

A Survey of Translation Activity in the Ottoman Empire*

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Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Tercüme Faaliyetlerinin Seyri

Öz ■ Batı dillerinden yapılan tercüme faaliyetlerinin son dönem Osmanlı düşünce tarihinin önemli bir parçası olduğunu göstermek amacıyla kaleme alınan makalede, başlangıcından 1882 yılına kadar olan tercüme faaliyetlerinin bir tarihçesi sunulmuştur. Sırasıyla, *Divân-ı Hümayûn*'da, donanmada, eyaletlerde, yabancı elçiliklerde ve 18. yüzyılda devlet himayesinde yapılan tercüme faaliyetleri hakkında bilgiler verilmiştir. Ardından 19. yüzyılda İstanbul'da tercüme faaliyetinde bulunan kurumlar ve buralarda yapılan tercüme sergilenmiş, sosyal cemiyetlerin ve süreli yayınların bu faaliyetlere katkılarına değinilmiştir. Son olarak da, 19. yüzyılda yapılan tercüme bir dökümü sunulmuştur.

Anahtar kelimeler: Osmanlı Tercüme Hareketleri, Tercüme, Mütercimler, Kültürel Değişim, Çeviri Bilim, Osmanlı Düşünce Tarihi

Translators have always played a crucial role in diplomatic and commercial relations of Muslim states. From the evidence of treaties with the states in Northern Africa, it appears that as early as the twelfth century translators were indispensable officials at sea-ports accessible to foreign trade across the Mediterranean, the Red Sea, and the Black Sea. During the times of the Abbasids, Ayyubids, Mamluks in Egypt and Saljukids in Anatolia,¹ the position and function of translators formed

* This article is a reviewed version of a chapter in my Ph.D. dissertation. A. Meral, *Western Ideas Percolating into Ottoman Minds: A Survey of Translation Activity and the Famous Case of Télémaque*, (Ph.D. diss., Leiden University, 2010).

** Dr., REVAK Publishing House, Istanbul.

1 C. E. Bosworth, "Tardjumân," *EI*², v.10 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2000): 236-238; J. H. Kramers, "Tardjumân," *EI*, 1st ed., v.8 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1987): 725-726; C. Orhonlu, "Tercüman," *İA*, 2nd ed., v.12/1 (Ankara: MEB, 1979): 175-181.

an important official post, and became increasingly important under the Ottoman Empire. Because of its large territories and vast commercial and diplomatic activities, the Ottoman State had close contacts with the European powers, and political and cultural exchanges became more frequent than in former centuries. The need for good and reliable translators expanded, and as many sea-port government offices had their own working translators, these men came to play an increasingly important role in the life of intellectual commerce.

Such interpreters were originally appointed by the local authority and attached to the administrative faculty of a ruler. Functioning as intermediaries for all commercial transactions, they levied special duties on merchandise and helped formulate, translate, and regulate the various treaties and agreements² that defined the commercial milieu. Here, where the transaction of languages and ideas developed in a multitude of social nexuses, demanding practical terms and inference for a commingling of foreign peoples, the specific activity of translation became discernibly inseparable from wider political history, within both international and domestic contexts. So much so, that by the late eighteenth century, the rich and expanding field of translation was one of the key channels through which Western ideas were promulgating across the Ottoman intellectual world, eventually to bear fruit in the penetrating social and political movements of the late nineteenth century. Translation activity was thus by no means confined to the history of literature, as is usually assumed; on the contrary, it is also of considerable interest to scholars dealing with the modernization of Ottoman culture.

In this article, we will attempt to document the history of translation activity in the Ottoman Empire chronologically up until 1882, in order to demonstrate that translation played an integral and vital part of the wider picture of late Ottoman intellectual history. The nineteenth century is characterized by an extensive growth of translation activity in a variety of fields. This development can only be understood against the background of the political, social and economic changes of the period, as well as the development of the printing press and journalism in Istanbul. But next to the crucial contributions of the state-sponsored institutions, important translation endeavors were also carried out by learned societies and individuals. Thus, we will also consider the bearing of several individual translations over that time period.

2 Kramers.

A. Early Translation Activities

1. Translation at the Imperial *Divân* (*Divân-ı Hümayûn*)

The translators working at the Imperial *Divân* were not only functionaries translating official documents, but indispensable figures in the undertaking of Ottoman diplomatic relations. They also contributed enormously to Ottoman culture by their translations from Western languages. It is not known when the translatorship was established as an official function. As early as the time of Orhan Gazi (1324-1362), there is no doubt that translators, whether or not they bore an official title, were needed by the Ottomans for diplomatic relations with the Byzantines. The Imperial decrees (*ahidnâmes*) written in Greek for Christian states also support the idea that translators may have existed in the Ottoman bureaucracy since the fourteenth century. However, it is still unknown how, through whom, and in which languages Ottoman officials carried out their diplomatic relations and correspondence with Byzantium and various Italian states during this time.

By the second half of the fifteenth century, presumably, Ottoman sultans were involved in negotiations with foreign envoys through non-Muslim translators who did not have any official title. In 1423, Sir Benedicto, the envoy of the Duchy of Milan, talked with Sultan Murad II (1421-44, 1446-51) through the agency of a Jewish translator who translated the discussions of the parties into Turkish and Italian. In 1430, a Serbian by the name of Curac corresponded in Slavic and Greek on behalf of the Ottoman State. Sultan Murad II's clerk, Mihail Pillis, who conducted the Arabic and Greek correspondence, was probably a translator as well.³

Sultan Mehmed II, the Conqueror (1444-46, 1451-81), was interested in science and philosophy and patronized many scholars. In the year 1445, the Italian humanist Ciriaco d'Ancona and other Italians visited the Palace and taught him Roman and Western history.⁴ After the conquest of Istanbul, Sultan Mehmed II had some Byzantine bureaucrats and men of letters translate Western works; and at the same time established a library in his palace. This library contained books in foreign languages which were acquired in consultation with Geôrgios Amirutzes (1400-ca.1469). Some Byzantine scientists, aristocrats and bureaucrats also wrote books and dedicated them to Mehmed II. He himself ordered various Greek books to be written and translated. Among these was a translation of one of Geôrgios

3 B. Aydın, "Divan-ı Hümayun tercümanları ve Osmanlı kültür ve diplomasisindeki yerleri," *Osmanlı Araştırmaları* 29 (2007): 41-86.

4 E. İhsanoğlu, "Ottoman science in the classical period and early contacts with European science and technology," in *Transfer of Modern Science & Technology to the Muslim World*, ed. by E. İhsanoğlu, (Istanbul: IRCICA, 1992): 1-48.

Gemistos Plethon's (ca.1360-1452) works into Arabic, ca.1462. Sixteen Greek manuscripts were written by Greek clerks (*kâtib*) in his Palace between 1460 and 1480, some of them for the sultan himself and others for the students of the Palace to teach them Greek.⁵ On the orders of Sultan Mehmed II, the *Almagest* by Ptolemy was translated into Arabic by a Greek scholar from Trabzon, Geörgios Amirutzes, together with his son.⁶ Critoboulos (1410-ca.1470), a historian from the island of Imbros (İmroz), is said to have conducted Mehmed II's correspondence. The sultan employed many other Byzantine bureaucrats and officials in the service of the State; one of them was the translator Dimitri Kyritzes. After Kyritzes, a certain Lütfi Bey, a convert to Islam, was appointed as a translator to the Palace. This appointment was a turning point, for after him translators were chosen from converts to Islam until the mid-seventeenth century. Lütfi Bey undertook diplomatic negotiations between Ottomans and Venetians in 1479. As an envoy to Venice, he brought a letter written in Greek in Istanbul on 29 January 1479 to the Doge Giovanni Mocenigo.⁷ The fifteenth century maps drawn by Muslim cartographers were among the first examples of maps of Western origin. According to Evliya Çelebi's account, Ottoman cartographers knew several languages, Latin in particular, and benefited from Western geographical works such as *Atlas Minor*.⁸ After the reign of Sultan Mehmed II, all translations from Western languages in the sixteenth century were done by *Dîvân* translators.⁹

From the sixteenth century onwards translators became part of the Imperial court (*Dîvân-ı Hümayûn*). They were part of the staff of the Chief Secretary (*Reisül-küttâb*), who was under the authority of the grand vizier, responsible for the conduct of relations with foreign states with the assistance of the chief transla-

5 Aydın. Some of the books written by Greek clerks were: Critobulus' *Historiae*, Arrian's *Anabasis*, Homer's *Iliad* and *Testament of Solomon*, Boundelmonti's travel book in Greek translation and Diegesi's tenth century manuscript about the construction of St. Sophia (*Ayasofya*) of which there are many translations both in Persian and Turkish languages. For the library of Sultan Mehmed II, see, Julian Raby, "East-West in Mehmed the Conqueror's Library," *Bulletin du Bibliophile* 3 (Paris, 1987): 299-304. About the Byzantine intellectuals at the court, see, P. Bádenas, "The Byzantine intellectual elite at the court of Mehmet II: Adaptation and identity," in *International Congress on Learning and Education in the Ottoman World (Istanbul, 12-15 April 1999) Proceedings*, ed. by A. Çaksu, (Istanbul: IRCICA, 2001): 23-33.

6 İhsanoğlu, "Ottoman science."

7 Aydın.

8 İhsanoğlu, "Ottoman science."

9 Aydın.

tor of the Imperial *Divân* (*Divân-ı Hümâyûn baş tercümanı*).¹⁰ Aydın mentions that during the time of Beyazıd II (1481-1512), translators were given the title of *dragoman*; and he gives us the names of three translators of the period: Alaaddin, İskender and İbrahim. He also states that Ali Bey, who in some sources is pointed as the first translator of the Imperial *Divân*, was among the staff of the translators in 1512.¹¹ Ali Bey went to Venice in order to undertake negotiations on behalf of the Ottoman State and to convey the text of a treaty on two occasions, the first being in 1502-1503 during the time of Beyazıd II, and the second during the time of Sultan Selım II, Yavuz (1512-1520).¹²

By the time of Süleymân I, Kanûnî (1520-1566), instead of *dragoman*, the title of *tercüman* began to be used. Three names are mentioned by Aydın as the translators of this period: Yûnus Bey, Ali Çelebi and Huban(?). Yûnus Bey, a Greek convert to Islam, was one of the important figures of Ottoman diplomacy of the Kanûnî period because of his role in Ottoman-Venetian relations beyond that of translator. He also had close contacts with French ambassadors and diplomats. He worked as a translator about twenty years (until 1550) and knew Greek, Italian, Latin and Turkish, and traveled to Venice many times. There, in 1544, he published a twenty-two-page-long Italian treatise about the organization of the Ottoman State, entitled *Opera nova composta per ionusbei in lingue greca et traduita in italiana*. During that time there were other translators in the *Divân*, among them: Hacı Ca'fer, Hasan Bey b. Abdullah and Mehmed.¹³ In the sixteenth century, another translator of the Imperial *Divân* was a Viennese convert to Islam, Ahmed (Heinz Tulman)¹⁴ who was succeeded by a Polish convert to Islam, İbrahim Efendi (Joachim Strasz).¹⁵ In 1550, İbrahim Efendi was appointed as the chief translator of the Imperial *Divân*. Between 1562 and 1568 his name was often mentioned in connection with Ottoman relations with Venice,

10 Orhonlu.

11 Orhonlu also mentions a translator, Dimitrios Sofyanos, under the reign of Sultan Cem.

12 Aydın.

13 Aydın. About Yûnus Bey, see also, J. L. Bacque-Grammont, "A propos de Yûnus Beg, Baş Tercüman de Soliman le Magnifique," in *Istanbul et les langues orientales: actes du colloque organisé par l'IFÉA et l'INALCO à l'occasion du bicentenaire de l'École des langues orientales, Istanbul 29-31 mai 1995*, (Varia Turcica, 31), ed. by F. Hitzel, (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1997): 23-39; J. L. Warner, "Tribute to a translator," in *Cultural Horizons: A Festschrift in Honor of Talat S. Halman*, ed. by J. L. Warner, (Istanbul: Warner Syracuse University Press, 2001): 343-356. Orhonlu also mentions Ferhat and his son Mehmed as translators in the sixteenth century.

14 Bosworth.

15 Orhonlu.

Paris and Frankfurt. He knew Italian, German and Latin, though some ambassadors asserted that he was not actually fluent in these languages. Oram, Hürrem Bey and Mustafa, Hungarian and Latin translators of the *Divân*, also served as translators during this century. In 1572, Hasan b. Hamza and the clerk (*kâtib*) Ali b. Sinan translated a work from French into Turkish. It was entitled *Tevârih-i Pâdişâhân-ı Françe*, the history of French kings from Faramund to Charles IX.¹⁶

A Hungarian convert to Islam, Murad Bey (Balázs Somlyai) was born in 1509 in Nagybánya and captured in the battle of Mohács by the Ottomans. He was ransomed by Rüstem Pasha and introduced by him to Sultan Süleymân. The Sultan appointed him as the translator of Latin and Hungarian texts in around 1553. He spoke Arabic, Persian, Turkish, Latin, Hungarian and Croatian.¹⁷ Besides his service in diplomacy and translation, he wrote a treatise intended for Christian readers about Islamic doctrine and culture in 1556-57, named *Kitâb-ı Tesviyetü't-Teveccüh ile'l-Hakk*. Later on, he translated this treatise into Latin and wrote other theological treatises.¹⁸ He is known as the only Ottoman poet who wrote verses in Hungarian. A famous hymn by him was written in three languages -Latin, Hungarian and Turkish- dating the early 1580s.¹⁹ He translated Cicero's *De Senectute* under the title *Kitâb der Medh-i Pirî*. He did this translation upon the request of the ambassador of the Venice in Istanbul, Marino di Lavalli, in order to offer it to Sultan Süleymân in around 1559-1560.²⁰ He also translated some Turkish chronicles into Latin upon the demand of Phillippe von Haniwald. The most important among them was Neşrî's historical work.²¹

The chief translator (*baş tercümân*) Mahmûd (Sebold von Pibrach) was born in Vienna and he knew German and Latin. He is mentioned as early as 1541 to have been a diplomat in the service of the Ottomans. He led some diplomatic missions to Vienna, Transylvania, Poland, Italy and France over the years between 1541 and 1575, and died on one such a mission in Prague.²² He wrote a famous Hungarian

16 Aydın. For an edition and translation of this text in French, see, J. Bacque-Grammont (ed. and trans.), *La première histoire de France en turc Ottoman : chronique des padic-habs de France 1572*, (Varia Turcica, XXX), (Paris : L'Harmattan, 1997).

17 P. Ács, "Tarjumans Mahmud and Murad: Austrian and Hungarian Renegades as Sultan's Translators," in *Europa und die Türken in der Renaissance*, ed. by W. Kühnmann, B. Guthmüller, (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 2000): 307-316.

18 Aydın.

19 Ács.

20 Aydın.

21 Ács. Aydın.

22 Ács.

historical work, the *Târih-i Ungurus*, in the 1540s. Based on a Latin Hungarian chronicle, it covers the history of the Hungarian people from the beginning to the end of the battle of Mohács in 1526.²³ Mahmûd and Murad were two important figures among the translators of the Imperial *Dîvân*, as Ács rightly states: “Mahmud and Murad had unusual lives. They were participants in, and active protagonists of, the great popular, linguistic and religious movements of the sixteenth century. Like men going between peoples, languages and religions, they had a particularly rich knowledge of those movements. Unfortunately, only fragments of that knowledge have been left to us.”²⁴

There was also the translator-ship of the Two Holy Cities (*Haremeyn-i Muhteremeyn tercümanlığı*), which was attached to the private secretariat (*kalem-i mahsûs*) and responsible for the Arabic-language correspondence with the Sharîf of Mecca.²⁵ In the sixteenth century, there were special Arabic, Latin and Hungarian translators, which indicates that there might have been translators for other languages. We know also of private translators for grand viziers. For example, the Grand Vizier Halil Pasha in the seventeenth century had a Jewish translator, Frenk Süleyman Ağa, who was also his doctor and concierge (*kapıcıbaşı*). He also had a Venetian translator called Paul Antonio Bon. The Grand Vizier Sinan Pasha also had a translator, a British convert to Islam.²⁶

Among the Jews who took refuge in the Ottoman Empire in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries were also physicians of Spanish, Portuguese and Italian origin. These immigrants brought with them new elements of European medicine and some of them operated in the service of the sultans. One of these physicians, Mûsâ bin Hâmûn (d.1554), wrote one of the early works on dentistry in Turkish. He wrote another work entitled *Risâla fî al-Adwiya wa Isti'mâlihâ* with the help of Islamic, European, Greek and Jewish sources. Shabân b. İshâk al-İsrâîlî (d. ca.1600), known as Ibn Jânî, translated from Spanish into Arabic a treatise on medical treatment using tobacco. From the seventeenth century onwards, however, Jewish physicians would be replaced by Greek physicians who were Ottoman subjects and had been educated in Italian universities.²⁷

23 Aydın. About the translation, see, G. Hazai, “Tarih-i Ungurus,” in *VI. Türk Tarih Kongresi (20-26 Ekim 1961)* (Ankara: TTK, 1967): 355-358.

24 Ács.

25 C. V. Findley, *Bureaucratic Reform in the Ottoman Empire: The Sublime Porte, 1789-1922* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1980), 313.

26 Aydın.

27 İhsanoğlu, “Ottoman science;” R. Şeşen, “Belgrad Divanı Tercümanı Osman b. Abdülmennan ve tercüme faaliyetindeki yeri,” *Tarih Enstitüsü Dergisi* 15 (1997): 305-320.

Another Hungarian convert to Islam was the translator Zülfikâr. He served as a translator for about fifty years up until the appointment of the Greek Panayiotakis Nikousisin 1657.²⁸ Early translators of the Imperial *Dîvân* were non-Muslims, but by the beginning of the sixteenth century mostly European converts to Islam were employed until at least as late as the mid-seventeenth century. As for Turks, we know only about Osman Ağa from Temeşvar in Ottoman Hungary in the seventeenth century.²⁹ Referred to as *dragoman* or *tercüman*, the renegade translators of the sultans enjoyed a high esteem in the court and played important roles in Ottoman diplomacy far beyond the function of translator. They were regarded as foreign officers of the highest rank and as key members of the Ottoman intelligence service.³⁰

There were two remarkable translations during the seventeenth century. The first of these was *Sajanjal al-Aflâk fî Ghâyât al-İdrâk* (The Mirror of the Heavens and the Purpose of Perception). This was a translation of Noel Durret's work into Arabic by Tezkireci Köse İbrâhîm Efendi between the years 1660 and 1664. It is said to be the first book to have treated the Copernican system in Ottoman scientific literature.³¹ The second translation was Abû Bakr b. Behrâm b. 'Abd Allâh al-Hanafî al-Dimashqî's *Nusrat al-Islâm wa al-Surûr fî Tahrîr Atlas Mayor* (The Victory of Islam and the Joy of Editing Atlas Major), based on Janszoon Blaeu's *Atlas Major seu Cosmographia Blaeuiana Qua Salum, Coelum Accuratissime Describuntur*. Blaeu's *Atlas Major* was presented to Sultan Mehmed IV (1648-1687) by Justinus Colyer, the Dutch ambassador in Istanbul in 1668. Al-Dimashqî began his work in 1675 and completed the translation in 1685. These translations introduced the systems of Ptolemy, Copernicus, Tycho Brahe and Andreas Argoli to the Ottoman scientific world.³²

See, also, N. Sarı and M. B. Zülfikar, "The Paracelsian influence on Ottoman medicine in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries;" G. Russell, "'The Owl and Pussy Cat' The process of cultural transmission in anatomical illustration," in *Transfer of Modern Science*, 157-179; 180-212.

28 Aydın.

29 Bosworth. Osman Ağa was appointed translator at the Austrian Embassy in Istanbul. See, R. F. Kreutel's translation of Osman Ağa's autobiography, *Leben und Abenteuer des Dolmetschers Osman Aga : eine türkische Autobiographie aus der Zeit der grossen Kriege gegen Österreich* (Bonn: Selbstverlag des Orientalischen Seminars der Universität Bonn, 1954).

30 Ács.

31 E. İhsanoğlu, "Introduction of Western science to the Ottoman world: A case study of modern astronomy (1660-1860)," in *Transfer of Modern Science*, 67-120.

32 Ibid.

By the middle of the seventeenth century the post of translator was held, on an almost hereditary basis, by members of Orthodox Greek families³³ from the Phanar (*Fener*) quarter of Istanbul up until the Greek revolt in 1821.³⁴ The Greek families settled in Phanar, where the patriarch had his seat after the conquest of Istanbul in 1453, were known collectively as the Phanariots (*Fenerliler*). Many of them were educated in Italy and, thanks to their education, language skills and links with Europe, they were employed by the Porte in various high positions, particularly in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. They served as physicians to Ottoman dignitaries; contractors for the supply of furs and meat to the Palace; “agents at the Porte” (*kapı kethüdası*); translators for the Arsenal, the Imperial Fleet and the Imperial *Dîvân*; and as hospodars (*voyvoda*) of Moldavia (*Boğdan*) and Wallachia (*Eflak*) for over a century. The *Dîvân* translators, after having occupied the office of translator, were appointed as princes of one of the Danube principalities (*Eflak-Boğdan*).³⁵

Panayiotakis Nikousis, a Greek doctor, had been educated by the Jesuit fathers in Chios, then studied philosophy under Meletios Sirigos at Istanbul, and from there went on to the medical school at Padua, Italy. On his return, in about 1660, he was employed by the Grand Vizier, Köprülüzâde Ahmed Pasha (1685-1676), as his family doctor. Later on, the Vizier employed him in drafting foreign dispatches, and in interviewing foreign envoys. In 1669 he was appointed as the chief translator of the Imperial *Dîvân*.³⁶ Panayiotakis was the first Greek to be employed in the foreign affairs of the Ottoman State.³⁷ He and the second translator (*tercümân-ı sâni*) Ali Ufkî Bey did translations from Greek and Latin for Hezârfeñ Hüseyin Efendi’s world history called *Tenkîh-i Tevârih-i Mülûk*. Ali Ufkî Bey had been captured in the 1645 Ottoman-Venetian war and brought to Istanbul, where he was enrolled

33 Among these families were Argyropulos, Cantacuzinos, Caradjas, Ypsilantis, Mavrocordatos, Mourouzis, Callimachis, Ghikas, Soutzos, Mavroyenis, Manos, Negris and Rosettis. About the Phanariots, see, for example, A. A. Pallis, *Greek Miscellany: A Collection of Essays on Mediaeval and Modern Greece* (Athens, 1964): 102-124.

34 Bosworth; Kramers; Orhonlu.

35 J. H. Mordtmann, “Fener,” *EI*, v.2 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1965): 879-880. Findley, *Bureaucratic Reform*, 91-93; İ. H. Uzunçarşılı, “Onsekizinci asırda Boğdan’ı voyvoda tâyini,” *Tarih Semineri Dergisi* I (1937): 32-37. S. R. Sonyel, *Minorities and the Destruction of the Ottoman Empire* (Ankara: Turkish Historical Society Printing House, 1993), 81.

36 Sonyel, 78.

37 Aydın. See, also, G. Veinstein, “Osmanlı yönetimi ve tercümanlar sorunu,” in *Osmanlı: teşkilat*, ed. by G. Eren, v.6 (Ankara: Yeni Türkiye yayınları, 1999): 256-263.

in the school of the Palace (*Enderun*). He also assisted in the task of translating the Bible into Turkish undertaken by Yahyâ bin İshak, also called Hâkî.³⁸

On Panayiotakis' death in 1673, Köprülü appointed in his place a Greek physician called Iskerletzâde Alexander Mavrocordato (1636-1709). Born in 1642, he was a very intelligent and highly educated man of Phanariot aristocracy and so excellent a doctor that he had the Sultan and many foreign ambassadors as his patients.³⁹ He held the post for twenty-five years, with a brief interruption in 1684. Four years later he became private secretary to the Sultan, with the title of "Prince and Illustrious Highness." He headed the Ottoman delegation to the Peace Conference of Carlowitz and took an active part in the affairs of the Orthodox Church. He died in 1709.⁴⁰

The aristocratic and rich Phanar-based families were sending their children to Italy for education. With these students a modernization movement started among Phanariots. Alexander Mavrocordato, one of the pioneers of this movement, studied philosophy and medicine in Rome and Bologna. His son Nicholas (1680-1730) was also named to the post of translator in 1698 and was appointed as voyvoda of Wallachia and Moldavia between 1709 and 1730. The appointment of Phanariot Greeks as governors or princes to the Danubian principalities shows that *Divân* translators had higher status in comparison with the translators of European embassies in Istanbul.⁴¹ Besides their knowledge of Turkish and Arabic, owing to their education in Europe, they knew many languages and became indispensable elements in Ottoman diplomacy, serving as translators of the Imperial *Divân* for one hundred and fifty-two years. They were not ordinary state officials, but rather enjoyed special authority and privileges, for as advisors to the grand vizier and chief secretary, their talent and discernment provided a certain enhancement to

38 Aydın. About the Bible translation, see, H. Neudecker, *The Turkish Bible Translation by Yahya bin 'Ishak, also called Haki (1659)*, Leiden: Het Oosters Instituut, 1994). See, also, J. Schmidt, "Between author and library shelf: the intriguing history of some Middle Eastern manuscripts acquired by public collections in the Netherlands prior to 1800," in *The Republic of Letters and the Levant* ed. by A. Hamilton, M. H. van den Boogert, and B. Westerweel, (Leiden: Brill, 2005): 27-51.

39 Sonyel, 80.

40 Sonyel, 81. Early in the nineteenth century some Phanariot families were allowed to use the title of "Prince." Sonyel, 161. See, also, Mordtmann; Findley, *Bureaucratic Reform*, 91-93.

41 Aydın. For the well-known families and Phanariots who worked as translators in embassies, see, A. H. de Groot, "The Dragomans of the embassies in Istanbul, 1785-1834" in *Eastward Bound: Dutch Ventures and Adventures in the Middle East*, ed. by G. J. van Gelder and E. de Moor, (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1994): 130-158.

imperial power. With the establishment of permanent embassies in Europe, the Phanariots served abroad as well, and had many privileges not ordinarily given to other non-Muslim subjects of the Empire. By the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century almost all the foreign affairs posts of the Ottoman state, from the *Divân* and embassy translator-ships to the hospodar-ship of the Danubian principalities, were held by Greeks.⁴²

Translators of such status were allowed to grow a beard, to have four servants, to wear fur and to ride a horse, in addition to being exempted paying *cizye* (head tax collected from non-Muslims). In the entourage of the chief translator of the *Divân* there were eight "language-boys" (*dil-oğlanı*) and twelve servants as of 1764.⁴³ The chief translator would act as interpreter during the grand vizier's or the sultan's conversations with foreign envoys; he would translate incoming letters to the Sublime Porte and vice versa; he would hold conversations with the foreign embassies and inform the grand vizier about these conversations with a memorandum (*takrîr*); and he would receive foreign envoys and present their demands or reasons for their visit to the grand vizier.⁴⁴ They translated every kind of document sent to the Imperial Council and replied to them, except the Arabic and Turkish ones which were conveyed directly to the grand vizier.⁴⁵ They were the most important officials after the chief scribe in the conduct of foreign affairs. Although they enjoyed some privileges comparable to those of the ruling class, their being cognizant of even the innermost policies and secret affairs of the state eventually awakened doubts and anxieties, and made their position a dangerous one.⁴⁶ With the execution of Constantine Mourouzi in 16 April 1821, due to his involvement in Greek nationalist unrest, the era of the Phanariot Greek translators came to an end.⁴⁷

It was thus only under the reign of Mahmûd II (1808-1839) and in the face of the Greek revolt (as well as the conflict with Muhammad Ali Pasha of Egypt) that the government began to appoint Muslims to the translator-ship. The first of these was one of the instructors of the engineering School, Yahyâ Efendi (d. 1824), who was followed by İshak and Esrar Efendis.⁴⁸ However, the need for more statesmen

42 Aydın.

43 Orhonlu.

44 Sonyel, 79.

45 Orhonlu.

46 Orhonlu; Findley, *Bureaucratic Reform*, 77-78, 93.

47 Aydın.

48 Kramers; Orhonlu.

equipped with at least one Western language entailed the establishment of the Translation Office (*Bâb-ı Âlî Tercüme Odası*) in 1821, with which we will deal in the following pages. And although many Greek translators were executed for direct or indirect involvement in the Greek revolt, a number of them remained employed in the government service. For example, one of the first directors of the Translation Office, Yahyâ Efendi, was a convert to Islam from Greek Orthodoxy.⁴⁹

Phanariots contributed to the translation process in various other fields as well. One of these translators was Constantin Alexandre Ypsilanti (Kostantin İpsilanti, 1760-1816), who received a good education, studied a number of languages, particularly French, and also served as a hospodar in the Danubian principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia. He translated a French book, assumed to be the work of Bernard Forest de Bélidor, into Turkish under the title *Fenn-i Harb (Muhasara-i Kal'a)*. He offered it to Sultan Selîm III (1789-1807), who liked the work and appointed him to the translator-ship of the Imperial *Divân* in 19 August 1796. The translation was published in 1792. He also translated two other works in the field of military science, namely, Vauban's *Traité de l'attaque et de la défense des places* under the title *Fenn-i Muhâsara ve Muhâsara-i Kal'a vü Büldân*, published in 1794, and Vauban's *Traité des Mines* under the title *Fenn-i Lağım*, published in 1793, in Istanbul.⁵⁰

Furthermore, Iakôvos Argyropoulos, known as Yakovaki Efendi (1776-1850), translated a geographical work, *Précis de géographie*, written in French by Mahmud Raif Efendi. After having been presented to Sultan Selîm III, the work was printed in 1804 in Üsküdar under the title *el-İcâletü'l-Cuğrâfiyye*. Yakovaki Efendi also translated Jean Henri Castéra's *Histoire de Catherine II, Impératrice de Russie* into Turkish under the title *Katerine Târihi*, also known as *Târîh-i Rusya*. Circulated first in manuscript form as early as 1813, it was published twice in Bûlâq (in 1829 and 1831) and then reprinted in Istanbul in 1861.⁵¹ Ten years after the *Katerine Târihi*, George Rhasis (Yorgaki Razi) translated another historiographical work, *Anabasis Alexandrou* "History of Alexander the son of Philip" the work of Flavius

49 Sonyel, 188.

50 Aydın; J. Strauss, "La traduction Phanariote et l'art de la traduction," in *Istanbul et les langues orientales*, 373-401; and his "The millets and the Ottoman language: The contribution of Ottoman Greeks to Ottoman Letters (19th-20th centuries)," *Die Welt des Islams*, 35/2 (November, 1995): 189-249. K. Beydilli, *Türk Bilim ve Matbaacılık Tarihinde Mühendishâne, Mühendishâne Matbaası ve Kütüphanesi (1776-1826)* (Istanbul: Eren, 1995), 182-4, 311.

51 Aydın; Strauss, "La traduction Phanariote," and "The millets and the Ottoman language."

Arrianus, under the title *Târih-i İskender bin Filipos*. The first translation of an ancient Greek historian into Turkish, it was printed in 1838, in Bûlâq.⁵² Vasilâki Voukas (Vasilaki Efendi) translated a satirical philosophical dialogue by the Greek philosopher Lucian entitled *Dalkavuknâme*, presumably in the early 1850s. It was published in 1870 by the state press, *Matbaa-i Âmire*.⁵³

2. Translation in the Imperial Fleet

The foundation of the translator-ship of the Imperial Fleet predated that of the Imperial *Divân*, and its character was different from the latter. The translator-ship of the Imperial Fleet was given to Phanariot Greeks with a special Imperial diploma of privileges. It was the first important official post given to Christians in the Ottoman State. After their service in the Imperial Fleet, translators were often appointed to the post of chief translator, and then to the rank of hospodar of Moldavia and Wallachia. As secretaries to the Grand Admiral (*Kapudan Pasha*), the translators of the fleet controlled the tax collection in the Mediterranean islands, and by extension served as the governors of the islands. The most eminent occupant of this post was Nicholas Mavroyenis, who was appointed as the chief translator of the fleet by *Kapudan Pasha* Hasan Cezayirli (d. 1790). In 1786 he was appointed to the rank of Hospodar of Wallachia and two years later to that of Moldavia.⁵⁴ Since translators of the Imperial Fleet were occupied with the subjects of the Empire far away from the metropolis, they had more power than the translators of the Imperial *Divân*. After the *Tanzîmât*, however, the character of the function changed completely; by then the translators were only occupied with translation work. At this time, there were two translators at Grand Admiral's service, one of them employed for Arabic and the other for French.⁵⁵

3. Translation in the provinces

In Ottoman provinces such as Egypt, the Morea (Peloponnesos), Tripoli, Damascus, Crete, Cyprus or Jerusalem, most of the subjects did not know Turkish. They

52 About Rhasis' *Vocabulaire françois-turc* published in St. Petersburg in 1828, the French grammar in Ottoman Turkish, published in Istanbul in 1838, and Alexandre Handjéri's (Hançerî, Hançerli, 1760-1854) *Dictionnaire françois-arabe-persan et turc*, published in Moscow in 1840-1841, see, Strauss, "The millets and the Ottoman language."

53 Strauss, "La traduction Phanariote," and "The millets and the Ottoman language."

54 Pallis, 110-111.

55 Orhonlu; Sonyel, 79; Pallis, 110.

conducted their affairs with the Executive Board of the Province (*Eyâlet Divânı*) and the courts of law through translators. For this reason it became necessary to employ, both in the *Divân* and the courts, translators to help them to express their particular problems and perspectives. Translators in the provinces were attached to the staff of the provincial governors,⁵⁶ while the ones employed in the provincial *Divân* were called in the Ottoman official documents translators of the *Divân* (*Divân tercümanı*) or translators of the Palace (*Saray tercümanı*). Those employed in the courts were called translators of the court (*mahkeme tercümanları*).⁵⁷ In the provinces mostly inhabited by Arabs, translators of the *Divân* were called Arab translators (*Arab tercümanı*). *Divân* translators were, in each situation, intermediaries between the administration and the inhabitants of the provinces, and were very influential. They functioned as intermediaries between the people to the governor-general (*beylerbeyi*)⁵⁸ and later between them and the provincial administration. The collecting of tax was also among their responsibilities. In some provinces they became first assistants to the governor of the province. They were not only translators but also the most important civilian administrators of the provincial communities.⁵⁹

As for the court translators in the provinces, we have little information about their number, status or privileges. It is well known that the courts in Islamic states always employed translators for non-Muslims from the early years of Islam. Although the Ottoman state gave autonomy to its non-Muslim subjects in judicial and religious matters, this did not exclude them from the Islamic judiciary. According to Islamic jurisprudence, non-Muslims were free to bring disagreements between themselves to a Muslim judge (*kadı*); but, all cases or disagreements between Muslims and non-Muslims had to be resolved by the judge. The same applied to criminal and territorial cases. Moreover, sometimes non-Muslims were judged for criminal offences, or for threatening the public security, in a provincial *Divân* headed by the governor of the province (*vâli*) or the governor of the sanjak (*sancak beyi*). Translators were officially appointed to the courts, and judges had the initiative for their commission. They selected them and requested confirmation of their appointment from the central administration. Translators translated the statements of defendants/claimants to the court and the decisions of the court back to the defendants/claimants. Depending on the local languages, Arab, Greek,

56 Bosworth.

57 K. Çiçek, "Osmanlı adliye teşkilatında mahkeme tercümanları," *Toplumsal Tarih* 5/30 (Haziran 1996): 47-52.

58 Orhonlu.

59 Çiçek, "Osmanlı adliye teşkilatında mahkeme tercümanları."

Armenian, Hungarian, Serbian or sometimes Turkish translators were employed at these courts.⁶⁰

4. Translation in Foreign Embassies and Consulates

It is said that the Western embassies in Istanbul had dragomans in their service from the time that the first Capitulations were issued, that is, from the sixteenth century onwards.⁶¹ At first these were Turkish native speakers, but later they were replaced by local Christians. In some cases, as in the case of the envoys sent by Moldavia and Wallachia, a Muslim translator was appointed by the Imperial *Divân*. Translators and even some ambassadors were Greeks, though some were of Venetian origin, and lived in the Beyoğlu (Pera) quarter of Istanbul.⁶² In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, they were usually local Levantines who knew Italian, the *lingua franca* of the time throughout the Mediterranean.⁶³

After the treaty of 1774 (*Küçük Kaynarca*), European states started to open consulates in the Mediterranean islands.⁶⁴ At the top of the hierarchy stood the ambassador. He was followed by consuls and vice-consuls in the various ports (i.e., Aleppo, Smyrna, Salonika, Alexandria, Cyprus, and Tripoli), where foreign agents existed or foreign ships docked. In effect, consuls were acting as all-round representatives of foreign nations.⁶⁵ The embassies and consulates employed translators, janissaries, a sergeant and a scribe in their service.⁶⁶ The ambassador and consuls never went out unless accompanied by janissaries.⁶⁷ Translators were responsible for conducting negotiations, written or oral, with the Turkish ministers and officials. They had to be present at discussions held with Ottoman statesmen, and

60 Çiçek, "Osmanlı adliye teşkilatında mahkeme tercümanları," Orhonlu.

61 de Groot, "The Dragomans of the embassies in Istanbul."

62 Orhonlu. K. İnan, "Osmanlı döneminde yabancı elçilik ve konsolosluklarda görevli tercümanların statüleri," *Tarih ve Toplum* 26/154 (October 1996): 4-9; Hitzel, 17. For Armenian families, see, for example, K. Pamukciyan, "Camcioğlu Ermeni tercümanlar ailesi," *Tarih ve Toplum* 24/143 (October 1995): 23-27. He writes about some members of the Camcioğlu Armenian family who worked as translators in Swedish Embassy in Istanbul during the 18th century; Sonyel, 214.

63 Bosworth; C. Wood, *The History of Levant Company*, 2nd ed., (London: Frank Cass & Co Ltd., 1964), 225.

64 Orhonlu.

65 Wood, 217, 219-220.

66 Orhonlu.

67 Wood, 227.

had to conduct all kinds of correspondence.⁶⁸ It was translators who conveyed the messages between and sometimes acted as intelligence agents for the Porte, embassies or consulates, and other European representatives; thus they were international mediators.⁶⁹

The appointment of the translators was laid down in an Imperial diploma (*berat*) from the sultan. This diploma specified the privileges of translators. For this reason they were called certified translators (*beratlı tercümanlar*).⁷⁰ This diploma guaranteed them, in addition to the rights granted by the treaties or Capitulations, the protection of the nation they served in embassies or consulates.⁷¹ Embassies could not employ translators without the diploma. Ambassadors had to act as the guarantors of any translator employed by the embassy.⁷² In principle, the Ottoman state accepted that embassies and consulates in Istanbul and the provinces could determine the number of translators required.⁷³ In the event of employing more than one translator, one of them had to be appointed as the chief translator who, as an Ottoman subject, would communicate between the embassy and the Ottoman State. In big embassies, translators were ranked as the chief translator, and thereafter second, third and fourth translator. If a consulate wanted to employ a translator, they had, through their embassy, to propose a candidate in a petition to the Porte. Moreover, the fixing and payment of their salaries were at the embassy's discretion.⁷⁴ Besides Istanbul, translators were employed by the European powers in consulates elsewhere in Anatolia, the Mediterranean islands and the Arab provinces. The position of the translator in Istanbul was however the most prestigious.⁷⁵

Translators were not allowed to have another job or to move to another city, and they had to wear certain distinctive clothes.⁷⁶ In case of danger they were allowed to dress like Muslims to hide themselves and to keep a gun for self-defense; they could go wherever they wanted and were protected by the janissaries who

68 Sonyel, 80.

69 Wood, 225; Kramers.

70 K. Çiçek, "Osmanlı Devleti'nde yabancı konsolosluk tercümanları," *Tarih ve Toplum* 25/146 (February 1996): 17-23.

71 Kramers; Sonyel, 80.

72 İnan.

73 Orhonlu states that each consulate could employ two translators (having Imperial diploma) from the Ottoman subjects and each had two assistants.

74 Çiçek, "Osmanlı Devleti'nde yabancı konsolosluk tercümanları;" Orhonlu.

75 Orhonlu; Kramers.

76 İnan; Hitzel, 53-54.

stood guard in front of their house. Some privileges were also given to embassy translators in courts.⁷⁷ The functions of ambassadors and translators were parallel so that translators could act as deputies of ambassadors or consuls. The main duty of translators was to form the channel of communication between the representatives of the European powers and the Ottoman State. The number of privileges, which became more extensive by the end of the eighteenth century, was determined separately with each state.⁷⁸ Translators were also representing the consuls in procedures before Ottoman courts whenever the consul's fellow subjects were involved. They were also employed by Western trading companies both as translators and intermediaries and were expected to act as the eyes and ears of their employers⁷⁹

In 1551, to ensure secrecy and fidelity, the Republic of Venice started to send students to Istanbul for study in order to become translators. These students were called "*giovani della lingua*," which was the translation for the Turkish *dil oğlani* ("language boy") and which was, following the Venetians, translated into French as *enfants de langue* or *jeunes de langue*.⁸⁰ In 1669, France decided to open a school, called *École des enfants de langue* or *jeunes de langue*, to provide translators for French embassies and consulates and avoid the use of Ottoman subjects. At the beginning they sent out boys to the convents of the Capuchins at Istanbul and İzmir to be brought up in the Turkish language.⁸¹ After a while it was decided that these students would continue their education in a school connected to the College of Louis-le-Grand in Paris; later, in their twenties, they were sent to Istanbul. The most brilliant years of this school fell between 1721 and 1762, closing in 1873. But long before then a new institution had been set up: on 30 March 1795 the Directoire, then in power in France, decided to open a new school, *l'École des langues orientales vivantes* (today, *l'Institut National des Langues et Civilisations Orientales*), which was housed in the National Library in Paris.⁸² While some of the graduates of this school were working in consulates, others were employed by Napoleon Bonaparte during the French occupation of Egypt (1798-1801). Among them were Jean-Michel Venture de Paradis, Louis-Amédée Jaubert, Jean Joseph

77 Çiçek, "Osmanlı Devleti'nde yabancı konsolosluk tercümanları."

78 Ibid. Bosworth.

79 Kramers; Bosworth; A. H. de Groot, "Protection and nationality: The decline of the Dragomans," in *Istanbul et les langues orientales*, 235-255.

80 Hitzel, 19.

81 R. Mantran, "Preface," to *Enfants de langue et Drogmans*, 9-10; Wood, 226.

82 Mantran. See, also, R. H. Davison, "The French dragomanate in mid-nineteenth century Istanbul," in *Istanbul et les langues orientales*, 271-280.

Marcel, Jacques-Denis Delaporte, Belletête/Belleteste, Damien Bracevich, Panhusen, Jean-Baptiste Santi l'Homaca, Jean Renno.⁸³

In Istanbul, language students, studied Turkish, Arabic and Persian every day with a Turkish instructor, went out for picnics and sometimes organized performances.⁸⁴ When they completed their education, some of them started work as translators, but others did service in the French Embassy in Istanbul or for French consulates and subjects in ports in Syria and North Africa.⁸⁵ They translated treaties and other documents and assisted at negotiations. Their range of involvement in the affairs of French embassies, consulates or French subjects in Ottoman lands was very broad, particularly, in diplomatic negotiations and affairs relating to judicial matters and commercial deals.⁸⁶ As early as the sixteenth century, these translators started to compile dictionaries and grammar books, and started to translate literary and scientific texts.⁸⁷ Besides travelers, it was these language students who introduced the Ottoman world to France. By the end of the seventeenth century they opened a channel to the West, introduced Western ideas to their fellow Ottomans and laid the foundations of Turcology and Orientalism in the West.⁸⁸

Following the French example, at the end of the seventeenth century a few Greeks were sent to Gloucester College in Oxford to learn English at the Levant Company's expense. They were to be employed as translators on their return, but the experiment was not successful.⁸⁹ During the first three-quarters of the nineteenth century British diplomats and merchants continued to depend on Levantine translators, and it was only from 1877 that British translators were trained at home in London.⁹⁰

83 Tājir, *Harakat al-Tarjama bi-Misir Khilāla al-Qarn al-Tāsi'a 'Ashar* (Cairo: Dār al-Ma'ārif, 1945), 5-13; J. al-Shayyāl, *Tārikh al-Tarjama fi 'Abd al-Hamla al-Faransiyya* (Cairo: Dār al-Fikr al-'Arabī, 1950), 46-51.

84 For example, in 1815, at the palace of the Venice Embassy, students performed Rousseau's *Pygmalion* and also the musical parts of *Les précieuses ridicules* and *Le malade imaginaire*. Hitzel, 39, 41.

85 Hitzel, 42.

86 Hitzel, 12.

87 For their works, see, Hitzel, 95-123.

88 Mantran; Hitzel, 12. For the list of French Dragomans, see, "Liste alphabétique des drogmans de France à Istanbul du XVI^e siècle à 1914," in *Istanbul et les langues orientales*, 533-538.

89 Bosworth; Wood, 225-228.

90 Bosworth.

By the end of the eighteenth century there were two hundred eighteen embassy/consulate translators in the Ottoman territories. By 1854, foreign embassies and consulates could not employ more than four translators; however, some countries such as France, Britain and The Netherlands were exempted. By as late as the beginning of the twentieth century, the chief translators of the embassies in Istanbul were still conducting negotiations of all kinds with the Porte, especially negotiations regarding to the interpretations of the capitulations. When the Turkish government abolished the capitulations in 1914, it also refused to recognize translators as foreign diplomatic or consular functionaries.⁹¹

5. Eighteenth century translation attempts

During the reign of Sultan Ahmed III (1703-1730), the Grand Vizier Nevşehirli Damad İbrâhîm Pasha (d. 1730) established commissions for the translation of Arabic, Persian and Greek works into Turkish. Most of these translations were from Arabic and Persian historical works, and remained in manuscript format. There were however two exceptions. The first was the translation from Greek into Arabic done by the commission headed by Esad b. Ali b. Osman b. el-Yanyavî (d.1730), grandfather of Ahmet Vefik Pasha (who was later well known for his Molière adaptations). Esad Efendi translated the *Isagoge* (İsaguci) by Porphyrius and the first four books of Aristotle's *Organon* and his *Physica*. He was perhaps the first Muslim scholar to mention in his works the telescope and microscope. The second translation was of a history of Austria from 800 to 1662. The work was translated from the German by the aforementioned Osman Ağa of Temeşvar under the title *Nemçe Târihi*.⁹²

İbrâhîm Müteferrika (d. 1745), founder of the first Turkish printing press, wrote a supplement to Kâtib Çelebi's geographical work *Cihannümâ* when he printed this work in 1732. His supplement contains a detailed explanation of the latest discoveries in the field of astronomy. After a year, Müteferrika translated Andreas Cellarius' *Atlas Coelestis* on the orders of Sultan Ahmed III. Halîfezâde İsmâil Efendi, also known as Çınârî İsmail Efendi, translated the astronomical tables

91 Kramers.

92 M. Kaya, "Some findings on translations made in the 18th century from Greek and Es'ad Efendi's translation of the *Physica*," in *Transfer of Modern Science*, 385-391; S. Aydüz, "Lâle devri'nde yapılan ilmî faaliyetler," *Dîvân İlmi Araştırmalar* 2/3 (1997/1): 143-170; M. İpşirli, "Lale devrinde teşkil edilen tercüme heyetine dair bazı gözlemler," in *Osmanlı İlmi ve Meslekî Cemiyetleri, 1. Millî Türk Bilim Tarihi Sempozyumu 3-5 Nisan 1987*, ed. by E. İhsanoğlu, (İstanbul: Edebiyat Fakültesi Basımevi, 1987): 33-42.

of Alexis-Claude Clairaut in his *Rasad-ı Kamer* or *Tercüme-i Zic-i Kılar*. Later he translated Jacques Cassini's astronomical tables into Turkish in 1772 under the title *Tuhfe-i Behic-i Rasinî Tercüme-i Zic-i Kasini*. Through these astronomical tables, logarithms were introduced to Ottoman scientists. Sultan Selim III then ordered calendars to be organized according to Cassini's astronomical tables, while at the same time Uluğ Bey's tables began to fall into disuse. However, these translators were mostly concerned with astronomical tables necessary for timekeeping. They were interested neither in the theoretical works of the new astronomy nor in the mathematical and theoretical justifications of the Copernican theory.⁹³

Gelenbevi İsmail Efendi played a transitional role between the old and modern mathematics. It was with Tamanlı Hüseyin Rıfki Efendi (d. 1816) that the teaching of modern mathematics started. Born in Tâman in the Crimea, he worked in the *Mühendishâne* (School of engineering) as the chief-instructor (*baş-hoca*) for twenty years. He knew English, and by either translations or quotations from English sources, he wrote *Usûl-i Hendese* (Principles of Geometry), *Müsellesât-ı Müsteviyye* (Trigonometry), *Mecmû'atü'l-Mühendisîn* (Corpus of Engineers), *İmtihânü'l-Mühendisîn* (Engineers' Exam), *Usûl-i İstihkâmât* (Principles of Fortification) and *Telhisü'l-Eşkâl* (Summary of the Figures). Some twenty years later his works were reprinted in Egypt.⁹⁴

Osman b. Abdülmennân, an Austrian or Hungarian convert to Islam, was one of the first instructors of the *Mühendishâne*. He served as a translator in the second half of the eighteenth century in the Belgrade *Divân* interpreting for Ottomans and Austrians and also served as a second translator during the governorship of Köprülü Hâfız Ahmed Pasha between 1749 and 1751 in the same *Divân*. In 1751, with the encouragement of Hâfız Ahmed Pasha, Abdülmennân translated Bernhard Varenius' (1600-1676) *Geographia generalis in qua affectiones generales telluris explicantur* into Turkish under the title *Tercümetü Coğrafya-i Varenius*. His second translation was a Latin gloss of the Italian Pierre André Matthioli's (1500-1577) to Dioscorides' botanical book, *Materia medica*. He translated it in 1770 under the title *Tercümetü Kitâb el-Nebât li-Matthioli*. It was the first Western botanical work translated into Turkish.⁹⁵ During the Ottoman-Russian war (1770-1774), Osman

93 İhsanoğlu, "Introduction of Western science."

94 H. Z. Ülken, *İslâm Medeniyetinde Tercümelere ve Tesirler* (Istanbul: Vakıf Yayınları, 1948), 359; *Türkiyede Çağdaş Düşünce Tarihi* (Istanbul: Ülken Yayınları, 1999), 27; E. İhsanoğlu, *Mısır'da Türkler ve Kültürel Mirasları. Mehmed Ali Paşa'dan Günümüze Başlı Türk Kültürü Bibliyografyası ve Bir Değerlendirme* (Istanbul: IRCICA, 2006), 104.

95 Dioscorides' *Materia medica* had been translated two times into Arabic at the beginning of the time of Abbasids by two Umayyads from Andalusia, namely, Abd al-Rahmân (912-961) and his son al-Hakam (961-977).

b. Abdülmennân wrote a book on geometry and war based on translations from French and German works. Called *Hediyyetül-Mühtedî*, it was written in Arabic. He made a fair copy of it in 1779. This work was not composed for scientific purposes, but for practical military needs. *Hediyyetül-Mühtedî* includes more theoretical information and diagrams/figures than the works written before it in the field of geometry. He produced another translation, *İlm ü Ma'rifeti Taktîr*, from the work of another Austrian doctor, Berkhardos. Later on, with additions and some changes in form, another version of the translation was composed, entitled *Zamâimü Kitâb-ı Ma'rifeti Takdîr*.⁹⁶

B. Nineteenth Century: Translation in the Service of Reforms

1. Translation in the newly established schools

From the eighteenth century onwards, the primary aim of the Ottoman state was to create a new army. Many European experts and technicians were brought and employed to reform the army and to train personnel, and the first modern schools for military training and medicine were established.⁹⁷ These new schools would not only serve the army directly, but provide qualified personnel for the civil services. The lack of textbooks⁹⁸ in Ottoman Turkish made translations and translators necessary. They worked as translators for foreign experts in these schools or in the army. For example, the experts responsible for the training of *Nizâm-ı Cedîd* soldiers in the barracks of Levent Çiftliği had a translator called “Levent tercümanı” or “Levent Çiftliği tercümanı.” At the beginning most of these

96 Şeşen.

97 E. İhsanoğlu, “Ottoman educational and scholarly-scientific institutions,” in *History of The Ottoman State, Society & Civilisation*, ed. by E. İhsanoğlu, v.II (Istanbul: IRCICA, 2002): 361-515; M. Kaçar, “Osmanlı İmparatorluğu’nda askeri eğitimde modernleşme çalışmaları ve mühendishanelerin kuruluşu (1808’e kadar),” in *Osmanlı Bilimi Araştırmaları II*, ed. by F. Günergün, (Istanbul: 1998): 69-137; M. E. Yolalıcı, “Education in the late Ottoman Empire in the 19th century,” in *The Great Ottoman, Turkish Civilization*, ed. by K. Çiçek, v.II (Ankara, 2000): 657-667; M. Ergün, “Batılılaşma dönemi Osmanlı eğitim sisteminin gelişimine mukayeseli bir bakış,” in *Osmanlı Dünyasında Bilim ve Eğitim Milletlerarası Kongresi Tebliğleri, İstanbul, 12-15 Nisan 1999*, ed. by H. Y. Nuhoğlu, (Istanbul: IRCICA, 2001): 89-102; O. Kafadar, *Türk Eğitim Düşüncesinde Batılılaşma* (Ankara: Vadi Yayınları, 1997).

98 About the first textbooks, see, E. Özbilgen, “Batı Bilimini Türkiye’ye aktaran ilk ders kitapları 1-4,” *Müteferrika* 2, 4-6 (Bahar 1994, Kış 1994, Bahar 1995, Yaz 1995): 179-185, 127-135, 191-197, 113-116.

translators were appointed from among the Greek population.⁹⁹ Among them was Caradja Manolaki, who was employed for teaching French to the students of the *Mühendishâne* and who translated a number of books.¹⁰⁰

2. The Translation Office of the Sublime Porte (*Bâb-ı Âlî Tercüme Odası*): 1821

As seen above, translator-ships were entrusted to non-Muslims, later to Italian, Greek, German, Hungarian and Polish converts to Islam, and afterwards to the members of Phanariot Orthodox Greek families who knew a European language and who were familiar with European culture. These translators not only translated official documents, but also produced or translated works in the fields of medicine, history, geography, military and language. However, the Greek revolt of 1821 caused the replacement of the Greek translators of the Imperial *Divân* by Muslims, for which reason the Translation Office of the Sublime Porte (*Bâb-ı Âlî Tercüme Odası*) was established on 23 April 1821.¹⁰¹ Findley describes the concomitant change in the system of government as follows:

The first of the new offices to emerge was the Translation Office of the Sublime Porte (*Bâb-ı Âlî Tercüme Odası*, 1821), founded to replace the old system of translators of the imperial Divan (*Tercüman-ı Divan-ı Hümayun*), a title that was nonetheless retained for the head of the new office. This nomenclature, referring to the Sublime Porte and the imperial Divan, is suggestive of the fact that there was at first no Foreign Ministry to which to relate the new office. With the nominal conversion of the chief scribe into a foreign minister, this Translation Office became in a sense the basic component of the emergent ministry, at least for the business that it conducted in languages other than Turkish. It is not surprising, then, that several of the other major offices of the ministry later emerged out of the Translation Office either directly or indirectly, or that its papers are probably the most comprehensive classification in the archives of the Ottoman Foreign Ministry.¹⁰²

Yahyâ Nâcî Efendi, a Greek convert to Islam, was transferred from his teaching position at the *Mühendishâne* to the Porte, in order to serve both as a translator and language teacher. Together with his son, Rûh al-Dîn Efendi, they conducted

99 Orhonlu; Bosworth.

100 Aydın.

101 S. Balçı, "Osmanlı Devleti'nde Tercümanlık ve Bab-ı Ali Tercüme Odası," (Ph.D. diss., Ankara University, 2006), 82.

102 Findley, *Bureaucratic Reform*, 186.

the Greek and French correspondence, yet this did not yield satisfactory results fast enough. Because of the lack of qualified Muslims, the Greek Stavrakı Aristarchis was given the post of translator on an interim basis, with Yahyâ Efendi delegated to check his work. In 1822, after the dismissal of Aristarchis, Yahyâ Efendi was given an Armenian deputy, Zenob Manasseh, who was an able linguist. They also had a staff of apprentices to train in translation.¹⁰³ According to the order of 17 December 1824, the Translation Office consisted of two units: the language office (*lisan odası*) for the training of students, and the translator office (*tercüman odası*), the place where the graduates of the language office were working. These two offices were under the supervision of the *Beylikçi* Efendi. When a translator in the translator office was appointed to another position, a new one would be assigned to his place from the language office.¹⁰⁴

On Yahyâ Efendi's death on July 10, 1824, he was succeeded by Hoca İshak Efendi (d.1836), a Jewish convert to Islam, who knew many languages including ancient Greek and Latin.¹⁰⁵ Called as the second Kâtip Çelebi, he was later appointed as the chief-instructor to the School of Engineering. He wrote and translated books on mathematics, physics, chemistry and military science and became the pioneer of modern science in Turkey.¹⁰⁶ Among his translations from French, which he produced in collaboration with the chief instructor of the Military School of Engineering, Ali Bey, were: *İlm-i Mabrutıyyât*, *İlm-i Cebîr*, *İlm-i Hesâb-ı Tefâzûlî* and *Hesâb-ı Tamâmî*.¹⁰⁷ Mehmed Nâmık Pasha (ca.1804-1892), who served under the supervision of İshak Efendi, discharged several diplomatic missions and played a crucial role in the founding of the new Ottoman Military Academy (*Mekteb-i Harbiye*, 1834).¹⁰⁸

İshak Efendi was succeeded by his assistant and son-in-law, Halil Esrar Efendi. Under his direction the number of the staff of the Translation Office, which was then three, increased. However, its real growth would be in the 1830s under the pressure of political events stemming from the defeat of the Ottoman forces by the Egyptian army of Muhammad Ali Pasha, which resulted in the Treaty

103 Balcı, *Osmanlı Devleti'nde Tercümanlık*, 82-87; C. V. Findley, "The foundation of the Ottoman Foreign Ministry: the beginnings of bureaucratic reform under Selim III and Mahmûd II," *IJMES* 3/4 (1972): 388-416; Findley, *Bureaucratic Reform*, 133-134.

104 Balcı, *Osmanlı Devleti'nde Tercümanlık*, 87-88.

105 Balcı, *Osmanlı Devleti'nde Tercümanlık*, 88; Findley, "The foundation of the Ottoman Foreign Ministry."

106 Balcı, *Osmanlı Devleti'nde Tercümanlık*, 92.

107 Aydın.

108 Findley, *Bureaucratic Reform*, 134.

of Kütahya with Muhammad Ali Pasha and that of *Hünkâr İskeleyi* with Russia in 1833. Together with the Egyptian Question and the treaty of *Hünkâr İskeleyi*, diplomatic efforts required more officials with knowledge of European languages. Hence, the Translation Office became one of the most important departments; the salaries of its employees were increased, Tecellî Efendi was appointed as the instructor of the Office, and Nedim, Âli and Safvet Efendis (in 1833) were brought in from the Imperial *Dîvân* office. Of these, Âli and Safvet Efendis would, in time, be appointed as foreign ministers and grand viziers.¹⁰⁹ Müftüzâde Mehmed Emin Pasha and the historian Tayyârzâde Ahmed Atâ Efendi were also attached to the Office in 1838. Promising young scribes of the Imperial *Dîvân* Office and some staff of the *mektûbî* and *âmedci* offices were also recruited by the Translation Office. In some cases, such as Keçecizâde Fuâd Pasha and Ahmed Vefik Pasha – both future grand viziers¹¹⁰ – young men were drawn in from outside the bureaucratic stream because of their prior knowledge of French. The prestige of the Translation Office increased and many of the employees from the Office rose to the second ranks of the Ottoman bureaucracy.¹¹¹ Ahmed Vefik Pasha, the son of Rûh al-Dîn and the grandson of Yahyâ Efendi, was one of the outstanding figures of the Office.¹¹² He went to Paris in 1834 with the entourage of Mustafa Reşid Pasha (1800-1858) and there graduated from the college of Saint Louis. Besides French, he studied Italian, Latin and Greek; and when he returned, he was appointed as the first translator to the Translation Office in 1845. He is well known for his translations from Molière, Lesage, V. Hugo, Voltaire and Fénelon. Other bureaucrats who had graduated from the Translation Office likewise made many translations of literary works.¹¹³

As the number of employees of the Translation Office increased steadily over the course of time, many of them became the most important bureaucrats of the Porte and the pioneers of the reforms during the *Tanzîmât* period.¹¹⁴ The Translation Office gradually became the primary center for the formation of a new type of Muslim scribal official and the most prestigious place of service at the Sublime

109 Balcı, *Osmanlı Devleti'nde Tercümanlık*, 93-94.

110 Findley, *Bureaucratic Reform*, 135.

111 B. A. Lator, "Promotion patterns of Ottoman bureaucratic statesmen from the Lâle Devri until the Tanzimat," *Güney-Doğu Avrupa Araştırmaları Dergisi* I (1972): 77-92.

112 Findley, *Bureaucratic Reform*, 135.

113 Aydın.

114 Ö. Berk, *Translation and Westernization in Turkey from the 1840s to the 1980s* (Istanbul: Ege Yayınları, 2004): 29, n. 25; Balcı, *Osmanlı Devleti'nde Tercümanlık*, 97; C. Bilim, "Tercüme Odası," *OTAM* I (June 1990): 29-43.

Porte.¹¹⁵ Recognizing it as the best place to start one's career, officials could after a few years move on from the Translation Office to one of the western European consulates or embassies, to positions in one of the ministries, or to staff positions in provincial administration.¹¹⁶

On August 27, 1835, after the death of Halil Esrar Efendi, Mehmed Tecelli Efendi was appointed head of the Translation Office. Under his supervision, the translation into French of the official gazette of the Porte, *Takvîm-i Vekâyi'*, was added to the duties of the Translation Office.¹¹⁷ Sultan Mahmûd II opened the first permanent embassies in European capitals and appointed their staff from the Translation Office. These young diplomat-translators had the opportunity to discover the European world directly and became the reformist leaders and statesmen of their country in the following years. Henceforth, the Translation Office became one of the basic components of the Foreign Ministry and the starting-point of governmental careers.¹¹⁸

By 1841, its staff had reached thirty in number, consisting of: the translator of the Imperial *Dîvân*, his assistant the first translator (*mütercim-i evvel*), five employees of the first class (*sinif-ı evvel*), five of the second class (*sinif-ı sâni*), seventeen supernumeraries, and a teacher.¹¹⁹ There were also non-Muslims among these translators, such as Redhouse (of dictionary fame), Arzuman, Kirkor, Kostaki, Sahak Abru and Vuliç.¹²⁰ For the education of the officials of the Translation Office four classes were offered, with a curriculum consisting of a wide range of subjects such as French, Law, International Law, History, Geography, Mathematics, Calligraphy, and translation from newspapers. With the outbreak of the Crimean War, the translation of English documents was increased and a new class was opened to teach English.¹²¹

In 1856, the Translation Office underwent very significant changes. Because of the increase in the volume of business, a new bureau was established in the Translation Office, namely, the foreign correspondence office (*tahrîrât-ı ecnebiyye odası*). Rüstem Bey was appointed director of the new unit with five employees on March 25, 1856. This office was mostly responsible for the classification of the

115 Findley, *Bureaucratic Reform*, 133.

116 Findley, *Bureaucratic Reform*, 211.

117 Balcı, *Osmanlı Devleti'nde Tercümanlık*, 98.

118 Balcı, *Osmanlı Devleti'nde Tercümanlık*, 99; Findley, *Bureaucratic Reform*, 136.

119 Findley, "The foundation of the Ottoman Foreign Ministry;" Bilim.

120 Balcı, *Osmanlı Devleti'nde Tercümanlık*, 120.

121 Balcı, *Osmanlı Devleti'nde Tercümanlık*, 102-104.

documents coming from the Foreign Ministry, recording them, transferring them to the related units, and keeping them at the office. Thus, it was like an archive of the Foreign Ministry.¹²² The Porte also employed translators in other ministries. For example, the *Meclis-i Ziraat ve Sanâyi*, established in 1838, had a translator, Fuad Efendi, appointed from the Translation Office.¹²³ From the end of the Crimean War, however, the role of translators appears to have been limited to the translation of documents coming into the ministries in languages other than Turkish. The organization of the Translation Office remained almost stable until about the time of Fuad Pasha's death (1869).¹²⁴ During the reign of Sultan Abdülhamid II (1876-1909), the Translation Office was enlarged in regard to its staff and survived until the end of the Ottoman Empire.¹²⁵ Besides their diplomatic duties, employees of the Translation Office worked in the offices that dealt with passports, customs, investigation of affairs (*tabkik-i ahvâl*), the inspection of Rumelia (*Rumeli teftişi*), the Imperial Fleet, education (*ma'ârif*), telegraphy, and refugees, for which the knowledge of French was a requirement.¹²⁶

The Translation Office was also important for its library. The officials who read its books became part of Ottoman intellectual life in the fields of science, thought, literature, and history.¹²⁷ They played an important role in the emergence of new types of literary expression, new media of communication, and new forms of political behavior.¹²⁸ Many of the pioneers of the reforms and the first translators of European literature started their careers in this office and had a crucial role in the transmission of Western ideas into Ottoman society.¹²⁹

During the *Tanzîmât* period, the Translation Office became a school which had an enormous effect on Turkish language and literature. Although in the beginning it did not have an influence on grammar and syntax, many Western, particularly French, technical words and expressions infiltrated Turkish. For example, Âkif Pasha used the expression of *mesâil-i politikîyye* (political matters) or *münistrîca* (instead of *nâzır* (minister)), *palais* for *saray* and *epe* for *kılıç* (sword). Some new

122 Balçı, *Osmanlı Devleti'nde Tercümanlık*, 102; A. Akyıldız, *Tanzimat Dönemi Osmanlı Merkez Teşkilâtında Reform (1836-1856)* (Istanbul: Eren, 1993), 90.

123 Aydın, n.82. Akyıldız, 259.

124 Findley, *Bureaucratic Reform*, 187-188.

125 Aydın.

126 Balçı, *Osmanlı Devleti'nde Tercümanlık*, 121-130; Findley, "The foundation of the Ottoman Foreign Ministry."

127 About the library, see, Balçı, *Osmanlı Devleti'nde Tercümanlık*, 130-145.

128 Findley, *Bureaucratic Reform*, 216.

129 Bilim.

expressions were created such as *asrın reis-i cumhûru* (president of the century), and some were taken as they existed in the original language, such as *nation*, *liberté* and *civilisation*. Henceforth, the Translation Office became a center for the formation of modern Turkish. Gradually, long opening sentences, devotions and eulogies were relinquished; instead of artistic expressions, didactic ones were preferred. In fact, the foundation of the Translation Office was itself one of the crucial reforms of the Ottoman Empire.

3. The Academy of Knowledge (*Encümen-i Dâniş*): 1851

In 1845, a temporary Commission (*Meclis-i muvakkat*) was charged with taking steps towards improving the existing education system and drawing up plans for public education. The commission prepared a report (*mazbata*).¹³⁰ In it, recommendations were made for: improvement of the curriculum and instruction in primary (*sıbyan*) and secondary (*rüşdiye*) schools; the establishment of a university (*dârulfunûn*) and an academy to prepare textbooks for the university whether in translation or as original work; and establishment of a permanent council of public education (*Meclis-i maârif-i umûmiyye*) to implement these recommendations. The other remarkable point of the report was its suggestion to translate some essential works in Western and Eastern languages into Turkish and to simplify the language in order to spread knowledge among the people. The Commission proposed that the Academy be composed of twenty internal and twenty external members. The ability to translate and compose would be sufficient qualification for membership, which would be a title of honor.¹³¹

In 1846, the Council of Public Education was set up. In 1851, another report concerning the Academy of Knowledge was written by Ahmed Cevdet (Pasha) on behalf of the Council.¹³² The number of internal members increased to forty and that of the external was unspecified. They were required to be competent in Arabic and Persian or in another foreign language.¹³³ External members, however, were not expected to have a good knowledge of Turkish but to produce scientific works in any language for the Academy.¹³⁴ It was decided to have two chairmen rather

130 K. Akyüz, *Encümen-i Dâniş* (Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Yayınları, 1975), 10, the report is to be found in pp. 32-35.

131 Akyüz, 14-16.

132 Akyüz, 11; for the report, see, pp. 44-49.

133 The names of the forty internal members can be found in Akyüz, 58-61; A. Uçman, "Encümen-i Dâniş," *DİA*, v.11 (Ankara: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 1995): 176-178.

134 The names of the external members can be found in Akyüz, 61-62; Uçman.

than one. Atâullah Efendizâde Şerîf Efendi was proposed as first, while Hayrullah Efendi was proposed as second chairman.¹³⁵ Upon the authorization of Sultan Abdülmecîd (1839-1861) on April 15, 1851, the establishment of the Academy was announced with Cevdet (Pasha)'s statement (*beyannâme*) together with the statute of the Academy's organization and duties (*nizamnâme*) and the membership list in the official gazette (*Takvîm-i Vekâyi'*) in June 1, 1851.¹³⁶

The Academy was opened on July 14, 1851 with a grand ceremony including the Sultan, all the ministers and members of the Academy. After the speeches of the Grand Vizier Mustafa Reşid Pasha and the second chairman of the Academy, Hayrullah Efendi, a Turkish grammar book, *Kavâid-i Osmâniye*, written by Ahmed Cevdet and Mehmed Fuad, was presented to the Sultan as the first work of the Academy. There were ministers, statesmen, *ulemâ*, translators, and historians among the members of the Academy. It is said that some of the ministers and generals were included in order to give honor and prestige to the Academy.¹³⁷

The Academy's importance lay in its efforts on behalf of the linguistic and educational reforms. It emphasized that the language and style of the translations and original works be as simple and plain as to be understood easily by common people. The use of strange words and ornate style had to be abandoned. For the development of Turkish, the need was also expressed for comprehensive grammar books and dictionaries. The Academy had to produce textbooks for the future university whether in translation or as original work. The importance of the Academy also lay in its promotion of the composition or translation of historical works. Last but not least, the Academy helped the emergence of a modern élite who were the prominent supporters of the reforms in all aspects of Ottoman culture.¹³⁸

Because of the political instability of the time, the Academy was closed in 1862. The members of the Academy produced, though not as much as expected, a number of translated and original works, most of which were not published. As for translations from Western languages; for example, Sahak Ebru, an external member of the Academy, translated several works such as Voltaire's *Histoire de*

135 Akyüz, 17-19.

136 Akyüz, 12.

137 Akyüz, 13; R. L. Chambers, "The Encümen-i Daniş and Ottoman Modernization," in *VIII. Türk Tarih Kongresi (11-15 October 1976) Kongreye Sunulan Bildiriler*, v.II (Ankara: TTK Basımevi, 1981): 1283-1289.

138 Berk, 29-38. See, also, E. B. Şapolyo, "Encümen-i Dâniş'in tarihçesi," *Türk Kültürü* 6/67 (1968): 439-444; A. S. Levend, "Türk kültürünün gelişmesinde derneklerin ve kurumların rolü," *Türk Dili* 17/198 (March 1968): 649-654; Chambers; Uçman; T. Kayaoğlu, *Türkiyede Tercüme Müesseseleri* (Istanbul: Kitabevi, 1998): 49-117.

Charles XII; Jean-Baptiste Say's *Catéchisme d'Economie Politique* under the title *İlm-i Tedbîr-i Menzil* (1851), the first work on European economic theories; a work by Louis-Philippe Comte de Ségur under the title *Vücûd-ı Beşerin Sûret-i Terkîbi* and Souvanie's first volume of *General History* under the title *Târîh-i Umûmî*. He also wrote a bibliographical dictionary in which figured some European statesmen, such as Charles-Maurice de Talleyrand-Périgord, Franz Georg von Metternich-Winneburg, Comte de Nessellrode and Camilo Benso di Cavour, entitled *Avrupa'da Meşhur Ministroların Tercüme-i Hallerine Dâir Risâle* (1855).¹³⁹

Ahmed Ağrıbozî translated a history of ancient Greece entitled *Târîh-i Kudemâ-i Yûnân ve Makedonya*. Todoraki Efendi translated Louis-Philippe Comte de Ségur's history of Europe under the title *Avrupa Târîhi*. Aleko Efendi's *Beyânü'l-Esfâr* is about the last Napoleonic campaigns. Mehmed Ali Fethi, an internal member of the Academy, translated a book on geology, *İlm-i Tabakât-ı Arz* from Arabic, which was originally written in French. It was printed in 1853 and attracted so much attention that nine forewords (*takrîz*) were written in Arabic and Turkish.¹⁴⁰

4. The Translation Society (*Tercüme Cem'iyeti*): 1865

In 1865, during the ministry of Ahmed Kemâl Pasha (1808-1888), the Translation Society (*Tercüme Cem'iyeti*) was established. Attached to the Ministry of Education, its objectives were: to compose books and translate scientific and artistic books, treatises and maps from foreign languages into Turkish for the public, and in particular for students; to review translated works and to fix a price for translations; and to expand the scientific terminology in Turkish. The society consisted of eighteen men, including a head, members, a secretary and a proof reader. The head of the Society was Münif Efendi and its members were: Ahmed Hilmi Efendi, Sadullah Bey, Rifat Bey, Mehmed Şevki Efendi, Mecid Bey and Faridis Efendi from the Translation Office; Colonel Mehmed Ali Bey; Kaymakam Nuri Bey from the Engineering School; Ömer Bey, from the Military School; Ohannes Efendi; Alexandr Efendi, the translator of the *Meclis-i Vâlâ*; Kadri Bey, Vahan Efendi, Nuri Bey, and the proof readers İhya Efendi and Pertev Efendi.¹⁴¹ Ahmed Hilmi Efendi translated a work by W. Chambers for students, entitled *Târîh-i Umûmî*, the first volume of which was published in Istanbul in 1866. He also translated a work by Otto Hübner for secondary school students under the title *İlm-i Tedbîr-i Servet*, published in 1869. After a short time, the Society was abrogated because of financial problems.

¹³⁹ Berk, 37; Kayaoğlu, 81-82.

¹⁴⁰ Berk, 38; Kayaoğlu, 87-88.

¹⁴¹ Kayaoğlu, 124-125.

5. The School of Language (*Mektebü'l-Lisân*): 1866

The School of Language was established on the initiative of the Minister of Public education, Kemâl Efendi, on March 26, 1866 in Istanbul. At the start, only French was taught. Later on, courses in Greek, Bulgarian and *inşâ'* (ornate prose) were added to the curriculum. The school started with twenty students; by 1869 the number had risen to sixty-six. It is not known when this school was closed down, but it was reopened in 1879. The period of study was four years, with courses in Arabic, Persian and *inshâ'* obligatory. The curriculum included the study of Greek, Slavic, Armenian, English, German and Russian. These languages were optional, with the exception of Greek and Armenian, which were obligatory as well. It was closed again at some point, but reopened in 1883. This time the duration of the course was five years. Besides French and *inshâ'*, the curriculum included a wide range of subjects, from history, geography, literature and international law to economics. Considered to be unsuccessful, the school was definitely closed down on August 18, 1892, to be replaced by a Higher School of Diplomacy.¹⁴²

6. The Grand Commission of Education (*Meclis-i Kebîr-i Ma'ârif*): 1869

The Ministry of General Education was established in 1857 with Abdurrahman Sâmî Pasha at its head. One of the articles of the Law on General Education (*Ma'ârif-i Umûmiye Nizamnâmesi*) mentioned the Grand Commission of Education (*Meclis-i Kebîr-i Ma'ârif*); it was to remain in function to the end of the Ottoman Empire with some changes in its staff and competence. The Commission consisted of two departments: the department of science (*dâire-i ilmîyye*) and the department of administration (*dâire-i idâre*).

The department of science, which had an important role in the translation movement, consisted of a chairman, two clerks and internal and external members. There were meetings twice every week. The number of internal members was eight and they had to be Ottoman subjects. There was no limit to the number of external members. One of the clerks had to know French for correspondence with European universities. Internal members had to know Arabic, Greek, Latin or one of the European languages, had to be able to write Turkish and also had to show competence in some branch of science. As for external members, they had to inform the department about their new findings and writings. They could attend general meetings, which would be held every three months. The directors of schools were

¹⁴² S. Balcı, "Osmanlı Devleti'nde modernleşme girişimlerine bir örnek: Lisan Mektebi," *Tarih Araştırmaları Dergisi*, Ankara, 27/44 (2008): 77-98. See, also, C. Işıksal, "Türkiye'de açılan ilk yabancı dil okulları," *Belgelerle Türk Tarihi Dergisi* 7 (1968): 29-31.

also considered members of the department, and if they were summoned they had to present themselves at the department. The tasks of the department itself were: to prepare books and treatises (whether original or translations) for public schools; if need be to advertise in newspapers for translations or original books or to establish societies for this purpose; to correspond with European universities; to stimulate the development of Turkish; and after examination and affirmation of written or translated books, to determine the wage for their authors and translators.¹⁴³

In the beginning, the head of the Grand Commission of Education was Münif Efendi (Pasha). The members of the department of science were: Kerim Efendi, Nasuhi Efendi, Mahmud Efendi, Mustafa Vehbi Efendi, Mehmed Efendi, Mikâil Efendi, Faridis Efendi, and Konstantinidi Efendi. The head clerk (*baş kâtib*) was Vacis Efendi, while the second clerk (*kâtib-i sâni*) was Hakki Efendi.¹⁴⁴ With the establishment of the department of science, translation activity was incorporated into the organization of the Ministry of Education. It still exists under different names and with different functions today.¹⁴⁵ Among the translations by members was Monsieur Le Mon's French grammar under the title *Sarf-ı Fransevi*,¹⁴⁶ and Alexandr Kostantinidis Efendi's translation of a book about ancient Greece under the title *Târîh-i Yunanistan-ı Kadîm* (published in 1869).

7. The Department of Composition and Translation (*Têlif ve Tercüme Dâiresi*): 1879

After some changes in the central organization of the Ministry of Education in 1879, a new department, the Department of Composition and Translation (*Têlif ve Tercüme Dâiresi*) was set up. Thus, translation activity, which had been conducted through a subsidiary within the Ministry, was incorporated into the central organization of the same Ministry. With the statute of 1879, the Ministry was divided into five departments. Heads of the departments were appointed from the Commission of Education, and the existing officials were shared between these departments.

Based on this new statute and under the supervision of the minister of education, Münif Efendi, as well as in keeping with the decree of Sultan Abdülhamid II for the translation of European books into Turkish, a translation society was established within the Ministry of Education. Ahmed Hamdi Efendi was appointed to its directorate and Ahmed Rifat Efendi to its secretariat. However, because of

143 Kayaoğlu, 135-136.

144 Kayaoğlu, 137-138.

145 Kayaoğlu, 148.

146 Kayaoğlu, 146.

financial shortages, the results were meager. We do not know of any work produced by the department except the publication of the Arabic grammar, *Tarz-ı Nevin* (New Method), by the director Ahmed Hamdi Efendi.¹⁴⁷

The Ministry of Education decided to close The Department of Composition and Translation because it failed to operate according to its original directives and because it took up too much space in the department. It was transferred to another department of the Ministry of Education, The Administration of Printing. With the Administration of Printing a new Commission was set up on December 31, 1881 called *Encümen-i teftiş ve muâyene hey'eti* (The Commission of Inspection and Examination). The duties of the Commission were: to inspect the books and booklets printed in Turkish, Arabic, Persian, French, Bulgarian, Greek and Armenian in the Ottoman territories; to censor books coming from abroad; and to inspect schools and libraries. This the Commission did achieve, but it never produced any scientific works.¹⁴⁸

C. Learned Societies and Translation

Throughout the nineteenth century several scientific and vocational societies concerned with translation and the spreading of science were set up. With their regular meetings, they provided a scholarly environment for scholars, professionals, government officials and other individuals. The precursor of these societies in Istanbul was the *Cem'iyet-i İlmiyye* (Scientific Society), activities of which could be called a kind of *salon*. The activities of the group started after the return of İsmail Ferruh Efendi from London where he had been ambassador for three years. The first meetings of the group took place in his mansion sometime after 1815. Members were scholars such as the chronicler and physician Şanizâde Atâullah Efendi, Melekpaşazâde Abdülkâdir Bey, and Kethüdâzâde Mehmed Ârif Efendi. The group devoted itself to scientific, literary, and philosophical discussions and debates, and to the teaching of individuals in a wide range of subjects. Some dignitaries and officials were also among the participants in these discussions, some of which touched on current events and political issues. The members of this group were mostly of *ulemâ* origin and they had studied modern science and philosophy and thus were familiar with Western culture. They had a great many students and through them exerted a lasting influence on future generations.¹⁴⁹

147 Kayaoğlu, 149-151.

148 Kayaoğlu, 154-155.

149 E. İhsanoğlu, "19. Asrın başlarında – Tanzimat öncesi – kültür ve eğitim hayatı ve Beşiktaş Cemiyet-i İlmiyesi olarak bilinen ulema grubunun buradaki yeri," in *Osmanlı İlmî ve Meslekî Cemiyetleri*, 43-74; Findley, *Bureaucratic Reform*, 130.

In 1861, the *Cem'iyet-i İlmîyye-i Osmâniye* (The Ottoman Scientific Society) was established. Its foundation was largely the work of the learned Münif Pasha, former apprentice of the Translation Office and the translator of several literary and philosophical Western works. The statute of the Society was published in the first issue of the *Mecmû'a-i Fünûn* (The Journal of Science), the Society's journal, which was the first Turkish periodical of this kind in the Ottoman Empire.¹⁵⁰ According to the statutes of the Society, its goal was to produce and translate books, to educate the public through all possible means and to spread science in the Empire. The society would publish a monthly journal in which articles about science, commerce, crafts, and religious and political questions would be published. The Society was not state-sponsored but a private undertaking. It had three types of members, admitted irrespective of their religion and nationality: the permanent (*dâimî*), non-permanent (*dâimî olmayan*), and members connected through correspondence (*muhabir*). The members were supposed to know Turkish or Arabic or Persian and at least one Western language (French, English, German, Italian, or Modern Greek) besides. There was no limit to the number of members; however, the number of members without knowledge of a Western language was limited to seven. The permanent members had to write articles for the Society's journal, and to give public courses. The other members were also expected to write or translate books in their specialized areas. The director of the Society was Halil Bey, ambassador to Petersburg. According to İhsanoğlu, sixteen permanent members out of thirty-three were employees and translators in the Translation Office. The Society founded a library which was open three days a week and also offered public classes in natural sciences, geology, history, and economics, as well as in five foreign languages. More than thirty newspapers and journals in Turkish, French, English, Greek and Armenian were collected by the library. Furthermore, books on natural sciences, geography, and mechanics, maps, and some instruments of physics and mechanics could also be found there. Readers had to pay a monthly fee of five *kuruş*, or thirty *kuruş* for six months in advance, and to be proposed by a member of the society in order to use the library, whereas the library was free of charge to students of official schools. As the only public library which contained about a thousand foreign language books in sciences, it became quite famous. The Society, which was closed in 1867, contributed to the intellectual milieu of the time with its journal, library and public classes. Although it did not publish translations or

¹⁵⁰ About the journal, see, Y. Işıl, "Bir Aydınlanma Hareketi Olarak Mecmû'a-i Fünûn," (M.A. thesis, Istanbul University, 1986); C. Aydın, "Mecmû'a-i Fünûn ve Mecmua-i Ulûm Dergilerinin Medeniyet ve Bilim Anlayışı," (M.A. thesis, Istanbul University, 1995); M. Akgün, "Cemiyet-i İlmîye-i Osmaniye ve Mecmû'a-i Fünun'un felsefî açıdan taşıdığı önem," *Felsefe Dünyası* 15 (Bahar, 1995): 52-72.

original works, the journal of the society included several translations and adaptations on history, geology, geography, philosophy, and the natural sciences from Western languages in its forty-seven issues over five years.¹⁵¹

We should also mention the *Cem'iyet-i Tibbiyye-i Osmâniye* (The Ottoman Medical Society), the first vocational society in the Ottoman Empire. It was founded in 1866 and contributed significantly to the development of Turkish scientific language through its translations. According to its statutes, the main functions of the Society were to translate Western medical books and to publish a monthly medical journal in order to publicize medical advancements. The society prepared medical dictionaries, *Lugat-i Tibbiye* (1874), and *Lugat-i Tibb* (1902), and translated a number of medical books into Turkish.¹⁵²

D. Translation in Periodicals

The first periodical, an official gazette, *al-Waqâ'i' al-Misriyya* (1828), was printed in Cairo both in Arabic and Turkish. It was followed by the first Turkish official gazette, *Takvîm-i Vekâyi'* (1831), printed in Istanbul. They marked the birth of journalism in Egypt and Turkey respectively, and would become an important means for the development of public opinion on social and political reforms, and for the popularization of modern ideas. By the second half of the nineteenth century, many newspapers, journals and magazines played an important role in the spread of knowledge, especially new ideas, throughout the Empire. Among these early enterprises were: the first non-official newspaper, *Tercümân-ı Ahvâl*, launched by Âgâh Efendi and İbrahim Şinasi in Istanbul, in 1860; *Tasvîr-i Efkâr*, published by Şinasi in Istanbul in 1862; and *Mecmû'a-i Fünûn* (1861) of Münif Pasha. Arabic language newspapers also began to appear at this time: Fâris al-Shidyâq launched the newspaper *al-Jawâ'ib*, which was read throughout the Empire, in Istanbul in 1861; Ya'qûb Sarrûf and Fâris Nimr founded the very important periodical *al-Muqtataf* in Beirut in 1876, which was transferred to Egypt in 1885; the periodical *Rawdat al-Madâris* (1870) was set up by Ali Mubârak and later on edited by al-Tahtâwî; and *al-Abrâm* was launched by the Taqla brothers in Alexandria in 1875.¹⁵³

151 E. İhsanoğlu, "Cemiyet-i İlmiye-i Osmaniye'nin kuruluş ve faaliyetleri," in *Osmanlı İlmî ve Meslekî Cemiyetleri*, 197-220; Berk, 38-42; Strauss, "The millets and the Ottoman language."

152 N. Sarı, "Cemiyet-i Tibbiye-i Osmaniyye ve tıp dilinin Türkçeleşmesi akımı," in *Osmanlı İlmî ve Meslekî Cemiyetleri*, 121-142; Berk, 43-44, n.79.

153 For the history of Press, see, A. Emin, *The Development of Modern Turkey as Measured by Its Press* (New York: Colombia University, 1914). "Matbuat," *DİA*, v.28 (Ankara:

These and the other periodicals of the nineteenth century, partly by publishing scientific and literary translations in their pages, contributed to the spread of new ideas. They introduced simple language; they helped to develop modern Arabic and Turkish literature and thought; and in the process contributed to the transformation of society and politics. Some of the literary and scientific translations or, sometimes, adaptations from Western languages, were serialized in newspapers before they were printed in book form.

Although it is beyond the scope of this article, a quick glance at some of these journals reveals many translations in serialized form that deserve further investigation. For example, as early as 1845, *Cerîde-i Havâdis* published a comedy in translation from Beaumarchais's *Barbier de Séville* under the title *Sevil Berberi*. In 1860 the newspaper, *Ruznâme-i Cerîde-i Havâdis*, serialized the translation of Victor Hugo's *Les misérables* under the title *Mağdûrin Hikâyesi* and also brought out translations from Voltaire. *Tasvîr-i Efkâr* serialized in its early issues translations from Emmer de Vattel and Georges-Louis Leclerc de Buffon. *Mecmû'a-i Fünûn*, for another example, serialized translations from Rousseau as did the journal of Ebuzziya Tevfik, *Mecmû'a-i Ebuzziya*.¹⁵⁴ In 1863, the newspaper *Mir'at* published Nâmîk Kemâl's translation of Montesquieu's *Considérations sur les causes de la grandeur et de la décadence des Romains*. After the 1870s, with the increase of private newspapers and journals, the translation movement gained momentum. Most of the newspapers and journals of the time were full of translations especially from French Enlightenment philosophers.

E. An Overview of the Nineteenth Century Translations

In the early nineteenth century, İshak Efendi presented a long and perhaps the most technical explanation of the Copernican theory in his *Mecmû'a-i 'Ulûm-i*

Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 2003): 119-127. S. S. Kuru (prepared by), "Yüz senelik gazeteciliğimiz," *Müteferrika* 3 (Yaz 1994): 3-47. H. S. Keseroğlu, "Batı'da ve Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda süreli yayınların ortaya çıkışı ve özellikleri," *Müteferrika* 6 (Yaz 1995): 19-28. O. Koloğlu, "Osmanlı'daki Türkçe dışı basın," *Kebikeç* 2 (1995): 127-137. H. Duman, "Süreli yayınlar üzerine yapılmış tezler bibliyografyası," *Müteferrika* 5 (Bahar 1995): 157-177; Le comte Philippe de Tarrâzi, *Târîkh al-Sahâfa al-'Arabiyya* (Beirut: al-Maṭba'a al-Adabiyya, 1913); I. 'Abduh, *I'lâm al-Sahâfa al-'Arabiyya* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Âdâb, 1944).

¹⁵⁴ About Ebuzziya Tevfik and his journal, see, Ö. Türesay, "Ebuzziya Tevfik ve Mecmua-i Ebuzziya (1880-1912)," *Müteferrika* 18 (Kış, 2000): 87-140; A. Gür, *Ebuzziya Tevfik Hayatı; Dil Edebiyat, Basın Yayın ve Matbaacılığa Katkıları* (Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı, 1998); F. Gündoğdu, "Ebuzziya Tevfik'in Türk Basıncılığına Getirdiği Yenilikler ve Türk Kütüphaneciliğine Katkıları," (Thesis of specialty, Hacettepe University, 1982).

Riyâziyye. By translating and summarizing contemporary European sources, İshak Efendi introduced new concepts and theories of modern science to Ottomans, such as Descartes' theory of the influence of mass on motion and Newton's theory on vacuum and gravity. His four-volume work, *Mecmû'a-i Ulûm-i Riyâziyye*, was influential not only in Istanbul, but also in Cairo. It was first printed in Istanbul in 1834 and then in Cairo between 1841 and 1845. In 1838, a modern geography book was translated into Turkish under the title *Mecmû'a-i Fenn el-Bahriye* and printed in Bûlâq.¹⁵⁵

Tamanlı Hüseyin Efendi's son, Emin Pasha, studied mathematics and physics at Cambridge. Like his father, he endeavored to bring modern mathematics to the attention of the Ottomans and worked as an instructor at the Harbiye School. He translated his dissertation into Turkish under the title of *Tahavvülât* (Transformations) and published it, and wrote mathematical books for secondary schools as well. Vidinli Tevfik Pasha (1832-1893) studied mathematical sciences in Paris while he was an attaché there. He wrote a *Linear Algebra* in English. *Cebr-i âla*, *Mihanik*, and *Cebr-i hattî* were among his works which included translations and quotations from Western sources.¹⁵⁶ All these works on mathematics were written for the newly established schools. Works in the natural sciences and medicine were also translated or written for the modern hospitals and new schools of medicine.

İbrahim Edhem Bey translated two works of the French mathematician Legendre into Turkish: *Kitâbu Usûli'l-Hendese* (Éléments de géométrie), published in 1836 (it was also translated into Arabic) and *Makâlât al-Handasa*, published in the same

155 İhsanoğlu, "Introduction of Western science;" Ülken, *İslâm Medeniyetinde Tercüme ve Tesirler*, 360; *Türkiye'de Çağdaş Düşünce Tarihi*, 28, 52. See, also, G. Saliba, "Copernican astronomy in the Arab east: Theories of the Earth's motion in the nineteenth century," in *Transfer of Modern Science*, 145-155; İ. Kalaycıoğulları and Y. Unat, "Copernik Kuramı'nın Türkiye'deki yansımaları," *XIV. Ulusal Astronomi Kongresi* 31 Ağustos – 4 Eylül 2004, Kayseri, ed. by İ. Küçük, F. F. Özeren, İ. Yusuf; available from <http://193.255.235.2/-unat/yl/T16.pdf>; Internet; accessed 8 October 2008. Y. Unat, "Türk astronomi tarihi literatürü (1923-2004)," *Türkiye Araştırmaları Literatür Dergisi* 2/ 4 (2004): 103- 133; available from <http://193.255.235.2/-unat/yl/M26.pdf>; Internet ; accessed 8 October 2008; "Türkiye'ye Çağdaş astronominin girişi," *Türkler* 14 (Ankara: Yeni Türkiye Yayınları, 2002): 906-914; available from <http://193.255.235.2/-unat/yl/M16.pdf>; Internet; accessed 8 October 2008; "Hoca İshak'tan Hoca Tahsin'e çağdaş astronominin Türkiye'ye girişi," *XV. Ulusal Astronomi Kongresi* 27 Ağustos – 1 Eylül 2006, İstanbul; available from <http://193.255.235.2/-unat/yl/T29.pdf>; Internet; accessed 8 October 2008.

156 Ülken, *İslâm Medeniyetinde Tercüme ve Tesirler*, 359-360; *Türkiye'de Çağdaş Düşünce Tarihi*, 27-28.

year.¹⁵⁷ Translations of Western historical works first appeared in Egypt. The first one was Şanizâde Mehmed Atâullah Efendi's (d.1826/1827) translation from French into Turkish, *Vesâyânâme-i Seferiyye*. It consisted of the Prussian King Frederick the Great's advice to his generals. Published in 1822, it was the first book issued by the Bûlâq press.¹⁵⁸ The second translation in the field of history was Yakovaki Efendi's translation of Russian History, *Katerina Târihi* (*Histoire de l'impératrice Catherine II de Russie, précédée d'un court aperçu de l'histoire de la Russie depuis son origine*), first published in 1829, as we mentioned earlier.¹⁵⁹ These early Turkish translations were followed by others about Napoleon Bonaparte and the history of France and Italy.¹⁶⁰ In 1879, Hidayet Ahmed translated a work about the history of philosophy by Emile Faguet under the title *Yeni Felsefe Târihi: Meşhur Filozoflar*, published in Istanbul.

The first French book on logic was translated into Turkish under the title *Miftâhu'l-Fünûn* from a work written by Pasquale Galuppi. It was published in 1868 in Istanbul. The translator is unidentified. Machiavelli's *Il principe* was translated into Turkish in 1834 by İshak under the title *Terceme-i Prens*. Later in the nineteenth century Haydar Rifat Bey started to translate it in the journal *Zeka* but could not complete it. In 1869 a work on political economy by Otto Hübner was translated into Turkish by Mehmed Midhat entitled *Ekonomi Tercümesi: Fenn-i İdâre*. Another Turkish translation was done in 1869 from a work by Benjamin Franklin under the title *Târik-i Servet ez Hikmet-i Rikardos* by Bedros Hocasaryan.¹⁶¹

Fénelon's *Les aventures de Télémaque* was among the first literary and philosophical books translated from Western languages. In his *La Turquie actuelle*, Ubcini states that in the first half of the nineteenth century *Les aventures de Télémaque* was the most popular classic among Levantines in the metropolis, and that it was translated into many languages such as Turkish, Arabic, Persian, Greek, Armenian,

157 İhsanoğlu, *Mısır'da Türkler*, 122-125.

158 İhsanoğlu, *Mısır'da Türkler*, 26.

159 It was reprinted in 1831 under the title *İkinci Katerina nâm Rusya İmparatoriçenin Tarihi*.

160 For example, *Târih Nâbülyûn Bûnâbarta* (*Extrait du Mémorial de Saint-Hélène*), Bûlâq, 1832; *Târih-i Nâbulyûn Bûnâbarta*, translated from the memoirs of Duc de Rovigo into Turkish in 1834; *Târih-i Dawla İtalyâ*, translated into Turkish by Abdullâh Azîz Efendi in 1834. An Arabic translation of the last work was done by 'Abdullâh 'Azîz and Hasan Fahmî in the same year under the title *Târih Dawla İtâliyya fî Bayân al-Ihtilâl al-Wâqi' fî al-Mamâlik al-Ûrûbbiyyâ bi-Zuhûr Nâbilyûn Bûnâbarta*.

161 There are also translations from Benjamin Franklin in periodicals, see, for example, *Mecmû'a-i Ebuzziya* (1880).

Kurdish, Georgian, Russian, Tatar, Bulgarian, Romanian and Albanian. He also mentions that he had been shown an album by the Russian attaché in Istanbul with the beginning of the *Télémaque* in seventeen or eighteen languages. (Ubicini goes on to relate how even his landlord knew the most beautiful passages of the *Télémaque* by heart).¹⁶² We read in Ahmed Refik's *Târihi Sîmâlar* that the Turks' acquaintance with the *Télémaque* went back to the eighteenth century. According to the French ambassador, General Aubert du Bayet, Morali es-Seyyid Ali Efendi translated the *Télémaque* into Turkish to learn French before he travelled to France.¹⁶³ But also the many students sent to France for their education played an important role in the introduction of the *Télémaque* to the Ottoman world, so that most of the Turkish intellectuals of the nineteenth century were familiar with the text, and some of them had original copies of it in their libraries.¹⁶⁴ It was translated into Turkish by Yûsuf Kâmil Pasha in 1859. Having been widely circulated in manuscript form in Ottoman *salons* for three years,¹⁶⁵ the translation was finally published in 1862.

In 1859, some dialogues from Fénelon were translated into Turkish in *Muhâverât-ı Hikemiyye*, the translation by Münif Efendi (Pasha). This work consisted of eleven dialogues from Fénelon, Fontenelle and Voltaire. Two of these dialogues were taken from Fénelon's *Dialogues*. Thus, Fénelon had been introduced to Ottoman readers before the first publication of the *Télémaque* translation. Two other translations also into Turkish from the work of Fénelon, appeared in 1876 and 1888: *Meşâhir-i Kudemâ-i Felâsifenin Tercüme-i Halleri*, translated by Yanyalı K. Şükrü, and *Hikâye-i Aristonous*, translated by Reşad. In 1880, an article about Fénelon was published in the journal *Şark*, and many fragments from his writings were quoted in Turkish journals.¹⁶⁶ Ahmed Midhat's *Kissadan Hisse*, published in 1870, consists of eighteen extracts from Aesop, eleven from Fénelon, one from Voltaire and fifteen passages written by Midhat himself.¹⁶⁷

162 A. Ubicini, *La Turquie Actuelle* (Paris: Librairie de L. Hachette et C^{ie}, 1855), 457.

163 A. Refik [Altunay], *Târihi Sîmâlar* (İstanbul: Kitâbhâne-i Askerî, 1331), 63-64.

164 M. K. Özgül, "Yusuf Kamil Pasha'nın Tercüme-i Telemak'ı," *Erdem* 40/14 (Ocak 2002): 193-241.

165 Ş. Mardin, *The Genesis of Young Ottoman Thought: A Study in the Modernization of Turkish Political Ideas* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2000), 241.

166 Fénelon, "Tercüme-i Hâl: Fénelon (I)," *Şark* I/8 (1298/1881): 189-191. For some translations from Fénelon, see, for example, Fénelon, "İki Tilki," *Âfâk* 6 (1 Muharrem 1300/1882): 278-280; Fénelon, "Duc de Bourgenge'a mektub," *Âfâk* 7 (1882): 321-323.

167 Berk, 69.

Muhâverât-ı Hikemiyye (Philosophical Dialogues) was translated into Turkish by Münif Pasha in 1859. It consisted of two dialogues from Fénelon's *Dialogues*, viz., "Démocrîte et Héraclite and *Le connétable de Bourban et Bayard*;" a dialogue from Fontenelle's *Dialogue des Morts*, "Erostrate et Démétrius de Phalère;" six dialogues from Voltaire's *Dialogues et entretiens philosophiques* and two dialogues from an undisclosed source.¹⁶⁸ Through these translations, new themes were introduced to Ottoman readers in a different way, namely, through the medium of philosophical conversations. In the second half of the nineteenth century other works had been translated from Voltaire, not to mention extracts in various journals.¹⁶⁹ According to Özege's catalogue the first Turkish translation of Voltaire's work in book form was published in 1869 in the Armenian alphabet under the title *Mikromega* (*Hikâye-i Filozofiyye*). In 1871 Ahmed Vefik Pasha translated his *Micromégas* under the title *Hikâye-i Hikemiyye-i Mikromega*. The catalogue also mentions another translation of Voltaire's *Alzire* for which no translator or date is mentioned.

At the beginning of the 1860s, two translations appeared in the newspaper *Tasvîr-i Efkâr*. The first one was Emer de Vattel's *Le droit des gens*, translated under the title *Hukûk-ı Mîlel* and serialized from 1865. The second one was Buffon's *Histoire naturelle* under the title *Târîh-i Tabîi*, which began to be serialized in 1865.¹⁷⁰ It was published in book form as well. In 1881 Ebuzziya Tevfik published a book entitled *Buffon*, which was reprinted in 1890. Nâmık Kemâl translated Montesquieu's *Considérations sur les causes de la grandeur des Romains et de leur*

¹⁶⁸ For the names of Voltaire's dialogues in the translation, see, Mardin, 234-235. Ülken, *Türkiye'de Çağdaş Düşünce Tarihi*, 68.

¹⁶⁹ For translations from Voltaire, see, for example, Voltaire, "Meşhur Voltaire'in makâlâtından tercüme olunan tabîat ile bir feylosofun muvâheresidir," trans. by Münif Pasha, *Ruznâme-i Ceride-i Havâdis*, 89 (22 Şaban 1277/5 March 1861): 1-2; Voltaire, "Hikâye-i Hikemiyye-i Mikromega." *Diyojen* II/62-67 (15 Tişrîn-i evvel 1287 - 2 Tişrîn-i sâni 1287 / 1871); Voltaire, "Volter'in hâl-i ihtizârında söyledîği bir kıt'anın nazme-i tercumesi," *Mecmû'â-i Ebuzziya* I/7 (15 Zilhicce 1297/1879): 212; Voltaire "Voltaire'in âsârından bir fıkra" *Mecmû'â-i Ebuzziya* II/20 (1 Receb 1298/1881): 634-637; J. J. Rousseau, Voltaire, La Fontaine, Bousseut and others "Cümel-i âtiyyeye Fransızca'dan tercüme olunmuştur," *Şark* I/4 (1298/1880): 854-888; Voltaire, V. Hugo. "Edebî ve Hikemî bazı mülâhazalar," *Şark* I/6 (1298/1881): 132. Beşir Fuad was the first to give a detailed account of Voltaire's life in his *Volter* published in 1886 in Istanbul.

¹⁷⁰ Emmer de Vattel, "Hukûk-ı Mîlel (le droit des gens)," *Tasvîr-i Efkâr* (4 Safer 1279-17 Muharrem 1282 / August 1, 1862- June 12, 1865); Georges-Luis Leclerc de Buffon, "Târîh-i Tabîi (Histoire naturelle générale et particulière)," trans. by Hekimbaşı Mustafa Behçet Efendi, *Tasvîr-i Efkâr* III-IV/216-248, 250, 252-255, 258-276, 286-325 (24 Safer 1281 - 4 Rebiyülevvel 1282 / July 29, 1864 - August 27, 1865).

décadence, under the title *Roma'nın esbâb-ı ikbâl ve zevâli* and published it in the newspaper *Mir'at* in 1863. He also translated his *L'esprit des lois* under the title *Ruhûş-Şerâyi*, but this was not published.¹⁷¹

The other influential philosopher in late Ottoman intellectual circles was J.J. Rousseau.¹⁷² Edhem Pertev Pasha (1824-1872) seems to have been the first to have translated a work by Rousseau. In 1865, two articles appeared in Münif Pasha's *Mecmû'a-i Fünûn* about whether suicide was permissible or not. They consisted of two letters exchanged between J.J. Rousseau and Lord Edward.¹⁷³ In 1872, Edhem Pertev Pasha translated a verse stanza from Rousseau and published it in the journal *Cüzdan* under the title *Bekâ-yi Rûh*. In 1873, another verse stanza from Rousseau, without mentioning the name of the translator, appeared in the same journal.¹⁷⁴ *Le contrat social* was translated by Nâmık Kemâl (1840-1888) under the title *Şerâit-i İctimâiyye*; however, it was not published.¹⁷⁵ Ahmed Midhat (1844-1912) started to translate *Le contrat social* in the newspaper *İttihâd* but he could not complete it.¹⁷⁶ Nâmık Kemâl also translated Volney's *Les ruines de Palmyre* but this was not published either. Volney's work is reported to have been translated four more times by Suphi Paşazâde Âyetullah Bey, Ziyâ Pasha, Recâizâde Ekrem Bey, and Seyfi Râşid Bey.¹⁷⁷ While he was in Switzerland, Ziya Pasha (1825-1880) translated

171 İ. Habib [Sevük], *Avrupa Edebiyatı ve Biz: garpten tercümelere*, v.I (Istanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 1940), 122.

172 R. Fakkar, "Comment Rousseau fut connu en Orient," *La tribune de Genève* 191 (Jeudi 16 août 1962): 1.

173 J. J. Rousseau, "Bakâ-yi şahsi ve nev'îye hizmet azam vazâif-i insâniyyet olduğuna dair makale," trans. by Edhem Pertev, *Mecmû'a-i Fünûn* III/33 (1281/1864): 329-346; Lord Edward's reponse to J. J. Rousseau, "Bakâ-yı nevî ve şahsiye hizmet-i a'zam vazâif-i insâniyyet olduğuna dair makedir (Milourd Edwar'ın J. J. Rousseau'ya cevabnamesi)," trans. by Edhem Pertev, *Mecmû'a-i Fünûn* IV/34 (Muharrem 1283/1866): 8-18.

174 There are plenty of Turkish translations from Rousseau in the journals and newspapers of the nineteenth century. For example: J. J. Rousseau & Pascal, "Bazı em-sâli hikemiyye," *Muharrir* I/1 (1875/1292): 32; J. J. Rousseau, "J. J. Rousseau'nun bir mütâlâası," *Muharrir* I/4 (1292/1875): 105-108; J. J. Rousseau, "Edebâ-i hukemâdan J. J. R.'nun hâl-i ihtizârında söylediği bir kıt'anın terceme-i manzûmesi," "J. J. R.'nun bir mutâlâa-i hikemiyyesi," "Kontes de Bari'nin name-i a'mâlinde J. J. Rousseau'ya dair olan ifâdâtı" *Mecmû'a-i Ebuzziya* I/9 (15 Muharrem 1298/18 December 1880): 282-83, III/28 (15 Safer 1300/26 December 1882): 869-876. Between 1882 and 1886, letters from his *Nouvelle Héloïse* were translated by Âli Bey Efendi and serialised intermittently in *Mecmû'a-i Ebuzziya*.

175 Habib, v.II, 132.

176 Ülken, *Türkiye'de Çağdaş Düşünce Tarihi*, 105, n. 12.

177 Ülken, *İslâm Medeniyetinde Tercümelere ve Tesirler*, 362.

Rousseau's *Émile* and *Les confessions* (*Defter-i Âmâl*), yet, with the exception of the forward to *Émile*, these two translations were not published. This foreword was published by Ebuzziya Tevfik in 1891 in the *Numûne-i Edebiyât-ı Osmâniye*. In 1880s Münif Pasha translated a couple of letters from *La Nouvelle Héloïse*. Mustafa Reşid included the first letter in his anthology, *Müntehabât-ı Cedide*, published in 1884. Rousseau's answer given to the question posed by The Academy of Dijon: "Si le rétablissement des sciences et des arts a contribué à épurer les moeurs? (1750)" was translated by Said Kemâl Paşazâde under the title *Fezâil-i Ahlâkiyye ve Kemâlât-ı İlmiyye* in 1881.¹⁷⁸

İbrahim Şinasi was very impressed by the ideas of Fontenelle, Voltaire, Montesquieu, Condorcet and Ernest Renan.¹⁷⁹ In 1859, he translated some verses from Lamartine, La Fontaine, Gilbert and Racine under the title *Tercüme-i Manzûme* (Translation of some verses), with its French title on the facing page, *Extraits de poésies et de prose, traduits en vers du français en turc, Constantinople, Imprimerie de la Presse d'orient, 1859*. It was originally printed lithographically and was republished in 1860, 1870, 1885 and 1893. The translation consisted of some selected lines from Racine's *Esther*, *Athalie*, *Andromaque* and *A laudes*, Lamartine's *Méditations-Souvenirs* and *Recueils poétiques*, La Fontaine's *Le loup et l'agneau*, Gilbert's *Sur sa mort*, and two paragraphs from Fénelon's *Télémaque* in verse. Şinasi also translated Racine's tragedies as *Trajedya Mazûmesi*. Another translation was made from works by Racine by Mehmed Nüzhet under the title *Fedri* in 1878 in Istanbul. In 1875 Rıfat translated another work of La Fontaine with the name *Gürk-i Kaza*, while Recâizâde Ekrem Bey likewise translated some fables by La Fontaine.¹⁸⁰ Lamartine's *Geneviève* and *Raphaël* were translated into Turkish in the last quarter of the nineteenth century.¹⁸¹ Edhem Pertev Pasha's *Tıfl-ı Nâim*, the translation of Victor Hugo's *Les feuilles d'automne*, is said to be the second verse translation in Turkish.¹⁸² In 1879, Şemseddin Sâmî translated Victor Hugo's *Les misérables* under the title *Sefiller*, but he could not complete it. It was completed by Hasan Bedreddin and published in 1908.

After these historical, philosophical and verse translations, there followed translations of novels, stories and stage plays. The literary translations mostly covered second-rate romantic fiction and later thrillers, and spy, detective and mystery

178 Habib, v.II, 132-133.

179 Ülken, *Türkiye'de Çağdaş Düşünce Tarihi*, 67.

180 Berk, 62-64. Ülken, *İslâm Medeniyetinde Tercüme ve Tesirler*, 362.

181 A translation from Lamartine appeared in *Âfâk* (1882/1 Muharrem 1300) under the title "Mevt."

182 Berk, 64.

stories. These translations introduced Ottoman readers to Western literary techniques, models and genres, and had an ever growing influence on Turkish language, culture and literature. With the growth of non-governmental journalism during the second half of the nineteenth century, short stories and novels were serialized in daily, weekly, and monthly journals and newspapers, and thereby popularized throughout the Empire. It is difficult to give a complete list of dramas, novels and romances translated into Turkish during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, for many of them are lost, and while some of the journals or newspapers in which many were serialized are no longer available, others still have to be scanned. Furthermore, translators sometimes did not mention the author's name or the title of the original book.

In 1863, the chronicler Ahmed Lutfi Efendi translated *Robinson Crusoe* into Turkish under the title *Hikâye-i Robenson* from an Arabic intermediary.¹⁸³ Şemseddin Sâmî translated it into Turkish from the French in an abridged form in 1884. According to Özege's catalogue, there were other Turkish translations by Mehmed Ali, by Halil Hamid in 1916, and by Şükrü Kaya in 1923. Alexandre Dumas Père's *Le comte de Monte-Cristo* was translated into Turkish by Teodor Kasab in 1864, and afterwards serialized in the periodical *Diyojen*. Dumas Père was among the most translated and read authors. It achieved such a success among Ottoman readers that Ahmed Midhat wrote a *nazîre*¹⁸⁴ to *Monte-Cristo* under the title *Hasan Mel-lâh* in 1875. After 1871 translations from works by Dumas Père appeared one after another.¹⁸⁵

In 1870 Emin Siddık translated Bernardin de Saint-Pierre's *Paul et Virginie* into Turkish and serialized it in the newspaper *Mümeyyiz*. It was not completed but was later published in book form. Another translation was done in 1893 by Osman Senâi [Erdemgil] under the title *Pol ve Virjini*. Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* was translated into Turkish by Mahmud Nedim Efendi in 1872 and published in Istanbul.¹⁸⁶ Recâizâde Mahmud Ekrem translated Silvio Pellico's *Le mie prigioni* from its French translation *Mes prisons* and first serialized it in the *Terakkî* newspaper in 1869 under the title *Mahbeslerim*; afterwards it was published as a book in 1874.¹⁸⁷ Recâizâde also translated Chateaubriand's *Atala* which was first serialized

183 It was republished in 1866, 1869, 1870, 1871, 1874 and 1877.

184 *Nazîre*: A work modeled after another work in respect to both content and form.

185 Like, *Polin* (1871), *Şerobino ve Selestini* (1873), *Mohikan dö Pari* (1875), *Pol Jön* (1878), and *Kadınlar Muharebesi (La Guerre des femmes)* (1880). Habib, v.II, 238, 287.

186 Habib, v.II, 140, 149.

187 Habib, v.II, 284.

in *Hakâyiku'l-Vekâyi'* in 1869.¹⁸⁸ It was published as a book in 1871 and reprinted in the next year. Chateaubriand's *Les aventures du dernier Abencérage* was translated in 1880 by A. Tahir under the title *İbn Serac-ı Âhir (Endülüşe dair)*.¹⁸⁹

Among the most translated authors in the Ottoman world were Paul de Kock and Jules Verne. From the 1870s, more than twenty books of Paul de Kock were translated into Turkish.¹⁹⁰ Besides ethical lessons and wisdom, Jules Verne's novels provided scientific and geographical information to the younger generation. Probably for this reason, these translations became very popular, so much so that some translators, like Ahmed İhsan, devoted their life to them. Jules Verne's books continued to be translated until the 1930s.¹⁹¹ One of the earliest translations was published in 1875 under the title *Seksen Günde Devr-i Âlem*. It was reprinted in 1888 and 1895.

Xavier de Montépin's *Les mystères de l'Inde* was translated into Turkish by Süleyman Vehbi and Manuk Gümüşciyan in 1874 under the title *Esrâr-ı Hind*. Up until the 1910s about thirty works were translated from the writings of Montépin. In 1880, Mahmud Şevket translated Abbé Prevaut's *Manon Lescaut*. Later translators of this work included Nuri Şeyda, İ. Panayotidis and Hasan Bedreddin, according to the entries in Özege catalogue. As of 1879 Ahmed Midhat had translated ten books by Alexandre Dumas Fils. More translations of his work appeared from 1880 onwards.¹⁹² Lesage's *Gil Blas* was translated by İstevan under the title *Sergüzeşt-i Jil Blas* in 1880. After the 1880s a great number of other books were translated into Turkish. Among the writers who were mostly translated were: Eugène Sue, George Ohnet, Hector Malot, Emile Barbieux, Emile Richbourg, Pierre Zaccone, Jules Mary, Michel Zévaco, René LeSage, Ann Ward Radcliffe, Emile Zola, Arthur Conan Doyle, Ponson du Terrail, Paul Segonzac, Maurice Leblanc, Mary Jules, Michel Morphy, and Charles Mérouvel. There were also translations from the German, Italian, Russian and English either directly or through French versions.

As in the case of the novel, drama entered the Ottoman world as a new genre through contacts with Europeans and translations. Carlo Goldoni's pieces were

188 Berk, 66.

189 Habib, v.II, 148.

190 For example, *Evlenmek İster Bir Adam* (1873), *Üç Yüzlü Bir Karı* (1877), *Güstav* (1877), *Madam Blakizkof Yahut Fitne-i Cihân* (1878), and *Loranten Yahut Seadet Yüzünden Felaket* (1881).

191 Habib, v.II, 243-247.

192 Among them were: *Lâ Dam O Kamelya* (1879), *Antonin, Bir Kadının Hikâyesi* and *İncili Hanım*, all published in 1880.

among the first to appear, but it was Molière's plays that were most often translated. Ahmed Vefik Pasha (1823-1891) translated sixteen plays into Turkish, the majority of which were adaptations. His translations were first printed in Bursa where he was provincial governor between 1878 and 1882, and later by the *Matbaa-i Âmire* in Istanbul. His success may have been due to the fact that the French scenes in these plays were changed into Islamic-Turkish ones. We should also add the translations of Teodor Kasab and Âli Mirza Habib, Güllü Agob, Mehmed Hilmi and Ziya Pasha from the works of Molière.¹⁹³ Ahmed Vefik Pasha's translations were mostly adaptations. His translations were meant to be both instructive and entertaining. He did not only provide his audience with understandable and appealing language, but also Turkicized the names, scenes, and sometimes even the themes, while advertising Western ideas.¹⁹⁴

In the 1870s, plays by Victor Hugo, Dumas Fils and Chateaubriand were translated into Turkish. Hasan Bedreddin and Mehmed Rauf even translated a play entitled *Hüda ve Aşk*, based on a work by Schiller in 1865. It was translated from the French version entitled *Intrigue et amour*.¹⁹⁵ Shakespeare's *Othello* was translated into Turkish in 1876 by Hasan Bedreddin for the first time from a French version.¹⁹⁶ Later on, Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, *Henry V*, *The Tempest*, *Macbeth*, *Julius Caesar*, and *Othello* were translated into Turkish. Thus, the most favored dramatists translated into Turkish were Molière, Racine, Corneille, and Shakespeare besides Victor Hugo and Voltaire. Some fables from Aesop were among the few classics translated in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. In 1884 Ahmed Midhat translated Xenophon's *Cyropaedia* under the title *Hüsrevnâme* from Dacier's French version.¹⁹⁷ From the mid-nineteenth century onwards, philosophical and particularly literary translations started to appear one after another. This process continued with an increase both in the number and quality of translated works up to the twentieth century and translation became an important component of late Ottoman or modern Islamic thought.

193 Habib, v.II, 44-50. Some of the Turkish adaptations from Molière were *Zoraki Tabib* (1869), *Zor Nikâhı* (1869), *Pinti Hamid* (1873), *İşkilli Memo* (1874), *Yirmi Çocuklu Bir Adam yahut Fettan Zeman İnsana Neler Yapmaz* (1879), and *Riyanın encamı* (1880).

194 About Ahmed Vefik Pasha's Molière translations, see, for example, M. G. Uluğtekin, *Ahmet Vefik Paşa'nın Çevirilerinde Osmanlılaşan Molière*, (M.A. thesis, Bilkent University, 2004); L. Ay, "Molière en Turquie et son introducteur, Ahmet Vefik Pacha," *Varia Turcica* III (1986): 283-303.

195 Habib, v.II, 162.

196 Habib, v.II, 599-601; Habib, v.I, 527.

197 Habib, v.I, 69-70.

Ultimately, most of the translators of the nineteenth century were bureaucrats who served in various positions of the state. They were a generation of a new type of intellectuals who received their education in Europe or in newly established schools of the Empire. They had knowledge of one or more European languages and modern sciences. Their positions, in fact, in the service of state helped them to put the new ideas they acquired through their education or translations into practice; and thus, they took an active part in the implementation of reforms. If we exclude earlier official translations and some individual ones, it is possible to say that from the late eighteenth century onwards the translation movement went hand in hand with the development of new educational system. Besides being an integral part of the new educational system, the movement was encouraged and sponsored by the state and local governors; the translators involved were consequently employed by the administration. By the mid-nineteenth century, the number of translators had risen to such a level that we are no longer capable of identifying them as individuals, or even of saying much about them as part of a larger group. More research on this topic remains to be done in the future.

A Survey of Translation Activity in the Ottoman Empire

Abstract ■ The article surveys the history of translation activity in the Ottoman Empire chronologically up until 1882, in order to demonstrate that translation played an integral and vital part of the wider picture of late Ottoman intellectual history. It displays the early translation activities at the Imperial *Divân* and Imperial Fleet, in provinces, foreign embassies and consulates and some translations done under the patronage of the government during the eighteenth century. The article then surveys the nineteenth century translation institutions and the translations produced within those institutions in Istanbul. Next, it provides information about the contribution of learned societies and periodicals to the translation movement. Lastly, the article reviews the nineteenth century translations.

Keywords: Ottoman Translation Activity, Translators, Dragoman, Cultural Transformation, Translation Studies, Ottoman Intellectual History

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