

Bosnian Boys in Solidarity: Exploring Evliya Çelebi's Seyahatname as a Source for Historical Network Research in Early Modern Ottoman Studies

Günhan Börekçi

Evliya Çelebi's *Seyahatname* serves as a captivating primary source for delving into the diverse manifestations of personal power networks prevalent in the 17th-century Ottoman imperial realm, often rooted in ethno-regional (cins) solidarity. Evliya's opus unfolds numerous invaluable narratives, shedding light on the intricate formation and functioning of networks comprising individuals who ascended to influential positions within the Ottoman administrative system during this period. This paper specifically delves into a compelling story from *Seyahatname*, unveiling how a cohort of children originating from the town of Nevesin in Bosnia established and sustained a notable political faction in the Ottoman capital and beyond. This narrative, presented across the 5th and 6th volumes of *Seyahatname*, not only elucidates the origins of the network in focus but also chronicles how these Nevesin children, enlisted as *devşirme* boys, maintained their solidary personal relations over several decades. The exploration reveals the gradual construction by these Bosnian boys of a formidable coalition, wielding control over certain high-ranking positions in the Ottoman imperial government during the 1630s and 1640s. In essence, this paper aims to spotlight this lesser-known Bosnian power network for scholars intrigued by diverse political patronage relations and ethno-regional solidarities in the early modern Ottoman world. Beyond emphasizing the value of Evliya Çelebi's *Seyahatname* as an essential source, my study presents a new methodological model for conducting Historical Network Research in Ottoman studies. This model addresses the gathering and processing of pertinent data by utilizing cutting-edge Digital Humanities tools. Furthermore, it elucidates the motivations and mechanisms underlying such networks of individuals during the specified period.