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TWO NEGLECTED CONTEMPORARY REPORTS IN FRENCH ON THE OTTOMAN CONQUEST OF BAGHDAD IN 1638

GARY LEISER

Introduction

In the spring of 1638 Sultan Murad IV set out on one of the greatest military campaigns in Ottoman history. His goal was to besiege and recapture Baghdad from the Safavids of Persia, who had taken it from the Ottomans in 1623. This campaign would rank among the great Ottoman sieges, such as those of Belgrade (1456, 1521), Vienna (1529, 1683), and Erivan (1635). Indeed, according to Rhoads Murphey, this “confrontation at Baghdad was an example of full-scale, full-commitment warfare which was not altogether characteristic of the period.”¹ The siege of Baghdad has recently received the attention of several Turkish scholars who have brought to light new Turkish sources concerning this event.²

- 1 Rhodes Murphey, *Ottoman Warfare, 1500–1700*. New Brunswick, NJ, 1999, 122.
- 2 In particular, Nermin Yıldırım, *Kara Çelebi-zâde Abdülaziz Efendi'nin Zafername Adlı Eseri (Tarihçe-i Feth-i Revan ve Bağdad) Tahlil ve Metin*. MA thesis, Mimar Sinan Güzel Sanatlar Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, İstanbul, 2005. Kara Çelebi-zâde (d. 1657) was a prominent member of the *ulema* (theologians, religious class), see Kenan İnan, ‘Karaçelebizade Abdülaziz Efendi’, *EP*. Mehmet Fatih Gökçek prepared a PhD dissertation based on two contemporary victory or conquest announcements (*fetihnames* – this genre of literature is discussed below), entitled *IV. Murâd'ın Bağdâd'ı Fethine Dair İki Eser: Nûrî İbrâhîm, Fetihnâme-i Bağdâd — Kâdî-zâde Ahmed Çelebi, Fetihnâme-i Bağdâd (Transkripsiyon–Değerlendirme)*, Marmara Üniversitesi Türkiyat Araştırmaları Enstitüsü, İstanbul, 2013. Subsequently, he published accounts by two participants in the conquest: one is an anonymous work which appeared as ‘IV. Murad’ın Bağdat Seferi’ne Dair Anonim Bir Eser: *Feth-i Bağdâd Kıssası*’, *Atatürk Üniversitesi Türkiyat Araştırmaları Enstitüsü Dergisi* 61 (2018) 269–296, and the other is his edition of *Müteferrika Ahmed’s Târîhü’l-İhtimâm Bi-Fethi Dâri’s-Selâm*. İstanbul, 2020. As for the first, Gökçek transcribes the Ottoman text and provides a detailed summary in modern Turkish. The author is unknown, but he participated in the campaign and was in the presence of Murad. This is rather long for a *fetihname*, some 40 folios. Müteferrika Ahmed was an Egyptian soldier who joined Murad’s campaign in the company of Hasan Ağa who was an Egyptian commander called the *gönüllüler ağası* (“chief of the volunteers”, auxiliaries recruited in the provinces). Müteferrika Ahmed wrote his account after he returned to Egypt in 1640. After Gökçek, Ahmet Üstüner published *Bir Divan Katibinin Kalemiyle IV. Murad’ın Bağdat Seferi (Târîh-i Fethi-Bağdâd)*. İstanbul, 2021. Abdurrahman Hibri (1604–1659), who

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Baghdad and Isfahan

A Dialogue of Two Cities in an Age of
Science ca. 750-1750

Elaheh Kheirandish

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