Religion as a determining factor of the Self and the Other in travel literature

How Islamic is the Muslim worldview? Evliya Çelebi and his successors reconsidered

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Throughout history there has always been cultural contact to a varying extent between those regions today referred to as the Near and Middle East on the one hand and Europe on the other. Despite political, geographical and religious obstacles, goods were exchanged, ideas and knowledge were transferred, people travelled and migrated across borders, while borders themselves changed their course and people stayed or fled over to the other side. In this sense the boundaries proved to be porous, but they became considerably more permeable from the 19th century onwards. The reasons were twofold. On the one hand, developments in infrastructure and transport technologies, such as railways and steamers, rendered previous notions of distance obsolete. Then again this development went hand in hand with political developments. To an increasing degree, the Near and Middle East became part of the European political sphere while the relationship to the European states became more and more vital for the Middle Eastern centres of power on a political, economic and cultural level.

This paper will discuss the influence of the Islamic religion in the ability of Muslims to get into contact with non-Islamic Europe as well as the role of religion within the perception of "the Self" and "the Other". Does an understanding of the classical positions of Islamic law help us to comprehend historical developments? Bernard Lewis suggests that a "Muslim worldview" based on Islamic doctrinal positions determined cultural contact with Europe and prevented Muslims from broadening their horizons. His line of argument claims that unlike for Europeans, religion for Muslims has always been and still is *the* essential category of identity and restricted cultural contact.

I want to question the idea that Islam (as a normative religious tradition) is *per se* the predominant determiner for "the Muslim" (as a historical and social being) in cultural contact. I will do so by first discussing Bernard Lewis's line of arguments. This will be followed by a theoretical frame for dealing with identity, alterity and the mechanisms involved in the process of the imagination of Self and Other. By taking identity and alterity not as a feature of the entities themselves, but as a feature of their relationship that is determined by both sides, we may understand how much the "Muslim" traveller is or is not determined by ideas prefigured by religion. This will question Lewis' assumptions on a theoretical level. With this back-

ground I will analyze four texts, dealing with cultural encounters with Europe in different settings. If there is a "Muslim worldview" it has to be consistent throughout different texts from different times. Therefore I will analyze four travelogues reaching from the 17th up to the early 20th century in order to cover a relatively wide range of relationships and contexts of cultural contact. Only if we take these transformations into consideration can we then look for static elements in the discourse.

The anchor is formed by the well-known travelogue of Evliya Çelebi to Vienna in 1665. It will show that even a text that seems to be a clear manifestation of an unshaken Ottoman worldview does not at all fit into the simplistic pattern of a "Muslim worldview". In order to prove this, the text has to be read and discussed thoroughly, so longer passages will be quoted to illustrate the different narrative techniques used to describe Evliya's experiences on the other side of the border of Ottoman/Muslim territory.

The findings of this analysis will then be discussed in the light of three further texts: The travelogues of Yirmisekiz Mehmed Çelebi (1720/21), of Rifāʿa Rāfiʿ aṭ-Ṭahṭāwī (1826–31) to France and Şerefeddin Mağmumi's travel accounts of his journeys through Europe in the late 19th and early 20th century. The first two are literary milestones in the genre of travelogue that have influenced their readerships for whole generations. They can now be reread under new the theoretical premises, which I will elaborate below. The travels of the Young Turk Şerefeddin Mağmumi may raise the question of how a "Muslim worldview" may have developed in the light of secular ideas both within the Ottoman Empire and within Europe, and furthermore raises the question of the extent to which self-perception is shaped by the perception of the Other. The latter three examples will be discussed in addition to the text of Evliya Çelebi, showing that certain patterns continue to exist while others may change over time. This shall protect us from generalizing one text within a narrative tradition, while at the same time allowing us to see similarities.

In my conclusion I will argue in favour of new ways of dealing with cultural contact in travelogues that transgress the ideas of a "Muslim worldview" and instead may see Muslims as embedded into a relationship to the West that sometimes is mutually based on religious ideas but sometimes also transcends these ideas. I will show the content and context of descriptions of identity and alterity and ask for the importance of religion in this regard. The analysis of the relationship and the function of the categories in use show that these categories may anticipate zones of contact and conflict, but are not eternal constants and are indeed changeable.

The Muslim worldview? The world as seen through an Islamic lens?

The idea of a "Muslim worldview" transcending time and space with a set of stable values and preconditions assumes that religious ideas form a Muslim subject

whose perception of the Self and of the Other, of the near and the far is primarily shaped by an Islamic tradition. This idea and the expression "Muslim worldview" itself were put forward by Bernard Lewis, most prominently in his book *The Muslim Discovery of Europe* (Lewis 1982). This premise is also the basis of Lewis' book *What went wrong* (Lewis 2002), tracing the attested backwardness of the Middle East to this form of "Muslim worldview", giving it a deterministic quality. In his line of argument he makes extensive use of travel literature. The starting point of his (and others') assumption is an evaluation of the canonical Islamic texts dealing with the relationship between Islam/Muslims and the respective Other.

When it comes to territorial concepts he claims that the Islamic concepts of *dār al-islām* (house/territory of Islam) and *dār al-ḥarb* (house/territory of war)[1] determined and continue to determine the worldview of people with an Islamic background. He writes:

> "In the Muslim world view the basic division of mankind is into the House of Islam (*Dār al-Islām*) and the House of War (*Dār al-Ḥarb*). The one consists of all those countries where the law of Islam prevails, that is to say, broadly, the Muslim Empire; the latter is the rest of the world."[2]

According to him, this legal/religious dimension prevented travelling, and cultural contact was not sought after, and instead developed only out of "dire necessity":

> "Even during such periods of relative peace, traffic with the infidel was discouraged. (…) [T]he jurists for the most part agreed that the only legitimate reason for a Muslim to travel to the House of War was to ransom captives. Even trade was not an acceptable purpose, though some authorities permitted the purchase of food supplies from Christian lands in case of dire necessity" (Lewis 1982: 61).

Lewis thus deduces a general disinterest into everything beyond the *dār al-islām*. The region of the "unbelievers" (i.e. Europe) was seen as one entity (Lewis 1982: 63). Living under Christian rule was not accepted by Islamic law (Lewis 1982: 67).

It has to be summarized here that in fact Lewis argues that the borders of cultural, political and economic contact where actually shaped by Muslim ideas about these borders and that these ideas were based on canonical texts. This might seem convincing at first, but it leaves out the possibility that these ideas may reflect political realities which might have their pendants on the other side, too. In a passing comment he states:

> "In general, Christian unwillingness to tolerate Muslim subjects was matched by Muslim unwillingness to remain under Christian rule" (Lewis 1982: 66).

This comment, if taken seriously, turns his line of argument upside down. It means that the Islamic norms and Muslim behaviour corresponded to the treatment en-

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1 On these concepts see Abel 1991a; Abel 1991b.

2 Lewis 1982: 60f. (italics by the editor). Accordingly, Muslims are seen as being in constant *ǧihād* against the rest of the world.

dured from the other side. In this case Islam is not necessarily the cause of certain attitudes and worldviews but may, in a legal sense, reflect a certain form of relation. The idea that Muslim legal norms were created within contexts of relations and were not given as such does not occur to Lewis at all. The dichotomy between the land of the believers and the land of the infidels, which had to be fought, was not only held by the Muslims in particular, but was also part of politics and discourse on the other side, yet it could be ignored by both sides when serving special political purposes and needs. As long as the *dār al-ḥarb* was a political reality for the traveller/soldier/captive, we cannot deduce that this political reality was produced by the Muslim worldview. In fact even the concept of a Muslim world, a *dār al-islām* as a single territorial unit in the sense of modern statehood, posing no borders to the traveller, must be questioned.

If we look at the time after the French Revolution, when secularism offered a basis for Muslims to stay in Europe and the borders are mutually recognized, this idea of the Muslim worldview as such seems to fail, considering a context where certain European states were politically even closer to the Ottomans than to their Christian neighbours, like France at the end of the 17th century, when the Ottomans were at war with the Austrians. Therefore the overwhelming role of religion in shaping territorial concepts of nearness or farness to the Other is still waiting to be proven and has yet to be tested. Only by comparing different travellers, who were in contact with the European Other in various periods and under varying social and political contexts, can we determine whether there is a consistent and genuine Muslim view of the Other or not. This is exactly what Lewis did, but I would argue that his approach gives too much meaning to the words of the text, ignoring the context and the situation, the reader and possible implications and functions of the narration, treating the texts as the truth of the author, not as a world created by a narrator for a certain public. Analyzing the texts on this level is closely linked to the question of how much Islam as a broad tradition influenced the identity of the single (Muslim) traveller. As identity has different layers to it, it is not a question of whether or not Islam plays a role in identity-building, but rather how and to what degree it does. A look at some aspects of identity may be helpful here.

Identity as a process and form of relation with the Other

Identity is dealt with in different disciplines, looked at from different angles, while stressing different dimensions of its properties. In the following observations I will take into consideration those theoretical aspects that will help us understand how identity is displayed and constructed in travelogues.

Identity, the sameness of a person over time (Noonan 2005: 33f.), has an individual as well as a collective dimension. The individual gains its notion of Self through contact with Others near or far, relating itself to them (see Maker 2007).

In its collective sense, the term *identity* is also used in the context of groups (group identity), implying the sameness of groups through time. All imagined national, social or religious groups and their members share this idea of an essential core that remains constant through changes of circumstances in the course of time.[3] Belonging to these groups and having premises with regard to the group members forms not just the identity of the individual but also the way the Others and their actions are perceived (Tajfel 1981).

Identity and alterity are dialectic concepts. There is no Self without the Other. The same is true for groups, there is no "we" without "them" (Schäffter 1991: 12). Therefore identity and alterity have to be dealt with within one framework, which obviously is neglected by the position taken by Lewis and others, as outlined above. Following Erving Goffmann, identity is acquired and ascribed at the same time, with ascribed identities influencing the acquired ones and vice versa.[4] Identity is about drawing and perceiving boundaries towards others. We can't have a notion of our own Self if we can't determine the boundaries between Self and Other. The picture of the Other is related to us, the pictures of ourselves to the Other. In a process of identity/alterity construction we choose the techniques to describe the Other and ourselves, determine the angle, the displayed details, the depth, the focus, use different filters, sharpen the contrasts or soften them (Fludernik 2007: 261).

Ideas of identity and alterity exist in a social and cultural setting and need confirmation to be acquired by the individual Self and groups alike. Travelogues are historical evidence of that process. Identity and alterity are culturally embedded and part of the collective memory. They display how the individual constructs itself and its group through narrative, thus using culturally existing forms of narratives. The branch of narrative psychology examines the way identity is constructed through narratives, claiming that we are what we are, because we tell it to ourselves as well as to one another in different cultural forms (Mancuso 1986: 99ff.; Giddens 2010: 54). Religion, then, as part of the collective memory, can also serve as a very important source for ideas about one's identity.

But still there lies a certain contradiction, tension and illusion in the term identity, as identity emphasizes consistency, yet at the same time identity has to adapt to changing contexts. Established concepts can only survive if they are updated, brought in line with ever changing realities. This is done through a narrative process that explains new realities within established frames and may transform these frames for the future, becoming itself part of the collective memory.

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3 Classical reading in the context of nationalism is Anderson (1983) and Hobsbawm (1985).

4 Engelhardt (2010: 126). Goffman has analyzed the influence of stigmatization on concepts of the self: Goffman (1990).

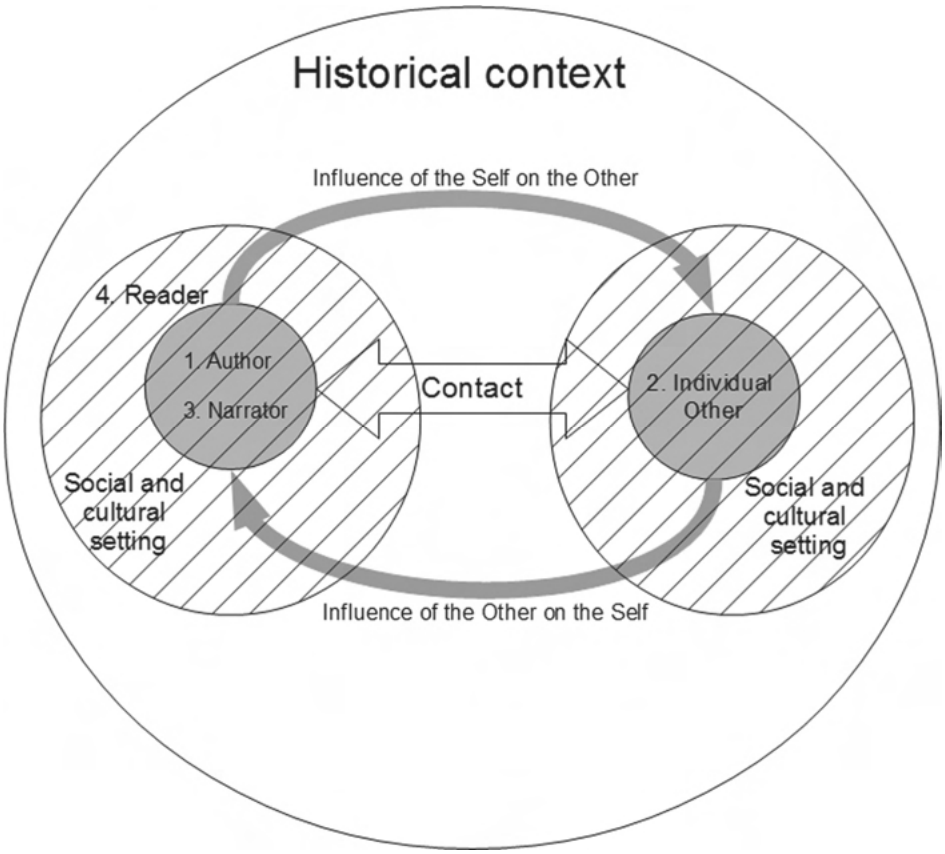

Figure 1: Narrative model of the processes involved in the description of the Other

Let me explain my arguments with the scheme above. Identity construction combines processes that are psychological, social and narrative. Travelogues therefore are neither purely factual nor purely fictitious, but perform different functions on different levels at the same time. A travelogue has a collective and individual dimension and combines factual experience with previous knowledge. It creates new knowledge but is tied to established narrative forms and assumptions of the reader.

The author as a person (1) is embedded into his social surroundings and into narrative traditions that include certain ideas about the Self and the Other. The narrative traditions may be shaped by religious traditions, factual and fictitious accounts. He gets in contact with his counterpart, the individual Other (2), who himself is embedded in another social and cultural setting including its particular narratives. The observations of the traveller and his perception by his host are therefore both *prefigured* by existing cultural patterns, literary traditions, cultural schemes and images. The view of the traveller is directed in a certain angle even

before he or she makes the first move (Nünning 2009: 128–136). While culture (and religion is part of culture here) determines the part of the Other that attracts attention and is potentially visible and understandable for the observer, it is in fact the individual condition and the general context that puts the Self into relation with the Other. The individual's intention to travel, i.e. their motivation, is as important as the specific historical context, war or peace, the conditions of travelling and the view of one's own society in comparison; all this affects the view of the respective Other. There is no objective observation. From the very beginning, the view is directed according to the categories of Self and that way reveals only a certain part of the Other, giving it a shape, taking a very restricted glance for the whole picture, whereas reality is much more complex.

During the actual contact there is no clear boundary between the observer and the observed (as suggested in the travelogue). The observer simultaneously enters the scene and causes reactions and adjustments on the part of the Other; in this sense his presence always influences the situation. He becomes part of the scene that he pretends to observe from an objective distance, although he too is a subject and is being observed by the Other. What he actually observes then is a selected section of the Other and the relationship between it and the traveller's Self. This "restricted Other" is then mistaken for the Other itself, whereas obviously it does not exist as such, but only in relation to the Self. Following the diagram, the Other influences the idea of the Self (Influence of the Other on the Self), while the presence and contacts of the traveller shape the Other's ideas of the Self (influence of the Self on the Other). As a result of the contact, neither side remains the same.

After returning home and writing the travelogue, the traveller becomes a narrator in his social context, directing his narration to a public within its setting. Prevailing ideas of the Self and the Other are referred to and observations prepared for the reader within the boundaries of his narrative and cultural norms. This form of communication therefore takes place within a prefigured narrative field and also contributes to this field.[5] The author's knowledge consists of both factual and a fictitious elements. Therefore the so-called "objective" knowledge, acquired through experience and put into narrative frames for the reader, contains these two elements as well.

Viewed in this light the travelogue should not be seen as offering the truth about what it describes but as constructed by the expectations of the observer as much as by those of his audience. The traveller creates a document that serves as a "passport", a re-entry card, to his own society and culture.[6] Therefore the picture of the Other contains a huge proportion of the Self. That is to say, the picture of

5 Nünning divides the narrative process into the three steps of *prefiguration/premediation*, *configuration* and *refiguration*, see loc. cit.

6 Regarding the travelogue as a practice of reaggregation see Harbsmeier (1997).

the Self within the travelogue has to unconditionally fit into the cultural norms of the traveller's home country. Furthermore, it has to be stressed that the real traveller and his judgments may be quite different from the protagonist of his story, constructed by the narrator[7] (no. 3 in the figure above). For his own prestige, the author may tell/construct certain episodes and conceal others (Brenner 1990: 21). The reader of the time (no. 4 in the figure above) only gets to know the protagonist and narrator of the story, yet unfortunately some historians tend to mistake him for the author, taking both for the same person.

Travelogues create previous knowledge (*prefiguration*) for the next generation of travellers and stand within a literary tradition. The cultural dimension and the intertextual embeddedness of travelogues very much speaks in favour of a continuity of the topoi and the borders between the Self and the Other. But if we take a look at the chart above, we see that all of its elements are in constant flux. In our case, the Ottoman Empire and the Arab centres of power had changing relations (ranging between peaceful and adversarial) with Europe – some states were allies, some enemies – and above all, even changing relations with one another. In this context individual and collective frames of reference constantly shifted, and with the French Revolution and technological innovations of the time, the changes and adjustments gained momentum. Therefore changes in the conception of the Self and the Other – identity and alterity – are highly likely to have occurred.

Paying an ambivalent visit to the enemy: Evliya Çelebi and his visit to Vienna

The account of the experienced traveller Evliya Çelebi of his visit to Austria/Vienna in 1665 is an early and central document of cultural contact between the Ottoman Empire and the Habsburg Empire. As there is a whole branch of "Evliya Studies" and the author is well known,[8] I will not go into details on his person and the political context but will rather concentrate on the text itself as a narrative of a cultural encounter.

The circumstances for this encounter could not have been any worse: The gun smoke of the last war still lingered in the air and the peace treaty that was to be signed by the delegation Evliya was part of in Vienna was not to last very long.[9] The border between Austria with the dynasty of the Habsburgs (*nemse* for Evliya Çelebi) and the Ottoman territory was not a diffuse imagination between the *dār*

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7 In the case of the travelogue the author creates a narrator who should be considered identical to the author himself.

8 On Evliya's life, the state of scientific research and available literature see Dankoff (2011), Kreiser (2005), Dankoff (2006), Tezcan (2009) and Tezcan – Atlansoy (2003).

9 Regarding the historical context of the encounter see Tezcan (2010), Kreiser – Neumann (2003: 206–215), Shaw – Shaw (1976: 200–225), and Kurtaran (2009).

al-islām and *dār al-ḥarb*, but a very real border between two distinct units that were not only of different religious preferences. The border existed on the political, economic, cultural, religious and linguistic level and was not merely a construct of the Muslim mind but a tangible material reality, constituted and militarily contested by both sides. This given reality structured the conditions of cultural contact. For each side, the imagined Other in this context was the negation of everything the Self stood for. The Habsburg and Ottoman dynasties were mutually exclusive to one another. Religious and dynastical ideas were the frame of political reference, leaving no place for the Other. Unlike the Christians on the Ottoman side, who were subjects of the Empire, the Christians on the side of the Habsburgs were enemies not in matters of religious preference (Christians formed the majority in the Ottoman part of the Balkans), but in a political and military sense, and unlike Christians under Ottoman rule, life under Christian rule was not just unthinkable for the Ottomans, but impossible. The conquest of Ottoman/Muslim territory by the Habsburgs meant the end of Muslim life as such on the conquered territory. Lewis totally ignores these quiet concrete preconditions of cultural contact and therefore the content of the terms in use. But contact itself and the narration of cultural encounter never takes place without a context, influencing the traveller, his experience and his narration as it is processed for his audience.

In this regard we must be careful in which sense Evliya Çelebi uses the terms *gavur* and *kafir* to characterize the Austrians. This distinction between the Muslim Self and the infidel Other initially seems to support the dichotomy of *dār al-islām* and *dār al-ḥarb* attested by Lewis. It seems that the "Muslim worldview" determines the view of the Other, who is described in negative terms. Simply pointing out the pejorative use of these words to label the Other could lead to the conclusion that Evliya himself had no interest in the Other. But if we take a closer look at the context of the encounter and the relationship between the Ottomans and Habsburg, it becomes apparent that he draws clear boundaries based on a religious terminology. However, in pre-secular times the religious dichotomy is a worldly one as well. Within a framework of religious references in a pre-secular age made by state and society, the Other, as counterpart of the Self is necessarily expressed in religious terms by both sides. For the Habsburgs, whose religiously legitimated ruler was the *Kaiser* of the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation, and the Ottoman Muslims (and in different contexts, also Christians of other denominations) were the unbelievers. Also the territory of the Other was not simply hypothetically *dār al-ḥarb*. The border between the territories was only temporarily respected by both sides, during a period in between the last and the next war. Therefore dār al-ḥarb was not constructed; it was a given, a very tangible reality. Instead of taking the categories *gavur* and *kafir* as a starting point, handling them anachronistically as "religious" in a modern sense, meaning a personal preference of spiritual life, and deducing a general disdain

and ignorance with regard to the cultural contact of Muslims in general, one should instead look at the descriptions themselves, which prove to be more sophisticated than the Muslim/unbelievers dichotomy suggests.

Taking the readership into consideration, who might be sceptical when it comes to descriptions related to the arch-enemy (Faroqhi 2004: 178–181), the use of a delimitative language becomes even more plausible. We might even take into consideration the idea that the author may make deliberate use of the Muslim/unbelievers dichotomy in order to fulfil the reader's expectations, which might be the precondition of enticing them to read and to continue reading the description that might ultimately even challenge the reader's established point of view. In this sense the travelogue uses established categories of identity to describe the Other, which might eventually lead to a repositioning towards this constitutive figure. Within the scheme presented at the beginning, it is obvious that the narrator has to present his narration to the reader within the established cultural and narrative forms and conventions in order to be understood.

For Evliya the clear boundaries don't prevent him from taking a closer look. Reading through his description it seems that his clear distancing from the Other is a precondition allowing him a closer, differentiated look even at positive aspects of the Other. As shall be proven, we can even establish that, precisely because the Other is a military threat and the essential opposite of one's own norms (the unbeliever in a worldview based on religious categories), it is out of question for the narrator and his public that the (appreciative) observations could challenge their own identity. When firm boundaries are drawn, corresponding aspects of the Other lose their threat. When the Other is of no challenge to one's own identity, it can be easier to learn from and use it as an object of projection, be it even in a fancy and positive way.

When it comes to the description of life in the lands of the enemy, Evliya often describes technological developments, artisanship, medicine and political measures very positively. Some of his stories are exaggerated and even fictitious in a favourable manner and tell *mirabilia* (*ʿağāʾib*) (see Dubler 1986), which form part of the genre but in this particular case shed a very positive light on the Austrians.

For example a "dentist" applies the following treatment after pulling out a rotten tooth from the mouth of a patient:

> "He then took one of the red-hot wires from the brazier and applied it to the root of the tooth. (…) He removed the tip of the wire from the rotten cavity and with it a tiny black-headed worm. He stuck another red-hot wire onto a second root of the tooth and a similar tiny worm emerged from the decayed part. Then, without touching the tooth with his hand, in the same fashion as he had extracted it he put it back into its socket. (…)
> 'This tooth won't ache any more and it is stronger than before,' said the surgeon."[10]

[10] Evliya Çelebi (2010: 245 [109f.]). All English quotations are taken from the outstanding expert on Evliya Celebi, Robert Dankoff. In square brackets, I have always added the reference to the critical transliteration of the Ottoman text in Evliya Çelebi (2003).

Evliya is not only the witness of this procedure, but also enjoys this treatment for three of his own teeth, making them firm like steel and strong enough to crack hazelnuts and walnuts with them. If we take into consideration that medicine was a highly appreciated discipline in the Ottoman Empire and similar "wonders" are told at other occasions (Evliya Çelebi 2003: 100, 107–111), such a positive fancied story is remarkable. But also in other fields of knowledge the infidel Austrians seem unbelievably clever. They construct wondrous machines, for example, that move things in a perfect way without the aid of horse and oxen (Evlia Çelebi 2010: 232 [100]).

For a public among whom mechanical innovations such as clocks and musical boxes are highly appreciated, such and other similar descriptions of the Austrians' wondrous mechanical skills would have been very impressive. But not only does Evliya tell positive *ʿağāʿib*, some of which may have been discovered as fictitious by the reader, but he reports highly positive aspects of practical life in the land of the "infidels". The roads are clean, women are very beautiful and some architectural achievements are without comparison, even in the case of churches (vide infra) (Evliya Çelebi 2003: 86, 100, 111). Here the positive abilities of the Other are even more interesting to analyze and explain, as they don't relate to *mirabilia*, but to qualities, desires, abilities and knowledge that are an integral part of the Self. Still, this does not question the Self, but serves as a motivator, even more so when the Other is in fact the enemy.

But there are other qualities and traits of character which are unique to the Self and can't be shared, so some borders are stressed and affirmed. As the positive descriptions have to be analyzed according to their functions and within the whole text, the negative attributes and descriptions must be analyzed within the same frame and the specific balance and blend must be taken into consideration. A central passage in the description is like a snapshot of the identity of the Self and otherness, and reveals the function of proximity and distance. Evliya, for instance, compares the Austrians to the Hungarians, portrayed as their conquered enemies:

> "Still, compared to the Hungarians the Austrians are like the Jews: they have no stomach for a fight and are not swordsmen and horsemen. Their infantry musketeers, to be sure, are real fire-shooters; but they have only a single rapier at their waist, and when they shoot they brace their muskets on a forked gun-rest – they can't shoot from the shoulder as Ottoman soldiers do. Also, they shut their eyes and shoot at random. They wear large hats and long pointed shoes with high heels, and they never remove their gloves, summer or winter" (Evliya Çelebi 2010: 230 [87]).

In this passage he deprives the Austrians of the central attributes of virility and braveness. They are compared to the Jews of the Ottoman Empire, who don't serve in the army. The Austrians lack the capabilities of the Ottoman soldiers and their courage and practical skills like fighting face-to-face in a sword fight and on horseback. Both abilities are pivotal to the Ottoman professional soldiers such as the Janissaries or Sipahis. All the Austrian soldiers can do is "shoot" and

then they even have to shut their eyes and shoot at random. Their overall appearance is described as ridiculous. We clearly see that Evliya draws a boundary between the Ottoman Self and the Austrian Other and which techniques he uses to achieve this. But he continues the description utilizing yet another very interesting narrative figure, namely by introducing the Hungarians in opposition to the Austrians. By using this technique of asymmetric description (Harbsmeier 1982: 17), the Austrians' enemies are constructed to be of a different quality and are displayed in very close resemblance to the Self.

> "The Hungarians, on the other hand, though they have lost their power still have fine tables, are hospitable to guests, and are capable cultivators of their fertile land. And they are true warriors. Like the Tatars, they ride wherever they go with a span of horses, with five or ten muskets, and with real swords at their waists. Indeed, they look just like our frontier soldiers, wearing the same dress as they and riding the same thoroughbred horses. They are clean in their ways and in their eating, and honour their guests. They do not torture their prisoners as the Austrians do. They practice swordplay like the Ottomans. In short, though both of them are unbelievers without faith, the Hungarians are more honourable and cleaner infidels [Org.: El-hâsil ikisi de kâfir-i bî-dînlerdir amma Macar aslah-i mevcud pâk keferelerdir]" (Evliya Çelebi 2010: 230f. [87]).

Though having been defeated by the Austrians and the Ottomans alike, the Hungarians, according to Evliya, still share attributes that arouse a positive association to the Ottoman Self. They have fine tables; they have the virtues of hospitality and knowledge of agriculture. When it comes to attributes of manhood, they are favourably compared to the (Turkish) Tatars, well known for their riding skills. The Hungarians hold the virtues of cleanness and of being respectable soldiers, as they know how to use the sword, but at the very same time are civilized, as they won't torture their prisoners. These positive traits have to be read under the premises of "like us". This is emphasized to such an extent that it exposes a heavy contrast to the Austrians.[11]

In so doing, Evliya uses the Hungarians to portray the Austrians in a negative way. In order to belittle the Austrians as much as possible, he enhances the status of the (defeated) Hungarians to such an extent that he has to reinforce the central dividing element again at the end. The quote points out that the enemy of the enemy can be near to the Self again, within the essential categories of the Self. But after so many compliments and inclusions into the concept of the Self, he then eventually redraws a border. The Hungarians are depicted as unbelievers, but in contrast to the Austrians as "clean" (i.e. "good") ones. The religious category here seems to act as an agent for reassurance as well as protection for the author, in order not to question the superiority of his own society despite the sometimes very positive observations of the Other.

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[11] Evliya Çelebi (2003: 87). It is interesting to note that in other cases, if it serves Evliya's purpose, the Austrians are presented as very clean, for example when he praises how organized a city is or when he tries to describe with how much honour they were received in a certain village. See e.g. Evliya Çelebi (2003: 81, 100).

The use of asymmetric description is typical for travelogues; the Other can either be similar to the Self in certain ways (as the Hungarians in this case) or the complete opposite of the Self (like the Austrians). Therefore the categories, appreciative or negative and condescending, are centred around the Self (Harbsmeier 1982: 17). What remains as the essence of that rough sketch of the two Others is a quite precise description of the author's and his audience's self-perception. The Ottomans are believers, clean, have good cuisine, and are generous hosts. They don't torture their prisoners; they have the central virtues of warriors and possess true manhood. In the descriptions of the Austrians and the Hungarians the Self is thereby reassured.

On the other hand, differences in very important categories of the Self, like gender, are portrayed with a certain amount of open-minded curiousness, but again, after the quite neutral (not at all negative) description the boundaries between the Self and the Other are drawn very clearly (Evliya Çelebi 2003: 89). In various cases Evliya satisfies his (or the readers') lust for exoticism and eroticism. Women and boys are described as very beautiful and attractive and the differences in gender relations – which he seems to enjoy – are at first merely stated and only later condemned (Evliya Çelebi 2010: 231[89]). In this way, anything can be reported to stimulate the curiosity of the reader, but the norms remain unchallenged.

This, Evliya, can even be free to report an encounter with a blond boy, the shape of a female's breasts etc. without ever leaving the frame of the norms at home (Evliya Çelebi 2003: 124). As İpek Hüner points out in her contribution to this book, we find very interesting aspects of "Orientalism á la Turca" in Evliya's (and other travellers') descriptions. Again, appreciative or curious descriptions are followed by affirmations of existing boundaries; this can be seen as a technique to balance the two aspects of the travelogue, the affirmation of the identity of the Self and the reader on the one hand and telling an interesting story that might challenge the Self on the other hand.

The challenge of this balancing act becomes even more obvious when Evliya enters the religious sphere. When he describes St. Stephan's Cathedral he has nothing but admiration for the architecture, not as a specifically Christian achievement, but as a universal one. It is presented as a wonder (*ʿağā'ib*) and he praises its architecture and the library. Despite, or because of, his use of the dichotomy of us (the believers) vs. them (the unbelievers), he says:

> "Of all [the building], the monastery named (St) Stephan in the very center of the city is such a grand and ancient structure that nothing like it has been or will be built in Turkey, Arabia and Persia, or in the seven climes of Christendom. Travellers coming by land and sea say that it has no equal in the inhabited quarter of the world, and it is true" (Evliya Çelebi 2010: 235 [103]).

Even the organ is praised as exceptional and connected to David (Davūd), known in the Islamic tradition for his affinity to music, explaining its impressive

effect in Islamic terms (Evliya Çelebi 2010: 238 [105]). It is not just that the architectural skills and the craft of making instruments are appreciated; Evliya additionally makes use of the positive description of the enemy to criticize the situation at home, to abash the reader. The more negative his description of the Other and the more significant his approval of others' positive achievement, the greater the shame that should be evoked in the reader. Describing the library at St. Stephan, he remarks:

> "Now, my dear, the import of this long disquisition is the following: These infidels, in their own infidel manner consider these books the word of God. They have seventy or eighty servants who sweep the library and dust off the books once a week. In our Alexandria, on the other hand, there is a great mosque known as the Perfumers' mosque supported by many pious foundations including hundreds of shops, *hans*, baths and storerooms; but the mosque itself lies in ruin, and its library that houses thousands of important volumes – including priceless Korans (…) is rotting because of the rain. Worshippers who come to this mosque once a week for Friday prayers can hear the moths and worms and mice gnawing at the Korans. No one from the community of Muhammad stands up and says, 'These Korans are being destroyed, let's do something about it.' That won't happen, because they do not love the word of God as much as the infidels do. I only wish that God make that mosque as prosperous as this church, and that its servants and governors regard that abandoned mosque with the eye of compassion" (Evliya Çelebi 2010: 236f. [103f.]).

Again the functional aspect in the description becomes obvious. Evliya, a learned person himself, uses a positive description of the enemy with its "false belief" to advocate his cause. The Muslim reader should now feel ashamed and be motivated to change the situation at home. In this sense the positive description is not necessarily aimed at describing the Other in a positive way at all.

The last episode of this section of his description works the other way around. It shows how Evliya skilfully and thoughtfully varies his techniques to enter into a dialogue with his reader. This time, he starts with an affirmation of the Self and then tells a highly appreciative description of figurative depictions that should be condemned from a normative Islamic standpoint. Under the headline "Account of the spectacle of images in the church of Vienna", he gives the following description of a situation highly challenging to the iconoclastic Muslim reader:

> "There are so many statues and icons in this church, images of the sons of Adam, and so many idols (…). I was on good terms with several priests and, partly as polemic, partly in jest, I said, 'How many gods you have – God forbid! – that whenever you pass by one of them, you remove your hats and bow down and worship'" (Evliya Çelebi 2010: 240 [105]).

So far so good, at the beginning of the episode he makes his (and the reader's) religious standpoint clear, refuting the use of images and statues from a normative position as idolatry (*širk*). But then he seems to enter into a discussion, as he gives room to the presentation of the Christian standpoint.

> "'God forbid', they replied, 'that we should consider them gods. The sole creator of you and of us is God, the Holy Spirit. God forbid that we should bow down and worship these images, or that we should pray to them for sons and daughters, blessings and worldly fortune and long life. They are only images of our prophet Jesus and his disciples, of our saints who came afterward and our monarchs who were world conquerors and pious endowers of good works. Whenever we behold these images, we respectfully offer our benedictions. Most of all, we show reverence to the prophet Jesus, because he is the spirit of God. In our religion, it is permitted to make images. When our priests harangue the people, just as your sheikhs do, they have difficulty conveying their message with fine words alone. So we convey the message through images of the prophets and saints and paradise, depictions of divine glory. And we show hell with demons, flaming fire and boiling water, depictions of divine wrath. When our priests give sermons, they point to these images saying, 'Fear God!' But we do not worship them in any way'" (Evliya Çelebi 2010: 240f. [105]).

In this balancing act Evliya gives room for the explanation of the Christian standpoint, perhaps even with a slight criticism to common practices of worship at Sufi-shrines where some Muslims might pray "for sons and daughters, blessings and worldly fortune and long life" (Evliya Çelebi 2010: 240 [105]).

The presentation is not commented on by Evliya, but after such an appreciative normative explanation, the religious ego of the reader should be restored again, namely through the words of the priest himself who goes on to explain the use of the depictions merely as the corrective for a deficit of the Christians. The Muslim sheikhs, on the other hand, are depicted by the enemy as superior in using words, which is especially important for the Islamic Self perception, as rhetorical skills and the high esteem for the language, which is the language of the Quran, are very important within the Islamic-Arabic culture. The praise from the highest representatives of the enemy must have been very sweet talk to the reader. The depicted images are explained by the priest as born out of a deficit in this field. Once this is made clear, Evliya can then get into the description of the actual content of the depictions that he seems to have been so impressed by, without exposing his description to criticism. He explains the depictions in a mediating way, by explaining the Christian art within an Islamic frame.

> "But when one sees the depiction of paradise in this Stephan Church of Vienna, which is the ill-fortuned seat of the German king, one wishes to die and go to heaven, recalling the Koranic verse (89:30), *Join My servants and enter My Paradise*. (…) Truly, when it comes to painting, the Franks prevail over the Indians and Persians" (Evliya Çelebi 2010: 241 [105]).

With a side blow to the Kaiser, expected from his public, he shows how the depictions can evoke strong (Islamic) religious feelings in him, which is also true for the depiction of hell.

> "Those who see once the depictions of these tortures – men roasting in the fires of naphtha and tar; groaning at the hands of demons and the whips of tormentors; bitten by scorpions, snakes and centipedes, vipers as long as camels' necks – will repent their ways of Nimrod and Pharaoh, Korah and Shaddad. They will cleanse themselves from

> backbiting and slander, adultery and fornication and pederasty, usury and wine drinking. They will leave off eating and drinking and spend the remainder of their precious life in a hermit's cell, having washed their hands of the filth of this world, and will say, 'It is God's to command: if it is not to be heaven, at least let my place be purgatory and not hell'" (Evliya Çelebi 2010: 241 [106]).

In these passages we see that Evliya is not just describing what he sees, but is giving room to his impressions and highly religious and emotional feelings, which are evoked by a) Christian art and b) through artistic means that are not appreciated within the normative tradition of his audience. But despite these obstacles he is somehow touched by the art of the enemy. This should not be underestimated and shows that he wants to convey a certain idea of closeness to the Other. When we think of how he condemns the "infidel" Austrians on other occasions the description of a central religious place and the ideas presented there show many similarities to the Self and perhaps even dimensions of Christian religion that can be admired.

Descriptions of the Other should not only be linked to real observations, but have to be read within their narrative function. Sameness and otherness can have very different functions within the construction of identity and alterity. Positive and negative descriptions may be directed towards the Other, but may just also play a functional role for the Self. If the Austrians really care so much about books or are such bad soldiers, all this has strong implications for the readers' self-perception. In the case of Evliya we see a whole variety of drawing boundaries while also creating openness. Sometimes there are no religious boundaries, for instance in cases when worldly wonders such as achievements in architecture and city planning are described. Sometimes he is inclined to draw clear boundaries and use a pejorative language at first, but then discusses even hotter topics, transgressing boundaries. Extracting single statements from the text, one could confirm the thesis of a "Muslim worldview" according to Lewis, but if we look at the function of these statements, the composition of the narration and function of the text in a specific socio-political context, the picture becomes much more complex.

From a narrative perspective the narrator must take the ideas of his audience as the basis for a convincing narration, but we must not rest at this observation. In the quotes being discussed we can see how complex the description even of the archenemy can be, despite being an Other who stands for the total negation of the individual and social Self. The description fluctuates between utopian and dystopian elements, between rapprochement and rejection, between affirmation of the reader's identity and a critique. The religious identity of the reader, being a precondition of reception and narration, is taken into consideration and reassured in many ways. This is not surprising, for the essential category of the enemy was a religious one (the Austrian King was the Kaiser of the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation, empowered to rule through religious legitimation), just like that of the Ottomans. But as we have seen, the religious condemnation should neither be seen as a religious statement in a modern sense, nor

does it serve as a sign of a general reserve with regard to new observations. In Evliya's text we see that even in times of war, cultural contact took place and that the "Muslim worldview" was not an obstacle at all. The affirmation of the dividing elements must be viewed within the frame of its context and the constellation of the traveller, his counterpart and his audience.

Shifting impressions in the change of context and audience: Evliya's successors and their ideas of Europe

The travels of Evliya Çelebi took place within a certain historical setting. His descriptions, when analyzed within my theoretical framework, are the outcome of his culture, the specific setting of the encounter, the existing ideas and textual foundations prevailing in his and the audience's mind as well as ideas the Other had about Muslims. The impact of these factors becomes obvious in the upcoming travelogues that will only be roughly described, contrasting the presented account of Evliya. The three texts chosen cover a period of about two hundred years, a period with massive changes with regard to the context of encounter and the expectations of the audience, and may show that the personality of the traveller is also of importance. This helps us look for stable elements of a "Muslim worldview" or the evidence necessary to question it on theoretical grounds.

When Yirmisekiz Mehmed Çelebi Efendi travelled to France in 1720/21,[12] France was no threat for the Ottomans but rather their partner and potential ally (against the Habsburgs). The tulip era had many things in common with the spirit at the French court in that time and the Ottomans were eager to import new styles, as were the French. Yirmisekiz's *sefaretname* (ambassadorial report) has been described as a crucial document in the Ottoman perception of Europe, but it reads very differently from Evliya's account.

As the text has been extensively discussed from a historical perspective and is dealt with in this volume by Bâki Asiltürk as well, I will only focus on the question of his characterization of the encountered Other, i.e. the French. Unlike Evliya's work, in this travel account it is not the differences between the Self and (in this case French) Other but rather the similarities that the authors focuses upon. In the "Muslim worldview" of this high-ranking diplomatic mission to France, religious dichotomies don't seem to play any role whatsoever in the description. The words *kafir* and *gavur* are totally absent in his diction, as are any references to the author's own religious identity; all this despite the fact that the addressee was

12 Regarding his route of travel and the historical context see Akyıldız (2010), Erdem (2010), Yirmisekiz Çelebi Mehmed Efendi (2004), and Göçek (1987: 7–71). The Ottoman Text and a translation into modern Turkish can be found in Yirmisekiz Çelebi Mehmed Efendi (1993). My references will be related to the popular Turkish translation by Şevket Rado (Yirmisekiz Çelebi Mehmed Efendi 2008). In square brackets after the reference to Rado, a reference to the Ottoman version contained in *Tarih-i Raşid* 1283h will be given.

none other than the Sultan of the Ottoman Empire, holding the title of Caliph of the Muslims. However, this can be understood if we consider that this audience was probably not interested into the reproduction of stereotypes, particularly when it sends a highly costly diplomatic mission to France.[13] Yirmisekiz Mehmed also knew that his description was to be translated into French, therefore he had a double audience in mind and a diplomatic responsibility.

In his characterization of the host country the national-monarchic principle is emphasized. His duty does therefore not lead him into a diffuse region of *dār al-ḥarb*. From the very beginning he makes it clear that he is the envoy to the French King (*françа padişahı*), for the preparations are conducted by the French ambassador in Istanbul (*françа elçisi*), and he also boards a French ship (*fransız sefinesi*) (Yirmisekiz Çelebi Mehmed Efendi 2008: 13 [74]). France is referred to as *fransa memaliği* (the French lands) (Yirmisekiz Çelebi Mehmed Efendi 2008: 19 [84]) and seen as a distinctive unity which corresponds to Ottoman political realities.

The contact takes place not between unequal peoples (believer/unbeliever), but between equals (two hereditary monarchies). Creating closeness is very important for the author, as the official travelogue is aimed at describing and presenting those aspects of the Other that can be emulated, and because the author knew it was to be read by French diplomats as well. He aims at including the Other in the Self, annihilating boundaries throughout the travelogue. Being treated on an equal level with the French in the diplomatic field seems to have been pretty much the aim of Yirmisekiz Çelebi Mehmed Efendi. The Other and its achievements are therefore described as variation of attributes and abilities of the Self. The Other is not presented as alien to the Self.

In his account the author stresses that the Ottomans were treated with high esteem by the Other. He describes the diplomatic protocol, the different visitors to the delegation and the interest of the public in the Ottomans. The interest of the Other of course increases the value of the Self. Since his readers at court know the religion of the French and that the relationship with France is not hostile, there is no need to stress the religious differentness. The traveller would have even failed in his duty if he told things already known and repeated normative positions already acknowledged by the reader.

His topics are palaces, water plays, the opera, craftsmanship, festivities with women, hunting, marvellous technological developments etc., even a wonderful organ in a church (Yirmisekiz Çelebi Mehmed Efendi 2008: 44).

Observations that may contradict his norms or those of the audience, like gender relations, are described with interest as a kind of exoticism, free of judgments. France is portrayed as a paradise for women, as they could do whatever they liked (Yirmisekiz Çelebi Mehmed Efendi 2008: 19). The world of France does not seem to question or threaten the Ottoman Self. It is remarkable in this

[13] About 80 persons accompanied the mission, which lasted 11 months.

context that Yirmisekiz Çelebi Mehmed Efendi could report in a self-confident way his presence at occasions that contradict the norms at home, without feeling the urge to justify himself or his actions. He participates at diplomatic receptions, visits balls and theatres where women are present and describes it unself-consciously for his readers. The public interest in the Ottomans is reported with pride. The only occasion where we learn that in fact our ambassador is the representative of a Muslim empire is presented within this context of public interest, namely when the French are invited as visitors to the Ottoman delegation's breaking the fast during Ramadan. This ceremony is reported as if it was a diplomatic event. The ambassador stresses the high esteem for the Ottomans, as crowds appeared to witness their Iftar reception, to see the Muslims eating and praying (Yirmisekiz Çelebi Mehmed Efendi 2008: 80ff). The interest in the Ottomans and the crowd's eagerness to see them are reported as a sign of admiration and respect for the delegation and their own political importance (Akyıldız 2010: 94). Ramadan is described as a social and political happening, not as a religious one in a modern sense. Like in the case of Evliya, we have to question the term "religious" when describing a pre-secular age. Beyond this episode there is no mentioning of religion. This indifference towards the religion of the Other is perhaps even more striking than his futile mission to ransom Muslim prisoners of war (Yirmisekiz Çelebi Mehmed Efendi 2004: 144, 168).

The explanation for the difference between the two descriptions is once more to be found in the constellation of author, readership, and context. France (unlike Austria) is a remote place and, for the alien observer, a society with no fundamental significance to the Self. Neither could France question the Ottoman legitimacy or impose any norms on the Ottomans (unlike 100 years later), nor were the Ottomans able to intervene into French affairs, or conquer parts of their land. Bearing in mind the geographical and emotional distance, it is understandable that their differentness could have been observed with curiosity. However, the differentness of the French appears to have no relevance for the reader (unlike the differentness of the Habsburgs). For the host in France the Ottoman differentness was seen in the same way. The two were not engaged in mutual "holy wars", but tried to direct their politics against "other Others", i.e. Austria. Once again the mode of relationship and the expectations of the readership(s) decide how the Other is depicted.

This is how Yirmisekiz Mehmed Çelebi's France appears to be a highly interesting place with a luxurious court culture and exotic habits. Some elements of the representative culture were described as suitable to adopt, other elements (like the gender relations) were described with curiosity as exotic and remote. In this sense, France is not the Other, but still different. Offering no surface for serious contact or friction, the otherness has a total different quality than the Austrians did for Evliya: it is of a quality that does not challenge the Self. Accordingly the obvious religious differentness is not a topic in this account of Yirmisekiz Mehmed Çelebi.

The amount of direct contact and accompanying friction between the Ottomans and European countries changed significantly over the next 100 years, and France was a source for both. It appeared on the battlefields in the Middle East, but at the same time became the country that most significantly influenced the minds of the reformers in the centres of the Middle East in the 19th century. One important document of this period is the well-known travelogue of Rifāʿa aṭ-Ṭahṭāwī, which can be understood to express the following: "Too near to be near".

While the account by Yirmisekiz Mehmed Çelebi could be seen as the "eye opener" for the 18th-century Turkish Ottomans, it was the Imam Rifāʿa aṭ-Ṭahṭāwī who played the same part for the Arabs about a hundred years later. When he travelled to Paris in 1826 the world had changed. Europe was successfully active in the Near East on the military and civilian level and an important role model of modernization for the Ottomans and their *wālī* of Egypt, Muḥammad ʿAlī. France was sometimes an active threat, sometimes a potential threat, but its achievements in the technological and military fields were a model. The closeness of the Other and the perceived weakness of the Self are not the ideal determinants for cultural contact, but a perceived need to learn more about the successful Other may stimulate curiosity. The well-known report of the Egyptian Rifāʿa aṭ-Ṭahṭāwī from his travel to France/Paris (Ṭahṭāwī 2002)[14] is a product of such a constellation and significantly shaped the image of Europe in his home country and beyond, so that even the Ottomans were its eager readers (Strauss 2003: 56f.).

For him and his readers the French Other is highly important for the Self: France occupied Egypt between 1798 and 1803, but became its ally against the imperial ambitions of the British later on. Only a few years after the French Revolution, cultural contact and conflict witnessed a whole new age: Merchants, military officers, teachers, doctors and missionaries from Europe became part of the townscape of North African and Middle Eastern centres (Agai 2009: 201; Newman 2002: 11). Ṭahṭāwī's ruler Muḥammad ʿAlī, as well as the Sublime Porte were in a paradoxical situation. The rapprochement to Europe and the emulation of European models were seen as the only way to protect against an expanding Europe. Ṭahṭāwī, as the Imam for the students of an Egyptian educational mission to France (1826–1831), gained significant insight into French culture and knowledge, as he was the only one amongst them who had studied the humanities. While others were trained in technical fields of knowledge, he had studied translation and had an understanding of various fields of knowledge, including literature and philosophy.

[14] Daniel Newman has presented an excellent translation with a long introduction into the context, a biography of the author, a comparison of different versions of the text, explanations of key words and a comprehensive documentation of the state of research (Ṭahṭāwī 2011). Additional references in square brackets are to the Arabic text in Ṭahṭāwī 2002.

In his account for his fellow countrymen, we can literally feel the struggle taking place in the narrator. He wants to and is supposed to present France as a model for the future Egyptian Self. Yet at the same time he has to prepare the readership for this message and soften its potential negative impact on their shaken self-confidence. Like Evliya he employs an elaborate technique to sell his bitter medicine to the potentially sceptical reader and make it as attractive and unthreatening/similar to the Self as possible. From the very beginning he reassures the Islamic identity, stressing differences and raising the self-confidence of the reader, and justifies his journey in Islamic terms (Ṭahṭāwī 2004: 109ff. [29]). He considers the Islamic concepts to be the proper frame for the comparison, for example when it comes to the order of continents according to their importance (Ṭahṭāwī 2004: 119f. [38]). He also tries to frame the Other through categories of the Islamic-Self. To put it bluntly: the message was not that the Egyptians should become like the French, but that the French are, in their positive aspects, the way Arabs should actually be. Modern knowledge, for example, is presented as just an update of original Muslim knowledge and scholarship, and therefore as belonging to the Self. This is especially true for scientific knowledge, which, according to Ṭahṭāwī, was a quality of the Arabs but belongs to a universal category and was and is to be found at other cultures as well. He presents France as a model in his time in this regard (Ṭahṭāwī 2004: 110 [23]).

Interestingly, this strategy of extensively justifying one's journey in Islamic terms in order to promote one's program to the sceptical readership is not to be found in the other two texts. It seems that being a part of an Ottoman diplomatic mission was enough justification for travelling. But as Ṭahṭāwī stayed for a longer period with the explicit purpose of learning from the Other, Ṭahṭāwī stresses his Islamic identity and assures the reader that he is only approving things that are not in contradiction to the text of the prophetic *sharia* (*naṣ aš-šarīʿa al-muḥammadiyya*) (Ṭahṭāwī 2004: 110 [24]). He is writing in self-defence, as the place of his learning is a challenge and threat for the whole region, even more so than Austria had been for Evliya's audience.

Like Evliya, Ṭahṭāwī sees Islam as a central quality of the Arab/Muslim Self. Ṭahṭāwī disapproves of any religious quality of the French; they can't be religious (because he and his reader are). France is described as the "land of unbelief and defiance" (*diyār kufr wa ʿināḍ*) (Ṭahṭāwī 2004: 101 [25]). The inhabitants are Christians by name only (Ṭahṭāwī 2004: 126 [42]). Unlike the Austrians (being portrayed as Christians) for Evliya, the French according to Ṭahṭāwī have no religious affiliation at all. But it seems that the lack of religious belief in the Christian faith is presented as a positive feature of the French. As he describes France as a utopian paradise, in many regards it cannot be Christian. It seems to be easier for the narrator and his public to accept a rational atheist as a teacher than a Christian. While Yirmisekiz Mehmed Çelebi Efendi and even Evliya can admire and exaggerate positive aspects of the Other without feeling questioned in their

own identity, it seems to be the other way around for Ṭahṭāwī; it seems that his and his audience's self-confidence has been severely shaken by the demonstrations of French and British military, technological and economic power.

But while Ṭahṭāwī detaches the French from the Christian religion, thus creating borders if we consider "religion" as a potential similarity, he annihilates these borders again by "Islamizing" the knowledge of the French. As far as the knowledge that could and should be acquired from the French is concerned, it is attributed to the God-given *ʿaql* (the human ratio) (Ṭahṭāwī 2004: 173 [91]). Hygienic measures in the city of Paris are presented as an Islamic duty for the Muslims, a habit of the "ancient Egyptians" (Ṭahṭāwī 2004: 222 [134]), who should be leading in this field. In Ṭahṭāwī's travelogue we see how religion is used to incorporate the Other, but for the first time the Other is attributed Islamic traits.

While religion as a normative and cultural-literal tradition is a strong marker of difference and a mechanism to portray similarities and differences with regard to the Self, it is not the only category of the Self. While for Evliya and Yirmisekiz Mehmed court culture and luxury were a link to the home culture, this element is now missing. Instead, for example, similarities with regard to gender are stressed, such as the courage of the French soldiers (they are as brave as the Egyptian ones) (Agai 2010: 46ff.). With regard to women the situation is more complex. Although their reported behaviour reverses the Islamic order, it is not condemned, and even modesty is attributed to some French women. For Ṭahṭāwī and his audience the possibility that the Egyptian women could emulate these models is nevertheless still unthinkable.

In his description we see that the French are displayed in a way showing that they are near enough to be appreciated and acceptable partners, though different enough so that they don't pose a danger. Paradoxically it is the strongly felt nearness that results in the need for differentiation from the Other. A "cultural conversion", unthinkable in the case of the two travellers discussed above, here becomes so tangible[15] that narrative and discursive strategies have to be used to resolve all doubts about the author's loyalty to his own society. The resulting message is that the "Egyptian" has much to learn from France, but what he has to learn is essentially already within the own categories of the Self.

While Ṭahṭāwī wrote for the sceptics of modernity, i.e. within their system of reference, the world 70 years later proves to be very much different for the following traveller, who presents yet another facet of selfhood and otherness. His positioning towards Europe can be described as "Wanting to be European, being made Oriental". The text asks the importance of the term "Muslim" in a secular context and if an individual is tied to the religious-cultural tradition by birth despite his individual belief. Şerefeddin Mağmumi, born in 1869, and student of

[15] Ṭahṭāwī even mentions converts from the time of the French occupation who left Egypt together with the French (Ṭahṭāwī 2011: 70).

the *Askerî Rüşdiye* military school where he was being trained as a medical doctor in the *Askerî Tıbbiye* in Gülhane, was among the first members of the Committee of Ottoman Union (*İttihad-ı Osmani Cemiyeti*), a predecessor of the Committee for Union and Progress (*İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti*).[16] As a military doctor he belonged to an Ottoman elite that was raised under a European system of education conducted in French in contact with political ideas that contradicted the established political order of the sultanate and therefore the established order in society. The Other, as we can interpret from his description of Anatolia and the Arab provinces, existed mostly within one's own society.[17] From 1896 onward Mağmumi travelled extensively in Europe (Belgium, England, France, Switzerland, Italy and the German Empire), after choosing the exile due to his political ideas. His observations appeared in Turkish newspapers and journals already during and after his travels; furthermore in 1908 and 1914 they were published as books. For him and his audience, travelling by train or the steam liner was a routine part of life. European costumes and literature were part of daily life and a common frame of reference. This lifestyle and culture, these aesthetics were present for them when they went out in the highly "European" quarter of Pera in Istanbul. It was part of their life through personal observations at home or in Europe or through literary and journalistic receptions.

With the *Baedeker* in his hand, Mağmumi travelled through *his* Europe, which had been part of his world since his childhood. Even in his first travelogue, when he still hadn't travelled to Europe, he makes references to the region, for example when he compares a landscape at the Aegean coast with the panorama of the St. Gotthard and the Mont Blanc. (Şerefeddin Mağmumi 2008: 129). Though he and most of his audience have not yet been there it is still part of their imaginative world. In his travelogue the "we" is constantly changing from situation to situation. Sometimes it is the travellers involved, sometimes it refers to those with a modern European culture, including himself, sometimes the Turks, every so often even "the Asian people" in general (Şerefeddin Mağmumi 2008: 385).

For him there is no border based on religion, culture, or progress. A railway coupé in Belgium may be worse or better than those in the Ottoman Empire, a park in France may be suggested as a model for a park in Istanbul and an Ottoman *kiraathane* or *kahve* which he finds in other European countries as well, may be preferred to the British pub (Şerefeddin Mağmumi 2008: 197). Religion for him doesn't seem to be of any interest; it is portrayed as a historical relict which has brought about many beautiful buildings, an approach that he can imagine for his native country as well.[18] He explicitly does not care about Islamic dietary restric-

16 Regarding Mağmumi's life and impact within the movement see Polat (2002: 17–62).

17 For the modern Turkish translation see Şerefeddin Mağmumi (2008), for the Ottoman version: Şerefeddin Mağmumi (1909).

18 As can be seen in the description of his trip to Italy (Şerefeddin Mağmumi 2008: 258–283). Regarding the highly critical attitude of parts of the Young Turks with regard to reli-

tions, making remarks about the quality of the beer wherever he passes, and portrays himself as a European gentleman. Everything would be perfect if it wasn't for the Europeans, who consistently confront him with his own difference, depicting him as oriental and Islamic. Episodes leading to discussions about an Islamic identity are initiated by the reactions of his fellow passengers or by false "orientalist" staging of Turks. He complains that others attribute false traits to him and his fellow countrymen on a number of different occasions.[19] In one episode this is beautifully illustrated: Travelling from Brussels to Paris by train, a very beautiful woman enters the train compartment. He is (unlike the other fellow passengers) a perfect gentleman to her. Though nobody recognizes him as a Turk, there evolves a discussion about Turkey in the cabin. Though none of his fellow passengers has ever been to the Ottoman Empire, nor knows a Turk, all of them nonetheless seem to have strong opinions: The Turks are barbarians! They wear absurd large turbans! They do not belong to European culture! They treat their women like slaves! They sell children! They are impolite to women! They are without any courtesy!

The young lady then raises the issue of polygamy. He thinks about saying something, but is too frustrated to do so, as he has experienced similar situations before. At the customs check-point he is the only gentleman who helps the lady with her suitcase, which is quite heavy. When she asks him if it is not too heavy for him he replies: "Rest assured, mademoiselle. I am a Turk. And the world can attest how strong the Turks are." The lady asks amazed: "Oh, you are a Turk?" He replies full of pride "Yes!"

Now he begins to explain to her his conviction that there is no difference between people in Europe and the Turks when it comes to civilization (*medeniyet*) (Şerefeddin Mağmumi 2008: 93–96). In this context we may say that 'his religion is progress': he believes in science and progress and thinks that they are universal to mankind. He rejects the very idea of a possible "Muslim worldview". Religions are for him of no importance. He wants to find commonalities, even though his fellow passengers stress his differentness. Within the scheme presented at the beginning we see how much the Other shapes the way the individual perceives him or herself in cultural contact, how much self-perception is shaped by the ideas of the Other.

As with the other travellers Mağmumi's description of the European Other (or the non-Other) serves certain aims and has to be read according to these functions as well. His Europe cannot be essentially different, as he tries to promote it at home. Therefore, besides few occasional episodes, religion is not depicted as a European feature. In this respect he is similar to Ṭahṭāwī, but unlike him, Mağmumi does not create his picture to flatter his religious audience at home. In the

gion see Hanioğlu (2005). Regarding Mağmumi's highly materialistic positions see loc. cit.: 44f. and 49f.

19 For example during his visit to the World Fair in Brussels in 1910 (Şerefeddin Mağmumi 2008: 37–41).

Europe he describes, religion seems to have been overcome, just as he himself wants religion to be overcome during the process of modernization in the Ottoman Empire. He describes this despite the fact that membership in the European "club" is denied to him in some occasions on the basis of his being a Muslim or an Oriental, which he himself denies. This rejection of his chosen identity influences Mağmumi's self-perception, and in his case we see that identity is part of a relationship: We can't choose it deliberately, but we acquire it through interaction with Others. Therefore any "Muslim worldview" can only make sense by taking the relation as such into account; that is, if the own ideas about the Self and the Other are treated on an equal level with the corresponding ideas that the Other in turn has about himself and his innate Others. It is highly unlikely that Mağmumi really did not see the continuous importance of religion during a time where the religious tensions in France were at a peak, resulting in the highly repressive law of separation between religion and state of 1905. But this fact does not fit with his idea that there are no borders when it comes to ideas of progress and enlightenment. There are borders between states, but according to him the modern culture should be floating across them. In this sense he presents himself as one of the rare 'real' Europeans.

Conclusion

Cultural contact creates many different kinds of frictions. Sometimes it leads to an affirmation of parts of one's identity; sometimes it leads one to question them. Sometimes Otherness is seen as a threat, sometimes as interesting. Within the period discussed, developments in infrastructure, politics and on the level of ideas influenced identity and alterity of Muslim travellers in different ways. Some borders lost their relevance; others were created anew, and yet others entirely changed their functions. In this context, Lewis's ideas of "a Muslim worldview" that were initially discussed have been challenged in this paper on two levels.

Firstly, a theoretical reflection on the process of the construction of identity and alterity in travelogues was conducted. A deeper inquiry into the development of a travelogue suggests that identity as well as alterity don't purely exist as fixed units and are not created by a single person or culture, rather they exist in a relationship with the respective Other. The context of the encounter is as important as the prefiguration of the traveller himself and his text. In this sense and under certain conditions, religion can play a role within the relationship but is not the only variable affecting the encounter.

Secondly, in the analysis of texts where Evliya Çelebi was used as a standard of comparison, it became clear that even within one single text, one subject can be described very differently according to the situation and the message which the author wants to convey. Coming back to the "Muslim worldview", we discover in Evliya's text that religion can be used to create a framework to integrate certain as-

pects of the Others, to describe them through similarities, but at the same time can stress boundaries, which themselves are very ambiguous as they sometimes are reaffirmed for purely functional reasons, when the Other is described in a positive way. The comparison with the other travelogues has illustrated that there is no such thing as a clear "Muslim view" with regard to religion. Religion can be totally left out of the description (as in the case of Yirmisekiz Mehmed Çelebi) when identity is not challenged, or used for the purpose of approach and creating distance (as in the case of Ṭahṭāwī), or it can also be brought up by the counterpart, though it does not play an important role for the Self in that particular moment (as in the case of Mağmumi).

Lewis neither thematizes the functional aspects of the use of otherness nor does he consider the importance of the context of the encounter for the description. Before the French Revolution, *dār al-ḥarb* was a mutual relation and therefore theologically valid, and far from being an innovation of the Muslims alone. Secularism in fact changed the situation, but did not really solve the issue of religious alterity; instead, religious difference was transferred into a new rhetoric. When terms of otherness lose their relevance, otherness is constructed in different terms, as it is vital for the Self. In this sense the experience of Mağmumi is highly interesting, for he is rendered by the Other on the grounds of religion/culture and nationality: He is being made a Turk although he himself longs to be associated with Europe. This is incidentally what we currently witness in the much debated political discourse on the issue of migration in Germany, which involves much the same processes that were witnessed by Mağmumi a hundred years earlier.

We have seen that otherness can have different functions and is created in a reflexive process. Drawing a line of distinction in travelogues may be a precondition of rapprochements, as well as a tactic of inclusion rather than exclusion. Identity can be found in the otherness of the Other, but can also be a consequence of ideas that the Other has about one's own Self. The devoted European secularist Şerefeddin Mağmumi is involuntarily made a Muslim/Turk in such a process. Religion can determine Self and Other in very different ways, but it is not just one of the involved parties that decides the outcome. It is imperative that identity, alterity and the specific context of cultural contact of both sides be described in relation to each other and within a single paradigm, taking further into account historical and contemporary processes. When it comes to religion and other categories, identity and alterity are created in this sense. Religion is therefore as much a determiner of Self and Other as further categories are, and it exists in the specific context of relationship but does not necessarily have to determine it.

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