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## Dragomans and “Turkish Literature”: The Making of a Field of Inquiry

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### Abstract

Theories of cultural and linguistic mediation have tended to posit intermediaries as conduits through which one culture/language either enters another unproblematically, or gets “distorted” due to intermediaries’ incompetence or self-interest. Both these perspectives presuppose stable, well-bounded, and coherent cultures/languages as what intermediaries purportedly mediate. Instead, this paper proposes an understanding of cultural and linguistic mediation as a process that constitutes its objects, that is, as an essential dimension of all acts of cultural and linguistic boundary-making. It focuses on dragomans (diplomatic interpreters) who operated at the interface between the Ottoman government and foreign diplomats to the Porte throughout the early modern period. The paper suggests how dragomans’ practices of knowledge production were profoundly collaborative, involving a range of Ottoman and Venetian interlocutors. Such practices thus belie any facile distinction between “local” and “foreign,” but rather challenge us to consider the emergence of “Oriental” studies as a dialogical project that necessitated ongoing recalibrations of prior knowledge through a multiplicity of perspective, where diplomatic institutions and epistemologies played a key role.

### Keywords

Dragomans; translation; diplomacy; Istanbul; scholarly networks; Trans-Imperial Subjects

### Introduction

Thirty years ago, Edward Said famously charted out some of the entwined epistemological principles and methodological procedures that underlie Orientalism as scholarly practice: the conception of Islam as a unified civilization, the collapsing of spatiotemporal distinctions among Islamicate societies, and the treatment of variegated Arabic, Persian, and Turkish texts

as a single tradition, regardless of their particular modes of transmission and sites of enunciation.<sup>1</sup> Said saw these epistemological procedures as inextricably linked to modern imperial power. Yet in the three decades since the publication of *Orientalism*, we have come to appreciate how, particularly in their early modern manifestations, such procedures bore a more tenuous relationship to an only-nascent European imperialism.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, recent scholarship has allowed us to consider the multiple ways in which remarkably similar methodological and epistemological procedures evolved at the heart of the Ottoman Empire in the course of the sixteenth century, as part of a self-conscious *translatio imperii et studii*. As scholars have shown, during the age of Süleyman the Lawgiver (ruled 1520-1566) Ottoman metropolitan elites themselves undertook a massive project of re-appropriation and synthesis of the intellectual fruits of earlier imperial formations, whether Greco-Latin, Arabic, or Persian. Building on this growing scholarship, we are now in a position to explore whether and how the body of texts about the Ottomans produced by early modern European observers might have operated as a re-articulation or re-framing of elite Ottoman perspectives on the region, its histories, and its cultures.<sup>3</sup>

This essay thus asks how decidedly Ottoman epistemologies of translation and re-appropriation and their attendant hermeneutical practices

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<sup>1</sup> Said, Edward W. *Orientalism*. New York, Pantheon Books, 1978.

<sup>2</sup> See, most recently, Irwin, Robert. *For Lust of Knowing: The Orientalists and Their Enemies*. London, New York, Allen Lane, 2006; App, Urs. *The Birth of Orientalism*. Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010; Bevilacqua, Alexander. "Beyond Orientalism". *n+1*, 10, 2011. Available URL: <http://nplusonemag.com/beyond-orientalism> [accessed 17 November 2013].

<sup>3</sup> On Süleyman's synthesis, see Fleischer, Cornell H. *Bureaucrat and Intellectual in the Ottoman Empire: The Historian Mustafa Ali (1541-1600)*. New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1986; Turan, Ebru. "Voice of Opposition in the Reign of Sultan Suleyman: The Case of Ibrahim Pasha (1523-1536)". In: *Studies on Istanbul and Beyond: The Freely Papers*. Volume I. Robert G. Ousterhout (ed.). Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Museum Publications, 2007, p. 23-37.

became a foundation for the European field of knowledge eventually known as Orientalism. In other words, it explores some of the institutions and agents through which modes of inquiry were mediated from Istanbul to other sites of intellectual production, and the impact that these channels of mediation themselves had on the ultimate shape of European Orientalism. As a first step toward addressing these admittedly very large issues, I wish to foreground how processes of mediation between the Ottomans and nascent European reading publics crucially involved what I call *trans-imperial subjects*, social actors who straddled and helped broker political, religious, and linguistic boundaries across various imperial domains.<sup>4</sup> As a specific cadre of such trans-imperial subjects, this study focuses on Venetian dragomans (diplomatic interpreters) in early modern Istanbul and their role in the constitution of “Turkish literature” (“literature” is used here in its early modern, expansive sense, as encompassing all branches of human science). The essay begins by charting out dragomans’ and other diplomats’ proto-Orientalist textual and visual production. It then suggests the broader contours of a socio-intellectual network that encompassed dragomans and their various interlocutors in Istanbul and other metropolises, to underscore the “dialogic emergence of culture”. The essay concludes with some preliminary thoughts on what might have been the unique features of dragomans’ epistemological procedures and textual practices, and how these features may have been shaped by dragomans’ differential positions in several sociological fields, including a trans-imperial network of kinship and patronage, an emergent Republic of Letters, and the more localized intellectual and diplomatic milieus of early modern Istanbul.

### **Travel, Knowledge, and the Place of Istanbul in the Republic of Letters**

Over the past few decades, a vast literature has emerged on the centrality of travel literature to the rise of an early modern global consciousness. Postcolonial critics in particular have emphasized how early modern travel writing and other proto-ethnographic genres were implicated in imperial programs, whether by constituting their non-European object of inquiry as the locus of categorical, insurmountable alterity, or by contributing to the

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<sup>4</sup> For a more systematic treatment of this concept, see Rothman, E. Natalie. *Brokering Empire: Trans-Imperial Subjects between Venice and Istanbul*. Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 2011.

emergence of new kinds of conquering subjectivities, engaged in real or vicarious globetrotting.<sup>5</sup> Similarly, much of the now sizeable scholarship on the early modern European “representation” of Islam has focused on canonical texts and their inherent blind spots as forms of metropolitan—and inherently myopic—knowledge production.<sup>6</sup>

Far less attention has been paid to the ways in which such representations emerged out of the intense interaction of Europeans with a variety of Ottoman subjects, textual artefacts, and semiotic practices. In what follows, I wish to take a closer look at a particular site of such interactions and its place in an emergent Republic of Letters, namely the diplomatic milieu of early modern Istanbul, to suggest a less linear understanding of the constitution of Ottoman society, culture, religion, and language as objects of knowledge. In particular, I will suggest not simply that an Orientalist will to power was absent from the production and circulation of texts about the Ottomans. Clearly, different writers and publics were differentially positioned on the power-knowledge grid. To suggest that all early modern writings about the Ottomans shared a single and unified perspective and purpose is to fall into an Occidentalist trap of presupposing a coherent and self-conscious European subject. Rather, I consider the writings to emerge from the diplomatic milieu of early modern Istanbul precisely as participating in the project of constituting Europe, a project which was informed from early on by competing ideas about civilization and the relationship

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<sup>5</sup> Pratt, Mary Louise. *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*. New York, Routledge, 1992; Kamps, Ivo; Jyotsna G. Singh. *Travel Knowledge: European “Discoveries” in the Early Modern Period*. New York, Palgrave, 2001; Colley, Linda. *Captives: Britain, Empire and the world, 1600-1850*. London, Jonathan Cape, 2002; Ballaster, Ros. *Fabulous Orient: Fictions of the East in England, 1662-1785*. New York, Oxford University Press, 2005; Rubiés, Joan-Pau. *Travellers and Cosmographers: Studies in the History of Early Modern Travel and Ethnology*. Aldershot, Ashgate, 2007.

<sup>6</sup> Matar, Nabil I. *Islam in Britain, 1558-1685*. New York, Cambridge University Press, 1998; Barbour, Richmond. *Before Orientalism: London’s Theatre of “the East”, 1576-1626*. New York, Cambridge University Press, 2003; Vitkus, Daniel J. *Turning Turk: English Theater and the Multicultural Mediterranean, 1570-1630*. New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2003; Bisaha, Nancy. *Creating East and West: Renaissance humanists and the Ottoman Turks*. Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004; Burton, Jonathan. *Traffic and Turning: Islam and English Drama, 1579-1624*. Newark, University of Delaware Press, 2005; Dimmock, Matthew. *New Turkes: Dramatizing Islam and the Ottomans in Early Modern England*. Aldershot, Ashgate, 2005. See also the references in note 8 below.

between language, religion, and political jurisdiction. This study, then, seeks to show how the diplomatic and scholarly networks through which knowledge of the Ottomans was given shape and circulation crucially involved members of the Ottoman elite themselves in intimate and ongoing conversations with their sojourning European counterparts. It thus emphasizes the “dialogic emergence of culture”. In the words of Dennis Tedlock and Bruce Mannheim, cultures are continuously produced, reproduced, and revised in dialogues among their members. Cultural events are not the sum of the actions of their individual participants, each of whom imperfectly expresses a pre-existent pattern, but are the scenes where shared culture emerges from interaction.<sup>7</sup> More specifically, this study is based on the premise, that the genealogies of Orientalism must take into account Istanbul itself as a key site of cultural production. Indeed, this paper is conceived as a first step towards an analysis of early modern Istanbul’s modes of trans-imperial scholarly sociability.

As numerous studies have shown, the early modern period witnessed an intensifying European awareness of and fascination with things “Turkish”. Ottoman practices of female dress, imperial governance, and military discipline informed English and French elite fashion, Italian political theory, Dutch military reform, and Habsburg court music, to mention just a few examples.<sup>8</sup> At the same time, many other aspects of Ottoman social life were objectified as signs of alterity incommensurable with European practices. In the context of ongoing warfare between the Ottoman Empire and its neighbours, both the structural similarities between European and Ottoman political and religious institutions, on the one hand,

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<sup>7</sup> Dennis Tedlock; Bruce Mannheim (eds). *The Dialogic Emergence of Culture*. Urbana, University of Illinois Press, 1995, p. 2.

<sup>8</sup> Meinecke, Friedrich. *Machiavellism: The Doctrine of Raison d'état and its Place in Modern History*. New York, F.A. Praeger, 1965, p. 85-87; Hentsch, Thierry. *Imagining the Middle East*. Montréal, New York, Black Rose Books, 1992; Stein, Perrin. “Amédée Van Loo’s *Costume turc*: The French Sultana”. *The Art Bulletin*, 78, 3 (1996), p. 417-438; Jardine, Lisa; Brotton, Jerry. *Global Interests: Renaissance Art Between East and West*. Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 2000; Breskin, Isabel. “‘On the periphery of a greater world’: John Singleton Copley’s turquerie Portraits”. *Winterthur Portfolio*, 36, 2-3 (2001), p. 97-123; Mack, Rosamond E. *Bazaar to Piazza: Islamic Trade and Italian Art, 1300-1600*. Berkeley, University of California Press, 2002; Malcolm, Noel. “The Crescent and the City of the Sun: Islam and the Renaissance Utopia of Tommaso Campanella”. *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 2003 Lectures, 125 (2005), p. 41-67; Rubiés, Joan-Pau. “Oriental Despotism and European Orientalism: Botero to Montesquieu”. *Journal of Early Modern History*, 9, 1/2 (2005), p. 109-180.

and the growing appetite for Ottoman “exotica”, on the other, were fuelled by a fledgling European print culture, in which the Ottomans were a favourite (though not always favoured) topic.<sup>9</sup> European knowledge of Ottoman society and culture relied on the unprecedented textual and visual output of sojourners in the Ottoman capital—travellers, missionaries, merchants, and especially diplomats. These sojourners thus became the European authorities on things Ottoman, and their extensive sojourns in the Ottoman Empire—shaped by the increasingly-codified protocols of contemporary diplomacy—a requisite practice for producing legitimate knowledge.<sup>10</sup> Such sojourners, in turn, relied crucially on a network of local (or localized) interlocutors and intermediaries for gaining knowledge and developing their own perspective on Ottoman society.

One vital cadre of such intermediaries was the dragomans employed by foreign embassies in early modern Istanbul.<sup>11</sup> Whether Istanbulite natives or long-term visitors, dragomans maintained an extended network of

<sup>9</sup> Göllner, Carl. *Turcica. Die europäischen Türkendrucke des 16. Jahrhunderts*. Bucharest, Editura Academiei R.P.R., 1961; Neumann, Iver B.; Welsh, Jennifer M. “The Turk’ as Europe’s Other”. In: *Cultural Politics and Political Culture in Postmodern Europe*. J. P. Burgess (ed.). Amsterdam, Rodopi, 1997, p. 291-320; Petkov, Kiril. *Infidels, Turks, and Women: The South Slavs in the German Mind, ca. 1400-1600*. New York, Peter Lang, 1997; Çirakman, Aslı. “From Tyranny to Despotism: The Enlightenment’s Unenlightened Image of the Turks”. *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, XXXIII, 1 (2001), p. 49-68; Soykut, Mustafa. *Image of the “Turk” in Italy: A History of the “Other” in Early Modern Europe, 1453-1683*. Berlin, K. Schwarz, 2001; Merle, Alexandra. *Le miroir ottoman: une image politique des hommes dans la littérature géographique espagnole et française (XVI<sup>e</sup>-XVII<sup>e</sup> siècles)*. Paris, Presses de l’Université de Paris-Sorbonne, 2003.

<sup>10</sup> Valensi, Lucette. *The Birth of the Despot: Venice and the Sublime Porte*. Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1993; Goffman, Daniel. *Britons in the Ottoman Empire 1642-1660*. Seattle, University of Washington Press, 1998; Lindner, Rudi Paul. “Icons Among Iconoclasts in the Renaissance”. In: *The Iconic Page in Manuscript, Print, and Digital Culture*. G. Bornstein; T. L. Tinkle (eds). Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 1998, p. 89-107; Höfert, Almut. *Den Feind beschreiben: “Türkengefahr” und europäisches Wissen über das Osmanische Reich 1450-1600*. Frankfurt, Campus, 2003; MacLean, Gerald M. *The Rise of Oriental Travel: English Visitors to the Ottoman Empire, 1580-1720*. New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2004; Heyberger, Bernard et al., *L’Islam visto da Occidente*. Milan, Marietti, 2009; Lee, Rosemary. “A Printing Press for Shah ‘Abbas: Science, Learning, and Evangelization in the Near East, 1600-1650”. Unpublished PhD Dissertation. University of Virginia, 2013.

<sup>11</sup> On the Venetian bailo, see Dursteler, Eric R. *Venetians in Constantinople: Nation, Identity, and Coexistence in the Early Modern Mediterranean*. Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006.

interlocutors among Ottoman officials, and frequented their homes and offices on a regular basis. From that vantage point, they served as principal actors in the production and circulation of news in Istanbul, itself a central node of early modern diplomacy, as historians increasingly recognize.<sup>12</sup> Dragomans' interpretive work was crucial in procuring for foreign diplomats and their numerous guests a current store of knowledge about Ottoman politics and society. Significantly, they not only made information available but shaped many of the discourses about the Ottomans that were then inscribed in official diplomatic dispatches and reports. The reports themselves circulated widely—some of them, although secret by definition, are known to have been quickly copied and sent off to Rome, while others were translated and anthologized into “manuals of political theory” for European-wide consumption.<sup>13</sup> By the mid seventeenth century dragoman positions became *de facto* heritable within a small circle of Istanbul-based Catholic families, leading many young local men to apprentice (and reside) for decades in embassy compounds. The various genres of diplomatic writing, as well as the structure and specific content of diplomatic chancellery archives thus became essential elements of their formation, which were passed on from father to son.<sup>14</sup>

Dragomans, then, were central to the production and circulation of current knowledge about the Ottomans to European-wide publics, and helped lay the epistemological and institutional foundations for the production of

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<sup>12</sup> Berridge, G. R. “Notes on the Origins of the Diplomatic Corps: Constantinople in the 1620s”. *Clingendael Discussion Paper in Diplomacy*, 92, 2004; Goffman, Daniel. “Negotiating with the Renaissance State: The Ottoman Empire and the New Diplomacy”. In: *The Early Modern Ottomans: Remapping the Empire*. Virginia Aksan; Daniel Goffman (eds). New York, Cambridge University Press, 2007, p. 61-74; Ghobrial, John-Paul. *The Whispers of Cities: Information Flows in Istanbul, London, and Paris in the Age of William Trumbull*. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2013 (forthcoming).

<sup>13</sup> Valensi, *The Birth of the Despot*.

<sup>14</sup> Venice played a particularly important role in the formalization of dragoman recruitment and training methods. Indeed, its system of years-long socialization of young dragoman apprentices in the household of its *bailo* (resident consul) in the Ottoman capital—a method which itself combined elements of Venetian endogamy with Ottoman methods of recruitment into elite households—became the model for other foreign powers, including France, Poland, and the Habsburg Monarchy. See Rothman, E. Natalie. “Interpreting Dragomans: Boundaries and Crossings in the Early Modern Mediterranean”. *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 51, 4 (2009), p. 771-800.

Orientalist scholarship.<sup>15</sup> Elsewhere, I have traced in some detail the emergence of a highly endogamous and powerful cadre of dragoman families out of Venice's colonial nobility in the Aegean and Adriatic, the Venetian citizen class, and the Latin community of Galata-Pera, on the outskirts of Istanbul. I've also shown how their textual and visual strategies for representing the Ottomans can be related to dragomans' intimate ties to bureaucratic elites and knowledge of imperial institutions in both Venice and Istanbul.<sup>16</sup> My ongoing research seeks to combine the prosopographical study of dragomans, kinship and social networks with an in-depth exploration of the texts and images they produced, in order to situate the articulation of Orientalist scholarship in relation to late-Renaissance Mediterranean diplomacy and print culture. Through this combined methodology I hope to provide a fine-grained periodization of changes in early modern European understandings of Ottoman society, politics, history, and religion. This paper is thus part of a larger project.<sup>17</sup>

Far from a unified enterprise, knowledge of the Ottoman Empire was produced in a range of genres and for an array of publics. Missionaries, scholars, pilgrims and travelers all contributed in fundamental ways to European knowledge about the Ottomans. In what follows, though, I wish to highlight the important role of dragomans and other diplomatic personnel—whether as authors, as translators, or as oral interlocutors and correspondents—in this emergent field of knowledge. As will become evident below, we can trace the dragomans' perspective and impact even in texts produced in non-diplomatic milieus, as dragomans' positionality,

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<sup>15</sup> Said, *Orientalism*; Frédéric Hitzel (ed.). *Istanbul et les langues orientales*. Paris, L'Harmattan, 1997; De Groot, Alexander H. "Die levantinischen Dragomanen. Einheimische und fremde im eigenen Land. Kultur- und Sprachgrenzen zwischen Ost und West (1453-1914)". In: *Verstehen und Verständigung: Ethnologie, Xenologie, interkulturelle Philosophie: Justin Stagl zum 60. Geburtstag*. Kowarzik. W. Schmied (ed.), Würzburg, Königshausen & Neumann, 2001, p. 110-127; Hamilton, Alastair; Richard, Francis. *André du Ryer and Oriental Studies in Seventeenth-Century France*. London, Arcadian Library in association with Oxford University Press, 2004.

<sup>16</sup> Rothman, "Interpreting Dragomans"; Rothman, E. Natalie. "Visualizing a Space of Encounter: Intimacy, Alterity, and Trans-Imperial Perspective in an Ottoman-Venetian Miniature Album". In: *Other Places: Ottomans Traveling, Seeing, Writing, Drawing the World. Essays in honor of Thomas D. Goodrich*. Part II in *Osmanlı Araştırmaları / Journal of Ottoman Studies*, 40 (2012), guest-edited by Baki Tezcan and Gottfried Hagen, p. 39-80.

<sup>17</sup> See my book manuscript in progress, *The Dragoman Renaissance: Diplomatic Interpreters and the Making of the Levant*.

epistemologies and methods became enmeshed in a much broader Ottomanist discourse. To illustrate this point, I begin with a brief survey of some dragomans' most significant contributions to Orientalist textual production, continue to consider some other texts produced in the diplomatic milieu of early modern Istanbul, and conclude with a consideration of the implications of this diplomatic setting (and of dragomans' unique perspectives and epistemologies) for the articulation of Orientalist knowledge.

To start with, dragomans authored some of the earliest and most influential Turkish grammars and lexicons to circulate in Europe.

1. Filippo Argenti's *Regola del parlare turcho* (1533), although never printed, is known to have circulated in multiple manuscript copies, and to have served as the basis for several later bilingual vocabularies and dictionaries. Not much is known about Argenti, other than the fact that he served as secretary to the Florentine legation to the Porte from 1524 to ca. 1533.<sup>18</sup>

The *Dittionario della lingua italiana-turchesca*, published in Rome in 1641, was penned by the Armenian Giovanni Molino. Before moving to Rome, Molino had served as French and later Venetian dragoman in the Ottoman Empire.<sup>19</sup>

A few decades later, the epic rivalry between two Habsburg dragomans and agents, Giovanni Battista Podestà (1624-1703) and Franciszek Meninski (1623-1698), resulted in a series of publications which lay the foundation for Vienna's pre-eminence in Oriental studies. Among these were Podestà's *Assertiones de principiis substantialibus, accidentalibus proximis & remotis, diversisque differentiis linguarum* (1669), *Dissertatio academica continens specimen triennalis profectus in linguis orientalibus* (1677), *Elementa calligraphiae Arabico-Persico-Turcicae* (1678), and *Cursus grammaticalis linguarum orientalium* (1690), and Meninski's 4-volume *Thesaurus linguarum*

<sup>18</sup> Adamović, Milan. *Das Türkische des 16. Jahrhunderts: nach den Aufzeichnungen des Florentiners Filippo Argenti (1533)*. Göttingen, Pontus. 2001, p. 14-15 and passim. See also Bombaci, Alessio. *La "Regola del parlare turcho" di Filippo Argenti. Materiale per la conoscenza del turco parlato nella prima metà del 16° secolo*. Naples, R. Istituto superiore orientale, 1938; Merhan, Aziz. "Filippo Argenti'nin 'Regola del parlare turcho' Adlı eserindeki bazı sözcükler hakkında". *Türkiyat araştırmaları dergisi*. 2001, p. 115-129; Rocchi, Luciano. *Ricerche sulla lingua osmanlı del XVI secolo: il corpus lessicale turco del manoscritto fiorentino di Filippo Argenti (1533)*. Wiesbaden, Harrassowitz, 2007.

<sup>19</sup> Kappler, Matthias. "Eine griechische Übersetzung (1664) von Giovanni Molinos 'Brevi rudimenti del parlar turchesco'". *Archivum Ottomanicum*, 17 (1999), p. 271-295; Swiecicka, Elzbieta. "Interpreter Yovhannes Ankiwrac'i Also Called Giovanni Molino". *Folia Orientalia*, 36 (2000), p. 329-342.

*orientalium* (1680) and *Complementum thesauri linguarum orientalium* (1687). The *Thesaurus* included a highly influential and much-reprinted trilingual Arabic-Persian-Turkish lexicon and a Turkish-Latin dictionary that remained virtually unsurpassed until the nineteenth century.<sup>20</sup>

A key moment in the institutionalization of “Turkish literature” was the publication in Venice in 1688 of two volumes under the aegis of Giovanni Battista Donà, returning bailo from Istanbul: *Della letteratura de Turchi* and *Raccolta curiosissima d'adaggi turcheschi*. Both books were based on an extensive collection and translation project undertaken by a group of young apprentice dragomans working under Donà in the Venetian embassy in Istanbul.<sup>21</sup> The *Della Letteratura* played a key role in the re-evaluation of Ottoman culture in Europe. “Literature” in this period was understood to encompass all learning and science, and the book enumerated Ottoman studies in the fields of grammar, poetry, logic, mathematics, geometry, optics, music, medicine, herbal alchemy, chemistry, history, politics, geography, and devotion, interspersed with translations prepared by Venetian dragoman Gianrinaldo Carli, and other apprentice dragomans. It concluded with an exhortation for additional translations of books from Turkish, Persian, and Arabic. Leibnitz, passing through Venice in 1690, remarked that the *Della letteratura* was the only “new” title he had discovered there.<sup>22</sup>

Shuttling between Istanbul and Paris, François Pétis (1622-1695) and his better known son François Pétis de la Croix (1653-1713) both served as dragomans under Louis XIV. The father prepared a French-Turkish, Turkish-French dictionary (which remained in manuscript), a catalogue of the Turkish manuscripts in the royal library, a translation of the Preface of Ebu'l-Hayr Taşköprüzade along with a poem on Genghis Khan, and a *Histoire du grand Genghiz Khan*, published posthumously by Pétis's son in 1710. The latter was an even more prolific author. He composed the Turkish poem which prefaces Jean Thévenot's *Voyages en Orient* (1664), produced the first French translation of the *One Thousand and One Nights* (1710-12),

<sup>20</sup> Weston, Evans. Robert, John. *The Making of the Habsburg Monarchy, 1550-1700: An Interpretation*. New York, Clarendon, 1979, p. 428.

<sup>21</sup> On the collaborative nature of these publications, see Scarpa, Francesca. ‘Da Venezia a Costantinopoli, da Costantinopoli a Venezia: Giovanni Battista Donà’, (Unpublished MA Thesis, Università degli studi di Venezia Ca' Foscari), Venice, 1998; Preto, Paolo. *Venezia e i Turchi*. Florence, Sansoni, 1975, p. 109 and passim.

<sup>22</sup> Infelise, Mario. “Gian Rinaldo Carli senior, dragomanno della Repubblica”. *Acta Histriae*, 5 (1997), p. 189-198.

among numerous other publications in French, Turkish, and Persian. The list of his unpublished manuscript works is even longer.<sup>23</sup>

As the above examples already suggest, in addition to their marked contribution to the systematization of the linguistic study of Ottoman Turkish, dragomans were key participants in the emergence of Ottomanist scholarship through their texts and translations of works in a range of other genres. In the early seventeenth century Venetian dragoman Giovanni Medun translated an influential ethical work by the Anatolian scholar Kinalızade, *Akhlak-i Ala'i* (1565), and gave it the title *Alti costumi o sia sapienza pratica, etica, economica, politica del turco Mehemed Effendi China-lixadè di Dimasco*.<sup>24</sup>

Even more prolific was another Istanbul-born Venetian dragoman, Giovanni Battista Salvago (ca. 1590-1644), who in 1622, while in Venice, drafted a series of translations and adaptations of Ottoman Turkish religious, legal, and historical texts. These included “Of the Death of Muhammad, Prophet of the Muslims”, taken from “The lives of saintly fathers and martyrs, including Hassan, Hussein, and others”, “The Institution of the Muslims of Crying Out on their Towers”, “On the Oration of the Muslims”, “On the Form of the Litanies of the Muslims”, and “The Unfortunate Life, and Unhappy Death of Sultan Osman, Son of Sultan Ahmed, and Nephew of Sultan Mustafa, the Current King of the Turks”.<sup>25</sup> Unlike his many translations of official Ottoman documents, Salvago seems to have undertaken these adaptations-translations of religious and historical texts on his own initiative. The choice of subject matter reveals his great interest in recent Ottoman history as well as in Muslim ritual practice. Salvago’s narrative concerning the deposition of Sultan Osman II in 1622 and his portrayal of Muslim ritual practice underscore his conscious attempt to act as an intermediary, introducing Ottoman religious and historical thought to an

<sup>23</sup> “Les Pétis, une dynastie d’orientalistes”, online edn, [<http://turquie-culture.fr/pages/turc-et-langues-turques/biographies/les-petis-une-dynastie-dorientalistes.html>], accessed 2 May 2013].

<sup>24</sup> Uysal, Enver. “Kinalızade’s Views on the Moral Education of Children”. *Journal of Moral Education*, 36, 3 (2007), p. 334; Götz, Manfred; Sobieroj, Florian. *Islami-sche Handschriften*. Stuttgart, Steiner, 1999, p. XVI. See also Toderini, Giambattista. *Letteratura turchesca*. Venice, Storti, 1787, vol. I, p. 95.

<sup>25</sup> Museo Civico Correr, Venice, Cod. Cicogna 2715, fasc. 22, fols. 224r-229v, fasc. 23, fols. 230r-233v, fasc. 24, fols. 234r-237r, fasc. 27, fols. 250r-251r, fasc. 38, fols. 315r-331v.

Italian readership.<sup>26</sup> Three years later, upon his return from an official diplomatic mission to the Maghreb, Salvago penned a *relazione*—an official report read to the Venetian Senate—about his North African sojourn. In it, he couched many of his observations of things Ottoman in the classifying language of humanist learning, fashioning himself as an educated metropolitan Venetian by simultaneously claiming insiders' knowledge of the Ottoman world and distancing himself from it.<sup>27</sup>

Salvago's literary and historiographical forays remained in manuscript until the twentieth century.<sup>28</sup> So was the *relazione* penned by another Venetian dragoman, Tomaso Tarsia, from the gates of Vienna in 1683, and the impressive translation undertaken by his brother Giacomo Tarsia (also while in Venetian service), of a chronicle by Hasan Vecihi (1620-1661) in 1675.<sup>29</sup> And in 1697 the Tarsias' cousin, Giovanni Rinaldo Carli, similarly a dragoman in Venetian service, published in Venice his translation of the *Takvimü't-tevarih* of the Ottoman polymath Katib Çelebi (Haci Halifa, 1609-1657), a chronology of world dynasties from Adam to the year 1648, under

<sup>26</sup> On the historiography of the deposition of Osman II in 1622 and its links to contemporary political and intellectual factions, see Tezcan, Baki. "The 1622 Military Rebellion in Istanbul: A Historiographical Journey". *International Journal of Turkish Studies*, 8, 1-2 (2002), p. 25-43; Piterberg, Gabriel. *An Ottoman Tragedy: History and Historiography at Play*. Berkeley, University of California Press, 2003; Hagen, Gottfried. "Review of Piterberg, Gabriel, An Ottoman Tragedy: History and Historiography at Play". *H-Net Reviews*, online edn, 2006 [http://www.h-net.org/reviews/showrev.php?id=11651, accessed 19 June 2012].

<sup>27</sup> See Rothman, E. Natalie. "Self-Fashioning in the Mediterranean Contact Zone: Giovanni Battista Salvago and his *Africa overo Barbaria* (1625)". In: *Renaissance Medievalisms*. Konrad Eisenbichler (ed.). Toronto, Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, 2009, p. 123-143.

<sup>28</sup> Of all his writings, only the *relazione* from North Africa has been published to date. See Salvago, Giovanni Battista. "*Africa overo Barbaria*". *Relazione al doge di Venezia sulle reggenze di Algeri e di Tunisi*. Alberto Sacerdoti (ed.). Padua, Cedam, 1937 [1625].

<sup>29</sup> Tomaso Tarsia's *Relazione di me Tomaso Tarsia Cavaliere Dragomano Grande della Serenissima Repubblica di Venezia alla Porta Ottomana, con la descrizione del compendio delli successi più essenziali accaduti nella guerra intrapresa dai Turchi contro l'Ungheria l'anno 1683* has been edited and printed in vol. 14 of the series *Relazioni di Ambasciatori Veneti al Senato* (Online edn, Fabris 1996). Giacomo Tarsia's translation of Vecihi's chronicle, entitled 'Successi dell'Impero Ottomano', survives as a 360-page manuscript in the Marciana Library in Venice, MSS It. VI 84 (6053). On Vecihi and his chronicle, see Atsız, Bugra. *Das osmanische Reich um die Mitte des 17. Jahrhunderts. Nach den Chroniken des Vecihi (1637-1660) und des Mehmed Halifa (1663-1660)*. Munich, Rudolf Trofenik, 1977.

the title *Chronologia historica*. The preface to the Italian edition expressed the hope, already conveyed in the *Della letteratura* a decade earlier, that the work would “disabuse” the public “from the reprehensive opinion that not a seed of erudition remains among these barbarians”.<sup>30</sup>

Even more successful were the publication efforts of dragomans in Habsburg employ. Hoca Saadeddin Efendi’s (1536-1599) *Tacü’t-tevarih* (Crown of Stories) was translated into Italian by the Ragusan Vincenzo Bratutti, who served as Ferdinand III’s dragoman in Vienna. He published the first part of his work, *Chronica dell’origine, e progressi della Casa Ottomana*, in Vienna in 1649, the second part in Madrid in 1652, where Bratutti had transferred to serve king Philip IV. The same dragoman also produced some translations of Turkish and Arabic texts into Castilian, including Celalzade Mustafa’s chronicle, which was published in Madrid in 1678 as *Anales de Egipto*.<sup>31</sup> A Turkish version of *Kalila and Dimna*, or the Fables of Bidpai’ (the Panchatantra, itself the product of complex Arabic-Persian-Sanskrit cross-cultural interactions), became in his hands *Espejo político y moral para príncipes, ministros y todo género de personas*, published in Madrid posthumously, in 1694.<sup>32</sup> Another translation of the *Crown of Stories*, this time into Latin, was published in 1671 by the above-mentioned Habsburg dragoman, Giovanni Battista Podestà. In 1680 Podestà also published a translation of a Persian text on Tamerlane by Mustafa b. Husain al-Jenabi.<sup>33</sup>

By the eighteenth century, dragomans undertook even more ambitious translation and publication projects. The Istanbul-born Étienne Roboly prepared in 1733 a French transcription and a translation of a chronicle attributed to Uruç Bey, a chronicler from the time of Beyazid II.<sup>34</sup> Julien Galland (Antoine Galland’s nephew) was apprenticed as a dragoman in Istanbul, and later became French dragoman in Sidon. In 1738 he published

<sup>30</sup> Infelise, “Gian Rinaldo Carli . . .”.

<sup>31</sup> The volume also included “sentencias filosóficas, compuestas por un doctor persa, llamado Seaid, y aora traducidas de lengua persiana en castellana por el mismo d. Vicente Bratuti”, See Mediano, Fernando Rodríguez. “Fragmentos de orientalism español del s. XVIII”. *Hispania*, LXVI, 222 (2006), p. 261.

<sup>32</sup> Babinger, Franz. “Die türkischen Studien in Europa bis zum Auftreten Josef von Hammer-Purgstalls”. *Die Welt des Islams*, 7, 3/4, (1919), p. 110.

<sup>33</sup> Podestà, Giovanni Battista. *Mustaphae Filii Hussein Algenabii de gestis Timur-lenki, seu Tamerlanis: Opusculum Turc.-Arab.-Persicum*. Latine redditum a Joanne Baptista Podestà, Vienna, Voigt, 1680.

<sup>34</sup> Ménage, Victor Louis. “Another Text of Uruç’s Ottoman Chronicle”. *Der Islam*, 47 (1971), p. 273-277; see also Jasanoff, Maya. “Cosmopolitan: A Tale of Identity from Ottoman Alexandria”. *Common Knowledge*, 11, 3 (2005), p. 393-409.

an account of the rituals and ceremonies of the pilgrimage to Mecca, which was eventually translated into German in 1757.<sup>35</sup> He also translated Ottoman ambassador Yirmisekiz Mehmed Çelebi's account of his embassy to Paris in 1721, *Sefaretname*, which was published in both Istanbul and Paris in 1757.<sup>36</sup> Paris-born Denis Cardonne (1720-1783) published in 1770 his *Melange de littérature orientale*.<sup>37</sup> Charles Fonton's (1725-1793) tract on Ottoman classical music, *Essai sur la musique orientale comparée a la musique européenne* (1751) became the foundation for an entire sub-discipline. It was deeply informed by previous studies of Ottoman courtly music by members of the court themselves, including Ali Ufki Bey (the Pole Wojciech Bobowski, 1610-1675, who composed his *Mecmu'a-i saz u söz* or "Collection of Instrumental and Vocal Works" ca. 1650) and the Moldavian prince-turned-Ottoman-courtier-and-scholar Dimitrie Cantemir (whose *Kitab-i 'ilmü'l-musiki 'ala vech-il hurufati*, or "The Book of the Science of Music According to the Alphabetic Notation" was completed in Istanbul between 1700 and 1703).<sup>38</sup> Other French dragomans and dragoman apprentices produced a variety of translations of Turkish texts, some of which were printed promptly by the first Ottoman Turkish press of Ibrahim Müteferrika, starting in 1729.<sup>39</sup> Although many other dragomans' translations remained in manuscript, there is evidence to suggest that they too were used by later authors of "Oriental tales" as the source for their various adaptations.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>35</sup> Corsten, Severin., et al., *Handbuch der historischen Buchbestände in Deutschland*. Hildesheim and New York, Olms-Weidmann, 1992, p. 72.

<sup>36</sup> On the ambassador and his texts, see Müge Göçek, Fatma. *East Encounters West: France and the Ottoman Empire in the Eighteenth Century*. New York, Oxford University Press, 1987.

<sup>37</sup> Cardonne also completed Galland's French edition of *Contes et fables indiennes de Bidpai et de Lokman. Traduites d'Ali Tchelebi-ben-Saleh, auteur turc*. 3 volumes, Paris, P.-G. Simon, 1778.

<sup>38</sup> Shiloah, Amnon. "An Eighteenth-Century Critic of Taste and Good Taste". In: *Ethnomusicology and Modern Music History*. Stephen Blum et al. (eds). Urbana, University of Illinois Press, 1991, p. 181-189; Feldman, Walter. "Review of Demetrius Cantemir, the Collection of Notations. Part I". *Ethnomusicology*, 39, 1 (1995), p. 146-150.

<sup>39</sup> On these translations, see Berthier, Annie. "Turquerie ou Turcologie? L'effort de traduction des langues au XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle, d'après la collection des manuscrits conservée à la Bibliothèque nationale de France". In: *Istanbul et les langues orientales*. Frédéric Hitzel (ed.). Istanbul, Isis, 1997, p. 283-317.

<sup>40</sup> Boch, Julie. "De la traduction à l'invention: Aux sources des Contes orientaux de Caylus". *Féeries*, II (2005), p. 47-59.

French dragomans were by no means the only Istanbul-based scholars to participate in the expanding Republic of Letters. Ignatius Mouradgea d'Ohsson (1740-1807), the son of an Armenian dragoman for the Swedish consulate in Izmir and a French diplomat's daughter, and himself the long-time dragoman of the Swedish legation to the Porte, became a celebrity in the literary circles of Paris, where he published his taxonomical "natural history" of the Ottoman Empire, *Tableau général de l'empire othoman* in three deluxe folio volumes beginning in 1787. The work went through another, more modest edition for bourgeois subscribers and was partially translated into English, German, Russian, Swedish, and Polish as well.<sup>41</sup> Another dragoman employed by the Swedes, Antoine de Murat (1739-1813), penned an important treatise on Ottoman music.<sup>42</sup> Franz von Dombay (1758?-1810), the author of numerous Orientalist studies, including a history of Morocco and a study of North African dialectology, served for over a decade as the Austrian dragoman in Bosnia.<sup>43</sup> A second Austrian dragoman, perhaps the most famous and influential of all, was Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall (1774-1856), who spent eight years in Istanbul and Cairo as an apprentice dragoman (1799-1807) and whose ten-volume *Geschichte des osmanischen Reiches*, published in 1827-1835 still provides indispensable source material for scholars in the field.<sup>44</sup>

Beyond direct authorship and translation, dragomans facilitated the work of embassies as centers of cultural production, whether in the development of conventions for diplomatic translation, both written and oral,

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<sup>41</sup> It is noteworthy that upon his return to Istanbul in 1792, Mouradgea presented a copy of the deluxe edition to Sultan Selim III, who rewarded him handsomely for it. Findley, Carter Vaughn. 'Presenting the Ottomans to Europe: Mouradgea d'Ohsson and His *Tableau général de l'empire othoman*'. Stockholm, Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul [on-line edn, 2003, <http://www.srii.org/FINDLEY.PDF>, accessed 7 May 2011], p. 27 and passim; Fraser, Elisabeth. "Dressing Turks in the French manner": Mouradgea d'Ohsson's Panorama of the Ottoman Empire". *Ars Orientalis*, 39 (2010), p. 198-230.

<sup>42</sup> This is the now lost *Essai sur la musique orientale ou explication du système des modes et des mesures de la musique turque*. See de Testa, Marie; Gautier, Antoine. *Drogmans et diplomates européens auprès de la porte ottomane*. Istanbul, Isis, 2003, p. 421-439.

<sup>43</sup> Schmidt, Jan. "Franz von Dombay, Austrian Dragoman at the Bosnian Border 1792-1800". *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes*, 90 (2000), p. 75-168.

<sup>44</sup> On Hammer-Purgstall's career, see Fichtner, Paula Sutter. *Terror and Toleration: The Habsburg Empire Confronts Islam, 1526-1850*. London, Reaktion Books, 2008, p. 129-162.

or as informants and interlocutors to ambassadors and other members of the diplomatic corps. Ambassadors were not infrequently aspiring scholars themselves, the most famous and influential example being the Habsburg ambassador Ogier Ghislain de Busbecq, whose *Turkish Letters* (1555-1562) had a profound impact on generations of readers, and which dealt quite extensively with issues of language.<sup>45</sup> A century later, another scholarly ambassador, the German Levinus Warner (1619-65) who served as Dutch Resident in Istanbul from 1655, played a crucial role in the two simultaneous initiatives to translate the bible into Turkish.<sup>46</sup> The role of Venetian bailo Giovanni Battista Donà in the project to anthologize Turkish texts in Italian translations was already noted above. A final instructive example, is Paul Rycaut (1667-1678), English consul in Izmir, whose *History of the Present State of the Ottoman Empire* (1665), *History of the Three Late Impostors* (1669), and *The Present State of the Greek and Armenian Churches* (1679) enjoyed enduring popularity and were among the most influential texts about Ottoman society and religion to be published in the seventeenth century.<sup>47</sup> Ottoman religious plurality was a recurring trope in European commentaries on the Empire. In an age of confessionalization, the ability

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<sup>45</sup> On Busbecq, see Wunder, Amanda. "Western Travelers, Eastern Antiquities, and the Image of the Turk in Early Modern Europe". *Journal of Early Modern History*, 7, 1-2 (2003), p. 89-119. On his efforts to systematically document the linguistic variety of the Ottoman realm, see Considine, John. *Dictionaries in Early Modern Europe: Lexicography and the Making of Heritage*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2008, p. 139-141.

<sup>46</sup> Malcolm, Noel. "Comenius, Boyle, Oldenburg, and the Translation of the Bible into Turkish". *Church History and Religious Culture*, 87, 3 (2007), p. 329 and passim.

<sup>47</sup> *The Present State of the Greek and Armenian Churches* went through several English and five French editions, in addition to a Dutch translation. A German edition of the History went through additional two reprints and "long remained an important source of knowledge to the Austrians about their mighty neighbour, with whom their own political and economic relations were far less extensive than those of the English": Anderson, Sonia P. *An English Consul in Turkey: Paul Rycaut at Smyrna, 1667-1678*. New York, Oxford University Press, 1989, p. 230. Traces of Rycaut's lasting impact are evident in various eighteenth-century encyclopaedic compendia, including, inter alia, Thomas Salmon's *Modern History*, whose sprawling, 150+ page treatment of Ottoman history, society, and religion relied heavily on Rycaut, see Salmon, Thomas. *Modern history; or, The present state of all nations. . . . I*, London, Bettesworth and Hitch; J. Clarke; S. Birt; Tho. Wotton; J. Shuckburgh; T. Osborne, 1744, p. 409-519 ("The Present State of the Turkish Empire"), p. 520-600 ("The Present State of Turkey in Europe").

of Ottoman statecraft to manage and contain a seemingly bewildering range of confessional groups was the source of both praise and awe. Unlike other contemporary texts on Ottoman-Christian religious life, though, which often belaboured the fine points of doctrinal disputation, Rycaut's books have a strong ethnographic flavour, and are based on Rycaut's direct observation and extensive conversations with a wide cast of Ottoman subjects, including his several personal friends at court, such as former governor of Cairo and Diyarbakır Şeytan İbrahim Paşa, court physician Giovanni Mascellini (who in the 1650s was also on the Venetian bailo's payroll, treating various dragomans and embassy employees), court dragoman Ali Ufki Bey, and Habsburg (and, unofficially, Ottoman) dragoman Marc'Antonio Mamuca della Torre, with whom Rycaut corresponded for over twenty years. Rycaut's books also incorporated extensive paraphrases, and at time almost verbatim quotations from English diplomatic dispatches and other official files at the embassy.<sup>48</sup> Perhaps as a consequence of these scholarly methods, Rycaut's account of Greek and Armenian religiosity was notably more empathetic than most contemporaries'.

Other embassy employees, especially secretaries, were similarly pivotal actors in the production and circulation of knowledge about the Ottomans in Europe. William Seaman (1606/7-1680) spent several years as an employee of the English embassy in Istanbul in the late 1620s, where he learned Turkish. Back in London, he subsequently published a partial translation of Hoca Sa'adeddin Efen-di's *Crown of Stories* as *The reign of Sultan Orchan, second king of the Turks* in 1652.<sup>49</sup> But the most famous and influential example by far is Antoine Galland (1646-1715), translator of the *Thousand and One Nights*. From 1670 Galland served as secretary to the French ambassador to the Porte, Charles Olier marquis de Nointel (himself an aspiring Orientalist). Galland's first five-year sojourn in the Otto-

<sup>48</sup> Anderson. *An English Consul in Turkey*. 232-234, 237, 282.

<sup>49</sup> Hamilton, Alastair. "An Egyptian Traveller in the Republic of Letters: Josephus Barbatus or Abudacnus the Copt". *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 57 (1994), p. 123-150; Roper, Geoffrey. "Turkish printing and publishing in England in the 17th century", a paper presented at *The 2nd International Symposium, History of Printing and Publishing in the Languages and Countries of the Middle East, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris, 2-4 2003*. Online edn, May 2009 [<http://pagespersoorange.fr/colloque.imprimes.mo/pdf/GRRo.pdf>, accessed 4 April 2013]; McJannet, Linda. *The Sultan Speaks: Dialogue in English Plays and Histories about the Ottoman Turks*. New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2007; Malcolm, "Comenius, Boyle, Oldenburg, and the Translation of the Bible into Turkish".

man capital, for which he left a detailed journal, was followed by two other extended visits to the Empire, in 1677 and in 1679-1688.<sup>50</sup>

In addition to providing the institutional space for the scholarly activities of their own employees, foreign consulates and embassies often hosted scholars and artists in residence for extended periods of time. Such sojourns—which frequently also involved travelling in the entourage of the ambassador to various parts of the Ottoman Empire—enabled visitors to strike long-lasting contacts with various Ottoman interlocutors, and to produce first-hand knowledge of things Ottoman, mediated, of course, by the perspectives of embassy dragomans and other local intermediaries. An example is the scholar Jacobus Golius (1596-1667) who from 1622 to 1624 served as dragoman for the Dutch embassy to Morocco, and who from 1625 to 1628 sojourned in Syria and Istanbul.<sup>51</sup> During his extended sojourn in the Ottoman capital, the Roman traveler extraordinaire Pietro della Valle (1586-1652) engaged a group of dragomans in his quest for local knowledge. He even acquired a miniature album produced by Ottoman artists, and a copy of a manuscript work on Ottoman government penned by Domenico Timoni (1590-1648), an Istanbul-born dragoman in English service, which he intended to send to Rome.<sup>52</sup> Similarly, the preface to the first volume of Giambattista Toderini's *Letteratura turchesca* (1787), a text that radically challenged

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<sup>50</sup> Galland, Antoine. *Journal d'Antoine Galland pendant son séjour à Constantinople (1672-1673)*. Translated by Charles H. A. Schaefer, Frankfurt am Main, Institute for the History of Arabic-Islamic Science at the Johann Wolfgang Goethe University, 1994.

<sup>51</sup> De Groot, Alexander H. *The Ottoman Empire and the Dutch Republic: A History of the Earliest Diplomatic Relations, 1610-1630*. Leiden, Nederlands Historisch-Archaeologisch Instituut Leiden/Istanbul, 1978, p. 192-193. The strong scholarly presence in Dutch consulates in the Ottoman Empire continued well after Golius, and included, inter alia, Johannes Heyman, the next holder of the chair in Oriental Languages at Leiden University from 1710 to his death in 1737. From 1700 to 1705 Heyman lived in the Dutch consulate in Izmir, where he served as pastor, and travelled extensively throughout the Eastern Mediterranean. See Schmidt, Jan. "Johannes Heyman (1667-1737); His Manuscript Collection and the Dutch Community of Izmir." In *Frontiers of Ottoman Studies: State, Province, and the West*. Colin H. Imber; Keiko Kiyotaki; Rhoads Murphey (eds). Vol. II. London, New York, I.B. Tauris, 2005, p. 75-90 at 76-77. I thank Mehmet Kuru for bringing this study to my attention.

<sup>52</sup> Cardini, Chiara (ed.). *La porta d'Oriente: lettere di Pietro della Valle*, Istanbul, 1614, Rome, Città nuova, p. 111 (letter from Istanbul, Oct. 25, 1614); Testa; Gautier. *Drogmans et diplomates européens*. 247. On Della Valle's Ottoman sojourn see also Lee. "A Printing Press for Shah 'Abbas".

European ideas about Ottoman scientific and literary stagnation, presents the work as the product of the author's sojourn in the Ottoman capital from 1781 to 1786, where Toderini stayed in the house of Venetian bailo Agostino Garzoni, and where the diplomatic milieu and dragomans' contacts among the Ottoman intellectual elite proved essential for the author's research.<sup>53</sup>

Another key example of the ways in which visiting scholars' intensive interactions with their Ottoman peers were shaped by the diplomatic milieu is the Bolognese count Luigi Ferdinando Marsigli's (1658-1730) sojourn in Istanbul in 1679-1680, where he was the guest of Venetian bailo Pietro Civran. Upon his arrival, young Marsigli hired a Jewish interpreter, Abraham Gabai, to teach him Turkish. He soon became acquainted with numerous scribes and scholars in the Ottoman court, and began to collect copies of documents and maps. Here is how Marsigli's modern biographer describes the patrician scholar's time in Istanbul:

Accompanied by his Jewish interpreters or the dragomans of the Venetian embassy, willing if not apt to learn Turkish himself, infectiously eager, young Marsigli managed to become friendly with a handful of well-informed men who moved fairly close to the ruling circles of the Ottoman court. They were doctors, astronomers, geographers, historians. Some were, or accounted themselves, universal experts. Muneğğim-basi, astrologer and herbalist, gave Marsigli the horoscopes of Sultan Mehmed IV and his son Mustafa, and discussed with him the question of calculating Istanbul's latitude; the two differed in their estimates. Hezârîfen, an encyclopaedic author to whom he pays affectionate tribute, generously showed him his own 'compendium' of official texts listing the forces of the Ottoman army and navy, with figures for the revenues supporting them. Marsigli was able to have this copied or at least summarised in Italian translation. Another piece by Hezârîfen, who had travelled to Mecca and the Yemen as a young man, discoursed on the coffee plant, coffee-making and the medical virtues of coffee. This too was transcribed for Marsigli.<sup>54</sup>

This passage nicely captures the multi-directional nature of the production and circulation of scholarly knowledge in early modern Istanbul, and the

<sup>53</sup> Toderini. *Letteratura turchesca*. I, 'prefazione', unpaginated.

<sup>54</sup> Stoye, John. *Marsigli's Europe, 1680-1730: The Life and Times of Luigi Ferdinando Marsigli, Soldier and Virtuoso*. New Haven, Yale University Press, 1994, p. 23.

key role played by dragomans and other diplomatic personnel therein, a point to which I will return shortly.

In the 1740s, Jean-Baptiste Adanson (1732-1804) became an apprentice dragoman in the French embassy. He was sent as an interpreter to Aleppo in 1754 and for the next half century served as a foreign consul in Tripoli, Alexandria, Cairo, and Tunis, until his death. His collection of four manuscript volumes is based on his travels in Egypt in the two decades from 1762 to 1782, and includes 61 full-page pen and ink-wash drawings.<sup>55</sup> If Adanson's drawings remained virtually unknown for many years, others, produced in a similar diplomatic context by sojourning artists hosted by foreign embassies played a pivotal role in fixing certain images of the Ottoman capital in European print culture. Among the earliest—and most enduring—European representations of the Ottomans were the portraits produced by Gentile Bellini (1429-1507) during his 1479 sojourn in Istanbul, occasioned by Mehmed II's explicit request to Venice.<sup>56</sup> These portraits, which reflect a deep engagement with Ottoman genres, motifs, and sultanic representational strategies, became part of a visual repertory studied and appropriated by Ottoman artists, whose work itself was the subject of later copying by artists employed by the influential Paolo Giovio.<sup>57</sup> The Istanbul sojourns of Pieter Coecke van Aelst (1533-34), Nicholas de Nicolay (1551-52), Melchior Lorck (1555-59), the three Austrian artists in the entourage of Habsburg ambassador Hans Ludwig von Kuefstein (1628-1630), George de la Chappelle of Caen (1643), the artist commissioned by Swedish ambassador Claes Rålamb (1657-1658), the group of artists in French ambassador Marquis de Nointel's "picture factory" in the 1670s, and, for an even longer period, Jean Baptiste Vanmour (in Istanbul from 1699 to his death in 1737),

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<sup>55</sup> Online edn, Kimpton, 2004 [<http://ead.library.jhu.edu/ms396.xml>, accessed 12 October 2012].

<sup>56</sup> Caroline Campbell; Alan Chong (eds). *Bellini and the East*. New Haven, Yale University Press, 2005.

<sup>57</sup> On these complex relations of transmission and re-appropriation, see Majer, Hans Georg. "Nigârî and the sultans' portraits of Paolo Giovio". In: 9th International Congress of Turkish Art, I. C. o. T. Art (ed.). Ankara, Kültür Bakanlığı, 1991, p. 441-455; *idem*, "Giovio, Veronese und die Osmanen". In: *Europa und die Türken in der Renaissance*. Bodo Guthmüller; Wilhelm Kühlmann (eds). Tübingen, Max Niemeyer, 2000, p. 345-359; Necipoğlu, Gülru. "The Serial Portraits of Ottoman Sultans in Comparative Perspective". In: *The Sultan's Portrait: Picturing the House of Osman*, Ayşe Orbay (ed.). Istanbul, İşbank Yayınları, 2000, p. 22-61.

were all employed as part of official diplomatic missions.<sup>58</sup> De Nicolay's images of Ottoman costumes were repeatedly copied and reprinted in later costume albums (including Francesco Sansovino's enormously popular publications in the 1560s and 1570s), and had a long-lasting impact on early modern taxonomies of Ottoman difference.<sup>59</sup> Vanmour's immense success in Ahmed III's court, his title of *peintre ordinaire du Roi en Levant*, and his official duties of producing painted scenes for festivities at the French embassy further underscore the significance of the diplomatic milieu for the articulation of an enduring visual repertoire for representing the Ottomans to European publics.<sup>60</sup> This repertoire, which emphasized (and often belaboured) Ottoman ritualism, extravagance, and the meticulous sartorial codification of social status, was clearly based on a diplomatic perspective shaped primarily by participation in state-sanctioned ceremonial, with limited access to more domestic spheres of life and to non-elite cultural production.

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<sup>58</sup> Mansel, Philip. "Between Two Empires: Hans Ludwig von Kuefstein, Ambassador From the Holy Roman Emperor to the Ottoman Sultan in 1628, and His Pictures". In: Ernst J. Grube *et al.* (eds). *At the Sublime Porte: Ambassadors to the Ottoman Empire (1550-1800)*. London, Hazlitt, Gooden & Fox, 1988, p. 11-19; *idem*, "Art and Diplomacy in Ottoman Constantinople". *History Today*, 46, 8 (1996), p. 43-49; Broos, Marianne. "Paintings of Receptions of the Ambassadors at the Sublime Porte by Jean Baptiste Vanmour (1671-1737) and Their Influence in Constantinople and Venice". In: *I Guardi: vedute, capricci, feste, disegni e quadri turcheschi*, Alessandro Bettagno (ed.). Venice, Marsilio, Fondazione Giorgio Cini, 2002, p. 179-185; Gopin, Seth A. "The Influence of Jean-Baptiste Vanmour". In: *I Guardi: vedute, capricci, feste, disegni e quadri turcheschi*, p. 153-162; Eveline Sint Nicolaas (ed.). *Jean-Baptiste Vanmour: An Eyewitness of the Tulip Era*. Istanbul, Koç Bank, 2003; Wilson, Bronwen. "Reflecting on the Face of the Turk in Sixteenth-Century Venetian Portrait Books". *Word & Image*, 19, 1 & 2 (2003), p. 38-58; Karin Ådahl (ed.). *The Sultan's Procession: The Swedish Embassy to Sultan Mehmed IV in 1657-1658 and the Rålamb Paintings*. Istanbul, Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul, 2006.

<sup>59</sup> Wilson, Bronwen. "Foggie diverse di vestire de' Turchi: Turkish Costume Illustration and Cultural Translation". *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, XXXVII, 1 (2007), p. 104-105.

<sup>60</sup> Eldem, Edhem. *French Trade in Istanbul in the Eighteenth Century*. Leiden, Boston, Brill, 1999, p. 205. For additional examples of Austrian, Italian, and French artists employed by ambassadors to the Porte in the eighteenth century, see Renda, Günsel. *The Ottoman Empire and Europe: Cultural Encounters*. Manchester, FSTC, 2006, p. 13.

## The Dialogic Emergence of “Ottoman Culture”

As the above cases suggest, the field of knowledge which ultimately became the discipline of Orientalism emerged dialogically, in the course of the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries, from the diplomatic milieu of Istanbul. It featured members of the dragoman corps—many of whom were born and raised in Istanbul—in conversations with other members of the Ottoman capital’s intellectual and political elite. Indeed, we cannot talk about a European perspective on the Ottomans without considering how this perspective (or, rather, perspectives) emerged through sustained dialogue with uniquely positioned Ottoman subjects.

Ottoman writings on Europe were similarly shaped by ongoing intellectual exchange and trans-imperial trajectories. Upon graduating from the University of Padua in 1692, Emmanuel Timoni, the descendant of a dragoman lineage, became the physician of the English embassy and, following a trip to London in 1703, was appointed to the prestigious Royal Society. A decade later, he published in the *Philosophical Transactions* a letter concerning smallpox inoculation, a method widely practiced in the Ottoman Empire. Timoni was followed by the physician of the Venetian embassy, Giacomo Pilarino. Over the next three decades Timoni’s and Pilarino’s publications on the matter were translated and published in Venice, Leiden, and Leipzig.<sup>61</sup> Other examples abound: Ali Ufki Bey, after being educated at the Ottoman court for two decades, joined ca. 1657 the service of several foreign ambassadors, including the English and the Dutch. While still in Ottoman employ, he completed a translation into Turkish of the tract *Ianua linguarum reserata aurea* by the Moravian reformer Comenius (1643). His translation projects expanded in the 1650s and 1660s, when he produced a Turkish translation of the Catechism of the Church of England (1653) and of the Old and New Testament and the Apocrypha (ca. 1658), a tract *Concerning the Liturgy of the Turks* (published posthumously in Oxford in 1691) and another tract on Turkish grammar, *Grammatica Turcicolatina* (1666), which he dedicated to the chaplain of the English embassy.<sup>62</sup> Bobowski’s bible translations may have been prepared with the help of

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<sup>61</sup> Testa, and Gautier. *Drogmans et diplomates européens*. p. 238.

<sup>62</sup> Neudecker, Hannah. “From Istanbul to London? Albertus Bobovius’ Appeal to Isaac Basire”. In: Alistair Hamilton *et al.* (eds). *The Republic of Letters and the Levant*. Leiden, Boston, Brill, 2005, p. 173-196. 174, 182.

another dragoman in Istanbul, the Jew Yahya bin Ishak, or Haki.<sup>63</sup> He was also the author of a detailed treatise on the Topkapı Palace, published in German and in Italian in 1665 and 1679, respectively, and a relation on the violent death of Kösem Sultan, the influential grandmother of Mehmed IV, which was published in England by Isaac Barrow.<sup>64</sup> An abridged English version of Bobowski's treatise on the palace also appeared in English print, and an unpublished French translation was found in the papers of Girardin, the French envoy to Istanbul, in 1686, who claimed to have authored it himself.<sup>65</sup>

Beyond his own writings and translations, Bobowski was a crucial link in the circulation of knowledge from Istanbul. He was one of the foremost informants not only for Rycaut's *Present State*, as discussed above, but also for other early Orientalists, including Nointel, Antoine Galland, and Cornelio Magni, who claimed that Bobowski presented his manuscripts to various diplomats in exchange for Alcohol.<sup>66</sup> Along with a Dervish named Ahmed of Galata Bobowski served as Ottoman Turkish instructors for Meninski, then dragoman to the Polish legation in Istanbul and ultimately the author of the most authoritative Turkish grammar in Europe until the nineteenth century.<sup>67</sup>

Other examples of scholarly networks connecting Ottoman courtiers and foreign embassy employees abound. In 1631, the Ottoman Lord Admiral, who was interested in astrology and cosmography, asked the Venetian bailo for a person knowledgeable on cartography who could help him with some maps he owned. The bailo offered to send his dragoman, Giovanni

<sup>63</sup> Neudecker. "From Istanbul to London?". 195.

<sup>64</sup> Borromeo, Elisabetta. *Voyageurs occidentaux dans l'empire ottoman, 1600-1644: inventaire des récits et études sur les itinéraires, les monuments remarquables et les populations rencontrées (Roumélie, Cyclades, Crimée)*. Paris, Maisonneuve & Larose, 2007, p. 855-858; Bayle, Pierre. « Hali-Beigh ». In: *Dictionnaire historique et critique*. VII, Paris, Desoer, 1820 [1720], p. 480.

<sup>65</sup> See Carol Garrett Fisher; Alan Fisher. "Topkapı Sarayı in the Mid-Seventeenth Century: Bobovi's Description", *Archivum Ottomanicum*, X (1985), p. 5-81.

<sup>66</sup> Anderson. *An English Consul in Turkey*. 41.

<sup>67</sup> Babinger. "Die türkischen Studien in Europa". 115; Meninski, Franciszek. *Lexicon Arabico-Persico-Turcicum, adjecta ad singulas voces et phrases significatione Latina, ad usitatiores etiam Italica*. 4 vols., Bernhard Freiherr von Jenisch; F. von Klezl (eds). Vienna, Typis Iosephi Nobilis de Kurzböck, 1780; Hamilton, Alastair. "Seaman, William (1606/7-1680)". *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, May 2009 [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/24986, accessed 2 June 2013].

Battista Salvago.<sup>68</sup> Antoine Galland maintained extensive contacts with Ottoman grand dragoman Alexandre Mavrocordato (1641-1709) and with the Ottoman court treasurer and polymath Hezârfen Hüseyin Efendi (whose name literally means “versed in a thousand arts”). Hezârfen (d. 1691) could count among his friends not only Galland, but also Marsigli, who met him in his seventies, and who—as noted above—made extensive use of his library. Hezârfen’s universal history, in turn, was based among other things on Greek and Latin sources, which he is known to have accessed through the help of some dragomans.<sup>69</sup> Mavrocordato, who like many members of Istanbul’s elite was trained at the University of Padua, and who, years later, used his time at the gates of Vienna in 1683 to try and purchase as many books as he could in the Austrian capital, dedicated his first historical work to a study of the strengths and weaknesses of the Ottoman Empire. Antoine Galland wrote in his diary in 1672: “J’avais entendu le jour précédent la lecture d’un discours italien écrit par le seigneur Maurocordato, touchant la force et la faiblesse de l’Empire ottoman”, and confirmed that the work contained precious information about the state of the empire.<sup>70</sup> Mavrocordato later published a three-volume work, *Etat de l’Empire ottoman*.

As Nicholas Dew notes, ‘Barthélemy d’Herbelot’s posthumous, monumental and hugely influential *Bibliothèque orientale* (1697) was indebted to an earlier bibliographic-encyclopedic endeavor, that of the Istanbulite polymath Katib Çelebi. Moreover, that d’Herbelot had access to Çelebi’s text in the first place owed to the collecting mission of Antoine Galland in the 1670s, sponsored by French ambassadors to the Porte. Galland, in turn, apparently was introduced to Çelebi’s work by no other than the Ottoman scholar’s student, Hezârfen.<sup>71</sup>

Modern scholars have often celebrated Katib Çelebi, Hezârfen, and their contemporaries as the “first” Ottoman scholars to consciously interact with their European counterparts. But this claim—corollary to the widespread and pernicious idea that early modern Ottoman elites lacked “curiosity” about and knowledge of Europe—is untenable. Many of the interactions between Ottomans and European sojourners in Istanbul were oral,

<sup>68</sup> Archivio di Stato di Venezia, Senato, Dispacci Costantinopoli, f. 111, c. 257b (February 4, 1630 m.v.). I thank Giorgio Rota for the reference.

<sup>69</sup> Bombaci, Alessio. *Storia della letteratura turca: dall’antico impero di Mongolia all’odierna Turchia*. Milano, Sansoni, 2<sup>a</sup> ed., 1969, p. 401-402.

<sup>70</sup> Galland, Schaefer. *Journal d’Antoine Galland*. I, p. 236-237.

<sup>71</sup> Dew, Nicholas. *Orientalism in Louis XIV’s France*. Oxford, New York, Oxford University Press, 2009, p. 179-180.

making their traces difficult to unearth, but in recent years more and more of the fermentation that characterized this milieu has come to light. See, for example, Ghobrial, *The Whispers of Cities*. And whereas the majority of translations undertaken by Ottoman scholars until the seventeenth century were from Arabic and Persian, the languages of medieval erudition and literature,<sup>72</sup> significant aspects of Latinate learning was incorporated into Ottoman culture as well in a variety of ways, and through a range of intermediaries, again, much of it orally.

As outlined by Tijana Krstić, the sixteenth century was the heyday of multi-lingual, multi-directional intellectual fermentation in Istanbul. Translational activity was already underway during Mehmed II's reign, who collected Greek manuscripts for his library and commissioned the translation from Greek of Plutarch's *Lives* and from Italian of the *Life and Deeds of Uzun Hasan, king of Persia*.<sup>73</sup> The translator, Giovanni Maria Angiolello, had taken part in an expedition with the Sultan's son. In 1465 Mehmed similarly commissioned a Byzantine scholar to translate from the Greek Ptolemy's *Geographia*, which he later supplemented with multiple Italian reproductions. [Note: Casale, Giancarlo. *The Ottoman Age of Exploration*. Oxford, New York, Oxford University Press, 2010, 20; for a sustained discussion of Mehmed's interest in Ptolemy in the broader context of Ottoman princely patronage of Renaissance geographical and cartographical works, see especially Roberts, Sean. *Printing a Mediterranean World: Florence, Constantinople, and the Renaissance of Geography*. Harvard University Press, 2013, p. 122-132.] Also originating in the same milieu was the translation of a "detailed exposition of the Christian Creed by the Greek Orthodox Patriarch Gennadios Scholarios who, soon after the conquest of Constantinople, was called into a debate with the sultan; the debate took place through an interpreter, who was asked to record it in writing".<sup>74</sup> The early sixteenth century saw anonymous Turkish translations of Aesop's fables

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<sup>72</sup> On this transnational enterprise, and the inherently multilingual character of the early modern Ottoman court, see Hagen, Gottfried. "Translations and Translators in a Multilingual Society: A Case Study of Persian-Ottoman Translations, Late 15th to Early 17th Century". *Eurasian Studies*, II, 1, (2003), p. 95-134.

<sup>73</sup> On Mehmed's Greek manuscript collection, which dates to the 1460s and 1470s, see Raby, Julian. "Mehmed the Conqueror's Greek Scriptorium". *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, XXXVII (1983), p. 15-34.

<sup>74</sup> Paker, Saliha. « Turkish Tradition ». In: Mona Baker; Gabriela Saldanha (eds). *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies*. New York, Routledge, 2001, p. 256.

(via Planudes) and of various Italian authors, including Abstemius, Rinuccio d'Arezzo, and Poggio Bracciolini.<sup>75</sup> It also saw the synthesis of a range of Iberian, Arab, and Indo-Chinese cartographic traditions in the works of Ottoman admiral Piri Reis (1470-1554), whose Atlantic Ocean chart (1513) and North Atlantic chart (1528) explicitly built on dozens of earlier maps, including those of Columbus.<sup>76</sup> In 1572, a *History of France* was translated into Turkish by Hasan b. Hamzah and 'Ali b. Sinān, commissioned by the chief secretary to the Ottoman Grand Vizier, Feridun Bey.<sup>77</sup>

The pattern set by dragomans Yunus Bey, Murad Bey, and Mahmud Bey of scholarly translations to and from Ottoman Turkish was followed and expanded in the next century by Bobowski and his students. In 1654, Katib Çelebi translated from Latin Mercator's *Atlas minor* with the help of a French convert to Islam, and used a range of European cartographers and geographers for a revised version of his *Cihannüma*.<sup>78</sup> Starting in 1675, Abū Bakr of Damascus (d. 1691), a scholar in the retinue of the grand vizier, was entrusted by Sultan Mehmed IV with the task of translating Blaeu's *Atlas Major* in eleven volumes, published in Amsterdam and previously gifted to the sultan by the Dutch ambassador in 1668. To achieve this task, which ultimately took a decade to complete, he collaborated with Marsigli, among others.<sup>79</sup> Other seventeenth-century Ottoman scholars translated and adapted Latin astronomical tables, as well as French and Spanish Paracelsian medical and anatomical texts, sometimes in collaboration with European colleagues who practiced in Istanbul.<sup>80</sup>

Imperial patronage of and interest in translations certainly picked up in the eighteenth century. In 1722 dragoman Osman Ağa of Temesvar, who had spent the decade 1688-1699 in Austrian captivity, translated from the German an outline history of Austria from 800 to 1662.<sup>81</sup> A few years later,

<sup>75</sup> Bombaci. *Storia della letteratura turca*. 324.

<sup>76</sup> On Piri Reis and other sixteenth-century Ottoman cartographical syntheses, including a 1520s portolan atlas inspired by the Italian genre of *isolarii*, see Günergun, Feza. "Ottoman Encounters with European Science: Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Translations into Turkish". In: Peter Burke; Ronnie Po chia Hsia (eds). *Cultural Translation in Early Modern Europe*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2007, p. 197-198.

<sup>77</sup> Lewis. *The Muslim View of the World*. 156.

<sup>78</sup> Günergun. "Ottoman Encounters with European Science". 202-203.

<sup>79</sup> Stoye. *Marsigli's Europe, 1680-1730*. p. 25; Günergun. "Ottoman Encounters with European Science", p. 204-205.

<sup>80</sup> Günergun. "Ottoman Encounters with European Science". 206-210.

<sup>81</sup> Lewis, Bernard. *The Muslim View of the World*. New York, Norton, 1982, p. 169.

the Ottoman Grand Vizier Mehmed Recib Paşa commissioned a Turkish translation of a history of China by the Jesuit Jean-Baptiste du Halde, from two dragomans, Paolo Eremiani (a graduate of the College Louis le Grand, established by Colbert to train apprentice dragomans for French diplomacy) and a certain 'Signor Lomaca'.<sup>82</sup> A series of extensive translations and writings on European society, history and science were undertaken by the founder of the Ottoman press, Ibrahim Müteferrika (1674-1745), in the 1730s and 1740s.<sup>83</sup> Finally, in 1792, Swedish dragoman Mouradgea d'Ohs-son was involved in sultan Selim III's reform efforts, which were based on the supposed adoption of European military reform.<sup>84</sup>

As this inevitably cursory overview suggests, much of the Orientalist scholarly perspective on Ottoman culture was shaped by the intensive interactions from the mid seventeenth to the mid eighteenth century among a relatively small group of erudite men in Istanbul, many of them native or long-time residents of the capital. It is their perspective—which encompassed both an admiration for Arabic, Persian, and Turkish learning, and a deep sense of “crisis” and need for reform, the famous (and now debunked) paradigm of Ottoman decline—that has colored Orientalist scholarship for centuries thereafter. This is a testament to the power of their synthesis, as well as to its epistemological limitations.

### Doing a History of Ottomanist Translations

What was the impact of the extensive textual and visual output produced in the context of Istanbulite diplomacy, and how are we to understand this corpus in relation to dragoman's personal trajectories, training, and

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<sup>82</sup> According to Giambattista Toderini, who was shown the manuscript of the translation by Eremiani's son, himself a dragoman for the Danish embassy, the translators abbreviated any discussions of religion and other matters “disagreeable to the Turks”: Toderini. *Letteratura turchesca*. II, p. 146-147. See also van den Boogert, Maurits H. “*The Sultan's Answer to the Medici Press? Ibrahim Müteferrika's Printing House in Istanbul*”. In: Alistair Hamilton et al. (eds). *The Republic of Letters and the Levant*. Leiden, Boston, Brill, 2005, p. 247.

<sup>83</sup> On Müteferrika's translations, see Shaw, Stanford J.; Shaw, Ezel Kural. *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*. vol. 1, New York, Cambridge University Press, p. 237-238.

<sup>84</sup> Findley. ‘Presenting the Ottomans to Europe’. 27.

precarious position both in Istanbul and in an emergent Republic of Letters? What follows is a very tentative attempt to address these questions.

Early modern Ottoman elite culture was inherently multilingual. Not only was Istanbul a magnet for migrants from across the Ottoman Empire, but many members of the administrative, military, and educational elite were de facto trilingual, or even quadrilingual.<sup>85</sup> Many top administrators and army officers were recruited as youth from among Greek- or Slavic-speaking populations in the Balkans, while others were war captives who already commanded one or more languages. Similarly, Ottoman scholars were often summoned to Istanbul's top *medreses* from Arabic and Persian-speaking centers of learning, such as Cairo, Baghdad, Damascus, Herat, Samarkand and Tabriz. This mobility further reinforced the self-conscious multilingualism of Ottoman elite culture.<sup>86</sup> In this multilingual setting, Turkish held a curious status. It was not perceived as the language of scripture and science (which remained, by and large, Arabic), nor, initially, as the language of courtly culture (which was dominated by Persian poetics). It was, however, used extensively for administrative and ceremonial functions, not least as a statement of power vis-à-vis foreign ambassadors. This was the case even when another language (e.g. Greek, and later Italian) was available to all parties.

The linguistic ideology that relegated different languages to distinct domains of textual production was nicely captured by the French traveler Jean Thévenot, who wrote that

les Turcs à Constantinople se voulant divertir font venir devant eux des Arabes, qu'ils font parler en cette langue; cependant c'est leur langue sainte, car leur Alcoran et toutes leurs prières sont en arabe, et ils disent communément que la langue turque sert en ce monde et qu'en Paradis on parlera la langue arabe, et en Enger la Persienne, qui toutefois est belle, et fait la meilleure partie des poésies et chansons turques, mais comme ils haïssent extrêmement les Persiens, ils médisent de tout ce qui les regarde.<sup>87</sup>

<sup>85</sup> Peirce, Leslie. "Polyglottism in the Ottoman Empire: A Reconsideration." In *Braudel Revisited: The Mediterranean World, 1600-1800*, edited by Gabriel Piterberg; Teofilo F. Ruiz; Geoffrey Symcox. Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 2010, p. 76-98.

<sup>86</sup> Günergun. "Ottoman Encounters with European Science". 192-193.

<sup>87</sup> de Thévenot, Jean. *Relation d'un voyage fait au Levant*. Paris, Chez Thomas lolly, p. 297-298.

We can now tentatively suggest that dragomans, whose bread-and-butter activity involved diplomatic interpretation to and from Ottoman Turkish, were uniquely positioned to appreciate its importance as a language of imperial power and the clear advantages of commanding it—not necessarily for everyday communication in Istanbul, where other languages could be adequately used, but for facilitating access to the administrative-bureaucratic heart of the empire.

Moreover, there is a particular significance to the fact that so many of the early texts on the Ottoman Turkish language were produced by dragomans. Such professional interpreters were socialized and trained either in the Palace School as young *devşirme* recruits and war captives (e.g. Yunus Bey, Murad Bey, Mahmud Bey, and Ali Ufkî Bey) or as apprentice dragomans in the Venetian or French embassies in Istanbul (which remained the leading two programs for training dragomans well into the eighteenth century). In the former case, their education reflected a metropolitan view of Ottoman elite culture, one that was self-consciously “synthetic”, based on the integration and re-appropriation of a heavy dose of Arabic and Persian literary models.<sup>88</sup> In the case of dragomans apprenticed in the Venetian and French embassies, their perception of Ottoman language use was informed by humanist ideals of eloquence, as well as by emergent ideologies about the relationship between vernacular languages and political power.<sup>89</sup>

In light of their extensive socialization in specific institutions (i.e. the palace and embassy compounds), a related set of questions has to do with dragomans’ choices of texts to write or translate. Aside from linguistic tracts, dragomans’ texts, especially before the eighteenth century, focused overwhelmingly on Ottoman state, government and institutions, to the relative neglect of other spheres of sociocultural production. This, and

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<sup>88</sup> On the centrality of Arabic and Persian letters in the Palace School curriculum, Miller suggests that the most popular texts in the seventeenth-century curriculum were in the genre of “*Mulamma*, narrative romances, or collections of short tales, characterized by a very ornate style with an unusually large admixture of Arabic and Persian words [...] As exercises in composition students wrote poetry and translated books, with commentaries appended, in both Arabic and Persian”, see Miller, Barnette. *The Palace School of Muhammad the Conqueror*. Cambridge, Harvard University Press, p. 102.

<sup>89</sup> On these language ideologies, albeit in a different setting, see Woolard, Kathryn A. “Bernardo de Aldrete and the Morisco Problem: A Study in Early Modern Spanish Language Ideology”. *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 44, no. 3 (2002), p. 446-480.

the strong taxonomic impulse of much of what was published about the Ottomans in contemporary Europe, had to do at least in part with the early articulation of “Turkish” as a field of knowledge in the diplomatic milieu of foreign embassies at the Porte. Dragomans were trained in chancellery practice, and were particularly attuned to the need to classify, compare, and commensurate Ottoman bureaucratic practice with that of European chancelleries.

As professional mediators, dragomans were wont to emphasize difference and, moreover, to conceive of difference in the form of binary oppositions between two clearly demarcated sides. Indeed, dragomans made their livelihood by pointing out equivalences and differences, by essentializing and objectifying cultures, languages, and practices as belonging squarely on one side or another, and therefore making their professional mediation and interpretation necessary. In this sense, their role in the articulation of Occidentalism, as well as Orientalism, warrants further consideration. Of course, these “professional hazards” of the dragoman’s trade were informed by—and in turn reinforced—contemporary Europeans’ growing tendency to conceive of Ottoman society and culture not in terms of their strong ties to other contemporary imperial formations (whether due to shared classical and post-classical intellectual roots, conscious competition and emulation, or the frequent movement of personnel and practices across political frontiers), but through the notion of *a priori*, radical alterity. At the same time, dragomans’ everyday activities engaged them in multiple high stakes interactions, which required them to “relate” back to imperial employers the substance of interactions elsewhere, thus undermining any simple sense of incommensurability.<sup>90</sup> These oral practices, still not fully charted out, surely played a pivotal role in defining dragomans’ modalities of knowledge production as a whole.<sup>91</sup>

All of the above suggests that dragomans were quite attuned to the conventions and expectations of their publics. At the same time, much more research is required on the ways in which their specific translational and authorial strategies (explanatory prefaces, glossing and elaboration,

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<sup>90</sup> Rothman, E. Natalie. “Afterword”. *Things not easily believed: Introducing the Early Modern Relation*, special issue of *Renaissance and Reformation/ Renaissance et Réforme*. Thomas V. Cohen; Germaine Warkentin (eds). 34, 1-2, p. 237-243.

<sup>91</sup> For some illuminating notes in this regard, albeit in a Mughal, rather than Ottoman context, see Alam, Muzaffar; Subrahmanyam, Sanjay. “The Making of a Munshi”. *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, XXIV, 2 (2004), p. 61-72.

calquing and “foreignisms”, ellipsis, reordering of materials, framing devices such as voicing and footing, and modes of referring to sources—or their erasure) corresponded to contemporary Ottoman textual practices. Attending to these dimensions of the dragoman’s craft may yield new insights on the dialogic nature of mediation, and on the specific ways in which dragomans perceived their “syntheses”.<sup>92</sup> Studies of dragomans’ specific textual practices will also further our understanding of the multiplicity of levels of mediation involved in the articulation of the broader field of Orientalism, e.g. the representation of a specifically Istanbulite Ottoman Turkish (as opposed to other regional dialects) as “standard”, or the inflection of Turkish through another language (for example, in Edmond Halley’s *Miscellanea curiosa* of 1708, where Turkish is clearly inflected through Italian in terms such as *Agiamoglani* or *visiriato*).

This last example also underscores the important position of dragomans at the interface between manuscript and print culture. As recent scholarship has emphasized, manuscript texts enjoyed much circulation among various readerships well into the early modern period. Diplomatic reports are an excellent example: they were meant for circumscribed circulation, but were often edited, printed, translated, and circulated far beyond their original intended audience in government. The genre of Venetian *relazione*, which several dragomans emulated, exemplifies the strong humanistic awareness and the impact of earlier printed texts on the framing of new texts about the Ottomans. This impact of Venetian dragomans went beyond Venetian diplomatic circle, or even Italianate print culture. As Christian Windler notes, “From Constantinople to the Maghreb, Italian remained, until the first decades of the nineteenth century, the main language in oral communications”.<sup>93</sup> Beyond its oral ubiquity, the written effects of Italian

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<sup>92</sup> For example, as Carter Findley notes in relation to Mouradega d’Ohsson’s *Tableau General*, the text includes various kinds of glosses, including lengthy “observations”, which mimic the “digressions” (*istitirād*) found in Ottoman chronicles, and which “in spirit . . . may stray very far from the way that subject is treated in Islamic law”. Findley. “Presenting the Ottomans to Europe”. 41. For a different take on d’Ohsson’s text, which emphasizes rather the “contingency and entanglement” of Ottoman and French cultures, see Fraser. “Dressing Turks in the French manner”: Mouradega d’Ohsson”.

<sup>93</sup> Windler, Christian. “Diplomatic History as a Field for Cultural Analysis: Muslim-Christian Relations in Tunis, 1700-1840”. *The Historical Journal* 44, no. 1 (2001), p. 79-106 at 85.

as the lingua franca of Mediterranean diplomacy and trade can be seen in English, French, Dutch, and German *Turcica* as well.<sup>94</sup>

Finally, through their selection of Ottoman texts to be translated, dragomans played a pivotal role in defining for their European publics a sense of Ottoman canonicity. As suggested above, however, dragomans' choices were themselves informed by a complex intellectual network, and, in some sense, voiced Ottoman elites' own imperial ideologies about the Ottoman synthesis of all prior knowledge. This dimension, too, calls for much further investigation.

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<sup>94</sup> I cannot treat these complex linguistic phenomena in detail here, but should mention in passim the numerous collections of copies of Ottoman official records with facing Italian translations, found in the papers of several British, French, and Dutch representatives to the Porte, as well as the Italian glosses to Ottoman Turkish literary texts in the papers of Dutch orientalist Johannes Heyman. See British Archive, State Papers 105/334 ("Book of Firmans, (Turkish) with Italian translations, concerning English merchants at Smyrna, 1678-1724" and 110/88 ("Letter book of Sir William Trumbull, resident ambassador to Turkey"); Leiden University Library, Oriental Collection, Or. 1289 (Ottoman Turkish rendition of Aesop's fables). I thank Mehmet Kuru for bringing these materials to my attention and for providing digital copies for further research.