of the earth could hear the sound of their pickaxes. They dug until they had reached the deepest part, and in three years, by erecting a platform, the foundation was built up to the surface.

In the following year construction was halted while workmen cut stones for the buildings above the foundation. A year later, the prayer-niche was installed to the same measurement as that of the mosque of Sultan Bayezid II the Saint. In three years they completed the walls as far as the vaults of the dome on all four sides. After that, they constructed the lofty dome on top of the solid square pier base.

Features of the Süleymaniye mosque. The bowl of the indigo-coloured dome of this great mosque, up to its lofty summit, is more spherical than that of Aya Sofya, and is seven royal cubits in height.

Apart from the square piers supporting this incomparable dome, there are four porphyry columns on the right and left sides of the mosque, each one worth ten Egyptian treasures. These columns were from the city of (—) in Egypt,¹ transported along the Nile to Alexandria. From there Karınca Kapudan ('Admiral Ant') loaded them onto rafts and, with favourable wind, brought them to Unkapanı in Istanbul and then to Vefa Square. When he delivered the four columns to Süleyman Khan at the mosque, he recited the verse:

The ants presented Solomon
A locust's leg;
Whatever of ours suits you
Accept, I humbly beg.

Süleyman Khan was pleased, and; as a reward for his service, Karınca Kapudan was duly granted the governorship of Yılanlı (Spurie) and Rhodes islands. These four columns of red porphyry are each fifty cubits high. God knows, there is nothing like them in the four corners of the world.

A semi-dome above the prayer-niche and another one above the qibla gate opposite it are fixed to the great dome. But there are no semi-domes resting on the aforementioned piers. In order not to overload them, the chief architect Sinan put windows of cut glass and crystal, (—) in number.

The multicoloured stained windows above the prayer-niche and the pulpit are the work of Sarhoş ('Drunkard') Ibrahim. Mere men are too impotent to praise them. At noon, when these windows let in the rays of the world-illuminating sun, the mosque interior shines with light, dazzling the eyes of the congregation. Each pane contains a myriad of varicoloured glass bits, in designs of flowers and of the beautiful names of God in calligraphy. They are celebrated by travellers on land and sea as a sight not matched in the heavens.

The prayer-niche and pulpit and the muezzins' gallery are made of pure white marble. But the master stonemason set the muezzins' gallery above (—) columnettes so that it is like the galleries of paradise. The lofty pulpit is made of raw marble and has a crown-like canopy, matched only by the

1 In Vol. 10, fol. 383a Evliya identifies the source of these columns as Luxor.

pulpit in the Sinop mosque. And the prayer-niche could be that of Solomon himself. Above the niche, gold on azure by the hand of Karahisari, is inscribed the verse, *Whenever Zacharia's visited her in the Niche* (3:37).

To the right and left of the prayer-niche there are columns with spiral braids that are white magic. Also there are candlesticks tall as a man, gilded with pure brass and gold, which hold candles of camphor wax, each one twenty quintals in weight. The candles are reached by wooden staircases of fifteen steps and are lit every night to illuminate the mosque interior.

In the left corner of this mosque, there is a lofty gallery raised on (—) columns, with a separate prayer-niche, for the sovereign's private use. Apart from this gallery, there are four others, one in each corner of the four piers, for the Koran reciters. On either side of the mosque there are (—) side benches of stone. Inside the mosque and flanking the side galleries there are congregational galleries resting on columnettes of various sorts. Outside the mosque and overlooking the sea there are again galleries on slender columns, similar to those indoors, and on the right side, the market. When the congregation gets crowded, people perform their devotions on these galleries.

Within the mosque, around the dome, there are two more rows of galleries supported by columns, which on holy nights are lighted with oil lamps. There are 22,000 lamps in total and thousands of chandeliers. And there are (—) windows all around the mosque, through each of which blows a gentle breeze that refreshes the congregation as though they had entered paradise. By God's command, this mosque has a pleasant fragrance that perfumes the brain; but it has no resemblance to the scent of earthly flowers.

On the side of the qibla gate and next to the two piers in the back of the mosque there is a fountain. The entire congregation drinks from the clear water, satisfying their thirst. And beneath some of the arches on the upper storey there are storage rooms where the notables of the province and thousands of travellers keep their money, the amount of which the Creator only knows.

Praise of the calligraphy of Karahisari. There has never been to this day, nor will there ever be, any calligraphy like that of Ahmed Karahisari both inside and outside this mosque. The Creator granted him success in this field. First, in the centre of the big dome, is inscribed the verse: *God is the light of the heavens and earth. His light may be compared to a niche that enshrines*

a lamp, the lamp within a crystal of star-like brilliance (24:35). He has truly displayed his skill in rendering this Light Verse.

In the semi-dome above the prayer-niche is written: (—). In the semi-dome above the qibla gate is inscribed: *I will turn my face to Him who has created the heavens and earth, and will live a righteous life. I am no idolater* (6:79). On one of the four piers is inscribed *Allah*, on another one *Muhammad*, on another *Abu Bakr*, and on the last *Umar, Uthman, Ali, Hasan, and Husayn*. And above the window to the right of the pulpit is the verse: *Temples are built for God's worship; invoke in them no other god besides Him* (72:18).

Apart from these, over the upper storey windows, are written the beautiful names of God. These are in the *şikafi* style, while the large inscriptions in the dome are in the *güzafi* style where every *alif* and *lam* and *kaf* is ten cubits tall — they were written in proportion to the height of the dome, so that they can be read plainly from below.

This mosque has five doors. On the right side is the imam's door; on the left, below the sultan's gallery, is the viziers' door; and there are two side doors. Written over the left side door is: *Peace be to you for all that you have steadfastly endured. Blessed is the recompense of paradise* (13:24). Written over the right side door is: (—) (—) (—) (—). And the inscription above the qibla gate is:

[2 lines empty]

In this inscription is added: *Ahmed Karahisari wrote this in the year* (—).

Description of the white courtyard. A flight of (—) stone steps leads up to the above mentioned portals of felicity of the noble mosque and to the three lofty gates of the delightful courtyard. This courtyard is a white plateau paved with white marble, every slab the size of a carpet, smoothed and polished and even, forming a crystalline valley. It is square in shape and, along with its side galleries measures (—) feet. But the mosque interior is larger than the courtyard, the distance from the qibla door to the prayer-niche being (—) feet and the width (—) feet. Above the side galleries, forty feet wide, that go all around this courtyard, over the varicoloured piers, there are (—) precious columns. And rising above these columns are varicoloured stone arches, giving the impression of a rainbow. Still further above and all around are (—) domes.

Overlooking this courtyard on all four sides are (—) windows, each with iron gratings and bars thick as one's arm. The master ironsmith wrought these windows with the skill of David, wielding his file so that

even now no trace of dust affects their polished surface which gleams like Nakhchivan steel. And over these windows are (—) panes of glass.

In the middle of this white courtyard is a square basin that has to be seen, a work of white magic. But it is not for ablutions — all four sides have marble latticework, and the congregation drinks its Water of Life. It is roofed by a squat dome covered with flat leaden tiles. The strange thing is that because jets spring up from the basin, it is called a fountain, but the water actually flows down from the dome like the Salsabil fountain in paradise. It is a marvellous spectacle that amazes anyone who inspects it.

Over the windows along the qibla gallery of this courtyard, the verse (—) (—) (—) is inscribed on azure porcelain tiles. The verse (—) (—) (—) is written over the gate on the left side, the verse (—) (—) (—) over the gate on the right side, and the verse (—) (—) (—) over the qibla gate.

This qibla gate is the tallest of all the gates and unequaled on earth in its fine white marble filagree decoration. The master stonecutter has joined the blocks together such that no man can differentiate between them. Above the lintel and within the marble recesses resembling a prayer-niche, there are nodding tulips and an array of other carvings, and marble chandeliers suspended by chains, wrought with the skill of Jamshid. On either side of this gate, in cells four stories high that reach up to the dome, dwell the timekeeper, the caller of the hours of prayer, the gatekeepers and caretakers.

Just inside this gate, the floor is paved with a large round block of red porphyry that is an unparalleled piece of polished stone. It is the size of a Muhammadan dinner-spread, and one side is slightly cracked.

Then, to the right, is a square slab of porphyry on which a cross was engraved, traces of which are still visible. The infidels offered a million of money for it, but it was not for sale. Finally, during a water festival, a *şahi* cannon was deliberately fired over the mast of the infidel galleons moored at Galata. The ball broke the threshold of the left gate of the courtyard of the Süleymaniye mosque, rolled onto the slab with the cross and came to a stop. But since it was set in the ground, it was not damaged. The import of this is that the cursed Franks were so hostile, and the master gunner so skillful, that they could take aim from Galata and strike the threshold of the Süleymaniye. Traces of the strike are still visible, and people come to view it.

On the pedestals of the columns along the four sides of this courtyard, there are brass plates on which are incised all the great events, such as fires and earthquakes, enthronements and public uprisings, and the like. The

engraver of the chronograms is provided for by the endowment. They are marvellous pedestals with dated inscriptions.

Description of the minarets. This mosque has four minarets, each one used for the Muhammadan call. Since Sultan Süleyman Khan was the tenth Padishah of the Ottoman dynasty, ten galleries were built on the four minarets. The two adjoining the mosque have three galleries each, and the climb to these incomparable minarets is (—) hundred steps. The two minarets in the rear corners of the courtyard are lower and have two well-proportioned galleries each.

The minaret on the left with the three galleries is called the Jewel Minaret. The reason is that, in order for the foundation to settle, Süleyman Khan had the building of this mosque stop for a year and built other pious works. Shah Tahmasp, the king of Persia, when he heard of the halt to construction, dispatched a great embassy with 1000 purses of money and a box of all kinds of valuable jewels. In his letter, he wrote, 'I heard that you did not have the funds to complete the mosque and so you put a halt. Due to your friendship, I have sent to you this amount of money from the treasury and these jewels. Sell them and spend the money, and take pains to finish the mosque. Let us have a share in your pious works.'

The emissary arrived with such taunting letters before Süleyman Khan, who was surrounded by a sea of labourers and masons employed about the mosque. Süleyman was incensed by the letter. In the presence of the emissary he distributed the 1000 purses of money to the Jews in Istanbul, and not a grain was left. He addressed the emissary, saying:

*The heretic on judgement day
Will be an ass beneath the Jew.*

To your masters the Jews, then, who will mount you when the time comes, let your money be allotted, so that when they do mount you on judgment day, they may spare you the spur and whip. Otherwise, what do folk like you who reject ritual prayer have to do with pious works like founding a mosque?

Then he gave the architect Sinan the box of jewels while the emissary was still present and said to him: 'The so-called precious stones he sent are worthless beside the stones of my mosque. So put them with the rest and use them in the construction.' When the emissary had understood the situation, he was dumbstruck. Several facetious letters were written in reply

to the emissary's letter, and he set out toward Revan. (Erevan, part of the Safavid kingdom at that time).

Meanwhile, the chief architect used the jewels to decorate the grooves of that minaret with artistry of all sorts, also for the marble roses decorating the inscriptions. This is why it is called the 'Jewel Minaret'. Some of the stones shine when the sun's rays strike, but others have faded and lost their lustre from exposure to the heat, snow, and rain. However, in the centre of the arch above the qibla gate, there is a Nishapur turquoise as large as a round bowl that dazzles the beholder.

On both sides of this mosque, there are forty taps for renewing ablutions.

Description of the bower of the light-filled tomb. Within a bow-shot's distance from the prayer-niche wall, in the midst of a rose garden, is the tomb of Süleyman Khan, *may his earth be sweet*. He lies under a lofty dome that has no match beneath this celestial dome. For the master builder has put a larger dome on top of a smaller dome. Such a well-wrought dome, with such a strange and wonderful design, and such artful and intricate carvings of marble, is not to be seen in any other country.

Description of the outer courtyard. On three sides of this mosque there is also a single-layered outer courtyard. Two sides are an arena long enough for a horse to gallop in. It is a vast courtyard adorned with lofty plane trees, weeping willows, cypresses, lindens, and ashés. And on its three walls are (—) windows in total.

The courtyard has ten gates: two on the qibla side, the Mera Gate and the Old Palace Gate; on the south side, the Mekteb Gate, Market Gate, Sağmedrese Gate, and Chief Physician's Gate; on the west, the Imaret (Soup Kitchen) Gate, Tevhane (Guesthouse) Gate, and the Agha's Gate, reached by (—) steps. On the north is the Dome Gate of 1001 Nails, reached by twenty stone steps – it is called so because that was the number of nails used to construct the dome. And on the east side is the Hammam Gate, with (—) steps leading down to the public bath. On this side, the courtyard is not enclosed by a wall but by a low parapet so that one can view Istanbul. The entire congregation stops here to enjoy a panoramic view of the imperial palace, Üsküdar, Boğazhisarı (Rumeli Kavağı), Beşiktaş, Tophane, Galata, Kasımpaşa, and Okmeydanı. And there are fine views of the Golden Horn and the Bosphorus, with thousands of ferries and caiques plying the waters and other boats unfurling their sails.

The circumference of the Süleymaniye mosque, around the four sides of this courtyard, is (—) thousand paces.

There is also a small courtyard between the Süleymaniye and the walls of the old palace. It is known as the Pehlivan Demir square, after the chief of the wrestlers. All the champions from the Lodge of Wrestlers grapple with one another at that pleasant place after the mid-afternoon prayer. The proper Turkish term is *gürüş*.

To the right and left of this mosque, there are the four great medreses for the chief muftis of the four schools of law, filled completely with men of the most profound learning.

There is also a Hadith school, a Koran recitation school, a medical college, a primary school; a hospital, a soup kitchen and dining hall, a guesthouse, a caravanserai for travellers, and a palace for the Janissary Agha; markets for goldsmiths, button makers and boot makers; a resplendent public bath; quarters for theological students; and 1000 houses for servants. 1001 domes can be counted in the vicinity of this mosque.

Seen from Galata, the Süleymaniye complex seems like a vast city covered with dark blue lead. There is a total of 3000 servants attached to it. They are maintained by secure endowments from Süleyman Khan, including the revenues of several islands in the Aegean – such as Sönbeki (Symi), İstanköy (Cos), Sakız (Chios) and Rhodes – that are governed by the endowment's administrator and his 500 agents.

Because Süleyman Khan is the conqueror of the seven climes, his name is mentioned not only here but in (—) Friday sermons. And in all the lands of Islam, there is no building stronger and more solid than the Süleymaniye. All architectural experts agree on this, and also that nowhere on earth has such an enamel dome been seen.

Within and outside this mosque the foundation is firm, the buildings elegant, and every piece of ornamentation the work of wondrous magic of extreme perfection. When the construction ended, the Grand Architect Sinan said, 'My Padishah, I have built for you a mosque so solid that on Judgement Day, when the mountains of the world are carded like cotton, the dome of this mosque will roll like a polo ball before the carder's bow string of Hallaj Mansur.'²

2 The mountains 'carded like cotton' are reminiscent of the Koranic image of the mountains on the Day of Judgement being 'like tufts of carded wool' (101:5); while the mention of carding evokes the ninth-century Sufi martyr al-Hallaj whose name means 'The Carder'.

Indeed, built on a lofty hill, the foundations are firmly supported by walls below, beginning from the upper wall of Tahtakale, to the wall of the palace of Siyavuş Pasha, to that of the Janissary Agha, to the cistern wall of Küçükbazar, and to the walls of the Agha's school, the guest house, the soup kitchen, the lead magazine, and the hospital.

Once, this humble one observed ten Frankish infidels with expert knowledge of geometry and architecture who were touring this light-filled mosque. The gatekeepers had let them in, and the caretakers had given them special shoes so they could walk around and see it. Wherever they looked, they put finger to mouth and bit it in astonishment. But when they saw the doors inlaid with Indian mother-of-pearl, they shook their head and bit two fingers each. And when they saw the enamel dome, they threw off their Frankish hats and cried out in awe, 'Maria, Maria!'

Then they saw the four vaults at the skirt of the dome, resembling the Vault of Chosroes. They are like the rainbow, in accordance with the verse:

Like the milky way, with head raised high
He threw the lasso to the vault of the sky.

— each one as it were a vault created by the hand of God. {In fact, these vaults can be dated from *kudret kemeri* ('Vault of Power'), the year 944 (1537).}³

They gazed at these arches and at the rest of the mosque's interior for an entire hour, with finger in mouth, then went outside into the courtyard. When they saw the four minarets, the four pedestals, the six lofty gates, the delightful courtyard and surrounding arches and domes, the columns and row on row of well-proportioned cupolas topped by gilded Muhammadan finials, their eyes were dazzled from the splendour. Once again they threw off their hats and walked all around this noble mosque bareheaded. Now in their awe they bit all ten fingers, that being their way of expressing extreme astonishment.

This humble one requested their interpreter to ask them how they liked this building. One of them turned out to be capable of speech. He said, 'All things, whether created beings or man-made structures, are beautiful either on the inside or on the outside. Rarely are the two beauties found together. But both the interior and the exterior of this mosque were constructed

3 An example of a chronogram, in which the numerical value of the letters add up to the date.

with such grace and refinement. In all of Frengistan we have not seen an edifice built to such perfection as this.'

'How does this mosque compare with Aya Sofya?' I asked.

'To be sure,' they answered, 'that is a larger building, constructed with brick, and an ancient work; solid and well-built for its time. But this is a finer construction in terms of grace, elegance, and beauty. It also required greater expenditure than Aya Sofya.'

In fact, they say that every ten *miskals* of stone used in this mosque cost one gold piece.

Expenditures for the Süleymaniye Mosque. When the mosque was completed, all its expenses — according to the accounts of the superintendent of construction, overseer, and treasurer — amounted to 890,383 *yük* of florins.

3. The antiquity of smoking

A curiosity. This ancient mausoleum (tomb of Sultan Mustafa), was built by King (—) at the time of the construction of Aya Sofya, (—) years before the Prophet. So it is a thousand and (—) years old. While (recently) the master builder and miners, with chisels like that of Farhad, were carving a hole in the south wall to put in a window, an iron tobacco pipe appeared between two bricks. All of them saw it, and they could still detect the scent of tobacco smoke. This is evident proof that smoking tobacco is an ancient practice.

4. Galata

Chapter 246: Account of the ancient edifice and great fortress of the city of Galata, its founding, its features, the buildings within it, and all its qualities

First, King (—) built the fortress of Constantinople after the time of Alexander the Great. The area of Galata was a meadow of pleasant air and a rich pasture where shepherds tended their sheep and cows, always milking them and bringing the milk to the king. Since delicious milk came from this fertile pasture, it was named Galata — *galata* being the Greek word for milk. Later, in order to quarter the shepherds, a fortress-like shelter was built near the present-day Kurşumlu Mahzen ('Lead-Covered

Magazine"). And so Galata became more and more built up, until the reign of (—).

{It is north of Istanbul, and a mile-wide strait separates them. It is eighteen miles long, reaching Kağıthane at its western extremity. One crosses from Stanbul to Galata by caique, ferry, or barge. In the era of the infidels there was a bridge of chains.}

[...]

Circumference of the walled town of Galata. Its circuit is 10,060 paces. In the year (—) (1634), when Sultan Murad IV went on his expedition to Revan, his lieutenant Bayram Pasha repaired and whitewashed the walls of Galata and measured them with an architect's cubit. The circuit, together with all the towers and ramparts, was calculated to be 18,000 cubits. There are 205 towers and 13,000 crenellations. The height of the walls is forty royal cubits. Some of the towers are eighty royal cubits in height.

But Galata Tower, built by Mehmed the Conqueror, is 118 cubits high, and its sky-scraping summit is covered with lead. From nowhere can one see the entire circuit of the walls of Istanbul, and its triangular shape, except from Galata Tower. In clear weather, the Mountain of Monks (*Cebel-i Rubban*, today Uludağ) which looms over Bursa is visible, and even the buildings of Bursa can be seen through a spyglass. {This tower, cylindrical in shape, is visible from three parasangs' distance.} The tower interior was a dungeon in ten layers; it is now a storage for Ottoman naval equipment. It has a single iron gate that opens to the south and is reached by a stone staircase of (—) steps: This humble one used to fly paper from there (i.e., from the top of the tower). One time I strung a rope to get a tightrope walker's view of Istanbul.

On the land side of Galata Tower is a deep moat, extending from Meyyit Gate to Tophane Gate. I have seen thousands of fortresses but never a moat like this; only that of Akkerman, where the Dniester flows into the Black Sea, might match it. There are always sailors in this trench twisting ship cables, marlines, and life ropes. It is broad and deep, and all along its edge are graveyards and cemeteries. {But there is no moat on the sea side, which is entirely covered with markets.}

[...]

This city has eighteen Muslim quarters, seventy quarters of Greek infidels, three of cranky Franks, one of Jews, and two of Armenians. No infidels reside in the first castle, and none at all in the second castle as far as the Arab mosque— the inhabitants of the quarter possess a noble rescript

from Mehmed the Conqueror according to which no infidel is allowed in, and if they see an armed Christian they give no quarter and kill him immediately. The majority of these inhabitants are grief-stricken Mudejars who came from Spain, driven out by the infidels, in the time of Sultan Ahmed. If they see an armed infidel in Galata, they kill him right away.

Aside from these two castles, the two walled areas of Galata as far as Tophane are filled with Franks of the Seven Kings (i.e., from the Habsburg Empire) and other Christians. According to the land survey of Murad (IV) Khan, there are 200,000 infidels and 64,000 Muslims. May God preserve it.

There are seventy churches. First, the Church of the Organ belonging to France. It is on a dyke; the gate is reached by a staircase of seven steps.

Near it is the Venetian church. It had burnt down, and lay in ruins for twenty years until it was restored at the time of the Candia truce (1669) by permission of Köprülüzade Ahmed Pasha. It has a sky-scraping square bell tower.

Inside and outside these churches, there are strange and wonderful images and icons that seem to be alive.

[2 lines empty]

The Greeks have (—) churches.

[1 line empty]

They have one hospital according to their false claim.

[1 line empty]

The Armenians have three churches.

[1 line empty]

And the Jews have two synagogues. But the Jews are always in fear of these infidels (i.e., Christians).

As for the infidel quarters, they are patrolled day and night, because they have girded their loins for rebellion more than once, and many of them were put to the sword.

[...]

The manners and customs of the inhabitants of Galata. The people of Galata are in (—) categories: the first are sailors, the second merchants, the third craftsmen of various sorts, and the fourth joiners and caulkers. Most of them wear clothing of Cezayir (the Aegean archipelago) {because they are mainly marines. There are fabulously rich captains, among them Elvan Kapudan.}

The Greeks are tavern keepers. The Armenians are sellers of pressed

meat (*pastırma*) and wealthy merchants. The Jews are intermediaries in the marketplace. The Jewish boys are male prostitutes – there is no more despised group of catamites than they.

The praiseworthy food and drink of the city of Galata. First is the fine white Mudejar *francala* bread. The thousands of coloured candies, flavoured with musk and ambergris and worthy of a padishah, in the glass jars at the confectioners' market are found nowhere else, unless it be paradise-scented Damascus. The Mudejars also sell spiced sweetmeats topped with decorative leaves and spiced ring-bread (*simit*).

Among the artisans are sellers of compasses and watches, cut-crystal lenses and hourglasses, and infidel apothecaries.

As for drinks, in the taverns – named Taş Nerdüben ("Stone Steps"), Kefeli, Manyalı, Mihalaki, Kaşkaval, Sünbüllü, Kostantı, and Saranda – are sold various notorious forbidden ruby-dripping wines, including *miskeet* (from Bulgaria) and wines from Ancona, Syracuse, Mudanya, Erdemit, and Bozcaada (Tenedos). When I pass through that wicked locale and see hundreds of downtrodden tavern-slaves lying in the highway, bareheaded and barefooted, and inquire about their wretched state, some put forth this verse:

I am so drunk I do not know
What is worldly or divine.
Who am I? Who is the cupbearer?
What is the crimson wine?

Or:

I have quaffed his ruby wine;
Drunk I am, drunk I am!
Captivated by his locks,
Mad I am, mad I am!

Or:

My foot takes no step but to the tavern,
My hand holds nothing but the cup of wine.
Stop the rant, preacher! My ear hears nothing
But the bottle's glugging and the drunken cry.

Some denizens of the tavern recite this couplet:

Ascetic, to the tavern
Politely go.
What this convent is
Do you think you know?

This humble one swears by God the Knower of Secrets that I have never partaken of a single drop of these intoxicants. Being of a sociable and impertinent nature, I have mingled among all the craftsmen and learned their secrets. But I only drank sherbet of Athenian honey, known as Mudejar sherbet. Galata has such types of craftsmen. But these bankrupted drunkards and addicts are put in the dungeon just inside the Yağkapı Gate to reform their manners.

This city, because of the delightful climate, is famous for its darling boys and girls. Its blessings are abundant for rich and poor alike. All the people are impertinent lovers, of dervish temperament. They are famous for their salons in wintertime. When the grand ship captains return from their voyages, they take all their friends in their faluccas and frigates to the vineyards in Boğazhisarı and have intimate gatherings.

The harbour of Galata, being an extremely fine one, is protected from the eight winds, and in winter time 1000 ships lay anchor here without fear. The suburb to the north of the walled town of Galata is considered to belong to Tophane, because it has a separate governor. There is no record of (Muslim) pilgrimage sites in Galata.

5. Kağıthane

The pleasure-park and resort lodge of world-adorning Kağıthane.

It is a promenade famous among travellers in Arabia and Persia, India and Yemen and Ethiopia. The Turkish poets have penned the praises of its air and water. It is a delightful river that flows through the valleys of Levend-çiftlik near the Bosphorus. Fullers wash their turbans and shirts and trousers without the need for soap – after two rinses the garments come out fresh as a white rose. Some Indian merchants bring their stuffs to Kağıthane and dip them in the water just once, which is sufficient to clean them.

On both sides of the river are grassy meadows with clover, alfalfa, couch grass, *levye* (?), buttercups, and tulips; and shady bowers adorned with thousands of plane trees and poplars and weeping willows. In the

river one gets sweet flag, the like of which is not found at Azov or in the lake of Kanizsa and whose root is extremely beneficial.

On holidays, thousands of old and young lovers come to this place to flirt with one another and go out in caiques and ferries. Some come with their boy sweethearts to take a plunge in the river and swim and embrace without fear. It is a river of love. But the tree roots along the banks sometimes catch the feet of swimmers like fishing nets and drag them down to a watery death, crying, 'Oh, a sea sprite has got me!' So one must be cautious, even though there are no sea sprites. Withal, thousands of sweethearts wrap their rosy pink bodies, like peeled almonds, with indigo-coloured silk aprons, then dive into the river like fish and flatter their lovers. There is much commotion, with musical entertainments in every corner worthy of Husayn Bayqara. In charge of this place of enjoyment is a regiment of janissary conscripts and their colonel, who also oversee the gunpowder mill.

Praise of the gunpowder mill. Bayezid the Saint built it at the border of this Spring of Life in the year (—). Later, Süleyman Khan made it into a stone building roofed with lead. But the dome is not made of stone. The staff, from the munitions corps, includes the chief gunpowder maker, his warden and guards, and 200 soldiers.

In this factory are 100 bronze mortars, each weighing ten quintals; and various wheelwork mechanisms that have to be seen and cannot be explained in words. There are also water wheels on the river. When the barrages are opened, the water wheels turn, as do the wheelworks inside them. Then iron pestles, each weighing 40 to 50 *okkas*, pound and grind the gunpowder in the mortars, while the workers stir it with wooden sticks. *Heaven help us*, if an iron pestle strikes a mortar and a spark lights the gunpowder, all the workers get blown in the air like the birds of Ababil (105:3). It is a dangerous place, and not a pretty sight. And the thundering noise from the wheels turning and the pestles pounding makes a man tremble to the marrow of his bones. It is a noteworthy sight for reckless tourists. Those who are sensible will view it from a distance and then will repair to the lodge of Kağıthane for carousing.

For this lodge has thousands of benches and galleries for lovers to sit in, a seventy-hearth kitchen and pantry worthy of Kay Kavus, twenty shops, a bread oven, a coffee house, a mosque, and a well of sweet water. There are 200 cells for the janissary conscripts, and storerooms full of dishes, pans,

ladles, kettles, and copper utensils. Lovers who wish may put up here as guests for fifteen nights and enjoy themselves.

Once every forty years,⁴ in this meadow of Kağıthane, the guild of goldsmiths assembles and holds parties for twenty days and nights according to the *kanun* of Süleyman Khan the Goldsmith. Guildsmen from all the Ottoman dominions flock to this festival, 300 purses are spent on it, and 12,000 journeymen graduate to become master goldsmiths. And it is a *kanun* of Süleyman Khan that the Ottoman Padishah in person attend this great gathering, pitch his Solomonian tent-pavilion, and give the chief goldsmith a gift of twelve purses. For when Süleyman was a prince in the city of Trabzon, he apprenticed under the Greek master Kostanta and himself became a goldsmith. Later, when he became sultan, he founded the goldsmiths' workshop near the Water-carriers' fountain.

First, twelve goldsmith apprentices kiss the hand of the glorious Padishah, then that of the *şeyhülislam* and the other great viziers, then the hands of the chief goldsmith, their sheikh, and their warden, and lastly the other masters, as established by Süleyman Khan. Then the chief goldsmith presents gifts to the Padishah — such as a chest, an inkstand, a bridle, a sword, or a scimitar — all encrusted with jewels.

In short, in the valley of Kağıthane, five to six thousand tents and pavilions are pitched. It is a sea of men for twenty days, and powerful torches turn the nights into bright days, as on the night of the Feast of the Sacrifice.

Once every twenty years the saddle makers' guild also has an outing here, and that is also a noteworthy event. And every year, from the first day to the last day of the month of Sha'ban, the people of Istanbul pitch tents in this plain of Kağıthane in anticipation of the fast of Ramadan. For a whole month they make amusements, under the name of *şeb-bük*.⁵ Such a place of joy is Kağıthane.

The town of Kağıthane is situated 1000 paces north of this promenade. It has 200 houses of Muslims with Iram-like gardens. There is the mosque of (—) Hatun who was (—)'s wetnürse (*daya*), with the following chronogram over the qibla door:

[1 line empty]

4 Elsewhere (Vol. 1, fol. 186a) Evliya reports that this festival is held once every twenty years, and that he attended it three times.

5 A rare word apparently signifying hand-clapping or the like; see Dankoff 2008, 215.

There are also a fine bath and twenty shops. In Byzantine times there was a paper mill (*kağıthane*) here, a large structure with masonry domes. And there were water wheels turned by the river that passed beneath the Daya Hatun mosque. The paper mill is now in ruins, but it could easily be restored and turned into a gunpowder mill.

In this place and as far as the wooden bridge there are lofty plane trees on both sides of the river, reaching up to the sky, on whose branches nest myriads of herons. Their plumes, that are left behind on their perches, are collected by the keeper of Emirgüneoğlu's garden (today's Emirgan).

Convent of the fire-worshipping Hindus. It is on the western side of this town, a small convent with a grassy meadow and a few weeping willows. If a Hindu dies in Istanbul and its environs, the body is brought here and cremated. This humble one witnessed it three times.

Convent of the Indian Kalender dervishes. It is at the head of the Kağıthane bridge. They are all Muslims. Sultan Ibrahim Khan, like Ibrahim ibn Adham (a famous Sufi, d. 777), used to set aside his crown and share food with the dervishes at this Indian convent.

6. Guilds' parade

Chapter 8: Guild of Mediterranean captains

[...]

Following the procession of the Mediterranean Sea captains, the butchers were supposed to pass, according to imperial decree. But all the great Egyptian grain merchants, including dealers in rice, hemp, Egyptian reed mats, coffee and sugar gathered together and began quarrelling with the butchers. Finally they went before the sultan and said, 'My Padishah, our galleons are charged with transporting rice, lentils, coffee, and hemp. They cannot do without us, nor we without them. Why should these bloody and tricky butchers come between us? Plagues have arisen from cities where they shed their blood, and for fear of this their stalls and shambles in other countries are outside of the city walls. They are a bloody and filthy band of ill-omen. We, on the other hand, always make Istanbul plentiful and cheap with grains of all sorts.'

Now the butchers' eyes went bloodshot.

'My Padishah,' they said, 'Our patron saint is Kassab Cömerd and our

occupation is with sheep, an animal that the Creator has made the object of mercy, and whose flesh He has made lawful food for the strengthening of His servants' bodies. Bread and meat are mentioned as the foremost of God's gifts to mankind: with a small portion of meat, a poor man can subsist for five or six days. We make our living with such a lawful trade, and are known for our generosity (*cömerdlik*). It is we who make Istanbul plentiful and cheap. As for these merchants and dealers and profiteers: concerning them the Koran says, *God has made selling lawful and profiteering unlawful* (2:275). They are such a despised group that after bringing their goods from Egypt they store it in magazines in order to create a shortage, thus causing public harm through their hoarding.

'The Ottoman state has no need of their rice in the first place, because there is excellent rice already available from Filibe and Beypazarı and (—). Nor do the people Turkey have a need for Egyptian hemp which they praise so highly, since there are various kinds of hemp available from Manastır, Florunya, Serfice, Tırhala, and Drama in Rumelia, and from numerous places in Anatolia, not to speak of the linen and cotton shirts from Trabzon which are sold for a straw — one can get a *beddari* shirt for 20 dirhems — so why do we need your hemp, which anyway has been the cause of so many huge fires in Istanbul? As for the lentils you speak of; this is a product found all over Rumelia and Anatolia.

'Egyptian sugar? But in the Koran the rivers of paradise are praised as being made of pure honey (47:15). Now we have honey from Turkey, Athens, Wallachia, Moldavia, each with seventy distinct qualities. Furthermore, if my Padishah wished, thousands of quintals of sugar could be produced in Alanya, Antalya, Silifke, Tarsus, Adana, Payas, Antakya, Aleppo, Damascus, Sidon, Beirut, Tripoli and other such provinces — enough to make it plentiful and cheap throughout the world — so why do we need your sugar?

'As for coffee: it is an innovation; it prevents sleep; it dulls the generative powers; and coffee houses are dens of sedition. When roasted, it is burnt; and in the legal compilations known as *Bazzaziya* and *Tatarkhaniya*⁶ we have the dictum that *Whatever is carbonised is absolutely forbidden* — this holds even for burnt bread. Spiced sherbet, pure milk, tea, fennel, salep, and almond-cream — all these are more wholesome than coffee.

6 *Bazzaziya*: a compendium of fatwas by Hafiz al-Din al-Bazzazi al-Kardari, d. 1414. *Tatarkhaniya*: a compendium of Hanafi law by Alim ibn Ala'al-din al-Hanafi, d. c.1351.

'You speak of henna. True, it is a Sunna of the Prophet, used by women and to dye the white beards of old men. But if you pound laudanum root in a mortar, mix it with water, and rub it in your hair or beard, it makes an excellent red dye, and furthermore rids hair and beard of lice and dust; so we have no need of your henna either.'

To these objections of the butchers, the Egyptian replied, 'Our rice is fine and white and cooks nicely, especially that grown in the regions of Manzala, Damietta, Faraskur and Birimbal, which has a wonderfully fragrant scent when cooked with butter. Before the Prophet there was no rose-water, rice, bananas, or jujubes; so the creation of rice is one of the miracles of the Prophet. As for our lentils, they are mentioned in the Koran – *and lentils* (2:61) – and grow in the soil of paradise and in the water of Egypt, and are tastier and cook better than the lentils of Turkey. No henna in any other land compares with our henna, and there is no argument that its use is a prophetic Sunna. It is true that Turkey has no need of sugar and hemp, and that sugar from Frengistan is also very fine. But tell us this, O band of butchers: What benefit and return do you offer to the public treasury?'

The butchers had nothing to say to this, and the Egyptian merchants continued, 'My Padishah, the goods arriving in our galleons provide the public treasury an annual revenue of 11,000 purses from customs dues. As a matter of justice, we ought to have precedence in the Muhammaḍan procession and the butchers ought to come after us.'

The *şeyhülislam* Yahya Efendi and Mu'īd Ahmed Efendi cited the Hadith, *The best of men is he who is useful to mankind*, and the sultan gave the Egyptian merchants a noble rescript authorising them to go first, and the butchers to go second.

Chapter 28: Guild of furriers

They are 1,000 men, with 500 shops, and their patron saint also is the prophet Idris, since they work with needles. But it was Hushang Shah who first hunted animals and wore their skins.⁷ He roamed the mountains in the guise of those animals in order to hunt them. Other people wore them in imitation of him, and took pleasure in wearing them. The patron saint of

7 Elsewhere (Vol. 3, fol. 47a; Vol. 9, fol. 70a) Evliya attributes the tanning of animal skins and the wearing of furs to the innovation of Jamshid rather than Hushang. In the *Shahnama* Jamshid, son of Hushang, is a culture hero, founder of the civilized arts; and in the *Book of Travels* he is the patron saint of many things (see Dankoff 2004, 92).

furriers at the time of the Prophet was Amr ibn Amiri. His light-filled tomb is in (—) (—) (—) and he is the fourteenth patron saint to be girded by Salman Pak.

A marvellous battle broke out between the furriers and the tanners. Finally the sultan and the nobles and grandees decided that wearing furs was a necessity and the order was given for them to go in advance accompanied by a special military band.

So they file past with their shops on drawn carts and carried on shoulders, adorned with the furs of sable, ermine, marten, red squirrel and Russian silver fox, the head and leg furs of sable, the neck furs of duck, swan and goldfinch, the neck and belly furs of fox, and the furs of astrakhan lambskin, all worth hundreds of thousand of *guruş*.

Next, the Greek furriers in the Mahmudpaşa market form a separate grand procession, wearing hundreds of furs which they put on backward.⁸ On their heads are outlandish bearskin caps. Their trousers are also animal skins. Some are covered head to foot with skins of leopard, tiger, lion and wolf. Others have sable kalpak crowns on their heads and pikes and javelins in their hands, and pass with their horses, also smothered in animal skins.

Another group wrap themselves in animal skins, pretending to be wild men, each one dragged along by five or six men with chains. These wild men of strange aspect – *Heaven help us!* – make mock attacks on the spectators, frightening them out of their wits. Others dress up as demons or fairies and stand on their heads, then leap to their feet and attack the crowd. Some are strangely attired as jinn, confounding the minds of any who see them. Still others put on lion or leopard or tiger skins and go on all fours, giving the onlookers threatening glances, and are hardly restrained from attacking them by their keepers who drag them along by chains and strike them with rattan staffs.

8 This means wearing them fur-side out, as we do today – as opposed to wearing them with the furry side next to the skin, which Evliya takes to be the norm, and which was apparently the common practice among the Russians and the Tatars (the source of furs for the Ottomans), for the practical reason that they provide greater warmth that way. Elsewhere (Vol. 10, fol. 173a) Evliya asserts that Hushang Shah, the patron saint of furriers, started out wearing furs backward or fur-side out (*ters geymek*) – apparently because he could hunt other animals more effectively dressed in animal-like fashion; but his more sophisticated imitators began to wear them fur-side in; although fur-side out is still the fashion in the Caucasus and parts of southern Russia and Tatar.

Next some men in skins of bear, boar, wolf, stag and roe deer enter the arena unchained and swaying back and forth. Behind them come a band of hunters with their motley hounds and brandishing pikes and maces. They attack the first group as though they were hunting boars and bears and wolves, and so pass before the sultan.

Guild of sable kalpak makers. Eighty shops and 105 individuals. Their patron saint is unknown. This headgear is the crown of the Chingissids. They deck their shops with sable kalpaks and entertain the crowds by stuffing kalpaks with cotton and manipulating the resulting puppets with strings.

Guild of sable merchants. 1,000 individuals, all of them Rumelian Greeks – from the cities of Serfice, Florunya, Liçista and Gölikesri – with no religion and no patron saint. They are wealthy merchants who every year import sables and squirrels and other furs from Muscovy. They put their sables on backward and pass in parade with their litters and horses adorned head to foot with sables and with leech teeth, also known as fish teeth.⁹

Guild of falconers {and other hunters}. 200 individuals. They are the furriers' hunters and possess sultanic rescripts exempting them from taxes. None of the other hunters – whether the chief falconers, or the keepers of hounds of the palace gardeners or of the janissaries, or the janissaries of the Istaranca hunters' corps – can interfere with these furriers' hunters. They shoot swans, goldfinches, mallard drakes and speckled ducks in the Great and Little Çekmece inlets and in the Terkoz lakes, and give their throat-fur to the chief furrier and their wings to the chief arrowsmith. They too pass in procession with their game.

Guild of leopard keepers. One agha – his shop is in the Lions' Den (*Arslanbane*) – and fifty-five individuals. Because the chief furrier possesses leopard skins and lynx skins, these leopard keepers parade with all the

9 Perhaps walrus ivory. There is a confusion of *sülüke* 'leech' and *sünüke* 'bone'; see Dankoff 2008, 213, citing Vol. 7, fol. 169b on 'the bone known as fish tooth', one of the imports from Muscovy.

10 At this point in the description appears the phrase *seraser çullar ile* which might mean 'with embroidered hair cloth bags' (used to restrain the animals?) or else 'dressed in hair cloth from head to foot' (but unclear whether this would refer to the animals or their keepers).

sultan's leopards, dragging them along by gold and silver chains¹⁰ and keeping them in check with rattan staffs, crying 'My leopard did not take it, my leopard did not see it!'

Guild of lion keepers. Their patron saint was Ali, the Lion of God, at whose feet all the wild beasts used to grovel. The chief lion keeper, in charge of lions and tigers, was originally supposed to march with the mastiff sheepdog keepers under the authority of the chief butcher; but the chief furrier persuaded the sultan to have them under his authority instead, since he had control over the skinning and tanning of lion and tiger skins. So the fifty lion-keepers too go in the procession with the furriers, dragging their chained lions and tigers – and panthers, bears, wolves and hyenas – like so many vicious dragons.

Following them come the Greek and Muslim darling boys (i.e., apprentices) of all the furriers, with their Tatar kalpaks and armed to the teeth.

The chief falconer of the furriers, the chief leopard keeper, the deputy of the chief lion keeper, and the chief furrier go together in front, stirrup to stirrup and bridle to bridle, dressed in the finery of their respective guilds. Following after are their darling boys and their eightfold band, all passing in ceremony.

This guild of furriers is very necessary to the Ottomans, whether at home or on campaign.

Chapter 34: Guild of barbers

[...]

Guild of circumcision barbers. They are 400 men, with 300 shops, and their patron saint is Abu'l-Hawakin Muhammad ibn Talha ibn Abdullah. Salman Pak girded him and he circumcised all those who were honoured with the glory of Islam. But the Prophet, by God's command, when he was born from his mother Amina, was already circumcised, and his eyes were uted with kohl.

The wife of Abu'l-Hawakin Muhammad was Rabi'a, daughter of Abdullah ibn Mas'ud. She circumcised her chaste-starred daughter by cutting off the excess flesh called the 'little red tongue' in the middle of her vagina. This was first done by (—) (Sarah), Abraham's wife, who out of anger at Hagar had circumcised her by cutting off that very flesh. Since that time, the practice of circumcising girls has become peculiar to Arabia.

Even in Egypt there are a people known as Hadari who make great merriment on the night of the circumcision of girls. The advantage of this for women, reportedly, is that it eases childbirth.

Here the circumcisers adorn their shops drawn on carts with various circumcision razors and, as they pass by in procession with drums and tambourines, pretend to circumcise some boys.

Chapter 41: Guild of acrobats

First are the master acrobats, i.e., tightrope walkers, who perform world-admiring feats. In Istanbul today there are thirteen masters, each one capable of climbing to the sky on rope ladders and conversing with Jesus and the cherubim. First is Mehmed Çelebi of Üsküdar, then Hacı Nasir of the Maghreb, Hacı Ali of Alexandria, Şaşı Hüsam of Harput, Kubadi of Bursa, Kara Şücah of Arapgir, Kemberoğlu, and Kız Pehlivan. They exhibit their skill in the Padishah's presence, wearing Kubadi slippers, some with balancing beam, some without, some with a tray in each hand and a donkey on their backs, or with a naked sword in each hand – in short, demonstrating their skill with one of the 260 props used by acrobats. They are Arab and Persian, Indian and Yemeni masters, who have set foot in the heavenly sphere at the summit of Galata Tower.

Chief of the guild, appointed by a noble rescript, is Mehmed Çelebi of Üsküdar, who performed in the Hippodrome on the occasion of the imperial circumcision. According to his register, there is a total of 200 tightrope walkers wandering about this island world, with 2,000 men in their train.

Their patron saint is Dawud Habli, son of Imru'l-Qays. Dawud scaled the fortress of Khaybar by tightrope and upon its conquest was girded as patron of the tightrope walkers by Salman the Persian. His tomb is in Hamadan. His father Imru'l-Qays was unique of his age, one of the most eloquent of the Arab poets, from the tribe of Quraysh. He recited these couplets –

*In summer man desires winter;
When winter comes, he desires summer.
He is never satisfied with one thing.
Let him perish! How ungrateful he is!*

– before the revelation of the Koran. Later, the Koranic verse: *Let man perish! How ungrateful he is!* (80:17) was revealed. Imru'l-Qays eventually went to King Heraclius and was buried in Caesarea.

7. Lağari Hasan Çelebi

On the sixth night after the chaste-starred daughter of Murad (IV) Khan, named Kaya Sultan, was born, in celebration of her hair being shorn, this Lağari Hasan created a rocket with seven prongs, to be fired by 50 *okkas* of gunpowder paste. Overlooking the sea at Sarayburnu, in the Padishah's presence, Lağari mounted the (main) rocket and his assistants ignited it. As he was soaring to the summit of heaven, he cried out, 'Goodbye, my Padishah. I am going to converse with Jesus.'

Offering praises to God, he ignited the rocket prongs around him, illuminating the sea below. But as he mounted to the roof of the sky, the gunpowder for the main rocket ran out and he plummeted back to earth. He had attached eagle wings to his arms in order to break the fall. Now he plunged into the sea before the palace of Sinan Pasha and swam ashore. Emerging naked, he kissed the ground before the Padishah and joked, 'Jesus greets you, my Padishah.'

He was rewarded with a purse of gold and an appointment in the cavalry corps with a salary of 70 *akçe* per diem. He went on to serve Selamet Giray Khan in the Crimea, and died there. He was my close friend. *May God's mercy be upon him.*

AN OTTOMAN TRAVELLER

SELECTIONS FROM THE

Book of Travels of Evliya Çelebi

TRANSLATION AND COMMENTARY BY

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ELAND