

B. ÖZÜKAN (Ed.), *Pîrî Reis The Book of Bahriye*, İstanbul, 2013, Boyut Yayınları, 276 pages, *Kıtab-ı Bahriye*, English texts TTT The Historical Research Foundation, İstanbul Research Center, 2013, 276 pages. E. Z. Ökte, & T. Duran. ISBN: 9789752310513

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In 2013 the year dedicated by UNESCO to the 500th anniversary of the Ottoman cartographer and naval officer Muhyî al-Dîn Pîrî Reis's completion of his world map in h.919 (1513), the publication in English of a version of a beautifully executed copy of Pîrî Reis *Kitâb-ı Bahriye*, today in the Istanbul University's rare book collection, No. T. 6605, has much to recommend it, not least in terms of making the detail of the superb quality of the cartography and *tezhip* of this *nakkaşhane* copy of Pîrî Reis's work available today in colour at a extremely low price to members of the general public in comparison to its original cost as a unique handmade illuminated manuscript and copies thereof, or its considerable cost today as a modern facsimile at about 800 TL. When looking at these charts drawn early in the 16th c, recording the coastline, ports, islets and islands of the Mediterranean and comparing them with modern maps or those from google.earth.com, it is evident that all the places are not drawn to the same scale, the relative scale of important features on these charts is drawn to a different larger scale from those areas of less importance for the mariner, as the work was specifically designed to be of service to a 16th c. mariner on a galley or sailing ship, while places inland except for those of an elevation to serve as navigational markers are usually not recorded.

It should however be noted that this book is not a facsimile, only details of important areas of the original maps, rather than copies of each map are included, while the then current 16th c. place names such as *Andaliyya*, today Antalya, *Ilkı Kara*, today's Kalkan, *Bozca Ada*, today Tenedos, have largely been dropped from the chapter headings, although for example, the chapter entitled "*The Harbor Called Caravola*" remains and describes Kekova in Antalya Province. A point made by the editor of this book Bülent Özukan in the publisher's notes, page 8, "*If Piri Reis could have prepared a new edition of the Kitâb-ı Bahriye that was replete with the correct names for harbors, coastlines and islands...*" suggests to the reader that the place-names employed by Pîrî Reis in the 16th c. on his maps and in his texts are somehow incorrect or wrong, rather than seeing these names as carrying important 16th c. toponymic evidence, and oddly, the editor adds, for an Ottoman text in English translation, "*In this work we have updated the text of the Bahriye to currently used Turkish.*"; which of course is not the case, as the text of this Boyut Bahriye is in English.

The compilation by Pîrî Reis of his monumental undertaking, the *Kitâb-ı Bahriye*, was completed in h.928 (1521) of 130 chapters, with a second longer presentation version made at the request of the Vizier to Sultan Süleyman, Ibrahim Pasha, of 210 chapters and containing an extensive informative poem and was completed by h. 932 (1526) and The Book of Bahriye

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T6605/Boyut 2013 was produced from a copy of the extended 1526 presentation version. Numerous copies of these two versions of the *Kitâb-ı Bahriye* of varying quality, accuracy in copying and of date, survive today in both Turkish and foreign libraries and collections and, whereas only one third of his 1513 world map, which survives today, rediscovered in terms of its importance in the Topkapı Palace in 1929, was a superb work of compilation, as was his second world map of h. 935 (1528-9) of which even less survives today, the *Kitâb-ı Bahriye* is complete and is far more personal, related in part from his own experience gained from sailing much of the Mediterranean and of visiting its shores.

The translation of the text into English that was employed in this publication was, it seems, largely the work of the unacknowledged Robert Bragner, employing his translation of the text of the second version of the *Kitâb-ı Bahriye* which was published in 1988 by TTT The Historical Research Foundation, İstanbul Research Center, in their four volume, trilingual publication, in transliterated Osmanlija, Turkish and English. Robert Bragner is a well-known translator of Turkish works into English such as: E. Z. Ökte, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu Mimarisini*, 2009; B. Tut's, *Çizgi ve Eller Osman Hamdi Bey'den Günümüze Türk Resminde Desen*, 2001; A. Bartur's, *Bir Usta Bir Dünya, Mimar Vedat Tek*, 1999 and, *1582 Surname-i Hümayun, An Imperial Celebration*, N. Atasoy, 1997, etc. The absence of the translator's name on his work reused in this 2013 publication could lead the reader to think the translation into English was the work of E. Z. Ökte and T. Duran who are credited with the "English texts".

The copy of the *Kitâb-ı Bahriye* published in facsimile by the TTT in 1988 was the Ayasofya copy donated to the Library by, "Sultan Ghazi Mahmut Khan, our great Sultan and August Emperor, Lord of the Two Continents and of the Two Seas, the Servant of Mecca and Medine, Sultan and Son of the Sultan", in 1730. This version published by Boyut in 2013 is from the İstanbul University's copy T.6605 of the *Kitâb-ı Bahriye*. This has resulted for example in the fact that the English translation of the Ayasofya copy of the dedication in Osmanlija ending with an Arabic prayer (a dedication which runs over folio 1/b and the upper part of f. 2/b), which has been taken and placed next to folio 1/b of the İstanbul Library copy, which, as with f. 1/b of the Ayasofya version (although the number of lines differs) carries only most, but not all of the actual dedication text in Osmanlija and Arabic prayer in the Ayasofya copy on the page. The final words of the dedicatory prayer found on f. 2/b of the Ayasofya copy are missing from f. 1/b of T.6605 which is illustrated in this Boyut 2013 publication on page 9 beside the English translation on the same page, but the English translation contains the full text of the whole dedication, including the last words of the prayer: "may He (the Almighty) bestow life and power to his sons (the sons of the Sultan) until the Earth is destroyed on Judgement Day. Amen.", words which are missing from the text of the folio illustrated beside it.

Further, rather than commissioning a new full translation of the entire text from Osmanlija into English, but instead reusing the 1988 translation, the main flaw in the 1988 translation has now been replicated 25 years later to a new generation of readers. The flaw is this, that although the body of the text has been translated, the Osmanlija legends written on the maps themselves have not been translated, denying important information to the reader of the translated text in either Turkish or English in the 1988 volumes, as likewise in this 2013 publication in English. The legends on the charts of the TSM copy Haz. 642 were translated in the publication, *Pîrî Reis Kîtab-ı Bahriye*, T.C. Başbakanlık Denizcilik Müsteşarlığı, Ed. B. Arı, transcription from Osmanlija into Turkish, A. Demir, English Translation, E. Özden, F. Özden, A. İlhan, Ankara, 2002, however, as is noted below, in different versions of the work different names appear on the charts and there is surely a need for a concordance of all the place names in the 42 (Pîrî Reis

Kıtab-ı Bahriye, T.C. Başbakanlık Denizcilik Müsteşarlığı, Ed. B. Arı, transcription from Osmaliya to Turkish, A. Demir, English Translation, E. Özden, F. Özden, A. İlhan, Ankara, 2002, introduction by N. Güz, un-numbered page) presently known versions of the text. The accurate translation of Ottoman legends recorded on maps, when copies of these maps are republished into modern Turkish, as also for example into English, is certainly worthwhile if very rare indeed.

It is self-evident from Pîrî Reis's work and words that the conveying of a large quantity of information and experience to the user of this series of charts/portulans was the primary reason for the making of the *Kitâb-ı Bahriye*:

"I have roamed the shores of the Mediterranean, Arabia, and Europe, and through the lands of Anatolia and the Maghreb. And I have written, my friend, all that needs to be written about each and everything:...Such knowledge cannot be known from maps; it must be explained. Such things cannot be measured with dividers, And that is why I have discoursed by writing at such length" (Piri Reis *The Book of Bahriye*, Ed. B. Özükan, 2013, 11).

"Now then there are a number of names on maps that if you will attend you will see what they are. The names of towns and citadels are in red while (the names of) uninhabited places are in black. You have learned the science of the map. There is but one more thing to say, and I will do so at once. There are a number of reefs: these are shown by black dots. Shallows that are entirely sandy are shown with red dots. Hidden reefs in the sea since ancient times have been shown by means of crosses. If one wishes to show tiny islets, points are marked equal to their number. Now if you can remember all this, I have told you all about the marking of maps" (Piri Reis *The Book of Bahriye*, Ed. B. Özükan, İstanbul, 2013, 15. Unmentioned in this text is the fact that the sources of both fresh and of brackish water, springs are also marked on the charts, together with some use of colour coding to indicate the type of coastline and to distinguish the taller peaks employed as navigational markers etc.)

"Every word of mine is something that seafaring men have related and that they have personally seen" (Piri Reis *The Book of Bahriye*, Ed. B. Özükan, 2013, 18).

And so, although the legends in Osmaliya written on the charts are often brief, many consisting of only a single word, such as *nişan*, meaning a marker employed for navigational purposes, also at times they convey important historical information. For example the ancient name of the islet immediately west of the peninsular immediately to the west of the Island of Caravola-Kekova, Kurenti (H. Hellenkemper, & F. Hild, *Tabula Imperii Byzantini*, Band 8, Lykien und Pamphylien, Teil I, Wien, 2004, 670) was recorded by Pîrî Reis as *Izle Korenti* (In T. M. P. Duggan, & Ç. A. Aygün, *Medieval port of Myra - Taşdibi-Stamirra, Arkeolojisinden Doğasına*), the Islet of Korenti, although the name Korenti does not appear in either the Osmaliya text, nor in the English translation of the text accompanying this map, the name of this islet is recorded in both the copy of the *Kıtab-ı Bahriye*, Ayasofya No. 21612 (Pîrî Reis *Kıtab-ı Bahriye*, The Historical Research Foundation, İstanbul Research Center, Ed. E. Z. Ökte, Transcription and Turkish text V. Cabuk, English text, R. Bragner, İstanbul, 1988, 4, 1644, 392a), and on TSM. Haz. 642 on the chart of Kekova, as *Izle Korenti* (Piri Reis, *Kıtab-ı Bahriye*, Y. Senemoğlu,

Tercüman 1001 eser, Ist. 1973, 288-9). However, on page 247 in this Boyut copy of the *Kitâb-ı Bahriye*, of İ.U. T6605, in this presentation copy, the same island is in fact named on the chart *Akizi Adası* (My thanks to M. Demir for reading these names), presumably due to the copyist's error, possibly adding an *alif*, thinking İzle was a name and then adding Adası afterwards, although it may be that this difference records a subsequent change in the name given to the island.

In terms of generating greater appreciation today for 16th c. Ottoman navigational awareness and maritime knowledge and of the considerable ability of Piri Reis to express himself through his use of language to convey directions and dangers, within a rich and colourful, if cut down, modern format amongst a wider section of the English reading public at an affordable price, this book, containing the text of Piri Reis's Bahriye is worth buying and reading. However, the cleaning of these images of the marks of time, removing the show-through on the page, etc. is somewhat disturbing, rather like presenting a great-grandmother to public gaze after a facelift and in the dress of a teenager. Not only does it seem vaguely improper, but the hours of concentrated effort spent by teams of computer *hokkabaz* in cleaning digital images made of these charts has somehow altered them and the book in a strange way, distinct from an original, a facsimile or a copy, producing an illusion. It is one thing to know intellectually that a work was written in the 16th century, quite another to realise that the silver has blackened, the gold has flaked, the paper has been creased and marked by the hands of centuries of past readers of the work, and, somehow, through the cleaning of these images, removing the evidence of the passage of the past into the present, time has been removed from them and they have been removed from time, no longer historical but something else, like stripping a historical façade of its past, or cleaning a Roman bronze of its patina acquired over the centuries to make it look new. Will people familiar with these new images, when they see an original think that it is in some way wrong, a fake, like people familiar with plastic flowers discovering a real one, is the real one a fake, a copy growing in the dirt of the earth, is the cleaner time resistant undying unchanging digital copy real, have they been living an illusion, and so, perhaps, in any similar venture it may be worthwhile to include a few copies of the unrestored images facing those restored, to give the reader an idea of their appearance in the present, just a taste of times past and a check to illusions.

There is also certainly space on many bookshelves for an update of the *Kitâb-ı Bahriye* in the 21st century written by a mariner intimate with sailing on the inner sea today, with the same and different hazards and markers, changed ports and places, perhaps in some way similar to the fashion in which T. Mackintosh-Smith has retraced and woven together a new yet old tapestry from the voluminous record of the journeyings of ibn Battuta in the 13th c., requiring engaging in somewhat more of an intellectual endeavour than just a panoramic photo-shoot, doubtless digitally re-mastered and yet another glossy publication.

One can surely hope that a definitive critical edition will be published of the *Kitâb-ı Bahriye*, with as accurate as possible translation (Such as for example the unfortunate typos missed by the copy editor of, Dr. Svat Soucek, Piri Reis and Turkish Mapmaking after Columbus, Boyut Yay. ve Tic. A.S., İstanbul, 2013, as for example on page 104, which should read, ...singled out for the solicitude of the Bountiful Lord-may God make his reign eternal..., but which instead reads, "...singled out for the solicitude of the Bountiful Ford-may God make his reign eternal..." as also, 'ageographical' rather than, a geographical, etc.) into Turkish and English of every single word on all the charts, with a concordance of the place-names in the various versions, recording all the variants in the text and on the charts, some of which may

have been deliberate updating, a task requiring a great deal of scholarly consultation and collaboration; and it should be noted that although the presentation copies are, being presentation copies, visually rather fine, as is the case with No. T.6605, they may contain rather more scribal errors, as with the changing of *Izle Korenti* into *Akizi Adasi*. If such a critical edition were produced, with commentary, concordance and indexes, scholars would once again have access to the information that Pîrî Reis collected and recorded in his updated work of 1526, as he writes, “*Every word of mine is something that seafaring men have related and that they have personally seen*” (Piri Reis The Book of Bahriye, Ed. B. Özükan, 2013, 18), hopefully with its publication either preceding or coinciding with the 500th year anniversary of the completion of the first version of the *Kitâb-ı Bahriye* in 2021.

