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Location: Osman Sin village, kaza
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Date: June 1974

Incili Çavuş as a Boy in the Court of Sultan Mahmut

Once when Sultan Mahmut was looking for an adviser, he went to Anatolia for that purpose, and there he found an eleven-year-old child. He took him to Üsküdar, in İstanbul. Wanting to test the intelligence of the boy, the veziers said to him, "My boy, this is the city of İstanbul. Look at it well."

When he looked out, he saw nothing but minarets, and so he asked, "What are those tall things?"

One of the veziers answered, "Those are the penises of İstanbul."

The boy said, "If your women are of similar build, it would be impossible to get back out of them."

When they heard this reply, the veziers were sure that they had found an adviser of great wisdom. They reported this to the padişah.

It so happened that the King of Bulgaria had requested an adviser from the sultan, and so after the boy had had three or five days' rest, he was sent to Bulgaria as an adviser there. As he traveled there, he was accompanied by a cavalry regiment. The question that the Bulgarians wanted to have answered was this: "Could a mare in Anatolia be impreg-
nated by a Bulgarian stallion if neither animal saw the other?" This question had been received in a telegram from Bulgaria.¹

¹ Reference to telegraph here is an obvious anachronism. Mahmut I reigned in the mid-eighteenth century and Mahmut II in the very early nineteenth century--both well before the invention of the telegraph.

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When the boy had reached a point about half an hour's ride the Bulgarian capital, he halted the cavalry regiment and informed it that he was assuming command. He ordered the troops to fire a thousand bullets at a dog that was passing through the village where they had stopped. In those days there were a thousand men in a regiment. They fired a thousand shots at the dog. People went from that village to the King of Bulgaria and complained: "Your majesty, a boy of eleven ordered a regiment to fire a thousand shots at a dog."

The king replied, "He will arrive here tomorrow, and at that time we shall meet and examine him. They [the Turkish visitors] arrived that evening, and they were shown their quarters. Town criers went about the city announcing, "A wise man has come from Turkey, and he will be examined at the airport tomorrow."²

The next day people assembled at the airport. The King of Bulgaria proposed that first they look into the matter of the dog. He said, boy, I have heard that you ordered your regiment to fire a thousand shots at a dog in a village through which you passed."

"Yes, sir," replied the boy.

"Why did you give such an order?"

"Sir, I noticed that dogs in Bulgaria were wandering about the rubbish heaps completely idle, while in Turkey dogs are busy killing foxes. Instead of walking about idly, let them go and strangle foxes in Anatolia."

The padişah said, "But, my boy, what is the fault of a dog in this? How could a dog here in Bulgaria have known about killing foxes

² Introducing an airport into this tale creates an even more extreme anachronism than does the presence of the telegraph.

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in Anatolia?"

The boy replied, "How could a horse in Bulgaria know about a mare in Anatolia?"

The King of Bulgaria said, "He is a perfect adviser! This is Incili Çavuş! Let him be known by that rank from now on. Give him his sergeant's epaulettes."

There was much jealousy among the Turks, even in those days. There were four veziers who became worried that after the emergence of Incili Çavuş there would no longer be an opportunity for them to be important in affairs of the state. These four veziers decided to play a trick on Incili Çavuş. They said, "Let us tell our wives to touch his rump and head. Also, let us kill the padişah's horse and then have it announced that he who killed that horse will be hanged."

They gave their wives orders as to what they were to do. When he [Incili Çavuş] was in the stable grooming his horse, one of the veziers' wives came to him and fondled his buttocks. Incili Çavuş caught this woman and laid her on the ground [as if to rape her], but the woman said, "you will kill the padişah's horse, you may do what you wish to me."

Incili Çavuş killed one of the padişah's horses. The wives of the three other veziers immediately went to the padişah to report this. Incili Çavuş was taken to court for trial. He was asked, "Why did you kill the horse?"

He answered, "Sir, this horse was in pain, and I could not bear to hear her suffering. That is why I killed it."

"But, son, there was the padişah's doctor with his drugs and his injections. Why should you kill the horse?" Again they said, "Tell the truth! Why did you kill the padişah's horse?"

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"Sir, the wife of one of the veziers came to me and handled my private parts. I reached for my belt and pulled her down. Then she said to me, 'If you will kill the padişah's horse, you may do whatever you wish to me.' I could not stand this, and so I killed the horse."

"Well, were you able to do anything?"

"Yes, sir."

"I should have done the same if I had been in your situation [said the judge]. You are acquitted."³

Acquitted

³ This is a lame and atypical ending for an Incili Çavuş story. There is usually a witticism or turn of phrase that earns the protagonist pardon for an offense.