

Contents

RALF ELGER/YAVUZ KÖSE Introduction.....	7
The Remembering Ego	
HATİCE AYNUR Autobiographical Elements in Aşık Çelebi's Dictionary of Poets	17
MICHAEL NIZRI The Memoirs of <i>Şeyhülislam</i> Feyzullah Efendi (1638–1703): Self, Family and Household	27
DIETER F. KICKINGEREDER Celâl Esad Arseven's Memoirs of his Life as an Artist and a Man of Politics: <i>Sanat ve Siyaset Hatıralarım</i> (1993).....	37
JULIETTE HONVAULT Speaking about Oneself when External Life is Ethically Primordial: The Diary of the Syro-Lebanese Arab nationalist 'Ādil Arslān (1887–1954)	47
CHRISTOPH HERZOG Lessons of a Long Life: The Self, History and Religion in the Memoirs of Muammer Tuksavul	59
The Travelling Ego	
RALF ELGER Lying, Forging, Plagiarism: Some Narrative Techniques in Ibn Baṭṭūṭa's Travelogue.....	71
DENISE KLEIN The Sultan's Envoys Speak: The Ego in 18 th -Century Ottoman <i>Sefâretnâmes</i> on Russia	89
BARBARA STÖCKER-PARNIAN An Unusually Long Way to the Kaaba: Reflexions in the <i>Safarnāma-ye Makka</i> of Mehdīqolī Hedāyat.....	103

The Fictional Ego

HENNING SIEVERT

Representations of the Self in Ottoman Baghdad: Some Remarks on
 Abū 'l-Barakāt Muḥammad al-Raḥbī's *Nuzhat al-mushtāq fī 'ulamā' al-'Irāq* 117

CARTER VAUGHN FINDLEY

Competing Autobiographical Novels, His and Hers..... 133

STEPHAN GUTH

Even in a Maqāma! The Shift of Focus from 'Trickster' to 'Narrating Subject'
 in Fāris al-Shidyāq's *al-Sāq 'alā 'l-sāq* (1855) 141

The Hidden Ego

JAN SCHMIDT

First-Person Narratives in Ottoman Miscellaneous Manuscripts..... 159

ASLI NİYAZIOĞLU

Dreams, Ottoman Biography Writing, and the *Halveti-Sünbülî Şeyhs*
 of 16th-Century Istanbul..... 171

PATRICK FRANKE

The Ego of the Mullah: Strategies of Self-Representation in the Works of the
 Meccan scholar 'Alī al-Qārī (d. 1606) 185

YAVUZ KÖSE

Consume together: Some Glimpses into Ottoman Consumer Behaviour 201

Notes on contributors..... 221

Introduction*

Ralf Elger/Yavuz Köse

Most of the contributions to this collection were originally presented at a conference that took place in Munich in 2007. Experts in Arabic, Persian and Turkish literature discussed first-person narratives or “ego-documents”, a term of recent Dutch, German etc. academic usage, but uncommon in English. We were interested in all kinds of texts: stories of a whole life, short personal notices, and everything in between. Authors and narrators who seemingly displayed deep emotional insights were presented along with those who described simple outward aspects of their lives. We discussed ‘normal’ actors in the course of fulfilling given social roles faithfully, as well as eccentrics and social outsiders.

Research concerning oriental first-person narratives has continuously grown over the last few years, both because of hitherto unknown manuscripts coming to light and already famous texts being more intensively treated than before. These texts were used for fact-oriented biographical studies, but sometimes also as sources for the history of ideas and mentalities. In the latter respect, the analysis was often based on European interest in individuality, Jakob Burckhardt’s book about the Italian Renaissance being a clear case in point. Does the ‘European individual’, which, according to Burckhardt, arose in the Renaissance, have a counterpart in the Orient, or to put it better, in Oriental literatures? This question has kept several people quite busy. Some researchers have said that there is no such thing as Oriental/Islamic individuality, sometimes adding that Islam’s collectivist human ideal excludes individuality.¹ This sweepingly broad thesis encountered equally sweeping criticism. Of course Muslims could be individuals, claimed some and invested much time and energy in order to produce evidence from several Oriental first-person narratives.²

The problem with this debate was that it never became entirely clear what “individuality” meant exactly. Those who claimed to have found it in Oriental texts seemed to define it

* This volume is the product of several hands and brains except those of the editors. The Munich conference on ego-documents, where most of these papers were presented first, was presided by our dear colleague Suraiya Faroqhi and funded by the German Research Council (DFG). That was the first step. For the last ones were in charge Christoph Knüttel, Munich, who cared for the accurate formatting of the manuscript and Matthew Powell who did the English corrections. The Universities of Halle and Munich granted financial support for the publication and Burçin Aydın designed the front-page illustration. Many thanks to all the contributors who collaborated in a long process of discussion about their papers and in some cases submitted several versions in order to get the best out of their research that could be accomplished by us and them.

1 Gustave von Grunebaum, *Medieval Islam: A Study in Cultural Orientation*, Chicago, 1946, pp. 270–275; Franz Rosenthal, “Die arabische Autobiographie” *Analecta Orientalia* 14 (1937), pp. 1–40.

2 See the articles in Randi Deguilhem (ed.), *Individual and Society in the Mediterranean Muslim World: Issues and Sources*, Aix-en-Provence, 1998, and Robin Ostle (ed.), *Marginal Voices in Literature and Society: Individual and Society in the Mediterranean Muslim World*, Strasbourg, et al., 2000.

as a sense of being different from others. This approach is somewhat doubtful. Of course people are different, in all societies at all times, but should they therefore be called individuals? If “individuality” means nothing more than a hazily defined delimitation against others, the term loses its discriminating power. It seems wise to reserve the term for more specific phenomena. Ralf Elger has proposed that it should describe an attitude of principal distance towards given *Weltanschauungen* and ideas of social order, including religion. Individuality in this sense might be hard to find in pre-modern Oriental literatures, but it is certainly there.³ A broader approach to individuality was made in a conference in 2003, titled “Horizonte des Individuellen in der arabischen Schriftkultur des 17. und 18. Jahrhunderts” in Bochum, Germany. The term “individuality” here served to formulate a research problem and was not used in an affirmative way.⁴

In the Munich conference, we were not only looking for individuality (which in fact received marginal attention), but for all kinds of egos speaking. Thus, a younger tradition of research on “ego-documents” in European History Studies was taken up.⁵ One reason for the success of this term can be found in a lack of good alternatives in German. “First-person narrative” cannot easily be translated, thus “autobiography” or “autobiographical narrative” was often chosen. Yet, like the term “individuality”, “autobiography” is loaded with many meanings and has been an object of numerous discussions. Some researchers have said that in order for a text to be called “autobiography”, it has to reveal some kind of individuality. They could thus deny the existence of pre-modern Oriental autobiographies.⁶ Orientalists answered that of course Oriental autobiographies exist⁷ and that the term should not be defined in the “narrow” European sense.⁸ This seems to be a rather dubious playing with definitions, as little convincing as is the wide use of the term “individuality.”

After switching to the term “ego-document” this debate could be returned to the shelf for the time being,⁹ and we were free to address more mundane questions. Firstly, a wide-ranging stock-taking of ego-documents was to be undertaken.¹⁰ Since “ego-documents” could encompass all texts with an ego talking about himself, a huge amount of literature must be taken into consideration. Not only the presentations of entire life-stories deserve

3 Ralf Elger, “Individualität und Kulturkritik in arabisch-muslimischen Ego-Dokumenten, 15.–18. Jahrhundert” *Periphus* 13 (2003), pp. 30–50.

4 Stefan Reichmuth, and Florian Schwarz, *Horizonte des Individuellen in der arabischen Schriftkultur des 17. und 18. Jahrhunderts*, Beirut, 2008.

5 See Winfried Schulze (ed.), *Ego-Dokumente: Annäherung an den Menschen in der Geschichte*, Berlin, 1996.

6 E.g. Thomas Philipp, “The autobiography in modern Arab literature and culture” *Poetics today* 14 (1993), pp. 573–604.

7 Dwight F. Reynolds (ed.), *Interpreting the self: Autobiography in the Arabic literary tradition*, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, 2001; idem (ed.), *Edebiyât: The Journal of Middle Eastern Literatures*, special issue, *Arabic autobiography* ns 7 (1997). See especially the article of Kirsten Brustad, “Imposing order: Reading the conventions of representation in al-Suyûfi’s autobiography”, pp. 327–344.

8 Saleh Mued Al-Ghamdi, “Autobiography in classical Arabic literature: An ignored literary genre”, unpubl. Ph.D. diss., Indiana University, Bloomington, 1989.

9 The broad spectrum of texts in the end will need some classification, and the question of whether a genre of autobiography should be postulated will come up again. But that was not the problem of the conference and it is not one of this volume.

10 See e.g. Cemal Kafadar, “Self and others: The diary of a dervish in seventeenth-century Istanbul and first-person narratives in Ottoman literature” *Studia Islamica* 69 (1989), pp. 121–150.

attention, but also travelogues, autobiographical *maqāmāt* (little anecdotes in a highly refined style), author-references in all kinds of works,¹¹ and even the most tiny notices on the margins of manuscripts (see Jan Schmidt’s article in this volume). The latter two would hardly fall into the category of “first-person narrative”, since they include no narrative—an argument for the wider use of the term “ego-document” in English as well. Even texts without an ego speaking can be interpreted as ego-documents, since everything we write reveals something about ourselves (see Patrick Franke’s article).

Coming back to ego-documents with an ego speaking, though, many aspects are interesting. Technical literary details may receive attention, including the question of plagiarism (see Ralf Elger’s article). Thematically focused ego-documents constitute a highly interesting field of research, particularly dream-narratives¹² (see Aslı Niyazioğlu’s article) and conversion reports.¹³

Egos talking about their family life and close social milieu are more numerous in Ottoman literature than many researchers used to believe. Some have their source in *sufi* circles,¹⁴ others come from the scholarly community¹⁵ (see Michael Nizri about Feyzullah Efendi). Travelogues, often read as geographical sources, can also be regarded as ego-documents.¹⁶ They may describe life-passages, *rites de passage*,¹⁷ serve the interests of courtly figures,¹⁸ or the career promotion of functionaries (see the articles of Hatice Aynur and

11 Gottfried Hagen, *Ein osmanischer Geograph bei der Arbeit: Entstehung und Gedankenwelt von Katib Celebis Gihannüma*, Berlin, 2003.

12 Cornell H. Fleischer, “Secretaries’ Dreams: Augury and Angst in Ottoman Scribal Service” in Ingeborg Baldauf, and Suraiya Faroqhi, with Rudolf Veselý (eds.), *Armağan: Festschrift für Andreas Tietze*, Prague, 1994, pp. 77–88; Cemal Kafadar, “Müteredditt bir mutasavvıf: Üsküp’lü Asiye Hatun’un rüya defteri 1641–43” *Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi: Yıllık* 5 (1992), pp. 168–222.

13 Tijana Krstić, “Illuminated by the Light of Islam and the Glory of the Ottoman Sultanate: Self-Narratives of Conversion to Islam in the Age of Confessionalization” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 51 (2009), pp. 35–63.

14 Kafadar, “Self and others”; Suraiya Faroqhi, *Kultur und Alltag im Osmanischen Reich: Vom Mittelalter bis zum Anfang des 20. Jahrhunderts*, Munich, 1995; eadem, *Ein Istanbuler Derwisch des 17. Jahrhunderts, seine Familie und seine Freunde: Das Tagebuch des Seyyid Hasan*, forthcoming.

15 Suraiya Faroqhi, “An Ulama Grandee and his Household (upon the occasion of a new book concerning the ‘Edirne Vak’ası)’” *Osmanlı Araştırmaları: The Journal of Ottoman Studies* 9 (1989), pp. 199–208.

16 Robert Dankoff, *An Ottoman Mentality: The World of Evliya Çelebi*, Leiden, 2004; Gottfried Hagen, *Das Fremde im Eigenen: Mehmed ‘Aşiq’s Reisen über den osmanischen Balkan*, forthcoming; Evliyâ Çelebi b Derviş Mehmed Zillî, *Evliyâ Çelebi Seyahatnâmesi*, vol. I, *Topkapı Sarayı Bağdat 304 Yazmasının Transkripsyonu – Dizini*, ed. Orhan Şaik Gökyay, Istanbul, 1995; Ralf Elger, “Selbstdarstellungen aus Syrien: Überlegungen zur Innovation in der arabischen autobiographischen Literatur im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert” in Renate Dürr, Gisela Engel, and Johannes Süßmann (eds.), *Eigene und fremde Frühe Neuzeiten: Genese und Geltung eines Epochenbegriffs*, Munich, 2003 (=Beiheft zur Historischen Zeitschrift, 35), pp. 123–137.

17 Karl Barbir, “The formation of an eighteenth century Sufi: Taha al-Kurdi (1723–1800)” in Abdeljelil Temimi (ed.), *La vie intellectuelle dans les provinces arabes à l’époque ottomane*, Zaghuan, 1990, vol. III, pp. 41–47; Ralf Elger, “Early life passages in first person narratives of 17th and 18th century Arab sufis” in François Georgeon and Klaus Kreiser (eds.), *Childhood and youth in the Muslim world/Enfance et jeunesse dans le monde musulman*, Paris, 2007, pp. 87–102.

18 Mīrzā Muḥammad Ḥaydar Dūghlāt, *The Tarikh-i-Rashidi: A History of the Moghuls of Central Asia. An English version edited, with commentary, notes and map by N. Elias. The translation by E. Denison Ross*, London, 1895.

Denise Klein). Ego-documents may legitimate rulers¹⁹ and praise poets.²⁰ Another, hitherto rarely considered genre, is the autobiographical *maqāma* (see Henning Sievert's article).

Apart from studies focused on specific texts, research on Oriental ego-documents has tackled some broader questions about literary history.²¹ One of these is whether or not the seemingly mushrooming production of Arabic travelogues in the Mashreq after the Ottoman conquest could be interpreted as a sign of an Early Modern era.²² This question, of course, requires further debate. Some argue that a real cultural change only occurred in later times, say in the nineteenth century, as may be attested in works like Mīrzā Šāleḥ Shīrāzī's report about his London journey from 1816 to 1819, a text sometimes regarded as the starting-point of 'modern' Persian travel-literature²³ (for another 'modern' Persian travelogue see Barbara Stöcker-Parnian's article). Certainly it was only in the twentieth century that definitely new genres came to light in the Orient, such as the autobiographical novel (see Carter Findley's article), and new role models were chosen by the protagonists, often putting them into conflict with their respective cultures (demonstrated by Dieter Kickingereder, Christoph Herzog, and Juliette Honvault). But then, traditional literary genres also stay alive, as is attested by continuing popularity of the *maqāma*-genre (see Stephan Guth's article). The question of tradition and innovation in ego-document writing needs much further research until we can construct a satisfactory literary history of ego-documents. The articles in this volume shall contribute to this highly interesting enterprise.

This book has four chapters in which a great variety of ego-documents in Arabic, Persian and Ottoman/Turkish will be discussed. The first chapter, entitled "The Remembering Ego", includes papers which examine diaries or memoirs. Michael Nizri presents the memoirs of *Şeyhülislam* Feyzullah Efendi (1638–1703). The Efendi's writings unfold his various strategies for establishing a strong family-oriented household. And, as Nizri argues, by doing so, he acted more like a vizier than like a *şeyhülislam*, and so clearly surpassed the scope of what was expected of a religious dignitary in the eighteenth century.

Somewhat exceptional in this chapter is Hatice Aynur's article about Aşık Çelebi's (1520–1572) "Dictionary of Poets" (*tezkiye*). Even if a *tezkiye* is strictly speaking not autobiographical in content, Aşık Çelebi offers the reader much personal information, via anecdotes and poetry. Two main topics of his discourse concern his paternal genealogy and the early arrival of his ancestors in the Ottoman realm. Aynur shows that Aşık Çelebi was eager to set himself apart from his peers by stressing the status of his family and his extraordinary

19 Stephen F. Dale, "The Poetry and Autobiography of the Babur-Nama" *The Journal of Asian Studies* 55 (1996), pp. 635–664; idem, "Steppe-Humanism: The Autobiographical Writings of Zahir al-din Muhammad Babur, 1483–1530" *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 22 (1990), pp. 37–58.

20 Mīr Muḥammad Taqī, *Żikr-i Mir: The autobiography of the eighteenth century Mughal poet Mir Muhammad Taqī "Mir" (1723–1810)*, transl., annotated and introd. by Choudhary M. Naim, New Delhi, 1999.

21 Ralf Elger, "Arabic travelogues from the Mashreq 1700–1834: A preliminary survey of the genre's development" in Christian Szyska, and Friederike Pannewick (eds.), *Crossing and passages in genre and culture*, Wiesbaden, 2003, pp. 27–40.

22 Elger, "Individualität."

23 Bert G. Fragner, *Persische Memoirenliteratur als Quelle zur neueren Geschichte Irans*, Wiesbaden, 1979, p. 13; Monica Ringer, "The quest for the secret of strength in Iranian nineteenth-century travel literature: Rethinking tradition in the safarnameh" in Nikki R. Keddie and Rudi Mathee (eds.), *Iran and the surrounding world*, Seattle, London, 2002, pp. 146–161, p. 150.

knowledge. Yet, he “also presented his subjects with compassion and did not hide his admiration for them”, as Aynur puts it.

Dieter Kickingereder provides an insight into the life of Celâl Esad Arseven (1875–1971) through the analysis of his two memoirs. Though the texts may not be reliable concerning specific dates and events, they clearly indicate that Arseven wanted himself to be seen as an artist. He therefore downplays relevant parts of his political career, like his connections to the Young Turks.

Juliette Honvault discusses the diary of the Syro-Lebanese Arab nationalist Amîr ‘Ādil Arslân written between 1934 and 1953. She reveals that Arslân used his diary entries to express different layers of identity, claiming both Arab and Ottoman origins. According to her, Arslân represents “a transitory figure, between the classical model and modern individuality”.

Christoph Herzog, in his article, analyses the memoirs of Muammer Tuksavul (1901–1996). This successful Turkish businessman constructs his memoirs as a success story of a “survivor”. Tuksavul was confronted with the death of his family members very early in his life. He uses his own survival and success as a sort of legitimization and authorization for his thoughts. Yet, according to Herzog, Tuksavul’s thoughts about Turkish history, politics, and religion are not driven by experience, but they are mere “intellectual rummage, rooted neither in the author’s life experience nor being truly the product of his own thought”.

The second chapter, entitled “The Travelling Ego”, offers three articles which use travelers’ accounts as “ego-documents”. Ralf Elger begins his survey of Ibn Baṭṭūṭa’s (1304–1377) famous account by arguing that Ibn Baṭṭūṭa was a great liar, since he most likely never had been to the places he describes so masterfully. Elger compares his work with other contemporary sources and reveals that the author cleverly plagiarized from these.

Denise Klein examines the genre of *sefâretnâme* of the eighteenth century as ego-documents by discussing three official reports from missions to Russia. According to Klein these reports, although they were meant to record diplomatic items, were not restricted to this purpose. Her interpretation indicates that the authors used these reports for very personal purposes. By analyzing the ego-document aspects of these works, Klein shows that the function of the genre of *sefâretnâme* goes beyond the mere diplomatic aspect.

The second chapter ends with Barbara Stöcker-Parnian’s discussion of Mehdîqolî Hedâyat’s (1864–1955) journey to Mecca by a rather indirect route via China, America and Europe. The report on this was published only 40 years after the journey, during which Mehdîqolî Hedâyat served in different high official positions. Stöcker-Parnian demonstrates that Mehdîqolî Hedâyat’s description of China is negatively biased, whereas he was somewhat uncritical in respect to the much more admired Japan. In his approach, Mehdîqolî Hedâyat reveals his vision of Iran as a modernizing country along Japans’ path in contrast to China.

The third chapter, “The Fictional Ego”, brings us to fictional works and their interpretation as ego-documents. Henning Sievert discovers in Abū ’l-Barakât Muḥammad al-Raḥbîr’s literary collection from the second half of the eighteenth century—“a quite stubbornly non-egocentric source”—traces of author’s personality and the way he perceived himself as a member of his family, who belonged to the literati and scholarly elite of Ottoman Iraq.

Carter Vaughn Findley compares two late Ottoman novels, the *Müşahadat* of Ahmed Midhat (1840–1912) and the *Muhazarat* of Fatma Aliye (1862–1936), the leading female

novelist of the late Ottoman period. He shows that both novelists were closely connected personally and also reveals a “competitive or reciprocal” relationship between both texts. Novels in late Ottoman society were, according to Findley, more than entertainment, but devices for “transforming existing society”. The authors were engaged in this kind of project, and thus added to their novels their own subjectivity, which allows Findley to use them as ego-documents.

Stephan Guth gives a detailed study of Fāris al-Shidyāq’s (1805–1887) work *al-Sāq ‘alā ‘l-sāq*, especially concentrating on his *maqāmāt* (“these symbols of the classical tradition”). According to Guth, the author focuses on the narrating subject rather than the ‘trickster’ character of the hero, who is at the center of attention in traditional *maqāmāt*. For Guth, al-Shidyāq’s particular use of the classical tradition “testifies to the formation of a new intellectual culture from within the autochthonous tradition”.

The last chapter of the volume, “The Hidden Ego”, includes articles about sources which at first sight would not be named “ego-documents”. Jan Schmidt’s discussion of Ottoman miscellanies, collective manuscripts, and notebooks (roughly from the seventeenth up to the nineteenth century) shows that Ottomans in the Pre-Reform Era were engaged with “ego-issues” in ways one would not expect. Ego-references are given, for instance, through mystical poetry or in stories rather than in the form of autobiographical annotations. According to Schmidt, literary conventions played a great role in this process and shaped the ways Ottomans revealed personal matters. An unemotional approach is a common feature of the entries.

Ash Niyazioğlu presents the most prominent sixteenth-century biographical work of the Halveti order: Yusuf Sinan’s (d. 1579) *Risale* (“Treatise”), wherein dreams play a significant role. Dreams were important for Ottoman authors, be it as a legitimization (i.e. the famous dream of Osman, the founder of the dynasty, or Evliya Çelebi’s dream which initiates his career as a traveler) or as means to present the reader with the author’s “biography” through his own (selected) social and professional network “with its emphasis on the career stories of his masters”.

Patrick Franke explores the strategies of self-representation of the Meccan author ‘Alī ibn Sulṭān Muḥammad al-Qārī (d. 1606). Since al-Qārī has not left any autobiographical text, Franke takes a closer look at the cross-references (more than 350) in the author’s oeuvre. They not only show relations between texts, but are revealing in terms of self-representation. According to Franke, al-Qārī used these references deliberately and systematically. By doing so, he first and foremost claims to be a renovator of his time (*mujaddid*).

In the final article of Chapter Four, Yavuz Köse discusses advertisements and letters to the editor from the late Ottoman period. Based on Winfried Schulze’s definition of ego-documents, he shows that (individual) appeals, meant to influence consumers, provide information about how the authors personally perceived the changing and worsening socio-economic situation before the First World War. Köse demonstrates that terms and slogans (with words like “Ottoman” and “nation” taking a prominent place) gradually shift from designating all Ottomans, irrespective of their ethnicity and/or religion, to a more exclusive denomination. Especially in Muslim publications, terms like “Ottoman” signify first Muslim, and then Turkish-Muslim members of the society. Each individual in these texts clearly expresses his/her affiliation to a group which shares a common duty: ensuring the survival of the Motherland through consuming local goods.