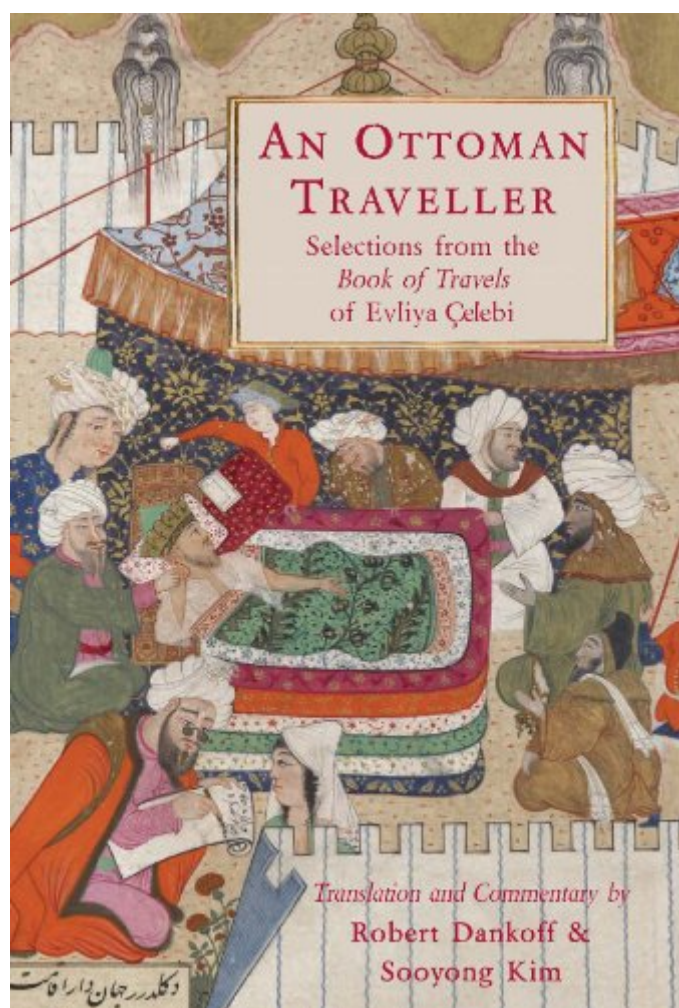


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An Ottoman Traveller: Selections From The Book Of Travels By Evliya Çelebi



Synopsis

Evliya Çelebi is the greatest travel writer of the Ottoman Empire. Born in Istanbul in 1611, he started travelling in 1640 and continued for over forty years, stopping eventually in Cairo where he died in about 1685. He collected his lively and eclectic observations into a ten-volume manuscript the Seyahatname, or Book of Travels. For the first time in English, this selection gives a taste of the breadth of Evliya's interests: from architecture to natural history, through religion, politics, linguistics, music, science and the supernatural. While he made over a thousand complete recitations of the Koran in his lifetime, he also wrote with curiosity about Christianity, about his own impotence, about the anti at a world convention of trapeze artists and the feats of a Kurdish sorcerer who conjured a horse from a log pile.

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Customer Reviews

Yes I know about Marco Polo. I also know about Gore Vidal's "Creation". There are other stories, travelogues, novels, myths I vaguely remember reading. But Evliya Celebi's Travels are above and beyond all that. The complete ten volumes includes history, travel information valid even today,

cultural anthropology, psychology, myths, stories, both conservative religious views and the most liberal sexual descriptions. It is an incredible treasure. Evliya's travels took him through the Balkans, Eastern and Central Europe to Russia, the Crimea, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Persia, Armenia, All of the Middle East and Anatolia. He was born in Istanbul in 1611 and died in about 1685 in Cairo. His first book starts describing Istanbul. he was also the first embedded reporter that I know, traveling with the Ottoman army and describing some major battles including one near Vienna. Unfortunately the "Travels" is written in Ottoman Turkish and we have this book as the largest English language compendium of various chapters and sections from the ten volumes. Ottoman Turkish, having incorporated a large number of Persian and Arabic words of the time and using the Arabic script but with the addition of some additional letters (like 'p') is difficult to read because of the limited usage of vowels. Unless you are familiar with a word, it is very difficult to read that word. There are a number of modern Turkish translations, but, so far, no one has either gone to the trouble of translating one of those to English, or trusted one to be complete and unbiased. The present volume, selects what the translator, the editor and the publishers consider to be significant sections from the travelogue. Thus we are at their mercy. What they have picked is mostly very interesting. Yet, one wonders how much one misses because these worthy people decided that we need not read those other sections. It is a book to whet the appetite. There are sections over which a seasoned traveler would go crazy, hoping to visit areas he has not been to and revisit others that he has already visited. A scholar of social anthropology could be aghast at the limitations of his knowledge on the customs and mores and attitudes of the different peoples of the time. A post modern or alternate history novelist would find a treasure here worthy of many short and tall tales. A behavioral psychologist could easily come up with new theories of cognition and perception on the basis of the observations, descriptions and narratives. Finally, Evliya Celebi is my namesake. My name is Celebi pluralized. My late uncle, Asaf Halet Celebi, was an important poet of the first half of the twentieth century. I call myself "Otherchelebi" in preparation of the publication of my travels, to continue the tradition. Unfortunately, i cannot trace my roots to Evliya. As an interesting afterthought, the word "Celebi" pronounced 'chaelaabee,' meant a 'gentleman, an intellectual, a man of learning, a wit' and was used by Ottomans and included many Armenians in the Ottoman Empire. According to Evliya, Turks were not regarded highly by the Ottomans who basically were christians converted to islam at an early age, educated at palace schools and who were not allowed to establish any roots in any regions or lands.

Fascinating!

Fascinating

Evliya Celebi you are one interesting mofo

A historical masterpiece of a travel diary written by a servant of the Turkish sultan on the occasion of his attacks on the Habsburg empire.

It is wonderful to be able to view the world through the eyes of a 17th Century privileged member of the Ottoman elite. Herodotus is sometimes disparaged as the "Father of Lies" but Celebi spins some very fantastic and supernatural yarns. The mores of his time are quite different!

Select this book if you are curious about a fascinating time and place - the world of the Ottomans! It is not a fast read and it is rather long. However it is well written with colorful language painting a tapestry of the exotic in a voice from the distant past. Drink this book while sipping Turkish tea while reclining on pillows in front of the fire or bring it to a cafe and sip coffee. You will be worlds away in no time!

This is a large work that is a translation of an early travelers account and it is very well done.

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