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## HISTORICAL AND SOCIOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF EVLIJA ÇELEBI'S TRAVELOGUES FOR MACEDONIAN CITIES

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**Abstract:** The main topic in this paper are Evlija Çelebi's travelogues from the point of historical and sociological aspects, who lived and worked in the second half of XVII-th century<sup>188</sup>. Evliya Çelebi's notes represent the Macedonian cities during the second half of XVII-th century.

In his travels he thoroughly explains which year and from who were conquered Macedonian cities. Further he explains that Macedonian cities were territorially and administratively divided.

The travelogue Evlija Çelebi's gave special attention to the cultural traditions and customs of Macedonian cities population, famous crafts of Macedonian population and other things.

Paper gave explanation on all we have mention above for the part of Macedonian cities such as: Stip, Samokov, Demir Hisar, Ohrid and Kriva Palanka, which would be described with Evliya Çelebi's travelogues. This paper summarize the appeal of scientific engagement on numerous world's scientists in field of historiography for full publication of his travels and notes of the famous Ottoman traveler Evliya Çelebi, which are unfortunately never fully published. This paper uses published and unpublished documents, defter, sidzhils and other authentic Ottoman archival material from Ottoman and Balkan sources.

Evliya Çelebi, as a significant person in the Ottoman Empire, had access to the sultan's orders to the caddies regarding counterfeit money offenses. One such order is from 05-th February 1580 year addressed to the Cadets of Skopje and Novo Brdo. In this order the sultan is acquainted with the Novobrdska fake workshop for akçes. This is the main reason for sultan order to the caddy to enter in the house of Suleiman and Redzep and to find all fake gold and silver akçes and to put them in a few bags and send it to him<sup>189</sup>. Taken as a whole, the above mention facts, lead us to conclude that counterfeiting money in the Ottoman Empire was a major boom and this created a serious problems on the High Gate. Spreading false money not only became a serious social issue in the Ottoman Empire, but also caused great damage to Ottoman economy. Numerous attempts from the Ottoman authorities trough orders and sanction for spreading this phenomenon by orders and special decrees, had a small effect in practice, although the death penalty for this type of illegal acts has been applied in many cases<sup>190</sup>.

The main hypothesis of this paper is: Whether the Macedonian cities, according to Evliya Çelebi's travelogues, abounded with numerous: churches, monasteries, bazaars, squares and other cultural heritage which made each Macedonian city unique in his style, appearance and spirit.

**Keywords:** historical and sociological aspects, Evlija Çelebi, travelogues, macedonian cities, cultural heritage

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Evliya Çelebi is one of the most famous Ottoman travelogues, besides Silahdar, Solak Zade, Hadji Kalfa and so on. He was born on 25-th March 1611 year in Istanbul and died in 1682 year<sup>191</sup>. His father was the dervish Mehmed Zili and his mother was in close family relations with later ottoman vizier Melek Ahmed Pasha, which would later play a key role in his education and life<sup>192</sup>. Evliya by nature was adventurer, traveler, historian, geographer and an incredible writer. His "Travelogues" are real proof for his hard work. Almost all of his life, or over 40 years, he had spent along the Ottoman provinces in Asia, Europe and African continent<sup>193</sup>. His personal diaries, which he wrote during his travels arranged them towards the end of his life. So along his long journey ten volumes were originally made as a publicly known as "Seyahatname" (The journeys of a traveler or the Chronicles of a traveler)<sup>194</sup>. Some of his fruitful historiography work were first published in distant 1843 year. Eight volumes out of ten volumes were

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<sup>188</sup> [Nurettin Gemici](#). Evliya Celebi, Istanbul, 2018, 5-8.

<sup>189</sup> *Muhime defteri*, No. 39, page 138 from (05.02.1580 year)

<sup>190</sup> Скендер Ризај, Рударството во Македонија од XV до XVIII век, Скопје, ГИНИ, бр.2-3, 1970,105.

<sup>191</sup> [Hüseyin Nihal Atsız](#). Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnamesi'nden Seçmeler, Istanbul, 2011, 3-5.

<sup>192</sup> Kuban Doğan. Istanbul of Evliya Çelebi. In: Istanbul: An Urban History, Istanbul, 1996,12-18.

<sup>193</sup> Leiser Gary, Birdmen of the Middle East: Early Attempts at Human Flight, Aerospace Historian 35.3, 1988, 175-177.

<sup>194</sup> *Robert Dankoff, An Ottoman mentality- The world of Evliya Celebi, Netherlands, 2004, 9-10.*

originally printed in Arabic between 1898 and 1928 year. The last two volumes were published in Latin between 1935 and 1938 year. Evliya Çelebi's numerous and extensive "Travelogues" mostly contain memoirs of Ottoman culture and religion, but also provide important: historical, geographical information and describe the culture, customs and traditions of the countries that Evliya Çelebi visited in his long traveling journey.

## 2. KRIVA PALANKA

According to numerous documents from famous Ottoman traveler Evliya Çelebi, Kriva Palanka is located near the Macedonian city Kratovo. Kriva Palanka got its name according to Kriva River, but in historical documents Kriva Palanka is well known with the name Bajram Pasha's Palanka.

Specific for Kriva Palanka from other Macedonian cities is her distinguished with excellent handicrafts from iron or actually items made from iron from the hands of professional masters. This is the main reason, why this city had numerous stores of ironworks and a lot of shops with various items of iron.

In addition from making iron objects, people who lived in Kriva Palanka also engaged in ore production.

Beside regular landowners, also most of feudal lords engaged in this type of production. All this leads us to conclude, without hesitation that there was a developed iron ore processing plant in Kriva Palanka, because between Kriva Palanka and Kratovo there was a chain of tall mountains which abounded with many types of iron ores.

In his travelogues for Kriva Palanka, Evliya Çelebi concludes that, despite abundance of natural wealth of iron ores, however the mines remain were neglected, because much of the iron ore was stolen from armed gangs, as well as Macedonian outlaws which passed through this strategic direction<sup>195</sup>.

All this mention above, lead us to conclude that Kratovo was a highly developed craft city during the XVI- th and XVII-th centuries under Ottoman rule. This period represents the most advanced period of Kratovo's and Kriva Palanka's history, as various crafts have been developed, such as mining, trade and so on.

Skopje was conquered by the Ottomans from 01.09.1391 year until its final fall under Ottoman rule on 06 January 1392 year and for a short period of time Macedonia was transformed into an important military-strategic base for the further expansion of the Ottoman Empire<sup>196</sup>. The conqueror of the city of Skopje is the famous Jigit Bey.

So, from the end of XIV-th century until, middle of XVI-th century the city has grown into an important administrative and economic center of Balkan Peninsula<sup>197</sup>. Skopje city was constantly changing its appearance, acquiring more oriental features. Skopje's exterior was dominated from Islamic buildings architecture, primarily secular but also sacred. In Evliya Çelebi's travelogues, when he personally visited the city during 1660 year, he noted that there were about 120 Islamic prayer houses (large and small mosques and abundance of prayer houses), 70 mosques (primary schools), 20 ottoman shrines, numerous public baths, 9 imarets (free or social public kitchens), more inns and etc<sup>198</sup>.

## 3. STIP

Stip according to Evliya Çelebi's travelogues was ruled by Gazi Mihail-Bey's son, Ali-Bey during the reign of Sultan Murat I (1359-1389). The task for conquering the cities of Macedonia was entrusted to Rumelian commander Lala Sahin-Pasha and one of the first Macedonian cities, which he was tasked to conquer was Stip which he conquered in 1380 year<sup>199</sup>. Ali-Bey's son Gazi Mihail-Bey had besieged Stip with 25,000 troops since 1379 year. But in 1379 year, he failed to conquer Stip. One of the main reasons that he was unable to conquer Stip this year, was that he was too busy to participate in numerous other military campaigns in Balkan peninsula and Europe. One morning during the 1380s the Ottoman conquering armies had occupied the positions on the west side of river Bregalnica and after a few hours they saw ducks emerging from the main fortress of Stip, climbing up the fortress down the steps leading to its interior and then they disappeared<sup>200</sup>.

After the soldiers which observed the Stip fortress reported to their commander Ali Bei, they were given the task of continually and secretly observing the main Stip fortress. So, after a few days they saw the ducks moving to Stip, actually they were coming in and out of the holes inside the fortress itself, and at the same time they were invisible to those which didn't know the fortress. After the ducks got off the fortress and began to move westward to River

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<sup>195</sup> Евлија Челебија, Путопис, II, Сарајево, 1957, 44-47.

<sup>196</sup> Александар Матковски, Ќемал Аручи. Извадоци од две турски хроники за Македонија и соседните области, Скопје, 1977, 248.

<sup>197</sup> Андреј Илиев, Воените операции на османлиската војска во Македонија (1371-1690), Скопје, 2010, 20.

<sup>198</sup> Евлија Челебија, Путопис. Одломци о југословенским земљама, Предео и коментар написао Хазим Шабановиќ, II, Сарајево, 1957, 35.

<sup>199</sup> Андреј Илиев, Воените операции на османлиската војска во Македонија (1371-1690), Скопје, 2010, 18-20.

<sup>200</sup> Evliya Celebia's travelogues were translated in many languages, so the ducks are mentioned in one of his travelogues in others travelogues are mentioned travelers, which were secretly observed from the Ottoman conquerors, showing them the way to enter in Stip and to conquer the city.

Bregalnica, Ali Bey with an three thousand Army quickly entered the fortress and through her moved in the area of Stip city by evening. During 1380 year city Stip and its surroundings were conquered.

The old Stip fortress which stretched on the west side of the city on a high steep mountain, had a pentagonal shape with large and steep cliffs. According to Çelebi's travelogues, the Stip fortress was a real stronghold. In the past it was better fortified<sup>201</sup>. But over the time, because of insufficient maintenance, the fortress has been destroyed in many places. During the cold winter nights, sheep and goats often stayed in the fortress. The Varosh area extends east of the Stip Fortress, between two rivers and a wide mountain saddle, surrounded by beautiful gardens and vineyards. The area was rich with decorative stone blocks extending along the mountain range and there were over 2140 stone blocks.

In Stip there are over 24 Muslim neighborhoods of which the most famous are: Kara Kadi neighborhood (Black neighborhood), Sinan Bey neighborhood, Uluklu district. On the eastern side of Stip, lies the locality Kavakli (Topolite), which according to the travelogues of Evliya Celebi from the second half of XVII century when he visited Macedonia is increasingly cultivated and decorated with numerous high and gorgeous castles, waterfalls. According to Evliya this was a pleasant place for night walks<sup>202</sup>. In his travelogues, Evliya Çelebi mentioned the mosques where Friday prayers were held in Stip area. Just below Stip Fortress was Fethie Mosque. This mosque was built immediately after the conquest of Stip by Ottoman conquering armies during 1380 year. Commander Ali Bey ordered, below the walls of the Stip Fortress, where previously was a church to be transformed in to mosque. In travelogues of Evliya this important mosque is under the name of Sultan Murat I (1359-1389) or "*Sultan Murat Mosque*", which was visited daily from many people. The Sultan Murat Mosque had a quadrilateral dome, made of strong beams and it was covered with special lead from above. The professional performance of the dome of Sultan Murat Mosque, made it this mosque the most beautiful mosque in Stip and its surroundings. A well-known in Stip was the Hisam Pasha Mosque which had a stone minaret covered with lead. Adli Efendi Mosque was a sacred and prayer place for Muslim believers. On the other hand, Ahmed Pasha Mosque was a place of spiritual elevation. Evliya Celebi's travelogues about the city of Stip and its surroundings also mention the Shehrie Efendi Mosque which was a place for religious rituals. The "Kadn An" (Female An or Konak), was a very beautifully decorated mosque that was regularly visited by many Muslim believers and was an unusual religious place for honoring the significance of the woman and children which were the main power of Islam faith<sup>203</sup>. The schools for reading the Koran were: Hisam Pasha Mosque, "Kadn An" and a mosque in the Stip Bazaar. In Sultan Murat madras, clergy were especially studied and special Islamic rituals were performed. In Stip there were 11 schools for children education. The most famous were the school in the district of Dzumaya and the neighborhood of Sinan-bey.

There were Shrines in seven different places. The most prominent of these were the Bali Effendi Shrine from the Bahraini sect, followed by the Adli Efendi Shirne, Sultan Shrine, Upper Shirne, Lower Shrine near the Hisam Pasha Mosque, Kadn An and the Shrine in Uluk neighborhood<sup>204</sup>.

During the visit of Evliya Çelebi, there were two large public baths in Stip, the most famous of which was the Emir Efendi public baths, which was located in an extraordinary garden and had healing springs. There were about 450 craft shops in Stip Bazaar. From what Evliya Çelebi could have noticed is that the people of Stip spoke literary Ottoman-Turkish language. The people were predominantly Macedonians, which except Ottoman-Turkish, spoke Macedonian, Serbian, Bulgarian and a small part of the population also knew Albanian. According to geographical evidence and Evliya Çelebi travelogues, he accurately locates the Stip district near Ovche Pole<sup>205</sup>.

The men in Stip were mostly dressed in trousers, overcoats and silk. They had white turbans on their heads<sup>206</sup>. The women, on the other hand, dressed very elegantly with headscarves and they were often dressed in black. From the pleasant air and water, most of the young generations in Stip were healthy and beautiful. One of the most famous crafts for which Stip was especially distinguished was knife's craft. Especially famous were the guilds that made knife covers, which were popular even among Greek and Persian hunters<sup>207</sup>.

<sup>201</sup> Fortification - Military term which refers to military and administrative arrangement of Stip fortress, which in the past was better regulated, disguised from military point of view, which represented a real shield (impenetrable rampart) for the conquering troops.

<sup>202</sup> Zirojević Olga. Beleške Evlije Čelebije o naseljima na putu od Beograda do Budima u svetlu savremenih izvora. Istorijski Časopis br. 24, 1977, 160-179.

<sup>203</sup> Evliya Çelebi: *Hayan, Sanan, Eserleri*. Istanbul, 1954, 55-60.

<sup>204</sup> Евлија Челеби, Пртепис, превод од османско-турски на Страшимир Димитров, Софија, 1972, 24-25.

<sup>205</sup> Babinger Franc. Die Geschichtsschreiber der Osmanen und ihre Werke, Leipzig, 1927, 130-145.

<sup>206</sup> Robert Dankoff, Nuran Tezcan. Evliya Çelebi'nin Nil Haritası - Dürr-i bî mislî in ahbâr-ı Nil, Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2011, 8-12.

<sup>207</sup> Evliya Çelebis Reise von Bitlis nach Van: ein Auszug aus dem Seyahatname. Trans. Christiane Bulut. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1997, 54-57.

#### 4. SAMOKOV

He was raised by Samokov, one of the King Despot's grandfathers and the city was named after him. Samokov and his district were conquered by the Ottomans shortly after the Battle of Marica from 25/ 26.09.1371 year, actually during 1372 year. The conquering armies under the command of Rumelian conqueror, Beglerberg Lala Shahin Pasha ruled over and destroyed it the Samokov Fortress<sup>208</sup>. During Evliya Çelebi's journey, Samokov was a small province of the Rumelian vilayet. Samokov population were mostly Macedonians and Serbs. Eleven of the neighborhoods were Muslim, and the rest were Christian and Roma. There were 12 prayer places in Samokov and its surroundings. The most numerous of them are the mosques, one of the most famous is the Hungyar Mosque located in the Malishka Bazaar with beautifully decorated minaret and internal balconies through which most of the city could be observed<sup>209</sup>.

In the main bazaar, Markoc-Bei Mosque was located, which at the time was a newly built mosque, highly decorated and full of live from the visit of the local population. Friday prayers were held at Sheih Efendi Mosques and Yonus Duke Mosque. In Samokov and its suburbs there are eight mosques, two madrasas, three children's schools and a large shrine, called Markochbeevo shrine, two public baths and two hundred forty craft shops. Almost every home had water fountains. However, the water wasn't for drinking, because contains iron and lead from the surrounding mines. In the bazaar and in the square itself, the most prestigious place is the Sultan's kitchen of Mehmed Efendi, which he personally built in honor of the Supreme God. He also built a fountain with a quadrilateral lining, from which water flows in the form of a human hand. What is particularly notable in Samokov and its surroundings, were remarkable craftsmanship of iron lanterns, locks, safes, iron coffee mills and other beautiful iron products.

#### 5. DEMIR HISAR

According to legends, which was also noted in the travelogues of Evliya Çelebi, Demir Hisar was created from a Greek king. Conquered in early 1385 year from conquering Ottoman armies led by Timurtas Pasha, one of the Sultan Murat I Gazi viziers<sup>210</sup>. The present name of Demir Hisar was named in honor of his conqueror Timurtash Pasha or Timur Hisar, but later in Macedonian literary language was accepted as Demir Hisar. According to the territorial and administrative arrangement, Demir Hisar and its suburbs were part of Rumelian area or actually a part of the Thessaloniki vilayet. Numerous beautiful villages were part of Demir Hisar. The main Ottoman rulers were: spahia, janissary sergeant and bazaar watchman<sup>211</sup>. Demir Hisar Fortress lies on a mountain range and has a pentagonal shape. It was made of stones and rocks. People lived in the valley of Demir Hisar, while the surrounding area of the fortress was completely displaced. According to Evliya Çelebi's notes about Demir Hisar and its suburbs there were about 1,600 stone and earthen houses. Demir Hisar was on the west side from Serres city. Demirhisar was especially distinguished from the presence and abundance of mineral waters, which were present especially in mountain springs. It is particularly important to note, that mineral water from the mountain springs had healing properties and was particularly useful to consume in the spring days when the mountain herbs blossomed. The famous and healing mineral springs were gathered from many people from Demir Hisar and very often from other Macedonian cities.

#### 6. OHRID

During 1667 year, Evliya Çelebi returns from an expedition in Peloponnese which in autumn continued in Crete, where he stayed the next two years and participates in military campaigns here<sup>212</sup>. During 31-st May 1670 year, ottoman military fleet went in Peloponnese. Evliya Çelebi was also a part of this fleet. At the end of 1670 year, Evliya Çelebi was commissioned to go in the capital of Ottoman Empire, Constantinople in order to take the sultan's orders for the military commanders of Epirus, southern Albania and Ohrid to send their troops for further battles of Ottoman empire in Asia<sup>213</sup>. So, when Evliya was carrying the Sultan's orders for above mentioned commanders, he first visited Janina, then: Delvino, Avlonija, Elbasan and finally he arrived in Ohrid. For the description of Ohrid, Evliya said that Ohrid extended east from Elbasan. On the east side was also the old Lake Ohrid full of beautiful villages. In describing the name of Ohrid, Evliya in his travelogues mention that the name was given at the time of Roman chronicles, actually was given from medieval ruler Radzaim, son of St. Solomon.

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<sup>208</sup> Osmanli Arsivi Daire Baskanligi, Makedonya'daki osmanli evraki, Ankara,1996,7-11.

<sup>209</sup> Андреј Илиев, Анита И. Николовска. Македонските градови низ историјата, Скопје, 2019, 8-12.

<sup>210</sup> Александар Матковски, Кемал Аручи. Македонија и соседните области во хрониката на Солак Заде (1373-1633), Скопје, 1975, 237.

<sup>211</sup> [Evliya Celebi](#). Seyahatname, Istanbul,2018, 20-24.

<sup>212</sup> А.Е.Качалопулос, History of Macedonia (1354-1833),Solun,1973,40-45.

<sup>213</sup> *Evliya Çelebi's Book of Travels. Evliya Çelebi in Albania and Adjacent Regions (Kosovo, Montenegro). The Relevant Sections of the Seyahatname*. Trans. and Ed. Robert Dankoff, Boston, 2000, 35-43.

During this time there was also a wise man of Emperor Radzaim called Ohri and with his helpful advice given to Emperor Radzaim the Ohrid Fortress was built. So, in his honor, Ohrid later receives his name from this wise man. Describing the battle for conquering of Ohrid, it's said that chief or main commander of conquering Ottoman armies for Ohrid conquest was Bejko Pasha. In Evliya Çelebi's notes the main problem of Bejko Pasha, were the narrow roads which didn't allow on the horse carriages to move and also the heavier armament of Ottoman army. So, Bejko Pasha, who fought against Roman rule, had to cut down all the oaks and other types of trees in order to expand the road leading to Ohrid and its surroundings so that the Ottoman armies could successfully maneuver here<sup>214</sup>. Ohrid was conquered by the Ottoman army during 1385 year. According to Evliya Çelebi's notes, the name of Ohrid in ancient times was Ohri, or was known under the name Lychnidos during the Byzantine rule in Macedonia. The complete diameter of Lake Ohrid is about 20 km. The shape of the lake is like elongated multilayered triangle and can be pass on foot in 24 hours. The lake was full of fresh and life-giving water. Along the Ohrid Lake there were several prominent fortresses: firstly the district of Struga city, then Novograd area and the largest of them is Ohrid fortress. The lake coastline have a extraordinary and cultivated habitats. Ohrid lake, which is one of the oldest lakes on Balkan Peninsula and in the world at all, has a variety of fish that are rarely or couldn't found in other areas. During this period, Evliya Çelebi said that, one of the fish with particular importance was Ohrid Eel, which was prepared in a special way and had a pleasant taste. At the same time eels were especially good to eat when a person had a headache in fact they were the best remedy and elixir against headaches. In addition the eel, Çelebija also mentioned other species of fish from Lake Ohrid, which also were very beautiful. One of those species is pike, Ohrid trout, whitefish and others. According to Evliya's records, the Ohrid Has had 60 middle and 342 smaller districts. According to sultan laws all landowners or actually districts owners were the main part of seven thousand Ottoman army which is under command of Rumelian area. The city of Ohrid had three main areas in his composition: one was Struga other one Resen and the third Ohrid. The Ottoman city authorities consisted from: bazaar observer, city duke, trustee person for the fishes, person responsible for collecting taxes, main Ottoman army commander, seven ottoman person responsible for Ohrid Fortress, main city person and ottoman persons responsible for Christian population. The most famous ornaments of Ohrid were following: below the shore of the lake was Yashi Pasha Castle, near the coastline was Aya Sophia Mosque, which with its beautiful ornaments, looks like a Constantinople mosque.

## 7. CONCLUSION

In this paper we give a broader overview of Evliya Çelebi's activities in Macedonia. In his "Travelogues", he gives a wealth of information about: geography, culture, customs, education, administrative arrangement of Macedonian cities, religious centers in Macedonia, numerous ottoman organizations which existed in Ottoman Empire and other numerous interesting data. However, what is particularly interesting and mentioned above is that Evliya Çelebi was also a respected person from the sultan, so he had a privilege right to read certain interesting and important documents and to describe them in his travelogues<sup>215</sup>. One interesting document that Evliya, later describes in his travelogues is one in which he says that there were organized groups of people which according to him were janissaries, which for their work were delegated from the Ottoman Supreme Court to search and find among the people counterfeit money "gümüs arayıcıyan". Organized groups were armed with sticks in their hands, which patrolled trough the streets and people<sup>216</sup>. If they found fake money during the search, the person was immediately turned over the near qadi (lawyer). Then lawyer asked the person, where his money was from and if the lawyer found that person is guilty, person was first bound and then hanged on the basis of penalties provided by Sharia law<sup>217</sup>.

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<sup>214</sup> Имбер Колин, Османлиската империја (1300-1481), Скопје, 2002, 37-42

<sup>215</sup> Lazarescu-Zobian M. Evliya Çelebi and the language of the rebellious Eflâks. Archivum Ottomanicum 8, 1983, 315-320.

<sup>216</sup> Nuran Tezcan, Semih Tezcan. Doğumunun 400. Yılında Evliya Çelebi, T.C. Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı Yayınları, Ankara, 2011, 15-18.

<sup>217</sup> Државен архив на СРМ, Турски документи на македонскиот народ, серија прва, I, Скопје, 1963, 43-44.

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