

Esavitic Genealogy for the Ottomans

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Context

The genealogy of ‘Osmān I (r. 1299-1326), which is transcribed below, is found in an Ottoman manuscript (Ayasofya, 3229), *Kenzü’l-cevāhirü’s-seniyye fi fütühāti’s-Süleymāniyye* (*Treasure of the Brilliant Jewels among the Conquests of Süleyman*), written by Şāh Kāsım Tebrīzī (d. 1539-40).¹ The compilation date of the manuscript is unknown.² It starts with gratitude to God and His prophets (1b-4a) and continues with epithets, glorification, and description of Süleymān I (r. 1520-1566) (4a-34a). Then, it mentions the death of Selīm I (r. 1512-1520), the enthronement of Süleymān, and the revolt of Cānberdī Ġazālī (d. 1521) (34a-63a). This is followed by the Belgrade campaign in 1521 and the elimination of Şehsuvāroġlī ‘Alī Beg in 1522 (63a-122b). The manuscript ends abruptly with the campaign of Rhodes in 1521 (122b-135b), omits the Hungarian campaign and the battle of Mohács in 1526, continues amid the campaign of Vienna in 1529 and finishes with the return journey of Süleymān from Vienna (136a-191b).

In the introduction, Şāh Kāsım enumerates ten qualifications (*hāşşe*) of Süleymān to argue his patron’s superiority over past and current rulers. Ten is not selected randomly but a deliberate reference to Süleymān being the tenth Ottoman Sultan and also the “perfect” number, as Şāh Kāsım explains with the help of numerology. These ten qualifications are (i) Süleymān’s glorious and God-chosen dynasty and his genealogy, (ii) the regularity in the Ottoman succession system, (iii) Süleymān being the religious renewer (*müceddid*) of the tenth Hijri century, (iv) Süleymān as the shadow of God (*zill-i ħodā*), (v) his peaceful enthronement, (vi) his protection over his subjects, (vii) his generosity, (viii) his wealthy and powerful empire, (ix) his holy wars (*ġazavāt*) and, (x)

¹ Şāh Kāsım Tebrīzī, *Kenzü’l-cevāhirü’s-seniyye fi fütühāti’s-Süleymāniyye*, Süleymaniye Library, Ms. Ayasofya 3392. I have examined Şāh Kāsım’s life and book in detail in an MA thesis. See Furkan Işın, “Politics of Persian Historiography at the Court of Süleyman: Shāh Qāsım and his Kanz al-jawāhir” (MA Thesis, Sabancı University, 2020). The book is edited and translated into Turkish, see Ayşe Gül Fidan, “Kenzü’l-cevāhiri’s-seniyye fi fütühāti’s-Süleymāniyye (İnceleme – Metin – Çeviri)” (PhD Diss., Kırıkkale and Ankara Universities, 2020).

² Tauer claims that it was copied after the execution of the grand vizier Ibrahim Pasha (d. 1536) because this copy does not refer to him, whereas a possible author’s copy housed in Manisa narrates İbrāhīm Pasha’s appointment to the army general (*ser-’asker*) in nine folios. See Felix Tauer, *Histoire de la campagne du sultan Suleyman Ier contre Belgrade en 1521* (Prague: F. Řivnáče, 1924), 12.

his fidelity as a vicegerent to his father, Selim I, when the latter was on military campaigns against the Safavids and the Mamluks.³ Şāh Kāsım aims by juxtaposing these ten qualifications to bolster the claim that his patron is “the superior and most perfect ruler among the rulers of the past and present.”⁴ By providing an Ottoman genealogy, he intends to show the divine favor and worldly kingship bestowed upon the ancestor of Süleymān, Esau b. Isaac b. Abraham.⁵

Who was Esau? Transmitting from Idrīs-i Bidlīsī’s (d. 1520) *Heşt Bihişt* (*The Eight Paradises*), an Ottoman dynastic history in Persian up to the reign of Bāyezid II (r. 1481-1512), Şāh Kāsım states that Esau was the son of Isaac, son of Abraham. After Esau and his subjects had consumed the riches of the Arab lands, they immigrated to Turkistan and the lands of Tūrān, where he became the ruler and kingship rested with his offspring.⁶ Bidlīsī’s account mentions another layer in which Jacob tricked his blind father Isaac to claim the prophecy for himself which was reserved for Esau because of the right of primogeniture. Isaac pitied his eldest son and wished him and his descendants to have worldly sovereignty until the end of times.⁷ Although he mentions that some historians claimed a Japhetic lineage for the Ottomans, Şāh Kāsım chooses Esavitic genealogy for his patron, because, as Flemming argues, through Esavitic pedigree with its “Semitic” connotations, the Ottomans could exploit the Islamic tradition to their advantage, especially after the conquest of Constantinople in 1453.⁸

³ Şāh Kāsım Tebrīzī, *Kenzü’l-cevāhir*, 23b-33a.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 24b.

⁵ To be sure, in the genealogy Şāh Kāsım gives the name of the grandfather of Oğüz Hān as “Kāyī” and states that this is how Esau was known in Central Asia.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 25b-26a.

⁷ Idrīs-i Bidlīsī, *Heşt Bihişt*, Istanbul: Süleymaniye Library, 3209, Ms. Nuruosmaniye, 21b-24a. For a Turkish translation, see Vural Genç, “İdris-i Bidlīsī: Heşt Bihişt Osman Gazi Dönemi (Tahlil ve Tercüme)” (MA Thesis: Mimar Sinan Üniversitesi, 2007), 371-375. To be sure, both historians recognize the Japhetic pedigree, yet the Esavitic ancestry is central to their narratives.

⁸ Barbara Flemming, “Political Genealogies in the Sixteenth Century,” *Journal of Ottoman Studies* 7-8 (1988): 137.

Transcription

Es-Sultān ‘Osmān Ḥān bin Ertuğrul bin Süleymān Şāh bin Kayā Ūlup⁹ bin Kızılbuğā bin Bāytemūr bin Kutluğ bin Tuğhurā bin Qarāyunū bin Buluğāy bin Sünkūr bin Tüktemūr bin Yāsāk bin Ḥamīd bin Kutluğ bin Dūrluğ bin Qarā Ḥān bin Nāsū bin Yalvāc bin Bāy Bey bin Tuğurā bin Duvagmış bin Gūç Bey bin Ārtūğ bin Qamārī bin Çektemūr bin Turuğ bin Kızılbuğā bin Yamāk bin Yāşūğā bin Ḥürmüz bin Bāysū bin Tuğurā bin Sevinç bin Cārbūğā bin Kūrulmuş bin Kūruḥād bin Bālcū bin Qumāş bin Qara Oğlān bin Süleymān Şāh bin Tarḥulū bin Būrlağā bin Bāytemūr bin Dürmuş bin Gök Ūlp bin Oğüz Ḥān bin Qarā Ḥān bin Kāytī Ḥān (also known as ‘İş bin İshāk b. İbrāhīm).¹⁰

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⁹ Although “Alp” is the accepted version by the Ottoman historians, Şāh Qāsım spells this name as “Ūlup”.

¹⁰ Şāh Qāsım Tebrīzī, *Kenzü’l-cevāhir*, 25b.

Facsimile

