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In-between Calvinism and Islam: Ali Bey's Transcultural Translation of the Bible into Turkish in the Time of Confessionalization

Agnieszka Ayşen Kaim
Institute of Slavic Studies Polish Academy of Sciences
aaysenkaim@gmail.com
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5839-4191

Abstract: Albertus Bobovius/Ali Ufkî Bey was a typical go-between of his time, a learned translator and convert who benefited from his double religious sensitivity. As a consequence, he was able to create a transcultural translation of the Bible in the 17th century. This paper brings context to these aspects of his life. Ali Ufkî Bey created his works on religion during a time of intensive confessionalization, when Istanbul was a hub for many political interests with various religious and cultural options intersecting in the Ottoman capital. The project of translating the Bible to the national languages of Islam was carried out according to the vision of an alliance between Islam and reformed Christian groups, supporting the thesis of *Calvino-Turkism*, promoted by John Amos Comenius. As oriental scholars were lacking sufficient command of Turkish, they had to commission highly qualified go-betweens. There were two competing plans: Dutch Calvinist and Anglican. Bobovius was a part of the Dutch plan, along with Yahya Bin Ishak, a Jewish dragoman. The strategies of translation chosen by Bobovius were very modern according to the present knowledge of the art of translation, but in his era, there were difficulties in choosing the right language register and the right religious imagery to find proper equivalents. Underestimated by his contemporaries, Bobovius was rehabilitated by today's linguists, and his "Turkish Bible" is still in use today. The text does not contest the religious identity of the author of this translation of the Bible but presents the hybridity of this figure against the background of the wider historical and confessional context of 17th-century Istanbul. It also provides examples of Bobovius's translation choices and an initial interpretation of his methodology of timeless transcultural translation, from the perspective of contemporary translation theories. In the light of contemporary transcultural studies, present-day scholarship may treat Ali Ufkî as a transcultural agent and a gifted go-between.

Keywords: confessionalization, Calvino-Turcism, equivalent, transcultural agent, Turkish Bible

1. The Multiple Identity of Converts

Young Wojciech Bobowski (Albertus Bobovius) captured by Tatars and sold to Turks as a slave, was one of those who, according to Metin Kunt, arrived at the Ottoman imperial Palace at an age when his mother tongue was already firmly a part of his personage, and

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his original name and family background were never forgotten.[1] The typical path for captured slaves was obligatory conversion to Islam. Albertus Bobovius, like other converts, gained a new identity after the process of acculturation, but usually, in fact, this was not a replacement of the old with the new, but a case of the two (or even more) layers of identity overlapping each other. It can be concluded that, until at least the end of the 16th century, the process of conversion did not involve a radical break from the convert's previous religious beliefs or lifestyle due to the syncretism of popular beliefs. For a long time, the act of conversion to Islam involved only the adoption of a Muslim name and headgear.

Nevertheless, the past identities of the new Ottomans were not of much significance to the state. It was the act of conversion that was considered an entry into a new life and a new framework of legal identity. For a *homo ottomanicus*, the acceptance of Ottoman rule was of rather greater importance than the recognition of the superiority of Islam.[2]

The works of Ali Ufkî as a translator of holy texts were created during the period between two employments at the Sultan's court. This is the period after he left the Seraglio having lost his job as a music teacher but before he gained the position of a dragoman. He started translating the first book of the Bible (Isaiah) in February 1662, completed his translations of the Old and New Testaments in October 1664 and of the Deuterocanonical Book – in December 1664.[3]

Bobovius' process of translating Christian texts has several dimensions. The general purpose of his work came from the confessionalization which occurred in this period, which combined the ideology and politics that were involved in this divine project, together with a second dimension, consisting of the translative skills and techniques involved in his work. How did this transcultural task work in 17th-century Istanbul, in the zone of contact between East and West, between Islam and Christianity? In this paper, the author will attempt to show the context of this translation project and present some aspects of a transcultural strategy of the translator. Additionally, a broad reference will be made to the works of other scholars, such as Hannah Neudecker, Noel Malcolm, Bruce Privratsky and Funda Toprak, who studied the history of the project of the Ottoman Turkish Bible and Bobovius' contribution to undertaking this task. However, this text does not contest the religious identity of the author of this translation of the Bible but presents the hybridity of this figure against the background of the wider historical and confessional context of 17th-century Istanbul. It also provides an initial interpretation of the methodology of Bobovsky's timeless transcultural translation, in light of contemporary translation theories.

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1 M. Kunt, "Turks in the Ottoman Imperial Palace," *Royal Courts in Dynastic States and Empires. A Global Perspective* (eds. J. Duindam – T. Artan – M. Kunt) (Leiden – Boston, MA: Brill 2011) 298, www.jstor.org/stable/10.1163/j.ctt1w8h2rh.18 [access: 4.02.2020].

2 A. Minkov, *Conversion to Islam in the Balkans. "Kisve Bahası" Petitions and Ottoman Social Life, 1670–1730* (The Ottoman Empire and Its Heritage 30; Leiden: Brill 2004) 105.

3 H. Neudecker, "From Istanbul to London? Albertus Bobovius' Appeal to Isaac Basire," *The Republic of Letters and the Levant* (eds. A. Hamilton – M.H. van den Boogert – B. Westerweel) (Leiden – Boston, MA: Brill 2005) 184.

2. Turning Turk

The 17th century was a harsh time of conflict when the slavery business run by the Crimean Tartars was widespread. New supplies of young Christian men and women were brought to the Ottoman Empire from the southern Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth as *esir* (slaves). One of these captives was Albertus Bobovius, also known by his Ottoman name, Ali Ufkî Bey. According to the current state of research on his origin, it can be assumed that he was probably born around 1610 in Leopolis, modern-day Lviv, in Ukraine. This city was an intellectual centre and a very important commercial hub on Fernand Braudel's "Polish isthmus,"[4] which led from Danzig (Polish: Gdańsk) to the Balkans, or even beyond, to Constantinople. In his homeland, Albertus Bobovius received an excellent education in languages and music and must have been very mature in terms of his professional background when he entered the Enderûn (literally the intimate part of the seraglio) in 1640–1650 as a captive page. He was assigned to the palace music school, the *meşkhāne*, where he was trained in singing and playing *santūr* (dulcimer).[5] His career was very impressive, similar to that of several of the famous Slavic youths brought via the recruiting system called *devşirme*, which was the Ottoman practice of abducting boys and young adults among Ottoman Christian subjects from the Balkans and then converting them to Islam. From among these converts, the most promising candidates were selected for the palace school, and after a period of education, they could become high-ranking Ottomans within the palace household and, later, in imperial administration or the military. However, their talents, skills and resources had partly been acquired prior to conversion to Islam, especially as far as the mastery of Christian-European languages and contacts in Christian Europe were concerned. Adding a long period of education in the Enderûn allowed them to develop widely educated, colourful personalities, useful for the various purposes of both Ottomans and foreigners. For approximately 21 years he was educated at the palace, also acting as a servant. Afterwards, he went to Egypt with a senior Ottoman officer, but while returning to Istanbul he was freed from slavery. Around 1650 he worked in the service of the English ambassadors to Istanbul. Between 1662 and 1664, he worked in the pay of the Dutch Resident in Istanbul, Levinus Warner. There are still some gaps in the information about his employment, but what is known is that in 1669 Bobovius was appointed as an interpreter to the Ottoman chancellery and several years later was even promoted to a high position in the office of the Chief Interpreter of the Sublime Porte, as a second interpreter. These different career paths attest to the variety of his competences as a polymath.

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4 F. Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press 1995) I, 195.

5 J.I. Haug, "Surmounting Religious, Musical and Linguistic Frontiers: 'Alī Ufqī's Translation of the Genevan Psalter (c. 1665) as a Transcultural Achievement," *La frontière méditerranéenne du XVe au XVIIe siècle. Échanges, circulations et affrontements* (eds. B. Heyberger – A. Fuess – P. Vendrix) (Turnhout: Brepols 2013) 376.

3. Go-Betweens[6]

The most recent academic approach to the phenomenon of the Ottoman renegades (Nathalie Rothman, Tijana Krstić, Tobias P. Graf[7]) offers a new perspective, according to which these outsiders, converts themselves, thanks to their "mobility," were actually instrumental in the exchange between Europeans and Ottomans. In these circumstances, instead of the category of "renegade," the more accurate term to use would be "trans-imperial subject," a category derived from Nathalie Rothman's expression describing those who: "straddled and brokered — and thus helped to shape the political, religious, and linguistic boundaries between the early modern Ottoman empire and other states ... and, by extension, Christian Europe more generally."[8]

Go-betweens were occupied with special tasks rooted in their hybrid position. They were valuable for Christians newly confronting the Ottoman Islamic culture. The first person they met was usually a convert, an interpreter, to be their guide and "porter at the gates" leading to the East. These converts were "transcultural agents," intermediaries to enable the process of transcultural transfer, as interest in the intensive exchange of knowledge was mutual. They were involved in the scientific, religious and diplomatic translation of European works into Ottoman Turkish. However, this was also the domain of those translators who combined the skills of scholar and interpreter. The famous dragomans, with their scholarly skills, involved in writing texts as Albertus Bobovius was, played a crucial role in introducing Renaissance ideas and Reformation thinking into the Ottoman Empire. This formed the foundation of the later period known as the *Lale Devri* (The Epoch of Tulips, 1718–1730) when the cultural elite of the Empire accepted a pro-European approach.[9]

The valuable expertise of captured Europeans, such as the useful skills of the young expert, Ali Bey, gained them privileged positions. To quote from Pier Mattia Tommasino, Bobovius was a typical *homo ottomanicus* who, coming from Europe with a non-Turkish linguistic and cultural background, was successful in obtaining a prestigious position in the multiethnic and multilingual framework of the Ottoman bureaucracy.[10] His merits followed two main pathways. To the Ottomans, he was a Sunni Muslim or even heterodox, a Sufi from the *halveti* order, Ali Bey or Ali Ufkî, but to Western Europeans, he was

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6 Broad reference is made to this subject of double life and double identity, transculturality and cultural transgression in the present author's book: A.A. Kaim, *Ludzie dwóch kultur. Wybrane przypadki transgresji kulturowej Polaków w Imperium Osmańskim w XVII, XVIII i XIX wieku* [People of Two Cultures – Selected Cases of Cultural Transgression of Poles in the Ottoman Empire (17th–19th c.)] (Warszawa: ISPAN 2020).

7 T.P. Graf, *The Sultan's Renegades. Christian-European Converts to Islam and the Making of the Ottoman Elite, 1575–1610* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2017).

8 E.N. Rothman, "Interpreting Dragomans: Boundaries and Crossings in the Early Modern Mediterranean," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 51/4 (2009) 773.

9 C. Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds. The Construction of the Ottoman State* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press 1995) 71.

10 P.M., Tommasino, "Travelling East, Writing in Italian Literature of European Travel to the Ottoman Empire Written in Italian (16th and 17th Centuries)," *Philological Encounters* 2 (2015) 15.

Bobovius, the former Christian or "Christian of Allah,"[11] still susceptible to returning to "the right path of faith."[12] Anyway, his first Christian self would mean that, after converting to Islam, he engaged his previous background knowledge and contributed to protestant missionary efforts by translating religious works into Turkish. As a freelancer interpreter working in the Ottoman capital, he could simply have been involved in different projects coordinated by different confessional groups. From the point of view of the Ottoman state, dragomans with their "lid identity"[13] were both "foreign," because they served in foreign embassies or because of their roots of origin, and "local" because of their numerous relationships in the Ottoman capital and provinces.[14] They were not merely interpreters; they played multiple and instrumental roles, not just restricted to their skills in translation, and they also served as advisers on Ottoman law and experts on oriental affairs.[15]

4. Two Protestant Plans for Indoctrination of Confessional Purity

This presence of educated converts – renegades – indicates the extent to which the Ottoman Empire participated in the process of religious polarization, usually considered typical of Christian Europe in this period: in both regions, a specific religious identity came to be associated with political loyalty to one's respective rulers. Bobovius was a typical go-between, and paraphrasing Nathalie Rothman's expression, he regularly mobilized his roots "elsewhere" to gain specific knowledge, privileges, or commitments to further his current interests.[16] These connections of Bobovius lead us to the intellectual circles of the 17th-century Ottoman capital, which maintained contact with Europeans without any involvement of the state.

The numerous acquaintances of Bobovius in Constantinople, apart from Muslims, also included several Roman Catholics, such as Antoine Galland, the Polish counter-reformist

11 "Christians of Allah" – former Christians who converted to Islam but still practicing Christian rituals; term as proposed by Bartolomė and Lucile Bennassar (*Les chrétiens d'Allah. L'histoire extraordinaire des renégats XVIe et XVIIe siècles* [Paris: Perrin 2006; 1 ed. 1989]). More information on crypto-chritianity see M. Reinkowski, "Hidden Believers, Hidden Apostates. the Phenomenon of Crypto-Jews and Crypto-Christians in the Middle East," *Converting Cultures. Religion, Ideology and Transformations of Modernity* (ed. D. Washburn) (Leiden – Boston, MA: Brill 2007) 409–433.

12 Neudecker, "From Istanbul to London?," 175.

13 A description of the "lid model" as a pattern of a complex Ottoman identity has been given by Cemal Kafadar (*Between Two Worlds*). It assumes the more or less sealed cultural identities of the various peoples (Turks, Greeks, Spaniards and Arabs), who came into contact with each other within the framework of a larger, bipolar division of equally sealed civilizational identities (East/West, Muslim/Christian, and so on). However, these identities were fluid in form, often being contradictory and ambiguous.

14 Rothman, "Interpreting Dragomans," 781.

15 H. Neudecker, *The Turkish Bible. Translation by Yahya Bin Ishak, Also Called Haki [1659]* [Leiden: Oosters Instituut 1994] 376.

16 E.N. Rothman, *Brokering Empire. Trans-Imperial Subjects between Venice and Istanbul* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press 2011) 11–12.

Jesuit, Teofil Rutka, Franciszek Mesgnien-Meniński and Protestants from different countries: Moravian John Amos Comenius, Dutch Leavens Warner, English Isaac Basire, Thomas Smith, Jacob Spon, Paul Rycaut, John Covel, and others.[17] And interestingly, Bobovius' works actually formed a part of some Protestant plans. Thus the power of the Word of God would be exercised on the souls of "the heathens" through the translation of Christian texts. Within the range of activities set up to endear these texts to local Muslims, there were a few projects for preparing an Ottoman Turkish version of the Bible. In the 17th century, it was intensively translated into the vernacular languages of Islam as a consequence of the demand of the Protestant Reformation for translating the Bible into "national" languages.

The initiatives of this campaign in the Ottoman Empire were coordinated from England and Netherlands. First, Bobovius was commissioned by the Anglicans and translated the text of the Anglican Catechism into Turkish in 1653. Proselytizing in the Ottoman lands required a proper collection of instructions for confessional purity and catechism. The same role, as an instrument of confessionalization to maintain the religious boundaries among "true" Muslims and local heretics, was played by the *ilm-i hal,* the Islamic manual of religious instruction. With this aim, Bobovius was engaged by Isaac Basire (1607–1676), chaplain to the English ambassador during the 1650s, who was an enthusiast of spreading the Anglo-Catholic faith throughout the East.

Afterwards, Bobovius became part of a Dutch plan and was recruited by Levinus Warner, a German-born oriental scholar and Dutch resident in Constantinople at the Sublime Porte (1655–1665). Ufkî embarked on the project of translating the Huguenot Psalter (melodies and linguist content) into the "Ottoman Psalter" and the Old and New Testament, as well as the Deuterocanonical Book /Apocrypha, during the period 1662–1664. This was not the first to be translated into the Turkish language, but the first to include these three parts. As far as can be surmised from preserved documents, the first project was inspired, financed and founded in the Netherlands with the participation of leading protestants of that time, such as John Amos Comenius himself (1592–1670). Bobovius already had experience with the works of Comenius, as previously, in 1643, he had translated his *Janua Linguarum Reserata* (The Door of Languages Unlocked). But the founder of this project was Laurens de Geer (1614–1666), the philanthropic son of the merchant industrialist and encyclopaedist, Samuel Hartlib (1600–1662), and also Jacobus Golius (van Gool) (1596–1667), professor of Oriental Languages at the Leiden University.

There was the Anglican "rival" Bible project, which was initiated by the chemist, Robert Boyle (1627–1691) and the diplomat and philosopher, Henry Oldenburg (1618–1677), with corporate and personal support from part of the Levant Company. The international rivalry between the English and the Dutch did not support the completion of these two projects. Oldenburg even tried to combine them but to no avail. Comenius, who believed that the copies could be combined, sent the proposed text to Oldenburg in 1666,

17 J.I. Haug, "Medical Knowledge in 'Alī Ufuḳī's Musical Notebook (Mid-17th Century)," *Intellectual History of the Islamicate World* 6 (2018) 120.

accompanied by a "dedication," addressed to the Sultan, which he hoped would be printed (also in Turkish translation).

For the Anglican version, Robert Boyle commissioned the clergyman William Seaman, author of a Turkish grammar book and dictionary, who had at one point been in Istanbul with the English ambassador, Sir Peter Wyche. In December 1664, his translation (or at least its sample/fragment) arrived in Amsterdam, and Comenius asked Golius for assistance. That English-Turkish [New] Testament, in the opinion of Bobovius and another translator which will be mentioned later, Shahin Kandi, was worthless. As Comenius noted in 1667, "The errors of the translation are apparently rustic and barbarous; not one of the more educated Turks will be able to read it."[18] However, Seaman's translation of the New Testament was published in Oxford in 1666, whilst Bobovius' version had to wait another 150 years.

Nevertheless, one very interesting point is the involvement of a few expert translators in the Dutch project. The project leader, Mr Levinus Warner also recruited his personal "dragoman,"[19] the Sephardic Jew, Yahya bin Ishak, who worked on the project between mid-1658 and late 1661.[20] Bobovius was the second employee, who started his translation of *Kitab-ı Mukaddes* (Holy Book) after he had been released from slavery. These two dragomans worked hard on the holy text, using their best knowledge of the sacred scripts. The translation of Yahya ibn Haki has been kept at Leiden University since the late 17th century. Haki preserved the character of the Hebrew Bible text and translated Hebrew phrases into Turkish phrases.[21] It was probably Ali Bey, his rival translator, who made this comment on the work of Haki: "[He] translated the Holy Scriptures from Hebrew into the Turkish not in a clear and lucid way, but in an obscure and intricate way because he translated word for word and badly at that, without any correct construction, so that you almost think it is a Talmud in Turkish."[22] Nevertheless, Haki could have been presented to Warner by Bobovius, and Ali Bey might have used Haki's translation while working on his own version.[23] There is even an account of the fee paid for the written translation by Haki: "The Old Testament for 500 akces, and the New Testament for 39, 550 akces."[24]

After the rejection of Haki's translation by Bobovius, the latter completed his task within three years. Officially, Warner was mentioned as the translator, but he was the initiator of this project and responsible for its success. He commissioned "mysterious" translators, as

18 N. Malcolm, "Comenius, Boyle, Oldenburg, and the Translation of the Bible into Turkish," *Church History and Religious Culture* 87/3 (2007) 360.

19 Haki is mentioned in Warner's last will as a beneficiary who received a valuable piece of clothing: "a son drogomant agy [i.e.Haki] une veste drap" (Neudecker, *The Turkish Bible* 367).

20 Malcolm, "Comenius, Boyle, Oldenburg," 333.

21 Neudecker, *The Turkish Bible*, 2.

22 According to Neudecker, *The Turkish Bible*, 367; this is an annotation authored by Ufkî, written in Latin on the last page of Haki's translation, found in the manuscripts in Leiden University in the catalogue De Goeje Catalogus Codicum Orientalium Bibliothecae Academiae Luguno Batavae Vol. V, 98.

23 Neudecker, *The Turkish Bible*, 366; E.N. Rothman, "Dragomans and 'Turkish Literature': The Making of a Field of Inquiry," *Oriente Moderno* 93/2 (2013) 411.

24 H. Neudecker, "A 17th Century Jew Demanding his Due," *Journal of Turkish Studies* 26/2 (2002) 157.

he was anxious about his reputation as an expert; he did not want to be judged as incompetent. In those days it was the standard practice for all translations into oriental languages to be signed in the names of the Western translators; the helpers or informants were not mentioned.[25] According to Noel Malcolm, one original (Archetypus) and two spare copies (Ectypus) of Bobovius were sent to Golius in Leiden.[26] After he disapproved the work of Bobovius, which will be referred to later, in 1666, Golius entrusted the correction to his employee, an educated Armenian from Aleppo, Şahin ibn Kandi – Shahin b. Qandi.[27]

5. Religious Polarization and *Calvino-Turcism*

The project of preparing the Turkish version of the Bible in two linked works shows that this language of a non-Christian power had great importance in theological terms, and had theological resonance in that century.[28] The interest of Bohemian, Dutch and English protestants with Turkey was inspired by their vision of Millenarianism. That vision had a cross-cultural character and spread the idea derived from the last book of the New Testament, the Revelation of John, that Christ will establish 1000 years (millennium) of God's Kingdom on earth before the Last Judgement. Before this happens, a few important events should take place, such as the conversion of Muslims and Jews to Christianity. There was also a rivalry between Catholics and Protestants for influence over oriental Christians.

In the 17th century, this idea focused on the Ottoman lands and considered an alliance of Islam and reformed Christian groups, supporting the thesis of *Calvino-Turkism* promoted by John Amos Comenius. This alliance was theologically based on common concepts, such as anti-trinitarianism and a belief in God's oneness, which has its Islamic analogue in the concept of *Tawhid*.[29]

There was also a political aspect to this alliance; it served both sides and had been planned to diminish the power of the Habsburgs and was consequently directed against the Roman Catholics. Not only Christians were engaged in the millennial movement, but it was also widespread in the history of Judaism and climaxed with the career of Shabbetai Tzevi, whose messianic message ignited the interest of Jewish communities in both Muslim and Christian lands. It is worth mentioning that, amid this atmosphere of the accusation of philo-Islamism between Catholics and Protestants, interest in Islamic studies was rapidly growing and took the form of a fascination with its culture and civilization and, as Cardini

25 Neudecker, *The Turkish Bible*, 378.

26 Malcolm, "Comenius, Boyle, Oldenburg," 336. "Archetypus meus, cum Aliorum Turcarum duobus Ectypis ad Academiam Lugdunensem in gremium Ex" (*ibidem*).

27 Letter from Jacobus Golius to Laurensa de Geer, April 5, 1666. Neudecker, *The Turkish Bible*, 375, n. 28.

28 Malcolm, "Comenius, Boyle, Oldenburg," 328.

29 T. Krstić, *Contested Conversions to Islam. Narratives of Religious Change in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press 2011) 118.

states, made an important contribution to the development of oriental studies[30]. Apparently, confessionalization worked for both sides, and in the mid-16th century and later, in the 17th century, the Ottomans were also quite advanced in drawing their boundaries among religious and social groups. It so happens that the period of concern to this work was dominated by a very conservative and orthodox Muslim atmosphere in the sultan's court of the Grand Vizierate of Ahmed Fazıl Köprülü, who had received the education of the ulema. As a result, neo-fundamentalist *salafi* and conservative rhetoric affected not only Christians and Jews but also Sufis, women and other liberal circles of the empire.[31] This triggered the change from a social *milieu* formerly favouring religious syncretism to a more fundamentalist-minded one.

6. The Question of Language

To serve this divine purpose, the details of the Bible translation project were important, such as the question of which variant of language should be used in the translation to address Ottoman subjects most appropriately.

The status of Turkish as the *lingua franca* of the Ottoman Empire is debatable; yet Armenians, Greeks, Jews, and others also spoke Turkish, certain groups among them as their mother tongue.[32] Moreover, these groups used Turkish for writing, even though they used their own alphabets (which seems to have been instigated by adherence to their own religious traditions and facilitated by the lack of a uniform educational system in the empire).[33] Some cases in point might be the existence of "Turco-Christian" literature and

30 F. Cardini, *Europa a islam. Historia nieporozumienia* (trans. B. Bielańska) (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego 2006) 170.

31 L. Peirce, "Polyglottism in the Ottoman Empire: A Reconsideration," *Braudel Revisited. The Mediterranean World, 1600–1800* (eds. G. Piterberg – T.F. Ruiz – G. Symcox) (Toronto: University of Toronto Press 2010) 85.

32 Benjamin Braude ("Introduction," *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire. The Abridged Edition* [ed. B. Braude] [Boulder, CO: Rienner 2014] 40) denies Turkish the status of a *lingua franca*, while Philip Mansel (*Constantinople. City of the World's Desire, 1453–1924* [New York: St Martin's Press 1996] 68), speaking of Constantinople, recognizes that its lingua franca was "a form of pidgin Italian, including French, Greek, Spanish, Arabic and Turkish words." Linguistic Turkification among different non-Turkish groups was uneven, hence the plural (on Greeks and Armenians see: J. Strauss, "Is Karamanli Literature Part of a 'Christian-Turkish [Turco-Christian] Literature'?," *Cries and Whispers in Karamanlidika Books. Proceeding of the First International Conference on Karamanlidika Studies* [*Nicosia, 11th – 13th September 2008*] [eds. E. Balta – M. Kappler] [Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz 2010] 159). See a brief general account on the (inter)lingual situation in: Braude, "Introduction," 40–42.

33 A brief bibliography on the cases of Armeno-Turkish and Jewish-Turkish books is given by Evangelia Balta (E. Balta – M. Kappler [eds.], *Cries and Whispers in Karamanlidika Books. Proceeding of the First International Conference on Karamanlidika Studies [Nicosia, 11th–13th September 2008]* [Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz 2010] 14–15). The volume introduced by Balta is part of a scholarly series on Karamanlis, a Turkish-speaking Orthodox population of 15th c.–1924 in Asia Minor, and its books in Turkish language with Greek characters. Parallel contributions to histories of five such literatures – Syro-Turkish, Cyrillic-Turkish, Hebrew-Turkish, Armeno-Turkish and Karamanlidika – are offered in: *ibidem*.

the translations of the Bible into Turkish executed during the Ottoman period: their typefaces are variously Arabic, Armenian, Bulgarian Cyrillic, Greek, Hebrew, and Latin.[34]

The "orientalist" patrons of the project knew all the languages, such as Persian and Arabic, but none of them had been able to provide expertise on the correctness of the Turkish language required of such a translation without the support of a *native speaker*. What Jacob Golius, professor of Turkish at Leiden University, understood too late was that the translation should be into Anatolian Turkish, not the Ottoman language of the elite,[35] and should be more similar to the locally approved Arabic version. Comenius, Golius and Warner 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.[36]

According to specialists in Ottoman Turkish of the 17th century, Ali Bey was faithful to the sentence structures of the Turkish of his time. The literary tradition he represented was based on simple and popular Turkish.

However, Bobovius and Warner planned to go through the entire translation together, using the commentary by Théodore de Bèze who suggested polishing the style.[37]

The underestimation of the quality of translation and the choice of the proper register of language could have resulted, as assumed by Malcolm, from the Protestant belief in the divine power and self-authenticating quality of God's Word.[38] The colloquial Turkish of Istanbul was not smooth enough for the Muslim reader, whilst, at the same time, European scholars were not well versed in Anatolian Turkish. Another aspect of the project was the neglect of the importance of modification, according to the theological interpretation of divine words in the light of commentaries. It was not taken into account during the first stage of the project.

Moreover, the project was interrupted by some sudden deaths. Warner died, poisoned in 1665 in Istanbul. The sponsor – Laurens de Geer died in August of 1666. In September of 1667, Golius died, and his position at the University remained vacant for 40 years. Then, in 1670, Comenius passed away. When the idea of a Turkish Bible came to life again, Ali Ufkî's version as the first four chapters of Genesis was printed in 1739, in Leipzig. Afterwards, in 1819, the British and Foreign Bible Society published the New Testament in Paris with slight corrections. The entire Ottoman-Turkish Bible was printed there in 1827,

34 Or "Turkish-Christian"; a term advocated by Johann Strauss ("Is Karamanli Literature Part," 154–155, 158–159) to cover Greek-Turkish (Karamanli[dika]) and Armeno-Turkish literature(s). B.G. Privratsky, *A History of Turkish Bible Translations. Annotated Chronology with Historical Notes and Suggestions for Further Research*, author's pre-edition (2014) 3, https://historyofturkishbible.files.wordpress.com/2014/03/turkish-bible-history-version-s-in-preparation.pdf [access: 9.12.2018].

35 Anatolian Turkish – used during the reign of the Seljuks in Anatolia (a 11th–14th century dynasty) developed in the 8th–16th centuries from Sufi terminology and took the Persian vocabulary from theological Arabic. It gained examples of other foreign, Indo-European syntax, not typical for agglutinative languages such as Turkish.

36 Privratsky, *A History of Turkish Bible Translations*, 20.

37 Neudecker, "From Istanbul to London?," 183.

38 Malcolm, "Comenius, Boyle, Oldenburg," 367.

but without the Deuterocanonical Book/Apocrypha. From that time and throughout the 19th century, it was published in fragments or as a whole in different alphabets – Greek, Arabic and Ottoman. In Istanbul, it was printed for the first time in the year 1870. The first Turkish publication in the Latin script was done in 1932. Even in the newest version of the Turkish Bible, from the year 1988, one can read in the introduction that it is a 1941 version based on the translation by Ali Ufkî.[39]

7. The Question of Interpretation

The status of the Holy Word was exceptional; any change of grammar or structure could affect the authenticity of the message, but this changed with the European Reformation. Ali Bey's translation was the reflection of a search for the equivalent of Biblical material in Islamic culture. That is why Şahin ibn Kandi of Aleppo, an Armenian copyist of Oriental manuscripts at Leiden University, was asked for a revision of Ali Bey's translation by Golius and de Geer. Kandi was fluent in Turkish and had a command of Arabic and Persian, and he took Ali Bey's translation as a starting point. He was supposed to work on a new translation that would correspond closely to the Arabic version of the Bible (in use for many centuries), and in that way, make the text more reliable for Levantine readers. Kandi managed to re-copy and correct twelve books and corrected several others.[40]

Did Ali Bey compare his translation with the Arabic version? In fact, Ali Bey himself may not have had the chance to compare his translation with the Arabic text of the Bible, since the first modern (Catholic) version of the translation did not appear in print in Rome until 1671. He was therefore unlikely to have had access to it or to other ancient and medieval Arabic manuscripts copied in Egypt.[41] In Ali Ufkî's edition, the notation of the proper names of characters that do not appear in the Qur'an, such as Petro, Se'mun, Filipo and Pilato, indicates some links with the Christian Catholic tradition and is taken from the Italian version of the holy book.

Ali Bey's translation strategy depended on the target audience, who were Muslims, not Christians. It forced Ali Bey to use simple and colloquial language (Tur. *halk Türkçesi*), and idiomatic style[42] with the awareness of the necessity of using corresponding vocabulary from the Quranic tradition and the terminology of the imagery of Islamic mysticism, Sufism.

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39 Today, there are three versions of the manuscript of the *Kitabı Mukaddes* translated by Bobovius (two of them to be found in the Warner Collection of the University Library at Leiden and one in the Harleian collection of the British Library), and one Biblical apocryphal text in Leiden.

40 Malcolm, "Comenius, Boyle, Oldenburg," 338–339.

41 Neudecker, *The Turkish Bible*, 372, n. 49.

42 A.A., Cooper, *The Story of the (Osmanlı) Turkish Version, with a Brief Account of Related Versions* (London: British & Foreign Bible Society 1901) 9, http://www.dlir.org/archive/archive/files/cbcb4c6b3a8301211a475ad-8cefc9028.pdf

According to Bruce G. Privratsky, the source text for Bobovius and Haki was probably the Latin Vulgate. In the translation of the New Testament, Bobovius followed also the Textus Receptus of the 16th and 17th centuries, one of the modern vernacular versions, based on Erasmus's Greek Testament: the Bible Olivétana, with John Calvin's preface and/or the Bible of King James I, that was used by protestant missionaries for translation purposes.[43]

When it comes to examples of later translation of the Bible into Ottoman Turkish and its sources, one can come across some passages in self-narratives on the conversion of Ibrahim Mütefferika[44] in his work *Risale-yi islamiye* (Treatise on Islam), written in 1710. The author also combines both sets of religious sensibilities in this religious-political tract. This approach points again to the vision of a protestant and Muslim union propounded by Calvino-Turkism already mentioned above. The work of Mütefferika is typical for the 18th-century understanding of the art of translation as creative mediation (*telif*) partly involving translation,[45] that contemporary language could be perceived as theological manipulation of the Holy Word in times of intensive confessionalization. In this treatise, the quotations from the Christian Bible and Torah were used with the vision of predicting the coming of the Prophet Muhammad and his religion, which he infused into the text of the Christian Bible.[46] He based his translation on the *Biblia Sacra* written in Latin in 1628 in Amsterdam with the preface of a Calvinist scholar.[47] According to Baki Tezcan's discoveries, Ibrahim referred also to the *Gospel of Barnaba*, the apocryphal text written originally in Italian by a convert to Islam.[48] As Mütefferika's work represents the polemical genre of self-narratives of conversion, in his *Risala* (Treatise), he used fragments of the Bible for the purposes of advancing the Proselyte agenda. And the fact that *Risala* was not translated into European languages can support the idea that Mütefferika was addressing Muslim readers. But his translated quotations supported the main thesis of the treatise and did not serve as a substitute for the Turkish version of the Bible.

Such a purpose was to be served by the project of Ali Bey's New Testament in Turkish, *Kitab ül-ahd el-cedid el-mensub ila Rabbina İsa el-Mesih* (The Book of the New Testament

43 Privratsky, *A History of Turkish Bible Translations*, 19.

44 Ibrahim Müteferrika (1674–1724) – a Unitarian from the city of Kolozsvar in Transylvania who climbed the Ottoman honorific hierarchy to attain the title of *müteferrika* (member of the learned elite associated with the court). He remains in history as the famous founder of the first Ottoman Arabic script printing press and he gained his fame for printing books in Ottoman conservative society. To produce his works after 1729, Müteferrika had to gain the full permission of the Ottoman court and religious authorities, including fatwas. T. Krstić, *Contested Conversions to Islam. Narratives of Religious Change in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press 2011) 118–120.

45 Paker, S., "Terceme, te'lîf ve özgünlük Meselesi" *Eski Türk edebiyatı çalışmaları IX: metnin hâlleri: Osmanlı'da telif, tercüme ve şerh kitabı içinde* (ed. H. Koncu) (İstanbul: Klasik 2014) 38.

46 B. Tezcan, "İbrâhîm Müteferrika ve Risâle-i İslâmiyye," *Kitaplara Vakfedilen Bir Ömre Tuhfe. İsmail E. Erünsal'a Armağan* (eds. H. Aynur – B. Aydın – M. Birol Ülker) (İstanbul: Ülke Yayınları 2014) I, 553.

47 *Biblia Sacra sive Testamentum Vetus ab Im. Tremellio et Fr. Iunio ex Hebraeo Latinè redditum et Testamentum Novum à Theod. Beza è graeco in Latinum versum* (Amsterodami: apud Guiljel. Janssonium Caesium 1628).

48 Tezcan, "İbrâhîm Müteferrika ve Risâle-i İslâmiyye," 523.

of Our Lord Jesus Christ), which was edited by Jean Daniel Kieffer and printed at the Imprimérie Royale in Paris in 1819.[49] Kieffer – a member of the Lutheran Church of France and a professor of Turkish at the Collège de France – had his command of Turkish polished for 7 years in Istanbul. According to Malcolm, Kieffer decided to correct the translation of Bobovius by comparing it with Hebrew, Greek and other modern translations. But he made even more extensive corrections in the 1827 edition of the Turkish Bible, especially in the New Testament. The scholar changed the colloquial style of Bobovius, mimicking the Greek and European syntax and mingling it with his choice of vocabulary.[50]

The art of translating is a decision-making process, as the modern scholar Jiří Levý[51] conceptualized it. But Kieffer's correction removed the aspects of language which had been drawn from Alberto Bobovius' intercultural competency and contextualism and polished the religious pluralism of Bobovius' attempts. For instance, in the Gospel of Matthew 22:36: "Master, which is the greatest commandment in the law?,"[52] Ali Bey's translation of the word 'law' was *Tevrat* (Torah): *ey mu'allim Tevratıŋ eŋ büyük emri kangisidir*[53]; in Kieffer's 1827 edition, "Torah" was replaced by "sharia": *ey mu'allim şeri'atıŋ eŋ büyük vasiyeti kangisidir*.[54] Bobovius, who was the first to take this decision, knew perfectly well that the Muslim word "sharia" could not be an equivalent for the word "Torah." Kieffer also corrected the divine names and replaced those used by Bobovius, such as Tanrı Teâlâ, Allah Teâlâ, and Cenâb Bârî, with the simple word "Allah." Ali Bey used the other names carefully, according to his contemporary and existing religious traditions, and in Ali Bey's Bible, St John the Baptist is called by his Arabic name, Yūḥannā al-Maʿmadān.[55] This version of the name was probably taken, as were many other words, such as kifâ' ("rock")[56] from the tradition of the Syrian Orthodox Church, using Aramaic language. The Ottomans were familiar with Syrian Orthodox Christians, who were part of the social milieu of Istanbul.

Bobovius reflected Ottoman reality in his version of the Bible and translated the expression "prayer" as *namaz*, that is, the ritual prayer that a Muslim is obliged to recite five times a day. In Matthew 6:5–6, in the account of Ali Bey, Jesus spoke in Turkish as follows:

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49 J.D. Kieffer (ed.), *Kitab ül-ahd el-atik 134 (The Book of the Old Testament) and Kitab ül-ahd el-cedid el- mensub ila Rabbina İsa el-Mesih 135 (The Book of the New Testament of Our Lord Jesus Christ)* (trans. Albertus Bobovius or Ali Bey; revised H.F. von Diez – J.D. Kieffer) (Paris: British & Foreign Bible Society, at the Imprimérie Royal 1827) 136. Printed in two volumes, Old Testament 984 pp., New Testament 318 pp. 27 cm. Print run: 5,000 copies (known also as Biblia Turcica).

50 Malcolm, "Comenius, Boyle, Oldenburg," 355.

51 J. Levy, "Translation as a Decision Process," *To Honor Roman Jakobson. Essays on the Occasion of His Seventieth Birthday, 11th October 1966* (ed. J. Levy) (Hague: Mouton 1967) II, 1171–1182.

52 KJV, https://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/Matthew-22–36/ [access: 2.12.2022].

53 Ali Bey 1664, as quoted in: F. Toprak, *XVII. Yüzyıla Ait Bir İncil Tercümesi. İnceleme – Metin – Sözlük* (Ankara: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı Matbaası 2006) 166.

54 Kieffer, *Kitab ül-ahd el-atik 134*, 36.

55 Toprak, *XVII. Yüzyıla Ait Bir İncil Tercümesi*, 119, as quoted in: Privratsky, *A History of Turkish Bible Translations*, 20).

56 Bobovius 1664, Y1:42, as quoted in Toprak, *XVII. Yüzyıla Ait Bir İncil Tercümesi*, 302.

> Namâz kıldığuŋ zamân mürâ'îler gibi olma zîrâ onlar keniselerde ve çarşularda ademlere görünmek içün namâza ikâmet etmegi seyverler — hakê derem size ki artuk cezâsını almışlardur — ammâ sen namâz kıldığuŋ zamân kendü odaŋa gir de kapuŋı kapa ve halvetde olan balata namâz kıl da halvetde gören Allah saŋa âşikâr sevâb bağışlaya.[57]
>
> [When you pray / recite the prayer of namaz, do not be like the hypocrites, for they like to stand out in kenesa and in the squares and pray in order to show themselves to the people. Verily I say unto you, they have already received what they deserve. And thou, when thou wilt perform thy namaz, enter into thy chamber, shut the door, and perform thy prayer to thy Father who is in solitude (halvet). And the father who seeth in his solitude shall render unto thee for thy good deeds (sevap)].[58]

The language, used in the above passage, captures the reality of the Ottoman street. The moment described is when the men close their shops, go to the mosque and, having sat down to await the imam's sermon, stand up to perform the first stage of prayer in an upright position. There was a dispute among Muslims as to whether these pious men were directing the prayer straight to Allah, or rather it is a show meant for human eyes. Ali Bey knew that many in the Muslim community would applaud such words. In this sentence, not only the word *namaz* but also the words *halvet* and *sevap* are derived from the terminology of Islamic mystical movements. Once having decided to use a particular term, the translator consistently selects subsequent phrases. *Halvet* is a Sufi term, a place of seclusion and communion with God alone. And *sevap* means a good deed, a virtue, necessary to obtain God's blessing. Perhaps Protestants would be unhappy with the use of the word *sevap* in connection with Jesus, but after all, it would be difficult for a reader raised in the Islamic tradition to interpret the term any other way.[59]

The use of Muslim terminology as a reference for religious translation is a general characteristic of Bobovius' translating style. In this particular case, the vocabulary of Sufism can be traced, which refers to folk parables, symbolism and rituals. The adherence to Sufi ideas and the activities of the brotherhoods, which fostered the development of Islamic intellectual life and strengthened the faith of the people, was a dominant feature of Ottoman religiosity for centuries. The use of the imagery and symbols of Sufism had great potential to influence potential conversion, and played an important role, for example, as a factor in the Islamisation of the Balkans, which began with Ottoman rule as early as the late 14th century.[60]

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57 Ali Bey 1664, Matta 6:5–6; Toprak, *XVII. Yüzyıla Ait Bir İncil Tercümesi*, 125.

58 KJV, https://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/Matthew-Chapter-6/ [access: 28.02.2023]. The English version: "Therefore when thou doest *thine* alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly."

59 This example is as quoted in Bruce G. Privratsky's *A History of Turkish Bible Translations* and illuminates the cultural context in which Bobovius' translation was consciously embedded.

60 A.A. Kaim, "Kręte drogi sufich. Turecko-bałkańskie wątki sufickiej koncepcji „drogi" we współczesnej odsłonie (na wybranych przykładach literackich) [The Twisting Paths of the Sufis – The Turkic-Balkan Motifs

The other source of vocabulary was the everyday experience of multicultural coexistence for the population of the Ottoman capital. The word *kenesa,* in Arabic, *kanīsa,* means exactly 'non-Muslim house of prayer' and Bobovius probably chose this word to remind the Muslim reader that Jesus spoke to the Jews. He consciously chose not to write "synagogue," "church" or "chapel." There was a significant Jewish population in Istanbul and they had established their own autonomous communities, including synagogues and kenesas in their own urban districts.

Translation studies also deal with words that are specific only to a particular culture and, through a process of domestication, an unfamiliar term can overcome the cultural barriers of the source text and become intelligible for the target reader: "Gerçi ben sizi tövbeye su ile ta'ammüd iderem ammâ benden soŋra gelen benden akvâdur ki ben anuŋ pâbucını tasımağa lâyık degülüm o size Ruhu'l – Kudus ve âteş ile ta'ammüd idecekdür..."[61] While *pâbuç* is a word coming from Persian, which in Ottoman fashion is used for a sort of shoe where the heel is exposed (an elegant slipper), here it stands for the equivalent of a sandal, used in the ancient Holy Land. The original Greek word was *hypodeo*, which means something bound under the feet. The other term used in this line, "Rūḥ al-Qudus," is an equivalent Quranic term used for the Holy Spirit.

Another group of vocabulary could be called formulaic, fixed phrases. The Quranic language has many expressions of exclamation, blessing or gratitude to God that are compounded with the word 'Allah,' as an apostrophic formula for glorifying or praising God, such as 'Elhamdülillah.' Bobovius used it to express the same feeling in both religions, as in Luke 13:11.

> ve işte orada bir 'avrat' var idi ki on sekiz yıl içinde cinnüŋ hastalıgı çekerdi ve hep bükülmüş idi de hiç toğrulanmadı.. Hazret-i 'İsâ dahi anı görüp yanına çağırdı ve aŋa dedi ki 'ey 'avrat sen hastalığuŋdan kurtulduŋ ve. üzerine ellerini kodı da ol anda toğruldı hem 'Elhamdülillah'dedi.[62]

We can define the domesticating choices of Ali Bey also as a "dynamic equivalent," a term proposed by Eugene Albert Nida (1914–2011), a linguist who was the translation consultant to the American Bible Society. Nida's concept of dynamic equivalence or functional

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in the Sufi 'tariqa' Concept in Selected Examples of Contemporary Literary Works]," *Slavia Meridionalis* 17 (2017) 2–3, https://doi.org/10.11649/sm.1437.

61 Ali Bey 1664, Matta 3:11, as quoted in Toprak, *XVII. Yüzyıla Ait Bir İncil Tercümesi*, 120. The English version "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and *with* fire:" (Matt 3:11 KJV: "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose..." https://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/Matthew-Chapter-3/#11).

62 Ali Bey 1664, L 13:11, as quoted in Toprak, *XVII. Yüzyıla Ait Bir İncil Tercümesi*, 268. "And, behold, there was a woman which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in no wise lift up herself. And when Jesus saw her, he called *her to him*, and said unto her, Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity. And he laid his hands on her: and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God." (https://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/Luke-Chapter-13/#11).

equivalence was employed in biblical translation[63] and is very close to the humanistic and pluralistic spirit of Ali Bey's translation. Nida was focused on the target reader's reaction, not on the source, in order to find the closest natural equivalent, and thus to communicate, he attempted to find a natural expression and refer the receiver of the message to behaviours well-known from his own cultural context.[64]

Bobovius' bicultural and bilingual identity was very helpful in fulfilling this task. Bobovius took on the role of interpreter of the text, and to facilitate its comprehension, he adapted the sacred text to the world of the target language.[65] This approach created the illusion of translator's invisibility – quite a modern attitude for the 17th century and originally released in 1995 by Lawrence Venuti: "... Under the regime of fluent translating, the translator works to make his or her work 'invisible', producing the illusory effect of transparency that simultaneously masks its status as an illusion: the translated text seems 'natural', that is, not translated."[66]

While Bobovius was part of a missionary, Calvinist plan, according to this project, quoting Venuti, "both the missionary and the translator must find the dynamic equivalent in the translating language so as to establish the relevance of the Bible in the receiving culture and produce the illusory effect of transparency."[67]

Ishak Haki and Ali Bey were the perfect *ahl al-kitâb* (men of the Book) for this task in the eyes of their commissioner, Mr Warner. Haki was well-versed in the Judaic tradition, Ali Bey, as a former Christian and a convert to Islam, in both these traditions. Was this a coincidence in the time of the Calvino-Turkism movement that targeted Jews and Muslims for conversion?

It seems that the history of these projects shows how, in terms of the prevailing ideology at a particular historical moment, translation may become a cultural and political tool, as Lawrence Venuti notes in his contemporary theory of translation studies.[68]

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63 E. Nida, "Principles of Correspondence," *The Translations Studies Reader* (ed. L. Venuti) (New York: Routledge 2000) 153–167.

64 Nida's ("Principles of Correspondence," 159) definition of translation in the context of Biblical scholarship is as follows: "Translating consists of producing in the receptor language the closest natural equivalent to the message of the source language, first in meaning and secondly in style."

65 Transparency is in the service of Christian humanism. "The task of the true translator is one of identification. As a Christian servant he must identify with Christ; as a translator he must identify himself with the Word; as a missionary he must identify himself with the people" (E. Nida, "Principles of Translation as Exemplified by Bible Translating," *On Translation* [ed. R.A. Brower] [New York: Oxford University Press 1966] 117, https://m.tau.ac.il/tarbut/tirgum/nida_tir.htm [access: 4.02.2020]).

66 L. Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility. A History of Translation* (London – New York: Routledge 2008) 5.

67 Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility*, 15.

68 Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility*, 15.

8. The Double-Life of the "Renegade"

Ali Ufkî Bey is known as the "Man beyond the Horizon" also from his memoirs, reporting *Serai Enderum,* which is a detailed account of his life in the Ottoman palace, written in Levantine Italian, which for Istanbul was the language of diplomats.[69] Pier Mattia Tomassino describes it as a "spying report (*delazione*) by an European Muslim who was living in Istanbul, written with the intention of returning to Europe one day."[70] This desire is confirmed by information from a letter to Basire, with whom he remained in contact (in the hope of going to England) for the rest of his life. The English king had his own plans connected with Ali Bey. The former had high hopes that "Bobovius will be a good Christian, and with his knowledge of (Eastern) languages and the secrets of the Ottoman Empire, will be an asset to the (English) king."[71]

However, in 1669, soon after his letter to Basire, Bobovius was appointed interpreter to the Ottoman chancellery, and then in 1671, was promoted to the office of Chief Interpreter of the Sublime Porte, ruled by Mehmet IV the Hunter (1642–1693). His official work in the translation bureau of the Topkapı Palace coincided with the Ottoman Campaign against Poland, during which he took part in negotiations that finally came to no avail. This issue deserves in-depth research by an Ottoman historian taking into account Polish and Ukrainian sources.

The biographical story of Bobovius can be patched together from his very detailed but unemotional records of life in the Palace, but his scholarly heritage cannot be overestimated. His translation of the *Kitab-ı Mukaddes* into Ottoman Turkish can be considered as one which, in modern anthropology, is called a translation of cultures, or intercultural interpretation; from a theological viewpoint, it was set up as a kind of "dialogue of religions and cultures." His preoccupation with this field was contributed by several "lids" of his Ottoman identity and also shows that religious conversion for a former Christian was far more complex than just a change of name and a change of hats.

In this particular case of Bible translation, the "target" language was Ottoman Turkish, which was Bobovius' tongue for at least his last twenty years. It is not known how fluent in Turkish Levinius Warner (the Dutch scholar and student of Golius, a contemporary professor of Turkish at Leiden University) was, but as the leader of the project he passed on his duty to professionals. The connection between Bobovius and Warner as employee and employer can be clearly understood from the remark in Latin at the end of the Book of John, as follows:

> By reason of the phrasing and writing skill of Albertus Bobovius Leopolitanus, who hopes for an eternal reward. To the greater honour of the All-bountiful and Omnipotent God and for the edification of his fellow men, by the goodness and favour of God, and also by the care, the expense and the help

69 A. Bobovio, *Saray-ı Enderun Topkapı Sarayında Yaşamı* (trans. T. Noyan) (Ankara: Kitapyayınevi 2013).

70 Tommasino, "Travelling East," 17.

71 As quoted in Neudecker, "From Istanbul to London?," 18.

> of Mr Levinus Warner, the translation of the complete Old and New Testament has been finished in the evening of October 16th (Gregorian calendar) /6th (Julian Calendar). In the year of Human Salvation 1664. It was love, not labour. May the good works not be mingled with incorrect words and may the good gift not be defiled by distorted expressions. Let it be read first, and next, if there should be any errors, they should be well examined. For, nobody is able to judge the translation, if he himself is not a still more learned translator, but if he is not and should he condemn it, not out of discernment, but out of hatred, he appears to condemn things he is ignorant about.[72]

Although his Bible translation was used in Turkey until 2002, his contemporary, Jacob Golius or his Armenian employee, Şahin Qandi, criticized his work:

> Concerning the translation made by Mr. Bobovius [sc. Ali Bey] in Constantinople, I find in it, after scrutinizing it properly, all kinds of great imperfections and deficiencies, not only from the point of view of the elegance of the Turkish language, but also where the translations themselves are concerned.[73]

Also, Comenius, in his letter to Warner (January 4, 1663), referred to the opinions of the oriental scholars and wrote about the character of Ali Bey's translation: "I see that there are some people who would like the translation to be more free, adapted to the spirit of the language."[74]

The appreciation of Ali Bey's efforts as a linguist and transmitter of cultures came from later scholars, such as Barbara Flemming, who wrote: "Ali Bey searches for lofty and learned words to form a Turkish Biblical style, in the spirit of the original."[75] In 1814, Baron von Diez reported Bobovius' version to the Bible Society, and expressed his appreciation of this work:

> 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.[76]

Following the Christian European approach of religious polarization in the 17th century, many scholars have already posed the question as to which faith he was born into and raised. However, the present author would tend, as a professional interpreter herself, to make some simplifications regarding bringing Ali Ufkî Bey within the sector of translation services. Bobovius was a freelancer, who earned money through lucrative assignments that

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72 Neudecker, *The Turkish Bible*, 372.

73 Malcolm, "Comenius, Boyle, Oldenburg," 337.

74 Malcolm, "Comenius, Boyle, Oldenburg," 334.

75 B. Flemming, "Zwei türkische Bibelhandschriften in Leiden als mittelosmanische Spra-chdenkmäler," *WZKM* 76 (1986) 114 (English trans. Privratsky, *A History of Turkish Bible Translations*).

76 As quoted in Cooper, *The Story of the (Osmanlı) Turkish Version*, 11.

at the same time were related to his general desire for learning. When it comes to the amount of his income, thanks to the meticulousness of the author, from notes on the cards of his 1665 Persian dictionary,[77] one learns that in 1664 it was 1800–2000 akça per month.[78] During his tenure as a dragoman in the Palace, he was paid a salary of about 315 akça for 2 months, at 5 akça a day, which, according to Cem Behar, provided a satisfying level of life in Pera.[79]

The efforts of Ali Ufkî Bey in works of religious translation have the background of Reformation and Counterreformation processes and also coincided with a difficult period in his homeland of Poland, which served as an example of the conservatism of Christendom, where Muslims were regarded as those who always spilt Christian blood and had an affinity with "evil."[80] In his homeland, after a long period of religious tolerance in the 16th century, when the Calvinists were the third largest confessional group after the Catholics and the Orthodox Christians, the situation changed in the second half of the 17th century. Domestic heretics such as all Protestants and Arians (Polish Brethren) were discriminated against and treated as dangerous individuals, punished with the death penalty since 1668 Apart from that, any previous connection to Islam could have been problematic. A strong accusation came from the Jesuits against the Arians, blaming them for favouring Turkey and thus its desire to conquer Poland, and thus, for political treason.[81] It is worth mentioning that, in the case of Arians, who had been a religious minority in the Polish Commonwealth and whose practices were abolished in Poland in 1658, antitrinitarian arguments and their belief in Jesus not being God's son but only a Prophet made them compatible with the Muslim faith. As a result, a large group of them eventually decided to leave Poland, among other destinations also for the Ottoman Empire, and to accept Islam. What is more, in the second half of the 16th century, one can even distinguish a pro-Muslim orientation within Polish Arianism.[82] Accounts in the Chronicle by the Polish historian Marcin Bielski (1495–1575) from the 16th century (1551), provide information about the status of Arians in the Polish Commonwealth. One passage is about an Arian called Michal Çavuş, sent by the Polish king Stefan Batory in 1583: "This Mustafa was a Christian before, and had a good command of Latin, but by the mistake of Arianism, he turned 'Turk'."[83]

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77 The Persian dictionary in which Bobovius' handwritten annotations were found is available at the BnF in Paris, Oriental Manuscripts Department (ref. Persan 199).

78 C. Behar, *Musıkiden Müziğe. Osmanlı/Türk Müziği: Gelenek ve Modernlik* (İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları 2005) 37.

79 Behar, *Musıkiden Müziğe*, 36.

80 T. Hyde (ed.), *Tractatus Alberti Bobobii de Turcarum Liturgia, peregrinatione meccana, circumcisione, aegrotarum visitatione, etc*. (Oxford: Theatrum Sheldonianum 1690) (Albertus Bobovius, "A Treatise Concerning the Turkish Liturgy," *Four Treatises Concerning the Doctrine, Discipline and Worship of the Mahometans* [London: Printed by Darby for Lintott 1712] 105–106); English trans. Neudecker, *The Turkish Bible*, 372.

81 J. Tazbir, "Walka z Braćmi Polskimi w dobie kontrreformacji," *ORP* 1 (1956) 183.

82 S. Morawski, *Arjanie polscy* (Lwów: author's edition 1906) 22–23.

83 M. Bielski, *Kronika Marcina Bielskiego* (Sanok: Turowski – Pollak 1856) III, 962, https://www.biblioteka-cyfrowa.pl/dlibra/publication/36249/edition/41556/content [access: 11.02.2019].

The only facts that are known consist of the information that he became a freeman late in his forties and stayed in the Ottoman Empire until his death. But the blank canvas of this important figure's unknown past can easily be filled with different nationalisms or usurpative narratives of ideologies. It was even attempted in 1690 by English editor, Thomas Hyde, who wrote the following in his introduction to the translation of *De turcorum liturgia, peregrinatione Meccana, de circumcisione, de aegrotorum visitatione* (1658–1661), another Latin work by Albertus Bobovius 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."[84]

Albertus Bobovius/Ali Ufkî Bey did not return to the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. The reasons for this are a point of much speculation. As a matter of fact, a few interpreters of "Polish" origin, specializing in oriental languages, managed to return to their native country and continue their careers with some success. Moreover, they represented religious minorities, like the Calvinist Samuel Otwinowski (1575–1642) who, after 10 years spent in Constantinople, moved back to Poland in 1610 and worked as a translator in the court of commander Stanisław Żółkiewski (1612), and afterwards as a translator for the Polish crown. Religiously, he was connected to the Calvinist congregation in Baranow.[85]

It seems that, for a "man of wide horizons," Ufkî Bey, with his close professional connections to Western protestants, regarded other options perhaps as less attractive. However, Bobovius remained in Constantinople, serving international projects with his wide range of skills and laid the foundations for the development of many different studies, including musicology,[86] translation studies, oriental studies and studies in the history of the Ottoman Empire, to mention but a few. The double identity of Bobovius can also be considered bicultural and bi-musical,[87] not only bilingual, but multilingual and, when it comes to religion, as a hybrid.

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84 Hyde, *Tractatus Alberti Bobobii de Turcarum Liturgia* (Albertus Bobovius, "A Treatise Concerning the Turkish Liturgy," 105–106); English trans. Neudecker, *The Turkish Bible*, 372.

85 Z. Abrahamowicz, "Otwinowski Samuel h. Gryf," *PSB* XXIV, 648.

86 Bobovius created the collection of Ottoman musical works; as a composer, a teacher and musician: *Mecmua-i Saz ü Söz*, British Library GB-Lbl (Sloane Collection, Z. 3114) and *Saklı mecmua* (Secret Manuscript, also called the Parisian manuscript, BNF Turc 292). His works in this field are the most important source of knowledge about Turkish classical music in the 16th and 17th centuries (C. Behar, *Saklı Mecmua. Ali Ufkî'nin Bibliothèque Nationale de France'taki [Turc 292] Yazması* [İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları 2008] 61).

87 Based on Bobovius' musicological and linguistic works, Judith Haug ("Being More than the Sum of One's Parts: Acculturation and Biculturality in the Life and Works of Ali Ufukî," *Archivum Ottomanicum* 33 [2016] 179–190) examines his biculturalism and biculturalism/bi-musicality, and grounds her statement on the theory of biculturalism proposed in Hood Mantle, *The Challenge of Bi-Musicality*, 1960.

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