

New Frontiers in Translation Studies

Özlem Berk Albachten  
Şehnaz Tahir Gürçağlar *Editors*

# Studies from a Retranslation Culture

The Turkish Context

 Springer

# **New Frontiers in Translation Studies**

## **Series editor**

Defeng Li

Centre for Translation Studies, SOAS, University of London,  
London, United Kingdom

Centre for Studies of Translation, Interpreting and Cognition,  
University of Macau  
Macau, Macau SAR

More information about this series at <http://www.springer.com/series/11894>

Özlem Berk Albachten • Şehnaz Tahir Gürçağlar  
Editors

# Studies from a Retranslation Culture

The Turkish Context

 Springer

*Editors*

Özlem Berk Albachten  
Department of Translation and Interpreting  
Studies, Faculty of Arts and Sciences  
Boğaziçi University  
Bebek, Istanbul, Turkey

Şehnaz Tahir Gürçağlar  
Department of Translation and Interpreting  
Studies, Faculty of Arts and Sciences  
Boğaziçi University  
Bebek, Istanbul, Turkey

ISSN 2197-8689

ISSN 2197-8697 (electronic)

New Frontiers in Translation Studies

ISBN 978-981-13-7313-8

ISBN 978-981-13-7314-5 (eBook)

<https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-13-7314-5>

© Springer Nature Singapore Pte Ltd. 2019

This work is subject to copyright. All rights are reserved by the Publisher, whether the whole or part of the material is concerned, specifically the rights of translation, reprinting, reuse of illustrations, recitation, broadcasting, reproduction on microfilms or in any other physical way, and transmission or information storage and retrieval, electronic adaptation, computer software, or by similar or dissimilar methodology now known or hereafter developed.

The use of general descriptive names, registered names, trademarks, service marks, etc. in this publication does not imply, even in the absence of a specific statement, that such names are exempt from the relevant protective laws and regulations and therefore free for general use.

The publisher, the authors, and the editors are safe to assume that the advice and information in this book are believed to be true and accurate at the date of publication. Neither the publisher nor the authors or the editors give a warranty, express or implied, with respect to the material contained herein or for any errors or omissions that may have been made. The publisher remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.

This Springer imprint is published by the registered company Springer Nature Singapore Pte Ltd. The registered company address is: 152 Beach Road, #21-01/04 Gateway East, Singapore 189721, Singapore

# Contents

<b>1</b>	<b>Introduction: Mutability in Retranslation.....</b>	<b>1</b>
	Özlem Berk Albachten and Şehnaz Tahir Gürçağlar	
<b>2</b>	<b>On <i>Gulistan</i>'s Turkish (Re)translations: A Chronological Survey Through Paratextual Data .....</b>	<b>11</b>
	Fatma Büyükkarcı Yılmaz	
<b>3</b>	<b>Elucidating or (Un)breaking the Chain? Intralingual Translations and Retranslations of Şeyh Galib's <i>Hüsn ü Aşk</i>.....</b>	<b>27</b>
	A. Handan Konar	
<b>4</b>	<b>Turkish Retranslations of Philosophical Concepts in <i>Kritik der reinen Vernunft</i> .....</b>	<b>41</b>
	Yeşim Tükel Kanra	
<b>5</b>	<b>(Re)translations of the European Convention on Human Rights in Turkish.....</b>	<b>61</b>
	Deniz Koçak Kurlm	
<b>6</b>	<b>The Turkish Retranslations of Marx's <i>Das Kapital</i> as a Site of Intellectual and Ideological Struggle .....</b>	<b>81</b>
	İrem Konca	
<b>7</b>	<b>The Indicative Role of Retranslations for the Turkish Leftist Discourse: Using Berman's Translation Criticism Path to Analyze <i>Manifest der Kommunistischen Partei</i> as a Case .....</b>	<b>95</b>
	Muazzez Uslu	
<b>8</b>	<b>Up to Date as Long as Retranslated: Thomas More's <i>Utopia</i> in Turkish.....</b>	<b>117</b>
	Ceyda Elgül	

<b>9</b>	<b>Retranslating and Repackaging a Literary Masterpiece from a Peripheral Language: The Functions of Paratexts in Recontextualizing Literary Translations</b> .....	137
	Şule Demirkol Ertürk	
<b>10</b>	<b>Retranslation, Paratext, and Recontextualization: <i>Le Comte de Monte Cristo</i> and <i>The Hound of Baskervilles</i> in Turkish (Re)translations</b> .....	155
	A. Selin Erkul Yağcı	
<b>11</b>	<b>Why “Sway” Again? Prosodic Constraints and Singability in Song (Re)translation</b> .....	177
	Mine Güven	

# Chapter 1

## Introduction: Mutability in Retranslation



Özlem Berk Albachten and Şehnaz Tahir Gürçağlar

The volume you are about to read focuses on retranslation in a specific culture; the authors explore different aspects of retranslation as they have surfaced in the Ottoman Empire and modern Turkish society. However, their descriptions of their contexts and their analysis of the position and implications of retranslation offer a set of conclusions that can be associated with practices in a wider set of cultures. In that sense, the articles should not be seen as confined to the Ottoman-Turkish context, since the issues that they bring to the spotlight are varied and have implications for the theories and methodologies of (re)translation. In this introduction we will offer an account of some common patterns that emerge from the studies that make up the present volume. While the findings of these studies reveal a set of characteristics that mark the history of (re)translation in Turkey, their findings are significant contributions to recent fields of inquiry in translation studies. In a recent article, Koskinen and Paloposki (2019) draw attention to the importance of the larger cultural context for a fuller understanding of individual case studies. The need to complement quantitative and qualitative approaches in research in (re)translation history and the advantages of such a combined effort is already evident (Berk Albachten and Tahir Gürçağlar 2019a). Once such studies reach a critical threshold, whereby a macro view complete with sufficient detail and analysis has emerged in a specific culture, the door opens for larger comparative studies. Koskinen and Paloposki suggest, “the next step for retranslation research will, we believe, consist of studies asking new questions on the basis of such macro level empirical evidence (tested on new, targeted data sets or case studies) and comparisons between these studies completed in different cultural, historical and literary contexts” (2019, 23). Having spent nearly 20 years researching the Finnish retranslation landscape, these two

---

Ö. Berk Albachten (✉) · Ş. Tahir Gürçağlar  
Department of Translation and Interpreting Studies, Faculty of Arts and Sciences,  
Boğaziçi University, Bebek, Istanbul, Turkey  
e-mail: [ozlem.berk@boun.edu.tr](mailto:ozlem.berk@boun.edu.tr); [sehnaz.tahir@boun.edu.tr](mailto:sehnaz.tahir@boun.edu.tr)

researchers have already started engaging in a cultural comparative method and compared their results with those from a study on retranslation in the field of children's literature in Slovene by Pokorn published in 2012 (Koskinen and Paloposki 2019, 36–38). With this volume, and the more quantitative and macro methodology we have implemented elsewhere (Berk Albachten and Tahir Gürçağlar 2019b), we hope to make headway to create a better understanding of Ottoman-Turkish retranslation history and its current state. We believe that this will make a contribution to identifying larger diachronic and synchronic patterns of retranslation, and the findings from this volume will help increase the capacity for cultural comparative studies in the field.

The field of retranslation has been flourishing during the past decade. Retranslations have always attracted the attention of scholars working on literary translation, yet the milestone in the study of retranslation has been Antoine Berman's so-called "retranslation hypothesis" (Berman 1990) and the subsequent studies that grew out of applications or critical readings of this hypothesis. There are sufficient sources readers can turn to for an overview of the conceptual and theoretical developments regarding retranslations that have largely taken place over the last 30 years. Readers who are venturing into the field for the first time may benefit from encyclopedia and handbook entries (Tahir Gürçağlar 2009; Koskinen and Paloposki 2010a), special issues (Milton and Catherine Torres 2003; Alvstad and Assis Rosa 2015; Dore 2018; Sanz Gallego and Van Poucke 2019), manuscripts (Deane-Cox 2014; O'Driscoll 2011) and edited volumes (Cadera and Walsh 2017; Berk Albachten and Tahir Gürçağlar 2019a) dealing specifically with the question of retranslation. The present introduction is reserved for an exploration of the retranslation landscape in Turkey vis-à-vis recent theoretical inquiries and findings in a global context. We believe that the findings in the various chapters of this volume are not only of concern for researchers in Turkish history, politics, and culture, but they will invite a broader discussion of various issues currently under scrutiny in translation studies.

The recent translation history of Turkey is marked by an abundance of retranslations. In another publication, we argued that the surge of retranslations in Turkey since the 2000s is connected to ideological, economic, and marketing-related reasons, as well as institutional intervention (in the form of government-issued recommended readings lists), and legal and copy-right related developments (Berk Albachten and Tahir Gürçağlar 2019b, 225). However, it can be confidently suggested that the Ottoman-Turkish culture has been a culture of retranslation for many centuries. Prior to the twentieth century, translation came under various guises and types until a western concept of translation *proper* strongly established itself in literary discourse starting at the end of the nineteenth century. This goes to the heart of the challenges in defining translation. Now that there is general agreement on the fuzziness of the concept of translation and the need to treat it as a cluster concept, rather than a singular and neatly delineated phenomenon (Tymoczko 2007, 54–106), the same approach needs to be adopted for retranslation as well. Indeed, the variability of definitions of translation has been discussed in light of the differences between retranslation, reprint, re-edition, and revision (Koskinen and Paloposki 2010b).

The opening chapter of the present volume draws attention to another perspective on retranslation that has a lot to say about hybrid literary fields that originate from intercultural systems (Pym 1998; Paker 2002). In intercultural literary systems, such as that of the Ottoman Empire, the relationship among languages used in literature is fraught with tension, rivalry, and innate hierarchies that are not so much due to linguistic but political and cultural processes. In such a context, there is often a search for distinction among agents in the literary field surfacing through various textual and discursive practices, including forms of rewriting and translation. Writers and poets engage in different forms of intertextuality, which has conventionally been defined as influence or imitation in the case of Ottoman literature (Paker 2015). Recent historical research in translation studies regards this as a form of poetic creativity, leading to inventive and innovative options that kept the literary repertoire alive (Paker 2011, 471). Rivalry among poets writing in the various languages of an interculture may complicate the notions of source and target language and culture, as well as the relationships among them. Some canonical texts may prove to be a fertile testing ground about how the often-artificial distinction between source/target, author/translator, and original/derivative may be traced and problematized. The first two chapters in this volume by Fatma Büyükkarcı Yılmaz and Ayşe Handan Konar tackle two such seminal works, *Gulistan* by Sadî and *Hüsn ü Aşk* by Şeyh Galip. Büyükkarcı Yılmaz offers a diachronic study on the retranslations of *Gulistan* from the fifteenth to the twentieth centuries, while Konar focuses on intralingual translations of *Hüsn ü Aşk* published in the Republican period in Turkey.

In the case of *Gulistan*, the textual strategies used by the poet-translators in rewriting the source texts and the discourses they introduce in their prefaces, statements of purpose, and concluding sections attached to the works help us contextualize retranslation as it was practiced in a pre-modern cultural sphere. The rewrites based on *Gulistan* are not termed ‘translation’ before the twentieth century, a stance that resonated with the concept of translation in circulation at the time (Paker 2002; Demircioğlu 2005, 2009). Büyükkarcı Yılmaz offers a list of all terms used to denote (re)translation in the paratextual materials surrounding the retranslations and identifies 12 different terms. Interestingly enough, the Turkish variants of the term ‘translation’ are also not used in many of the retranslations of *Hüsn ü Aşk*, even though some were published as late as the twenty-first century. Konar adds another variable to the discussion on poetry retranslation, that of *nazire* (a parallel poem) and suggests that this can also be used as a fruitful analogy to retranslation as a hybrid textual practice.

The issues manifested through these two studies speak to the concept of ‘aging’ often shown as the main driving force behind retranslations. The two source texts in question preserved, or perhaps even reinforced, their high status in the literary field through time, and the will to retranslate them prevailed for various reasons. When one studies the motives expressed by the retranslators, it becomes clear that there were a wide variety of other reasons behind the retranslators’ decision to revisit these texts and present them to new audiences in addition to the aging of previous translations. A close look at the intralingual and interlingual retranslations in the two cases reveal the impossibility of identifying standard patterns in terms of their

motives. In Konar's study, linguistic aging brought by the change in the alphabet and the adoption of roman letters to replace Arabic script appears as a significant motive. The same is also valid for the twentieth-century retranslations of *Gulistan*. However, showing aging as the only motive behind these retranslations fails to reflect the contours of a very complex situation. In the case of the retranslation of both *Gulistan* and *Hüsn ü Aşk*, there appears to be a drive to "supplement" both the source texts and the existing translations (Koskinen and Paloposki 2003, 22). The two studies reveal that retranslations carried out in prose supplement the source texts and aim to explain or introduce the source texts to a changing readership. Konar astutely argues that the discourse around these supplementary retranslations positions them as paratexts at the service of the source text, increasing comprehensibility and releasing new interpretations. Indeed, Kathryn Batchelor (2018) has recently explored Genette's idea of the translation as paratext and the new insights it can bring to translation studies. In the meantime, retranslations in verse appear to stand as independent works and position themselves as replacements of the source, rather than supplements. Konar's finding has the potential to trigger new questions in the field of verse retranslations and retranslation as parallel poetry is worthy of further exploration.

The wish to supplement a previous translation as a motive is specifically prominent in retranslations of philosophical and political texts, a field that has largely remained out of the scope of studies in retranslation. Five studies in this volume, by Tükel Kanra, Konca, Uslu, Elgül, and Kurlmel, closely attest to this phenomenon. Retranslators often have multiple intentions: supplementing the source text with new readings and interpretations, as well as supplementing its presence in the target culture by tailoring the text to new audiences, by rectifying its perceived flaws, or by loading it with new functions are among these objectives. While many retranslators openly express their wish to 'update' the language of the target text at the face of an aging lexical and terminological repertoire, they often identify gaps in previous translations that go beyond linguistic elements. What is paradoxical is that the efforts of retranslators may not always create the desired outcomes. In Yeşim Tükel Kanra's study on retranslations of Kant, this situation surfaces through the translation of philosophical concepts. While retranslators engage in an effort to explain, clarify, and update Kant's concepts, they end up producing decontextualized terms, moving the concepts further away from their home systems, deeming them less comprehensible for the target readership. Tükel Kanra's article discusses Turkish (re)translations of *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* (*The Critique of Pure Reason*) (1781/1787) produced between 1935 and 2010. Focusing on the (re)translations of Kant's preface to the second edition (1787), Tükel Kanra traces the translations of Kant's concepts in Turkish and scrutinizes their communicative value at the intertextual level against the backdrop of radical linguistic changes in Turkey. As Tükel Kanra argues, the process of transferring/translating concepts are crucial, since any failure will give rise to "concepts without conceptions in the target language". In this regard, Tükel Kanra discusses different solutions proposed by the (re)translators of *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* to what they see as a problem of aging language and terminology based on a textual and paratextual analysis. She furthermore argues

for the methodology of *Begriffsgeschichte* (conceptual history), especially in Koselleck's work (2002), in analyzing the translations of philosophical concepts and the decisions of their translators, as well as tracing the history of the reception of philosophical thought.

Likewise, in Deniz Kurmel's study, the main trigger for the retranslations of the European Convention of Human Rights in Turkish seems to be the changing legal and terminological context. However, it is only the initial official translation that has validity vis-à-vis Turkish domestic law, thus new interpretations of the convention in Turkish only serve as supplementary translations. This creates a dual field for human rights law in Turkish – one that is bound by the official translation and the first translator's interpretation formulated over half a century ago and another that strives to reflect the "spirit" of the Convention, yet has no legal standing. Kurmel's article specifically focuses on the translation of the two key terms of Article 5 of the European Convention on Human Rights, "detention" and "arrest", and examines the transfer of these terms into Turkish in the official translation (1954) and two "independent" retranslations (2003 and 2012). Similar to Tükel Kanra, Kurmel stresses the importance of a contextualization process when translating terms into a new system, especially because of the legal consequences a legal text creates. Moreover, in legal translation, as this case demonstrates, translation not only occurs between two languages, but also between two distinct legal systems with different conceptual structures, terminological apparatus, classification systems, etc. In this specific case, the vagueness of these concepts in the Convention proves to be of particular significance as the interpretation, thus the translation of these terms, has direct ramifications in the field of human rights. The fact that Article 5 of the Convention is one of the primary articles by which Turkey is being judged by the European Court of Human Rights probably is a good indicator for this argument. Thus, by analyzing the (re)translations of these terms in detail, Kurmel draws attention to the possible legal practices these translated texts can cause. As she demonstrates, the Convention lost its vague structure, and the terms became more specific in the official translation, whereas the retranslations function only as supplementary and informative texts with regards to the official translation.

İrem Konca and Muazzez Uslu focus on the ideological dimension of supplementarity in the context of the translations of Marx's texts and discuss how concerns about linguistic aging, censorship, indirect translations, and a never-ending quest for 'improved' readings of Marx drive retranslators towards new versions of the texts. In her article on the Turkish retranslations of Marx's *Das Kapital*, İrem Konca explores how the translation of this particular book became a site of intellectual, ideological, and personal struggle among various agents in a wide time span from 1912 to 2011. Konca focuses on five retranslations produced between 1933 and 2011, the first three from French, the next from English, and the final one from the German original. By analyzing the retranslation history of *Das Kapital* and the relevant paratextual material, including prefaces to these retranslations and critical essays by the retranslators and publishers, Konca reveals the tension between the retranslators and publishers of the work, especially regarding the issues of

terminology and concepts with the aim to create a specific Turkish leftist discourse, as well as the “correct reading” of Marx’s work.

Focusing on yet another work by Marx, Muazzez Uslu analyzes two direct and two indirect retranslations of *Manifest der Kommunistischen Partei* (*The Communist Manifesto*) in Turkish. With more than 30 retranslations, *Manifest der Kommunistischen Partei* (1848) occupies a central position in the translated leftist corpus in Turkish. Thus, this significant number, as maintained by Uslu, is an indicator that the work is being canonized in the Turkish system. Uslu, furthermore, argues that the abundance of retranslations indicates retranslation’s potential to trigger a value-creating process in the receiving culture and making the former (re) translations, their historical and ideological context, and retranslators’ agencies visible. Like Konca, Uslu also emphasizes the ideological and commercial tension between direct and indirect (re)translations. In this case, the main criticism by the retranslators who rendered the book from German was focused on the use of out-of-date terminology and self-censorship in the former indirect retranslations. Adopting Berman’s path to translation criticism, Uslu examines both the paratextual elements and the translated texts. Interestingly, her comparative textual analysis demonstrates that the comments and criticisms expressed in the paratexts were to a large extent political, as well as speculative. Her detailed comparative reading of the German original text, its English translation, and Turkish retranslations reveals that all four Turkish retranslations made use of multiple source texts and the claims regarding (self)-censorship remain baseless.

Likewise, in her study on Thomas Moore’s *Utopia* (1516) in Turkish, Ceyda Elgül offers an outline of the rivalry among publishers and retranslators who, in an effort to create an appreciable difference in their translations, created different *Utopias* to trigger what appears to be contemporaneous, yet diverging readings. After examining the first translation of *Utopia* in 1964 that contributed to a cultural repertoire that aimed to perpetuate the ideals of Turkish humanism, Elgül focuses on two retranslations, both printed in 2003 by two publishing houses with conservative and leftist publishing ideologies, respectively. Unlike the first translation that aimed to create a reading community that would appropriate the ideals of cultural modernization and westernization, these two retranslations, equipped with the ideologies of the translators and publishing houses, re-introduced Moore’s work to new readerships. With over 30 retranslations since the first retranslation that appeared in 1996, Moore’s *Utopia* in Turkish is an interesting case revealing different ideological contexts and standpoints of the translational agents.

Lexical aging of the translations appears as a significant motive behind many of the retranslations taken up in this volume and beyond – yet aging in itself is a complex phenomenon and cannot be reduced to solely a linguistic dimension. In a comprehensive study on aging, Van Poucke (2017) has identified various stylistic, lexical, and grammar related factors that often go simply as “linguistic” aging. However, beyond this dimension, one can also mention forms of translational and cultural aging that comprise changes in translation strategies and cultural and ideological expectations (Van Poucke 2017, 106–107). Furthermore, conceptual aging appears to be an understudied area in the field of retranslations of scientific, legal,

and philosophical texts and requires particular methodologies that consider the historical evolution of concepts and their intricate links with terms, as shown by Tükel Kanra and Kurlmel's studies. As the first few chapters of our book demonstrate, retranslation may have a rejuvenating effect on the source texts, while translators and other agents in the publishing market use retranslation to further their social, cultural, literary, or ideological agendas, they make sure that the source texts remain relevant for new generations and groups of readers. In some cases, translations may go through a genuine aging process requiring the publication of updated versions, although this idea needs to be considered with some caution. Van Poucke questions the validity of a general category of aging for translations and poses a set of questions that exposes the complexity behind the concept of aging (2017, 110). Indeed, when presented as the reason behind retranslations, aging may be more discursive than actual.

While some of the studies we have briefly introduced so far have a micro focus and demonstrate their findings through meticulous textual analysis, others have adopted a broader contextual view. Regardless of their scope, paratextual analysis appears as an indispensable tool in both micro and macro studies on retranslation. As Van Poucke and Sanz Gallego insightfully suggest, "By abandoning the traditional method of comparing different translations of one and the same text on micro-textual level and including other considerations on macro-textual and contextual levels in the analysis, a range of new 'highways' of investigation are discovered..." (Van Poucke and Sanz Gallego 2019, 13). Paratextual analysis is certainly a gateway between the text and its context and the micro and macro levels. When it comes to retranslations, paratexts provide spaces for retranslators and other agents in the publishing field to express their views and guide the reading of the works in question. This transformative power of the paratext is exemplified by many cases in this volume. With the onset of digital media and the Internet, the limits of paratexts have expanded drastically. The paratext, once conceived as the material "threshold" between a work and its presentational elements, now includes such elements as Internet sites, digital platforms, and blogs (Batchelor 2018). Şule Demirkol Ertürk's contribution in this book exhibits the multiplicity of paratexts that play a role in the mediation of a translated classic in a new form. Demirkol Ertürk explores the editing, circulation, and reception processes of two English translations of Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar's novel titled *Saatleri Ayarlama Enstitüsü* (1961) (*The Time Regulation Institute*) in 2001 and 2014 respectively. *The Time Regulation Institute* is indeed a significant case to scrutinize the motivations for retranslation from Turkish into English, as few such works exist. Showing how paratexts may be used to repackage a work and build dialogical links between a retranslation and other translations, Demirkol Ertürk draws attention to the marketing side of retranslations. She also effectively uses data from reviews and blog posts on the Internet as new forms of paratexts that shed light on reader responses. Analyzing paratexts together with reader responses published in online media, Demirkol Ertürk explores the editorial approaches of different publishers as well as the functions of paratexts in recontextualizing literary products. In this particular case, the retranslation of Tanpınar's novel and its paratexts were formed under the influence of Orhan

Pamuk's writings about Tanpınar and the image of Turkey as reflected in Pamuk's works.

Likewise, in her chapter, Erkul Yağcı argues that paratexts define the popular or canonized statuses of retranslations. Her study focuses on retranslations of two well-known classics, namely Arthur Conan Doyle's *The Hound of Baskervilles* (1901) and Alexandre Dumas' *Le Comte de Monte Cristo* (*The Count of Monte Cristo*) (1844), that have been retranslated into Turkish many times. Erkul Yağcı centers her study around the notion of "popularity" that she analyzes both as a motive and a consequence with a significant impact on the publication of retranslations. In this context, paratexts surrounding the retranslations, as well as film adaptations, disclose various contextual dynamics that determined the reception of these works and helped to shape the fictional characters Sherlock Holmes and Le Comte de Monte Cristo in the Turkish literary system. Erkul Yağcı's detailed history of the retranslations of these classics via a meticulous analysis of the wide variety of paratextual elements demonstrate how transmedial storytelling practices carry established works onto a new terrain where they meet with new audiences.

Finally, Mine Güven's study on song retranslation stands as a perfect example of the expanding definitions of retranslation. This is an innovative contribution that explores retranslation within a multimedial and multidisciplinary framework. Examining three translated versions of the popular song *¿Quién será?* (1953) in Turkish, based on textual, paratextual, and contextual information, Güven explores the issues unique to song translation, questioning, at the same time, the verifiability of the so-called retranslation hypothesis. Similar to the literary domain, where translating the 'content' versus 'form' has been a major discussion point, scholars in the field of song translation have also long discussed the rendering of the meaning of the lyrics as opposed to the 'melody' when translating songs from one language to the other. Favoring Johan Franzon's views, who defines a song as "a piece of music and lyrics – in which one has been adapted to the other, or both to one another – designed for a singing performance" (2008, 376), Güven conducts an analysis that goes beyond that of texts, emphasizing the actual outcomes of translation decisions or a justification thereof. She particularly calls attention to prosody, musical notation, and other contextual factors that may have influenced the (re) translations in a time period of more than 30 years. In Güven's study, singability appears as a big factor shaping the retranslation of song lyrics as she makes an important contribution to studies on musical retranslation. This is a nascent area of study that promises exciting research avenues for the future.

At the 3rd World Congress of FIT (Fédération internationale des traducteurs/International Federation of Translators) in 1959, Pierre-François Caillé (1907–1979), the founder of FIT and its director at the time, called Turkey a "heaven of translation" after listening to Bedrettin Tuncel's presentation on the Translation Bureau (Yücel 1961). Recent studies on retranslation in the Turkish context, as also demonstrated by the articles in this current volume, position Turkey as an epicenter for retranslation, truly, as a retranslation culture, with implications not only for Turkey, but also far beyond its borders.

## References

- Alvstad, C., & Rosa, A. A. (2015). Voice in retranslation: An overview and some trends. *Targets*, 27(1), 3–24.
- Batchelor, K. (2018). *Translation and paratexts*. London/New York: Routledge.
- Berk Albachten, Ö., & Tahir Gürçağlar, Ş. (2019a). The making and reading of a bibliography of retranslations. In Ö. B. Albachten & Ş. Tahir Gürçağlar (Eds.), *Perspectives on retranslation: Ideology, paratexts, methods* (pp. 212–230). London/New York: Routledge.
- Berk Albachten, Ö., & Tahir Gürçağlar, Ş. (Eds.). (2019b). *Perspectives on retranslation: Ideology, paratexts, methods*. London/New York: Routledge.
- Berman, A. (1990). La Retraduction comme espace de la traduction. *Palimpsestes*, 4, 1–7.
- Cadera, S. M., & Walsh, A. S. (Eds.). (2017). *Literary retranslation in context*. Oxford: Peter Lang.
- Deane-Cox, S. (2014). *Retranslation, translation, literature and reinterpretation*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Demircioğlu, C. (2005). *From discourse to practice: Rethinking 'translation' (Terceme) and related practices of text production in the late ottoman literary tradition*. Unpublished PhD dissertation, Boğaziçi University.
- Demircioğlu, C. (2009). Translating Europe: The case of Ahmed Midhat as an ottoman agent of translation. In J. Milton & P. Bandia (Eds.), *Agents of translation* (pp. 131–159). Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- Dore, M. (Ed.). (2018). Exploring audiovisual retranslation, special issue of *Status Quaestionis* 15. Available at <https://statusquaestionis.uniroma1.it/index.php/statusquaestionis/issue/view/1239/showToc>.
- Franzon, J. (2008). Choices in song translation: Singability in print, subtitles and sung performance. *The Translator*, 14(2), 373–399.
- Koselleck, R. (2002). Hinweise auf die temporalen Strukturen begriffsgeschichtlichen Wandels. Begriffsgeschichte, Diskursgeschichte, Metapherngeschichte, ed. Hans Erich Bödeker, 29–47. Göttingen: Wallstein.
- Koskinen, K., & Paloposki, O. (2003). Retranslations in the age of digital reproduction. *Cadernos de Tradução*, 1(11), 19–38.
- Koskinen, K., & Paloposki, O. (2010a). Retranslation. In Y. Gambier & L. van Dorslaer (Eds.), *Handbook of translation studies* (Vol. 1, pp. 294–298). Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- Koskinen, K., & Paloposki, O. (2010b). Reprocessing texts. The fine line between retranslating and revising. *Across Languages and Cultures*, 11(1), 29–49.
- Koskinen, K., & Paloposki, O. (2019). New directions for retranslation research: Lessons learned from the archaeology of retranslations in the finnish literary system. *Cadernos de Tradução*, 39(1), 23–44.
- Milton, J., & Torres, M-H. C. (Eds.). (2003). *Tradução, retradução e adaptação*, special issue of *Cadernos de Tradução* 11.
- O'Driscoll, K. (2011). *Retranslation through the centuries*. Oxford: Peter Lang.
- Paker, S. (2002). Translation as Terceme and Nazire. Culture-bound concepts and their implications for a conceptual framework for research on ottoman translation history. In T. Hermans (Ed.), *Crosscultural transgressions: Research models in translation studies II: Historical and ideological issue* (pp. 120–143). Manchester: St. Jerome.
- Paker, S. (2011). Translation, the pursuit of inventiveness and ottoman poetics: A systemic approach. In R. Sela-Sheffy & G. Toury (Eds.), *Culture contacts and the making of cultures. Papers in homage to Itamar even-Zohar* (pp. 459–474). Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University Unit of Culture Research.
- Paker, S. (2015). On the poetic practices of 'a singularly uninventive people' and the anxiety of imitation. In Ş. Tahir Gürçağlar, J. Milton, & S. Paker (Eds.), *Tension and tradition: The dynamics of translation in Turkey* (pp. 27–52). Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- Pym, A. (1998). *Method in translation history*. Manchester: St Jerome.

- Sanz Gallego, G., & Van Poucke, P. (2019). Retranslation in context. *Cadernos de Tradução (special issue)*, 39(1).
- Tahir Gürçağlar, Ş. (2009). Retranslation. In M. Baker & G. Saldanha (Eds.), *Routledge encyclopedia of translation studies* (2nd ed., pp. 233–236). London/New York: Routledge.
- Tymoczko, M. (2007). *Enlarging translation, empowering translators*. London/New York: Routledge.
- Van Poucke, P. (2017). Aging as a motive for literary retranslation: A survey of case studies on retranslation. *Translation and Interpreting Studies*, 12(1), 91–115.
- Van Poucke, P., & Sanz Gallego, G. (2019). Retranslation in context. *Cadernos de Tradução*, 39(1), 10–22.
- Yücel, H.-Â. (1961). Tercüme Cenneti. *Tercüme*, 15(75–76), 17–19.

## Chapter 2

# On *Gulistan*'s Turkish (Re)translations: A Chronological Survey Through Paratextual Data



Fatma Büyükkarcı Yılmaz

**Abstract** *Gulistan* of Sadî (1258), one of the most celebrated and widely-read “books of ethics” in Persian literature, was translated into Turkish many times between the fourteenth and twentieth centuries. Originally written as a combination of both verse and prose, the source text was sometimes translated into Turkish completely in verse, sometimes completely in prose, or sometimes as a mixture of verse and prose like the source.

This study explores topics such as why *Gulistan* was retranslated, the motives behind retranslations as expressed in the introductions or conclusions by translators, the presentation and description of retranslations by translators, features reflecting the temporal or cultural context in which the translation was produced, and finally, mentions or criticisms of previous translations. Among extant translations of *Gulistan*, ten texts have been chosen with a view to revealing potential clues on the perspectives of their (re)translators through paratextual data, focusing mainly on introductions and conclusions.

## Introduction

*Gulistan* (گلستان) is a literary book on ethics (*ahlâkî eser*) written in 1258 by Sadî, a renowned writer and poet of Persian literature who authored over 23 works. It was written as a combination of prose and verse, with some Arabic verses. It comprises eight chapters preceded by an introduction which includes an invocation to God, panegyric to the prophet of Islam, the reason for writing the book, and a panegyric to Atabek Ebû Bekir. The subjects of the eight chapters are: the nature of sultans, conduct of dervishes, the virtue of contentment, benefits of silence, love and youth, weakness and old age, effects of nurture, the morals of conversation, and social decorum. Every chapter is adorned with Arabic and Persian verses and stories that

---

F. Büyükkarcı Yılmaz (✉)  
Boğaziçi University, Istanbul, Turkey  
e-mail: [yilmazfa@boun.edu.tr](mailto:yilmazfa@boun.edu.tr)

have a moral lesson based on everyday situations. Some of the stories told are based on the real life of Sadî himself while some are based on what he had heard or read.

This work has been (re)translated into Turkish and commented on many times, and dictionaries (*sözlük*) have been created for it since the fourteenth century. This chapter explores the following questions by examining the retranslations of *Gulistan* which, I will argue, has a retranslational cycle in Turkish Literature: Why was *Gulistan* (re)translated? Did the translators feel the need to explain their reasons in the introductions or conclusions of their works? How were the retranslations presented and described by their translators? Did the translators offer any clues on the strategies that they followed while translating? Did they mention any features of the temporal or cultural context in which the retranslation was produced? Are there any mentions or criticisms of the previous retranslations?

The goal in this study is to trace the perspectives of (re)translators through the paratextual data offered by ten of their works, focusing mainly on introductions and conclusions. The retranslations examined are those by Seyf-i Sarâyî (d. after 1394), Sibîcâbî (d. after 1397–98), Manyasoğlu (fifteenth century), Zaîfî (d. after 1557), Şeyhülislam Esad Efendi (d. 1625), Mehmed Said (d. after 1897–98), Ahmet Saib-İzzet (nineteenth century), Ahmet Esat (twentieth century), Niğdeli Hakkı Eroğlu (d. 1953) and Kilisli Rifat Bilge (d. 1953).

My chronological survey will help reveal certain literary facts such as why and how the (re)translations were done, which methods were pursued, and possible critiques of other translations they included. This will be complemented by examining various paratextual data pertaining to translations of *Gulistan* penned between the fourteenth and twentieth centuries.

## **Seyf-i Sarâyî, *Kitâbu Gülistân bi't-Türkî* (The Book *Gülistan* in Turkish), 793/1391 (Verse-Prose)**

The first translation of *Gulistan* was titled *Kitâbu Gülistân bi't-Türkî*<sup>1</sup> and done by Seyf-i Sarâyî in 793/1391 in Kipchak Turkish, which belongs to the north branch of west Turkish family.<sup>2</sup> As its original, the work was translated in both prose and verse. In the introductory statement of purpose section (“*sebeb-i telif*”), Seyf-i Sarâyî translates Sadîs’ words almost verbatim. He narrates how he started translating *Gulistan* as follows:

At the outset of summer days, while sitting together with savants among roses and talking about the art of prose, someone asked how a difficult couplet would be divided according to *aruz*. Upon hearing Seyf-i Sarâyî’s answer, he said “I have an advice for you, if you take it,

<sup>1</sup>The facsimile of the text was first published with the preface of Feridun Nafiz Uzluk in 1954. Ali Fehmi Karamanloğlu published this work with a linguistic study and translation in 1978.

<sup>2</sup>Kipchak Turkish belongs to the north branch of west Turkish family and has characteristics of west Turkish.

that would be good for you, if you translate Şeyh Sadî's *Gulistan* into Turkish, you leave a memento of your name in this world". (Karamanlioğlu 1978, 4–6)

(İlk yaz günlerinde, güller arasında âlimlerle oturup inşa ilminden bahsederken, onlardan biri, zor bir beytin aruza göre nasıl bölüneceğini (takti) sormuş. Seyf-i Sarâyî'nin cevabını duyunca, sana bir nasihatim var, kabul edersen hayırlı olur, Şeyh Sadî'nin *Gülîstan*'ını Türkî tercüme kılsan, adına dünyada yadigar kalır, der.)

Seyf-i Sarâyî accepts that offer. He explains why *Gulistan* is such a significant book by composing the below couplets and lists eight chapters in the introductory statement of purpose section (Karamanlioğlu 1978, 5):

Türkîge kaytıp Acemden bu kitâb  
Ma'rifetke açtı sekkiz türlü bâb

(Translating this book from Persian into Turkish, he opened eight doors towards divine wisdom.<sup>3</sup>)

In order to emphasize the significance of the work, he compares it to *Husraw u Shîrîn* and says odd and wondrous stories are only found in *Gulistan* (Karamanlioğlu 1978, 5):

Ol acâyib kim garâyib munda bar  
Husraw u Shîrîn içinde kanda bar

(The odd and wondrous stories that *Husraw u Shîrîn* has are contained in this work as well.)

At the end of the translation, he informs the readers that the book has come to an end, saying "the translation of the book *Gulistan* has been completed" (tamâm boldi terceme-i kitâb-ı *Gulîstân*) (Karamanlioğlu 1978, 177). The terms he uses for his translation are "terceme" (translation) and "Türkîye kaytmak" (turning to Turkish). Seyf-i Sarâyî does not inform us about the method he used while translating.

## **Sibîcâbî, *Gulistan* Tercümesi (The Translation of *Gulistan*), 830/1397–98 (Verse-Prose)**

The second translation of *Gulistan* in Turkish literature belongs to Sibîcâbî of Sibicab (city of Sayram), produced in 830/1397–98. A combination of both prose and verse just like the original, this translation is considered as the work of a transition period, although it displays more of Khwarezm-Golden Horde Turkish qualities, there seem Chagatay Turkish qualities as well (Ergene 2012, V, 220–21).<sup>4</sup> It was presented to Muhammed Sultan, the governor of Turkistan. The goal offered in the translation itself was the desire for this rare pearl (*Gulistan*) to be a memento from Sibîcâbî in the land of Turkistan. Sibîcâbî writes, when people admire this

<sup>3</sup>All translations into English are by the author, unless otherwise stated.

<sup>4</sup>Khwarezm-Golden Horde Turkish is a language between Karakhanid Turkish and Chagatay Turkish. Developed in the thirteenth century from Karakhanid Turkish, it gave way to Chagatay Turkish in the fifteenth century. Chagatay Turkish was the literary language of the Central East, starting from the beginnings of the fifteenth century up to the beginnings of the twentieth century.