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Gottfried Hagen & Baki Tezcan
Does the Qatar Map of the Tigris and Euphrates belong to Evliya Çelebi?*

Zekeriya Kurşun**

When one examines the magnificent work of Evliya Çelebi (1611 – c.1685), one of the greatest travelers the world has ever known, one is struck by something lacking — viz., maps. This despite the fact that Evliya frequently mentions ancient books of geography and atlases in his work, and lays particular stress on the importance of the guild of mapmakers in seventeenth-century Istanbul. Despite this, there are no maps in the manuscripts of the work that have come down to us. It seems rather strange that Evliya Çelebi, who aimed to provide information on every topic and who, moreover, was evidently knowledgable about cartography, should have left his work — and left us — deprived of maps. Indeed, Evliya Çelebi experts have always drawn attention to this situation. This concern led researchers to look for such maps, and already in 1949 one researcher suggested that a seventeenth-century map of the Nile in the Vatican Library might belong to Evliya Çelebi.1 Unfortunately it took another sixty years before this suggestion was confirmed. Today, thanks to the research of Robert Dankoff and Nuran

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* Translated by Robert Dankoff; all images published in this article are published thanks to the courtesy of Shaikh Hassan bin Muhammad al-Thani.

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1 Ettore Rossi, “A Turkish Map of the Nile River, about 1685,” Imago Mundi 6 (1949): 73-75.
Tezcan, it is established that the Vatican map of the Nile does indeed belong to Evliya Çelebi, although it is not in his own hand.²

Evlüya Çelebi mainly used land routes for his travels. But in the Ottoman geography of the seventeenth century river transport provided water routes that buttressed the land routes. For this reason Evliya in his Seyahatnâme also gave special importance to rivers and their depiction. In this regard, it is possible that alongside the map of the Nile, whose attribution to Evliya is accepted today, we will find other river maps belonging to Evliya.

Here we will discuss a map whose story resembles that of the Nile map. It first appeared in Europe (London) and later returned to Asia. It is a map of the Tigris and Euphrates, and we believe that it can also be attributed to Evliya Çelebi.

In the 1980s the firm of Bernard Quaritch, which has been dealing with rare books and manuscripts in London since 1847, offered a map for sale under the heading “A Rare Ottoman Chart of the Gulf and Mesopotamia.” It gave a brief description of the form and contents of the map, and also its source. According to the sales announcement, the map emerged from the library of William Trumbull (1639-1716). Trumbull was an English statesman who lived in the same period as Evliya. At the same time he was a scholar and a traveler. More importantly, he served as ambassador in Istanbul from 17 August 1687 to 31 July 1691, a period immediately following Evliya’s death. He was particularly active in the development of English trade in Ottoman territories, and it is highly likely that he had an interest in maps showing trade routes. However, no information was provided as to how this map, now offered for sale, entered Trumbull’s library. Bernard Quaritch also reported in the sales advertisement that information on the map would be included in The History of Cartography that was forthcoming from the University of Chicago Press.

But before this publication occurred, the map was acquired in 1988 by Shaikh Hassan bin Muhammad al-Thani, a member of the Qatar ruling family. His interest in the map probably stemmed from the fact that it is the oldest Ottoman map that includes the Persian Gulf. Shaikh Hassan bin Muhammad al-Thani had a limited number of facsimiles made of the map and a brochure describing it. The boxed facsimile and the brochure, with an introduction by the Shaikh, were prepared by Touch Editions in England, using photos of the map made in Switzerland by A. G. Neueschwitte Verlag and printed in Germany by Zeitung Memminger. Despite this careful attention, a full description of the map was not

² For an extensive description of the Vatican map of the Nile see: Robert Dankoff and Nuran Tezcan, Evliya Çelebi’nin Nil Haritası “Dürr-i bî misîl în abhâr-i Nil” (Istanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2011).
made. The brochure described it as the oldest Ottoman map of the Persian Gulf and Mesopotamia and reported that it contained the areas in that region that were ruled by the Ottoman empire at the beginning of the seventeenth century. It explained that the map began with the source of the Tigris, showing Anatolia and Iraq, and ended in the south at the Persian Gulf, and that it was a very important source of information for the Gulf region. While the brochure described the physical features of the map — albeit with some errors — it only listed the place names on the map and some interesting features according to the publisher, without giving any details. Thus it drew attention to the fact that in northern Iraq a place along the Tigris was clearly labelled menba’-t zift meaning “source of petroleum”; that Abadan was drawn with exaggerated size; and that the areas of present-day Kuwait and Qatar were each shown with a castle and without mention of any name. But there was no discussion of who might be the author of the map.

As for the publication mentioned in the sales announcement, it did not appear until 1992. In this publication there was no mention of the brochure and facsimile mentioned above; apparently the map was lost to view after it was sold. In a section on regional maps, Ahmet T. Karamustafa, author of the chapter on Ottoman cartography, discussed the map based on a black-and-white reproduction obtained from Bernard Quaritch. He also briefly discussed the Vatican Nile map, which had been pointed to by Ettore Rossi and which today, thanks to Robert Dankoff and Nuran Tezcan, is recognized as belonging to Evliya Çelebi; and he included a picture of that. Karamustafa reiterated Rossi’s view that the Nile map might belong to Evliya Çelebi, but explicitly refrained from such a judgment with regard to the Tigris and Euphrates map, which he compared rather with the maps of Istanbul waterways. After touching on Ottoman cartography before the 17th century, he evaluated the Tigris and Euphrates map as follows:

Both of the two known extant regional maps chart rivers. The map of the Euphrates and the Tigris seems to date from the mid-seventeenth century. Drawn in color on eight double-folio sheets of paper attached in strip form, this map resembles, physically and conceptually, the scroll maps of Istanbul waterways discussed earlier. It is arranged like a graphic itinerary, and important sites along the course of the two rivers are noted in pictorial elevation. Major routes in the area depicted are schematically indicated. The topography of the terrain itself is left uncharted, with only major mountains being shown in conventional wave patterns. Every feature in the map is clearly identified in writing.

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3 Manuscript Chart of the Gulf and Mesopotamia, SAEC XVII (UK, 1988), 4-5.
4 Ibid., 10.
While suggesting a primarily commercial function for the map, Karamustafa concluded: “Nonetheless, the legends of the map do not allow us to venture much beyond such elementary speculation.”

The present writer had occasion to view the original map in the private collection of Shaikh Hassan bin Muhammad al-Thani in 1998, but at the time I did not have the opportunity to pursue the topic. Later I obtained one of the facsimile reproductions and, with permission of the owner, began to work on it. Here I wish to discuss briefly my initial findings; I plan to publish the larger study as a book.

The map, consisting of eight attached folios, has the dimensions 343.5 x 43 cm. The legends are written in black ink and conform with seventeenth century Ottoman rík’a script. Mountains are indicated in yellow and green, rivers in blue ink. The above-mentioned “source of petroleum” is colored black. Many places, beginning with the deserts, are left without color. Some of the buildings and historical monuments have their domes, columns or roofs colored red — presumably to give them special prominence. Beginning at Erzurum, the map follows the Euphrates and Tigris Rivers in a north-south direction, ending at the Shatt al-Arab region. Except for a few of the mountains, which are colored, the map does not indicate topographical features. It only shows, in carefully delineated drawings, special features of the period, including castles, mosques and shrines on both banks of the two rivers, and sometimes also bridges, crossings, stages and hans (caravansarais).

As with the Nile map, there is no indication of who drew the Tigris-Euphrates map and who wrote the legends. Yet there are indications that this map too must belong to Evliya Çelebi. We may list these indications in two categories, based on the physical properties of the map and on its contents.

Thus, the paper, writing and format of the map leave no doubt that it belongs to the seventeenth century — i.e., to the age of Evliya Çelebi. Although no chemical analysis of the paper and the ink has been made, there is no doubt as to its provenance. While the dimensions of the two maps are different, the Tigris-

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6 I am grateful to Shaikha Moza bint Nasr of Qatar, who arranged access to the map; to Shaikh Hassan bin Muhammed al-Thani, who purchased the map and added it to his collection and who gave permission to study it, and to his personal secretary Muhammad F. Hammam; and to the Qatar Embassy in Ankara which arranged access to the map and its owner.
Euphrates map resembles the Nile map in the style of writing and of drawing. Only on the Nile map the regions are delineated and described, while on the Tigris-Euphrates map we have only the drawings of the places shown and their bare names. This difference can be explained by the difference of the settlements along the two routes. The area from Eastern Anatolia to the Persian Gulf is filled with historical towns and castles, which is not the case for the length of the Nile. On the other hand, because castles, mosques, shrines and even town plans are so prominently featured on the Tigris-Euphrates map, little room was left for descriptions, which were perhaps omitted for that reason.

With regard to contents, the map is in nearly perfect agreement with the corresponding sections of the Seyahatnâme. The drawings of towns and castles correspond very closely with their descriptions in the book. The cities, mosques, shrines and tombs on the map are characterized in the same way as they are in the Seyahatnâme — e.g., Halebuş-Şahba for Aleppo. In the Seyahatnâme Evliya carefully records road conditions, distances between stages, customs duties, hans (caravansarais), and bridges; and one observes the same care for these matters on the map. The roads between towns are labelled as such (yolduz) and are indicated with drawing. As in the book, the distances and number of stages between towns are included — crucial information for the traveler. The drawings on the map give the impression that they were made from observation of the places shown. The layout of castles and towers is not merely symbolic; rather it corresponds exactly to the form indicated in the Seyahatnâme.

There is another interesting agreement between the map and the book with regard to contents. Some places that Evliya describes in the Seyahatnâme without having seen them are also found on the map, but in these cases the drawings were evidently not done from observation. The best example is the drawing of Lahsa castle toward the end of the map: it is larger than the actual Lahsa castle we know today, and the town is not situated within the castle walls (see Figure 1).7

On the other hand, we have no other Ottoman maps of this type belonging to the seventeenth century or later. The only one that resembles it as a map of journeys and routes is the Nile map that we have recognized as belonging to Evliya Çelebi. While the map prominently features the castles along the Tigris and Euphrates from Erzurum to the Persian Gulf, it does not omit other places that

7 “Andan öte şarka Lahsa’un hükümdür. Ammâ hâkir Hind’e ve Lahsa[ţya] varmadım (Beyond that to the east is governed by Lahsa. But I did not go to India and Lahsa);” Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnâmesi, vol. 10, eds. Seyit Ali Kahraman, Yücel Dağlı, and Robert Dankoff (İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2007), 480 [= İstanbul Üniversitesi Kütüphanesi, Türkçe Yazmalar 5973, 442b].
would only attract the interest of a traveler. This proves that it was not drawn up for military purposes but that it aims to depict the completed route of a journey. On the other hand, there is no other Ottoman traveler in the seventeenth century who followed this precise route. We may conclude that this map issued from the hand of Evliya Çelebi or else from the hand of someone close to him and under his direction.

Let us give a few examples. The map begins in Eastern Anatolia at the headwaters of the Tigris and Euphrates and ends at the Shatt al-Arab, the Persian Gulf, and the Indian Ocean. It shows Hurmuz, where the Gulf opens out to the Ocean, and also shows the holy city of Mecca, despite its distance from the Tigris and Euphrates. Thus, while showing Lahsa and its surrounding region as an Ottoman province in the seventeenth century, it also shows Mekke-i Mükerreme (Mecca the Noble) in symbolic form southwest of Lahsa. After the road from Mecca to Lahsa, labelled as twelve stages and desert (Ka‘be-i Şerif’den Lahsa’ya on iki konakdur çöldür), we have a drawing at the map’s extremity of the place where the Kaaba is found. Only here, in contrast with other such drawings on the map, instead of the Kaaba itself we find a drawing of the surrounding porticoes and domes and a minaret with two balconies in Ottoman style. The legend below is not Ka‘be but Mekke-i Mükerreme. We can explain this feature with the supposition that the map was drawn up before Evliya performed the Haj journey (i.e., before 1671)
when he gave a very detailed description of the Kaaba in the *Seyahatnâme*. Or perhaps he was reluctant to depict the holiest building of the Muslims on a map that would be passed from hand to hand.

Evlîya Çelebi, when he begins his description of the Tigris, explicitly states that it is not simply these two rivers that assure a connection between the two distant places of their headwaters and the Persian Gulf. In fact, his description has the character of a source of inspiration for a map of this kind. The connection he establishes between the source of the rivers and the Gulf where they disembouch constitutes a brief and pithy description of our map:

These streams join together and the river [Shatt or Tigris] flows at the foot of Diyârbekir on its eastern side and beneath Fis Kaya, watering the gardens of Çay and Reyhân, then below Diyârbekir, under the bridge where the rafts dock that go to Baghdad and Basra on the Shatt, flowing toward Hasankeyf and Cezîre, watering 100 castles and towns and cities (or Medain) and the entrepôt of Mosul and other regions. By the time it reaches Baghdad, as many as 150 great streams have joined together. Below Baghdad it is joined by the Diyala and Charka and the Greater Zab and other great rivers. Then above Basra at the promontory of Qurna castle the two brother rivers — the Euphrates and the Shatt [Tigris] — join with a single heart and purpose. Before Basra the united river becomes like the sea. Ships from India, Portugal, Laristan and Multan, England and Holland, Oman and Yemen and Aden and Jedda and Eth come to port at Basra bringing valuable merchandise and taking away invaluable stuffs.... And again carracks and filipots and bargias from Dunkirk and Denmark and galleons and Yemen jalașs come to the entrepot of Basra from Lahsa and San'a and Aden and Mocha, from Ahmedabad and Ferahabad and Dīvawad (Diù) and Meymūn-ı Mustaфаşabad and Dabul and the entrepot of Peyguvar and a thousand ports that cannot be expressed in words. This Shatt al-Arab is such a sea of the water of life before Basra. And the Shatt River before Basra is a tidal basin.8

8 *Evlîya Çelebi Seyahatnâmesi*, vol. 4, eds. Seyid Ali Kahraman and Yücel Dağılı, (İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2000), 33 [text corrected according to Topkapı Sarayi Kütüphanesi (TSK hereafter), ms Bağdat 305, 205a]: *Andan cümlesi bir olap cereyan ederek Diyarbekir’in cânihib-i şarkisi dibinde Fis kayası altından ubûr ederek Çay bostânılığının ve Reyhân gülstânılığının ray edüp andan aşağı Diyarbekir’in Şat ızişre Bağdad ve Basra’yı giden Kelek Cısıri ısheleşinden aşağı Hasankeyf’e doğru ve Cezîre’ye doğru yüz yetmiş pare kılâr’ı kasabât ve Medâyinler’i ve bender-i şehri Musul’u ve gayri diyârleri saki ederek tâ Bağdad-i bebişt-abâb’â varınca yüz ellî eded enbâr-i azîmler mağbût olup Bağdad’dan aşağı nehr-i Dîvâle ve Çerka ve Zarb-i Ali ve niçe nehr-i kebirler karşup ba’dehû Barâdân yakaruda Kurna kat’âs burnunda nehr-i Furât ile Şat birâderi bir olap yek-dîl yek-cihet nehrên-i birâdereyn ittifâkîyyla deryâ-misâl cereyan edüp Basra önüne vardıklarında deryâ-misâl olup Hindüstan ve Portakal ve Laristan ve Multân ve İngilîs ve Felemenk ve Ümmân ve Yemen ve Aden ve Çidde ve Haheb gemileri gelîş Basra’yı yanaşup metâ’t-zî-kymet getirüp kâlâ-yı bi-minnet
The connection that Evliya mentions — i.e., the parallel course of the Tigris and Euphrates from their source to where they disembouch — is what he has shown on a single map. In scale and method it is a kind of map not encountered with heretofore in the Ottoman cartographic tradition. In addition we find a rather large sailboat drawn in the Gulf in order to indicate that ships reach the Shatt al-Arab from various places of the world, just as mentioned in the above text.

Evliya, who expresses the connection between the rivers by saying that they join below Qurna castle “like two brothers,” shows this on the map as well.

Figure 2: Basra and Qurna (above); and Hasankeyf and Diyarbekir (below).
he shows the relation of the two rivers to the Indian Ocean in a detailed drawing, which must have its source in the following text of the *Seyahatnâme*:

The place below Basra where this Shatt al-Arab joins the Sea of Oman — i.e., the ocean — is called Merece’l-bahreyn (Confluence of Two Seas). As this unhypothetical slave has observed, this Shatt al-Arab [Tigris] has its headwaters in four places in the mountains of Diyarbekir to the north and flows southward. Between its rise and its setting is a total of (---) (---) stages. It disembouches into the ocean below Basra. Several historians record that 2060 tributaries, great and small, flow into the three rivers of this Shatt [Tigris], the Euphrates and the Murad from their headwaters until they flow into the Sea of Oman in the vicinity of Basra. The tributaries are noted and mapped out in books of cosmography such as the atlas, Mappamundi, Atlas Minor, Geographia, the atlases of Padre and Kolon [i.e., Chrisopher Columbus] and in nautical charts. God willing, this lowly one, whose nature is given over to travel and who has seen the tributaries of the Shatt over 41 years and tasted their waters and journeyed along each one in those regions from their rise to their setting, will record them to the best of my ability, if not in great detail.\(^9\)

Similarly, just as he describes in detail in various volumes all the places shown in drawings on the map along both banks of the two rivers, he gives an overview in Volume 2 in his discussion of the Euphrates. This comprehensive description gives the impression of being a guide to the being when the map was being drawn up:

The great river Euphrates takes its rise in the middle of the Erzurum plain, emerging at the foot of a cliff at the shrine of Dumlu Baba Sultân toward Georgia in the east. It flows west, breaking up in the Erzurum plain into swamps and straits and

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湖泊和支流作为数以千计的巴格达迪起重机的筑巢地。经过村庄卡恩，第二阶段，它流经凯玛尔城堡，然后与穆拉德河汇合，该河来自 Bingöl 夏季牧场，在伊佐利库尔德人的领土上。它沿着马拉蒂亚的海滨流过，沿途参观塞米萨特和卡勒图尔-鲁姆和比勒克，大桥），可见于博马格，巴利，卡里卡，卡菲，哈迪塔，希特，阿亚，塔克，希尔拉和库法；然后与 Shatt al-Arab [Tigris] 在沼泽 (Batâyh) 脚下的库尔纳城堡后，流入大海，成为巴格拉河前的印度船只。10

读者了解 Evliya Çelebi 他的工作知道，他详细描述的城堡（或城墙城镇— kale）他已经访问 — 这些是旅行者在广泛领土愿望中最多要见。在同一

time it is certain that Evliya, who prided himself on being an Ottoman, saw these castles as symbols of the state and of authority. This attitude, much apparent in the book, is also reflected on the map which is full of drawings of castles large and small along the two rivers. These drawings fit both the actual shapes of the castles and the way they are described in the Seyahatnâme. For example, Erzurum castle is described in the Seyahatnâme as follows:

It is a strong square-shaped fortress, with two walls all around, made of pumice stone. The area between the walls, known as hisâr-pîçe, is 70 paces. It is surrounded by a moat.... The inner castle (citadel) has nothing looming over it; the outer castle has looming over it a tall tower like a minaret, made of brick.\(^\text{11}\)

Van castle is described as follows:

It is a prominent cliff, variegated and ruby-colored, rising in back toward the sky like a camel collapsed beneath its load.\(^\text{12}\)

And Birecik castle is described as follows:

A small hexagonal castle rising to the sky above a bare cliff, situated toward the northeast of the Euphrates River. The battlements are very solid, with the towers looking toward one another. There is no moat, because it consists of sheer cliffs on all six sides like the pit of hell and serving as nesting places for falcons and eagles and kites.\(^\text{13}\)

The castle drawings on the map fit these descriptions perfectly. While the map does not show other details relating to the topography of the region, it does

\(^{11}\) Ibid., 104 [text corrected according to ms. Bağdat 304, 286b]: Mezkûr bâyır ubez ı blel-i mûrabba' küsêke taşlı dâiren-mâdâr iki kat hisâr-i üstübâridê kîm iki haytûn mâbeyni yetmîş adîmdîr, hisâr-pîçe derler ve dâiren-mâdâr handakî vardir... Gâyet havâlesiz iç kal'adîr. Taşra kal'aya havâle, eflâke ser çekmiş bir tula minâre gibi külle-i âlîsi var. Kesik külle nâmûyla şöhre-i sehr olmuş, üstü bir tahta örtüli kâsr-i âlîdîr.


Figure 4a: Erzurum

Figure 4b: Van
indeed depict Van castle as “a camel collapsed beneath its load.” And Birecik castle is depicted exactly as in the book, atop a high cliff, six-sided, with towers that look onto one another.

One of the most important indications that the map under discussion belongs to Evliya Çelebi is the depiction of the castle of Ruha (Urfa) and the two columns immediately in front of it. As with other castles, Evliya has drawn the castle and below has written kal’e-i Ruha. Then, in front of the castle, he has drawn the two columns that still stand today, and below them has written mançınık-i hazreti İbrahim Aleyhisselam (Mangonel of Abraham). As is well-known, the prophet Abraham lived in this region and fought against idolatry. Thereupon he was hurled into the fire prepared by Nimrod, using these two columns. This report, mentioned in the Koran, is also related by Evliya. But what is important for us is the special attention he pays to these columns, which he mentions several times and which he terms mançınıklar (mangonels). Thus, discussing the founding of the city of Urfa, he writes: “The mangonels used to hurl Abraham into the fire of Nimrod are clearly visible in this city,” and again, describing Urfa castle: “The two man-made tall columns [constituting] the mangonel of the fire-temple of Nimrod with
which Nimrood the damned hurled Abraham into the fire are in this castle.”

Not content with this, Evliya takes up the remnants of the mangonels under a separate heading:

Description of the wondrous mangonel of Abraham the Friend [of God]: It is the remnant of a mangonel on a red rock overlooking the city rising to heaven atop a bare hill within the upper castle of Urfa. When the prophet Abraham summoned Nimrood the damned to the religion, Nimrood put Abraham in prison and contrived this mangonel. There are two man-made columns on that rock, like two stylus-shaped minarets, rising to heaven. At that time it had spring-mechanisms and a balance-pan (kef), like the balance-pan of a sling, and thick ropes. They put Abraham in that balance-pan, like seating someone in the novel contraption set up in our day during festivals and called “swing” (salıncak). Several hundred Nimrodites swung him until, when he reached a certain point, they let loose the springs and let him fly in the air. Gabriel descended seven times like lightning, offering to save him, but Abraham refused, saying “God will save me, He is my refuge.” When he fell into the fire the Lord turned it into a rose garden for Abraham. Still today those two mangonel columns are visible in the castle, a noteworthy monument; but the mechanisms are no longer there.15

Just as Evliya, whenever he mentions the mangonels in the Seyahatnâme, says that they are clearly visible; so on the map he has drawn these two columns very prominently compared to the other pictures. Even the legend below is slightly more prominent; so the special attention he gives this topic in his written work seems to be reflected in the map. The fact that no other Ottoman source — at least, of those known so far — refers to these columns as mangonels confirms our


view of the relation between the *Seyahatnâme* and the Qatar map, suggesting that the map too belongs to Evliya Çelebi.\(^{16}\)

![Figure 5: Urfa](image)

The excerpts given here from the *Seyahatnâme* have the character of a source of inspiration for the map. It appears that Evliya Çelebi again and again, albeit in indirect fashion, provided illustrations on the map for information in his book. In conclusion, the Qatar map of the Tigris and Euphrates that we have tried to introduce here was drawn up either by Evliya himself or else by someone in his retinue and under his supervision.

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**Does the Qatar Map of the Tigris and Euphrates belong to Evliya Çelebi?**

Abstract ▪ This article discusses the map of the Tigris and Euphrates in the private collection of Shaikh Hassan bin Muhammad al-Thani of Qatar. Through a detailed comparison of the map with the text of Evliya Çelebi’s (1611-c.1685) *Seyahatnâme* (Book of Travels), this study demonstrates that the map in question was drawn up either by Evliya himself or else by someone in his retinue and under his supervision.

Keywords: the Qatar Map of the Tigris and Euphrates, *Seyahatnâme*, Evliya Çelebi.

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\(^{16}\) Cf. Kâtib Çelebi, *Cihannüma* (Istanbul [Muteferrika edition], 1732), 443: *Urfa şehrinin iç kal’esi bir mahall-i mürtefi’de duvarı üzerinde iki amîd-i refî’ vaz’ olmuştur* (The Urfa citadel is on raised ground and two high columns have been erected on its wall).