A History of Turkish Bible Translations
Annotated chronology with historical notes
and suggestions for further research

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With thanks to all who have suggested corrections of previous editions

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Introduction

The Turkish Bible has a history almost as old as the English, French and German Bibles of the Protestant Reformation. Two Turkish translations of the Bible were completed 350 years ago. The first was a draft manuscript by Yahya b. İshak (known as Haki), datable to the period 1657-61. It was followed by the stronger translation of Wojciech Bobowski (known as Ali Bey), who began work in 1662 and finished his final manuscript copy in 1665. One hundred years earlier the Psalms had been translated by Ahmed b. Mustafa (known as Leâlî), a Sufi scholar. These first Ottoman Turkish translations are remarkable because they were intended for Muslim readers at a time when a Protestant mission had not yet been contemplated, let alone organized, for Ottoman Turkey or any other Muslim land. A century and a half after Ali Bey, a Turkish Bible based on his manuscript was printed for the first time in Paris (New Testament 1819, Bible 1827), and this became the basis for further Turkish translations used by Armenian and Greek Christians. Beginning in 1852 revisions were made to the 1827 version, again in Arabic orthography and intended for Muslim readers. The work accelerated when an edict on religious freedom in the Ottoman Empire was promulgated in 1856 after the Crimean War.

In this study “Turkish” means the language of the Seljuk and Ottoman Turks and their successors in the Turkish Republic (Oğuz or “Western” Turkish). The Turkic languages of Central Asia and the Golden Horde are not detailed here, but fragmentary Kipchak translations that predate the Ottoman Turkish Bible will be mentioned briefly (an example is included in Appendix II). Still earlier translations or Bible fragments in Old Turkic may someday be found. In the 9th century there was a Christian khanate of the Karluk Turks centered in Taraz (southern Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan), to whom a bishop of the Church of the East (Nestorian) was appointed (Mark Dickens, “Patriarch Timothy I and the Metropolitan of the Turks,” Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, Series 3, vol. 20 (2): 117-139 [2010]). To date the earliest trace of the Bible in Central Asia is a Syriac liturgy in Uyghur transcription, intended for the use of the Turkic Uyghurs participating in the Syriac-language worship of the Nestorian Church (Mark Dickens, “Multilingual Christian manuscripts from Turfan,” Journal of the Canadian Society for Syriac Studies 9 [2009]; “Biblical fragments from the Christian library of Turfan, an eastern outpost of the Antiochian tradition,” forthcoming).

Leâlî, Haki and Ali Bey have competitors for the first Turkish translation: (1) A New Testament translation by Primus Truber in the 1570s was mentioned by Jean Deny (“À propos des traductions en Turc Osmanli des textes religieux chrétiens,” Die Welt des Islams, N.S. 4 [1]: 30-39 [1955]), but if a manuscript of this translation ever existed it may have been in Croatian rather than Turkish, and in any case it would not predate Leâlî’s Psalms. (2) The Crusader colonies interacted with Turkish emirs and their armies for two centuries, sometimes on friendly terms; so it is possible that verses or selections from the Bible were translated during the Crusades. However, Mark Dickens has not found any such reference in his study of The Chronicle of Michael the Syrian, a Syrian Orthodox Patriarch who had theological conversations with Kilç Arslan, Sultan of the Seljuk Turks.

Roman Catholic missions, see pages 6-7 and 82 below, also Appendix III.
Turkish was the lingua franca of the Ottoman Empire, which means that Turks were not its only speakers: Armenians, Greeks, and Jews also spoke Turkish, many of them as their mother tongue. But because there was as yet no common educational system in Turkey, these peoples wrote Turkish in their own alphabets. All the books annotated in this history were written in the Turkish language of Anadolu (Anatolia) and Rumeli (Turkey in Europe), but the typefaces are variously Arabic, Armenian, Bulgarian Cyrillic, Greek, Hebrew, and Latin. Almost all of these Bible translations, including those of Haki and Ali Bey, were done in Istanbul, reflecting Turkish as spoken there by various ethnic groups at various times. The first part of the Bible actually printed on an Istanbul printing press was a Turkish Torah in Hebrew characters, translated by Karaite Jews. Turkey was then a multi-ethnic society united by the Turkish language.

The Bible has a prominent place in Turkish literary history. Today’s neo-Ottomanist revival has drawn attention to the old Turkish Bibles and Bible manuscripts, including several by Muslim scholars that had been forgotten or neglected until recently. Because Ali Bey is a fascinating figure in the history of Turkish music, his Turkish Bible is regularly mentioned by music historians; one of his musical works was a setting of Psalms 1 through 14 in the style of the Ottoman court. He is memorialized in the Turkish Protestant movement as well — so much so that there is a tendency in the churches to identify every old Bible as “Ali Bey’s Bible.”

Much as the King James Version (1611) remains more or less understandable to English speakers today, the language of the first Turkish translations is still familiar to today’s Turkish speakers — if it is read to them or transcribed into Latin characters. Though they know the language, few Turks today can read the Arabic alphabet (Osmanlıca, commonly called eski harfler, old letters) in which the first Turkish Bibles were written. But when selections from these manuscripts are read to Turkish speakers, or transcribed for them, the narrative and poetic sections are understood without serious difficulty, excepting a few obsolete words. It is also true that some sections of the New Testament epistles are so replete with Arabic and Farsi phrasings that they seem hopelessly archaic to the average Turkish reader today. Students of Ottoman Turkish know how to decode the two Arabic and one Persian root words in sular ra’dıŋıŋ sedasından şitab etdiler (the waters fled from the sound of
your thunder [Psalm 104:7, Kieffer’s Bible, 1827]), but Turks today prefer purer Turkish, as in senin gürlemenin sesinden kaçılar (Kitabı Mukaddes, 1941) or göğü gürletince sular hemen çekildi (Kutsal Kitap, 2001).

The New Testament (İncil) has been in print in the Latin orthography of modern Turkish since 1933 and the Bible (Kitabı Mukaddes) since 1941. A contemporary-language version (Kutsal Kitap) was published in 2001, followed in 2003 by an alternative version that includes the Old Testament Apocrypha for the use of the Orthodox and Catholic churches. In 2005 the Syrian (Süryanî) Orthodox Archdiocese of Istanbul published a diglot Bible lectionary in Syriac with Turkish translation. A translation of the Turkish Bible was issued by a Muslim publisher for the first time in 2007, and a Turkish translation of the Torah with commentary was produced by Jewish scholars between 2006 and 2010.

The initial research on this history was conducted in the course of 2010, web-published in December 2010, and amended since then with new material provided by readers. I have annotated as many versions of the Turkish Bible as I have been able to acquire from digital libraries, used book stores (via NadirKitap.com), and individuals. Otherwise I provide bibliographic data from university library catalogs, many of them accessible via WorldCat.org. In 1901 Cooper produced a table of the 19th-century editions of the Turkish Bible, but no comprehensive listing for the entire history has appeared in print until now. Can Şakirgil, the translator of the Turkish version of my work, delved into some of the historical issues I raised, and his researches during the translation process persuaded me to update many items in this English version also.

Noel Malcolm’s engaging and detailed articles on the history of the 17th-century Dutch and English projects supersede previous constructions of this period of Turkish Bible translation. Neudecker’s manuscript studies of Ali Bey’s grammar, of a contemporary

4A.A. Cooper, “The story of the (Osmanli) Turkish version, with a brief account of related versions” (London: British & Foreign Bible Society, 1901); previously printed in Bible House Papers, No. 1/6 (1899).


collection of letters about Ali Bey, along with Funda Toprak’s study of the Four Gospels in Ali Bey’s draft translation, give us access to substantial pieces of the 17th-century manuscript tradition. Sadik Yazar has drafted a helpful guide to New Testament manuscripts by Muslim scholars in the Süleymaniye archives in Istanbul. These works, along with Schmidt’s catalog of Oriental manuscripts in Leiden and Roper’s article on early Turkish printing, have provided substance for my summaries of the early period. Works by Turkish scholars include those by Behar and Elçin of Ali Bey’s Psalms and other musical works.

In addition to Cooper, older articles by Riggs, MacCallum, Deny, and Nilson were critically explored, but I tried to confirm their statements from other sources. Cooper is the source of Ali Şimşek’s brief biography of Ali Bey that was recently reprinted in the preface to a Turkish Bible. Essentially the same version appears in Steer’s testimonial history of the

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10Funda Toprak, XVII. Yüzyıla Ait İncil Tercümesi: İnceleme – Metin – Sözlük (Ankara: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı Matbaası, 2006), pp. 117-349; she also shows two facsimile pages (though reduced in size) from each of the four Gospels on pp. 646-653.


18Deny, op.cit.

British Bible Society. Cooper was entranced by the “romance” of the Ali Bey story for confessional reasons, but even now that it has been brought down to earth by further historical research, Ali Bey’s life and work reflect a quintessentially Ottoman spirit that has attracted the attention of Jewish, Christian and Muslim historians, linguists and Bible translators.

A good portion of this study is devoted to the 17th-century translations as a demonstration of what would be possible for historians of the later centuries applying similar methods. Even for the early period much research remains to be done. Despite Schmidt’s catalog, Neudecker’s and Toprak’s studies, and a new website displaying some of the Ottoman Turkish Bibles, the 17th-century manuscripts have barely been touched for academic study, and no critical edition of any Turkish Bible manuscript is anywhere on the horizon. As online resources make archives and memoirs more accessible, the 19th-century Protestant missions in the Ottoman Empire are being studied with useful results, but the Bible translations of this period have received little attention. Comparisons of the Turkish vocabulary in the various Bible texts would be rewarded with new insights into the interreligious vitality of the Turkish language. A few examples of this kind are offered in the following pages.


22 Ali Şimşek, director of Yeni Yaşam Yayınları, has been a helpful correspondent, along with Behnan Konutgan, former director of the Turkish Bible Society (Kitabı Mukaddes Şirketi); Rod Harbottle, director of the Translation Trust; and J.A.N. Frankhuizen of the special collections department at the Leiden University Library. Can Şakırgil has provided access to several of the Bibles printed in the 19th century. Other sources are mentioned in the text of this article for their academic works. I thank everyone, named or unnamed, who has replied to my inquiries.

23 Osmanlica Kelâm: http://www.osmanlicakelam.net

Armenian and Arab Orthodox Christians were the focus of Roman Catholic missions in the Ottoman lands, but their work did not involve Turkish translations of the Bible—we will encounter the first Catholic translator of the Turkish Bible only in the 1950's. The early Catholic work was centered in Syria, where the Maronite Church became the first of several “Uniate” churches. A Catholic printing press for Arabic type was established in Aleppo in 1706 (moved to Lebanon in 1720), and though “selected books of the Bible” were among its publications, these were in Arabic and Latin and, as far as we know, did not include a Turkish translation. In 1680 Hanna Şamlı (John the Syrian), who may have been a Catholic, made a manuscript copy of Seaman’s Turkish New Testament, but it was not an original translation.

The Turkish translations are divided below into chapters according to the alphabet in which they were written. Historical issues are explored in annotations under each version.

25The Uniate movement in Syria and Iraq was basically about the desire of Greek Orthodox (Melkite) and other “eastern” churches to have local bishops of their own choosing; in other words, freedom from the heavy hand of their distant and non-Arabic-speaking patriarchs. Rome was willing to grant them this local authority, whereas the Greek Orthodox Patriarch in Istanbul, for example, was not. When the “eastern” churches united with the Roman Catholic (“western”) Church, the Latin mass was not imposed on them and they were allowed to keep their ancient liturgies and languages of worship, such as Greek, Syriac (Aramaic), and Armenian. This semi-independence allowed for creative development. In Catholic churches of Greek Orthodox background, Byzantine Greek was eventually replaced in the liturgy by Arabic. The best history in English is Bruce Masters, *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Arab World: The roots of sectarianism* (Cambridge University Press, 2001).

26ibid., chapter 4
Chapter 1

Turkish in Arabic (Ottoman Turkish, Osmanlıca) Characters

At least one Turkish Bible translation by a Muslim translator preceded the better known Christian projects that began in the 17th century. The Muslim translations tend to be fragmentary, and often their provenance and dating is unknown, even when the translator tells us his name. For example, a facsimile of a Turkish manuscript of the four Gospels and a few chapters of Acts was transcribed in a doctoral dissertation by İ. E. Özkan. The manuscript’s language is archaic and seemingly independent of wordings in later Turkish translations, which suggests that it may be from an early period. Unfortunately Özkan ventured to identify neither the translator nor the historical period to which this manuscript belongs. In one case, however, we know more.

*circa 1550 – Tercüme-i Kaside-i Fatlubni Tecidni* (Call on me and you will find me: A draft translation). Translated by Leâlî.

During the reign of Suleyman the Magnificent the Ottoman poet and Koranic scholar Ahmed b. Mustafa also known as Leâlî (born in Saruhan, died in Amasya, 1563), translated the Psalms into Turkish. He was an advocate of Turkish composition, as distinct from the Persian poetry which was cultivated by Ottoman literati. Because of his proclivity for Turkish verse we have this early treasure of Turkish Bible translation. His manuscript is found in a number of libraries under titles such as *Tercüme-i ba’zı ayât mine’z-Zebûr* (Translation of a few verses from the Psalms) and *Tercüme-i Du’â-ı Zebûr* (Translation of the prayers of the Psalms).


29 Basic biography: [http://dergiler.ankara.edu.tr/dergiler/12/849/10748.pdf](http://dergiler.ankara.edu.tr/dergiler/12/849/10748.pdf). Geoffrey Lewis, citing a 19th-century Ottoman scholar, writes that Leali was a famous poet, writing in Turkish as well as Persian, as early as the reign of Mehmet the Conqueror; if so, Leali lived a very long life (*The Turkish Language Reform* [Oxford University Press, 1999], p. 7.

30 I am grateful to Dr. Sadık Yazar for sharing his notes on Leâlî and the other Turkish manuscripts of the Psalms from a draft article to be entitled, “Osmanlı Döneminde Zebur Tercümeleri ve Le‘âlî (Ahmed b. Mustafa)’nin Tercümesi.”
Leâlî’s source text was an Arabic translation by Ibn Abbas. In a heading of the manuscript in the Süleymaniye Library, Leâlî comments on this source: “As Ibn Abbas recounts, ‘I found a sura in the Psalms sent down to David that resembles the Rahman Sura in the Glorious Koran and repeats some of its verses. This was in the Syriac language and I translated it into Arabic.’”

Comparing the Bible with the Koran and searching for biblical prophecies of the coming of the Prophet motivated Muslim translations in the early period. This motivation helps us understand why most of these manuscripts by Muslim translators featured only small fragments of the Bible. Leâlî’s translation of the Psalms, however, is different. His title, “Call on me and you will find me,” reflects the kind of biblical language that is attractive to Sufis. The spiritual experience of the presence of God and the heavenly journey are at the heart of many of their own writings, which is true also of the Psalms. A study of Leâlî and his times in light of his translation of the Psalms awaits its researcher.

The first complete Turkish Bible translations

An early proposal for a Turkish translation of the Bible seems to have been made by Erasmus during the Reformation. As a humanist he was disturbed by the exclusively military response of Catholic Europe to Ottoman expansion in the Balkans and the Mediterranean region. A hundred years later Erasmus’ suggestion that Muslims be approached with a Bible in their own language inspired J.A. Comenius (Jan Amos Komenský), a philosopher and educator of the early Enlightenment, to do something about it. Of the two Turkish translations of the Bible and another of the New Testament done in the 17th century, the two Bibles were promoted by Comenius, and he was consulted about the additional New Testament project.

31Hajji Mahmud Efendi Collection, ms. 3387.
Known as the father of modern education, Comenius was offered the presidency of Harvard College in its early years but declined, deterred by his duties as a bishop of Unitas Fratrum (The Unity of Brethren), sometimes called the Bohemian Brethren and later the Moravians. In 1656 he had fled from Poland to Amsterdam after his church had suffered a long series of persecutions under the Catholic monarchy of the Hapsburgs who ruled Central Europe.

Comenius’ benefactor, the Dutch merchant Laurens de Geer, supported the Turkish Bible project financially. Academic authority was provided by Jacob Golius (van Gool), professor of Turkish at Leiden University. Golius’ brother Peter, who lived in Aleppo, was the intended editor before printing. There being no printing presses on Ottoman soil in the 17th century, the printer was to be Johann Georg Nissel of Leiden. The point man in Constantinople was Levin Warner, the Dutch “resident” (ambassador), who recruited the translators.

1661 – *Turkish Bible in manuscript*, by Yahya bin İshak, who called himself Hâki (“the humble”, “man of the soil”).

Two manuscripts of Haki’s translation are preserved in the Warner Collection of the University Library at Leiden. One is a draft in four folio volumes (3 Old Testament, 1 New

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34For a biography of Comenius and a history of the travails of the Bohemian Brethren, see the introduction in Murphy (1995); cf. Malcolm (2007b), p. 497.


36In the early Ottoman period Istanbul (written Stamboul by Europeans) meant the old city on the peninsula between the Golden Horn, the Sea of Marmara and the Theodosian Walls. The suburbs, Galata and Pera (where foreign embassies were located), among others, were not part of the city proper. Ibn Battuta visited in 1332 and referred to Galata as a separate city (*Rihla* [Beirut, 1964], pp. 350-351; cited by Nadia Maria el-Cheikh, *Byzantium Viewed by the Arabs* [Harvard University Press, 2004], p. 207). Although the Ottoman census of 1477 included Galata it was recorded separately from Istanbul (John Freely, *Istanbul: The Imperial City* [Penguin, 1998], p. 188). In Ottoman times all of the above were collectively called Constantinople (or “Greater Istanbul” now in historical studies). In Turkish they were called Qustantiniye (from the Arabic intonation of Constantinople), which was further abbreviated to Qosdana in Jewish writings. As for Istanbul, it probably elided into its phonetic form from the way Turks pronounced the accented syllables of the Greek *kon-STAN-tino-POLi*. The notion that *İstanbul* derives from the Greek *eis ten polen* (“to the city”) is asserted in many histories but is substantiated rather weakly in the seminal essay by Steven Runciman (“Constantinople-Istanbul,” *Revue des Études Sud-Est Européennes* 7: 205-208 [1969]). In the 17th century Turks began to say that *İstanbul* means *İslam Bol* (full of Islam), which was true enough in spirit but not in etymological terms. In 1924 the surrounding towns were incorporated into Metropolitan Istanbul (*İstanbul Büyükşehir Belediyesi*), whereupon letters addressed to Constantinople were returned to sender.

Testament), the other a “fair copy” of Genesis through 1 Kings 9:9 only.\(^{38}\) The transcription of the fair copy was assigned to Nicolas Petri (ibn Butrus), a Christian from Aleppo, who had once worked as a copyist for Golius in Leiden but was now living in Constantinople. At least one other copyist was involved, as revealed by the handwriting.\(^{39}\) Since the fair copy ends in the middle of a chapter, the work of the copyists was obviously interrupted, and neither manuscript was ever printed or circulated. A third fragment in Haki’s hand was later bound inadvertently with the draft manuscript of Ali Bey.

Based on an inscription in Haki’s fair copy at the end of Deuteronomy, Neudecker dates its completion to 1659, but this probably signifies the completion of the Pentateuch only (both the draft manuscript and the fair copy). Malcolm has proposed a likely scenario of the timing of Haki’s work, arguing that his draft of the complete Bible was finished in late 1661.\(^{40}\) Then, in late 1661 or early 1662, it appears that Levin Warner evaluated the translation, apparently with the help of Ali Bey, and rejected it. This reconstruction of the timing coheres with the beginning of Ali Bey’s work on a new translation in February 1662 (see below). What weighs against it and in favor of Neucker’s conclusion that Haki finished in 1659 is the observation that it would have been remarkably inattentive of Warner to let Haki keep working on an unacceptable translation for the full four-or-five-year period from 1657 to 1661. Warner lived in Constantinople from 1657 until his death in 1665.

From correspondence recorded in a London newsletter by Samuel Hartlib, we know that the first proposal to Warner that he produce a Turkish translation was made by Comenius in 1657.\(^{41}\) Warner had been a student of Golius in Oriental languages,\(^{42}\) but when he arrived to take up his diplomatic duties in Turkey he hired out the Bible project to Haki, neither translating nor correcting the manuscripts of his translators. Warner was well enough


\(^{39}\) Neudecker (1994), p. 394f. Ibn Butrus is not identified here but Neudecker has told me that he was one of the two (or more) copyists.


satisfied with Haki’s progress in late 1659 to announce to Comenius and his Dutch friends that he would soon deliver a manuscript of the Turkish Bible ready for printing. This being the case, Warner must have hired Haki almost immediately on his arrival in Constantinople in 1657.

Who Was Haki?

Haki was a Jewish dragoman (tercüman, translator) and likely a native of Constantinople, which was called Qosdina by Jews. Neudecker has demonstrated that he translated the Old Testament from Hebrew. (No study has yet been made of Haki’s New Testament.) Some of his marginal glosses are in Ladino, the Hebræo-Spanish language of the Sephardic Jews. A comment in Latin in another hand appears at the end of Haki’s draft manuscript observing that his Turkish is full of Hebraisms and sounds like the Talmud. This disparaging note was probably written by Ali Bey.

Haki tells us his name in his manuscript, and Ali Bey mentions him once in a marginal note in his own draft manuscript of the Book of Judges. Haki is identified as Warner’s dragoman in the latter’s will, which awarded him “une veste drap” — clothing from the master’s closet being a common bequest to a servant or employee. Otherwise we know nothing of Haki’s life. His name has not surfaced from the Ottoman archives, and Neudecker’s search for the names Yahya b. İshak and Haki in the Jewish cemeteries at Hasköy and Kuzguncuk turned up nothing.

When Robert Pinkerton of the British and Foreign Bible Society (BFBS) discovered Ali Bey’s manuscripts in the Leiden archives in 1814, he missed or ignored Haki’s manuscript. A study of Pinkerton’s reports in the BFBS archives might shed light on this omission. Cooper’s

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44In the early Ottoman period Istanbul meant the old city on the peninsula between the Golden Horn, the Sea of Marmara and the Theodosian Walls. It population was primarily Muslim, but Jews still occupied Balat and Eminönü, their quarters from the Byzantine period, until they were expelled from Eminönü after the Great Fire of 1660. Until the 20th century the name Constantinople was still used to describe “Greater Istanbul”; in Turkish it was called Qustantiniye (from the Arabic intonation of Constantinople), which was further abbreviated to Qosdina in Jewish writings (http://www.jewishtoursistanbul.com/cosdina.html).


article on the history of the Turkish Bible (1901) does not mention Haki, nor do Deny (1956) or Nilson (1966). Haki’s work seems to have been unknown until Barbara Flemming examined his manuscripts and published a short article describing them in 1986.\(^48\) This was followed in 1994 by Neudecker’s excellent book on Haki’s manuscripts, informed by her knowledge of both Turkish and Hebrew. She describes his translation as “very literal” and “pseudo-interlinear” because “the clause syntax is Semitic, whereas the phrase syntax is Turkish.”\(^49\) Neudecker’s study is not a critical edition of Haki but does contain two hundred pages of 1 and 2 Samuel in strict transliteration,\(^50\) along with facsimile pages from Haki’s manuscript of these two books. She analyzes Haki’s Turkish for what it tells us about 17th-century Ottoman usage. See Appendix III below for an example of Haki’s language.

A five-page manuscript of the first eight Psalms in Ottoman Turkish by another Jewish figure, Ibrahim el-Isra’ili, is held in the Süleymaniye Archives and has been examined by Sadık Yazar.\(^51\) We do not know who Ibrahim was or when he lived. Yazar thinks the manuscript may be from an early period, but further research is needed to determine whether it predates Haki and Ali Bey.

**Background of the Early Turkish Translations**

In 1648 the Thirty Years War had ended with Protestants having failed to achieve the goal of religious toleration in Catholic lands. This European dynamic is the backdrop for the early Turkish Bible translations. Interest in Turkey on the part of Bohemian, Dutch and English Protestants was inspired by a millennial vision that has been intriguingly labeled Calvino-Turkism, a wishful political alliance between Islam and Protestantism that would encircle the Catholic Hapsburgs.\(^52\) According to the prophecies of Comenius’ friend, Mikuláš Drabik


\(^50\)Unfortunately, Neudecker’s useful transliteration scheme for Ottoman vowels can no longer be used. Her characters were produced by a DOS word processor, and Unicode does not include them.

\(^51\)Süleymaniye Library, Es’ad Efendi Collection, ms. 5. I thank Sadık Yazar for sharing with me his notes on “Zebûr Tercümeleri.”

(Nicolaus Drabicius), a Turkish victory over the Hapsburgs would be followed in God’s plan by the conversion of the Turks as a prelude to the conversion of the Jews and the union of all religions into one true church.\textsuperscript{53} (Unifying the world through spiritual enlightenment and universal education was a basic theme in the writings of Comenius.) For such a purpose a Turkish translation of the Bible had to be prepared, in Comenius’ words, “out of holy zeal for the conversion of a great nation to Christ.”\textsuperscript{54} He believed this to be an “endeavour for peace”\textsuperscript{55} among the peoples of the world. A similar millenarian vision in the mind of Samuel Hartlib inspired a parallel Turkish translation project in England (see Seaman 1666 below).

A political overture was made to the Turks during a visit to the grand vizier by Drabik’s disciple, Johann Jakob Redlinger.\textsuperscript{56} In 1665(?) Redlinger visited the Ottoman army camp in Hungary, told the grand vizier that the Turkish translation of the Bible was ready, and requested that he be invited to come to Constantinople, learn Turkish, and expound on the Bible. Nothing came of this, but Drabik’s prophecies did not depend on full-blown missionary endeavor. The key was a military victory by those “servants of God,” the Ottomans and their European allies, over the Hapsburg “idolaters” (Catholic worship being viewed as idolatrous by Protestants). As for the conversion of the Turks, it would occur after the victory by the miracle of their encounter with the Word of God in their own language. This was the era of Luther’s principle of \textit{sola scriptura}. For Comenius, the European

\begin{quote}
French king, Francis I, made a military alliance with Suleyman the Magnificent in 1526, and Titian painted a dual portrait of the two monarchs ca. 1530. Luther preached that good Christians could accept the rule of the Turks, because unlike the Pope the Turks would let Luther interpret the Bible in his own way (Richard Marius, \textit{Martin Luther} [Harvard University Press, 1999], pp. 146, 186, 236). Earlier, the Crusader cities in Syria had made various alliances with Muslim emirs during their 200-year history on the Levantine shores. In 1182 Patriarch Michael of the Syrian Orthodox Church supported Kılıç Arslan II of Rum, the Seljuk sultan. “Michael sought to affirm that Turkish rule, including all the suffering caused by their raiding and pillaging, was ultimately part of God’s plan... [T]hey had a God-ordained role to play in human history, a role that his Syrian Orthodox readers were not to question, but humbly to accept” (Mark Dickens, “The Sons of Magog: The Turks in Michael’s \textit{Chronicle},” in \textit{Parole de l’Orient} 31: 446f. [2006]).
\end{quote}

\begin{footnotes}
\footnotetext[53]{Roper, p. 7}
\footnotetext[54]{Malcolm (2007a), p. 349.}
\footnotetext[55]{Malcolm (2007a), p. 360.}
\end{footnotes}
Reformation had occurred by the spiritual power of Scripture alone, and the same could now be expected in the friendly Turkish lands as well. Such hopeful idealism predated the practical realities of the Muslim-Christian encounter later experienced by European and American Protestants who began their work in Ottoman lands only in 1819.

The visions of Drabik had been incubated in the fire of the Hapsburgs' persecution of The Unity of Brethren Church. Ottoman Turkey was already a refuge for European renegades and victims of religious persecution. Turkey was also the strongest single military power in Europe, and it was therefore logical for Comenius and Drabik to think of the Ottoman sultan as a savior. Drabik believed he had heard God instructing him to

write to your Assistant [sc. Comenius], that vessel of my grace, and tell him that he should consider how the Law of my word, and the Psalms and hymns, together with an outline of the organization of the church [sc. The Unity of Brethren], may be translated into the Turkish language and sent to the Sultan.

Comenius justified Drabik's prophecies theologically, believing that Muslims, by virtue of their belief that Jesus is the Messiah, are closer to Christianity than are the Jews, and that Muslims would therefore embrace the Gospel before the Jews did. The Turks would spontaneously “take up the teaching of the Gospel, and on their foreheads they will accept this sign of mine: Jesus of Nazareth, king of the Jews.” The conversion of the Jews would then follow at the end of time. It is important to note that Comenius never mentioned the idea of deploying Protestant evangelists in Muslim lands, though he did expect the Turks to welcome his Bible-based program of “universal” (meaning public) education.

57Comenius’ confidence in Drabik was sadly misplaced (Murphy, pp. 40-42). Drabik had previously prophesied a Swedish victory over the Poles which would be followed by Swedish support for the return of The Unity of Brethren to Bohemia from their refuge in the Polish city of Leszno. Believing Drabik, Comenius wrote to the Swedish king, encouraging an invasion of Poland. When the Poles unexpectedly defeated the Swedes, Leszno was destroyed in reprisal by the Polish army on 29 April 1656, and the Brethren were dispersed again. Comenius fled to Holland. Still loyal to his errant friend, he then arranged for the publication of the prophecies of Drabik and two other prophets of The Unity of Brethren. For this he was roundly criticised by his own followers, “accusing him of having precipitated the destruction of Leszno by propagating Drabik's predictions” (Murphy, p. 41).


59ibid.
Despite this millenarian background of the first Turkish Bible, Flemming’s description of the 17th-century Turkish Bible translation projects as “missionarisch” is an anachronism. The concept of Protestant missionaries was not known until the end of the 18th century, and none were resident in Ottoman lands until 1819. At this time “missionary” was used exclusively to describe Catholic priests and religious orders working in the French and Spanish colonies. As a result of the Franco-Ottoman military alliance Catholic missions were established in Lebanon and Aleppo from the 17th century onwards; they made converts from the Christian churches of the Syrian region but did not interest themselves in Muslims, let alone Turks.\(^61\) The Catholic ambience of the word “missionary” made it a concept that did not flow smoothly into Protestant vocabulary or Comenius’ interest in the Turks. Martin Luther had taunted the Pope to send preachers to the Turks instead of raising Catholic armies against them, but this was hyperbole: Luther himself never considered such a program for the new Evangelische Kirche. Chaplains to the diplomatic and merchant communities in Constantinople did not think of their work as a mission to the Turks, and when they engaged with local people at all it was usually with the Ottoman Christian minorities. Comenius was an energetic educator but also a man of his age: he never conceptualized the sending of missionaries. He simply dreamed of the spiritual enlightenment of the Turks by means of Bible reading, to which they would devote themselves in gratitude for the support of their Protestant allies in the conquest of Catholic Europe.

A Hebrew New Testament had been in print in Europe since 1599,\(^62\) and a Hebrew Bible was printed in 1662 in Leiden. This encouraged Comenius in his commitment to a similar Turkish translation. He drafted a dedication in which he appealed to the sultan to let the Turkish Bible be read in his realms, reminding him that God “has stirred up your spirit… to

\(^{60}\)Flemming, p. 111.

\(^{61}\)Bruce Masters, Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Arab World: The roots of sectarianism (Cambridge University Press, 2001)

take charge of restoring the Jewish people, who are dispersed throughout the world, so that they may once again obey the God of their fathers as one people and one kingdom.”

Mentioning a kingdom of the Jews appears to have been Comenius’ way of endorsing of the messianic claims of his contemporary Sabbatai Sevi, a rabbi of Smyrna, who hoped to be crowned king of Israel by the Ottoman sultan. Jews in Europe had been selling their property and heading for the Near East to await the enthronement of this Jewish king. The fervor had affected Christians also, as Comenius’ dedication reveals. As far away as Boston, Increase Mather was energized by the apocalyptic implications of the restoration of the Jews to their kingdom. He held a series of lectures on the conversion of the Jews which created such spiritual distraction in Boston that a council of pastors asked him to stop. There were no Jews in Boston, but Mather’s Puritan following was excited by the thought of the conversion of the Jews as a pre-condition of the return of Christ.

Eventually Sabbatai was arrested in Istanbul and thrown in jail, but the fervor did not die down. Jews began making pilgrimages to his prison castle at Kilitbahir on the Gallipoli Peninsula, hailing him as the messiah and king of the world, expecting the Ottoman sultan to surrender his kingdom to their messiah. The Turks had had enough. Sabbatai was summoned to an audience with Sultan Mehmet IV in Edirne in September 1666 and threatened with death, whereupon he converted to Islam on the spot.

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66 Sabbatai Sevi (Zvi) left behind an Islamo-Jewish community disparagingly called Dönme (convert, renegade), whose adherents still believe he was the messiah and that his conversion to Islam a fulfillment of the messiah’s suffering as prophesied in Isaiah and the “Servant Psalms”. In Istanbul the Dönme prefer the name Selanikli, because many of them came to Turkey from Salonica. Cf. Jacob M. Landau, “The Dönmes: Crypto-Jews under Turkish rule,” Jewish Political Studies Review 19 (1-2) (2007); Marc David Baer, The Dönme: Jewish Converts, Muslim Revolutionaries, and Secular Turks (Stanford University Press, 2009); İlhan Zorlu, Evet, Ben Selanikliyim: Türkiye Sabetaycılığı (İstanbul: Zvi-Geyik Dış Tic. Basın Yayın ve Turizm, 2004).
and the collapse of the Ottoman siege of Vienna in 1683, the visionary engine of the Calvino-Turkish utopia lost steam. The long-term survivor of this millennial period was not a Jewish kingdom but a Bible in Ottoman Turkish, of which Haki’s and Ali Bey’s manuscripts were early drafts.

1662-64, 1665 – *Turkish Bible in manuscript, by Ali Bey (Ali Ufkî)*

Wojciech Bobowski (pronounced *vòy-chek bu-bóf-ski*) was also known as Albertus Bobovius, a pen name, and as Ali Bey to the Turks. He was born in Lwów in Polish Lithuania (now Lviv, Ukraine); his birth date is uncertain but is often cited as “circa 1610.” As a boy or young man he was captured by Tatar raiders, sold as a slave (*esir*) in Istanbul, circumcised and given the name Ali. He was eventually enrolled in the sultan’s palace school (*Mekteb-i Enderun*) and served for about 20 years at the Topkapı Palace as a musician and dragoman (*tercüman, translator*). In the Ottoman classification of slave ranks, this now made him a high-status *kul* of the sultan. Evliya Çelebi tells us in his *Seyâhatnâme* that Sultan Mehmet IV once honored “Polish Ali” with the gift of a horse and complimented his Turkish fluency (“*şu düzgün konuşan, ağzı laf yapan Lehli Hâli*”).

He had gained his freedom before 1657, *i.e.* at least five years before Levin Warner hired him to translate the Bible. For biographical details and research issues on Ali Bey’s life, see Appendices IV and V.

**Ali Bey’s Manuscripts**

Preserved in four folio volumes in Leiden, Ali Bey’s draft translation is the lineal ancestor of today’s Turkish Bible. From the dates he noted when he finished drafting each book of the Bible, we know he began work in February 1662 and finished in December 1664. In 1665 he supervised at least two secretaries (as revealed by the handwriting styles) who made two “fair copies”, known also as the secretarial copies, which were sent to Golius along with the draft. One of the secretarial copies is complete and preserved in five folios (Cod. Or. 390a-d), missing only a few pages in the Book of Job; the other contains only Isaiah and several books of the Apocrypha. The draft in Ali Bey’s hand and the secretarial copies are archived in Leiden. Another fair copy—this one in Ali Bey’s hand—survives in Amsterdam.

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68 Schmidt, *op.cit.*., vol. 1, pp. 84-90, provides a list of dates written in Ali Bey’s hand in his draft manuscript., Cod. Or. 390a-d.
with corrections by Şahin Kandi superimposed (see below).\textsuperscript{70} The Turkish Language Society (Türk Dil Kurumu) in Ankara has microfilm of Ali Bey’s manuscript in Leiden.\textsuperscript{71}

One of the secretarial copies (Cod. Or. 1101a-f) features full vowel pointing, which was unusual in Ottoman Turkish manuscripts. We may only speculate about why the points were added. There were rather few Ottomanists in western Europe at the time, so perhaps Golius was concerned that a typically unpointed text might be misunderstood by his editors or typesetters; he may have requested a pointed copy for purposes of clarification. Presumably there was no intention that the vowel points be included in the printed book.

Like Haki’s, Ali Bey’s translation contains a collection of the Old Testament Apocrypha. This, along with his occasional marginal notes in Latin and the fluent Latin of his other writings, has prompted the suggestion that both he and Haki were translating from the 4th-century Latin Bible, the Vulgate. Ali Bey versified the Psalms and several other passages according to the Vulgate tradition (the numbering is different in Protestant Bibles). However, Ali Bey follows the Textus Receptus\textsuperscript{72} where New Testament textual variants are involved (in passages I have examined thus far), suggesting that his source text was one of the modern vernacular versions based on Erasmus’ Greek New Testament, perhaps the Olivétan Bible of French Protestantism and/or the King James Version. A study of Ali Bey’s spellings of proper names, \textit{e.g.} Petro, Se’mun, Filipo, Pilato, would reveal much about his connections with Christian traditions. Several of these are Italian spellings and suggest a Catholic connection.

\textsuperscript{69}Leiden University Library, Warner Collection: Cod. Or. 390a-d is Ali Bey’s rough draft; Cod. Or. 390e. is a proof sheet printed in 1662; Cod. Or. 1101a-f is the secretarial “fair copy”, and Cod. Or. 1117a is the incomplete secretarial fair copy; \textit{cf.} Schmidt, vol 1. pp. 83-92, 416-422, 435-436. Schmidt’s pp. 418 and 436 feature images of two pages from the secretarial copies in a finer hand and larger characters than the page of Ali Bey’s draft in his own hand shown on p. 85.

\textsuperscript{70}Amsterdam University Library: MS J 69c is a fair copy and MS VI H 2 is another fair copy lacking the Pentateuch, Apocrypha, and New Testament. Both fair copies are in Ali Bey’s hand. \textit{Cf.} Malcolm (2007a), pp. 336-37, fn27,28; Schmidt, vol. 4 (forthcoming), pp. 10-20.

\textsuperscript{71}Listed under letter K as Mikrofilm/34 Kitab-ı Mukaddes (Tevrat, Zebur, İncil) Ali Bey (çev.): \url{http://tdkkitaplik.org.tr/mikrofilm.asp}.

\textsuperscript{72}“Textus Receptus”, the ‘received text’, is a Latin designation used by Bible scholars for the Greek New Testament edited by Erasmus and reflected in European translations of the Reformation period, including Luther’s Bible and the King James Version: \url{http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Textus_Receptus}. Ancient Greek manuscripts discovered since the Reformation have influenced modern translations including the Turkish \textit{Kitab-ı Mukaddes} of 1878 and the \textit{Kutsal Kitap} of 2001.
The fact that Ali Bey refers to John the Baptist as *Yûhannâ Ma’madânî*, a Christian construction of John’s name in Arabic, suggests that he was in contact with the Oriental churches also, perhaps the Syrian Orthodox Church where Syriac (Aramaic) was the liturgical and Arabic the vernacular language. Ali Bey could not have consulted an Arabic Bible, because the first modern (Catholic) translation was printed in Rome only in 1671, and he would not likely have had access to the ancient and medieval Arabic manuscripts copied primarily in Egypt.

Ali Bey would not have done a Turkish translation of the Apocrypha unless it had been ordered by his Dutch Reformed sponsors. In 1648 the Westminster Confession had pointedly denounced the Apocryphal books, but this English Reformed position does not seem to have influenced Comenius, Golius and Warner: the Old Testament with appended Apocrypha was the Bible they knew. In any case they may have felt that a Turkish translation of the Bible should include all the books in the Bible of the ancient churches of the Ottoman Empire.

At the end of Haki’s manuscript a critical comment in another hand appears to have been written by Ali Bey. A likely scenario is that Warner asked Ali Bey for advice on the quality of Haki’s work, accepted Ali’s judgment that it sounded too Jewish, and hired him to produce a new translation. Haki’s manuscript was available to Ali Bey as he did his own translation. See Appendix III (a) for a comparison and indications of ways Ali Bey made use of Haki’s draft.

Ali Bey’s draft manuscripts were sent to Jacob Golius in Leiden in four parts as he finished them. Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel were sent first, and a single page from Isaiah was printed already in late 1662 as a demonstration of what the text would look like in the typeface then available.

Ali Bey generally used the Islamic theonyms *Allah Teâlâ* or simply *Allah* to translate YHWH, *Tanrı* to translate Elohim, and *Efendi(m)* or *Rabb* or *Rabbî* to translate Adonai. But he was not always consistent; for example in Genesis 1:1-2:4 he used *Cenâb Bârî* (Glorious Creator), *Bârî*

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73 Toprak, p. 119, transcribing Cod. Or. 390d.

74 Malcolm (2007a), p. 334

**Teâlâ** (Most High Creator) and **Allah Teâlâ** (Most High God), as well as the Old Turkic **Taŋrı**, to translate the single Hebrew word Elohim. Then YHWH Elohim (two words) in Gen. 2:5 is written **Taŋrı Allâhü Teâlâ** (three words). Clearly he was contextualizing the translation for a Muslim audience. Peter describes Jesus as **hayâtıŋ sultânı** (sultan of life) in Acts 3:15, where the English has “author of life”. The Old Testament patriarchs had both wives (avrat) and concubines (câriye), again reflecting the language of Ottoman culture. Since Levin Warner sent Ali Bey’s translation on to Leiden, we may presume that he approved of this kind of contextualization, but a controversy erupted over the divine names in the 1820s after his New Testament appeared in print (see below).

Levin Warner died in Turkey on 22 June 1665. The traditional dating of Ali Bey’s Bible manuscript is 1666, but this date can be forced to apply only to the fair copies of his manuscript transcribed during 1665 and sent on to Leiden by late 1665. It was probably one of these copies with vowel points that was used as the source text for the first printed Turkish New Testament in 1819 and Bible in 1827. We do not know whether the draft manuscript, completed in 1664, was consulted; the secretarial copies are more legible, one of them written in a quite elegant hand.

**The Legend of Sultan Mehmet’s Bible**

Ali Bey’s servitude in the sultan’s entourage seems to have ended before 1657, and he went to work for the Ottoman government again only in 1669. His translation of the Bible was done during four years of the intervening period, 1662-65. There is no evidence that he translated the Bible while he was a slave of the sultan or in the sultan’s service as a freedman, as claimed by MacCallum, let alone that it was Sultan Mehmet IV himself who disapproved of Haki’s translation and ordered Ali Bey to start over. **Avcı Mehmet** (“the hunter”) was a ghazi warrior who pursued a policy of converting the Jews of Istanbul and Christians in Thrace and the Balkans to Islam. By no means was he interested in translating the Bible. 77

The source of the legend seems to be that two centuries later, in 1856, Sultan Abdülmecid accepted a gift of a Turkish Bible from the British ambassador, Sir Stratford Canning, after

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76MacCallum (1942), p. 61.

77Baer, *Honored by the Glory of Islam*, op.cit. is a fine study of the long reign of Sultan Mehmet IV.
the promulgation of religious liberty in the Ottoman Empire. Later Sultan Abdulhamid II approved the printing of the Kitab-ı Mukaddes, though initially the government had resisted its publication and changed its mind only under pressure from the British (see below under Kitab-ı Mukaddes, 1878). It is historically groundless for these equivocal incidents from the latter half of the 19th century to be transposed back two centuries to the time of Ali Bey and Sultan Mehmet IV.

Nevertheless, both Christians and Muslims have circulated the conjecture that Sultan Mehmed ordered the translation of the Bible. The coincidence that Ali Bey who had once been the Sultan’s slave was also a Bible translator has seeded an imaginary scenario of interreligious convergence between Islam and Christianity that never occurred. History is easily constructed in our own image, and in this case the construction has a double source. On the one hand, Turkish scholars of the Ottoman heritage naturally try to minimize European influence on Ottoman cultural achievements, and the Turkish Bible was one of these. On the other hand, Christians hope that, if an Ottoman sultan actually ordered the Turkish Bible, it will now gain legitimacy in a country where Muslims tend to discredit it. However captivating, the legend must give way to the historical record, which testifies that the early translations of the Turkish Bible were inspired, directed and funded from the Netherlands. Ali Bey did his translation while employed by the Dutch ambassador and did not begin work on it until four or five years after he was freed from slavery.

The Quality of Ali Bey’s Translation and the Revision of his Manuscripts

In 1666 Golius began reading Ali Bey’s fair copy. Until then Golius, Comenius and others had been under the impression that Levin Warner was doing the translation himself, but by now Warner was dead and they finally learned that Ali Bey was the translator. Golius criticized Ali Bey’s work for both style and accuracy and proposed that revisions be done by Şahin ibn Kandi of Aleppo. Şahin was an Armenian copyist of Oriental manuscripts at Leiden University, supervised by Golius and funded by de Geer. Corrections in Şahin’s hand

78 Akın and Bayraktar, in their introduction to Ekümenik Kutsal Kitap (see below, 2007), p. 4.

can be seen on Ali Bey’s fair copy in Amsterdam, where several books of the Old Testament written out in Şahin’s hand are also archived.

The nature of Şahin’s corrections has not been studied, nor do we know precisely why Golius felt corrections were needed, so we must rely the evaluations of Ali Bey’s work by later scholars. Flemming praised Ali Bey’s strenuous work, as compared to Haki’s heavy word-for-word translation: “Ali Beg searches for lofty and learned words to form a Biblical Turkish style in the spirit of the original.”80 But Şahin may have noted that sometimes Ali Bey’s spelling of Arabic words is inconsistent; for example, he occasionally drops the initial \( \text{ayin} \) in words beginning with the vowel \( a \). Ali Bey used words that eventually became obsolete, were rightly corrected by Kieffer, and never appeared again in any translation, though these should not have bothered Şahin who was Ali Bey’s contemporary. On rare occasions Ali Bey’s Turkish syntax is excessively conversational, as in 2 Samuel 11:22 where he wrote, “\( \text{mujdeci gitti ve gelip Dâvûd’a i’lâm eyledi cümle ol nesne ki Yoâb onun için onu gönderdi idi} \),” which Kieffer properly corrected to read “\( \text{haberci gitti ve gelip Dâvuda cümle Yoâbinsi oña ismarladığını i’lâm eyledi} \).” On the other hand, Ali Bey’s choice of words was often better than Kieffer’s, so that two later translators, Selim Efendi and Schauffler, sometimes rejected Kieffer’s version and returned to Ali Bey’s usage as it had appeared in the Turkish New Testament of 1819. Most notably, Ali Bey constructs narrative sentences in an uncomplicated and conversational manner. Any criticism of Ali Bey’s occasionally archaic vocabulary must be tempered by Sadık Yazar’s observation that Ali Bey was loyal to the sentence structure of the Turkish of his time. The literary tradition he knew often featured simple and popular Turkish, Yusuf Emre being the classic example.

Since he was an Ottoman Christian, Şahin may have objected to the way Ali Bey delved into Islamic culture to find equivalents of the biblical material. Ali Bey knew that Muslims, not Christians, were the target audience for his Bible, but Şahin may not have grasped or accepted this. In Matthew 6:5-6, for example, Jesus speaks these words in Ali Bey’s rendering:

\[
\text{Namâz kıldığın zamân mürâ’iler gibi olma zîrâ onlar kenisalarda ve çarşılarda adamlara gördûn melk için namâza ikâmet etmeği severler — hakkâ derim size ki artık cezâsımı}
\]

80Flemming, p. 114, my translation.
(When you recite the namaz don’t be like the hypocrites, because they love to stand up in the synagogues and at the street junctions for the namaz so as to be seen by men. Truly I say to you they have received their recompense. But when you recite the namaz go into your own room and shut the door and say your namaz to your Father who is in halvet and God who sees in halvet will grant you sevap openly.)

Here we feel the daily experience of the Turkish street, where men get up from their work, close their shops, walk to the mosque, sit down and wait for imam to start, then stand up for the first cycle of prostrations. Whether this is for love of God or “to be seen by men” is a regular subject of conversation among Muslims. Ali Bey knew that many in the Muslim community would applaud Jesus’ words. In this passage not only namaz but also halvet and sevap are Islamic terms. For the Sufis a halvet was a place of seclusion in the presence of God, and sevap is the merit of good deeds earning God’s favor. Protestants will squirm at the thought that Jesus was talking about sevap in this passage, but it is difficult for Muslim readers to interpret it in any other way, regardless of what kind of vocabulary is used. Ali Bey hesitated only at one point: he could have used a neutral word that would imply “mosque” but instead wrote kenisa which can only mean church or synagogue, thus reminding his Muslim readers that Jesus was actually speaking to Jews.

Toprak notes a few instances where Ali Bey’s draft manuscript shows evidence of having been translated by a non-native speaker of Turkish. Some of these recur in Kieffer’s edition of 1827 and most were corrected in the editions of Türafi Efendi in the 1850s and by Selim and Schauffler in the following decade. As shown by Toprak, Ali Bey also has a habit of using a plural noun after an adjectival number that modifies it, e.g. ol yedi etmekleri ve balıkları alıp şükr edip pareledi, where yedi etmiği (ekmüğü) ve balığı would be expected by a modern native speaker. In Ali Bey’s time the double plural seems to have been under the influence of Turkish numbers modifying Arabic plural nouns; so it would not have been incorrect as it is in Turkish today.

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81 Toprak, pp. 32, 36, 54.
When Baron von Diez reported to the Bible Society in 1814 he praised the translation as accurate and inspiring:

If I find, in the progress of the work, Ali Bey’s version as correct as hitherto, I do not say too much when I assert that it will rank among the very best versions of the sacred volume; and in many passages even excel them. His style is truly classical. Indeed, should the Turkish language ever be lost, it might be restored from this work in all its copiousness and ease. Having made the Turkish language for thirty years my constant study, and considered it almost a second mother tongue, it is really a treat to me to sit down in order to hear the Word of God speaking to me in this language.\(^{82}\)

This sentiment is felt also by readers today, which is remarkable considering that Turkish was not Ali Bey’s native language.

In August 1666 Ali Bey was unaware that Şahin had been asked to revise his work and hoped that he might be invited to do the job himself. Under his Latin pen name, Albertus Bobovius, he wrote to Isaac Basire, an English friend who had introduced him to the English ambassador. In the letter he writes that he would like to work in England and revise his translation by consulting the Bible commentary of the Swiss scholar Theodore Beza, fulfilling a wish Warner had voiced to him.\(^{83}\) In the end, however, Ali Bey did not revise his work, and Şahin never completed his revisions, which seem not to have been consulted for any subsequent translation.

**The End of the Dutch Project**

Warner had died in Turkey in 1665, before Ali Bey’s fair copy was finished. Then, crucially, Laurens de Geer died in 1666. His heirs continued to support Comenius and apparently also Şahin for a time as he revised Ali Bey’s Turkish Bible. But then Golius also died, and in June 1667 Johann Heinrich Hottinger, a Swiss Orientalist who would have provided new expertise for the translation project, was killed in a boating accident before he could take up his professorial duties in Leiden. De Geer had been the only money behind the Dutch

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\(^{82}\)Cited in Cooper, p. 11; from *The Christian Observer conducted by the members of the established church for the year 1832* (London: J. Hatchard & Son, 1832), vol. 32, p. 255. URL: [http://books.google.com/books?id=7uARAAAAYAAJ&printsec=frontcover&dq=christian+observer+1832&source=bl&ots=FEJGIaljklJL&sig=vp2gJ01nSw10v7Ik9rXASr7BVt4&hl=en&ei=O8aUTNHNOsOKswbK1IFb&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=1&ved=0CA8Q6AEwAA#v=onepage&q=christian%20observer%201832&f=false].

\(^{83}\)Neudecker (2005), pp. 178ff.
project, and Hottinger’s death was felt by Comenius as a judgment of God.\textsuperscript{84} Comenius did not know that Ali Bey was eager to come to Europe to revise his work further, because Ali had sent his letter to Basire in England, not to Comenius in Holland.

Comenius died in 1670. Contrary to what one writer has said,\textsuperscript{85} he had not abandoned the Turkish Bible because the translation was not good enough; rather, the project had proven to be too complex for the time. A translation project involving a document as large as the Bible requires scholarshi, and money, and both had now evaporated. Bible translation also requires a contextualized grasp of cross-cultural communication. Immersed in Ottoman ethnic realities, Ali Bey understood this; Comenius’ so-called universal philosophy did not.

In 1679 a plan to print Ali Bey’s Bible was revived by Christian Vladislav Nigrin who had been hired to go through Comenius’ unpublished papers, but no Orientalist could be found to finish the revisions of Şahin. The person who might have revised it, Ali Bey himself, had also died by this time in Turkey (ca. 1677).

Failure to print the Turkish Bible in the 17th century has been attributed to the very small pool of Turkish linguists in Europe at the time.\textsuperscript{86} Another factor was the project’s dependence on private patronage. There was no church support that might have continued the project beyond the lives of individual benefactors. Ali Bey’s Bible was finally printed only after the Bible societies were founded in the 19th century.

Funda Toprak has published a word-for-word transcription of the Four Gospels in Ali Bey’s draft translation (Leiden ms. 390d); her detailed glossary of his vocabulary is a significant contribution to 17th-century Turkish linguistics.\textsuperscript{87} A full glossary of Ali Bey’s vocabulary will be available when the transcription of his full text is completed at OslamlicaKelam.net.

For a biography of Ali Bey and his times see Appendix IV. For an essay on Ottoman slavery see Appendix V.

\textsuperscript{84}Malcolm (2007a), p. 354.

\textsuperscript{85}Mike W. Stroope, “The legacy of John Amos Comenius,” \textit{International Bulletin of Missionary Research} 29 (4): 204-208 (2005); for this statement, p. 207.

\textsuperscript{86}Malcolm (2007a), p. 360ff.

\textsuperscript{87}Toprak, op.cit., pp. 351-644.
The only known manuscript of Ali Bey’s *Mezamir* was on display at the Sabancı Museum in Istanbul in June-September 2010. Cem Behar’s study of this manuscript begins with a careful introduction in Turkish on the life of Ali Ufkî, which he has now updated in another essay on Ottoman music history. His study of the *Mezamir* includes the 14 psalms in the romanized transliteration used today by Turkish scholars, as well as staff notation in both facsimile and modern form. Each of Ali Bey’s musical psalms is longer and more poetic than the Psalms of his Bible translation. For example, the simple language of Psalm 8 in Ali Bey’s Bible finished in 1665: “Ey Efendimiz Allah Teâlâ, cümle yerde ismiŋ ne kadar azimdir ki izzetini gökler üzerine koduŋ” (O Lord, our Master, how magnificent is your name in all the earth that you have fixed your glory above the skies) may be compared with the version in the *Mezamir*:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Ey Perverdigârmuz Hakk Teâlâ} & \quad \text{O Highest and Righteous, our Protector} \\
\text{Ne kadar mucib ü azîm ü a’lâ} & \quad \text{How gracious and magnificent and exalted} \\
\text{İsm-i izzetin bahr ü berde} & \quad \text{Is your glorious name on the face of the sea} \\
\text{Semâ üstünde hem cemi’ yerde.} & \quad \text{Over the sky and in all the earth.}
\end{align*}
\]

Considerations of rhyme, meter and the tastes of a Muslim audience influenced the way Ali Bey turned the psalm into a hymn.

Ali Bey adapted the tunes from the Genevan Psalter and set them to the Turkish modal system. It has been speculated that he knew the Genevan Psalter from his training as a church musician in Lwów, but there is no documentary evidence for this. It is more likely that he received a copy from one of his European friends (see Appendix IV).

Turkish musicians honor Santûrî Ali Ufkî, the master of the santur (zither), for his larger and earlier work, *Mecmûa-i Sâz ü Söz*. Recently another of his musical manuscripts has been

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90 In Behar (1990) the transcriptions are on pp. 61-85, words and music in modern staff notation on pp. 87-92; and the manuscript facsimile on pp. 95-104.

91 Elçin (1976).
discovered. In its time it was the first collection of Ottoman music written in western staff notation, datable to the early 1650s. *Mezamir* seems to have been a later work, though its date is uncertain. Thanks to Turkish music historians, there has been more critical study of the texts of Ali Bey the musician than those of Ali Bey the Bible translator.

Ali Bey worked on these musical psalms toward the end of his life. The timing is evidence of his enduring interest in the Bible. He appears to have sustained a commitment to contextualize the religion of his youth in an Islamic medium even after his Bible translation was finished. Several CD's include renditions of his Psalms. Strikingly, these arrangements create a spiritual atmosphere similar to 17th-century Puritan hymnody. But *Mezamir* cannot have been intended for a Christian audience. It was Ottoman chamber music for an evening’s entertainment in the cultured and mystical ambience of *Der Saadet*, the Gate of Bliss, also known as Istanbul.


Seaman’s *İncil-i Mukaddes*, preceded by his booklet of the epistles of John, was the first Turkish New Testament ever printed, though its circulation was limited and its afterlife short. For various reasons it is not accorded the same honor as Ali Bey’s translation. It is the only Turkish translation that ever used the Aramaic *Yesû* instead of the Arabic *İsâ* as the name of Jesus. An invocation of the Holy Trinity is written in Arabic on the top of the title page: “Bismi-’llâh ve’l-İbn ve’l-Rûhü’l-Kudüs el-Allah el-Vâhid.”

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William Seaman (1606-1680) was an Oxford graduate and clergyman who spent a few years (ca. 1628-31) in Constantinople as chaplain to the English ambassador. He cannot have been there as late as 1639, as is sometimes stated.\footnote{Malcolm (2007a), p. 339; Alastair Hamilton, “William Seaman,” Oxford Dictionary of National Biography (Oxford University Press, 2004-2010). URL: http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/printable/24986. The end of the ambassador’s tenure in Constantinople, not Seaman’s was 1639.} Seaman was the pioneer of Turkish studies in England. His first publication was an English translation of a Turkish history of the early Ottoman period (1652), and his crowning work was a five-volume grammar, Grammatica linguae turcicae (1670). The latter was printed in Ottoman characters, unlike earlier European grammars of Turkish.

In 1659 Seaman arranged for the printing of his Turkish “sample” of the Bible from John’s epistles, after which he was recruited by Robert Boyle to translate a Puritan catechism, printed in 1661.\footnote{Hannah Neudecker, “Bobowski’s Turkish translation of the Anglican catechism” (forthcoming).} Boyle was a key figure “in the circle of Samuel Hartlib, whose millenarian convictions included belief in the imminent conversion to Christianity of the Muslims and a determination to hasten the process. In England the plan was fostered by Hartlib himself, Henry Oldenburg, John Durie, and above all Robert Boyle…”\footnote{Quoted in Malcolm (2007a), p. 339.}

Seaman emerged as the best English candidate to translate the New Testament, but this proved to be a bridge too far for him. It is one thing to translate a historical work from a foreign language into one’s mother tongue, which requires only a passive knowledge of the foreign language. It is quite another matter to translate from one’s mother tongue into a second language, which requires a high level of idiomatic and cultural fluency. Seaman had lived in Turkey for only a short time and could not possibly have acquired this level of fluency.

Seaman had already drafted the Acts of the Apostles and one of the Gospels when he was forestalled by news from Holland that “Warner’s” (=Ali Bey’s) Turkish Bible was almost finished. In late 1664 Seaman resumed his work because the Dutch project appeared to be delayed and it was thought in England that it involved only the Old Testament, though we now know that Ali Bey had already finished his complete draft of the Bible. When this news reached England, the Hartlib circle decided it would be well in any case to have two draft
translations of the Turkish New Testament to compare. This seems to have set a precedent: the Turkish Bible has never been confined to one translation alone, not even in its first decade in the 1660s.

Seaman secured financial backing from English merchants trading in Turkey, and Boyle decided to make up any shortfall himself; so the New Testament proceeded to press. Proof sheets were printed in Oxford beginning in November 1664, after which the presses ran slowly, a few sheets each week, until June 1666. The long printing process appears to have been due to a shortage of lead type for Ottoman Turkish: proofs had to be sent to Seaman in London or his country home before the next sheets could be set in type in Oxford.

Henry Oldenburg had been passing news between Holland and England on the progress of the two translations. In February 1666 Comenius proposed to Oldenburg that the printing of the Bible be coordinated, using Seaman’s New Testament and Ali Bey’s Old Testament. Collaboration came to quick end, however, when the Dutch scholar Golius, already uncertain about the quality of Ali Bey’s work, examined Seaman’s New Testament and “considered its language to be so artificial as to be virtually incomprehensible.” His Armenian employee Şahin Kandi told him that it was worthless and would not be understood by a Turk.

Several libraries still catalog Seaman’s İncil-i Mukaddes erroneously as a Nogai (Tatar) translation from the North Caucasus, but the mistake has been deemed understandable considering how contrived Seaman’s Ottoman Turkish was. The Turkish grammar he published later was also criticised during his lifetime: “It lacks any form of systematic approach to Turkish, contains numerous errors, and includes a thoroughly unreliable guide to the pronunciation of the language.”

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98Malcolm (2007a), p. 342

99Roper, p. 4


101Roper, p. 5; Riggs, p. 237.

102Hamilton, op.cit.
In retrospect Seaman’s failure seems inevitable. He did his translation in England, apparently without access to native speakers of Turkish. Bible translation would not be done this way today. It always begins with a draft by a native speaker of the target language and involves a team approach. Seaman had no team and his knowledge of Turkish was passive. Ali Bey, by contrast, had lived in Turkey for 30 years when he began his translation, did all his work in Turkey, had access to Haki’s draft translation, which had also been done in Turkey, and through his experience as a court translator had learned a plain and fluent style that tended to conceal evidence of his foreignness. Malcolm attempts a speculative defense of Seaman’s Turkish as merely the simplified language of the people instead of the cultured Turkish which Golius and Şahin advocated. This is untenable. Malcolm does not claim to have examined Seaman’s style or vocabulary. A comparative examination of the two texts demonstrates that it is Ali Bey’s translation that is the simple and conversational one. Even Seaman’s title for the New Testament sounds contrived.

In both Holland and England financial backing for the Turkish Bible translations was provided by merchants — men who owned sailing ships, traded in Mediterranean ports and were familiar with the Turkish coast. Some copies of Seaman’s New Testament were sent to Smyrna in 1672, but “given the poor Turkish of the edition, and the general reluctance of Muslims to accept or read Christian texts anyway, it is unlikely that many found their way into the hands or the libraries of Turkish readers.”103 Hanna Şamlı, a Syrian Christian, copied Seaman’s translation out by hand (see below, 1680), so at least one copy arrived somehow at his doorstep. Despite the more lasting influence of Ali Bey’s superior translation, Seaman’s New Testament was the first printed book of the Turkish Bible to arrive in Ottoman territory, even if we have no evidence that any Turk ever read it.

The İncil-i Mukaddes is available in microform at a few university libraries in the USA and the original book in Cambridge and Leiden. One was sold for a high price at auction in 1995.104 Selections from Seaman’s translation were reprinted in Germany in the mid-18th century for use in a Christian training program (see below) but never again since then. Seaman’s true legacy in the history of the Turkish Bible is that his publications pioneered the creation of lead type for Ottoman Turkish. At the time there was no printing press in Turkey.

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103Roper, p. 8


Hanna Şamlî (“John the Syrian”) tells us in a half-page afterword to the Four Gospels that he wrote it down between 14 August and 18 September 1680, asking Christians to pray for him as he worked. I conclude that he copied Seaman’s book directly, because the last page of the Gospel of John which I have seen is an exact copy of Seaman’s printed text of 1666; even Seaman’s strange spellings and oddities are the same. Hanna does not tell us where he was when he wrote this manuscript; presumably he acquired a copy of Seaman’s New Testament in Syria.

Why would Hanna have made a manuscript from a printed book? Perhaps he had never seen a Bible in Turkish before and having borrowed it and promised to return it he wanted a copy to keep so made a manuscript from it. Hanna gives no indication that he knew of Ali Bey’s manuscript.

Another partial New Testament in the Turkish collection at the Bibliothèque Nationale has been dated by Blochet to the 1830’s on the basis of the handwriting.105


The German Oriental Institutes

Though Protestants were disappointed by the Catholic victory over the Turks in 1683, their engagement with Jews and Muslims continued. In 1724 a Protestant institute for Jewish studies was founded in Halle. The Institutum Judaicum was the first of several such schools that taught Christian apologetics with the goal of converting Jews. For the next two centuries Jewish evangelism was a strong movement in Europe, whose character was transmuted into programs of interreligious studies only after the Nazi genocide against the Jews. The first Institutum Judaicum also had a Muslim focus, printing Bibles, Scripture portions, language manuals and evangelistic tracts in Arabic, Hindustani (Urdu), Persian, and Turkish, as well

105E. Blochet, Catalogue des manuscrits turques / Bibliotheque Nationale, p. 166f. (available from the library).
as Hebrew and Yiddish, under the tutelage of Johann Heinrich Callenberg (1694-1760). It is unclear whether these tracts were ever distributed to Muslims or whether the *Institutum Judaicum* ever sent any of its graduates to Muslim cities.


Callenberg’s Gospel of Luke was a reprint of one book from Seaman’s Turkish New Testament. Luke was followed in 1747 by *Pauli Apostoli Epistola ad Romanos Turcice*¹⁰⁶ (Letter of the Apostle Paul to the Romans in Turkish), in 1749 by the Acts of the Apostles, and in the 1750s by the Gospel of John, the First Epistle of John, and Hebrews.¹⁰⁷

Callenberg also wrote a 48-page booklet entitled: “Short account of an essay, to bring the Jewish nation to the knowledge and practice of the truth of the Gospel and his endeavour to promote the conversion of the Mahommedans to Christianity” (1732). The work was reprinted many times; the English version first appeared in 1734.


This booklet comprises a preface by N.W. Schroeder of Marburg and 28 pages of Ali Bey’s Turkish text of Genesis 1-4 with Latin in parallel columns. Schroeder tells us that his father had purchased in Amsterdam two handwritten “codices” of Ali Bey’s translation of the five books of Moses, one of them with vowel points. Schroeder’s mention of these “books” of Ali Bey’s manuscript raises questions about how many copies once existed and in what form. The only copies known today are the ones mentioned by Ali Bey himself in his letter to Isaac Basire and preserved in Leiden and Amsterdam. Except for Schroeder’s comment there is no evidence of copies made later. A plausible scenario is that Schroeder’s father bought parts of

¹⁰⁶A library listing in WorldCat.org is evidence that Seaman’s New Testament was the text for Callenberg’s Turkish translations: “Texte de l’éđ. du N.T. trad. en nogay (dialecte turc du nord du Caucase) par William Seaman, Oxford, Henry Hall, 1666, repris et éđ. par Johann Heinrich Callenberg.” The reference to Nogay Turkish is in error but the reference to Seaman is probably not.

¹⁰⁷Luke may have been preceded by Matthew in 1735 but I have not found a library record of this book.
the incomplete secretarial copies of Ali Bey’s draft manuscript, the ones that had been done in Istanbul in 1665 and could have been bound later in smaller codices, section by section.\textsuperscript{108}

Schroeder’s introduction reveals a limited knowledge of Ali Bey’s life based on a version published in 1690 by Thomas Hyde (1636-1703), an English Orientalist at Oxford.\textsuperscript{109} Schroeder repeats Hyde’s assertion that Ali Bey was first dragoman (chief translator) under Sultan Mehmet IV. He also leaps to the unwarranted conclusion that Ali Bey’s desire to move to England and return to the Christian faith, as noted by Hyde, had actually taken place.\textsuperscript{110} Schroeder claims that some of Ali Bey’s works had been suppressed by the Turks—a statement for which there is no other evidence in the historical record.

However brief, Schroeder’s booklet is the earliest printing of Ali Bey’s text, discounting the single proof sheet of Isaiah printed in Leiden in 1662. Appendix III(b) shows a brief transliterated section of Schroeder’s text of Ali Bey’s Genesis. But apparently Schroeder never printed the rest of the manuscripts in his possession. Proximity of time and place with Callenberg’s publication of individual books of the Turkish Bible from Seaman’s İncil-i Mukaddes suggests that Schroeder may have had a connection (or been in competition) with the printing operation at the Institutum Judaicum. There is a hint of this in Schroeder’s preface where he comments that Ali Bey had lived “quite constantly among the Turks themselves” (apud ipsos Turcas frequentioribus). Perhaps this was an oblique way of criticising Callenberg’s use of the translation of Seaman, who had only briefly inhabited the diplomatic quarter in Constantinople and had never lived “quite constantly among the Turks.”

Writing in 1825, Ebenezer Henderson mentioned a new printing of Ali Bey’s text in Berlin and showed an example that corresponds exactly to the first part of Schroeder’s text of Ali Bey.

\begin{itemize}
  \item[\textsuperscript{108}] Notably, MS VI H 2 archived in Amsterdam is an incomplete fair copy of Ali Bey’s manuscript that lacks the Pentateuch, Apocrypha, and New Testament.
  \item[\textsuperscript{110}] Many thanks to Ashley Parrott, who translated Schroeder’s preface for me.
\end{itemize}
Bey’s Genesis.\textsuperscript{111} Henderson does not provide a reference, but it seems that Schroeder’s booklet had been (or was about to be) reprinted in Berlin. I have not been able to locate this edition, and it is uncertain that it ever existed.

**The Bible Societies**

The Turkish translation projects of the 17th century had depended on private benefactors. In the 18th century Callenberg’s Oriental institute had limited resources and managed to print only Bible selections. A sustainable program of Turkish Bible publication began only with the Bible societies of the 19th century. The British and Foreign Bible Society (BFBS) was founded in London in 1804.\textsuperscript{112} It sponsored and funded Turkish Bible translation for the next two centuries, beginning with the discovery of Ali Bey’s manuscript in Leiden by Robert Pinkerton (1780-1859).\textsuperscript{113} According to a BFBS report addressed to its patron almost 20 years later, this happened as follows:

In the year 1814 Mr. (now Dr.) Pinkerton, being on a tour of the Netherlands, sent information to London, respecting a Turkish translation of the whole Bible in manuscript, which had been deposited for a century and a half in the archives of the University of Leyden. Your lordship cannot have forgotten the delight with which this intelligence was received by every biblical scholar and every friend of religion, more especially when it was stated that by a venerable nobleman, Baron von Diez, who had formerly been the [P]russian Ambassador at Constantinople, and was a competent Turkish scholar, and whose character stood high for piety and zeal for the propagation of Divine truth, that “the translation was accurate, and the style most excellent,” and that he himself would edit the manuscript and superintend its printing. To convey the whole inspired word of God into the very strongholds of the false prophet, was a prospect that filled with joy every Christian heart; and it seemed, with any desecration of the word, truly providential that this manuscript should have been so long prepared, and have survived the vicissitudes

\textsuperscript{111}Ebenezer Henderson, *The Turkish New Testament Incapable of Defence, and the true principles of Biblical translation vincidated: in answer to Professor Lee’s “Remarks on Dr. Henderson’s Appeal to the Bible Society, on the subject of the Turkish version of the New Testament, printed at Paris in 1819.* (London: C. & J. Rivington, 1825), pp. 92f. URL: [http://books.google.com/books?id=13IsAAAAYAAJ&printsec=frontcover&dq=Ebenezer+Henderson+Turkish&source=bl&ots=13j0UQ8X0j&sig=xrD5mVOUTh2pReQP86iAoxVUetY&hl=en&ei=xOeHTOXcNISPswaWkrCbCg&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=2&ved=0CBMQ6AEwAQ#v=onepage&q&f=false].

\textsuperscript{112}Steer, op.cit.


of years, and the conflagrations and sackings of the late [Napoleonic] war, till the
return of peace, and the institution of Bible Societies afforded facilities for its
printing and circulation.115

The BFBS was impressed with Ali Bey’s translation because it sounded like classical Turkish
but was simple and idiomatic. This shows that it is an error to say that the old translations
were wooden and incomprehensible — a prejudice of the post-Ottoman era. Both Ali Bey in
the 17th century and the Bible Societies in the 19th century recognized the importance of
contemporary vocabulary and style in Bible translation.

In 1813 the BFBS spawned a Russian Bible Society in St. Petersburg, which printed a Turkish
New Testament a few years later (see Chapter 4 below). The American Bible Society (ABS)
was founded in 1814 but did not begin to interest itself in the Ottoman world until 1836.116
The earliest American books in the Ottoman languages were printed at the printing house of
the Church Missionary Society (CMS, Anglican). This press had been established on Malta in
1815 after Britain occupied the strategic Mediterranean island during the Napoleonic Wars.
As for the BFBS’s first Turkish project, its investigations led it to the conclusion that the only
printing press for Ottoman Turkish that could handle a large book was in Paris.

1819 – Kitab ül-ahd el-cedid el-mensub ila Rabbına İsa el-Mesih (The Book of the New
Jean Daniel Kieffer. Printed at the Imprimérie Royal in Paris by the BFBS. 483 pp. 13 cm
x 22 cm

This rare book can be found today in Leiden, Weimar, the British Library, the French
National Library, the Ramseyer Collection at the University of Minnesota-Duluth, and in
Turkey at the National Library (Milli Kütüphane), the Seyfetti Özge Bağış Kitapları collection
at Atatürk University in Erzurum, and a private collection in Ankara. Another copy was
offered in 2012 at a very high price by an antique bookseller. It is printed on rough cream-
colored paper in a fine typeface and mostly without vowel points. As befits a holy book
intended for the use of Muslims, the titles of this and all the 19th-century Bibles were written
in Arabic, though the rest of the book was in Ottoman Turkish. (After the primary title itself


116Peter J. Wosh, Spreading the Word: The Bible business in nineteenth-century America (Cornell University
the remainder of the title page features Turkish grammar, but almost every word is from Arabic.) In the Muslim world holy books are recognizable as holy by their Arabic titles.

In 1814 the preparation of Ali Bey’s manuscript for publication had been assigned by the new British Bible Society to Baron H.F. von Diez, but when he died in 1817 Jean Daniel Kieffer (1767-1833) was engaged to continue the project in July of that year. Kieffer was professor of Turkish at the Collège de France and interpreter to the French king. He qualified for these positions during his tenure as a diplomatic officer, serving in Constantinople from 1796 to 1803 and perfecting his Turkish while living for three years in the Yedikule prison after Napoleon had annoyed the sultan by invading Egypt in 1798. Kieffer's Turkish-French dictionary, published in 1835,\textsuperscript{117} was the standard until Redhouse's dictionary superseded it in 1855. As professor of Turkish Kieffer taught two men who became Bible translators, Wilhelm Schauffler and Elias Riggs.

A native of Strassbourg, Kieffer had trained for the Christian ministry, but his linguistic talents led him into the diplomatic service. He was a member of the consistory of the Evangelical (Lutheran) Church of France and served the BFBS as their principal agent in France.\textsuperscript{118} One biographical sketch comments that the ten years spent by Kieffer on Bible translation was “the great work of his life.”\textsuperscript{119}

Von Diez and Kieffer made changes to the divine names in Ali Bey’s Leiden manuscript (not consulting the copy with Şahin’s corrections, as far as we know). They standardized Allah and Rabb as equivalents of Elohim and YHWH, respectively.\textsuperscript{120} Malcolm suggests that Kieffer’s revisions


\textsuperscript{119}URL: http://turquie-culture.fr/pages/turc-et-langues-turques/biographies/kieffer-jean-daniel.html

\textsuperscript{120}See the discussion below under Kieffer’s NT of 1819, also Appendix II for a comparison of Ali Bey’s and Kieffer’s use of the divine names in Genesis 1-2. I have compared Toprak’s transcription of Ali Bey’s draft manuscript of the Gospels and Schroeder’s 1739 edition of Genesis 1-4, which is Ali Bey’s text, with Kieffer’s Bible of 1827.
were mostly interpretative, based on comparisons with the Hebrew and Greek and with other modern translations, not corrections of erroneous Turkish... [This] suggests that the criticisms of Golius and Shahin Kandi [had been] either too severe, or also based more on interpretative considerations.\(^{121}\)

Such a statement is valid as far as the manuscripts of 1664-65 are concerned in their relationship to the 1819 New Testament. As we will see, however, extensive corrections were made in the 1827 Turkish Bible, especially in the New Testament, with Kieffer actually garbling Ali Bey’s excellent Turkish, as a result of pressure from British critics. In the Old Testament Kieffer made relatively fewer corrections to Ali Bey’s text.

Mistranslations in Kieffer’s New Testament were alleged by Ebenezer Henderson (1784-1858), who accused him of failing to correct Ali Bey on a number of points, most of them theological in nature. The title of the Gospel of Matthew, for example, is Hazret-i İsa el-Mesihîn İncil-i Şerifi Mattanıŋ Kavlince (The Holy Gospel of the Glorious Jesus Christ according to Matthew), where both the honorific Hazret and the title İncil-i Şerif carry Islamic overtones. A raging debate followed between Henderson,\(^{122}\) then working for the Russian Bible Society, and Samuel Lee (1783–1852),\(^ {123}\) professor of Arabic at Cambridge. Lee defended Ali Bey against Henderson’s charge that his translation had been denied publication in the 17th century because it contained “a mass of unholy matter,”\(^ {124}\) which would naturally occur, according to Henderson, in a translation produced by a Muslim. Lee doubted that the quality of the translation had been to blame for the Dutch failure to bring the manuscript to press. He reminded Henderson that Ali Bey had “spared no pains in forwarding the cause of Christianity as far as his literary labours would allow.”\(^ {125}\) Lee

\(^{121}\)Malcolm , p. 360, n. 96.

\(^{122}\)Henderson, op.cit.; see pp. 44ff. for his objections to Ali Bey’s words for the divine names, etc.

\(^{123}\)Remarks on Dr. Henderson’s Appeal to The Bible society on the subject of the Turkish version of the New Testament printed at Paris in 1819 to which is added, An Appendix, containing certain documents on the character of that version. Cambridge: J. Smith, Printer to the University, 1824. URL: http://books.google.com/books?id=bTgHAAAAQAAJ&printsec=frontcover&dq=Ebenezer+Henderson+Turkish&source=bl&ots=Z04HtxiQoW&sig=SXFbqFQckegk15rcx96RvgzuzzI&hl=en&ei=x0eHTOXcNISPswaWkrCg&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=5&ved=0CBwQ6AEwBA#v=onepage&q&f=false.

\(^{124}\)Quoted by Lee (1824), p. 6.

\(^{125}\)Lee (1824), p. 4.
believed that Ali Bey’s Bible “exhibits uncommon care and fidelity, in the full expression of every scriptural truth.”

Henderson objected especially to Ali Bey’s way of handling the divine names. Often he had used two or more Arabic words with Islamic overtones, such as Allâh Teâlâ (God Most High) and Cenâb Bârî (Glorious Creator), where the Greek had only the one word Theos. He had also written Hazret-i İsa almost every time the name of Jesus occurred. Henderson thought Allah and İsa alone were required in a literal translation, but Lee countered that Allah is followed 99 times out of a hundred by Teâlâ in Muslim speech and literary diction. This cultural feature of Muslim diction was not taken as an argument in its favor by Henderson.

An uproar in the English churches accompanied the debate, and the BFBS suspended distribution of the 1819 New Testament after 100 copies had been sold. Kieffer patiently revised the book, consulting Brunton’s Kakass (Tatar) of 1813, and Henry Martyn’s Persian of 1810, making 49 corrections of the theological vocabulary (though Henderson had wanted many more corrections). When the Old Testament was printed with the New Testament in 1827, Cenâb Bârî disappeared from Ali Bey’s Bible as a translation for Elohim, and Allâh Teâlâ was retained only where the Hebrew reads El Elyon (God Most High), as in Genesis 14:18. In poetic sections Hakk Teâlâ was retained as a translation of “The Most High” (e.g. Psalm 78), and a variant Arabic form, Müte’âl, was widely used as well (e.g. Psalm 56), apparently without objection. In general, however, Elohim and Theos would be translated henceforth simply as Allah without supplementary honorific titles in all Turkish Bible translations.

Henderson had objected also to Taŋrı (“Tengri”), the sky-god in the pre-Islamic culture of the ancient Turks, because (oddly) it appeared in no dictionary he knew; so Kieffer dutifully eliminated this word also. Ali Bey had copied Haki in using the theonyms Taŋrı Te’âlâ, and even Taŋrı Allah Te’âlâ. As a Jew who knew the Torah, Haki also knew that he needed multiple words for God, but did his solutions to the problem reflect common usage in Ottoman Turkish among Muslims and Christians also? This is doubtful and deserves further research in Yusuf Emre and Turkish writings up to the time of Haki and Ali Bey. After the

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126Lee (1824), p. 5.
New Testament of 1819 Tanrı never appeared as a word for God in the Turkish Bible, even in the Kitabı Mukaddes of the Turkish republican period; with lower case it was reserved for ‘gods’. Tanrı was revived in the contemporary-language New Testament (Müjde) of 1987 and the draft booklets in the late 1970's. By this time there were political reasons for its use. Saying Tanrı instead of Allah was a way of appealing to the new secularist audience by conforming to the de-islamizing policies of the Türk Dil Kurumu. The TDK prefers its reconstructions of the language of the ancient Turks (Öztürkçe) to words of Arabic and Persian origin.

At Henderson’s urging Ali Bey’s Hazret was also eliminated from the names of the prophets, as was Kuds-ü Şerif, for which Ürişalim (Jerusalem) was substituted. Silvestre de Sacy, the most celebrated Orientalist of the time (1758-1838), argued that Yesu should be substituted for İsa, as in some of the Oriental churches, but his view was not adopted. In 1826 the BFBS approved Kieffer’s revised version for publication. It also decided to exclude the Old Testament Apocrypha (Deuterocanonica) in Ali Bey’s manuscript. It is unclear whether Kieffer had prepared these books for press.

Thus, although it cannot be said that Kieffer’s Bible was fully de-islamized (the names that were accepted, such as Allah, Rabb, and İsa, are Arabic words, after all), some of the elegant Arabisms that characterize the spiritual language of Islamic devotion were eliminated.

Two extended examples of Ali Bey’s usage as compared with Kieffer’s version are presented in Appendix III. They show that in the 1819 version he changed single words or occasional confusing inflexions but seldom tampered with Ali Bey’s form or style. It is therefore remarkable that, when he edited the 1819 version for inclusion in the Turkish Bible of 1827, Kieffer consistently revised Ali Bey’s syntax and grammar in what appear to be deliberate violations of correct Turkish. In place of Ali Bey’s conversational expressions, Kieffer substituted heavily literal translations, mimicking Greek and European syntax and grammar in ways that can only be described as garbled Turkish. For example:

1) The 1827 version almost always introduces direct speech with dedi ki (he said), even though Kieffer knew that as a rule dedi should appear at the end of direct speech. Ali Bey had usually done it correctly in 1664, and Kieffer himself had preserved Ali Bey’s syntax in

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127Henderson, p. 69.
the 1819 version. This sentence from John 13:25, where John asks Jesus which one of the
twelve apostles will betray him, appears in the three versions as follows: “ol dahi Hazret-i
İsanıŋ göğsüne eğilip oña ya rabb kimdir dedi” (1664, 1819); “ol dahi İsanıŋ göğsüne eğilip
oña dedi ki ya rabb kimdir” (1827). This is a small matter in one sentence but becomes
annoying when the reader encounters it in almost every conversation throughout the entire
Bible.

2) In John 20:29 Jesus says, “Ne mutlu görmeden inananlara” (1664, 1819), but Kieffer
changes it to read “Ne mutlu onlara ki görmediler ve inandılar” (1827). The former is
natural Turkish, whereas the latter mimicks the European syntax of “How happy are those
who have not seen yet believed.” Kieffer must have known that he was garbling the
translation here.

3) In Matthew 13:28 Ali Bey, writing natural Turkish, has the farmer who is told about the
tares sown in the wheat field saying “Düşman işidir!” (It is the work of an enemy). In the
1827 version Kieffer changes it to “Bir düşman bunu etmişdir.” This is a word-for-word
representation of European diction in the expression, “An enemy has done this.”

4) In Matthew 15:34 where Jesus asks his disciples, “Ne kadar etmeğiniz var” in 1819, Kieffer
changes it to “Ne kadar etmekleriniz var” in 1827, thus mimicking the Greek plural, “posous
artous echete” (how many breads have ye). Turkish requires the singular: “how much
bread.” But it must also be said in Kieffer’s defense that it is sometimes he who corrects Ali
Bey’s own use of the offending plural form.

Such changes occur in almost every verse. Why would Kieffer have made these un-Turkish
adjustments to the correct wordings of the 1819 text? From his fine-tuning of Ali Bey’s 1665
manuscript in the 1819 version we know that Kieffer knew Turkish well, but by 1827 it
appears that he was under such heavy pressure to stick so closely to the Greek in all matters
that it distorted his judgment. He seems to have thrown in the towel in order to give his
critics what they wanted and must have known that the 1827 Bible would now be a second-
rate translation.

A comparative study of the vocabulary, grammar and syntax of the Ali Bey Bibles of 1664,
1665, 1819 and 1827 awaits its researcher. Clearly something was lost when Ali Bey’s
translation was cleaned up, and not only in stylistic matters. In the theological debate that
continues to this day, many would hold that Ali Bey’s usage reflected a viably contextualized sense of the appropriate form of the divine names. Accommodating certain Islamic terms in the translation of the names of God, the prophets, etc., cannot be avoided in Bible translation in the languages of the Muslim world, and it can be argued that these accommodations should be expanded, not decreased. Today there are translations that are returning to the contextualizing principles of Ali Bey 350 years ago.

At the bottom of the controversy was Henderson’s commitment to literalism against Lee’s translation theory that privileged the language of the target audience. Henderson protested that the Bible Society should not have allowed Lee’s ideas in the door, and the same protest continues to this day. In any case, decisions made in the mid-1820s, especially in the matter of the divine names, set a standard for Turkish translations of the Bible.

It is regrettable that the BFBS did not accept the evaluation of the 1819 New Testament solicited in Turkey by Robert Pinkerton. Soon after its publication he visited a certain Mr. Ruffin in Pera, who is acknowledged, by universal testimony here, to be the most learned and skilful Turkish scholar in Constantinople, and to whom I had an introduction from Professor Kieffer. In reference to the translation, he said that he had read about ten pages of it, and found the style pure and fluent; that it was not in the pompous style of the Divan, a mixture of Arabic and Persian, but chaste and elegant Turkish, which would be read with pleasure by the man of letters, and understood by the lowest in society.

Pinkerton then sought out another Turkish expert, a Russian diplomat, Mr. Fonton, who suggested a few changes to the Gospel of Matthew but evaluated the book in glowing colors as “a version which will be universally understood; the changes he proposes are few.” Though it is notable that Pinkerton did not consult native Turkish speakers, these evaluations raise questions in retrospect about the way Kieffer was forced into making changes of style and syntax which qualified critics agreed were unnecessary.

1820-21 – The Four Gospels in manuscript. Translated by İsmail Ferruh. 269 pages.
Located in the Bayezid Library in Istanbul,\textsuperscript{129} this manuscript translation by a Sufi scholar seems to have been inspired by wordings in Ali Bey’s translation, according to brief comments on it by Sadık Yazar. İsmail Ferruh was a Crimean Tatar known for his Turkish translations of a commentary on the Koran and of the seventh book of Rumi’s \textit{Mesnevi}. He was Ottoman ambassador in London for a short period (1798-1801)\textsuperscript{130} and he died in Istanbul in 1256 A.H. / 1841 C.E.\textsuperscript{131} In a note at the end of the manuscript he claims to have translated from an Arabic version in the year 1236 A.H. (1820-21 C.E.),\textsuperscript{132} but he does not tell us why he did so.

Sadık Yazar identifies several other manuscripts of small parts of the Bible\textsuperscript{133} translated by Muslim scholars whose motivation was to show how the Bible prophesied the coming of Muhammad, but this motivation does not appear to have figured in Ismail Ferruh’s translation. Some Sufis were interested in Jesus as a spiritual guide, and this manuscript may represent this phenomenon.

If Sadık Yazar is correct that Ali Bey’s phrasings appear in this manuscript, İsmail Ferruh must have been one of the first Turkish readers of Kieffer’s New Testament of 1819. As a former diplomat in England he would have had early access, no doubt, to the 1819 version.

\textbf{1827 – Kitab ül-ahd el-atık}\textsuperscript{134} (The Book of the Old Testament) and \textbf{Kitab ül-ahd el-cedid el-mensub ila Rabbina İsa el-Mesih}\textsuperscript{135} (The Book of the New Testament of Our Lord Jesus Christ), also titled as \textit{Biblia Turcica} in library catalogues. One library identifies it as

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\textsuperscript{129}Bayezid Collection, no. 51.


\textsuperscript{131}This information is from Sadık Yazar, \textit{op.cit.}, who also mentions a partial manuscript of the Gospel of Mark in the Süleymaniye Library, Donated Manuscripts no. 2518. Translator and date have not been determined. In a note at the top of the manuscript Jesus is referred to as \textit{Efendimiz} (Our Master), but it is unclear whether this means the translator was an Ottoman Christian: “Ulemâ-yı Nasrâniyeye Hz. Îsâ Efendimiz semâvâta su’ûd buyurduklarından otuz sene sonra Hz. Markos tarafından yazılmış İncil-i şerîfin tercümesidir” (This is a translation of the Noble Gospel written by St. Mark who, according to Christian theologians, wrote 30 years after Our Glorious Master Jesus ascended to the heavens).

\textsuperscript{132}Presumably this was the Roman Catholic translation of 1671 by Sergius Risi. A Protestant translation of the New Testament in Arabic was first printed in 1860 by Eli Smith.

\textsuperscript{133}Süleymaniye Library, Ali Nihat Tarlan collection no. 144, folios 7b-60a, dated 1205 A.H. / 1790-91 C.E., apparently by an Athenian who embraced Islam; other manuscripts in the Süleymaniye entitled “Tercüme-i Ba’z-i Âyât-i Zebûr ve Tevrat ve İncil,” “Tercüme-i Ba’z-i Ayât-i İncil,” and “Tercüme-i İncil.”

This was the first complete Bible printed in Turkish, commonly but incorrectly called Ali Bey’s Bible. Kieffer incorporated the first four books of Ali Bey’s Pentateuch as edited by H.F. von Diez, along with a revised version of the 1819 New Testament, into the 1827 Bible. Given the way it distorted Ali Bey’s work as already discussed (see 1819 above), the 1827 version cannot really be called Ali Bey’s Bible. Readers in the 19th century called it “Kieffer’s Bible”, but it might also be said that it had become Ebenezer Henderson’s Bible, reflecting the flames of criticism he had fanned in the British churches. The most lasting influence of this Bible is that it standardized the use of \textit{Allah} for the Hebrew \textit{Elohim} and \textit{Rabb} for \textit{YHWH}, using \textit{tanrı} only for the plural gods of the nations, a pattern that went unchanged for the next 150 years; whereas Ali Bey had used \textit{tanrı} for \textit{Elohim}, \textit{Allah Teâ laâ} for \textit{YHWH}, and \textit{ilâh} for the gods. Ali Bey’s equivalence between \textit{YHWH} and \textit{Allah Teâ laâ} has never been recovered in any Turkish translation. His insightful contribution to inter-religious communication deserves reconsideration, because these two theonyms are the most glorious names of God in their respective traditions.

The book has been digitalized by the \textit{Bayerische Staatsbibliothek} in Munich. A handful of copies are archived or held in private collections in Turkey and are sold occasionally by used booksellers in Istanbul. Mustafa Kemal Atatürk owned the Turkish Bible of 1827, along with

\[134\] Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Digitale Bibliothek. Old Testament (298 MB), URL: \url{http://www.bsb-muenchen-digital.de/~web/web1022/bsb10224108/images/index.html?digID=bsb10224108&pimage=1014&v=100&nav=0&l=de}. Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges and Ruth contain imaging errors in the downloadable PDF but can be read correctly online.


\[136\] On the title page of both the Old and New Testaments the title is followed by these words: \textit{ki ingilterrenin ve saire rub-i mescûnun etraf ve eknafina | kitab-ı mukaddesleri\textsuperscript{n} intişarı için ingiliz memleketinde | muntazam olan memca\textsuperscript{m}\textsuperscript{n} masârif ile | tab olunmuşdur} (printed with funds from the society organized for the distribution of the holy book in England and other regions of the globe), and at the bottom of the page: \textit{fi madinat Pariz el-mahrusat | bi darûl-taba\textsuperscript{a}t el-melkuttat el-mimarat | sene 1827 el-meshiyya} (in the city of Paris the great metropolis at the royal printing house of engineering, in the year 1827 C.E.).
two copies of the 1886 version. One copy of the latter contains marginal notes in his hand. The father of the Turkish language reform read the Bible in Ottoman Turkish.

The printing did not include the deuterocanonical books (Apocrypha) which were part of Ali Bey’s manuscript. If Kieffer left research notes or a manuscript of his own, these have not been studied. Nor has there been a thorough comparative examination of Kieffer’s Bible with his New Testament of 1819, let alone with Ali Bey’s manuscripts. Kieffer introduced Arabic spellings of proper nouns (people and places) from the Arabic, where Ali Bey had followed the Hebrew and Greek more closely, probably relying on the European versions. For example, Kieffer wrote Cacele for Golgotha and Cilcal for Gilgal. His use of the Arabic form Celil for Galilee survives in the Turkish Bible down to the present day, though now written Celile.

Kieffer’s Bible features full vowel pointing — a change from the mostly unpointed New Testament text of 1819. To produce the pointed text he may have worked from the secretarial or “fair copy” of Ali Bey’s translation in the Leiden archives, which is pointed, but there are indications that he may have compared the secretarial copy with the unpointed original in Ali Bey’s hand as well. None of the later Turkish Bibles were pointed; so Kieffer’s Bible is

137 Atatürk’s personal library is preserved at the Anıt Kabir, his mausoleum in Ankara: http://www.tsk.tr/anitkabir/kutup/t.html. The 1827 and 1886 Bibles are listed under T for Tevrat. If Atatürk owned the New Testament of 1933 (printed in the modern Turkish alphabet which he created), the book is not catalogued in his library. He died in 1938 before the new Kitabı Mukaddes was published in 1941.

138 At its founding in 1804, the British & Foreign Bible Society allowed the printing of Bibles with the Old Testament Apocrypha. Theological objections to this policy led in 1813 to the withdrawal of the Scots and the founding of a separate Scottish Bible Society, and the BFBS accepted this criticism in 1826 by adopting a policy against the inclusion of the Apocrypha in its Bibles (G.H. Anderson, op.cit., p. 538). Thus, when the Turkish Bible was printed in 1827, a draft translation and “fair copy” of the deuterocanonical books were available for editing in Ali Bey’s manuscript, but the decision of 1826 meant that they were to be excluded. Research in the BFBS archives would reveal the context for this concession by the BFBS to the objections of the Scots.

139 The initial letter G is represented inconsistently in Ali Bey’s transcription of Hebrew place names. Following an Arabic spelling convention for Hebrew words, he wrote Celile for Galilee, Cacele for Golgotha, but then switched to Kerkisin for the Gergesenes (Gadarenes), and Getsemani for Gethsemane. Kieffer tried to straighten out Ali Bey, representing G (Hebrew gimel) consistently as Turkish Ğ (or Hebrew jimel) — thus Celil (but not Celile), Cilcal, Cercese and Cesemeniyet, respectively; also in the Old Testament Kieffer was rigorous in writing G as Ğ, e.g. Cilcal for Gilgal, Ğil’ad for Gilead, Colyat for Goliath. Ali Bey’s inconsistency suggests that he knew it did not really work. Haki knew his Hebrew and wrote Ğilgãl, Ğil‘ad, and Ğolyas (Golyat with Arabic se = th), with Ğayin.

140 A note in French bound in front of the title page of the complete secretarial copy reads: “The 5 Books of Moses. A very neat copy made of the manuscript of Ali Bey; but the copyist has sometimes committed
the easiest to read of them all. An examination of the BFBS archives or Kieffer’s papers might inform us about the decision to include vowel points. Was it done for the sake of easy reading? for Turkish readers of minimal education? for Armenian or Greek readers who were accustomed to reading Turkish in their own alphabets, not in Ottoman Turkish characters? or simply for European scholars who needed the vowel points as a crutch?

The two books were printed in large format: the height is 27 centimeters or 10.6 inches, only a little smaller than A4 paper today. In later Turkish Bibles the unpointed text helped the printer reduce the physical size of the book. Like the 1819 New Testament, the New Testament of 1866 was 22 cm. high, the 1886 Kitab-ı Mukaddes 21 cm., and the 1911 İncil only 19 cm. Advances in lead type technology contributed to this condensing process. The later typefaces are crisper than the typeface of Kieffer’s Bible but harder to read because the type is both small and unpointed. Turks who can read the Arabic text of the Koran, where vowel points are generally supplied, sometimes confess that they cannot read Ottoman Turkish because it was normally written without vowel points.

One notable fact about Kieffer’s 1819 and 1827 versions is that all the translators — Bobowski, Kieffer, von Diez — were men who learned their Turkish in government service; they were not missionaries. It is also significant that a Turkish Bible was finally brought to press only when an organized Bible society assumed control of the project. Funding, institutional energy, and a board capable of resolving conflicts were essential to the project’s completion.

After 25 years a need was felt for a revision of Kieffer’s New Testament, and an additional 25 years were needed to finish a complete revision of the Ottoman Turkish Bible in 1878 — half a century after Kieffer’s Bible. In the meantime there appeared Turkish Bibles in Greek and Armenian letters that were dependent on Kieffer’s Bible and, in that sense, revisions of it.


“omissions or other errors” (translated from Schmidt, op.cit., vol 1, p. 417). Handwriting analysis would determine whether Kieffer wrote this note and therefore whether he used the secretarial manuscript.
This first attempt at a revision of the Turkish Bible is a rare book — only the copy in the British Library is mentioned anywhere. Elçin says it is a second printing but seems to mean that the first edition was Kieffer’s Bible.  

In 1942 MacCallum, with the full resources of the Bible Society in Turkey at his disposal, was unable to find any information on the life of Türabi Efendi, the translator of this booklet and subsequent revisions of Kieffer’s work. One thing we do know about him is that he was the author of the first Turkish cookbook.  

1853-54 – *Kitab-i İncil-i Şerif el-mensub ila Rabbina İsa el-Mesih*. William Watts nâm şahsın tabhânesinde tab ve temsil olunmuşdur fi sene 1854 el-mesîhiyye [London]. The British Library has this book, which was a revision by Türabi Efendi of Kieffer’s version. It contained the Four Gospels and Acts of the Apostles only, despite the title which suggests that it was a complete New Testament.

Notably, all the revisions of the 1850s were published by the BFBS in London. The BFBS did not yet have a printing operation in Turkey. The American Board had set up a press in Smyrna, but for some reason it was not used for the BFBS’s translations during this period.


After Schroeder’s four chapters of Genesis in a Turkish-Latin version in 1739, this was the first diglot book of the Turkish Bible. Italian was the lingua franca of the Mediterranean seaports.

141Elçin also mentions that a manuscript of this book (of Genesis and Psalms only?) had been in Hyde’s possession at Oxford (1976, p. xi). Was Elçin mistaken, or does a different manuscript or copy of Ali Bey’s translation of these two books of the Bible exist? Elçin cites no source for his statement.

142MacCallum (1942), p. 61.


144A library catalog shows an entry for a 4th printing of a Turkish New Testament in 1853 by Hariton Manasyan Matbaası in İstanbul. Because it was a 4th printing, it would seem that this cannot have been the same book as Türabi Efendi’s new translation. That it is an erroneous catalog entry is suggested by the number of pages, 637, which is the same as the number of pages in the 1866 translation by Schauffler and Selim Efendi (see below).
Redhouse’s involvement in Bible translation began after Türabi Efendi’s Gospels and Acs of 1853 sold out during the Crimean War. Redhouse had published his first Turkish-English dictionary in 1855 and was celebrated later for bigger dictionaries and a grammar of Ottoman Turkish, written in English. He also translated William Paley’s *Evidences of Christianity* into Turkish on behalf of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (SPG), which had begun to interest itself in Muslims. As a Bible translator, however, his career was short-lived. He was a European renegade who as a young man had jumped ship in Constantinople and gone to work for the Ottoman navy as a draftsman. Though his language skills were prodigious, he was not a believer, did not know Hebrew and Greek, and his Turkish style was judged by Christian critics in Istanbul to be too much flavored with Ottomanisms of Arabic and Persian vintage. The Armenian Evangelical Church had been established in 1845 and its leaders had begun to make known their evaluations of the translators’ work.

John 1:6 provides an example of the milder revisions of in this version. In Kieffer’s Bible of 1827 we read: *Allah’dan gönderilmiş bir adam var idi ki onuŋ adı Yuhanna idi*, to which Türabi and Redhouse make three small changes: *Allah’dan ırsâl olunmuş bir adam var idi ve onuŋ adı Yahya idi*. The changes were of three kinds: 1) using *Yahya* in place of *Yuhanna* acknowledged the Koranic name of John the Baptist and distinguished him from John, the writer of the Gospel; 2) substituting *ve* for *ki* got rid of one of the annoyances of 17th-century syntax with its frequent use of this Persian relative particle; and 3) substituting *ırsâl etmek* for *göndermek* re-introduced the Arabic word in place of a Turkish one, reverting to the usage of Ali Bey in his manuscript and the New Testament of 1819. Arabicizations of individual words occur in many verses, e.g. John 8:10, where Türabi and Redhouse have Jesus speaking to the woman caught in adultery as follows, with Kieffer’s version in parentheses: *Ey ‘avrat ol (şul) seni ithâm edenler (kovalayanlar) nerededirler (kandadr), ‘aleyka (üzerine) hiç kimse hükm etmedi mi?* Here Türabi and Redhouse help the reader by revising two Old Turkic forms (*şul, kanda*),

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but they also eliminate the Turkish kovalamak in favor of Arabic ithâm, and substitute the Arabic preposition ‘aleyka for a Turkish one.

In some passages Türabi and Redhouse’s Arabic and Persian phrase syntax (called izafet or “tacking on”) is almost incomprehensible to the modern Turkish reader. In James 1:16-18, for example, they wrote: “Ey sevgili karındaşların yanılmayıng. Her bir mevhibe-i hayriye ve her bir mevhibe-i kâmile yukarıdan olup nürlarıŋ babasından nûzul olur ki onuŋ katında teğayyür ve tahallüfün şâibesi yokdur. Ol kendi irâdesinden olarak hakk kelâmi ile bizi tevlîd eyledi tâ ki biz mahlüklarının bir nev-i nevbâvesi olayız.” Even in Ali Bey’s translation and Kieffer’s revisions this sentence was rather strained, but Türabi and Redhouse engage in heavy and seemingly gratuitious Arabicization of the text. They were trying to write the high literary Ottoman Turkish of their time. Their successors, Selim and Schauffler, produced a more tasteful literary translation by eliminating Türabi and Redhouse’s excessive izafet phrases and returning in many cases to Turkish instead of Arabic or Persian expressions.

Nevertheless, the Turkish syntax of the 1857 New Testament is more natural than that of Kieffer’s 1827 version. Influenced by the fashion of the new Ottoman printing industry, Türabi Efendi and Redhouse smoothed out the awkward Turkish sentence structure in verses where Kieffer had followed European diction too closely. Nevertheless, Türabi and Redhouse did not start from scratch on a new translation but copied every sentence from Kieffer’s New Testament. Though they made many appropriate adjustments to syntax and many vocabulary substitutions, their dependence on Kieffer is evident. It was Schauffler’s work in the 1860s (see below) that moved definitely in the direction of the elegant Ottoman style of the mid-19th-century neo-classical revival.

The Turkish New Testament of 1857 has been digitalized. An excerpt from it posted on the internet147 includes an appended note that misstates historical events when it says, “This edition seems to be the product of the much needed criticisms of Scholar Ebenezer Henderson [about shortcomings of the earlier version of A. Bey].” Henderson’s corrections had been addressed in Kieffer’s Bible of 1827. The work of Türabi Efendi and Redhouse in the 1850s was unrelated to the controversy of the 1820s.

Early Influence of the Bible among Turkish Muslims

In 1856 the Hatt-ı Himâyun (Edict of Protection) proclaimed freedom of religion in the Ottoman lands, or so it was thought at the time. The decree was celebrated by the British ambassador with a presentation of a copy of the Turkish Bible to Sultan Abdülmecid.148 (If this was a complete Bible it must have been the first edition of 1827; if not, then Türabi Efendi’s Gospels and Acts of 1853.) The elation over this event in European circles was short-lived.

The alliance of Britain and France with Turkey in the Crimean War had given them opportunity to force the issue of religious freedom. Though the intention was primarily to protect the Ottoman Christian minorities, the edict also opened the way for Muslim outreach in small house meetings. ABCFM, SPG and CMS (Church Missionary Society) workers encouraged this work.149 “By 1864, there was a wave of Muslim inquirers and converts [and] more than 50 Turkish men, women and children were baptized (1857-1877)...On one occasion, ten adults were baptized and prospects of a convert church seemed hopeful.”150 In 1860 two Turks began their studies at St. Augustine’s Missionary College, Canterbury: Mahmoud Efendi, who later worked on a Turkish grammar but died in 1865 at Malta, and Selim Efendi, who became a key figure in Turkish Bible translation.151

On 17 July 1864 a wave of arrests of Turkish converts began. They were imprisoned or disappeared, and the Ottoman government instructed the British ambassador that no further evangelization of Muslims would be allowed. Clearly the European and Christian interpretation of the provisions on religious freedom in the Hatt-ı Himâyun had been too hopeful. The lasting result of this period of Muslim outreach was not a Turkish church but the revision of the Ottoman Turkish Bible. Led by ABCFM translators, financially supported by the BFBS, and staffed by native speakers of Turkish (Turkish Muslims and Armenian

148Cooper, p. 22.
151Schaufler (1887), p. 199, 232. A photo of Mahmoud and Selim can be seen with their seminary class in Canterbury at: http://www.machadoink.com/Students%20of%20St%20Augustines%20College.htm. Selim took a Christian name and was ordained Rev. Edward Williams.
Christians), the revision built on translations that had already been done in Græco-Turkish and Armeno-Turkish (see Chapters 3 and 4 below).


This was the first part of the Turkish Bible in Arabic characters printed on Turkish soil, preceded only by Firkowitz’s Torah of 1835 in Hebraeo-Turkish and the early Armeno-Turkish and Graeco-Turkish translations. Like Türabi Efendi’s version of 1853-54 it contains only the Four Gospels and Acts.

Of all the 19th-century translators, Wilhelm Gottlieb Schaufler (1798-1883) had perhaps the most fascinating background. A “Russian German” from Odessa where his father led a German peasant colony, he traveled to Smyrna in 1826 where he met one of the two original ABCFM missionaries in the Near East, Jonas King. King encouraged him on his way to Andover Seminary in Massachusetts, and after completing the theological curriculum there he proceeded to Paris to study Arabic with de Sacy and Turkish with Kieffer, who had recently finished editing Ali Bey’s Bible manuscript. Schaufler arrived back in Constantinople in 1832. William Goodell was the first ABCFM worker in Constantinople, arriving in 1831, followed by Schaufler. Both were graduates of Andover, the new evangelical alternative to Harvard Divinity School, which had fallen under Unitarian influence.

Schauffler led the ABCFM’s Ottoman Jewish outreach for 25 years, producing an Old Testament in Ladino, the Hebræo-Spanish language of the Sephardic Jews of the Ottoman

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152His name is always printed William in English-language sources and library catalogs. I have not found a German source on Schaufler.


lands. Then toward the end of the 1850s Schauffler turned his attention to Ottoman Turkish translation. He was charged with transcribing Goodell’s Armeno-Turkish into the Arabic characters of Ottoman Turkish but soon felt this was a hopeless task, because the Turkish spoken by the Armenians and Greeks was “too coarse and degraded to be... acceptable to Osmanlis,” and because “the same terms were frequently employed by the different nationalities in widely different senses.” This suggests that a conflict was brewing about whether the approach to Muslims should involve different methods and language than those used in outreach to Armenians and other Christian minorities — a problem of contextualization that remains a matter of controversy among Christians to this day.

Schauffler’s first effort, in collaboration with Selim Efendi, a convert from Islam, was the Gospels and Acts, which appeared at the height of the spiritual awakening after the Crimean War. It was well received both by Muslim converts and by Ottoman Christians who could read Turkish in Arabic script.

1865 — İncil-i Şerif ile Tefsiri. İstanbul: Erzincanlı Artin Minasyan ve Şirketi Matbaası. 400 pages.

This book is listed in the collection of Mr. Talat Öncü as “BDK - ÖZEGE; 9130”. I have not yet examined the translation or commentary.


This version was “translated afresh from the Greek ... [and] the Gospels and Acts (1862) were corrected afresh for this edition.” Here the New Testament begins to sound like Modern

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156 Ladino was to Ottoman Jews what Yiddish was to European Jews: colloquial Hebrew mixed respectively with Spanish and Turkish, and Polish and German. Both are now dying languages, but they were strong, living languages in the 19th century. Freely concludes his book on Sabbatai Sevi with a personal account of overhearing a cleaning lady at the Edirne train station singing in Ladino in the 1990s.

157 Greene, p. 22, gives the date 1856. Cooper, p. 23f, and Nilson p. 134, say 1858. Schauffler himself does not give a date.

158 Cooper, p. 25.

Turkish, because the relative clauses were now arranged according to Turkish rules of syntax, rejecting the frequent use in Kieffer’s Bible of the Persian particle *ki* to connect relative clauses, returning to Ali Bey’s style in this respect and often preferring his choice of words to Kieffer’s.

The 1866 version circulated among Muslim inquirers during the new openness after the Crimean War and the *Hatt-i Himâyun*. Schauffler and Selim adopted a definite Muslim focus, contextualizing the translation to the neo-classical Turkish style of the mid-19th century. They were accused of using too many Arabic words and phrases, though in fact they used simple Turkish words more frequently than either Kieffer or Türabi and Redhouse had done. The difficulty had been “to create the style of language which would be intelligible to the less literary [Turkish or Armenian reader] while at the same time being attractive to the educated [Muslim].” Schauffler’s and Selim’s work did not fulfill the hopes of the missionary community, where the preference leaned heavily toward a translation in the simple Turkish of the Ottoman Christian minorities. A related aim was that Muslims, reading the Ottoman Turkish Bible in Arabic characters, and Christians, reading the Ottoman Turkish in Armenian or Greek characters, might read the same Bible text in their different scripts. While the 1878 and 1886 *Kitab-i Mukaddes* relied on the 1866 New Testament for its precise sentence syntax, its vocabulary was simplified and its range reduced.

Coincidentally, “The Bible House in Constantinople” was established in 1867 as a joint venture of the American Bible Society and the British and Foreign Bible Society. The first of the several buildings in Sirkeci, up the hill from the Galata Bridge, was finished in 1872.

whole [was] revised by J.W. Redhouse” seems to be a confusion with the New Testament of 1857.

160 Nilson, p. 135

161 Wosh, p. 244.

162 Writing in 1915, Greene provided finely tuned details on mission history in Turkey: “In 1872, in spite of all obstacles, Dr. Bliss had the satisfaction of seeing the first of the Bible House buildings finished. It is a handsome building, of yellowish stone, five stories high and fire-proof. The shops on the ground floor are rented, and on the floors above are the offices of the agent of the American Bible Society and of the treasurer of the American missions [ABCFM], with large store-rooms for Bibles and mission books and rooms for editors and translators of mission books and periodicals, and on the top floor the residence of the agent of the Bible Society. A second building, subsequently erected in the rear, is rented for a large printing establishment, with facilities for electrotyping and lithographing. A third building, on another part of the lot, is used, on the ground floor, as a chapel, seating 250... A fourth building is rented for shops. The total cost of the land and buildings has been over $100,000, of which $60,000 was raised by subscription, and the balance has come from rents. The income
The organizer of this project was Isaac Bliss, ABS “agent” for the Levant since 1856. He reported in 1883 that almost 2 million Bibles and portions had been printed in 30 languages since the first press was established in Malta in 1815,\(^{163}\) (it moved to Beirut and Smyrna in 1833 and after Smyrna to Istanbul). Of course the 2 million Bibles included not only Ottoman Turkish but other languages of the ethnic groups of the Ottoman Empire, as well as some European languages.


Schauffler produced in this book a true book of neo-classical Ottoman Turkish poetry, presumably in collaboration again with Selim Efendi. Almost every noun in these Psalms is from Arabic or Farsi, and many verbs are as well, because a Turkish verb can be formed by adding the Turkish verb “to be” (*etmek, eylemek* or *olmak*) to nouns. Clearly this translation was intended not for the new Protestant churches but for the Ottoman literati. Schauffler’s commitment to make the Bible meaningful to classically educated Turkish Muslims is evident in this translation above all others.

Many in the Ottoman Christian community felt that Schauffler had strayed into more and more ornate Turkish with each book of the Bible he produced. Both of the principal advocates of the two approaches to translation had long experience in Turkey. Schauffler was opposed by Dr. A.T. Pratt, who was summoned from Anatolia in 1868 to work on Bible translation. Pratt’s revision of Goodell’s Armeno-Turkish New Testament was successful (see Chapter 4 below), but he died in 1872 before the issue with the Ottoman Turkish Bible was resolved.

In July 1873 a revision committee met in Istanbul, encouraged by both the ABS and the BFBS to make a firm decision on translation policy.\(^{164}\) The issue was whether the Armeno-Turkish should serve as the basis of an Ottoman Turkish translation. The committee included

\(^{163}\)G.H. Anderson, *op.cit.*, p. 69; Cooper, p. 18.

\(^{164}\)Cooper, p. 28.
ABCFM personnel: Schauffler, Elias Riggs, and George F. Herrick, the latter an associate of the late A.H. Pratt. The British member was R.H. Weakley of the CMS, who had been one of the translators of the *Mizan ul-Haqq* of Karl Gottlieb Pfander (1803-1865), a defense of the Christian faith written specifically for Muslims. This committee first drafted Genesis as a trial run to establish procedures, then turned to the New Testament.

At this point, in December 1873, Schauffler resigned from the committee due to ill health and “irreconcilable differences of opinion.” The others on the committee favored the Armeno-Turkish Bible as the basis for the Ottoman Turkish.\(^ {165}\) Schauffler resigned also from the ABCFM over the Board’s decision not to set up a separate Muslim outreach division.\(^ {166}\) He moved to Moldova, saw his Turkish translation of the Pentateuch and Isaiah to print in Vienna (funded by the ABS, though it is often termed an “independent version”), then retired to the USA. His autobiography was published posthumously in 1887.\(^ {167}\)


This is a diglot Genesis with Hebrew on the right-hand pages and Turkish on the left. It may be Schauffler’s Turkish version of Genesis, but I have seen only the title page,\(^ {168}\) where a printer’s notation in Latin characters says “Turk. & Hebr. Gen.” The Hebrew title page says the book was printed in Vienna by Mr. A. Reichard & Co., so Miciç in Ottoman characters means Vienna.\(^ {169}\)


\(^{165}\)Cooper, p. 37.

\(^{166}\)Schauffler (1887), p. 235.

\(^{167}\)Schauffler (1887), URL: [http://www.archive.org/details/autobiographyofw00scha](http://www.archive.org/details/autobiographyofw00scha).


\(^{169}\)Strangely, the year of publication printed in Arabic numbers, 1872, does not agree with the Hebrew “5,602 as of Creation,” which corresponds to 1841-1842.
This book is not mentioned by Cooper. A used bookstore in Istanbul advertises one copy for a high price. If there was a publisher other than the printer, this is not stated in the online advertisement.

1874 – Gospels and Acts. Printed in Istanbul by the Bible Societies. Revised by a KMŞ committee from Schauffler and Selim’s version of 1862.

The Gospels and Acts were the first fruit of the revision committee’s work, marking the end of a 50-year tradition of the single missionary translator and a single native collaborator. A first draft was done by George Herrick and Avedis Constantin, an Armenian pastor, then revised by Şükri Efendi and Şemsi Efendi (replaced soon by Ahmet Efendi). Cooper reports that “immediate use was made by the distribution of several thousand copies amongst the Turkish soldiers at the seat of war.” This was the Russian-Turkish War of 1877-78, which followed the Bulgarian Revolution of 1876. It is intriguing to imagine how the distribution of the New Testament to Ottoman soldiers fighting against Christian armies was allowed. In Turkey’s secular army today, no religious books of any kind are distributed, even in peace time.

Cooper describes the working method of the revision committee. After the draft had been compared with the Greek and, in cases of obscure language, with European translations,

> the literary form of the sentence and its exact intention were submitted to the Turkish co-assessors and discussed with them. That done, the whole passage was read aloud in its revised form, finally corrected and passed by agreement of the responsible members, or, in the very rare instances of disagreement, by a majority.


This New Testament includes the Gospels and Acts printed the previous year. A library record indicates that the Revision Committee included Schauffler, Riggs, Herrick and others; so Schauffler’s contribution was still being recognized though he was no longer a member of the committee at the time of publication. For the first time a pocket edition was printed as well:

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170Cooper, p. 35.

171Cooper, p. 35.
Sufficient interest was taken in the publication of the Testament, at once by the native Turkish assessors of the Committee and by their Moslem friends, to dictate a request that it might be printed (for one edition) with fine type in a small form, so as to be carried about and read, without attracting the unwelcome attention of fanatical neighbours.\textsuperscript{172}

A similar request was voiced by the Turkish churches for a pocket edition of the İncil in 2001; in 1875, however, the source of the request included Muslim readers.

1876 – \textit{Mezamir: Lisan-ı İbraniden bi’ıt-tercümê}. Boyacıyan Agop Matbaası, İstanbul, İngiliz ve Amerikan Bibl Şirketleri. 187 pages. (Apparently a trial run for the Kitab-ı Mukaddes of 1878)


1877 – Tevrat, yani, Musa peygambere vahyi tarıkile nazil olan şeriat ül-lâhik kitabdır (Torah, or the book of the guiding Sharia that descended to Moses the prophet by means of revelation). Vienna: Adolf Holshaus. Translated by Wilhelm G. Schauffler.

After resigning from the American Board and the Translation Committee and leaving Turkey, Schauffler arranged for the printing of his final translations in Vienna. He was still funded by the ABS and the BFBS.\textsuperscript{174}

Because its intended audience was Turkish Muslims of the mid-19th century, and because this kind of contextualized language remains an issue today, Schauffler’s and Selim Efendi’s work deserves critical examination by a student of Ottoman Turkish and Bible translation theory. Unfortunately, copies of their books do not surface in Istanbul’s used book stores, probably because the older versions went out of fashion when the new Turkish Bible of 1878 and 1885-86 appeared. They can, however, be found in a few libraries in Europe.


\textsuperscript{172}Cooper, p, 35

\textsuperscript{173}Darlow and Moule, \textit{op.cit.}, are quoted in a note on this version in WorlCat.org library records.

\textsuperscript{174}Schauffler (1887), p. 235.
In December 1878 this first complete Ottoman Turkish Bible since Kieffer was published concurrently with the Armeno-Turkish revision (see Chapter 4 below). It is the first use of the title Kitab-ı Mukaddes for an Ottoman Turkish Bible. The place of publication, Der Sa'adet (Gate of Bliss), is an Arabic honorific for Istanbul. Kieffer's Old Testament having been previously revised only in Türabi Efendi's Genesis and Psalms, and Schauffler's Genesis, Psalms and Isaiah, the 1878 Bible was the first complete Turkish translation of the Old Testament in half a century, combined with the New Testament of 1875.

The title pages carried a notice that the book was published with the permission of the Department of Public Information. Sultan Abdul Hamid II had revoked the Ottoman Constitution of 1876 and taken repressive measures against reformers; so his stamp of approval on the 1878 Bible came as a surprise. The Bible House had not asked for a royal imprimatur, only for permission to proceed with printing under the terms of the Hatt-ı Himâyun. It would seem that this appeal for approval was made at this time (and not earlier when the New Testament was printed) because of the serious implications of the revocation of the Constitution. The application was rejected initially on the grounds that the Bible was not needed in the language of the Sultan's Muslim subjects. Upon appeal by the British ambassador this decision was reversed, but what appeared to be a serendipitous endorsement of the Bible by the Sultan became also a restrictive precedent. Henceforward all books published in the Ottoman Empire required government permission. The publication of the Bible had been promoted by European diplomatic influence, but the requested certification was subsequently exploited by the government as a rationale for official censorship.

Again George Herrick and Avedis Constantian were the lead translators, and again the Turkish translators were Muslims: Şükri Efendi and Ahmed Efendi, who were (retired?) government clerks, and Keyfi Efendi, a Kurdish scholar of Turkish and Arabic literature.
Keyfi Efendi’s “study of the Bible finally led him to confess Christ,” but he was never baptized and remained a Muslim in the employ of the Bible House. He had been hired initially as a copyist because of his beautiful penmanship (a reminder that photocopy machines were still a century away) and because of his interest in the Gospel, to which he had been introduced by a Yezidi in Iraq. Keyfi Efendi was honored by the committee with the task of doing the final revisions of Turkish grammar and wording; so this Bible that formed the new basis of all future editions of the Kitab-ı Mukaddes reflects the language of Keyfi Efendi. He went to his reward in 1882.

Some phrasings from earlier versions were retained in the 1878 version; for example, the Epistles of John repeat the 1857 translation by Türabi Efendi and Redhouse in many verses. Later 19th-century printings modified the 1878 version only slightly. In the Hacı Mahmud Efendi Collection in the Süleymaniye archives, a printed but undated Bible seems to be the 1878 version. The first verses of Genesis in this version show differences in two small details from the 1886 version. The 1878 version contained no footnotes.

**1885-1886 – Kitab-ı Mukaddes, yani Ahd-i Atik ve Ahd-i Cedid:** ‘An asl muharrer bulunduğu u İbrani ve Keldani ve Yunani lisanlarından bi’t-tercüme… ve İngiliz ve Amerikan Bibel şirketleri masârifîyle (The Holy Book, or the Old Covenant and New Covenant: A translation from the original texts in the Hebrew, Chaldean (Aramaic) and Greek languages… with funds of the British and American Bible Societies). Ma’ârif umumiye nezaret-i celîlesiniŋ 14 Muharrem el-Harâm 1301 ve 3 Teşrîn-i Sânî 1299 tarihli ve 752 nûmarûli ruhsatnâmesiyle (with certificate of permission no. 752 of the High Ministry of Public Information dated the 14th day of Muharrem, 1301 A.H. and the 3rd day of Teşrin II, 1299 A.H.) İstanbulda Boyacıyan Agop Matbaasında tab olunmuştur. 1885 version: 1,422 pages with footnotes. 1886 version: 1,023 pages without footnotes.

In response to growing Turkish literacy and a new emphasis on Turkish popular culture, this Bible revision eliminated still more Arabic and Persian features and made minor adjustments to Turkish grammar in the Kitabı Mukaddes of 1878. Cooper tells us that new members were added to the committee to replace older Turkish scholars “who could not

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175 Cooper, p. 31, quoting from Isaac G. Bliss, *Twenty-five Years in the Levant* (1883); MacCallum (1942), p. 62.

176 No. 4797-001 and 4797-002.

177 I thank Sadık Yazar for sharing with me this transcription from the Süleymaniye document: “Allâh ibtidâda semâvât ü zemîni halk eyledi ve zemîn tehî ü hâlî ve lücce üzerine zulmet olup sularun üzerinde dahi rûhullâh hareket êderdi.” The 1886 version shows sular not sularun, and êder idî not êderdi.
make a complete break from the Osmanli [sic] tradition of style with its unnecessary borrowing of Arabic and Persian vocabulary and syntax.”

Upon the death of Sultan Abdülaziz in 1876 and in response to the liberal reputation of the new Sultan Murat, a large number of Turkish newspapers and journals had emerged suddenly. They were allowed to function freely for a few years, even under the censorship policy of Sultan Abdülhamid. As a result a public language emerged that popularized the written style of Ottoman Turkish. According to the CMS translator, R.H. Weakley, this social process influenced the 1885 revision of the Bible. Nilson’s description of the development of Ottoman Turkish style over several centuries deserves special note:

Ali Bey’s relatively simple Turkish of the seventeenth century was unacceptable to the educated Muslim Osmanli whose language had become highly stylized and remote from the conversational language of the people. During the course of the [19th] century… this was successfully simplified as the educated classes began advocating a simplified and purer Turkish literature.

In other words, the Kitab-ı Mukaddes of 1885-86 returns us to simple Turkish like that of Ali Bey, except that two centuries of language development had now occurred. In qualification it must also be said that the neo-classical Ottoman Turkish of the mid-19th was not entirely eliminated from the new Bible, as many of the fine expressions of Wilhelm Schauffler and Selim Efendi were accepted by its editors.

Even in the 21st century the Turkish language is still replete with Arabic and Persian words. It was not so much Arabic and Persian vocabulary as Arabic syntax and phrasings that were progressively edited out of the 1878 and 1885-86 versions of the Turkish Bible. Persian izafet (Arabic and Persian nouns connected by means of the Persian particle –i/-i or the Arabic u-/ü-) is seldom encountered in these new versions. The Turkification of Turkish writing is an ongoing social process that began in the 1870s.

The 1885 version featured an extensive set of cross-references, which made it a very large book. These cross-references were eliminated in the 1886 printing, which therefore is almost

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179Cooper, pp. 33ff.
180Nilson, p. 135
the same size as the un-footnoted version of 1878. The only footnotes in the 1878 and 1886 versions are a few variant readings and alternate translations.

**1901 — Kitab-ı Mukaddes, yani Ahd-i Atik ve Ahd-i Cedid:** ‘An asıl muharrer bulunduğu İbrani ve Keldani ve Yunani lisanlarından bi’t-tercümé... Amerikan Kitab-ı Mukaddes Şirketi masârifiyle (The Holy Book, or the Old Covenant and New Covenant: A translation from the original texts in the Hebrew, Chaldean (Aramaic) and Greek languages... with funds of the American Bible Society). Der Saadet [İstanbul]: Boyacıyan Agop Matbaasında tab olunmuştur. Printed also by Agop Matyosyan. 1124 + 334 pages.

This was the last major revision of the Ottoman Turkish Bible; so later dates of publication on some Bibles and New Testaments reflect reprints from this version. The last printing I have found in library records was in 1922, the year before the proclamation of the Turkish Republic. New Testament reprints from the years 1903, 1906, 1908, 1911, 1912, 1920, and 1922 have appeared for sale recently on Turkish websites, along with a New Testament dated 1896 and Proverbs (*Emsal-i Süleyman*) dated 1898; apparently these were trial runs for the 1901 Bible. Funding this time was from the American Bible Society exclusively; the BFBS is not mentioned on the title page of these books.

Finally with this version the Turkish text was successfully harmonized, so that the Bibles in Ottoman Turkish, Armeno-Turkish and Græco-Turkish typefaces used the same Turkish text. The revision committee was led by George Herrick with members R.H. Weakley, Avedis Constantian, H.O. Dwight, Elias Riggs, his son Edward Riggs, Prof. Bezdjian of Marash, and Prof. Terzian of Aintab. Muslims were notably absent from this committee. After this point, whenever Muslim scholars have been employed or consulted in Bible translation projects, their involvement has been viewed with suspicion in the Christian churches in Turkey, though missionary translators have often valued the linguistic contributions of Muslim colleagues.

**1922 — Kitabı Mukaddes.** Translated by İzmirli İsmail Hakkı.

This is a printed version of (parts of?) the Bible in Ottoman Turkish by İsmail Hakkı (1869-1946), a progressive Muslim scholar who later became chairman of the Faculty of Theology at Istanbul University. He had been a member of the Committee of Union and Progress and was interested in the history of religions. İsmail Hakkı’s book is archived at the Süleymaniye
in Istanbul, along with his earlier Arabic (not Turkish) printings of the Bible. A study of İsmail Hakki's life and work and a comparison of his translation with the 1901 version would be a significant contribution to the history of the Turkish Bible. I have found no mention of any influence of this work on the Kitab-ı Mukaddes of 1941. Was the Bible House aware of this translation of the Bible by a Muslim?

2011 — Osmanlica Kelâm. Images of the original pages of Ottoman Turkish Bibles, with transcription in Modern Turkish characters.

This website at www.osmanlicakelam.net displays images from the 17th-century Turkish Bible manuscripts and the several printed Bibles that followed. Currently the site features many of the books from Ali Bey’s manuscript of 1665, his New Testament printed in 1819 as edited by Kieffer, Kieffer’s Bible of 1827, Genesis and Psalms as revised in 1852 by Türabi Efendi, the New Testament revised in 1857 by Türabi and Redhouse, the 1866 New Testament newly translated by Selim and Schauffler and their Psalms of 1868, and the Kitab-ı Mukaddes published in 1886. Schoeder’s Turkish-Latin diglot of Genesis 1-4 published in 1739 with a few chapters of Ali Bey’s text is included as well (Turkish and Latin on facing pages). Supplementing the Turkish transcription, glosses on obsolete words and explanatory notes are shown as pop-ups. Only books of the Bible for which transcription is available are displayed, but additional chapters and books are added to the site as the transcription work progresses.

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181 İzmirli İsmail Hakki, Kitab-ı Mukaddes, Osmanlıca, no. 4426-001.

182 İzmirli İsmail Hakki, Kitab-ı Mukaddes, Arapça (1910) no. 0038; Kitab-ı Mukaddes, Arapça (1913), no. 4449-001.

183 URL: http://www.enfal.de/ecdad140.htm
The Karaite Jews are geographically diverse and their origin is ancient. Rejecting the Talmud and all other sources of religious authority except the Hebrew Old Testament (Tanakh), their theology is sometimes traced to Philo of Alexandria, though the view that they can be traced to the Sadducees derives from a mistranslation of the Karaite history of Avraham Firkowicz (1787-1875).\footnote{Dan Shapira, Avraham Firkowicz in Istanbul (1830-1832): Paving the way for Turkic nationalism (Ankara: KaraM, 2003a); Abraham Baer Gottlober and Abraham Firkowicz, Bikkoreth letoldoth hakkaraim, oder, Kritische Untersuchungen über die Geschichte Karaer (Vilno: Sh.Y.Fin, 1865) (text in Hebrew; bibliographical notes in Yiddish by A. Firkowicz).} A key figure in Bible translation, he was the chief proponent of the idea that European Jews, including the Karaites, are descendents of the Khazars, a medieval Turkic kingdom of the Volga-Don basin which adopted Judaism in the 8th century, and from there back to the Jewish diaspora among the Medes in ancient times.

The early Karaites spoke Karaim (Karayca), a Kipchak-Turkic language, which survived in some communities into the 20th century.\footnote{Dan Shapira, “The Turkic languages and literatures of the eastern European Karaites,” in Karaite Judaism: A Guide to Its History and Literary Sources, ed. Meira Pollack, Part I, vol. 73, pp. 657-707 (Leiden: Brill, 2003b).} Because of the peculiarity of a Jewish people speaking a Turkic language, even those histories that doubt Khazar ancestry for the Karaites trace their origins to the breakup the Golden Horde (a Turkic-Kipchak kingdom on the Russian steppe) in the 14th century. At this time Karaites settled in several towns of Poland and Lithuania, others in the Tatar towns of the Crimean Peninsula (where they became the Jewish majority in relation to the Rabbanite Jews (“mainline” Jews). The older Karaite center in Byzantine Constantinople, where the Karaites spoke Greek, had pride of place. They fled the city after Ortaköy burned in 1203, fearing further anti-Jewish pogroms by the Catholic Crusaders who captured Constantinople in 1204. These Karaites settled in Edirne, but 250 years later were resettled in Ortaköy by Sultan Mehmet the Conqueror. By the 19th century the Karaites spoke the Turkic Karaim language in the Slavic and Lithuanian cities, but Tatar or “Crimean Turkish” in the Black Sea region, and, increasingly, Ottoman Turkish in Istanbul.
Hebrew scrolls of the Old Testament with partial translations and commentary in Karaim had circulated for centuries in beautifully illuminated manuscripts, but the Karaites had never printed a Karaim translation of the Bible.\footnote{Shapira (2003a), p. 29.} In fact, the first printed Karaite Bible was a Turkish (not a Karaim or Tatar) translation of the Torah. When Greece fought a successful war of independence against the Ottoman Empire in the 1820s, Greek speakers came under suspicion in Turkey. Karaite Jews were identified by the Turks with the Greek heritage. By now, however, many Karaites spoke Turkish and their leaders were pursuing a new identity for the small Karaite community. “The choice of Turkish [for a translation of the Torah]… revealed…allegiance to the Ottoman state, particularly after the establishment of the Greek state.”\footnote{ibid., p. 39f.}

In general the Karaites had fared well under Islamic rule, especially during the modernizing reforms of the last khan of the Crimean Tatars, Şahin Giray (1745-1787), who had also inspired the Tanzimat reforms of Sultan Mahmud II (1785-1839) in the Ottoman Empire. The domains of these friendly Muslim sovereigns were a refuge for the Jews when they were persecuted by Christian princes. It was under these circumstances that a movement to teach Turkish to the Karaite children of Ortaköy was promoted by Firkowicz, the controversial rabbi who had moved from Crimea to Ortaköy in 1830. He prepared a diglot Torah as a teaching aid.


This Torah is the first Bible in Ottoman Turkish written in Hebrew script.\footnote{Shapira (2003a), pp. 29-41; also his "Miscellanea Judæo-Turkica. Four Judæo-Turkic Notes: Judæo-Turkica IV," \textit{Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam} 27: 475-496 (2002), here pp. 486ff.; “Karaite printing in the Ottoman Empire” (2005), p. 13, URL: \url{http://colloque.imprimes.mo.pagesperso-orange.fr/pdf/DSA0.pdf}.} The date and title are uncertain because all surviving copies are lacking the first page; one copy is held at the Ben-Zvi Institute in Jerusalem. Its vocabulary is the vernacular Turkish spoken in Istanbul (“the language of Ismail”), but the syntax follows Karaim or Hebrew. The foreign ordering of the phrases means that it is not a good translation in Turkish terms, but this...
feature made it useful to the Karaite boys to whom Firkowicz was teaching both Hebrew and Turkish.

Shapira provides some examples of the translation. At Deuteronomy 31:26 it reads: “almaya kitabın bu ol-Torah-nin ve qoyasınız onu tarafindan şart sandığını H’Tanğrinizin ve olsun orada sana şahadığa,” which in the Kitabı Mukaddes of 1987 reads: “Bu şeriat kitabını alın, ve onu Allahımız RABBİN ahit sandığının yanına, sana karşı orada şahit olsun diye koyun” (Take this book of the law and put it beside of the ark of the covenant of YHWH your God, that it may be there a witness for you). This kind of quasi-interlinear Hebraic syntax occurred also in Haki’s manuscript of the Turkish Bible, as noted by Neudecker (see above). Jewish translators seem to have been reluctant to deviate from the arrangement of the Hebrew phrases.

Firkowicz himself was a native Karaim speaker who learned Tatar and then “Crimean Turkish” for strategic reasons; so the Turkish vocabulary of his translation of the Pentateuch was edited and no doubt improved by the other translators, Yitzhaq Cohen and Simha Eğiz. They were native to the Karaite community in Ortaköy and good Turkish speakers. Considering the animosity between Firkowicz and Cohen over control of the Karaite synagogue there (described in painful detail by Shapira), it is surprising that the Turkish translation of the Torah was ever completed.

For Firkowicz, printing a Turkish Bible in Hebrew letters was a forward-looking way for the Karaites to distinguish themselves not only from the Greeks, but also from the “Rabbanite” Jews, the main and larger body of Jews, who spoke Ladino in Turkey. Firkowicz gloried in the idea of Turkic Judaism and Turkish-speaking Karaite Jews. He hoped to make Istanbul the spiritual center of this movement, including the larger communities of Karaites in Russian cities. Unfortunately for him, his grand plan was rejected by the Karaite Jews of Ortaköy. They were a small community and felt Firkowicz’s project would overwhelm them

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189 Shapira (2003), p. 33

190 This translation used the Turkic pronoun “ol-” to translate the Hebrew definite article “ha-” except that for theonyms the Hebrew “ha-” was preserved literally. Where they needed the Turkish pronoun they used “o” as in modern Turkish (Shapira 2003a, p. 33, n. 56).

191 The “Rabbanite” Jews of Turkey, along with the Dönme sect, spoke Ladino, also called Judezmo or Hebrao-Spanish. Therefore they did not suffer under the same political liabilities as the traditionally Greek-speaking Karaites. Schauffler began work on a Ladino translation of the Bible about the same time as the Karaites were producing their Turkish translation (see the chapter below on “Related Languages”).
with linguistic and cultural influences from elsewhere in the Karaite world. His vision of Turkic Judaism also threatened the Karaites’ pecuniary links with the Greek Orthodox Church, which was served as a financial conduit with their benefactors in Karaite communities elsewhere.

Though the printing of the Torah went forward, it appears that some of the Jews of Ortaköy preferred Kieffer’s Ottoman Turkish Bible of 1827. Schauffler noted in 1851 that Kieffer’s Bible was being read by Jewish scholars, and these may have included Karaites. A Christian translation of the Turkish Bible intended for a Muslim audience did not preclude its use by other Turkish speakers who could read Arabic script.

The shelf life of the Hebræo-Turkish Torah was short. Plans to translate a complete Hebræo-Turkish Bible (Old Testament) were abandoned, because the Torah failed also to impress the Karaites in Crimea, where Tatar, not Turkish, was the lingua franca. Firkowicz had returned to Crimea in 1832 before the printing was finished. Eventually all copies unsold in Ortaköy were sent to Crimea, but Firkowicz was unsuccessful in promoting their use there.

In 1841 at Gözleve (Eupatoria) in Crimea an Old Testament was printed in a Tatarized Karaim translation, sponsored by the merchant Mordechai Tırşqan. This Bible attracted the loyalty of Karaite Jews in Crimea and Russia. The Hebræo-Turkish Torah no longer had an audience and was assigned to oblivion, but, as Shapira notes, it “could provide much material about vernacular Turkish as spoken in the Ottoman capital in the first half of the 19th century, especially by non-Muslims.”

The Hebræo-Turkish Torah was the first piece of the Bible ever printed in Istanbul. It was also an original translation. MacCallum’s suggestion, repeated by Toprak, that it was

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193 Shapira (2002), p. 487. The history of Jewish printing also includes a Turkish dictionary in Hebrew characters by Ali b. Nasr b. Daud, dated to 1676, which makes it a resource for students of 17th-century Turkish. The copy in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France was displayed at the Sabancı Museum, Istanbul, August-September 2010.

194 MacCallum (1942), p. 60.

based on a 14th-century Karaim translation has been refuted by Shapira. It was the Tırışqan Bible in Tatarized Karaim that was adapted from earlier Karaim material, not the Hebræo-Turkish Torah.

The “de-judification” of the Karaites in favor of their “Turkicness” became a personal project of Firkowicz, which he pursued for the rest of his long life. He meant this only in the political, not the religious, sense. He believed the Karaites were the true Jews and persuaded the Russian government that they should not be persecuted with the main body of Rabbanite Jews. Karaite ethnic origins, he believed, were distinct from those of other Jews; therefore the Karaites could not be blamed for the killing of Jesus and the persecution of the early church. Shapira proposes that this argument was an early example of Turkic nationalism. Atatürk himself was impressed by it as an example of a long-standing European sub-culture with a Turkic identity and idiom. Ismail Gasprali (Gasprinsky, 1851-1914), the Tatar nationalist and famous advocate of Pan-Turkism, grew up in Bahçe-Saray, Crimea, and may have been influenced as a child by the famous patriarch, Avraham Firkowicz, who lived nearby. For Firkowicz himself, the Turkish Pentateuch had been an early project in his lifelong ambition to make the Karaite Jews embrace Turkishness.

196 Shapira (2005), p. 13; p. 14 n.33; p. 12, n.27.

197 Shapira (2003a), pp. 60-94.
Chapter 3

Turkish in Greek Letters (Græco-Turkish, Karamanlıca)

Many Greeks of Ottoman Asia Minor learned Turkish as their mother tongue but wrote it in Greek characters. This was called the Karamanlı Turkish culture, because of the large Greek Christian population in the Karaman and Cappadocia regions of Anatolia. Generally speaking, the Greeks of the Anatolian plateau spoke only Turkish, just as Muslims in Crete spoke Greek as their mother tongue but wrote it in Ottoman Arabic characters. Turkish was spoken also by Greeks in Constantinople and other coastal cities, where bilingualism was normal. The need for a Turkish Bible in Greek characters was deeply felt especially in the Greek communities in Anatolia.

1782 – The Psalms in Græco-Turkish. Translator unknown. (Acts and the Epistles also appeared in Venice in 1818.)

1822 – The Psalms. Revised by Henry D. Leeves.

Henry D. Leeves (d. 1845)198 was an Anglican clergyman who had been appointed principal agent for the BFBS in Constantinople in 1820. Robert Pinkerton (mentioned above in connection with Kieffer’s Bible) also visited Constantinople and “arranged for the transcribing of the Turkish Scriptures into the Greek character, for the use of the numerous Greeks, who could only read and understand the Scriptures in that form, since called the Græco-Turkish.”199 Pinkerton also signed contracts for the production of a Bible in Modern Greek, which eventually became Leeves’ project in addition to the Græco-Turkish.200


198 For Leeves’ date of death see: http://website.lineone.net/~aldosliema/rl.htm.

199 George Browne, The History of the British and Foreign Bible Society, from its institution in 1804, to the close of its jubilee in 1854 (London: Bible Society House, Blackfriars, 1859), vol. 2, p. 29. Browne’s wording reminds us that the terms Græco-Turkish, Armeno-Turkish, etc. were creations of the translators and not indigenous in the Turkish language itself.

200 Pinkerton also contracted with an Albanian translator and initiated plans for a Ladino (Judezmo) translation. See the chapter below on Related Languages.
The title of this Turkish New Testament is written in both Arabic and Greek characters, and we are also told on the title page that it is for the use of Christians in Anatolia who do not know Greek (Giounani lisani pilmegeen Anadolu'daki Hristianlerin txanigiet (=caniyet) menfaatleri itxoun tap olounmous dour). Cooper reported it to be a “transcription of Kieffer’s Turkish Testament (1819) in Greek characters,” i.e. of Kieffer’s controversial edition of Ali Bey, the distribution of which was suspended because it featured too much Islamic vocabulary. A study of how Leeves dealt with these expressions, especially considering that he was writing for Greek Christians, would be revealing.

Significantly, a Bible in Greek characters was printed in Turkey at the same time that the BFBS decided it could find facilities to print the Ottoman Turkish Bible only in Paris. The Turkish Psalms in Greek characters were published in 1827 at the same printing house.

The Greek spelling Istamopol on the title page reflects the Greek *polis* for city, which is the source of the syllable –bul in the Turkish word İstanbul.

1835 – *Genesis yani Mahlukatin yaratilicinin kitabi* (Genesis, the book of the creation of created things)... “a Protestant translation.”

The Greek alphabet is familiar to more Europeans than are the Arabic characters of Ottoman Turkish, but one discovers in transcribing the Graeco-Turkish into Latin characters that Greek did not have the ı, ö, ü or ş and used other consonants differently than the Modern Turkish reader would expect. Thus pes is written for beş, piutun for bütün, and tagilmasi for dağılması in the following title:


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202 Shapira (2003), p. 29f., n. 51
This is the Pentateuch and Joshua, translated into the “Plain Turkish” of the Ottoman Greeks. Translated by Leeves and Christo Nicolaides, it anticipated their Græco-Turkish Bible of 1839. The title tells us that the book was funded by the British and Foreign Bible Society and published by the ABCFM at their I.I. Robertson Press, established in 1828 on the island of Syros (Ceziře-i Syra) in the Aegean Cyclades. The Karamanlıca translation of Genesis mentioned above may have been printed in the same place. The long-winded Turkish representation of the name of the British and Foreign Bible Society (“Committee formed to Distribute the Holy Hooks in England and in all other parts of the Whole World”) follows the wording in Kieffer’s Bible of 1827.

The translation is characterized as a rendering into Açık Türkçe. This means “Plain Turkish”, the language of the people as differentiated from the elegant Turkish of the sultan’s court and the Ottoman elite. Clearly the Greeks spoke simpler (some would say inferior) Turkish when compared with educated Turks, but it is also true that Greek influenced Turkish. In the Ottoman Turkish translations from Ali Bey onwards one discovers occasional words of Greek derivation, usually having to do with agriculture (angaria for corvée labor, defne for the laurel bush [Gk. daphné], ırğad for a field hand [Gk. ergates < ergazomai, to work], nadas for a fallow field [Gk. neatos < neos = new], etc.); and now and then an Italian word as well (manca for a non-helal meal, i.e. not properly prepared in the Muslim fashion [Ita. mangia]).

**1839** – The Græco-Turkish Bible. Translated by Leeves and Christo Nicolaides. Printed in Athens and Beirut.

In the 1820s the Greek war of independence against the Ottoman Empire precipitated pogroms against Greeks in Constantinople. Leeves had begun his work there but moved to Corfu, the Adriatic island. He worked there with Nicolaides, a native of Philadelphia (now Alaşehir). They later moved on to Athens where the printing was completed. MacCallum tells us that the Græco-Turkish Bible they produced was essentially identical to Ali Bey’s translation; in other words, a transliteration of Kieffer’s Bible of 1827 into Greek characters. Nilson, however, says that Leeves simplified the Turkish to conform to the vernacular of the Ottoman Greeks, moving away from the Arabic and Persian phrasings in Ali Bey’s

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203 ibid. I have copied the title from Shapira.

204 MacCallum (1942), p. 62.
manuscripts and Kieffer’s Bible. This difference of views deserves further investigation, revealing how little we know about the Græco-Turkish translations.

1844 – *Ijob, Paraoimia Solomontos, Ekklisiastis yani Iobun, Emsali Solomonun ve Vaizin Kitapi ki Halia Meyzetten Atzik tirkzege terzume olunup*…. (Same printing data as for the Pentateuch and Joshua).


The Greek Protestant movement was never widespread in the Ottoman period; so the impact of the Græco-Turkish Bible was limited. Because the Old Testament did not include the Apocrypha, it did not conform to the text of the Greek Orthodox Church. For more on William Goodell, see the Armeno-Turkish Bible below.

1869 – *Kitabı Mukaddes*. Edited by Elias Riggs. Printed in Istanbul. By now Goodell had retired. Elias Riggs (1810-1901) was his American contemporary, schooled at Andover like Goodell and Schauffler, serving initially in Athens and Smyrna until he moved to Constantinople in 1844, where he lived for more than half a century until his death at the age of 90 in 1901. During his career he worked on Bible translations in four languages: this revision of Goodell’s Graeco-Turkish, the Modern Greek, the Armeno-Turkish and the Ottoman Turkish (see Chapters 3, 4 and 7 below and Chapter 1 above).

1884 – *Kitabı Mukaddes*. Revised by Elias Riggs with Alexander Thompson (BFBS), George Kazakos, a Greek evangelical pastor, and Avedis Assadourian of the Armenian Evangelical Church.

The Græco-Turkish Bible used *Allah* for God, as in Turkish, but *Peder* for Father and *Iēsous Christo* as in Greek; otherwise it sounds quite Turkish when read aloud. Written in the colloquial *Karamanlıca* dialect, it used no Arabic and Persian phrases and fewer Arabic and Persian words than the Ottoman Turkish Bible of 1878. For this reason the Græco-Turkish sounds more like modern Turkish in some ways than the Ottoman Turkish does.


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206Nilson, p. 134.

207Cooper, p. 27n gives the date as 1871. The printing may have spanned several years.

208My thanks to Rod Harbottle for this insight (personal correspondence).
words the New Covenant: A translation from the original texts in the Greek language. With funding from the Bible Society established for the distribution of the holy books in England and other countries. Printed at the A.H. Boyajian printing house in Istanbul).

This appears to be a reprint of the New Testament from the Græco-Turkish Bible of 1884. As in Leeves’ translation of 1826, the main title shown in boldface above was written in both Arabic and Greek and the sub-title in Turkish, but all in Greek letters. The title reveals some of the peculiarities of Ottoman usage: bir (one) is assimilated to bit when followed by a word beginning with t; and the Arabic plural memalik (countries) is used in place of today’s memleketler. The Greek spelling of Istanbul reflects the Greek polis for city, but the printer was an Armenian.

Both the bilingualism of the coastal cities and the “reverse monolingual” cultures of the Anatolian and Greek hinterlands were lost after the exchange of Turkish and Greek populations in 1923. New public school systems assimilated these Ottoman cultural groups into the nationalist monocultures of Greece and Turkey. As a result, the Græco-Turkish Bible is a mere curiosity today.
Chapter 4

Turkish in Armenian Letters (Armeno-Turkish)

The Armenian Bible translated by St. Mesrob Mashtots and his disciples in 434 AD was one of the earliest Bible translations in any language, the proud legacy of the Armenian Apostolic (Orthodox) Church. One of the treasures of Ottoman bookmaking is an illuminated vellum manuscript of the Armenian Bible made in Istanbul in 1623 by the scribe Hakop at the behest of an Armenian community in Persia. The Venice Psalter of 1565 was the first printed Bible portion in the Armenian language. The full Armenian Bible was printed for the first time in Amsterdam in 1666, then revised in Constantinople in 1705. The Armenian Bible of 1733 was the work of the Mechitarist Fathers of San Lazzaro, Venice. The first project of the Russian Bible Society, founded in 1813, was to reprint 7,000 copies of this Armenian Bible, but these were bought primarily by the clergy of the Armenian Apostolic Church. Many Armenians no longer understood the Armenian language.

By the 19th century, a Bible in the vernacular language of the Armenian people was needed, and this was no longer Armenian but Turkish, written in Armenian characters. Pliny Fisk, the first American missionary in the Near East, recommended that a Bible translation be done in Armeno-Turkish to support the vision of reforming the Armenian Church — it being a Protestant principle that a reformation requires the proclamation of the Word of God in the language of the people. Though Fisk died young, his challenge became a focus of the ABCFM and BFBS initiatives in Turkey.

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208 This Bible is in the rare books collection of the Calouste Gulbenkian Museum in Lisbon: http://www.museu.gulbenkian.pt/obra.asp?num=la152&nuc=a5&lang=en. It was on display at the Sabanci Museum, Istanbul, in August-September 2010.

209 URL: http://www.ccel.org/ccel/swete/greekot.iii.iv.html gives the data as 1565, but http://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/bodley/library/specialcollections/oriental_rarebooks/middleeast says 1587.


212 Cooper, p. 18.

Khojentzi means a man from Khojand, Central Asia (now Tajikistan). He was an archimandrite (abbot) in the Armenian Apostolic Church, but one source says he was a translator for the Russian government. Mandated by the Armenian Patriarch (in Constantinople?), his New Testament was published with support from the BFBS and was followed in 1822 by a revision (?) by a certain Keghamian of Erivan. Another revision was begun by Henry D. Leeves in 1823, but he soon decided to focus on the Modern Greek and Græco-Turkish translations, handing off the Armeno-Turkish work to Goodell. Comparison of this version with Goodell’s revision below might reveal why the ABCFM and BFBS felt a new version was needed, especially since the 1819 version was widely circulated as late as 1851. It was on sale for $2,000.00 on a rare books website in 2010.

1831 — New Testament in Armeno-Turkish, by William Goodell with Bishop Dionysius and Vartabed Gregory. Printed at the CMS press established at Malta for this purpose, with funding from BFBS.

The bishop and the vartabed (church teacher) were Armenian Orthodox scholars of evangelical persuasion. (The Armenian Evangelical Church was not established until 1845.) Work on an Armeno-Turkish New Testament had begun in 1823 in Beirut when William Goodell (1792-1878) first arrived on the field and met these men. When he moved from Malta to Constantinople in 1831 — the first Protestant missionary to reside there — he brought with him this Armeno-Turkish New Testament and tells us that it was welcomed by the Patriarch of the Armenian Apostolic Church. In light of the opposition of the Patriarch that emerged within a few years, it may be surmised that he was as interested in Goodell’s plan to set up schools for Christian children as he was in Goodell’s New Testament.


214Deny, p. 39n; Riggs, p. 241.

215Riggs, p. 240.


217Goodell in Prime, op.cit., p.128, 132ff. Goodell had learned the pedagogy of the “Lancastrian” school model that was popular in the early years of American public education. Few teachers were needed because good students were assigned to teach the ones who lagged behind. Goodell carried a full curriculum with him when
Goodell had a fervent evangelical spirit, believing that the Armenian Orthodox church could be reformed from within. Young Armenian men came to him for Bible study, the results of which exceeded his expectations: they rebelled against the conservative priests of the Armenian Apostolic Church. When they were then expelled (some were also imprisoned by the Armenian Patriarch), Goodell felt forced by circumstances to help them establish their own church. The First Armenian Evangelical Church of Constantinople was founded in 1845, and a few years later the Ottoman government gave it legal covering by appointing an Armenian layman as the titular head of the Armenian Protestant millet. Now there were three Armenian communities in the Ottoman lands: the Protestants, the Catholics (Franciscan and Jesuit missions to the Armenians had born fruit in the 18th century218), and the ancient Armenian Apostolic Church.

Goodell’s New Testament was the foundation of the Armenian evangelical revival, but the Khojentzi version continued in circulation among the Armenian Orthodox. Rival Armeno-Turkish Bibles seem to have circulated along confessional lines.

1843 — Armeno-Turkish Old Testament, by William Goodell and Panayotes Constantinides. Printed at the ABCFM press in Smyrna.219

A partial draft of the Old Testament had been done by Bishop Dionysius, but half the manuscript was lost in the fire that destroyed Pera in November 1831. Dionysius then translated parts of the Old Testament again, and this was used by Goodell and Panayotes, who finished their Old Testament in manuscript on 6 November 1841.220

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218 Bruce Masters, Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Arab World: The roots of sectarianism (Cambridge University Press, 2001), chapter 4

219 Prime, p. 128.

220 Cooper (p. 19) gives 1833 as the date of the fire in Pera. From Goodell himself we know it occurred two months after his arrival in 1831. In a letter written in 1841 Goodell wrote, “Dionysius, the Armenian bishop, formerly in my employ, first translated the work with the help of the Arabic and Ancient Armenian Bibles, together with Keiffer [sic]. Nearly or quite half of this translation was burnt at the time of the great fire here ten years ago; and the bishop had to translate it again. My present translator, Mr. Panayotes Constantinides, had the advantage of this translation...” (Prime, 269; cf. p. 24, 114ff., 478). Goodell mentions fires also in 1839 (p. 238f.), 1848 (p. 343), 1849 (p. 348), and Schaffler, in a memorial to Goodell on his retirement, mentions a fire in 1833, which may be the source of Cooper’s confusion (Prime, p. 478). Fires were frequent on the streets of old wooden houses of Constantinople. The great fire of 1660 destroyed the Jewish quarter at Eminönü and large sections of Muslim Istanbul.
Goodell wrote in his journal[221] that the task had been difficult because there was no previous Old Testament translation in Armeno-Turkish and because Armeno-Turkish had no history as a written language. He was also sensitive to the scrutiny it would receive from the Armenian clergy. We were, he wrote, “preparing the Scriptures for those who are comparatively enlightened, and the learned and influential of whom have … become great pedants in criticism.” A proud graduate of Andover Theological Seminary, Goodell added that the translation was done from the Hebrew. Though he was himself employed by the ABCFM, funding for the project came from the American Bible Society.


This is the Armeno-Turkish Bible revised and printed in one volume. Goodell and Panayotes were tireless revisers of their own work. A revision of his 1831 New Testament had been published in 1857. Goodell was the grand old man of the Protestant project in Constantinople; he retired in 1865 after 43 years in the Near East, 34 of them in Constantinople, and died in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in 1878.222

1870 — **Aht æ Chæ tit, eani : İncil i Şerif lisanaæ asli i eunanite n pit’ t’ær rchiwme** (Ahd-i Cedid, yani: İncil-ı Şerif – lisan-ı asli Yunaniden bir tercüme). WorldCat.org shows this imprint: İstānboũltā: A.H. Poũ yachian,223 1875.

This free-style revision of Goodell’s New Testament was done by A.T. Pratt, a physician who worked in Aleppo, Aintab and Maraş and learned the Anatolian Turkish of the Armenian evangelical communities there.224 His grammar of Ottoman Turkish recommended him for translation work. In 1868 he was assigned to Constantinople to work on the Bible because he was committed to the principle that the Ottoman Turkish, Armeno-Turkish, and Græco-Turkish Bibles should reflect a single Turkish text in their respective alphabets. Pratt’s New Testament is the version found in Armeno-Turkish Bibles of the late Ottoman period and

221 Goodell in Prime, op.cit., p. 270f.


223 Boyacıyan.

224 Cooper, p. 20f.
may still be bought in used book stores in Istanbul. He died in 1872 while revising the Armeno-Turkish Old Testament.

1878 — *Kitab-ı Mukaddes*. Revised by a committee after the death of A.H. Pratt, including his Armeno-Turkish New Testament. Printed concurrently with the Ottoman Turkish version in Arabic characters.

1888 — *Kitab-ı Mukaddes*, reflecting the 1885-86 revision of the Ottoman Turkish Bible. This Bible marked the end of the Armeno-Turkish translation project — a matter which deserves reflection. The Armenian people were geographically dispersed across the Ottoman Empire. They had originated in eastern Anatolia and the Caucasus but had gained a strong presence across the empire, especially in the coastal cities, over its last two centuries or so. Where the Armenian Evangelical Church was established, Armenians were active in distributing the Bible in the various translations. After the pogroms of 1895-96 this distribution network was adversely affected by fear. Then, after the terrible massacres and forced emigration of 1915-16 (commonly called genocide in Armenian and Western historiography), Anatolia and Thrace were essentially emptied of Armenian men, and many Armenian women were absorbed into Muslim communities, often under duress, in marriages to Kurdish and Turkish men. When Turkey excised most of its Armenian population, the distribution of the Armeno-Turkish and Ottoman Turkish Bibles came to an abrupt end in many places. Only in Istanbul, where the Armenians survived in reduced numbers as a Christian community, did these Bibles still have a substantial readership. In the late 20th century it was also in Istanbul where the first Turkish evangelical churches were born, often as multi-ethnic churches that included Armenians.

1926 — Armeno-Turkish Reference Bible. Vienna: Christoph Reisser’s Sons.

A copy of this book is held by the Indiana University Library. Notably it was not printed in Turkey. After World War I most of the surviving Armenians now lived elsewhere, and books in the Armenian alphabet could no longer be printed in Turkey.

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Nilson, p. 135

I thank Jurg Heusser for this historical insight in his essay, “Die Geschichte des türkischen Bibels,” which seems no longer to be available at: [http://www.orientdienst.de/muslime/tuerkische_bibel.shtml](http://www.orientdienst.de/muslime/tuerkische_bibel.shtml).
Research on the Armeno-Turkish Bible awaits the attention of a scholar who can read both Armenian and Turkish. There has been more research on the 16th- and 17th-century Armeno-Kipchak Psalms (the Kipchak Turkish of Crimea and the Caucasus written in Armenian characters) than on the Armeno-Turkish Bible of the 19th century.

Chapter 5:

Turkish in Latin Characters (Modern Turkish)

The Turkish Revolution was symbolized by the adoption of a Latin alphabet inaugurated in 1928. This event ended the Ottoman phenomenon of Bibles in multiple Turkish scripts. It not only overturned the orthographies of the Turkish Bible, it also squeezed its rich oriental vocabulary into a modern mold.\(^{228}\)

However, pride of place for the first translation of any part of the Bible in a Latin-based Turkic alphabet goes not to the İncil of 1933 but to the Codex Cumanicus in the Kipchak language.\(^{229}\) The original manuscript, later expanded, is usually dated to 1303 C.E. and written in Latin letters, because Italian merchants and friars were its reading audience. Kipchak was the Turkic language of the Golden Horde to the north and east of the Black Sea during and after the Mongol period. The Mongol armies had included more Turks than Mongols, and among these were the Kipchaks (also called Cumans), who were the ancestors of the Tatars and other Turkic peoples in Russia and the Caucasus.\(^{230}\)

The Codex Cumanicus includes a small selection of Bible verses in Kipchak, including the Ten Commandments and the Lord’s Prayer (the latter is shown in Appendix II). The translators were Franciscan and Dominican friars who lived at Kaffa on the Crimean Peninsula and itinerated in the Kipchak lands. Verses such as “Tengrini sevgil barca üstünde” (Love your God above everything) and “Sevgil seniŋ qarinda seniŋ kibi” (Love your brother as yourself) are still recognizable to Turkish speakers.\(^{231}\) “Khanligiŋ bolsun” (thy khanate come) from the


\(^{230}\)From the 9th century C.E. and as late as the 12th century the Khazars, a Jewish khanate, occupied roughly the same region as the later Kipchaks. The Khazars seem to have spoken a Hunnic language related to Bulgarian, with some Turkic elements, but their written and scriptural language was Hebrew. Reciting the Psalms was the core of Khazar worship, but there is no evidence of a Bible translation in their native language. For a summary of Khazar studies see Schlomo Sand, The Invention of the Jewish People, trans. Yael Lotan (London/New York: Verso, 2009), pp. 210-249.

\(^{231}\)The –gil suffix reflects the Turkish verb kilmak. Bar and barca (all things) are still used in Tatar and Kazak and are not unknown in Anatolian Turkish. URL: http://tdkterim.gov.tr/bts/?
Lord’s Prayer is a reminder that the contextualization of the Gospel was being practiced long before the innovations of the 20th century.

The *Codex* was largely a travel guide for European merchants doing business in the northern Black Sea ports. The brief excerpts from the Bible found in it constitute a kind of catechism for the use of Italian priests working among the Kipchaks, but the *Codex* was not a translation of the complete Bible or of any book of the Bible. A Turkish Bible in Latin characters was delayed many centuries, awaiting the language reform of Atatürk, and then it inherited the tradition of Ottoman Turkish translation, not the Kipchak Turkish of the *Codex Cumanicus*.

1928 — Proverbs. A di-script version in Arabic (*Osmanlıca*) and Latin characters.\(^{232}\)

1928 — The Psalms. Translated by Fred Field Goodsell and a “Turkish philosopher and poet.”\(^{233}\)

This translation lacked “accuracy” and “uniformity” — in other words it was a free translation — and was never printed. Following this experiment Frederick W. MacCallum of the ABCFM was appointed in September 1928 to lead a joint committee of the ABS and BFBS to produce a Turkish Bible in conformity with Atatürk’s language reform. He was a Canadian scholar who “had taught Hebrew and Greek during the first 20 years of his missionary career, was as familiar with Turkish as any foreigner may hope to be, and could use the English, French, German and Armenian versions to check their Turkish efforts.”\(^{234}\)

He chose a Muslim, identified cryptically as “Bay Cami” to be his assistant.\(^{235}\) This man was a Turkish soldier and diplomat living then in retirement, who, in addition to a deep scholarly knowledge of his native Turkish, had acquired thorough mastery of Arabic during fifteen years of service in North Africa, and of French during his diplomatic career in Europe. He had, besides, a reading knowledge of German, English, and Persian.\(^{236}\)

\(^{232}\)Mentioned by Nilson, p. 136. I have not found this booklet in library catalogs.

\(^{233}\)Riggs, p. 247.

\(^{234}\)ibid.

\(^{235}\)MacCallum, p. 62.

\(^{236}\)Riggs, p. 247. I am identifying the “Bay Cami” mentioned by MacCallum with the retired soldier described by Riggs.
MacCallum and “Bay Cami” would produce a draft, pass it to another Turkish reader for purely literary review, and then to a revision committee who checked it against the Greek and Hebrew.


In 1930 and 1931 the Gospel of Matthew, followed by Mark and Luke, were printed separately in the new Latin characters. The reviewers were C.F. Gates and F.F. Goodsell. These Bible portions in the modern Turkish alphabet are still referred to as “Osmanlı” in some foreign library catalogs — a designation left over from the days when there was more than one Turkish writing system.


A copy of this modern edition of the Turkish Psalms is held by the Pamukkale University Library in Denizli, as well as several European and American libraries.


This was the first New Testament in the new Turkish alphabet, translated by MacCallum and “Bay Cami” and reviewed by J.K. Birge, C.F. Gates, E.T. Perry, and Charles T. Riggs. Printed on thin glossy paper, the typeface is sharper and blacker (more readable by tired eyes) than any Turkish Bible printed since then. It perpetuated the habit of the late Ottoman New Testaments that used the word İncil to mean the four Gospels, hence the words “ve Diğer Kitaplar” (and Other Books) on the title page; nevertheless, İncil is embossed on the cover as the sole name of the volume. On the title page Kitabımukaddes appears as one word in the names of the Bible societies; this conflation was not repeated in later translations, but Kitabı Mukaddes Şirketi (KMŞ) became the legal name of the agency in Turkey.

1933-38 — Several Old Testament books and Matthew. Trial publications. Istanbul: KMŞ
Genesis and Isaiah (1933), Matthew, revised with style simplified (1936), Job (1938), as well as the Psalms and Proverbs were printed separately as trial translations of the Old Testament books in the 1930s.

1941 – Kitabı Mukaddes, Eski ve Yeni Ahit (Tevrat ve İncil) : İbrani, Kildani ve Yunani dillerinden son tashih edilmiş tercümedir. İstanbul: Kitabı Mukaddes Şirketi, 489 İstiklal Caddesi. Printed by Kenan Basımevi.

The new Turkish Bible was edited and prepared for press by F.W. MacCallum and “a Turkish savant,” presumably meaning “Bay Cami” again. Library records sometimes carry this notice: “Revised and corrected translation by F.W. MacCallum et al.,” the names of Turkish assistants obviously concealed for security reasons.

An article by MacCallum’s son, F. Lyman MacCallum, in the Turkish language journal, Tercüme, introduced the Turkish Bible to the language reformers. It was praised as “the first truly Turkish publication since the language reform,” reflecting the feelings of a new generation of Turks, who were proud of their new secular alphabet. For the first time a new version of the Bible had been produced without the assistance of translators from Turkey’s Christian communities, whose numbers had been decimated during the First World War and its aftermath. The Armenian and Greek churches of Anatolia no longer existed, and in Istanbul the churches had been overwhelmed by secularist nationalism.

Since 1941 there have been a series of minor revisions of this Bible with initial corrections published in 1948, and the 1987 edition is still in print. Nevertheless, the Kitabı Mukaddes has been criticized since the 1950s for its archaic vocabulary. The Turkish language reform had been rigorously applied to the 1941 edition, but the difficulties were insurmountable, as later explained by Nielson: “the militantly secular government… [was] trying to throw out everything Arabic, but there was no attempt to provide a substitute for Arabic religious terms. Therefore the committee had no choice but to continue using many Arabic terms in its new translation.”

238 MacCallum (1942), op. cit.
239 Nielson, p. 137
240 Nielson, p. 136.
It is notable that the *Kitabı Mukaddes* bears the same Arabic title as the late-19th-century translations (the deletion of the hyphen in the Arabic ızafet phrase “Kitab-ı ...” made the title look more Turkish). This Bible also retains the usage of Kieffer’s Bible of 1827 for the divine names: Allah for elohim and theos; RAB for YHWH, and Rab for adonai and kurios (shortening the Arabic Rabb to Rab, conforming to the rules of the language reform). Perhaps for this reason the *Kitabı Mukaddes* is still recommended at the Faculties of Islamic Studies at Turkish universities, but it is seldom read in Christian churches in Turkey today.

On the one hand, a good deal was gained in the Latinized version, including punctuation, which Arabic and Ottoman Turkish lacked; on the other hand, much of the colorful vocabulary of Ottoman Turkish was lost.

After English, Ottoman Turkish had the richest vocabulary of any language in world history; whereas Modern Turkish, having thrown out many (but by no means all) Arabic and Persian words, often restricts itself to a single word to convey a range of meanings. For example, the 1941 and later translations repeat the word sıkıntı endlessly to describe the troubles of life; whereas Ottoman Turkish Bibles had featured a range of colorful words: gamm, ibtilâ, ızdırâb, muzdarib, meşakkat, müzâyaka, etc. Such words are still shown in Turkish dictionaries, but the tendency of modern translators is to avoid them in favor of sıkıntı, a supposedly “pure Turkish” word which, however, was unknown before the language reform! Simplified vocabulary has been a double-edged sword, both widening the readership by making Turkish easy enough for minimally literate readers, but weakening a strong literary tradition. The reformers “hacked away at picturesque, overgrown Ottoman Turkish,” and the Bible translators felt obliged to follow suit.


Everett C. “Jack” Blake (1901-1990) was the son-in-law of Fred Field Goodsell, one of the members of the committee that produced the first post-language-reform İncil in 1933. By 1955 there was very little left of the Greek community of İzmir, where Blake worked. The Christian era in biblical Smyrna appeared to have come to an end, but Blake now dared to envision a Jesus movement among the Turks, selecting texts from the New Testament in the hope that Muslims would read a sample. His title, “Behold the Man,” hints that, in his view,

the humanity of Jesus as emphasized in liberal theology was the best way to appeal to Muslims. A copy is held by Widener Library at Harvard University.

“Behold the Man” was not printed by the KMŞ but by the ABCFM as an outreach to Muslims. Amerikan Bord Neşriyatı (ABCFM’s legal name in Turkey at that time) produced other Bible literature during this period, such as a 40-page survey of the books of the Bible entitled Kitabı Mukaddesteki Kitaplar ve her biri hakkında bir yazı: Seçilmiş Kitabı Mukaddes ayetleriyle beraber (İstanbul: Amerikan Bord Neşriyatı, 1954). They also published a series of children’s books entitled Çocuklar için İncil’den Öyküler (İstanbul: Amerikan Bord Neşriyatı Dairesi, 1956).


This is a revision of the Psalms from the 1941 Kitabı Mukaddes. It is identified as the 3rd printing but the date of the first is not given. Probably the Psalms of 1932 and the Kitabı Mukaddes of 1941 are meant.


Jean Wendel was a Jesuit priest from Hungary who prepared a Turkish translation of the New Testament during a period of new thinking in the Roman Catholic Church that led up to the liturgical reforms of the Second Vatican Council (1962-65). He used simple language and circulated his Incil-i Şerif to a Christian audience in Istanbul for testing. The response was positive, and a committee of the BFBS was formed in 1963 to revise the Gospel of Mark from Wendel’s New Testament. The project included Wendel, Paul Nilson, two Americans, two Turkish Muslims who were “sincerely dedicated” to Bible translation, and a Turkish-speaking Greek Orthodox professor. This was the first effort to apply new vocabulary now felt to be more acceptable in secular, republican Turkey than the Arabic religious vocabulary of all previous Turkish translations.

New Translations for New Movements and Methods

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242 Spelled Vendel by Nilson, p. 137, but Wendel in library records. Nilson’s spelling reflects Turkish pronunciation.

243 Nilson, p. 138.
In the 1960s the first missionaries of Operation Mobilization (OM), a new evangelical agency, arrived in Turkey. They saw little prospect that a Turkish church would ever result from the work of the ABCFM, because the latter had been influenced by theological liberalism since the late 19th century. After the Turkish Revolution the ABCFM had decided to continue its work even though Turkey’s secular republic treated evangelizing Muslims as severely as the Ottomans ever had. A few schools and medical facilities that had not been destroyed during the wars of 1912-22 were revived, and the ABCFM was encouraged by the Turkish government to continue its social work in conformity with secular principles.

Despite this policy, one Turkish group committed to follow Jesus emerged during the period of radical secularism after the Turkish Revolution. Calling themselves Balıkçılar (Fishermen), these Muslim-background families were led by Dr. Emin Kılıçkale, a Turkish Sufi, who accepted the Four Gospels only and rejected the rest of the New Testament. He had studied medicine at Yale University and imbibed the liberal spirit, including the view that the pure historical Jesus was different from the constructed Christ of Christianity. Merrill Isely, director of the American Hospital (ABCFM) and long-term resident of Gaziantep from 1920 t0 1960, met with the Fishermen for many years, coining the term “Jesusists” to distinguish them from Christians. In the 1960s Isely’s successor, George Privratsky, persuaded the Jesusists to study the Acts of the Apostles, but his counsel that they also read Paul’s Letter to the Romans was not accepted. The influence of the Fishermen was limited to Dr. Emin’s immediate circle in Gaziantep and a few nearby towns, also later in Ankara under the leadership of one of his sons. The significance of this small movement was its affirmation of Jesus as a kind of Sufi master and its embrace of the ethics of Jesus in a Muslim city.

OM workers felt the Fishermen were rigid, sterile and unsusceptible to evangelical influence, and they criticized the ABCFM’s abandonment of specifically Christian evangelism. They were young and mobile, learned Turkish well, worked at secular jobs or came in and out of the country as tourists, passed out Christian literature, shared their faith, and were generally brash, brave, and lovable. Inevitably some were arrested, deported and blacklisted. Though they rightly invoked Turkey’s commitment to freedom of religion as specified in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, they were violating the old gentlemen’s agreement
between Atatürk and the ABCFM, disturbing the confluence of secular Turkish and liberal Christian views that had prevailed since the Turkish revolution.

Today this first evangelical wave since the time of William Goodell, William Schauffer and Elias Riggs is remembered as heroic in the Turkish Protestant churches. These small fellowships are the fruit of the work of OM and other evangelical groups that followed, or they were successors of the Armenian and Syriac (Süryani) Protestant churches of the 19th century. This revival of the evangelical spirit in Turkey significantly influenced the course of Bible translation.


The KMŞ (Turkish Bible Society) had previously reprinted booklets of the Gospels, Psalms, Proverbs and Job from the Kitabı Mukaddes of 1941, but this version of the Gospel of Mark was the first new translation they had attempted for a quarter-century. Vedat Örs was professor of linguistics at Ankara University, retired and in his 80s by this time. His competence in multiple languages was valued at the KMŞ and admired by young evangelical Bible scholars newly arrived in Turkey. A Turkish Muslim but distinctly secular in his philosophical perspective, Professor Örs began doing Bible translation in his old age because of his deep respect for Jesus.

Notably, KMŞ continued its policy of using Muslim translators who were sympathetic to the Bible, but the new evangelicals were suspicious of this translation which they saw as as the work of a Catholic priest revised by a Muslim skeptic. It was unpopular also in Istanbul’s conservative Armenian and Syriac (Süryani) Protestant communities. By now they were accustomed to the Kitabı Mukaddes, and elderly Christians were still reading the Ottoman Turkish and Armeno-Turkish versions in the “old letters.”


KMŞ kept trying to germinate a new translation, so the team was expanded. The lead translator of this second attempt at the Gospel of Mark was again Prof. Örs, but there was new blood. Pamela Richardson, a Cambridge graduate, was the exegete, and Graham Clarke, an Oxford graduate in Turkish with expertise also in New Testament Greek, was a
reviewer. They were among the new wave of evangelicals working in Turkey, and their training in Koiné Greek was valued at the KMŞ, but “adverse comments” were cited by the KMŞ as the reason for abandoning the project. Bünyamin Candemir, a Sûryani Protestant, argued that a Muslim could not understand the spiritual realities of the Bible, however good a linguist he might be, and this view was accepted by the KMŞ director, Ameniel Bagdas, also a Sûryani.


Modelled on the Living Bible Paraphrase by Ken Taylor, these booklets with black-and-white illustrations featured selections from the Four Gospels. They were translated by Dr. Nevzat Baban of the Istanbul University Medical School, who became one of Turkey’s most famous scientists, assisted by Kenan Araz, whose confessional biography was an early product of the new evangelical movement in Turkey. In this translation Tanrı was used as the word for God and Allah was excluded, reflecting the spirit of Turkish secularism.

The KMŞ is listed as the publisher of the Hz. İsa booklets, also as the İsteme Adresi (“Request from this address”) on the back of the title page, though these booklets were unrelated to the KMŞ’s work on the Gospel of Mark mentioned above. The copyright holder, Ortadoğu Yayinevi, was a euphemism for the informal translation team.

1978(?)—Hz. İsa: İncil’den Luka başlıklı bölüm. İstanbul: No date or publisher is given.

This Gospel of Luke in Turkish was adapted from the Living Bible translation of Dr. Baban for the soundtrack of the Jesus Film. The booklet was printed for distribution with the video cassette and during screenings of the film in churches and theaters.

In the end the idea of a Turkish paraphrase was judged to be inappropriate and the project was abandoned, although the Gospels of Matthew and John from this series were reprinted in 1994. The Turkish sound track of the Jesus Film, still widely distributed in Turkey today, was later edited in light of subsequent translations. The process that led to the publication of Müjde (Good News, New Testament) in 1987 was already underway, initially in competition with the Living Bible project but eventually superseding it.

Bruce Farnham, My Big Father: The story of Kenan Araz, a courageous witness (Bromley: STL Books, 1985; reprinted by Paternoster, 1992).

The publication of this New Testament is mentioned in the Catholic translation of 2009 as a basis for the latter. It was reprinted in 1986.

1987 – Kitabı Mukaddes’in Deuterokanonik (Apokrif) Kitapları. İstanbul: Kitabı Mukaddes Şirketi.

For the first time since Haki and Ali Bey, the Old Testament Apocrypha was translated into Turkish. The translator was a Catholic who is not identified. The introduction was written by Father Luigi Iannitto of Sent Antuan Kilisesi (St. Anthony Roman Catholic Church). By now the KMŞ was an ecumenical agency cooperating with the United Bible Societies (an international and interdenominational consortium), so the KMŞ printed the Apocrypha on behalf of the Catholic churches in Turkey.

A new Turkish Bible publishing company

Frustrated by the slow progress towards a modern translation, a committee of evangelicals was formed in 1977 under the initial leadership of Peter Hopkins, intent on producing a New Testament in contemporary Turkish. When approached for support, the KMŞ replied that they had no current translation project underway. At a meeting on 27 October 1979 the new committee decided to proceed independently, the Gospel of John and several of Paul’s letters being almost ready for publication. Ali Şimşek, one of the new wave of Turkish Christians, was hired as translator, Graham Clarke and Pamela Richardson were the exegetes, and Trevor Penrose was the tireless organizer. Şimsek had received training in Bible translation at seminars organized by William Reyburn of the KMŞ.

Some time later the KMŞ revived their own New Testament project with Thomas Cosmades as lead translator. He had already done a version of the Gospel of John entitled Su, Ekmek, Yaşam (Water, Bread, Life). The independent committee was now asked to join this project but declined. They felt Cosmades’ style was idiosyncratic and his use of Turkish neologisms excessive. The new committee was committed to the principle that first drafts should be produced by a native speaker and that, under the political circumstances of modern Turkey, this lead translator should be a Turk. While Cosmades was bilingual and wrote excellent Turkish, he was a Greek.

245 Recently reprinted under a German title, Das Jahr des Wassers: Eine Neue Kreatur.
After this parting of the ways, work on two New Testament translations went forward. At Penrose’s initiative the Translation Trust was incorporated in the UK in 1984 to raise funds for *Yeni Yaşam Yayınları* (New Life Publications). YYY was incorporated in Turkey, which now had two Bible publishers, though it is traditional to refer to the KMŞ as *The Bible Society.*


Ali Şimşek was the lead translator of this landmark translation, in association with Graham Clarke, Trevor Penrose and others. *Müjde* opened a new period in Bible distribution in Turkey. Its contemporary language and paperback format were suited to a new generation of rapidly urbanizing Turks. Beginning in the 1970s small Christian fellowships of Turks (mostly of Alevi background) and descendants of Ottoman Christians had begun gathering in Istanbul, Izmir, Ankara and Antalya. Though the Turkish Christian movement was small, the growth of these churches accelerated after the publication of *Müjde.* It was revised in 1994 and incorporated into the *Kutsal Kitap* in 2001 with a few modifications of vocabulary.

*Müjde* abandoned the divine name *Allah* which had appeared prominently in Turkish translations for centuries, substituting *Tanrı* to render the Greek *Theos.* Haki and Ali Bey had also used *Tanrı,* but it had been edited out in Kieffer’s Bible of 1827, except for *tanrılar* (“the gods”). In the *Kitabı Mukaddes* of 1941 neither *Tanrı* nor *tanrılar* were used. The translators of Müjde revived *Tanrı* because they felt that the language was developing in the direction of the Öztürkçe (pure Turkish) as advocated by the language reformers, and because the anticipated readership were the “secular moderns” who had already rejected Islam.

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246 This reflects the pattern in Britain where “The Bible Society” means the British and Foreign Bible Society, the first one, as distinct from later offshoots such as the Trinitarian Bible Society.

247 Many of these people were Muslims and Turks who happened to have a Christian grandmother or great-grandmother. Armenian women were taken by and/or chose to marry Turkish men to avoid massacre or forced exile from Turkey during World War I. As their grandchildren explored their family history, some of them were attracted to the new Turkish churches.
Though much beloved of Turkish-speaking Christians, the God of the Müjde translation has become anathema in the Turkish Islamic revival, where Tanrı is viewed as the pagan god of the pre-Islamic Turks and of non-Muslims in general. Because the Kutsal Kitap removes Allah from the vocabulary of the Bible, Muslim teachers refer to it disparagingly as Tanrı’nın kitabı (the book of Tanrı). This Islamic rejoinder is a new development in the interreligious culture of Turkey and can be specifically attributed to the publication of the Müjde. The de-Islamizing vocabulary of the Müjde became popular with Christians, but this contributed to theological polarization of Christians and Muslims, stamping the new Turkish Bible with the view of some Christians that Christians and Muslims worship two different deities.

1988 — İncil: Sevinç Getirici Haber — İncil’in Yunanca’dan çağdaş Türkçe’ye çevirisı. İstanbul: Kitabı Mukaddes Şirketi.

This is the Contemporary Turkish New Testament of the KMŞ and a rival to YYY’s Müjde. The translator was Thomas Cosmades (d. 2010). It can be read online, in the BibleWorks program, and in revisions printed in Turkey in 1998 and Germany in 2010. It is preferred by some Christians in Turkey and in some Turkish churches in Germany.


The foreword (önsöz) of this excellent new translation of the Psalms is signed by Xavier Nuss and Hakkı Demirel, with a Roman Catholic imprimatur by Mons. Pierre Dubois, Vicar Apostolic. No publisher is indicated other than the printing house. In 1996 it was lightly edited and reprinted by the Turkish Bible Society (Kitabı Mukaddes Şirketi) as part of the Old Testament translation project that led to the publication of the Kutsal Kitap in 2001.


A diglot Turkish and English version from the Müjde for language learners. Still in print.


Featuring condensed Bible stories in large type and attractive color illustrations on every page, this imported book is still for sale in Turkey. Küçükler için Resimli Kitabı Mukaddes was an earlier children’s Bible based on Kenneth N. Taylor’s The Bible in Pictures for Little Eyes

with old-fashioned Sunday School pictures (Moody Press, 1956), published in a Turkish-English diglot version in the 1960's (exact date unknown). It was re-issued in a Turkish-only version entitled Küçükler için Resimli Kutsal Kitap, with a new translation by Memduh Uysal (İstanbul: KMŞ, 1990).


This appears to be a revision or reprint of Matthew from the 1987 Müjde in preparation for the revised Müjde of 1994.


This distinctive translation of the Gospel of John was matched by a companion translation of Matthew entitled Göksel Kral, both based on the Living Bible and reprinted from early work on a Turkish Bible paraphrase in the 1970s (see above: 1978 — Hz. İsa'nın Öğretişleri). The publisher, Kutsal Kitap Araştırma Merkezi (KKAM), is the Turkish Bible Correspondence Course that began by advertising the İncil in Turkish newspapers in the 1980s and now has an expanding ministry via its internet webpage.


This is a revision of the first edition of 1987.


These are draft booklets of the Contemporary Turkish Old Testament, initiated as a joint project of the KMŞ and YYY in 1989.


These two books in rough newsprint were published by Müjde Yayıncılık, a Roman Catholic publishing effort, not to be confused with the New Testament translation entitled Müjde
(1987 above). Hakkı Demirel also translated the Gospels and Acts of the Apostles. Both booklets listed here use Allah as one of the divine names. In the case of Genesis the publication page tells us that it was translated from French, and that it was a second printing; the title “Tevrat” is confusing, because the book actually consists of selections from the Old Testament, not the Torah only. First printings of several of the booklets appeared in the 1980's, but I have no further information on the earlier period. As the Contemporary Turkish Old Testament project of KMŞ and YYY proceeded the Catholics abandoned their translation effort and endorsed the *Kutsal Kitap*, which was printed in a Catholic and Orthodox version in 2003 (see below).


A revision of the Turkish Psalms of 1988, now incorporated into the Contemporary Turkish Old Testament project, with a new introduction and a useful glossary (*sözlükçe*) of Hebrew terms in the Psalms.


A revision of the *Sevinç Getirici Haber* of 1988, Cosmades’ translation of the New Testament, revised by Behnan Konutgan and İhsan Özbek.


This diglot version shows the New International Version in parallel columns with Tomas Cosmades’ Turkish translation of the New Testament.


*Kitabı Mukaddes Şirketi* (KMŞ) is the Turkish Bible Society that inherited the work of the ABS and BFBS. *Yeni Yaşam Yayınları* (YYY) continued the work of a committee of evangelical translators that had begun work in 1977 (see above). YYY adapted the revised *Müjde* of 1994 to harmonize with the Contemporary Turkish Old Testament it had produced in cooperation.
with KMŞ, and the two books were printed together under the title *Kutsal Kitap* (KK). The translators for the Contemporary Turkish Old Testament included Ali Şimşek, Behnan Konutgan, and Mahmud Solgun. Paul Lawrence and Ken Wiest were the Hebrew exegetes, Graham Clarke the New Testament exegete.

A decision was made to use the YYY’s Müjde instead of KMŞ’s Sevinç Getirici Haber (the Cosmades translation) as the New Testament text for the Protestant version of the *Kutsal Kitap*. A consultant from the United Bible Societies, Krijn van de Jagt, was entrusted with the decision. In choosing the Müjde he insisted that several words be changed: *Kudüs* became *Yeruşalim* (Jerusalem), *rahip* became *kâhin* (priest), and *topluluk* became *kilise* (church). These decisions were protested by some members of the translation team and remain controversial to this day. For example, *kilise* is an undisguised adaptation of the Greek word *ekklesia* and thus commits the Bible to the Turkish prejudice that “church” means a religious building of Turkey’s enemies, the Armenians and Greeks.

The KK quickly became the Bible of most of the Protestant churches in Turkey. It is well phrased in contemporary Turkish diction, making it an eminently readable and honored piece of Turkish literature. Its style, however, is sometimes too formal for easy reading by Turks with limited education, especially in the theological passages of the New Testament epistles.

In the Bible’s title the Arabic word *mukaddes* (‘holy’, ‘sanctified’) was replaced by the neologism *kutsal* (‘holy’, from the Turco-Mongolian root *kut*, ‘good fortune’), a word which had first appeared in writing only in 1935. The *Kutsal Kitap* thus announced even on its cover that it was committed to Atatürk’s Turkish language reform.

The theonyms of the Müjde were now applied to the Old Testament, where the Hebrew *YHWH* (Yahweh) is translated as *RAB*, ‘Adonai’ as *Rab*, and ‘Elohim’ as *Tanrı*. In the New

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249 URL: [http://www.nisanyansozluk.com/?k=kutsal](http://www.nisanyansozluk.com/?k=kutsal)
Testament Tanrı is used consistently as a translation for the Greek ‘theos’, and Rab for ‘kurios’.

At the time of publication it was decided that YYY and Translation Trust would hold the copyright to the New Testament, and KMŞ would hold the copyright to the Old Testament, even though YYY translators were co-workers in the Old Testament project.Difficulties resulting from copyright issues persist especially for YYY, which does not have its own translation of the Old Testament. KMŞ holds copyright to the 1988 Cosmades translation of the New Testament and to the Contemporary Turkish Old Testament as printed in the Kutsal Kitap.


A small red paperback, this is the New Testament (Müjde) from the Kutsal Kitap distributed free of charge by Zirve. The “Four Spiritual Laws” (Tanrı’yu Kişisel Olarak Tanınmak İster Misiniz?) are appended at the end of the book. This is the İncil that Turkish readers receive if they ask for one at a church or via evangelistic web sites.


Printed at the request of the Jewish community in Turkey, this is the Contemporary Turkish Old Testament from the Kutsal Kitap. Tevrat, a Turkish intonation of Torah, is used here as a title for the Hebrew Old Testament as a whole.


A diglot printed for Turkish emigrés in Germany, this New Testament features the Turkish translation by Cosmades.

2003 — Kutsal İncil, by Bünyamin Candemir. İstanbul: Kitabı Mukaddes Şirketi.

Having been involved in Bible translation since the 1970s, Candemir, a Sûryani Protestant, believed that the Müjde and Kutsal Kitap had abandoned too many positive features of a literal translation, but he recognized that the Kitabı Mukaddes was outdated.²⁵⁰ His

²⁵⁰ Jurg Heusser, “Die Geschichte des türkischen Bibels,” the link for which at http://www.orientdienst.de/muslime/tuerkische_bibel.shtml seems no longer to work.
compromise version restored *Allah* to the New Testament as the translation of *Theos*. It followed the King James Version in many respects, even to the point of italicizing words italicized in the KJV; for example, compare I Cor. 4:7. Candemir’s New Testament can be read online at [http://www.incil.biz/incil-4/](http://www.incil.biz/incil-4/) or downloaded from: [http://presbiteryen.org/](http://presbiteryen.org/).


This edition of the *Kutsal Kitap* including the Old Testament Apocrypha was printed for the Catholic and Orthodox churches in Turkey, thus returning to the tradition of Haki and Ali Bey who had done draft translations of these deuto-canonical books under Dutch Reformed sponsorship in the 17th century. Behnan Konutgan revised the 1987 version of the Turkish Apocrypha to conform its vocabulary to that of the *Kutsal Kitap*.

The New Testament in this Bible is the *Sevinç Getirici Haber* of 1999, a revision of Cosmades’ translation of the New Testament. YYY and The Translation Trust refused permission for their New Testament to be printed in a Bible that would include the Apocrypha. Though Luther himself had translated some of the Old Testament apocryphal books, Protestants today do not accept them as holy writ. Be that as it may, this way of expressing a principle in the case of the *Kutsal Kitap* was an unfortunate sign of the Christian disunity that still surrounds the Bible. In the 21st century it is quite evident from the array of Turkish translations in print that Christians disagree about which books belong in the Bible.

The deuto-canonical books can be read in Turkish at the *Kutsal Kitap* website along with the rest of the Bible. The internet has fostered an accommodation that had been rejected during disagreements over print publication.


This is a Modern Turkish translation of the folio in Ali Bey’s Ottoman Turkish manuscript of 1664 that contains the deuto-canonical books (the so-called ‘Apocrypha’). The translator, Kadir Akın (b. 1954) believes these books are important to include in the Turkish Bible for three reasons: because they were part of Ali Bey’s Bible; because they include proverbs that ring true in the Turkish literary tradition; and because he feels this complete Bible rooted

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deeply in the Turkish translation tradition will appeal to students in the Islamic theological faculties of Turkish universities.

“Apocrypha” in Greek means “hidden things” in the sense of secret wisdom, so “Gizlenen Kitaplar” in the title of Akın’s book is a literal Turkish translation of the Greek word. Unfortunately, however, the idea of hidden secrets feeds the perception of Muslims that Christians are withholding pieces of the Bible that would tend to confirm Islam.

Kadir Akın is a Turkish Christian from Adapazarı who emigrated to Germany in 1986 and became a German citizen. Hakkı Bayraktar is a Muslim publisher in Istanbul. Biographies and photos of both men appear on the frontispiece. Akın approached Bayraktar about publishing his work when KMŞ proceeded with a different translation of the Apocrypha. Akın was the only translator and Bayraktar’s contribution was limited to editorial presentation. According to Akın this collaboration of a Christian translator and a Muslim publisher involved various disagreements, but it continued with the publication of a complete Bible in 2007 (see below).

Akin did his translation between 1986 and 1989, but it was published only in 2003. He also produced a valuable, but still unpublished, letter-for-letter transliteration of the Apocrypha folio in Ali Bey’s manuscript. Thus far he has published only his translations, not the transliterations.

Ali Bey’s manuscript of the Old Testament Apocrypha was not printed with the Turkish Bible of 1827, and all the later Ottoman Turkish translations followed suit. The BFBS had decided in 1826 to exclude the Apocrypha from any translation under its sponsorship; clearly this decision was prompted by the upcoming publication of Kieffer’s version of Ali Bey’s Bible. This decision influenced the future course of Bible translation in many languages. As mentioned above, the Translation Trust took the same conservative Protestant position in 2003, refusing permission for its version of the Turkish New Testament (Müjde) to be printed in the Turkish Bible with Apocrypha that was being prepared by the KMŞ for the Catholics and Orthodox. The exclusion that had been in force since 1826 had been reversed by the ABS in 1964 and by the BFBS two years later, but YYY and the Translation Trust did not follow suit.252

252URL: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Biblical_Apocrypha#Modern_editions
In Turkey KMŞ had already published a Catholic translation of the Apocrypha in 1987 (see above). Later a revised version by Behnan Konutgan was included in the ecumenical version of the *Kutsal Kitap* (KK2003), which went to press at about the same time as Akın’s translation of Ali Bey’s Apocrypha (see above). So there were now three versions of the Apocrypha in Turkish (the first two are cited in Akın’s bibliography, items 4 and 12). Akın has told me that the KMŞ versions do not honor the Turkish translation tradition, because they neither followed the text of Ali Bey nor used the same list of Apocryphal books which he translated. This elevation of Ali Bey as the arbiter of Bible contents reflects the romantic attachment to him felt by some Protestants in Turkey.

While the Roman Catholic, Anglican and Orthodox Churches have always included the deuto-canonical books, they disagree about which books to include. The Apocrypha, so called, is a misnomer, because it is a fluid collection, with some books included by one church that are rejected by another. Given this baffling controversy, it is not surprising that the source texts for the Konutgan and Akın translations were different, and that the books they included are (only slightly) different. Konutgan followed the Greek Septuagint of the third century B.C., which was the Old Testament of the early Christians (often cited in the New Testament) and of the Orthodox churches ever since; whereas Akın translated from Ali Bey’s 17th-century Turkish manuscript, which had followed the Latin Vulgate. Though both the content and the order of the books varied, the differences in the end turned out to be minor: fifteen books are included in both the KK2003 and Akın translations, but KK2003 additionally includes Psalm 151 and IV Maccabbes (which Ali Bey had excluded) and excludes the Prayer of Manassah (which Ali Bey had included).

On the title pages of the Akın/Bayraktar Apocrypha it is asserted that this version is “the final text with omissions corrected” (“eksikleri giderilmiş son metin”). This seems to be intended as a claim that Ali Bey’s text is the correct version, when in fact the whole issue of “correctness” is disputed among the churches. See below (2007) for further discussion of the Akın/Bayraktar version of the Ottoman Turkish Bible of 1885, to which this text of the Apocrypha was appended.

The frontispiece and introduction repeat the widespread claim that Sultan Mehmet IV ordered Ali Bey’s translation of the Bible. We know that Ali Bey’s translation was sponsored
and paid for by a Reformed group in the Netherlands, not by the Sultan, and that Ali Bey was a free man and no longer in the Sultan’s service when he did his Bible translation (see the section on Ali Bey above).


Printed at the request of the Jewish community in Turkey, this is the Zebur of 1996 with a new cover.


This is a diglot lectionary of readings for Sundays and festivals in the Syrian Orthodox Archdiocese of Istanbul. It is a reminder that the minority languages of the Ottoman Empire are still in ritual use in the ancient churches, but that the mother tongue of the laity is Turkish.

The Syriac (Aramaic) New Testament is called the Peshitta and is claimed by this church as the original New Testament in the language spoken by Jesus. While it is true that Jesus spoke both Hebrew and Aramaic and that Syriac is the modern descendent of Aramaic, Western scholars have produced documentary evidence that the Peshitta was a 5th-century translation from the Greek New Testament.


The Jehovah’s Witnesses (Yahova Şahitleri) operate in a few Turkish cities. Viewed as heretical by the Orthodox, Catholic and Protestant churches alike, they distribute their Bible and other literature in public places such as bazaars and recreation areas.

2006-2010 — Türkçe Çeviri ve Açıklamalarıyla Tora ve Aftara. Tora Bereşit 1, Tora Şemot 2, Tora Vayikra 3, Tora ve Aftara 4, Tora ve Aftara/Devarim — Tevrat Tefsiri. 5 volumes, 17 x 25 cm. İstanbul: Gözlem Gazetecilik Basın ve Yayın A.Ş.

This fresh Turkish translation of the Torah by Moşe Farsi features extensive rabbinic commentary in Turkish according to “Judaic method, perspective and tradition.” Genesis,


Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy were printed separately in very large volumes. The top of the left-hand pages displays the Turkish translation with the Hebrew at the top of right-hand pages, and most of both pages is filled with the commentary. The translation team for the commentary included Diani Yanni, Selin Saylağ and Baruh Beni Danon. Farsi has also produced a book of ritual for the Jewish festival of Purim that includes a translation of Esther, again with commentary.

Clearly Protestant Christians no longer monopolize Turkish Bible translation. Both Jewish and Muslim publishers have now produced Turkish Bibles (for a Muslim publisher see the next entry below), and the Jehovah’s Witnesses as well (see above). This complements the historic tradition of Turkish Bible translation in which both Muslims and Jews were active, as discussed in Chapters 1 and 2 above.

This Turkish Torah is advertised on the internet where the publisher claims it as the first direct translation from Hebrew into Turkish. This fails to acknowledge the Turkish translation from Hebrew by Avraham Firkowicz in 1835 (see the section above on Turkish in Hebrew characters). Moşe Farsi has apologized saying that he did not know about the Firkowicz translation. Christian translators have always insisted that they followed the original Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek sources — a claim asserted on the title pages of the Kitabı Mukaddes from the 19th century onward.

Today translation teams usually produce a first draft based on an English Bible (or another modern language known to the translator) and then compare it with the Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek texts, making adjustments as needed. In this sense it is probably true that Farsi’s work is the first modern translation of the Torah drafted from the Hebrew, making it a unique contribution by a bilingual Turkish and Hebrew speaker. It is also, according to Farsi, “the only translation that follows the traditional Talmudic Jewish sources and commentaries.”

Farsi is now working on Joshua and plans to translate the historical books of the Old Testament. He is uncertain whether he will then move on to the Psalms and other poetic books, noting that they may not lend themselves to the Modern Turkish diction of which he is capable. This is a prescient comment. As compared with the rich vocabulary of Ottoman

255URL: http://www.kitapyurdu.com/kitap/default.asp?id=84212
Turkish, the Turkish of the modern language reform has been impoverished by the exclusion of many words of Arabic and Persian origin. Modern Turkish translations of Isaiah and Hosea, for example, display a rather repetitive and unnuanced vocabulary as compared with English translations, let alone the Hebrew.

Moşe Farsi is a Jew born and educated in Istanbul and his mother tongue is Turkish. He is a Turkish citizen now living in Israel.


This is a translation into Modern Turkish of the Kitabı Mukaddes of 1885, supplemented with a modernized version of the Old Testament Apocrypha in Ali Bey’s draft manuscript of 1662-1664. The translator is Kadir Akın, a Turkish Christian and German citizen (see above: 2003, “Gizlenen Kitaplar”). The thorough set of cross-references that were published in the 1885 version are included in this translation — a useful feature for Bible students.

The cover and introduction to the book contain a number of statements by the publisher intended to appeal to Muslim readers in the faculties of Islamic studies in Turkish universities, where neo-Ottomanist sentiment is strong. For example, the 1885 version of the Kitabı Mukaddes is asserted to be the only “official” Turkish Bible because it was published with the permission of Sultan Abdülhamid II and the Ottoman Ministry of Public Instruction. The cover also claims that the whole book is from the translation of Ali Bey, reflecting the popular view that any Ottoman Turkish Bible must have come ultimately from Ali Bey. In fact, however, the 17th-century text of Ali Bey’s Bible is a distant ancestor of the 1885 version — not unlike the soup of the soup of the soup that Nasreddin Hoja served to the friend of a friend of a friend! Even Kieffer’s Bible of 1827 was reflected quite weakly in the 1878/1885 version, a new translation in its own right.

In the Akın/Bayraktar Bible the Apocryphal books are interleaved with other Old Testament books as in the Septuagint of the Orthodox churches — the pattern also approved by the United Bible Societies. Ali Bey, however, had followed Luther’s Bible and the KJV in putting

\[256\] The cross-references in the Kutsal Kitap of 2001 are minimal. The interpretive notes in the Açıklamalı Kutsal Kitap are the best available in Turkish.
the Apocryphal books in a separate folio; the order of the books in this folio is preserved in Akın’s earlier book (see above).

A polemical argument from Akın’s Turkish Apocrypha as published in 2003 is repeated here. Now we read that these books have been “deliberately hidden” (adeta gizlenen) from the Turkish reading public, presumably by the Protestant translators. Again the title page asserts that this is the “final text with omissions recovered” (eksikleri giderilmiş son metin). The charge that there are books missing from the Turkish Bible is true in the limited sense that Ali Bey’s translation of the Apocrypha was excluded from the 19th-century Turkish Bibles. Unfortunately it also feeds the perception of Muslims that the text of the Bible has been “changed” (değiştirilmiş) with an assertion that does not apply to the Catholic and Orthodox version of the Kutsal Kitap.

Kadir Akın is a serious scholar of Ali Bey’s translation of the deuterocanonical books. His energy as an independent translator is evident also in his letter-for-letter transliterated text of the entire Kitabı Mukaddes of 1885. Completed 25 years ago, this typescript has not yet been prepared for publication.


The publication page of this translation of the New Testament tells us that it was based on Wendel’s Turkish Gospels of 1959 and Hakkı Demirel’s New Testament of 1983. Dominik Pınar is identified as the translator and P. Jacob Xavier as commentator and theological evaluator. The introduction was signed by Luigi Padovese, the late Roman Catholic bishop for Anatolia, then resident in İskenderun.


This is a minor revision of the Kutsal Kitap of 2001 on high-quality thin paper with attractive imitation leather binding. A few minor corrections were made to the text.

257Leiden University Library, Cod. Or. 390c (1664) and 1101e (1665).
AKKIT is the first Study Bible in the Turkish language, initiated by Trevor Penrose before his death. The editorial team was led by Ali Şimşek, assisted by Neslihan Yangın, and included Turkish Bible scholars, reflecting the growing maturity of the Protestant movement in Turkey. Among other Bible helps promised when the Kutsal Kitap appeared in 2001, this one is among the most useful. The NIV Study Bible was the basis for the commentary, but adjustments were made and new notes written for the Turkish context. Commentary is well presented from an evangelical perspective and includes several (including Catholic, Orthodox and Pentecostal) perspectives on disputed issues, such as sacraments, women in leadership, Arminian vs. Pentecostal vs. Reformed interpretations, etc. The introduction includes an outdated biography of Ali Bey adapted from Cooper (1901).

Launched a month after AKKIT, YAKK is a Pentecostal Study Bible printed by the Assemblies of God and based on The Full Life Study Bible (NIV): An International Study Bible for Pentecostal and Charismatic Christians (Zondervan, 1992), which is also called the Life in the Spirit Study Bible and the Fire Bible in other editions. The explanatory notes in YAKK were translated from this Bible, and the Turkish Bible text is a new literal translation based on the NIV. Ali Şimşek was the project director and Alper Özharar the lead translator of the notes.

Though a Study Bible in Turkish had been long awaited, it was a surprise when two of them appeared in the same year. One hopes that the Turkish churches will benefit from the opportunity to examine the sectarian process suggested by two differently annotated Bibles. YYY signed separate contracts for the two projects with different funding sources. Publication of Christian books in Turkey is often dependent on foreign funds, which can influence publishing decisions.

İncil: Sevinç Getirici Haber — İncil’in Yunanca’dan çağdaş Türkçe’ye çevirisi.
A revision by Thomas Cosmades and Hayrettin Piligir of the same title of 1988, based on online testing. Downloadable in a red-letter version from http://presbiteryen.org/. Cosmades died in September 2010 shortly after the publication of this revision.


This was a trial edition of the Gospel of John for the HADİ New Testament published in 2012. Many of the criticisms of the secular vocabulary of the Müjde and Kutsal Kitap have been addressed in this new translation. See below.


TSV is a personal project of İlhan Keskinöz based on translations he makes during sermon preparation. Thus far only the Proverbs of Solomon are posted on the internet: http://incil.info. http://www.hristiyanforum.com/forum/suleymaninozdeyisleri-f699/.


This paraphrase of the Gospel of Matthew features contextualized vocabulary and explanatory footnotes for Muslim readers, following the pattern of “Muslim Idiom Translations” (MIT) that had appeared recently in other languages of the Muslim world. On facing pages there is a Turkish interlinear translation under the Greek New Testament text in romanized characters — the first time the original Greek text has been printed in a Turkish Bible.

A Turkish Muslim drafted the paraphrase from a contemporary Arabic New Testament, and this was corrected by Muslim and Christian consultants. The Islamic theonym Mevla is used for Father and Vekil for Son of God. However controversial, these terms were intended to counteract the perception of many Muslims that Christians proclaim Mary as God’s consort who bore him a son. Because the Gospels do not say such a thing, it can be argued that the literal terms Father (Baba) and Son (Oğul) miscommunicate the intended meaning. Baba and Allah’ın Oğlu are shown on the interlinear pages and explained also in the footnotes, but the less literal wordings are used in the main text, an MIT paraphrase.
This project revived the Ottoman tradition of Christian editors collaborating with Muslim translators, and of the early Turkish translations of Ali Bey and Kieffer, when Muslims were the anticipated audience. Most Turkish Christian leaders opposed this translation, as did some churches in the West. In the early months of 2012 the Matthew paraphrase was attacked in an internet petition campaign on the (English-language) website of *Biblical Missiology*, an American entity. In an inquiry arranged by the World Evangelical Alliance in early 2013, a committee of theologians concluded that the “divine familial names” (a new term sparked by this controversy) should be translated with a near equivalent familial term in the target language.


After a trial publication of the Gospel of John in 2011, *HADİ* was released in November 2012 with a grand ceremony at an Istanbul hotel. YYY has a contract with the World Bible Translation Center and Bible League to publish a Turkish Easy-To-Read Bible for minimally literate readers. The vocabulary is simple, the sentences are short, and the print is large. Some Islamic terms from Ali Bey and the *Kitabı Mukaddes* are restored to the text, such as *Allah* for God, *Kelâm* for the Word, and *Kudüs* for Jerusalem. The footnotes give brief explanations of key terms, including two different explanations of *Allah’ın Oğlu* (Son of God) contextualized for Muslim audiences. When Jesus calls God his Father, this is translated *Semavi Baba*, meaning Heavenly Father but with an Islamic nuance in the word for heaven (Muslims often refer to Islam, Christianity and Judaism as the *semavi dînler*). Similarly, *Allah’ın Hükümrânlığı* translates Jesus’ term “kingdom of God” with an Arabic flavor, replacing the de-islamized expression *Tanrı’nın Egemenliği* in the *Kutsal Kitap*. The traditional Arabic term *mürit* for “disciple” has resulted in controversy among Turkish Christians of secularist leaning, who associate the term with Islamic sects in conservative Muslim countries.

The lead translator is Ali Şimşek, who was also the translator of the *Müjde* and one of the translators of the *Kutsal Kitap*. After he had spent 25 years of his life on one translation, his commitment to take on the HADİ project is evidence of his desire to see the Bible made available to both secularist and conservative audiences in the Turkish reading public.
Chapter 6

Turkish in Cyrillic Letters (Bulgarian Turkish)

Turkish as spoken in Bulgaria is essentially the same language spoken in Turkey but with some Bulgarian vocabulary. Turkish is not taught in Bulgarian schools, so many Turkish speakers cannot read or write Turkish.

1992 – Müjde. Transliterated into Cyrillic characters. Printed at WEC Press, UK

When a Christian movement began among the Turkish-speaking Millet and Roma ethnic groups in Bulgaria, the Müjde of 1987 was printed for them in Cyrillic characters.


Thomas Otto and a team of native speakers of Bulgarian Turkish produced these Psalms and New Testament in the Bulgarian dialect. A note to Türkiyeliler (Turks of Turkey) appears on the website asking them to be tolerant of the Bulgarian words that do not conform to Istanbul Turkish (İstanbul türkçesine uygun olmayan, hatta kimi bulgarca sözlere rastladığınız zaman onu hoşgörü ile karşılayın).

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Chapter 7

Related Languages

Discounting Bible excerpts in Kipchak in the Codex Cumanicus, Bible translations in Turkic languages outside the Ottoman Empire began with Henry Brunton’s Karass (Nogai Tatar) New Testament in 1813 as revised by Dickson: İncil-i mukaddes, yani, İlsa Masihin yeni vasiyeti (Astragan: Yuḥannā Mīṭāl, 1818).258 In 1820 this translation was modified by Charles Fraser for distribution among the Kazakhs, and then revised a number of times as late as 1910, but it still sounded more like Tatar than Kazakh. For many of the Turkic languages (Azerbaijani, Kyrgyz, Tatar, Uyghur, Uzbek, etc.), short chronologies of variable historical quality can be read online.259 The shadow of Russia, China, and Iran — not Turkey — hovered over these translation efforts. They remind us that Turkic languages in some places are still printed in Arabic characters (Uyghur in China; Azeri in Iran) and in Cyrillic letters (Kazak, Kyrgyz, Tatar, Uzbek; also Uyghur in the former Soviet lands).

The Bible in Kurmanji Kurdish, Kitêba Pîroz: Peyhama Kevin û Peymana Nû, was published in Latin characters in Germany by GBV-Dillenburg in 2004 and can be read online.260 When the Turkish government liberalized its Kurdish policy and allowed publications in Kurdish, the Turkish Christian publisher, Gerçeğe Doğru, printed a Kurmanji New Testament entitled Peymana Nû İncîl: Mizgînîya İsa Mesih in 2006. The Gospel of Luke in the Zaza dialect has been translated for use as the soundtrack in the film, Jesus. For Iraqi Kurds the Sorani Kurdish Bible in the Arabic alphabet was published in 1998 and can be read at the Kurdish Christian website above. Kurdish is written also in Cyrillic characters in the former Soviet countries. In the Ottoman period the American Bible Society had printed Isaac G. Bliss’s Kurmanji Kurdish New Testament in Armenian script (Istanbul: A.H. Boyajian, 1872; preceded by the Gospels in 1857).

Translations in the non-Turkish languages of the Ottoman Empire were done by several of the same 19th-century translators we have encountered in connection with the Turkish Bible.


Their competency in multiple European and Oriental languages reminds us of Ali Bey. For example:

Elias Riggs was the translator of both the **Bulgarian** and **Modern Armenian** Bibles (the latter not to be confused with the Armeno-Turkish Bible). His work was so influential that he is considered one of the heroes of the Bulgarian revolution; correspondingly he is also viewed as a missionary meddler in Turkish politics during the late Ottoman period.²⁶¹

Henry D. Leeves revised the **Modern Greek** New Testament (not to be confused with his Græco-Turkish New Testament), which had been commissioned initially by the BFBS agent, Robert Pinkerton, from Archimandrite Hilarion, a Lebanese Greek. Leeves also translated the Old Testament into Modern Greek. Complicating the project was the Greek revolt against Ottoman rule in the 1820s that led to Leeves’ withdrawal from Constantinople to Corfu and later to Athens.²⁶² Bible translation influenced the revolutionary politics of the Ottoman Christian minorities.

In the 19th century around 500,000 Jews lived in the Ottoman lands,²⁶³ with substantial communities in Salonica, Smyrna and Constantinople. Accepting responsibility for a project first envisioned by Robert Pinkerton,²⁶⁴ William Schauffler and Rabbi Shemtob translated the Old Testament into **Ladino**, the language of the Sephardic Jews, which is written in Hebrew characters and is also called **Judezmo** and **Hebraeo-Spanish**. Schauffler’s Ladino Bible was printed in Vienna in 1842 by the ABS. The New Testament revised by Schauffler from the 1747 version²⁶⁵ was reprinted as late as 1922. Today there are still 100,000 Ladino speakers in Bulgaria, Greece, Israel, and Turkey. A new online Ladino New Testament in Latin characters appeared in 1999.²⁶⁶
Chapter 8
A Brief Comparison: Turkish Translations of the Koran

The Koran was not widely available in Turkish during the Ottoman period. The manuscript tradition consisted mostly of commentaries under a Turkish rendering (me’al, “meaning”) of the Arabic Koran. Such translations were often fragmentary and remained, in any case, in manuscript. The earliest Turkish me’al of the complete Koran, usually dated to 1424 C.E. (820 A.H.), was done by Muhammed b. Hamza, a Seljuk Turkish preacher in Baghdad. Half a millenium later this was transcribed into Latin (modern Turkish) characters by Ahmet Topaloğlu (1976-78), who also produced a valuable companion dictionary of its 15th-century Turkish vocabulary.

The earliest printing of any book containing the Koran in Ottoman Turkish was the commentary of Ahmed Salih b. Abdullah, Zübdet’ü’l-asar el-mevahib ve’l-envar (A work of conclusions: Contributions and enlightenings). It was translated in manuscript in 1685 and is said to have been printed in Istanbul in 1875. The academic authority on the history of the Turkish Koran, Muhammed Hamidullah, tells us the location of the 17th-century manuscript of the Zübdetü’l-asar in the Istanbul University Library, but fails to mention the editor or publisher of the printed volume. Online lists of Turkish me’aller of the Koran seem always to be based on Hamidullah’s description. I am not aware of an academic study of the Zübdetü’l-asar.

The conservative Sultan Abdul Hamid II had opposed the translation of the Koran. When the Young Turks overthrew him in 1909 an Islamic journal in Istanbul, Sirat-ı Müstakim, immediately printed some Turkish verses of the Koran with commentary. The first complete


268 Türk İslam Müzesi, manuscript no: 40.

269 Ahmet Topaloğlu, Muhammed bin Hamza XV. Yüzyıl başlarında yapılmış Satır-Arası Kur’an Tercümesi, 1. cilt (giriş ve metin), 2. cilt (sözlük). (İstanbul: T.C. Kültür Bakanlığı, 1976).

270 Aziz Kur’an: Çeviri ve Açıklama (İstanbul: Beyan Yayınları, 2000), pp. 131-142 (a list of Turkish translations), here p. 133; Kur’an-ı Kerim Tarihi ve Türkçe Tefsirler Bibliografiyası (İstanbul: Yağmur Yayınları, 1965).

271 For example, http://www.kuranmeali.com/turkcemealler.asp.

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Ottoman Turkish translation of the Koran alone, i.e. without commentary, was entitled *Terjumat el-Kuran* and was printed in 1913. The publisher, İbrahim Hilmi Efendi, promoted it as an anonymous translation, but controversy erupted immediately.

The attempt to hide the identity of the author, a Syrian Catholic named Zeki Megamiz, precipitated a scandal about providing Muslims with a translation by a Christian. A journal article warned the Sheikh ül-Islam’s office about the danger, and the authorities prevented the distribution of this book.\(^{272}\)

Conservative Muslims feared Christian translators, just as conservative Christians have been suspicious of Muslim translators for 350 years.

Immediately after the Turkish Revolution three Turkish versions of the Koran appeared in the space of one year (1924-25). This was before Atatürk’s language reform, so all three were Ottoman Turkish in Arabic characters. The three were Hüseyin Kâzım Kadri’s *Nur’ul-Beyan* (The light of clarification), again by the printer İbrahim Hilmi; and two translations both entitled *Kur’an-ı Kerim Tercümesi* by Süleyman Tevfik and Cemil Sait (Dikel). All three were rejected by Muslim scholars: Kadiri’s because he had only informal training in Arabic, Tevfik’s because he was considered a literary rogue, and Dikel’s because his source text was a French version, not the Koran in Arabic.

What these incidents reveal is that the Turkish reading public had become impatient with the conservative commentary tradition that resisted the “innovations” of the then 450-year-old European print culture. Turkish printers were modern men and responded to popular demand for the holy book, but their initial efforts failed because they were idiosyncratic and did not consult the *ulema* scholars.

Worried about religious chaos, the Parliament (*Meclis*) of the Turkish Republic demanded an official Turkish version of the Koran, and the Directorate of Religious Affairs (*Diyanet*) assigned the task eventually to M. Hamdi Yazır Elmalı. The result was not a Koran for the people but a Turkish text of the Koran embedded in a nine-volume commentary entitled *Hak Dini Kur’an Dili* (1935-38).\(^{273}\) This erudite work is still used in Turkish theological training, and the translation itself is still in print and widely respected, but at the time it did not meet the popular demand that had inspired the three earlier printings of the Koran in Turkish.


\(^{273}\)URL: [http://www.kuran.gen.tr/?x=s_main&kid=3](http://www.kuran.gen.tr/?x=s_main&kid=3)

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1955 a new translation was published by Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı, emeritus professor of Turkish Sufism at Istanbul University, and circulated widely. More recently, translations have proliferated. Each of the Muslim brotherhoods (tarikat) has its favorite translation. Yaşar Nuri Öztürk's Kur'an-ı Kerim ve Türkçe Meali, first published in 1993, is said to be the most printed book in Turkish history.²⁷⁴

The proliferation of translations has resulted in an outcry against scholars who are said to be “changing” the Koran. Vernacular versions of the Koran are called me’al, which means “meaning” rather than “translation”, because the words of God are felt to be so holy that they cannot be translated accurately. In practice Muslim scholars simply paraphrase the Koran based on the tefsir (commentary) tradition in which they were trained, and then print their paraphrase next to or under the Arabic original. This results in variable Turkish representations of the meaning of the Arabic text. Accusations of scholars making “errors” have arisen among devout but unlettered Muslims, who wonder why the various me’al do not agree. In effect, Turkish Muslims are now being exposed to the same kind of confusing mix of translations that English-speaking Christians have experienced since the first revision of the King James Version in 1888. Many and widely varying translations of the sacred text now compete for the book-buying dollar and lira.

The Islamic idea of the Koran as an eternal and immutable text that came down from heaven complicates the Muslim translator’s work. Over the centuries Christian translators have aspired to produce a “faithful” rendering of the Hebrew and Greek Testaments, but to them “faithful” has never meant “exact”. Translation necessarily involves a contextualization of the message of the holy book in a literary form that reflects the modern culture to which it is addressed.

Studying the Koran online is a normal feature of Muslim life today. Anyone with one Turkish lira to pay for one hour at an internet café can listen to Arabic oral recital of the Koran while reading the Turkish transliteration simultaneously. Multiple Turkish translations are viewable at Kuranmealleri.com and Kuran.gen.tr. The website of the government’s Ministry of Religious Affairs (Diyanet İşleri Bakanlığı) features many resources including its own Turkish translation, downloadable as a PDF or DOC file: Diyanet.gov.tr/kuran/default.asp.

²⁷⁴URL: http://www.kuran.gen.tr/?x=s_main&kid=2; http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ya%C5%9Far_Nuri_%C3%9Cz%C3%B6rk

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This list shows all the Turkish Bibles and Bible portions I know of, but it is not annotated. Where the exact title is known it appears in italics. Corrected or additional publication data may be sent to bruce.p@post.harvard.edu. Please provide a scan of the title and back-title pages if possible.

KEY:
Ottoman Turkish (Arabic) and Modern Turkish (Latin) translations are shown in black,
Turkish in Hebrew characters in purple,
Turkish in Greek characters in blue,
Turkish in Armenian characters in brown,
Turkish in Bulgarian Cyrillic characters in green.


1661 – Turkish Bible in manuscript, by Yahya bin İshak, a.k.a. Hâki.

1662-64 – Turkish Bible in manuscript, by Wojciech Bobowski, a.k.a. Ali Bey. This draft was followed by a “fair copy” in 1665.


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1747 by Pauli Apostoli Epistola ad Romanos Turcice, in 1749 by Acts, and in the 1750’s by the Gospel of John, the First Epistle of John, and Hebrews.


1782 – The Psalms in Græco-Turkish. Printed in Venice.

1818 – Acts & Epistles in Græco-Turkish. Printed in Venice.


1820-21 – The Four Gospels in manuscript. Translated by İsmail Ferruh.

1822 – The Psalms in Græco-Turkish. Revised by Henry D. Leeves.


1827 – Kitab ül-ahd el-atik [and] Kitab ül-ahd el-cedid el-mensub ila Rabbina İsa el-Mesih (Biblia Turcica). Edited from Ali Bey’s manuscript by H.F. von Diez and J.D. Kieffer (called Ali Bey’s Bible or Kieffer’s Bible). Two volumes. Paris: Dar el-Taba’at el-Melkuttat el-Mi’marat (Imprimérie Royale), on behalf of the BFBS.


1835 – Genesis yani Mahlukatin yaratilicinin kitabi.

1836 – Hazreti Musanın pes kitapları hem tahi Navi Oğlu Iesunun kitapi, ki İngilterranın ve piytun dunyannın sair her taraflarına mukattes kitapların tagılması itzun İngiliz memleketinde muntazim olan Refikatin marifeti ile Atzik Turkte lisana tertzime olunup Tzezirei Syrata Amerikali I.I. Robertsonun Pasmasinta tap olunmus tur.

1839 – The Græco-Turkish Bible. Translated by Leeves and Christo Nicolaides. Printed in Athens and Beirut.


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1844 – Iob, Paraioimia Solomontos, Ekklisiastis yani Iobun, Emsali Solomonun ve Vaizin Kitapi ki Halia Meytetzen Atzik tirkztege terzume olunup…. (same printing data as the 1836 Pentateuch and Joshua).


1855 – El-İncil ila rivayet-i Matta el-Aziz. Edited by James W. Redhouse, revising Türabi Efendi. Two bilingual versions, Turkish-English and Turkish-Italian. London: BFBS.


1865— İncil-i Şerif ile Tefsiri. İstanbul: Erzincanlı Artin Minasyan ve Şirketi Matbaası.

1866 – Kitab ül-Ahd el-cedid el-mensub ila Rabbina İsa el-Mesih. Translated by Schauffler and Selim Efendi. İstanbul: Hariton Matasyan Matbaası,

1868 – Mezamir-ı Davud. Translated by Schauffler. İstanbul: Minasiyan (=Hariton Matasyan?) Matbaası.


1872 — Sifr-ü Tekvin el-Mahlûkât — Bereshit. Miciçde tab olunmuş fi sene 1872 el-mesihiyiye.


1874 – Gospels and Acts. Revised from Schauffler and Selim’s version of 1862. Printed in Istanbul by the Bible Societies.

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1875 – \textit{Ahd-i cedid, yani İncil-i Şerif}: Lisan-ı aslı Yunaninden bir tercümedir. İstanbul: Boyacıyan Agop Matbaası.


1878 — \textit{Kitab-ı Mukaddes} (Armeno-Turkish). Printed concurrently with the Ottoman Turkish version.

1884 – \textit{Kitab-ı Mukaddes}. Revised by Elias Riggs with Alexander Thompson, George Kazakos and Avedis Assadourian.


1888 — \textit{Kitab-ı Mukaddes}. The Armeno-Turkish reflects the 1885-86 revision of the Ottoman Turkish Bible.


1926 — Armeno-Turkish Reference Bible. Vienna: Christoph Reisser’s Sons.

\hline

\textbf{AFTER THE TURKISH LANGUAGE REFORM (1927)}

1927/28 — Proverbs in a di-script version, Arabic and Roman characters.

1928 — Psalms. Translated by Fred Field Goodsell and an unnamed Turkish poet.

1930 — \textit{İncil Mattaya göre}: Eski Yunanca aslına tatkık olunarak Türkçeşi tashih edilmiştir. İstanbul: İngiliz ve Ecnebi Kitabı Mukaddes Şirketi ve Amerikan Kitabı Mukaddes

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1936 — Matthew. Revised in simplified style. Also in the late 1930's, Psalms, Proverbs, Job, and Genesis were printed separately.

1941 — **Kitabı Mukaddes, Eski ve Yeni Ahit (Tevrat ve İncil) : İbrani, Kildani ve Yunani dillerinden son tashih edilmiş tercümedir.** İstanbul: Kitabı Mukaddes Şirketi. Edited and prepared for press by Frederick W. MacCallum and “a Turkish savant”.

1957 — **İşte Adam : İncilden Seçmeler.** Hazırlıyan E.C. Blake. İstanbul: Amerikan Bord Nesriyat Dairesi.

1958 – **Mezmurlar: Asılına göre son tashih edilmiş tercümedir. Üçüncü basış.** İstanbul: Kitabı Mukaddes Şirketi.


1972 — **İncil Markos: Aslından aç ağ das Tüür rkap e’ye yapılan yeni tercü me.** Translated by Jean Wendel, Vedat Örs and others. İstanbul : Kitabı Mukaddes Şirketi. 50 pp.

1974 — **Markos İncili: Aslından aç ağ das Türkç e’ye yapılan yeni tashih.** Translated by Vedat Örs. İstanbul: Kitabı Mukaddes Şirketi.

1978 — **Su, Ekmek, Yaşam** (Gospel of John). Translated by Thomas Cosmades.

1978— **Hz. İsa’nın Öğretişleri and Hz. İsa’nın Mucizeleri.** İstanbul: Kitabı Mukaddes Şirketi. Translated by Nevzat Baban.

1987 — **Kitabı Mukaddes’in Deuterokanonik (Apokrif) Kitapları.** İstanbul: Kitabı Mukaddes Şirketi.

1987 — **Müjde: İncil’in çağdaş Türkçe çevirisini.** Translated by Ali Şimşek et al. İstanbul: Yeni Yaşam Yayınları and The Translation Trust.

1988— **İncil: Sevinç Getirici Haber: İncil’in Yunanca’dan çağdaş Türkçe’ye çevirisini.** Translated by Thomas Cosmades. İstanbul: Kitabı Mukaddes Şirketi.

1988 — **Zebur -Mezmurlar.** İstanbul: Ohan Basımevi.

1990 — **Rut.** İstanbul: Kitabı Mukaddes Şirketi.

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1992 — *Yeșu* (Joshua). İstanbul: Yeni Yaşam Yayınları.


1996— *Mezmurlar (Zebur).* Downloadable in either Turkish or Bulgarian Cyrillic characters.


1996 — *Mezmurlar (Zebur).* Downloadable in both Turkish and Bulgarian Cyrillic characters.

1998 — *İncil (Sevindirici Haber): İncil’in Yunanca aslından çağdaş Türkçe’ye çevirisini.* İstanbul: Kitabı Mukaddes Şirketi and the United Bible Societies.


2001 — *Kutsal Kitap: Eski ve Yeni Antlaşma (Tevrat, Zebur, İncil).* İstanbul: Kitabı Mukaddes Şirketi in cooperation with Yeni Yaşam Yayınları.

2001 — *İncil – Müjde: İncil’in çağdaş Türkçe çevirisini.* İstanbul: Zirve Yayıncılık ve Dağıtım and Yeni Yaşam Yayınları / The Translation Trust. 5th printing, 2005.


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2003 — **Kutsal İncil**. Translated by Bünyamin Candemir. İstanbul: Kitabı Mukaddes Şirketi.

2003 — **Kutsal Kitap ve Deuterokanonik (Apokrif) Kitaplar**. İstanbul: Kitabı Mukaddes Şirketi.


2004 — **İndjil: Yeni Ahit, Yeni Antlaşına: Bulgaristan Türkçesi**. Plovdiv: Sevda OOD.

2004 — **Tehlim** (The Jewish Psalms). İstanbul: Kitabı Mukaddes Şirketi.


2005 — **Kutsal Kitap: Yeni Dünya Çevirisi**. The New Testament was also published in 2005 as **Kutsal Metinler – İncil**, By the Jehovah’s Witnesses.

2006-2010 — **Tora Bereşit 1, Tora Şemot 2, Tora Vayikra 3, Tora ve Aftara 4, Tora ve Aftara/Devarim – Tevrat Tefsiri**. 5 volumes. Gözlem Gazetecilik Basın ve Yayın A.Ş.


2009 — **Kutsal Kitap: Eski ve Yeni Antlaşına (Tevrat, Zebur, İncil)**. İstanbul: Kitabı Mukaddes Şirketi ve Yeni Yaşam Yayınları. A minor revision of the 2001 version.

2010 — **Açıklamalı Kutsal Kitap**. İstanbul: Yeni Yaşam Yayınları and The Translation Trust.


2010 — **Başlangıçta Kelâm Vardi: İncil’in Yuhanna Bölümü — Yuhanna: Kolay Anlaşılır İncil**. İstanbul: Yeni Yaşam Yayınları.

2010 — **Süleyman’ın Meselleri** (Proverbs). Türk Standart Versiyonu, by İlhan Keskinöz.


2011 — **OsmanlicaKelam.net**. A website of Ottoman Turkish Bibles with transcription and explanatory notes.

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2012 — *Halk Dilinde İncil: Sadeleştirilmiş İncil Tercümesi (HADİ)*. İstanbul: Yeni Yaşam Yayınları.

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APPENDIX II: THE LORD’S PRAYER IN THE TURKISH VERSIONS


I. Draft Manuscript by Ali Bey (1662-64), adapted from the transcription by Funda Toprak:

İmdi böyle namâz kılıp deyiŋ
Ey göklerde olan babamız
ismiŋ* mukaddes olsun
melekûtuŋ gelsin
muradıŋ nice gökde ise yerde dahi böyle olsun
her günki etmeḡimizi** bize bugün ver
ve bize suçlarımızı bağışla, nice ki biz dahi bize suçlu olanlara bağışlarız
ve bizi iğvaya*** salma illâ bizi habisden*** kurtar
çün mülk*** ve kuvvet ve izzet*** seniŋdir. Amin.

*Sağır nef represented by /ŋ/ with a tail was pronounced like English ng as in Anataolian dialects today. **Ekmek spelled etmek in Old Turkic was still common in the 19th c. *** By the time the 1827 version was printed these words had been edited as follows: imtihan for iğva, şerrir for habis, melekût for mülk, and ebeden after izzet.

II. Armeno-Turkish İncil 1819 (Turkish in Armenian characters, St. Petersburg), translated by Seraphim Khojentzi. These Armeno-Turkish versions were printed in MacCallum (1942).

Atamız ki semadasın,
kaddis olsun ismin senin,
gelsin senin melekütun,
meşiyetin olsun senin, nice ki semavatta ve arzda.
Yevmeye etmeḡimizi ver bize bugün.
Ve hafv eyle bize deynimizi, nice ki biz hafv ederiz bize medyun olarlere.
Ve eletme bizi tecrübeye, amma halâs eyele bizi şerirden,
Zira senindir melekût ve kuvvet ve mecdu müebbet. Amin.

III. Armeno-Turkish Bible 1863 (Turkish in Armenian characters, Istanbul), translated by William Goodell and Panayotes Constantinides

Ya göklerde olan Pederimiz,
ismin mukaddes olsun,
padişahlığın gelsin,
iradetin göktesi gibi yer üzerinde dahi olsun.

Her günkü ekmeğimizi bize bugün ver.
Ve bize borçlarımızı bağışla, nice ki biz dahi borçlarımızını bağışlız. 
Ve bizi imtihana getirme, illa bizi yaramazdan kurtar,
zira padişahlık ve kudret ve hamet ebed-ül abat senindir. Amin.


Ey semavatta olan Pederimiz,

senin ismini mukaddes olsun.

Seniŋ melekâtun iç gelsin
Semada nice ise yer üzerinde de seniŋ iraden icra olunsun.

Riskimizi bize bugün ver.
Ve bize suçlı olanları bağışladığımız gibi bizim suçlarımızı bağışla.
Ve bizi iğvaya idhal etme ama bizi şerirden kurtar,
zira melekût ve hükümet ve izzet ebed-ül abat senindir. Amin.

V. Kitabi Mukaddes 1885 (Osmanlıca, Arabic characters), translated by George Herrick, R.H. Weakley, Keyfi Efendi et al.

Ey semavatta olan Pederimiz,

ismini mukaddes olsun,

melekûtun iç gelsin,

iradetin semavatta* olduğu gibi yer üzerinde dahi icra olunsun.

Yevme etmeğimizi bize bugün ver.
Ve bize suçlu olanlara bağışladığımız gibi bizim suçlarımızı bağışla.
Ve bizi iğvaya getirme, lakin bizi şerirden kurtar,
zira melekût ve kudret ve izzet ilelebet senindir. Amin.

* changed to semada in the İncil-i Şerif, 1911
VI. Ahd-i Cedid yani Nea Diathēkē 1899 (Karamanlıca, Turkish in Greek characters), translated by Elias Riggs, George Kazakis, Avedis Assadourian et al.

Ey göklerde olan Pederimiz,
ismın mukaddes olsun
padişahlığının gelsin,
iradetin göklerde olduğu gibi, yer üzerinde dahi icra olsun.
Her günük ekmeğimizi bize bu gün ver.
Ve bize suçlu olanlara bağışladığımız gibi, bizim suçlarımızı bağışla.
Ve bizi iğvaya getirme, lakin bizi yaramazdan kurtar,
zira padişahlık ve kudret ve izzet ebed ül-ebd senin dir. Amin.

VII. Kitabı Mukaddes 1941 (Latin characters), translated by Frederick W. MacCallum, “Bay Cami,” et al.

Ey göklerde olan Babamız,
ismın mukaddes olsun;
melekütun gelsin;
gökte olduğu gibi yerde de senin iraden olsun.
Gündelik ekmeğimizi bize bugün ver.
Ve bize borçlu olanlara bağışladığımız gibi, bizim borçlarımızı bize bağışla.
Ve bizi iğvaya götürme, fakat bizi şerirden kurtar,
Çünkü* meleküt ve kudret ve izzet ebedlere kadar** senindir. Amin.

In the İncil of 1933 these Osmanlıca words had been used: *zira, **ilelebet.


Göklerdeki Babamız!
Adın kutsansın.
Hükümranlığın gelsin.
Gökte olduğu gibi, yerde de isteğin uygulansın.
Gündelik ekmeğimizi bize bugün ver
Ve bize karşı suç işleyenlerin suçunu bağışladığımız gibi
sen de bizleri bağışla.

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Günahla sınanmamıza olanak bırakma. Bizleri kötüden kurtar.

Çünkü hükümranlık da, güçlülük de, yücelik de çağlar boyu senindir. Amin.


Göklerdeki Babamız,
adın kutsal kılın.

Egemenliğin gelsin.

Gökte olduğu gibi, yer yüzünde de Senin istediğini olsun.

Bugün bize güneşlik ekmeğimizi ver.

Bize karşı suç işleyenleri bağıışladığımız gibi,

Sen de bizim suçlarımızı bağışla.

Ayarılmamızı izin verme. Bizi kötü olandan kurtar.

Çünkü egemenlik, güç ve yücelik sonsuzlara dek senindir! Amin.

**Supplement: Codex Cumanicus, 1303** (Latin characters), trans. by Franciscan friars in Crimea.

This is Kipchak (Kıpçak, Qıpchaq) Turkish, not the Western or Oğuz Turkish of the Selçuk, Osmanlı and modern Turks. Vowels have been supplied where they are missing in the original.

أتامیز کیم* کؤکتے سن،
alğılı bolsun seniŋ atųŋ,
gelsin hanlıŋıŋ,

بolsun seniŋ tilemegiŋ* necik کیم* کؤکتے، alay* yerde

کؤنده etmek*imizni bizge bugün bergıl*
da ki yazıklarımızı bizge bosatgil

نecik کیم* biz bosatrbiz bizge yaman etkenlerge
da ki yeğin* şınamagna kurgmalıdır,

bizni barca* yamandan kutkalgıl. Amin.

* کیم = کی — tilemegiŋ = dilemegin > dileğin — necik کیم = nice کی — alay = olay > öyle — etmek = ekmek — bergıl = vere kil — yeğin = yeğin (?) > aşrı — bar(ca) = tüm. Note that -ni is the accusative and –ge is the dative ending in the Kıpçak languages.

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**APPENDIX III (a): 1 SAMUEL 2:1-10 in HAKİ and ALİ BEY**

This is the Song of Hannah in Haki’s manuscript of 1659 (or 1661) compared with Ali Bey’s finished translation of 1665. Ali Bey has used Haki’s wording in some places but he shows a better sense of Turkish syntax and rhythm, and his vocabulary is more fluent. I have adjusted Neudecker’s transliteration of Haki to conform the vowel system to Modern Turkish, as in the transcription tables shown on OsmanlicaKelam.net.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Haki, 1659 (adapted from Neudecker 1994)</th>
<th>Ali Bey, 1665 (from OsmanlicaKelam.net)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2:1b - Sevindi yüreğim Hakk Teâlâ ile</td>
<td>2:1b Benim kalbim Allah Teâlâ ile mesrur dur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>boyuzum yücelendi Hakk Teâlâ ile</td>
<td>Allah Teâlâ ile boyuzum yücelendi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ağzım eğlendi düşmanlarım üzerinde</td>
<td>benim ağzım düşmanlarını üzerine bollandı</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zira seniň halâsiŋ ile sevindim</td>
<td>çün seniň halâsiŋ ile sevindim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:2 Hakk Teâlâ gibi kuddüs yokdur</td>
<td>2 Allah Teâlâ gibi kuddüs yokdur zîrâ senden ĝâry yok</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zira sendan ĝâry yokdu</td>
<td>ve Taŋrıımız kadar kavî yokdu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ve Taŋrıımız gibi yey yokdu</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:3 çokluk söylemen</td>
<td>3 çokluk pek yücelenip söylemen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yüce yüce çıkmışın pek ağzıŋzadan</td>
<td>ağzıŋzadan tekebbülük çıkmışın</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zira ilimler Taŋrısi Hakk Teâlâ dîr</td>
<td>çûrâ ‹ilimleriŋ Taŋrısi Allah Teâlâdır</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ve ona işler yakarş</td>
<td>ve işler ona yahşur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:4 cebbârların yayları kırmış ve sırdi</td>
<td>4 cebbârların yayları kırmımda ve uftâdeler kuvvetle kuşandılar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kuvvet kuşaklandılar</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:5 toklular *etmeğe kiralandılar (*ekmek)</td>
<td>5 toklar etmeğe kiralandılar ve aç olanlar ferâğat edti dîl mêle ki âkire olan yedi doğurdu ve oğulları çok olan zabûnlandı</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ve aç olanlar men oldular</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ta akire olan çok doğurdu</td>
<td>6 ölduren ve dirilden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ve oğulları çok olunan kırıldı</td>
<td>mezârâ indiren ve çıkaran Allahdir</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:6 Hakk öldürücü ve dîrlîcî</td>
<td>7 fakîr ve ĝanîyi eden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mezara indiren ve çıkaran</td>
<td>ednâyi ve âlâyî eden Allahdir</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:7 Hakk Teâlâ fakir edici ve ğanî edici</td>
<td>8 fakîri tozdan kaldırı</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>indiren ve kaldırın</td>
<td>ve dervişî necisden çıkaran</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:8 toprakdan kaldıran</td>
<td>sultânlar ile oturmak için</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fakîri kenîfden kaldıran</td>
<td>ve onlara ‹izzet kürsûsini nâsib etmek için</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dilîciyî ğanîleri oturmak için</td>
<td>zûrâ yerîn direktleri Allahînîrd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ve izzet eskenmiyî (?) miras eder onlara</td>
<td>ve onlariŋ üzerine dûnyaya dayandırdı</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zira Hakk Teâlâ yerîn direktleri</td>
<td>9 mukaddesleriniŋ ayaklarını saklar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ve temel etdi überlerine dünyânın</td>
<td>ve yaramaza zûlmetde helâk olurlar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:9 işlerîn ayaklarını saklar</td>
<td>zûr âdâm kendî kuvvetîyle büyümeye</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ve kemler karâglıkda kirîr</td>
<td>10 Allah ile çekîsenler kirînî</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zira kuvvet adam büyümeye</td>
<td>überlerine göklerden gürüldeyeceddîr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:10 Hakk Teâlâîn cepkenlerini kirînlî</td>
<td>Allah Teâlâ yerîn kenârlarına hûküm edeckîd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>üzerlerine gökden gürüldür</td>
<td>ve kendî pâdişâhîna kuvvet vérip kendî mesihînîş</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hakk Teâlî hükm eder yerîn kenârlarını</td>
<td>boynuzunu büyûdeckîd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ve padşâhına kuvvet verir</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ve mesihîn boyunuzu kaldırdîr</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This comparison shows that Kieffer corrected Ali Bey’s translations of the divine names but otherwise did not edit his language except in small details. Henderson displayed a similar comparison (1825, pp 92f.) in his critique of the 1819 Ottoman Turkish New Testament.

**APPENDIX III (b): GENESIS 1-2 in ALİ BEY and KIEFFER**

**Shroeder, Quatuor, 1739** (Ali Bey’s original)

Tevrat-ı Mûsâ aleyhi es-selam

1:1 İbtidada Bârî Teâlâ gökleri ve yeri yaratmışdır

1:2 yer tahî ve hâlî idi

lüccenîn dahi üstü yanında Tağrînîn Ruhu deprenir idi

1:3 bu kez Allah Teâlâ aydınlık olsun dedi de aydınlık oldu

1:4 hem Cenâb Bârî aydınlığın güzel olduğunu gördü de Cenâb Bârî aydınlığı karanhıklarından ayırdı

1:5 ve Cenâb Bârî aydınlığın gündüz ve karanhlığı gece tesmiye eyledi ve ahşam ve sabah olunca evvelki gün oldu

1:6 ve dahi Cenâb Bârî dedi ki suların ortasında bir raki’ olsun ki suları bulardan ayırdı

1:7 pes Tağrî Teâlâ bir raki’i yapıp ve raki’iңin altında olan suları raki’iң üstünde olan sulardan ayırdı ve böyle oldu.....

**Kieffer, Ahd-i Atik, 1827** (editing Ali Bey)

Sifr-ü Tekvin el-Mahlukat

1:1 İbtidada Allah gökleri ve yeri yaratmışdır

1:2 ve yer tahî ve hâlî idi

lüccenîn dahi üzerine karanhlık idi ve suların üzerine Allahîn Ruhu deprenir idi

1:3 ve Allah aydınlık olsun dedi ve aydınlık oldu

1:4 hem Allah aydınlığın güzel olduğunu gördü ve Allah aydınlığı karanhıklardan ayırdı

1:5 ve Allah aydınlığın gün ve karanhlığı gece tesmiye eyledi ve ahşam ve sabah olunca evvelki gün oldu

1:6 ve dahi Allah dedi ki suların ortasında bir raki’ olsun ki suları bulardan ayırdı

1:7 pes Allah raki’i yapıp ve raki’iңin altında olan suları raki’iң üstünde olan sulardan ayırdı ve böyle oldu.....
This comparison shows that Kieffer made more adjustments to Ali Bey’s vocabulary in the NT than in the OT example above, but only minor adjustments of his style. I have adjusted Toprak’s transliteration of Ali Bey’s draft manuscript to conform the vowel system to Modern Turkish, as in my transcription from Kieffer’s Bible.

Ali Bey, 1664 (transcr. Funda Toprak, 2006)

22:31 ve ölülerin ikametini hususunda Allah Teâlâ’ın size dedigini okumadınız mı ki Allah Teâlâ’ın ölülerin ilâhi değildir illâ dirilerin ilâhi
32 ben İbrahimîn Allahı ve İshakı ve Yakubun Allahı
Allah Teâlâ ölülerin ilâhi degildir amma dirilerin ilâhi
33 cem’i etler dahi bu nüshid ona ta’limine ta’ccüb etdiler
34 ve feriziler işıdip ki zindiklari ağızını kapadi bile cem’ oldular
35 ondan fuhakadan birisi oña şu su’al etdi ve intihan edip dedi ki
36 ey mu’allim Tevrat’ın e’n büyük emri kanğısidir

37 Hazreti ’İsa oña dedi ki
Rabbı’n Allah Teâlâ bütün kalbînenden ve bütün canından ve bütün fikrîn den sev
38 evvelki hem büyük emir bu dur
39 ikinci budur buña manend kendi karibini kendini gibi sev
40 ve bu iki emirlerde cem’i şeri’atler ve peygamberler mundericdir
41 ve feriziler müctemi’ iken Hazreti ’İsa onlara su’al edip 42 dedi ki mesih için ne sanrınzız kimin oğlu dur onlar dahi oña Davudun dur derler
43 ve onlara dedi ki pes Davud oña ruhda niçin rabb diyé ad koýup dedi ki
44 Rabb Rabbime dedi ki ta ben düşmanlarınız ayaklarınız basamak koyuncaya dek benim sağımda otur
45 pes çünü Davud oña rabb der onuŋ oğlu nice ola bilir
46 ve kimse oña cevap veremedi hem ol günden sonra artık oña kimse su’al etmeye cür’et etmedi

Ali Bey, as edited by Kieffer, 1827

22:31 ve ölülerin kayameti hususunda Allahın size dediğini okumadınız mı çün dedi ki
32 ben İbrahimîn Allahı ve İshakı ve Yakubun Allahı’ım Allah ölülerin Allahı değildir amma dirilerin Allahı
33 cem’iyyetler dahi bu nüşitmeke ona ta’limine ta’ccüb etdiler
34 ve ferisiler işıdip ki sadıklerin ağızını kapadi bile cem’ oldular
35 ve onlardan biri ki bir fakih idi oña su’al edip ve intihan edip dedi ki
36 ey mu’allim şeri’atı’n e’n büyük vasiyeti kanğısidir
37 ve ’İsa oña dedi ki
Rabbı’n Allah bütün kalbînenden ve bütün canından ve bütün fikrîn den sevesin
38 evvelki ve büyük vasiyet bu dur
39 ve buña benzeyen bu dur seniŋ koşsunu kendini gibi sevesin
40 bu iki vasiyetlerde bütün şeri’at ve peygamberler mundericdir
41 ve ferisiler müctemi’ iken ’İsa onlara su’al edip 42dedi ki mesih için ne sanrınzız kimin oğlu dur onlar dahi oña dediler ki Davudun dur
43 ve onlara dedi ki öyle olsa Davud oña ruhda niçin rabb der çün dedi ki
44 Rabb Rabbime dedi ki ta ben düşmanlarınız ayaklarınız basamak koyuncaya dek benim sağımda otur
45 imdi eğer Davud oña rabb derse niçin onuŋ oğlu ola bilir
46 ve kimse oña cevap veremedi ve ol günden sonra artık oña kimse su’al etmeye cer’at etmedi
APPENDIX IV: THE LIFE OF WOJCIECH BOBOWSKI (ALİ BEY)

The best biographical information about Ali Bey comes from his own writings and from several items datable to the period 1666-68 in the Thomas Smith Collection, Bodleian Library, Oxford.\(^{275}\) The collection contains a letter from Ali Bey asking for employment in England, written in Latin and in his own hand, as well as supporting testimonials written by his English friends. Before Neudecker’s study of the Thomas Smith papers, Ali Bey’s biography had been based largely on a promotional introduction to one of his works by Thomas Hyde, written in 1690.\(^{276}\) The French encyclopedia *Biographie Universelle* (1811) included a biography of “Ali-Bey ou Ali Beigh,”\(^{277}\) essentially repeating Hyde’s story, as did subsequent accounts. Ali Bey is mentioned a few times in the Ottoman imperial archives (see Elçin’s note on Hezârfen Hüseyin below).\(^{278}\) We also have comments about him in the travel diaries of his European friends.\(^{279}\)

Though Wojciech Bobowski’s birth date is unknown, the date of his capture by the Tatars is reported to have occurred about 35 years before the composition of one of the papers in the Thomas Smith Collection. This seems to mean he was captured in Crimean Tatar raids along the Bug and Poltava Rivers in 1632, or during the Polish-Ottoman War of 1633-34 that followed.\(^{280}\) Bobowski himself tells us that Lwów (Lviv in Ukrainian, Lemberg in German) was the city of his birth. It lay near the border between the Polish-Lithuanian


\(^{276}\) Hyde, op. cit.


\(^{278}\) Elçin (1976), p. v.

\(^{279}\) Articles cited here by Behar, Elçin, Malcolm and Neudecker provide details of these sources. Behar (1990), p. 22f. shows a list of Ali Bey’s European friends.

\(^{280}\) Cf. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Polish%E2%80%93Ottoman_War_%281633%E2%80%931634%29. In the early 17th century a surrogate war occurred between Cossacks who were nominally subject to the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and Tatars subject to the Ottoman Sultan. Generally the Tatars were the stronger party, but the outskirts of Istanbul were attacked by Cossacks in 1615 and again in 1625; cf. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zaporozhian_Cossacks. There were also Tatar raids into Polish territory in 1624 and 1644: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_wars_involving_Poland. The raiders of the early 1630s were Tatars of the Budjak horde.
Commonwealth and the Tatar lands to the north of the Black Sea. If he was born in 1610 (the traditional though undocumented date), he would have been a young man in his twenties when he was taken prisoner. Neudecker offers an alternative timeline, accepting that he was a boy of 10 years old when he was captured in 1632, which would require that his birthdate be moved forward to the early 1620s.

It is hard to accept the contemporaneous account by Ali Bey’s friend, Clæs Ralamb, that he was captured during the Venetian War, presumably the one fought in the Adriatic Sea in 1537-40. This conflicts with the statement in one of the documents in the Thomas Smith papers that he was captured “by an incursion of the Tataress into Poland.” Since the writers of both the Tatar and the Venetian versions of the story were acquaintances of Ali Bey, it is unclear why their stories would conflict.

Ali Bey’s skill in languages and his knowledge of Western musical staff notation suggest that he had had a good education in Lwów. These facts also justify the conclusion that he was probably captured not as a small boy but as teenager or young man.

Polish historians believe that Bobowski was from a noble Polish family, based on a statement to this effect by Hyde and the fact that Bobow was a minor Polish county during this period. If Bobowski was a count or a member of a noble family it must be asked why he was not ransomed and why he never mentioned his noble lineage in any of his writings.

Ali Bey “served for many years in the Imperial household as a musician and trainee page, but was (according to one early writer, Cornelio Magni) eventually expelled for drunkenness.” Indeed, there is internal evidence in Ali Bey’s writings that he enjoyed his wine. When he finished his draft of the Bible in December 1664 he wrote a note to Warner in which he expresses hope of eternal reward for his work and that Warner will now treat him to a good stiff drink (bonum potum). In his musical pieces he celebrates wine in the way the

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Sufis sometimes did, including one piece entitled “Canticle to Bacchus,” the Roman god of wine.\(^{285}\)

Ali Bey’s term of service as a slave in the Topkapı Palace has been set variously at 19, 21, or “around 20” years,\(^{286}\) or, more to the point, “almost three prentiships,”\(^{287}\) which means almost three terms of seven years (see Appendix V on slavery and manumission in the Ottoman tradition). At this point he seems to have entered the service of a Turkish officer whom he accompanied to Egypt. When he returned to Istanbul (at least by 1657) he was freed from servitude, presumably by this Turkish officer.

Before his time in Egypt and while he was still a slave, he had been introduced to the English community in Constantinople by Isaac Basire, who was chaplain to the English ambassador during the 1650s. Basire had hired him to translate the Anglican catechism in 1653. In his letter in the Thomas Smith papers, Ali Bey thanks Basire for introducing him to Sir Thomas Bendish, who was English ambassador from 1647 to 1660, and who hired him as a translator. Ali Bey also served Heneage Finch, Lord Winchilsea, ambassador from 1662 to 1664, and it was during this second period that Levinus Warner, the Dutch ambassador, recruited him to translate the Bible. Ali Bey must not have been very busy in his other work for Lord Winchilsea if he was able to finish both a draft and a revised translation of the Bible in the four-year period 1662-65.

Ali Bey’s relationship with the two ambassadors raises a question. Were Ali Bey and his scribes paid by Warner, or did Winchelsea pay Ali’s salary and second him to Warner? It has been supposed that funding for the entire term of the Dutch project came from Comenius’ benefactor, Laurens de Geer, the merchant of Amsterdam. As discussed above, Comenius and Golius did not know that Ali Bey was the name of their translator until after Warner’s death, so how would de Geer have designated funds for his salary? The loss of Warner’s papers probably means that these questions will never be answered.

At the beginning of the Glasgow manuscript of Ali Bey’s translation of the Anglican catechism (a diglot text with Turkish and Latin in parallel columns) there is a dedication to


Sir Thomas Bendish’s son.\textsuperscript{288} This raises questions of chronology. Either Ali Bey had a friendship with young Bendish several years before he was hired by the ambassador, which is usually dated to 1657, or this dating of the beginning of his employment at the embassy is wrong. It is conceivable that Ali Bey’s work on the catechism ca. 1653, when the dedication to young Bendisch was written, led immediately to his hiring by the ambassador. In this case, Ali Bey’s 19 years as a slave, including his time with the Turkish officer in Egypt, would have to be fit into the period between 1632 or 1634, the most probable dates for his capture by the Tatars, and 1653, when he translated the catechism.

**Ali Bey — First Dragoman?**

A firman (decree) in the Ottoman archives for the year 1669 shows that Ali Bey was paid for a term of service to the Ottoman state, but his official position is not mentioned.\textsuperscript{289} Hyde is the source of the statement that Ali Bey rose to be “first dragoman” (chief translator) to the sultan;\textsuperscript{290} if this is so, it cannot have happened until after 1670—long after his term of slavery and at least five years after he finished the Bible translation. Neudecker speculates reasonably that Ali Bey’s desire to go to England, which he expressed in his letter to Basire, may have been foiled by an offer of a high position in the sultan’s service, since governments generally try to prevent the defection of civil servants who would take too much information with them. However, no evidence has surfaced from the Ottoman archives to confirm that Ali Bey was ever first dragoman.

Elçin casts aspersions on the European sources that claim this, noting that Ali Bey was later dismissed from the sultan’s service for making translation errors and therefore could not have risen to the honored position of first dragoman.\textsuperscript{291} He concedes only that he might have been second dragoman, for which he cites an Ottoman writer of the 17th century but fails to provide a quotation or full bibliographic data.\textsuperscript{292} Malcolm bows to Elçin’s view that Ali Bey

\textsuperscript{288}Personal correspondence from Hannah Neudecker.


\textsuperscript{290}Hyde’s preface in Bobovius (1712 [1690]), \textit{op. cit.}, p. 105; Neudecker (2005), p. 188.

\textsuperscript{291}Elçin (1976), p. vi.

was second dragoman; whereas Neudecker calls him first dragoman, following Hyde. The issue is how much credence should be given to Hyde on this point, especially since Ottoman records show (according to Elçin) that other men occupied the position of first dragoman during the 1670s.

Ali Bey’s Faith

It has been asserted that Ali Bey’s knowledge of the Genevan Psalter proves that he was from one of the Protestant communities in Lwów. The documentary basis for this claim goes back to Hyde in 1690, and it is true that Catholic Poland was tolerant of religious dissent in this period, but Ali Bey never tells us in his own writings that he had been a Protestant.

Ali Bey set the Psalms to music toward the end of his life, after he had translated the Bible. It is reasonable to speculate, therefore, that a copy of the Genevan Psalter, from which he adapted the tunes to the Turkish modal system, was given to him by one of his European friends during or after the Bible translation project. In Drabík’s exhortation to Comenius, he mentioned the translation of “Psalms and hymns” as one of the means of appealing to the Turks. So Comenius himself may have sent the Genevan Psalter to Turkey, or Warner may have take it with him when he took up his post in Constantinople. Other likely explanations being available, there is no need to presume that Bobowski knew this Protestant musical tradition from his youth.

Some time after his capture Bobowski was circumcised and converted to Islam. This was normal treatment for war captives and other slaves. It was sanctioned both in Islamic tradition and in the Bible, where we read that God commanded Abraham to circumcise all men and boys in his household, including his slaves from other nations (Genesis 17).

But did Ali Bey remain a closet Christian? In 1690 Thomas Hyde wrote as follows in his introduction to De Turcarum Liturgia, a Latin work by Albertus Bobovius (Ali Bey) on Islamic worship and religious customs:


It is highly to be deplored, that he was prematurely snatched away by death before he could return to the Christian faith, which he intended to do wholeheartedly, longing to be able to earn his bread in some honest way in England among Christians and to be removed from the pressure of the infidel.  

This longing is confirmed by Ali Bey’s letter to Basire in the Thomas Smith papers (dated circa 1668), where he pleads circumspectly for employment as a translator in the court of King Charles II. An anonymous note in the same collection tells us that Bobowski had made “promisses” [sic] to return to the church if work could be found for him in England. Apostasy from Islam while he was living in Turkey could have resulted in the death penalty. We also have several oblique statements of Christian faith in Bobowski’s own hand. At the end of his draft manuscript of Matthew’s Gospel he wrote: “Mattanın İncili tanam oldu ve'l-mecdü’l-illahi ebeden” (Matthew’s Gospel is finished and glory be to God forever). The same note appears at the end of Mark’s Gospel with the addition of “da’imen ebeden amîn” (always and forever amen). At the end of the Gospel of John he writes the date in Latin as “Anno Salutis Humanae 1664” (in the year of the salvation of humanity 1664), which feels like a strong statement of Christian faith. “Ani a partu Virginis 1666” (In the year of the Virgin’s offspring 1666) appears on the title page of his Grammatica Turcico-Latina. On the basis of these colophons Neudecker notes that Ali Bey’s diligence in translating not only the Bible but several other Christian books is evidence of his personal “preoccupation with Christianity.”

Elçin and Behar doubt that Ali Bey was anything but a complete and honorable Muslim and speculate hopefully that he made the pilgrimage to Mecca. Rumors of Ali Bey’s wish to return to the church sound to Elçin like European propaganda, created by his European friends to popularize his writings or his legacy. Elçin cites several pages of Islamic sentiments in Ali Ufki’s musical treatise, Mecmûa-i Sâz ü Söz, including hints that he had Sufi tendencies. Against this it must be said that Bobovius’ (Ali Bey’s) description of the hajj in De Turcarum Liturgia is too detailed to be an eye-witness account, reading instead like a Latin

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299Toprak, pp. 184 and 226, transcribing Cod. Or. 390d.

translation of an Islamic guide book for pilgrims. It does not feel like a travel diary, lacking lively images of scenes in Mecca that an eyewitness would have been eager to record. An investigation into the sources of his description of Mecca would be a valuable contribution to his biography.

Elçin weakens his argument with the sentiment that nobody would ever want to leave beautiful Istanbul and move to England — a mirror image of the special pleading which he deplores in Europeans. More to the point, Behar notes that Ali Bey’s last European friends, John Covell and Antoine Galland, do not mention his intention to move to England or leave Islam in their reflections on him after his death. In the scenario deduced by Neudecker from the Thomas Smith papers, Ali Bey would have abandoned any thought of leaving Turkey when his plea to Basire in England was not answered. When he then achieved a position in the sultan’s service as a free man, he would have had no further worldly motivation to return to Christianity.

The sentiment expressed in the introduction to the Açıklamalı Kutsal Kitap of 2010 that Ali Bey was “a Muslim in name with a Christian heart” has a long history going back to Hyde. It may be true but it lacks nuance — what we actually know from the historical record is more limited. Ali Bey’s writings reveal that the Bible and Christian writings engaged his interest, and he wrote in a note to Warner when he completed his draft Bible translation that his work had been “for love not labor” (amor non labor fuit). So we know that Ali Bey did not share the opinion of most Muslims that the Bible is a corrupted and therefore dangerous book.

Islam engaged his interest as well, as expressed in the Turkish musical tradition, and he tried to translate the vocabulary of the Bible in ways Muslims would understand, e.g. he often used the word namaz to translate “prayer”, but this was edited out by Kieffer. On the one hand, the fourteen psalms of Ali Bey’s Mezamir are highly contextualized in an Islamic theological framework. On the other hand, the way he noted the dates when he completed several books of the New Testament seem to be affirmations of Christian faith.

301 Behar (1990), p. 43.

302 Açıklamalı Kutsal Kitap (AKIT, 2009), page x. This sentiment is found also in Cooper (1901).

Anything we presume to know about Ali Bey’s spiritual life must come from a careful examination of his Bible translation and other writings. Both Muslims and Christians will do well to observe this rule.

**A Summary of the Writings of Ali Bey, a.k.a. Albertus Bobovius**

After he gained his freedom, Ali Bey made his living as a translator and writer, paid or encouraged by Christian scholars from Europe. He was a prolific writer, translating religious works and writing linguistic and musical books of his own. His translation of the Anglican catechism at the behest of Isaac Basire has been mentioned above. His *Grammatica Turcia-Latina* has been studied by Neudecker as a source on 17th-century Ottoman Turkish.  

His Latin essay on Muslim ritual life, *De Turcarum Liturgia*, was printed in English in 1712 with a collection of articles on Muslim customs by other authors. His essay about life in the Topkapı, which was printed in three European languages during the 17th century, has recently appeared in Turkish translation. It is an important historical source because it describes and maps the palace before the “Great Harem Fire” of 1665 destroyed its old structures. His transcriptions of Ottoman music were unpublished until a Turkish edition by Elçin in 1976 of his *Mecmua-i Saz ü Söz* (instrumental and vocal works) opened the door on Ali Ufkı’s place in musical history. A new study by Behar of a further musical work appeared in 2009. Ali Bey’s Psalms (*Mezamir*), discussed above, are evidence that his musical and religious interests converged toward the end of his life.

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304 Neudecker (1996); ms. in the Bodleian, Oxford, ms Hyde 43, Ethé, col. 1252. no. (199) 2237.

305 Bobovius (1712), op. cit.


307 Manuscripts of the *Mecmûa-i Sâz ü Söz* are preserved in the British Museum, London (Sloane Collection, No. 3114) and the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.


310 For a summary list of his writings see Behar (1990), p. 33; for an annotated bibliography see Neudecker (1996), pp. 171-178.

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The Death of Ali Bey

Ali Bey’s death is usually dated ca. 1675, though 1677 may be more accurate: Behar has offered arguments that would set the date of death more precisely.\(^{311}\) Except for a trip to Egypt, he had lived in Istanbul since he was a young man, so he was probably buried there, but no gravestone has yet been found. We do not know whether he ever married.

A few years later the Ottoman army was defeated by the Holy League of the Catholic powers at the Battle of Vienna (1683). At that point the curtain came down on Calvin-Turkism — that fanciful puzzle of the spiritual unification of Turks and Protestants, in which Ali Bey’s translation of the Bible was one of the pieces. Ali Bey did not live to see the Polish army of King Jan III Sobieski make the Catholic victory at Vienna possible. Fifty years earlier it had been the military weakness of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth that had allowed Tatar raiders to cross its borders on slave raids. They carried off a gifted young Polish musician and linguist to the Istanbul slave market, thus contributing unawares to the Turkish translation of the Bible.

\(^{311}\) Behar (1990), pp. 41-43.

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Because Ali Bey was a slave it is sometimes said that he was a victim of the *devşirme*. This was a levy on Christian families in Ottoman lands, whose boys were taken to Istanbul to be trained from childhood for the sultan's service, especially for the Ottoman army, the *Yeni Çeri* (Janissaries). Bobowski, however, was a native of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, outside Ottoman territory, and he was probably already a young man, not a boy, when he was captured. The correct term for his status is *esir* (Tatar *jasyr*, from the same Arabic root), meaning human war booty. Such captives were held for ransom or sold into slavery. The sultan's agents frequented the slave markets, looking for galley slaves for the Ottoman navy. Now and then they found special cases like Wojciech Bobowski, though in his case it has been deduced that he was bought first by another Muslim family in Istanbul and only later sold to the sultan.

Tatar raids took hundreds of thousands of Slavic and Circassian men and women, boys and girls, during the 16th and 17th centuries and brought them to the slave market in Kaffa on the Crimean Peninsula. This was the famous “white slave trade.” Estimates on the high side run to one million Poles plus two million Russians and Ukrainians, with 20,000 per year as a reliable estimate from contemporary sources in the 17th century.\(^{312}\) Slave-raiding was a strong sector of the Crimean economy, with Istanbul its primary market to the south: 70% of Black Sea slaves were sent on to Istanbul. The effect on Russia was devastating. Unable to prevent the raids, the czar started collecting a tax in 1551 to ransom Russians from Tatar captivity and later instituted a regulated system in 1649. A higher price was paid for nobles than for peasants. Poland, however, had no such system.

The Italians had dominated the Black Sea transit route for slaves from the time of the Fourth Crusade: in 1204 the Genoese established their first trading colonies in the Crimea. After the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople the Turks expelled the Genoese, authorized the Crimean Tatars as the Ottoman forward line in the slave business, and set up Greeks, Armenians and Jews as middle men in Kaffa and other Black Sea ports. The Istanbul slave

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market was operated by Jews exclusively. In other words, Muslims were both the beneficiaries and the military wing of the slave trade, but the Ottoman dhimmi peoples, i.e. the Christians and Jews, were its businessmen. In 1648 a French officer visited Kaffa and reported:

In the city there are not many [Muslim] Tatars, there live chiefly Christians who keep in their hands many slaves which have been purchased from the Tatars, who had plundered and seized them in Poland or in Muscovy. This city has twelve Greek churches, thirty-two Armenian churches, and a Catholic church; St. Peter's. In the city there are probably five or six thousand households, but we find here over 30,000 slaves.”

The Turkish historian Halil İnalcık has shown that

a constant influx of human labor (slaves) as military men, craftsmen and domestic laborers, was indispensable for the society of the Ottoman Empire [whose] growing imperial structure needed ever more officials, and each of them was an eager buyer [of slaves] for his entourage.

The Ottoman navy depended on large numbers of Slavic slaves for their galley ships where mortality was very high; so Ali Bey was a lucky slave, as these things go. When shipping turned to sails and then to steam, galley ships went out of fashion and demand for slaves declined. This economic factor was the death knell of the Tatar raids. The numbers of slaves in Turkey dwindled in the 19th century, though slavery was never made illegal in the Ottoman Empire.

Ali Bey was not the only Ottoman slave who earned a name for himself. Other famous products of the Black Sea trade included the Mamluks, or slave warriors. The most successful of these were the slaves who populated the army of the Ayubbid dynasty, being trained from boyhood in Egypt much as the Devşirme boys were in Istanbul. The Mamluks eventually took over Egypt and ruled it as sultans for 250 years. During this time only slaves had access to power in Egypt — a paradoxical social structure. The Mamluks were defeated by the

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314 Matsuki, p. 178.
Ottomans and their sultanate came to an end in 1517, but they continued as Egyptian feudal lords under Ottoman rule until the 19th century.

In Islamic societies a slave was not always condemned to slavery for life, because the slave owner earned both spiritual merit (Ar. sawâb, Tü. sevap) and social honor by freeing a slave. Slaves trained for the sultan’s service might be freed after a term of seven years or re-enrolled for additional terms. We know that Ali Bey served (almost?) three terms of seven years, or “three prenticeships.” Slave women in the sultan’s service were sometimes married off to Ottoman officers or civil servants; so it is said that Circassian girls vied for the honor of being taken as slaves into the sultan’s harem, knowing that they might later become ladies of standing as free wives of wealthy Turkish men.

Or at least such stories were common tropes among the Ottoman elite. This noble side of Ottoman slavery tends to be romanticized in Turkish historical accounts as a way of painting slavery with the brush of kindness and to distinguish it from the chattel slavery of the American sugar and cotton plantations. The brutal slavery of the galley fleets goes unmentioned in such accounts; indeed, a full-page spread on Ottoman slavery in the conservative newspaper Takvim (5 November 2012, p. 14) summarized the work of Turkish historians on such topics as the generous salaries of the women of the Sultan’s harem, their daily allowance of cinnamon used as a deodorant, and the meritorious manumission of slaves, but did not mention slavery in the Ottoman galleys.

Believers will feel that it was God’s providence that enslavement was the means by which Wojciech Bobowski became Ali Bey, a bicultural person with deep experience of Turkish and Islamic culture. It was also Islamic law on slavery that made his manumission possible after nineteen years. Indeed, he was freed just in time for his career to merge with the vision of Comenius — another victim of oppression and exile — to produce a Turkish translation of the Bible.

Ali Bey does not complain about slavery in his writings, perhaps because it would have been impolitic to do so. As a privileged esir, a court musician and accomplished tercüman, he had been dressed in fine clothing and lived on the grounds of the sultan’s palaces in Istanbul and


318The Imperial Harem of the Sultans: Daily life at the Çırağan palace during the 19th century: Memoirs of Leyla (Saz) Hanimefendi (İstanbul: Hil Yayın, 1999), translated by Landon Thomas from the French, Le Harem Impérale (Calman-Lévy, 1925), chapter 3.
Edirne. It is notable that, when Ali Bey was freed, he did not return to Poland but lived on productively for another twenty years in Istanbul—the crown jewel of European cities in the seventeenth century. Among his contributions to Ottoman culture during these years of freedom was his Turkish Bible, the fountain from which every subsequent translation has flowed.